Foreword

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In the French-speaking world, Jean-Michel Chapoulie's analysis of the Chicago sociological tradition has been essential reading since it first appeared in 1998. The fascination among French and other European social scientists for the "Chicago School" has a history that begins with Maurice Halbwachs in the thirties and continues to the present day. Until publication of this welcome translation, however, few English readers had the opportunity to understand how that fascination emerges from the work of the Chicago sociologists themselves.

In the 1980s, Chapoulie was one of a few French sociologists who traveled to Chicago and elsewhere in North America. They wanted to see for themselves what the dominant departments of sociology might have to offer in their efforts to develop the discipline in France. The insistence on empirical research in replicable urban situations, the essential core of the Chicago sociological tradition, promised to liberate French sociology from the constraints of philosophy and armchair speculation. They met with Howard Becker, Everett Hughes, Morris Janowitz, Lyn Lofland, Sherri Cavan, Herb Gans, Erving Goffman, Anselm Strauss, and other living bearers of the Chicago tradition, including myself. In Chicago, Chapoulie formed an enduring friendship with Howie Becker that he gratefully acknowledges, along with his thanks to Arlene Kaplan Daniels, who mentored him during his stay in Chicago. The messages and examples Chapoulie and others brought back from Chicago have had lasting positive effects on French empirical sociology, and the pragmatic underpinnings of the Chicago tradition are a lively subject in contemporary French social scientific thought.

Chapoulie's immensely scholarly reading of the Chicago sociologists between 1920 and 1960 should take its place with seminal works on the Chicago tradition, notably by Martin Bulmer, Mary Jo Deegan, and Andrew Abbott. Perhaps Chapoulie's most important contribution is his critical review of many of the classics of the Chicago urban literature and particularly his questioning of the term "Chicago School," which he would rather classify as a tradition. "It is . . . not a single, clearly identifiable 'Chicago School' " that emerges from this inquiry, he writes, "but works that exist within networks of exchanges and borrowings between researchers." These networks and borrowings are carefully traced out in chapters on the original contribution of W. I. Thomas, on the race relations research sponsored by Park, by in-depth commentaries on the work of the pioneering African American sociologists, especially Charles Johnson and E. Franklin Frazier, and on the less central but enlightening research and careers of Donald Roy and Nels Anderson. Chapoulie's keen understanding of Chicago's place in American sociology and social thought clearly guide the substantive choices that structure the book.

Chapoulie traces the guiding idea of the city as a social laboratory, usually attributed to Robert Park, to an article written by Albion Small in 1896. He shows that the idea and practice of "going into the city" becomes a central tenet of the methodological approach by 1904, later much reinforced by Park and Burgess, and remained so through the second period of field research into the sixties. In consequence, through much of the twentieth century, Chicago was, as Richard Wright said, "the known city," where social scientific research was consumed by a wider public, including politicians and policy makers. Their work influenced writers outside academia like Jane Addams, Nelson Algren, Horace Cayton, James T. Farrell, Saul Bellow, Studs Terkel, Lorraine Hansberry, Carolyn Rogers, and of course Wright himself. For them the "school" in the term Chicago School was that incomparable social lab, the city itself.

Chicago was, as Gerald Suttles has termed it, the "shock city" of the early twentieth century. No city struck the imagination of artists and intellectuals around the world as did 1920s Chicago. To offer a personal example, on a visit in 2004 to Moscow with Chicago trade unionist Edward Sadlowski, we were taken to the original flat of Sergei Eisenstein, the foremost pioneer of Russian (and Soviet) cinema. The apartment was not open to the public and was preserved as it was at the time of Eisenstein's death in 1948. On his bookshelves we found almost a complete set of the first edition Chicago sociological classics. I leafed through his copy of Thrasher's *The Gang* and found copious notes that Eisenstein had made in the margins.

No doubt, as Chapoulie recognizes, his treatment of research on race relations under Park's leadership will be the most controversial aspect of this volume, as it appears for the first time to an American audience. Since the publication of Aldon Morris's *The Scholar Denied: W. E. B Du Bois and the Birth of Modern Sociology* (2015), Robert Park's stature as a founding leader of American sociology is challenged for his failure to appreciate and incorporate Du Bois's research on the African American experience in the Chicago curriculum. This is part of a broader critique of the failure of American sociology to put research by black scholars, like Du Bois and Oliver Cox, in the foreground of their writing about what they primarily thought of as "the Negro Problem."

As a sociology graduate student at the University of Chicago in the sixties, it was evident to me that on issues of race especially, the Chicago researchers of the classic period had failed to admit the importance of political mobilization, or of cultural identity politics, that gave rise to the civil rights movement, the demand for "Black Power," the slogan "Black is Beautiful," and much more of what was creating profound social change in Chicago and the nation. In the Chicago Department of Sociology, some of the old biases remained as obstacles. When we discussed Du Bois, if we ever did, it was often in connection with his early research, which was often categorized as belonging to a valuable, but prescientific, "social survey" tradition. Du Bois's *Black Reconstruction* was never required reading; perhaps, for our mentors, it was too dependent on a Marxian analytical framework. Thus students lost the opportunity to understand in detail the systematic terror and heroic black struggles of the post-civil war period. And we missed the opportunity to get to know Du Bois as a true sociological innovator and founder of our field. Elijah Anderson, (also a Chicagoan of the sixties), has succinctly described in his introduction to *The Philadelphia Negro* the sociological role model we missed as graduate students while we were learning in what, he would agree, was a sociological "white space." Anderson writes that Du Bois

walked the streets of the old Seventh Ward—and one can just imagine this stiff and proper Victorian gentleman in his suit and starched shirt moving through the hurly-burly of the noisy, congested neighborhood—and talked to people, listened to people, mapped the area, made ethnographic observations, and collected descriptive statistics.

Written earlier than the Morris critique, Chapoulie does not directly address the issue of Du Bois's effective exclusion as a founder of American sociology.

But his readers will understand the dispositions that lead to his marginalization by the Chicago sociologists under Park's leadership. He shows that Park and most of his generation of white sociologists were committed to life in the slow lane of racial equality. Many were never persuaded that black americans could fully measure up. There were 80 lynchings of black men in 1920, but most sociologists did not want to look squarely in the eye of American racism and racial terror, or to study the "White Question."

Yet despite their failures, Chapoulie offers ample evidence for why the questions they posed and the methods the Chicago sociologists developed, continue to inspire empirical research in the United States and throughout the world. Workplace research still draws on Donald Roy's early examples. New approaches to polling and survey research always cite Blumer's original critique. Wirth's writing on the ghetto and Saint Claire Drake and Horace Cayton's monumental *Black Metropolis* continue to inform new research about segregation. Ecological models of urbanization, the study of deviance, crime, juvenile delinquency, community studies, and, yes, studies of race and ethnicity, will inevitably draw on comparisons to empirical research in the Chicago tradition. It is also true that when younger sociologists from France or other parts of the world come to study in American universities, they will likely be mentored by faculty who practice one or another of the living traditions of Chicago-style research. We have Jean-Michel Chapoulie to thank for ransacking the archives to create so thorough a scholarly analysis of the Chicago tradition's evolution over five decades, and for offering us so many new insights into how and why the work was originally produced.