History of Sociology

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Abstract: This article deals with the developments, trends, and essence of research in studies on the history of sociology in the German-speaking world since 2000. It discusses studies on the methodology of the history of sociology, publications on the institutionalization of sociology, on early and modern classics, on national and transnational historiography, and on sociology in face of National Socialism. Although the history of sociology is only rudimentarily institutionalized, especially in Germany, and there are almost no chairs or specialist journals for the history of sociology, we can nevertheless discern a spirit of optimism among younger researchers in this field. At the same time, we still lack a productive exchange with other historiographic sciences.

Keywords: History of sociology, sociology in German-speaking countries, classics of sociology, methodology of the history of sociology

1 The Situation at the Outset

Research on the history of sociology has long remained in the shadows of German-language sociology, less in terms of the number of publications than a lack of institutionalization. In Switzerland and Germany in particular, the analysis of the history of sociology has failed to put down more than rudimentary institutional roots. If we consult the leading journals in sociology, only rarely do we find contributions that address the history of the discipline. There is also no German-language equivalent to the *Journal of Classical Sociology* or the *Journal of the History of the Behavioural Sciences*. One of the few places for researchers interested in the history of sociology to publish in German-language journals has been the *Jahrbuch für Soziologiegeschichte*, which was first issued in the 1990s but has been published only sporadically since 2000. The *Soziologische Revue's* special issue *Soziologie 2000 (Sociology 2000)* also failed to include the history of sociology as a subject in its own right. The situation is similar when we look at university chairs. Unlike in Austria, there is no longer any chair at all explicitly devoted to research on the history of sociology after Karl-Siegbert Rehberg (Dresden) and Klaus Lichtblau (Frankfurt/M) retired. There is furthermore no section for the history of sociology in the professional bodies such as the Swiss Sociological Association (SGS), or the European Sociological Association (ESA)—in marked contrast to the American Sociological Association's (ASA) Section on the History of Sociology or the International Sociological Association's (ISA) Research

Note: Translation from German, including all quotes from German literature, by Stephan Elkins (*SocioTrans—Social Scientific Translation & Editing*).

Committee on the History of Sociology (RCHS). Only since autumn 2019 there is a section for the history of sociology in the German Sociological Association (GSA). Exceptions to this unsatisfactory picture of the institutionalized history of sociology in the German-speaking world are various archives (cf. Moebius and Ploder, 2017: 327ff.). Particularly worth mentioning are the *Sozialwissenschaftliche Archiv Konstanz* (SAK) and *Archiv für die Geschichte der Soziologie in Österreich* (AGSÖ).

Austria, and particularly sociology in Graz, are an outlier in this respect. For decades, Austrian sociology has shown a decided interest in research on the history of sociology and of science that has deliberately been expanded toward a separate branch of science in its own right. Moreover, the Austrian Association for Sociology (ÖGS) has long established a history-of-sociology section.

Perhaps it is on account of this favorable situation that Graz has emanated a spirit of optimism in recent years as to the future of research in the history of sociology. A sign of this optimism is, for instance, the three-volume *Handbuch zur Geschichte der Soziologie im deutschsprachigen Raum* (*Handbook on the History of Sociology in the German-Speaking World*; Moebius and Ploder, 2017; 2018; Holzhauser et al., 2019), which addresses the history of sociology in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland and provides an overview of the methodological toolbox for this research. This major project has picked up on previous research on the history of sociology in German-speaking countries, for instance, on the four-volume works of Friedrich Jonas (1968), Wolf Lepenies (1981), or the multi-volume *Geschichte der österreichischen Humanwissenschaften* (*The History of the Austrian Humanities*), edited by Karl Acham since 1999.¹ In recent years, Graz has furthermore been the origin of newly founded publication organs such as *Zyklus. Jahrbuch für Theorie und Geschichte der Soziologie* or the journal *Serendipities*.² For several years now, a spring school has regularly been conducted on the *Sociology and History of the Social and Cultural Sciences*.³ Recently, Graz has been at the center of reviving the debate on how and why we should pursue the study of the history of sociology (cf. Dayé and Moebius, 2015).

When speaking of the history of sociology, German-language sociology has distinguished, in line with Lothar Peter (2001: 11; cf. Moebius, 2004; 2017a), between *Soziologiegeschichte* (the study of the history of sociology as a specific discipline of sociology) and *Geschichte der Soziologie* (the historical processes of the discipline of sociology as such). *Soziologiegeschichte*, the study of the history of sociology, refers according to Peter to an independent strand of sociological research that is devoted to the history of sociology conceived as the “actual historical course of sociological theory building, research, and institutionalization as well as all other activities and

1 Unfortunately, the book on sociology in the Habsburg Empire edited by Karl Acham (2020), which will fill a large gap in international research on sociology in Central Europe, was not yet published when the article was finished and therefore cannot be discussed here.

2 See <http://www.springer.com/series/13108> and <http://serendipities.uni-graz.at/index.php/serendipities>

3 <https://doktoratsprogramm-geschichte-soziologie-sozialwissenschaften.uni-graz.at/#>

phenomena that are concerned with the relationship of sociology and society” (Peter, 2001: 11). *Geschichte der Soziologie* is the history of sociology proper—the historical processes of sociology, its actors, institutions, practices, findings, and social functions; they are thus the central objects of research in the field of *Soziologiegeschichte* (Peter, 2001: 11; cf. Moebius, 2004: 15f.).

2 Methodologies

Since the late 1990s, questions have increasingly been raised in the German-speaking world concerning the how and why of studying the history of sociology. A new development was to explicitly advocate for the application of genuine *sociological* theories and methods to the historiography of sociology (cf. Fleck, 1999). A broader debate on the ways and objectives of studying the history of sociology was waged in 2001 in the *Jahrbuch für Soziologiegeschichte 1997/1998*. Two essays stood out in particular: First, Lothar Peter’s contribution on “Why and How Do We Conduct the Study of the History of Sociology” provided the hitherto arguably most comprehensive and systematic methodology of research on the history of sociology (Peter, 2001; 2015, see also Moebius, 2004; 2006; 2017a). Compared to other methodological considerations, Peter’s piece explicitly included an analysis of the history of sociology’s impact on society as an object of research in its own right. Taking Wolf Lepenies’ introduction to the four-volume edition of *Geschichte der Soziologie* (1981; *The History of Sociology*) and Dirk Käsler’s (1984) study of early German sociology as his point of departure, Peter (2001; 2015) outlined a methodological research design geared specifically to history-of-sociology analyses. At the heart of Peter’s methodology is the analytical distinction of three major dimensions of research in the history of sociology: the *cognitive* dimension, the *social* dimension, and the dimension of its *history of impact and discourse*.⁴ The general framework for research on the history of sociology, or likewise the history of ideas, first of all involves contextualizing, by reference to historical reality and social history, the ideas, theories, methods, instruments, institutions, actors, and history of impact to be analyzed. In other words, the object of research must first be considered in the broader context of the societal (economic, social, political, and cultural) processes at the time of its emergence. This framing is to account for the fact that ideas do not surface in a historical and social void but are historically and socially situated or, rather, because of their “existential determination” (*Seinsverbundenheit*; Mannheim) are only possible at a specific point in time. Accordingly, a study on the history of sociology or of ideas would have to take contemporary society into consideration as an essential point of reference for the concrete relevance of sociological ideas. (Schimank, SOCIETY, this volume)

⁴ In the following I refer to Peter (2001; 2015).

The *cognitive dimension*, as the first level of analysis, therefore consists according to Peter in exposing the historical contexts of science and of ideas (i.e., contemporary paradigms, theories, methods, and discourses) that embed the development of and provide the backdrop to what constitutes sociological thinking. Investigation of the cognitive dimension is followed by examining the *social dimension*. In the social dimension, Peter distinguishes between the analysis of actors and the analysis of institutional processes. What such an analysis should demonstrate is how actors' biographical conditions affect intellectual content, without drawing a deterministic connection from a biography to any specific content. Methodically, we must therefore distinguish between the study of actor biographies and the study of their works, for analytically the actors' biographical moments are, according to Peter, not of interest for their own sake but in terms of their role in promoting the production of intellectual insights. This can then be followed up by analyses of milieus, networks, generations, and habitus. (Huinink/Hollstein, *LIFE COURSE*, this volume) The analyses of institutionalization can involve several levels: group formation, constellations, schools of thought, specialist journals, or professional organizations. Lastly, analyses at the level of the *history of impact and discourse* inquire how sociological knowledge enters into and is used in social discourse. Which position do theories, methods, and ideas occupy in sociological discourse, and what role do techniques and relations of power play? A discourse-historical analysis is also interested in potential developments in sociological thought that have not been realized or have been suppressed. (Hollstein/Kumkar, *QUALITATIVE METHODS*, this volume) Another dimension of Peter's methodology that is often neglected in the study of the history of sociology and closely tied to the history of discourse is sociology's history of impact, particularly its (intended or mostly contingent, non-anticipatable) impact on the future course of the discipline, neighboring disciplines, and society. Investigating the impact and imprint of sociology on discourse in society would merit a study of its own.

Even if Peter's methodology has only rarely been applied so far (cf. Moebius, 2006), it arguably sensitizes us toward dimensions of sociological research that we must definitely take into account and provides valuable orientation to historians of sociology. In addition, it offers a suitable point of departure for further discussions with other disciplines that employ historiographic methods as well as for refining and enriching it by drawing on methodological concepts from these other disciplines, the concept of intellectual history, for instance (cf. Moebius, 2017a). In any case, Peter's methodology, in my view, is unique within international discourse on the history of sociology in terms of its systematics and comprehensiveness.

A second major contribution in the *Jahrbuch für Soziologieggeschichte 1997/1998* toward a methodology of the history of sociology is by Martin Endreß (2001), who draws on the sociology of knowledge. Just as sociology in general reconstructs processes of attributing meaning, Endreß argues, the study of the history of sociology, too, must be conceived as a type of reflection informed by the sociology of knowledge. It is, however, Endreß' response to the question of "Why a history of sociology?" that makes reading this article particularly worthwhile. Endreß emphasizes the historicity

of the object of sociology itself: society with its social practices and orders. Since sociology starts from the tenet that its object is historically constituted, historical self-reflection is an indispensable part of doing sociological research (cf. Endreß, 2001: 65f.): “Sociology has a genuinely historical object inasmuch as it always involves the *reconstruction* of already completed processes of attributing and constituting meaning. [...] To the extent that the attribution of meaning is always preconstituted by past attributions and conceptions of meaning, but can never as a matter of principle be identical with the latter because of the temporal difference between construction and reconstruction, sociology’s point of reference is invariably the difference between attributions of meaning—the conception of meaning *ex ante* and the inquiry into it *ex post*” (Endreß, 2001: 65). Addressing this difference in a reflexive manner is, in Endreß’ reasoning, what defines sociology’s “disciplinary profile.” “Because of its constitutive reference to the past, sociology is structurally geared toward self-thematization [...]” (Endreß, 2001: 65). Apart from the self-reflexive and critical potential of research in the history of sociology, Endreß further stresses that the processual nature of society precludes that we could identify *a priori* the direction in which the “fluid” social is evolving and that we could thus *per definition* typify, without further ado, previous perspectives of the object as obsolete (Endreß, 2001: 66). In so doing, Endreß provides convincing reasons for a history of sociology that extend far beyond the once postulated need to develop the identity of the discipline (c.f. Lepenies, 1981).

The debate over ways and objectives, triggered in the early 2000s, experienced a revival more than a decade later as revised versions of the articles mentioned above were published anew in the context of international contributions on the ways and objectives of the history of sociology (cf. Dayé and Moebius, 2015).

3 Institutionalization

As Peter emphasized, institutionalization processes are a key field of analysis for a historiography of sociology. Processes of institutionalization include, for instance, the foundation of journals, professional organizations, or research institutes as well as the formation of schools of thought and intellectual circles. Only slowly has the history of sociology in the German-speaking world begun to study scholarly journals (cf. Moebius and Ploder, 2018: 919ff.; Moebius, 2017b). The same is true internationally, where—with the exception of the analyses of the Durkheimians’ *L’Année sociologique*—there is also little to be found. Yet the analysis of journals is a relevant endeavor, especially in regard to their gate-keeper and canonization function. Analyses of professional organizations are also rare; so far, this issue has been addressed only in isolated contributions (cf. Moebius and Ploder, 2018: 761ff.). Again the situation is similar internationally. Here one of the few exceptions is Jennifer Platt’s analyses of the British Sociological Association (2003) and the International Sociological Association (1998). As for Germany, there has been a DFG-funded research project ongoing since 2012, under the direction of Hans-Georg Soeffner, on the history

of the German Sociological Association, so that we can hope for a monography on the topic in the near future.

There is also much catching-up to do with respect to analyses of research institutions (cf. Moebius and Ploder, 2018: 995ff.). One of the most intensely studied institutes is the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt, which is typically covered in analyses of the “Frankfurt School” (Wiggershaus, 2001; Albrecht et al., 1999; Ziege, 2009). A particularly well done, source-based study is Ariane Leendertz’s (2010) book on the history of the founding of the Max Planck Institute (MPI) for the Study of Societies in Cologne. She reconstructed the founding of the Cologne institute, which directly emerged from the Starnberg MPI for the Study of the Scientific-Technical World, directed by Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker and Jürgen Habermas, which was closed in 1981.

As for sociology’s institutionalization in terms of the formation of schools of thought, the internationally most prominent ones are arguably the Durkheim School, the Chicago School, and the Frankfurt School. Less well known than the Frankfurt School but just as pivotal for the institutionalization of the social sciences in West Germany after 1945 were the circle around Helmut Schelsky, the Cologne School around the former ISA president René König (cf. Moebius, 2015), as well as the Marburg School around Wolfgang Abendroth, Werner Hofmann, and Heinz Maus (cf. Peter, 2014). Only slowly are these schools, which were crucial for the course of the social sciences in Germany after 1945, beginning to draw attention (Moebius, 2018b) and being studied together with other sociological schools of thought that have formed in the Federal Republic, such as Philosophical Anthropology (Fischer, 2006), Explanatory Sociology (Maurer, 2017), the Constance School around Thomas Luckmann, sociology in Munich around Ulrich Beck, sociological gender research, or post-structural schools of thought (Fischer and Moebius, 2018).

4 Classics

Internationally, a traditional field of the history of sociology is the history of its classics. Particularly instructive are recent books from the USA: *Becoming Mead: The Social Process of Academic Knowledge* by Daniel Huebner (2014) or *The Frankfurt School in Exile* by Thomas Wheatland (2009). Thanks to intensive archival work, they provide new insights on the work and life of their protagonists. This applies as well to Wolf Lepenies’ (2010) portrayal of Auguste Comte, a good read that centers on Comte’s visual media strategies for spreading his positivist religion.

Both in France and the USA, we have been witnessing a lively study of Émile Durkheim and the Durkheim School for a few decades now. Special mention needs to be made of the following volumes published since 2000: the Durkheim biography by Marcel Fournier (2007), Edward Tyriakian’s (2009) Durkheim studies, and Jean-Francois Bert’s studies on Marcel Mauss (2012a; 2012b). In German-speaking countries, the Durkheim School long received little attention. This has changed since 2000

as the Durkheimians' political studies and studies of the theory of gift exchange began to attract increasing interest (cf. Moebius and Nungesser, 2014). As the attention devoted to the Durkheimians' collective knowledge production (cf. Moebius, 2006; 2012) has grown, Durkheim himself, in addition to Mauss, Robert Hertz, and Maurice Halbwachs, has once again moved to the center of attention. On the occasion of a conference in Berlin, Tanja Bogusz and Heike Delitz edited a collection of contributions from international Durkheim experts in 2013. Stéphane Baciocchi and Jean-Luis Fabiani (2013: 433–471) landed a coup by presenting notes, which they had discovered, taken by students attending Durkheim's lectures on pragmatism. These notes confirm Hans Joas' (1987) thesis that these lectures were primarily strategic ones in the academic field. Another interesting contribution in the context of the history of sociology is an article published by Lothar Peter in 2013. In his introduction to the German edition of Durkheim's *Sociology and Philosophy* (*Soziologie und Philosophie*, 1967), Adorno once suggested Durkheim's proximity to fascist ideologies. Peter examines Adorno's "tribunal" (Peter, 2013: 91) in detail and comes to the conclusion that it represents a "discourse-strategic discussion" of what the Frankfurt School conceived of as positivism. Peter sees the reason for Adorno's misreading of and polemic against Durkheim in the sociological controversy with the Durkheim expert René König in the 1960s in the context of what was called the positivism dispute (cf. Moebius, 2015: 72; Moebius, 2018a), which first and foremost revolved around the issue of whether science should be geared toward a critique of society.

As far as the sociological classics are concerned, there are a number of scholars that deserve mentioning for their efforts and contributions. Special mention needs to be made of Dirk Kaesler for his merits in this respect. Beginning in 1976, he edited the multiple-volume series *Klassiker der Soziologie* (*The Classics of Sociology*), published by Beck. Moreover, he deserves particular credit for his many publications on Max Weber. Kaesler's engagement with the history of sociology reached its peak right on time for Max Weber's 150th birthday: in 2014, the internationally reputed Weber expert published a 1,000-page Weber biography, which has since become the standard Weber reference, providing a plethora of informative details on Weber's life and work (cf. Kaesler, 2014). For any scholar seriously interested in Weber, there is no way past this comprehensive biography. The same holds true for Jürgen Kaube's (2014) brilliantly written Weber biography, which was published the same year and provides an entertaining account of Weber's life and work. Deserving of particular mention is Kaube's matter-of-fact treatment of Weber's psychic breakdown since he avoids becoming caught up in psycho-historical speculation and statements about Weber's sex life (cf. Radkau, 2005).

Aside from Weber, Karl Marx in particular is among the classics about whom a number of biographies have been written internationally over the past few years (Sperber, 2013; Stedman Jones, 2016). In Germany, too, the number of biographies and introductions increased in time for the Marx anniversary in 2018. Michael Quante and David P. Schweikhard (2016) edited a well-structured compendium, which could have offered a more comprehensive account of Marx's reception in sociology in particular.

A stylistically brilliant biography is Jürgen Neffe's *Marx. Der Unvollendete* (2017; *Marx. The Unfinished One*). The most detailed one is Michael Heinrich's *Karl Marx und die Geburt der modernen Gesellschaft* (2018; *Karl Marx and the Birth of Modern Society*). Heinrich's book is the first volume of a larger study on Marx's life and work, which works out with great care and precision the social and political conditions as well as the history of ideas that provide the context to his time. In addition to biographies, a host of new introductions have been published as well (cf. Henning, 2017; Fetscher, 2018; Nippel, 2018). However, most of them adopt a political-ideological view of Marx at the expense of a more detailed discussion of his political economy.

There is only one classic thinker that no one has yet dared to approach by means of a biography: Georg Simmel. This is so even though Simmel's multidisciplinary and multifarious work would lend itself particularly well to a biography informed by a sociology of knowledge.

In recent years, we can discern a trend towards publishing biographies of "modern" classics. This refers to those scholars who shaped the course of German sociology after World War II, such as Theodor W. Adorno (Müller-Doohm, 2003; Claussen, 2003; Jäger, 2003), Jürgen Habermas (Müller-Doohm, 2014), Helmuth Plessner (Dietze, 2006), and Ralf Dahrendorf (Meifort, 2017). Although each of these biographies provides some new facets to our understanding of the work and life of these sociologists, they mostly adhere to a rather traditional form of presenting their genre. By contrast, it would be interesting to apply the aforementioned methodologies to biographies as well, for instance, by thinking along the lines of a Bourdieuan sociology of the field or turning to habitus or constellation analyses.

Despite the large number of biographies that have been published in recent years, we still lack life histories of some of the German sociologists who played a major role in establishing sociology in post-war Germany, such as Helmut Schelsky or René König. In the case of König (1984), there is at least an autobiography, and his works have been published in twenty volumes, each with an informative afterword by the editors. These volumes have recalibrated our traditional image of König. Whereas he had long been seen as a protagonist of quantitative social research, this collection shows his open-minded and cosmopolitan understanding of sociology, abundance of interdisciplinary knowledge, comprehensive literacy, and emancipatory interest (cf. König, 1998). The number of publications on the publicly more visible Schelsky has been growing over the past five years (Gallus, 2013; Wöhrle, 2015). Particularly worth mentioning is the work of Gerhard Schäfer, who is internationally considered to be *the* expert on Schelsky. Thanks to his comprehensive research, he has published numerous articles that shed some new light on Schelsky's life and work. Schäfer analyzes Schelsky from the perspective of a sociology of the intellectual as the "star sociologist" of the 1950s (Schäfer, 2015) and traces, in a very knowledgeable and source-based manner, the development of Schelsky's thought and his engagement during the era of National Socialism (Schäfer, 2017). Schäfer's planned comprehensive history of Schelsky's oeuvre is something to look forward to.

Our preoccupation with older or modern classics is also being advanced by the series *Klassiker der Wissenssoziologie* (*Classics of the Sociology of Knowledge*) edited by Bernt Schnettler and published by UVK Verlag. This series includes books on Harold Garfinkel, Erving Goffman, Marcel Mauss, Maurice Halbwachs, Arnold Gehlen, and Robert E. Park as well as on Michel Foucault, who has become ever more prominent in sociology in the wake of the poststructural turn in German-language sociology since around 2000 (Stäehli, 2000; Moebius, 2003; Moebius and Wetzell, 2005; Moebius and Reckwitz, 2008).

5 National Historiography

As we can see, attention in the history of sociology is being increasingly directed toward individual facets of German-language sociology. An especially instructive book in this context is the collection of essays by M. Rainer Lepsius (2017), edited by his son Oliver Lepsius, which in itself comes close to representing a monographic history of sociology in Germany (Lepsius, 2017). Under the title *Soziologie und Soziologien* (*Sociology and Sociologies*), it compiles Lepsius' early contributions on the institutionalization of sociology in Germany. All of these essays are extremely knowledgeable and range from sociology in the interwar period to the 1990s. Lepsius writes brilliantly, argues clearly, and is *the* connoisseur of sociology in Germany. He was directly involved in establishing sociology in East Germany after 1990. The chapter on sociology in the GDR and the establishment of sociology in the new federal states provides an abundance of new information accordingly.

But what about a monography on the history of sociology in Germany that gives a comprehensive account spanning all these partial aspects? Is there a study comparable to Johan Heilbrun's *French Sociology* (2015) or Albert H. Halsey's *A History of Sociology in Britain* (2004)? Monographies on sociology in individual countries are currently being published internationally in the series *Sociology Transformed*, edited by John Holmwood and Stephen Turner, for instance, on sociology in Austria, Denmark, Australia, and the USA. In 2020, the present author is planning to publish a book on sociology in Germany in this series. Apart from Peter Wagner's comparative study between countries, the only larger monographies on sociology in Germany that I am aware of are by Uta Gerhardt (2009) and the historian Paul Nolte (2000). Gerhardt has written *Soziologie im zwanzigsten Jahrhundert* (*Sociology in the 20th Century*) from a decidedly "Weberian-Parsonian angle" (Gerhardt, 2009: 20), which thus unfortunately neglects much other sociology. Especially the claim that the Weimar era witnessed few new developments in sociology (21) must be refuted in light of the work of Karl Mannheim, Max Scheler, Norbert Elias, Theodor Geiger, and others. The fact that Gerhardt largely ignores the 1970s and '80s because she sees them as being a "side-show to the 1960s" (21) seems to be untenable in view of the grand theories of the 1980s: Jürgen Habermas' *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns* (1981; *Theory of Communicative Action*, 1984 and 1987), Niklas Luhmann's *Soziale Systeme* (1984; *Social*

Systems, 1995), or Ulrich Beck's *Risikogesellschaft* (1986; *Risk Society*, 1992). Her normative Weber-Parsons lens restricts her critical view of the subject matter. Unlike the latter, Paul Nolte's excellent study *Die Ordnung der Gesellschaft* (2000; *The Order of Society*) succeeds in describing and illuminating in great detail and very knowledgeably the professional self-reflection and self-description of the German social sciences in all their facets from the German Empire until 1990 along contemporary categories of analyses such as mass, community, leveling, technology, and others. Nolte has an intimate knowledge of the affiliations and controversies among the protagonists, and his study is interesting methodologically as well: he is interested in the history of sociology as a "history of social conceptions of order" that must also inquire into the role of sociology in the "*Description and Self-Definition of West-German Society*" (thus the subtitle of Nolte's book).

Monika Boll's *Nachtprogramm* (2004; *Nightly Program*) offers another innovative perspective on the national historiography of sociology by inquiring into the media impact of sociological knowledge on and the transfer of this knowledge to society via radio programs. Her study throws new light on German sociology and the process of intellectual self-understanding in West Germany by analyzing the many facets of the efforts to establish a public sociology and the debates among the sociological protagonists of the 1950s and 1960s—namely, Adorno, Gehlen, Horkheimer, König, Plessner, and Schelsky—in the cultural programs on the radio.

6 Sociology During National Socialism

In the same way that the history of sociology exhibits a curious "war suppression" (cf. Joas and Knöbl, 2008), sociology long neglected the National Socialist dictatorship as well as the role of sociology during the National Socialist era. Since the Sociology Congress in Jena in 2008 at the latest, German sociology has witnessed a revived interest in the history of sociology during National Socialism (cf. v. Dyk and Schauer, 2015). As early as the 1970s, a few sociologists concerned with this issue—among them specifically Carsten Klingemann, Johannes Weyer, Otthein Rammstedt, Rainer M. Lepsius, Karl-Siegbert Rehberg, and Erhard Stölting—conducted a number of source-based studies that have deconstructed the hitherto widespread myth that there had been no sociology during NS rule. In close connection with this research and its authors, a new, ongoing debate erupted, beginning in 2000, which has found expression in individual studies and articles in the bulletin of the German Sociological Association. Particularly noteworthy in this debate is the volume on *Soziologie und Nationalsozialismus* (2014; *Sociology and National Socialism*) edited by Michaela Christ and Maja Suderland: it comprises sociological contributions that analyze society during NS rule as well as work on the role of sociology during and after the NS regime from a history-of-sociology perspective. Special mention needs to be made of the contribution by Henning Borggräfe and Sonja Schnitzler (2014). Their diligent research traces the history and discontinuation of the German Sociological Association (DGS) and refutes the myth that

discontinuing the DGS was a liberal or preemptive act to save German sociology, as Leopold von Wiese, DGS president after 1945, would have liked to have us believe. What the authors show instead is that it was the result of a rivalry and struggle between two camps that sought to curry favor with the National Socialist regime.

7 The History of Transnational Transfers

A hitherto largely neglected field in the study of the history of sociology has been the analysis of “histoires croisées” (Werner and Zimmermann, 2002), that is, transnational interrelations. We find the beginnings of such an analysis in studies of the history of the Frankfurt School (Wiggershaus, 2001), the Collège de Sociologie (Moebius, 2006), or in studies of transfers between German and French sociology (Gephart, 2005). An informative study devoted to such transfers is Christian Fleck’s *A Transatlantic History of the Social Sciences: Robber Barons, the Third Reich and the Invention of Empirical Social Research* (2011). His source-based research examines the role of the Rockefeller Foundation in the ascent of empirical social research not only in the USA but also in Germany and Austria. Fleck’s extensive study also comprises a collective biography of more than 800 German-speaking social scientists, both emigrants and “home-guards” (*Daheimgebliebene* as this group is unfortunately often referred to in trivializing fashion in German), as well as an analysis of the decline of the German-speaking university system and the ascent of its US-American counterpart in the 1930s and 1940s. All in all, Fleck has not only provided a study of the institutional and socio-economic conditions of the ascent of empirical social research that is rich in detail, underpinned by archival sources, and displays interpretive excellence but one that is also highly innovative in terms of its methods of collecting and using quantitative data—as far as the history of sociology is concerned.

8 Final Remarks

Since 2000, much has happened in the study of the history of sociology. As numerous activities show (Moebius and Ploder, 2017; 2018), especially young scholars currently exhibit renewed interest in the history of their discipline and its historical self-reflection. To some degree, this stands in contrast to the state of the history of sociology’s institutionalization. Although this history is being taught at many universities and the number of publications is growing, there remains a lack of journals and organizational structures; for instance, a DGS section devoted to the history of sociology is existing only since 2019. Despite all these other efforts, there is additionally the need to intensify contact with the historical sciences. In this vein, it has been lamented that, in its treatment of National Socialism, sociological research has rarely sought contact with historians (cf. Fleck, 2018), who, in contrast to sociologists, can look back on decades of expertise in research on National Socialism. Connecting with the historical

sciences (e.g., intellectual history) also in other areas could be pursued more actively, especially considering that sociology and the history of sociology could benefit the historical sciences as well or both could mutually support one another (cf. Moebius, 2017a). However, we should take special care that the study of the history of sociology does not morph into a matter of *l'art pour l'art*, thus losing touch, when looking back, with what is going on in contemporary society. “Insofar as the study of the history of sociology is able to shed light on the relationships between historical sociological reflection and actual developments in society and identify the aspects of power, interests, violence, and crisis immanent in these relationships, it will strengthen our capacity for critical sociological analysis of modern society in the present” (Peter, 2015: 142).

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