



Shedding light on a dark chapter of the discipline: elements on the development of German sociology in the years 1933-45

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Shedding light on a dark chapter of the discipline: elements on the development of German sociology in the years 1933-45

In a discussion at one of the sessions of the Research Committee 08 “History of Sociology” at the ISA World Congress of Sociology at Durban, 2006, I briefly mentioned some details of the history of German sociology under national-socialism. Several of the participants came to see me afterwards and were asking for more information on that period of the history of sociology in my home country and it appeared to me that it might be of general interest for the research committee to write a paper on that topic. If there is little literature within German-language sociology on the history of the discipline between 1933 and 45, it appears that there is still much less available for an international audience. This paper aims to provide a brief overview on the topic, based on the German literature available in the field. Beyond the descriptive level, this paper raises questions around the definition and self-definition of the discipline in different historical periods.

In order to understand the developments between 1933 and 1945, and to evaluate the significance of this historical period for the discipline in Germany, it is vital to get an impression of the state of affairs before 1933, i.e. during the Weimar Republic (1918-1933). Lepsius states that a complete and systematic presentation of German sociology from 1918 until 1945 is a difficult task, not only because of the specific historical, political and cultural context, but also because of the expansion and diversification of sociological orientations, as well as the explosive combination of sociological theories and political ideologies. This paper is thus divided into three parts: German sociology of the Weimar period; under national-socialism; and in exile.

German sociology under the Weimar Republic

The years from the end of the 19th century until the end of the first world war can be considered as the founding phase of German sociology¹, when the discipline produced its major foundational texts (Max Weber [1864-1920], Georg Simmel [1858-1918], distinguishing themselves from the French programme as proposed by Emile Durkheim [1858-1917]). During the Weimar Republic, German sociology got increasingly diversified and there was a multiplicity of perspectives and approaches as never before and that, I would claim, has never been achieved again since then. At the same time, this led to a very heterogeneous state of the discipline lacking unicity and common agreement on its core features.

Max Weber, who might have had the potential to develop a coherent approach and sociological

¹ The developments in the neighbouring disciplines like history, economy, “state science” (“Staatswissenschaft”) and philosophy can not be dealt with in detail here.

school, had passed away in 1920, and historicist of sociology Lepsius regrets that Weber's his programme of methodological individualism and comparative analysis of social structures and cultural systems had no major influence on the sociology of the 1920s. He sees his early death as one source of weakness against the later upcoming currents like holism, historicism, and social Darwinism. The same could be said of Simmel's sociology, since Simmel passed away in 1918 and had little influence throughout the 1920s. The personalities of the early generation of sociologists who remained active and influential, were Ferdinand Tönnies (1855-1936), Werner Sombart (1863-1941) und Alfred Weber (1868-1958). However, none of them proposed a coherent programme for the theoretical and methodological development of the discipline.

Nevertheless, the number of scholars who formed part of the sociological community was growing continuously, resulting in the heterogeneity and multiplicity that characterised the 1920s, with its fragmentation into many circles and milieus. Furthermore, it should be noted that before 1933, the German-language area formed a rather well integrated scholarly community, beyond Germany, including Austria or the former Habsburg Empire, and Switzerland. Interestingly, the Jewish intellectual community formed an important part in it, especially in the social sciences².

Before this area of cross-national scholarly communication was destroyed with the ascendance to power of the national-socialists, and later on with the divisions of the Cold War, Berlin and Vienna can be seen as local centres where different approaches were represented. At Vienna, an important centre for the sociology of the 1920s, several perspectives were represented. The ideas of Gustav Ratzenhofer (1842-1904) and Ludwig Gumplowicz (1838-1909) were reanimated and hotly debated with regard to the new political context. Othmar Spann (1878-1950) was appointed at Vienna with the support of bourgeois and catholic political parties, in order to counter balance leftist currents with his neoromanticist ideas. The very heterogeneous Marxist tradition was getting more and more differentiated and attained access to German and Austrian universities for the first time after the first world war. However, due to the developments of the Russian Revolution and the assassination of Rosa Luxemburg (1871-1915) and Karl Liebknecht (1871-1919), Marxism ran short of optimism. The discovery of the early writings of Marx and their publication through the Frankfurt School resulted in a short revival. But the intellectuals participating in these efforts were among the first to be persecuted at the beginning of the 1930s. Carl Grünberg (1861-1944), who left Vienna for a position at Frankfurt, was the first to establish relations between Austro-Marxism and the Frankfurt School.

Another interesting personality related to Austro-Marxism was Otto Neurath (1881-1945), who acted as a bridgehead towards the Vienna Circle. The latter, in 1929, published its manifesto "*The Scientific Conception of the World – The Vienna Circle*", that resumed their idea of a unified science on the basis of logical empiricism. Another representative of neopositivism was Karl R. Popper (1902-1994). Finally, Vienna was the home of emerging empirical social research around young P. F. Lazarsfeld (1901-1976), Marie Jahoda (1907-2001) and their "Marienthal" study group. Most of those sociologists from Vienna went into exile after 1934 and continued their scholarly activities abroad, mainly in New York.

Frankfurt hosted theoreticians like Franz Oppenheimer (1864-1943) and Carl Grünberg as well as the Institute for Social Research. Frankfurt University gained in importance with the nominations of Karl Mannheim (1893-1947) and Max Horkheimer (1895-1973). Cologne was the home of

² Cf. König (1971a).

Leopold von Wiese (1876-1969), who proved to be instrumental in institutionalizing the discipline, as well as of Max Scheler (1874-1928), Helmuth Plessner (1892-1985) and Paul Honigsheim (1885-1963) who represented diverging perspectives. Even the school of Hans Freyer (1887-1969) at Leipzig could not be seen as a veritable “school” dominated by one approach.

At Heidelberg, Alfred Weber (1868-1958) and Emil Lederer (1882-1939) were trying to mark a departure from Max Weber, and the younger generation, – Edgar Salin (1892-1974), Arnold Bergstraesser (1896-1964) und Karl Mannheim (1893-1947) – had little in common as well. Finally, there were Tönnies at Kiel, Andreas Walther in Göttingen and later in Hamburg, Johann Plenge (1874-1963) in Münster, Max Graf zu Solms (1893-1968) in Marburg.

In order to describe the importance of the political right within the social sciences, René König (1906-1992) starts by stating that national-socialism did not unexpectedly emerge out of a vacuum in 1933. Adolf Hitler (1898-1945) had already become leader of the NSDAP in 1921, two attempts to overthrow the state remained without success in 1920 and 1923. The ideological support of national-socialism started to form long before 1933, and the bourgeois and conservative social sciences made their contributions to it. The elites of these milieus were characterised by their “anti-industrial”, “anti-capitalist”, “anti-socialist” and “anti-urban” attitude, where “anti-capitalism” was mainly oriented towards “Jewish” financial capital. They combined their obsolete and insufficient theoretical approaches with what they took for Marx’s (1818-1883) social philosophy, in order to overcome the problems of their time intellectually. König expresses his analysis in the following way: “The adoption of Marxism by bourgeois social thinking is the expression of the shock experienced by the German bourgeois world when, under the impression of the second drive of development of the modern industrial system from the beginning of the 20th century, then under the impression of the war and revolutionary post-war chaos and inflation, fell out of their comfort zone and saw themselves confronted with the completed realities of a new world, lacking the adequate means to dominate it intellectually, eventually with the only exception of Max Weber, who had died, however, in 1920.” König concludes his remark by stating that “the polemic had become universal and total“. He illustrates this at the example of Freyer’s “Sociology as a science of reality” (1930), in which the author claims that truth is a question of political will/voluntarism: “Real will founds real knowledge”.

The right-wing thinkers took over the critique of Marx, which they understood as being compatible with their own critique, and out of this mixture developed the idea of a “revolution from the right”. This revolution was thought to be aimed simultaneously against socialism and liberal bourgeoisie. It contained at its core anti-Semitic thoughts, formulated in increasingly aggressive terms. The “revolution from the right” was meant to put an end to the social problems of the time: urbanisation, pauperism, capitalism, inflation, the supposed “domination of Jews in the economy”, and so on – and to get back to the life in “communities”, giving its importance back to “the people” (“Volk”). The “Volk” was conceived of as the subject of this revolution. Even the “re-agrarianisation” of Germany was intended. It will become obvious afterwards what significance these ideas would gain after 1933.

It is noteworthy for the development of the discipline, that the universities founded after the war established the first chairs in sociology. The German Sociological Association (“Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie”, DGS) began to struggle for the possibility to obtain degrees in sociology from the middle of the 1920s. The discussion became more concrete at the beginning

of the 1930s and crystallised in Karl Mannheim's speech at the conference of German university professors in sociology in February 1932. His speech reflected the problems of this generation of sociologists. Mannheim distanced himself from ideological and historicist currents, which he deemed particularly dangerous in contemporary Germany, and he respected the self-definition as an empirical discipline. He also strengthened the view that the heterogeneity within sociology was not only a source of chaos and disorder, as many of his colleagues used to complain, but that it hosted an important richness and variety for the sociological endeavour. Finally, he distinguished three sociological orientations: the political-juridical one, the socio-economic one, and the philosophical one. This shows that the exact definition of the field, of its contents and aims remained unresolved until the end of the Weimar Republic. The consideration and prestige Mannheim had earned through his "Ideology and Utopia" may indicate that this theoretician could have had considerable impact on the development of the discipline, had he been able to continue after 1933.

Despite the decision of the Prussian Parliament in 1929, that in all universities chairs of sociology should be established, the systematic institutionalisation of the discipline could not be completed, first because of the economic depression of 1929, then because of the political situation after 1933. Lepsius also draws attention to non-university fields of activities for sociologists – popular education, trade unions, associations - that seemed to grow in importance after the increase of anti-democratic thought within the universities and was an option mainly for the younger generation of sociologists.

After 1928, he observed a particular vivacity and accelerated development of sociological activities, expressed among other things in the growing numbers of publications. The generation of the 30- to 35-year-olds was getting onto the chairs and struggled for a clearer self-definition of the discipline, strengthening at the same time empirical research on contemporary social structures. Mannheim and Horkheimer, who took over the positions of Grünberg and Oppenheimer at Frankfurt, Theodor Geiger (1891-1952), who had arrived at Braunschweig in 1928, Alfred Salomon (1891-?) and Gottfried Salomon (-Delatour) (1896-1964) formed part of this new generation, who had grown up under the impression of the war and post-war period and who confronted now the older generation of scholars from the times of the German empire. The conjuncture of sociology after 1928 was thus animated by these younger sociologists. They were to be overtaken, in the middle of their intellectual development and production, by the accession to power of the national-socialists a few years later.

German sociology under national-socialism, 1933-1945

The years 1933 to 1945 represent a particularly difficult chapter in the history of the discipline. In the first place, it seems necessary to distinguish two very different strains of development, namely the sociology which remained on the territory during the national-socialist period on the one hand, the sociology in exile on the other hand. Considering exiled sociology as a part of German sociology seems to require less explanation than the fact of naming the orientations developing under national-socialism so.

Many books on the history of sociology remain very unclear on the tendencies of those years³, often declaring the total stand-still of German sociology in 1933. At the same time, this period is the object of a vivid and often polemical discussion under (very few) interested scholars, and the extraction of generally accepted facts remains difficult. This article can not take up the whole of the discussion, but will draw a picture summarising the most important points. I will mainly rely on the seminal book by Otthein Rammstedt⁴, who offers a general presentation of sociology under national-socialism.

In order to indicate the degree of complication, it should be noted that two positions have emerged in the discussion so far. Rammstedt characterises them in the following way: First, the thesis of the interruption of sociology between 1933 and 1945. According to this thesis, the national-socialists, hostile towards the “liberalistic”, “Marxist” and “Jewish” had put an end to it in 1933, and sociology only re-emerged after 1945⁵. Secondly, the thesis of the incompatibility of sociology with any sort of fascist, “engaged” scholarly activity, often combined with the first thesis. Paulsen⁶ adds a third thesis, i.e. the lack of influence and the absence of consequences of the sociology practised under national-socialism for the developments after 1945. This thesis represents a certain contradiction to the first two and was particularly influential in the early post-war discussions.

The difficulties in apprehending the history of the discipline between 1933 and 1945 leads to its isolation, the underestimation of its importance, or even the claim of its non-existence. The considerable lack of information on this period can thus be explained by the fact that many historians of sociology still believe in one of these three theses. National meetings of sociologists in the post-war period largely ignored the topic which has remained under researched until today.

The particular difficulty in dealing with sociology between 1933 and 1945 is thus the question

³ This omission characterises the following publications: Jonas (1976); Klages (1969); Lepenies (1981). Carsten Klingemann (1981) states the difficulty in dealing with the history of the discipline during that period and the fact that representatives of all sociological orientations seem to be convinced that these twelve years have no relevance for sociology (Klingemann 1981: 273).

⁴ Rammstedt, 1933-1945.

⁵ Cf. Rammstedt (1986); Klingemann (1981). On the history of the DGS after 1933 and after 1945, see the discussion between König and Schelsky in: Wittebur (1991); König (1971b); see also: Adorno (1972). It should be noted, that a large part of German sociologists emigrated after 1933, that several others could not continue their profession after that date, and most of the sociological journals ceased to be published- This is true, among others, for „Kölner Vierteljahreshefte für Sozialwissenschaften/Kölner Vierteljahreshefte für Soziologie“ (1921-1934) and „(Sociologicus) Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Soziologie“ (1934); the journal „Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung“ moved to Paris in 1933.

⁶ Paulsen (1988).

whether we can talk at all about sociology regarding the activities during this period. Certainly, its discourses, concepts and theories are incompatible with what is today regarded as sociology. At the lexical level, concepts referring to the realities of the „Reich“ were used, which are not accepted any more today, such as “Volk” in the sense of a mythical and racial idea of the unified people, “Volkwerdung” (“becoming of the people”), “will of the people”, “race”, “racial hygiene” and so on. At the theoretical level, claims are no less unacceptable today, as, for example, the idea that the victory of national-socialism corresponds to the realisation of the German essence, expressed in the spirit of the people. This supposedly “causal explanation” could not be received today. In the same vein, on the pragmatic level, the discourses around the political mission at the service of national-socialism inherent in sociological theory seems to be obsolete⁷.

From today’s standpoint, it seems to be justified to call these discourses political or ideological, but not sociological⁸. However, it is noteworthy that people, institutions and books of the time were named “sociological” – i.e. the self-definition of at least parts of the scholarly community of the time diverged consistently from today’s understanding of the discipline⁹. In order to understand the historical context, it thus seems necessary to make abstraction from current views and to look first at what was then considered sociological. This will also lead to caution regarding the transformations a scholarly discipline may undergo under given historical circumstances.

Rammstedt thus refutes the thesis of the general discrimination and persecution of all sociologists by the national-socialist regime: “A general rejection of sociology through the NSDAP or national-socialist ideology did certainly not happen. Rather, a career of the word ‘sociology’ can be traced as a consequence of the propagated ‘people’-aspects (‘völkische’) of NS-ideology; it went hand in hand with a popularisation of the sociological perspective and its integration into the national-socialist *weltanschauung*, as the latter was transformed into dominant knowledge”. Hitler himself, by the way, would not have hesitated to become a sociology professor. In order to be able to stand for the presidential elections, he needed to obtain German citizenship, and one of the solutions proposed in 1932, was to nominate him onto the chair of “Organic social theory and politics” at Braunschweig Technical University¹⁰. Rammstedt shows, that certain sociology programmes had integrated national-socialist ideology easily before the accession to power of the national-socialists in 1933.

Rammstedt attracts the attention towards a fact that is often underestimated, namely the institutionalisation and professionalisation: “Without any doubt, sociology was practised in Germany under national-socialism. In 1944/45 there were more chairs than in 1932/33; the number of university-based as well as extra-university sociological institutes grew rapidly; a professional field for sociologists outside academia became a reality for the first time. (...) In

⁷ p. ex. Freyer, cited in Rammstedt 1986: 85.

⁸ This is the reason why Lepsius claims the end of sociology in 1933: “The attempt to explain human behaviour out of the structural conditions of human societies, declined. Anything that focuses on the description and explanation of social phenomena is not social science for that matter. Not the object matter defines the discipline, but the questions asked. In this sense, the accession to power of national-socialism means the end of sociology“. Lepsius 1981: 462.

⁹ This corresponds to Rammstedt's methodology: in order to capture sociology under national-socialism, he relies on the following sources: sociological institutions (Cf. Rammstedt 1986: 128 ff.); the self-definition as “sociologist“ in “Kürschners Gelehrten-Kalender“ (Kürschner's Calendar of Scholars, a sort of equivalent to “Who's-Who“) for the years 1931, 1935, 1940/41 and 1950 (p. 95 ff.); and a complete bibliography of publications between 1933 and 1945.

¹⁰ Deuerlein 1974: 374.

1933/34 many sociologists had to leave Germany. But in 1935, more scholars in Germany defined themselves as sociologists than ever before”.

As for the internal developments within sociology, Lepsius can be cited again as an introduction to the topic, where he describes the development of sociology after 1933: “If we look at emigration not according to its loss of potentials of the staff, but according to its consequences for the scientific character of the sociology remaining in Germany, we can observe a systematic effect: the exclusion of certain scholarly traditions in sociology. The political intervention caused a selection of historical orientations in favour of historicism, holism, idealism, voluntarism and social-Darwinism and to the disadvantage of an analysis of social change, of methodological individualism, of materialism, structuralism and socialisation theory. The first have a long tradition in German humanities and were influenced by romanticism and idealism, to which social-Darwinism was added later on. National-socialism did not create these orientations wholesome, but it allowed for their victory over the forces taking shape against these traditions from the end of the 19th century”.

In his study about emigration of German sociologists and its consequence for the remaining sociology, it says furthermore: “Whatever social scientific potentials remained in Germany and Austria, it was unilaterally limited to the heritage of German idealism, at a transformation from sociological structural analysis towards a politically indifferent anthropology or a politically relevant biology, at a description of selective processes of population development, migrations, settlement patterns and so on”.

As outlined in the chapter above, the direction which sociology was to take throughout the 1930s and 40s was noticeable long before. However, 1933 was a crucial moment. Many sociologists, as the whole of German scholars and professors, welcomed the change of government and Hitler’s accession to power. Many saw these events as indications of the change they had wished for, and that aimed directly at “the essence” of the German people. They called this change “Volkwerdung”. The fact that many professors signed the “Avowal of German University Professors Adolf Hitler and the national-socialist State“ proves the acceptance of national-socialist ideology by many scholars.

In their view, sociology as a discipline of social realities had to change if reality changed. Bearing this argument in mind, sociologists struggled for theory building and systematisations in order to give their discipline a new face. Their vision renounced any critical reflection on the „knowledge of the national-socialist movement” and subordinated to it without complications. Karl Heinz Pfeffer (1906-1971), one of those thinkers who contributed to its formulation, can be cited as an example for this current of thinking: “The present German sociology has nothing in common with this past ‘sociology’. It even avoids bearing its name and hides in the habits of other sciences. It has different aims, different means, different conditions than former ‘sociology’. It finds its tasks, its motivation, its moral attitude and its intellectual foundations in the renewal of the German people through the national-socialist movement. It can not be its task to criticise the fundamental knowledge of the national-socialist movement (...). It can only absorb these fundamental insights, it can only subordinate itself to them. Then it will immediately deduce from them the right way to rigorous work, which alone gives it a right of existence in popular life“.

Rammstedt calls the perspective which was dominant on the territory of the “Reich“ after 1933

“German Sociology“ (with capital letters). But he insists that its development was notable right before 1933 and that “German Sociology” emerged out of German sociology. One of the main theoreticians of the national-socialist time, Freyer, himself distinguishes two phases in the development of this orientation, namely a phase of “practical sociology“ until 1936 and from then on a phase of “applied sociology“. On the theoretical level, the two periods were characterised by specific explanations for the reasons and modalities of the “Volkwerdung“. Directly after the accession to power of the fascists, which was thought to represent the unequivocal sign of the “waking up of Germany“, the historical events were explained through models from German historical philosophy. After 1936, bio-racial explanations, combined with a mythological discourse, became more dominant.

The so-called “practical sociology“ aimed at strengthening the “emergence of the nation“. The sociological interpretation relied on the following arguments to describe the social and political changes of the time: The change was the expression of a “political will“, whose subject was the people (“Volk“). The “Volkwerdung“ depends on the leader (“Führer“). The sociological concept of “society“ was replaced by the concept of “German people as a voluntaristic community“. Theory encompassed socio-political functions, and the “German Sociologists” aimed at influencing the process of “Volkwerdung“. After the supposed end of bourgeois-capitalist society, they saw it as their duty to contribute to the unification of the “people”: “Between 1933 and 1935/56, sociology thought it could influence the ‘Volkwerdung’ was an autonomous force through ‘empirically stating the real’ (Freyer)“. Furthermore: “They saw it as a specificity of ‘German Sociology’, that it put itself at the service of the transformation of society into the people. This presumed that the task for ‘German Sociology’ was to encourage the ‘Volkwerdung’ ‘tactically’”.

“Applied sociology“ after 1936, proposed itself to take over the role of a technique and to submit to its instrumentalisation through fascist sociology. According to Rammstedt: “After 1936, sociology became a ‘weapon of the regime’ and was instrumentalised by the fascist *Weltanschauung*“. Furthermore: “It was not any more the ‘Volkwerdung’ that was in question, but the ‘structuring of the people’, ‘German Sociology’ “did not any more orient itself towards politics, but it saw itself as a ‘weapon’ of the NS-regime“. It thus finally gave up any distance towards national-socialist ideology. It aimed at being employed for the “structuring of the people“, for the identification of “inner and external enemies“ – the question of “enemies“ being militant right from the beginning, this tendency increased again with the outbreak of the war - and it combined with the development of techniques aiming at maintaining social order. In its endeavour to serve the totalitarian regime in practice, it increasingly gave up any sort of theoretical work and favoured empirical research. The results of such research, among others in major research fields like sociology of security or military sociology, should be of immediate value to the regime.

The relationship between this “German Sociology” and other perspectives was that of an ever more complete monopoly, in the sense Lepsius outlined above. However, this status was not only a result of the politics of Hitler's regime, which banned and persecuted disliked currents. There was rather also a connection between this official policy and the internal policies of the academic field. The perspectives that were close to the regime offered support and services and therefore obtained gratifications. But at the same time, sociology got more and more unified by its own means, among others through the policies of the DGS. From the moment when Freyer got engaged in the Association, it proceeded to “Gleichschaltung” (political equalization/alignment)

internally and refused membership to deviating sociologists. The conference at Jena in 1934 was a meeting of almost exclusively “German Sociologists”. After this meeting, the DGS dissolved under conditions that are till date unclear and controversial.

With the domination of “German Sociology” came the exclusion of approaches coming from abroad, especially from the Western neighbours, which were often associated with “Jewish” thinking. Nevertheless, Rammstedt shows that “German Sociology” did not produce a veritably coherent theoretical framework.

German sociology in exile

This part on sociology in exile has to be seen in relationship with the former. Whereas “German Sociology” under national-socialism formed a relatively unified field with rather few personalities giving it a face and meaning, the situation was just the opposite for the German sociology in exile. The above mentioned perspectives and their representatives spread over a variety of countries all over the globe and into very different social, political, cultural and academic spaces. Sociology in exile is therefore a strongly heterogeneous field, which developed under the influence of a combination of diverse factors. It is impossible here to represent the whole range and scope of emigration or a systematic approach on sociology in exile. Before the situation of the exiles is looked at more closely, the importance of their role for the reconstruction of German sociology after the end of the second world war should be stressed, when several of them returned to their home country and got engaged in the development of post-war sociology.

The contents of this part are mainly drawn from Klemens Wittebur, „German sociology in exile 1933-45“. Research on the emigration of German intellectuals and scholars started only in the 1970s, and an evaluation of the real loss and the consequences for German universities remains difficult. Wittebur counts 141 exiled sociologists, this is about one third of the total population. Most of them had to leave the country as a consequence of the “Law on the reinstatement of officialdom” of 7th April 1933 (“Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums“), when they had to leave their academic positions and were forced or decided to emigrate. This law aimed at politically “problematic” persons (mainly Marxists, left liberals and republicans), who were the first to leave Germany. Later on, the “Special laws” (“Sondergesetze”) forced Jews to leave Germany, independently of their political attitude. Some of them decided lately to leave, not believing in the durability of the regime or – in very rare cases – because they wanted to build up or maintain active resistance against the regime from within. The situation of the refugees was to change after the outbreak of the war in 1939.

Apart from this international emigration, the very under researched so-called “internal emigration“ should be mentioned, an expression often used to hide or justify the adaptation under the new regime. Among those in “internal exile”, however, were two important representatives of the discipline: Tönnies, one of the few professors who protested against anti-Semitic violence at university; and Alfred Weber, who, while university chancellor at Heidelberg in 1933, had intervened when students hoisted the national-socialist flag on the university. The two of them lost their positions and were forced to retire prematurely. During national-socialism, it was nearly impossible for them to publish their works.

During the 1930s, repression erased certain sociological institutes or even whole universities, as for example the Institute of Social Research at Frankfurt, which emigrated wholesome and re-established at New York. Cologne and Heidelberg lost half of their staff; Hamburg and Jena suffered huge personal losses as well. Berlin and Leipzig, however, were hardly attained by emigration. An important point against the thesis of the interruption of sociology in 1933 is the fact that massive emigration started in 1933, but it continued in the course of the following years, making the assumption of a punctual event erroneous.

The age of the exiles shows that it was mainly the young generation who fled the regime and thus did not contribute to the further development of the discipline, with the exception of those returning after 1945. The majority of the exiles was right at the beginning of their academic careers when they left Germany. The older ones often hesitated longer and found it much more difficult to leave their country, even after they had lost their positions.

Concerning the host countries, a first wave of emigration was directed towards the European neighbouring countries. Only when the concerned finally realized that the national-socialist regime was to remain in power durably, they favoured more far-away countries. In absolute numbers, the countries hosting most of the emigrated social scientists were, in decreasing order, the US, Great Britain, France, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Turkey. The conditions under which the exiles were received were variable and too intricate an issue to be discussed at length here. The attitude towards emigrated intellectuals was not the same everywhere, and possibilities to find work in the academic domain were also variable. What certainly characterised the situation in the majority of the host countries was the dominance of a political attitude far from being anti-fascist. At times when the whole world was following with enthusiasm the Olympic Games at Berlin and when the international community followed a policy of *détente* towards Hitler's Germany, refugees represented an ambiguous and bothersome element for this uncritical attitude. In addition, they were received with the widely spread resentments and prejudice – fear of concurrence on the job market, for social privileges, of political annoyances. Turkey formed an exception, as it was in need of an academic elite and instrumentalised the immigrated scholars from the West in the framework of the Kemalist reforms to build of and complete the newly built up modern university system. The US, due to their status as an “immigrant country”, also represented interesting possibilities for an academic career.

If it is difficult to evaluate the exiled sociology according to its contents, König's observations seem interesting. According to him, forms of solidarity between Jewish and Non-Jewish exiles developed. The experience of emigration and life in exile strengthened a sort of sociological realism, and the distance towards the home country encouraged perspectives that went beyond ethnocentrism and German provincialism. The exiles often not only refuted explicitly the national-socialist ideology, but started to criticize increasingly those German traditions that had fed into the development of this paradigm.

Conclusion

The three parts of this paper – the presentation of the multiplicity and heterogeneity of German-language sociology during the Weimar Republic, the developments under national-socialism as well as the fate of all those intellectuals who had to leave the country shows clearly that the period 1933 to 1945 was of major significance for German sociology in particular, and thus also

to the discipline in general. The fact that today, this period is almost forgotten in the self-definition of German sociology could be seen as a good sign. However, it is obvious that insights into the history of these years prove to be more than distressing as to the potentials inherent in our discipline and should thus be remembered in any upcoming generation. To close the argument, the discussion in RC 08 in which I mentioned historical details on Germany was actually centred around a paper on sociology in the Soviet Union, which seems to remain just as obscure. It might be a very challenging task to gather studies on the trajectory of our discipline in totalitarian contexts, or under oppressive regimes, and to proceed to international comparisons.

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