

**THE JOURNAL OF INTERDISCIPLINARY HISTORY**  
**Vol. VIII: 2 Autumn 1997**

*A Second Chicago School? The Development of a Postwar American Sociology.* Edited by Gary Alan Fine (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1995) 420pp. \$70.00 cloth \$22.50 paper.

**REVIEWED BY GARY T. MARX**

Why is there a question mark in the title of this book when the ensuing text makes it clear that there is no one Chicago school, but several. The book might better have been titled "Some Tenuously Connected, Occasionally Juicy, Revelations and Observations about The Social Processes Involved in the Emergence of Collective Definitions and Memories of A Major Style of Sociological Work Associated with the University of Chicago between 1945 and 1960." But no matter. The book is informative; it has a great deal to say about the recent history of a beguiling and enduring approach to social research. It adds to prior work by Bulmer, Kurtz, and Harvey that cover the earlier, generally perceived more golden years under Park.<sup>1</sup>

Anyone drawn to social research that has come to be called "qualitative research" or "symbolic interaction" (terms not in use at Chicago during this time period) will find something of interest in this adulatory work. Given the diffuseness and recency of the phenomena, it is not always clear what is being commemorated. For me, it is a style inspired first by Park and then Wirth, Blumer, Hughes, Warner, and others, involving (1) research in such natural settings as workplaces, hospitals, schools, and the streets, (2) richness in descriptive details as well as personal accounts and experiences, (3) an interest in process, a view of behavior as fluid, emergent, and interpretive and of actors as interactive and creative, or, at least, wily, (4) an interest in the dynamics of collective and personal definitions and symbolic meanings, (5) a wariness of both undue methodological rigor and abstraction (whether numerical or theoretical) not arrived at inductively, and (6) a concern with social issues and liberal amelioration.<sup>2</sup> These characteristics, in tum, are related to enlightenment optimism about the role of knowledge, pragmatism, and a softly critical perspective that includes a natural suspiciousness of official accounts and an insistence upon including the input of subordinates, but not broad systemic critiques.

The book helps to locate the origins and components of what is popularly known as "Chicago Style Research" in sociology, even if that term is empirically misleading, given the importance of demographic and survey research at Chicago during the time in question.

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Bulmer, *The Chicago School of Sociology* (Chicago, 1984); Lee Harvey, *Myths of the Chicago School of Sociology* (London, 1987); Lester Kurtz, *Evaluating Chicago Sociology: A Guide, with an Annotated Bibliography* (Chicago, 1984). See, for example, Robert Park and E. W. Burgess, *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* (Chicago, 1921).

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Louis Wirth, *The Ghetto* (Chicago, 1928); Herbert Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method* (Englewood Cliffs, 1969); Everett Hughes, *The Sociological Eye: Selected Papers* (New York, 1971); Lloyd Warner et al., *Social Class in America* (Chicago, 1945).

Fine, the editor, does not tell us the criteria for choosing authors or topics. One contributor mentions a symposium at which these issues appear to have been discussed. The papers vary considerably in style, method, and argument. We get pieces of puzzles but no agreement as to what the puzzles are or how they can be solved.

Jennifer Platt bases her convincing argument that there were several Chicago schools on quantitative data about the methods that students used. Another group of articles explores the substantive content and development of the major fields studied: Paul Colomy and J. David Brown consider the sociology of work and interactionist tradition; R. Fred Wacker race and ethnicity; John F. Galliher deviance; and David A. Snow and Phillip W. Davis collective behavior.

Through an analysis of metaphors, Fine and Lori J. Ducharme discuss the cultural backdrop of the 1950s that informed representative work about the medical profession. Andrew Abbott and Emanuel Gaziano, drawing on an extensive documentary record (and offering an embarrassment of riches for academic cocktail party stories), note a divided faculty and an administration that was disapproving of the department. In true Chicago tradition, they wonderfully illustrate how the label "Chicago School" was an emergent, socially constructed and internally varied and changing concept with all the clarity and ambiguity of a Rorschach test seen in dim light.

Shulamit Reinhartz traces the diffusion of qualitative field work with the movement of Hughes to the new Brandeis sociology department in 1961, Mary Jo Deegan sees systematic gender bias and sexism as characteristics of the department, although not many of the women present were aware of it at the time. Appendices list the Ph.D. degrees awarded and faculty members between 1946 and 1965.

These essays offer a useful history of ideas and careers, but the diffusion of Chicago ideas throughout the United States and the incorporation of ideas from elsewhere—such as survey research, statistical methods, and structure-functional theory into Chicago makes tracing intellectual impacts and lineages, particularly in so recent and short a time period, a messy business indeed. In general, the book is better served by a focus on ideas than on what some observers may see as the self-serving, latent imperialism of a focus on a geographical place. Yet, anyone who has been inspired by the work of Goffman, Becker, Riesman, and Gans, among so many others, knows that something worthwhile was occurring during those years.

The book mirrors its subject in being a theoretical, descriptive, nonsystematic, and enthusiastic, and it reaches no grand conclusions. Nor are the articles generally located within a framework of ideas from the sociology of science and knowledge or from organizations or professions that would help order the disparate observations. Yet, it is an empirically rich and valuable source of data for those who would construct more theoretical and analytic accounts and for those in this tradition seeking a better understanding of the antecedents of their own intellectual identities.

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