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Paranoid and Institutional Responses to the Use of Psychoanalysis Among Early Sociologists: A socio-psychoanalytic Interpretation

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Introduction

In this paper, I analyze the paranoid and institutional responses of early sociologists to the use of psychoanalytic ideas. These responses began to emerge mainly after World War II, as sociology was being constituted as a separate social science discipline in academia. My interest in paranoid reactions began while I was working on a paper on the misalliance between sociology and psychoanalysis (Cavalletto and Silver 2009). Despite periods of acceptance and creative integration from the turn of the century until the mid-1950s, the general trends through the 2000s suggest the gradual retreat, dilution, dismissal, and finally disappearance of psychoanalytic ideas from mainstream sociological discourse. How could this have happened?

Reading 203 articles and 375 reviews in two mainstream sociological journals (The *American Journal of Sociology* and The *American Sociological Review*), selected on the basis of their use of psychoanalytic concepts, puzzled and angered me. A significant number of the articles were clearly antagonistic to psychoanalytic ideas. I felt personally attacked, dismissed, and confused by the negativity and paranoid fears that were expressed. This was a clear sign of my own identification with pioneers of psychoanalytic sociology who had tried to bring sociology and psychoanalysis together. Using a socio-psychoanalytic lens, I wanted to make sense of the decline of psychoanalytic ideas in ASR and AJS between the mid 1940s and mid 1960s, a period that showed the rise and

fall of psychoanalytic ideas. My personal history as a sociologist trained at Columbia University in the 1960s and later trained as a psychoanalyst at the National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis (NPAP), brought insights into the larger struggles in the field. My frustrated, and for the most part unsuccessful attempt to combine the two disciplines is used to illustrate a broad analysis of disillusionment and marginalization regarding the difficulties of sustaining interest in psychoanalytic sociology.

The challenges faced by American sociologists in the 1940s and 1950s in creating and sustaining a "scientific" professional identity occurred within a highly competitive and crowded academic milieu. From a psychodynamic point of view, the fight for positioning as a science inflicted narcissistic injuries and fears of marginalization among sociologists who responded with paranoid defenses such as phantasies of omnipotence, rigid/linear thinking and the split between cognition and affect. The defense mechanisms and social controls that frame paranoid defenses have a double function: first, to create boundaries and a sense of security (I feel "in control), and second, to impose, manipulate, and force others to submit (I am controlling the situation; I am controlling the "Other"). The former describes a need to control the impact of affects, especially negative affects, and their diffusion; the latter describes a need to regulate "others" monitering the ways knowledge is created, shaped, and institutionalized around coherent/rational, unitary, and universal theoretical discourses.

I am making a distinction between paranoid fears and anxieties on one hand and paranoid thinking on the other. The distinction allows me to sparate between individual and social defenses and their mutually reinforcing impact. Paranoid fears and anxieties often stem from early (pre-verbal) childhood fears of loss, abandonment and annihilation

that become integrated into personality styles of functioning. "Paranoid thinking" refers to rigid cognitive patterns-- a mindset-- organized around narrow and formulaic discourses. Paranoid thinking as a social defense occurs within an imperative framing of ideas that, to some extent, permeates the creation and maintenance of scientific and social knowledge. It belongs to a rigid system of anticipation and suspiciousness that suggests the suppression and/or selective scanning of ideas and the repression of aggressive tendencies. Paranoid thinking structures the more individual/idiosyncratic fears in an attempt to monitor them within organizational discourses and structures that normalize the "childlike" expression of individual fears and anxieties into the politics of paranoia. Paranoid thinking helps reduce individual anxieties, channeling them into institutional and organizational forms and simultaneously inducing the internalization of regulatory psychic mechanisms of control geared toward conforming to normative discourses. By politics of paranoia I mean formal and informal ways used by a political system to manipulate emotions of fear of annihilation, and loss of personal and collective identities in order to provide a false sense of security. Such appeasement and manipulation of paranoid fears are never fully successful and are likely to touched upon deep-seated personal fears that create a re-enforcing cycle the expression of fear and their manipulation (Tomkins 1995). The diffusion of paranoid anxieties and the use of paranoid thinking to control them have been part and parcel of politics of paranoia within the modernist projects of capitalism (Brennan 2000).

In this paper I illustrate, within a specific socio-historical context, the reciprocal and mutually re-enforcing mechanisms between individual paranoid fear and anxieties on one hand and paranoid thinking on the other. I apply socio-

psychoanalytic ideas to an analysis of the responses of sociologists to the introduction of psychoanalytic concepts into sociological discourse during a time of professional uncertainty and struggles for power and recognition. Reading articles and reviews from the *American Journal of Sociology* and the *American Sociological Review* in the1940s, 1950s, and mid 1960s I identified negative feelings and how they were expressed, channeled, and controlled at a time when sociology was emerging as a discipline struggling to create a distinct professional identity in the context of an increasingly bureaucratized, science-oriented, and paranoid anti-communist political mood in post–World War II America. The articles and reviews were coded using a computer program that selected articles and reviews with any of the following words: "Freud, Freudian, Psychoanalysis, and Psychoanalytic." Each article and each review was coded along three dimensions: (1) as being psychoanalytic either "significantly" or "in passing"; (2) as taking a positive, negative, or neutral stance toward psychoanalysis; and (3) whether an article or review was written by a sociologist or not. For the purpose of this paper, I only looked at the articles and reviews coded as containing significantly negative responses to psychoanalytic ideas and written by sociologists.

In the 1920s and 1930s, the recognition of the role and usefulness of psychoanalysis was relatively widespread, as exemplified by the special 1939 issue of the *American Journal of Sociology* on Freud's contributions to the social sciences. Psychoanalysis was a tool commonly used by social anthropologists, critical social theorists, and sociologists in a variety of different fields that linked individual and collective action. Ernest Burgess, for example, expressed his optimism and enthusiasm for the use of psychoanalysis in the following way:

> Many sociologists have utilized psychoanalytic concepts for their illuminating social processes in the behavior of the person and the group. . . . Social conflict between classes, nations, and races seemed to take new meaning in the context of the Freudian significance of mental conflict in the individual. . . . To the degree that this procedure enriched the conceptual system of sociology and rendered it more adequate for its tasks, it unquestionably was advantageous.
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> (Burgess 1939, 368)

However, the post–World War II era saw an increased distance and hostility to psychoanalysis, despite the contributions of important social theorists such as Adorno, Benjamin, Fromm, Riesman, Rieff, Parsons, Miller & Swanson, Slater, and Smelser.[1] Partly to blame were the crudely psychoanalytic character studies hastily produced in support of the allied effort in World War II. The more fundamental causes, however, were the postwar transformations of the social sciences, which were fueled and funded by government grants and corporate support; the use of social engineering to rebuild societies; a growing enthusiasm, even obsession for "scientific" methods and empiricism. Also at work was the peculiar set of intellectual views prompted to some degree by American cold-war rhetoric and paranoid policies of the 1950s, which saw psychoanalysis as a "foreign" influence promoting socialistic, anti-religious, and antisocial views of society. These sociopolitical transformations carried with them the ideological hegemony of a body of practical-minded scientific presuppositions that allowed little room for alternative, less "scientific" approaches (Cavalletto 2007; Steinmetz 2007).

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[1] For a detailed description of how psychoanalytic ideas were celebrated by sociologists during that period, see George Cavalletto's paper "Opening and Closing the Sociological Mind to Psychoanalysis: Mainstream Sociology, Talcott Parsons and the Positivistic Unconscious." (2010)

Burgess's 1939s optimism about psychoanalysis was, however, qualified by the emerging distrust and suspicion as expressed, for example, by Read Bain in an article assessing the importance of Freud's ideas for sociologists:

> Psychoanalysis exhibits many traits similar to those of a religious cult. There are numerous bitter feuds and fanatic factions within the fold; symbolism, ritualism, and logical confusion abound; it flourishes upon dogmatic denial of the ordinary postulated and methods of natural sciences. . . . The fundamental Freudian assumptions is that the human personality is a more or less abnormal or supervenient by-product of non-social, or even anti-social instinctual tendencies. It fails to envisage the human personality as a culture-product as well as a culture producer.
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> (Bain 1936, 203)

The views expressed in the above quotation reflect a wide spread attitude. Social-scientific explorations, filtered through the new positivistic lens, created a strong condemnation of Freudian ideas and made the overlap of anthropology, history, social theory, and psychoanalytically inclined psychology appear unscientific, not to mention suspiciously foreign. The embrace of positivism in the social sciences and the rejection of psychoanalytic ideas were prophetically stated by Gregory Zilboorg, who in 1939 had predicted a trend toward "megalomanic scientism."

Brief Theoretical Overview of Paranoid Constructs

Let me start with a brief theoretical overview of paranoid constructs from a psychoanalytic perspective that will help explain how I apply such concepts to an analysis of reactions by sociologists to the use of psychoanalytic ideas. Paranoid responses to loss (real or imagined) have a long history in psychoanalysis, starting with Freud's study of Dr. Schreber's diaries (1911) and continuing with Klein's (1937)

discussion of the paranoid-depressive position and Lacan's (1956) conceptualization of a pre-paranoid self.

Freud stressed that paranoia is organized around a structure of feelings that includes a complex array of affects, including grandiosity, delusional jealousy, homosexual fears, compulsive mindset, and repressed aggression (Laplanche and Pontalis 1988). Melanie Klein (1937) located paranoia in the first years of life (at a preverbal level) around a fear of loss and annihilation. Through a process of projective identification, the infant experiences and phantasizes aggression coming both from the outside (the poisoned mother's breast) and the inside (coming from the infant's own body). Such mechanisms continue over the life cycle around issues of loss and separation.[2] Lacan's analysis focused on self-generating and self-reinforcing negative affects that threatened one's identity in the form of misrecognition, organized around a pre-paranoiac self (1977). This pre-paranoiac self rests on the identification with the desire of an "Other" through language and symbolization that shapes paranoid thinking.

Paranoid fears and anxieties are responses to anticipation of losses in one form or another.[3] Among infant and young children the paranoid fears of loss and lack of protection are primary. As adults such early fears are often denied/repressed but re-experienced through the loss of autonomy, prestige, well-being, identity, money, but above all when confronted with the loss of life. In this framework, paranoid fears create needs for protection and dependency while simultaneously inducing feelings of anger for being controlled by social forces like the family, the community or the government.

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[2] **They also have been used to analyze the politics of paranoia in the context of colonialism and the search for the good life (Rustin 1991, Roland 2010).**

[3] **Despite theoretical differences between these psychoanalysts they all focus on the consequences of separation and abandonment in the early years of life.**

When these needs for social and emotional protection go unfulfilled individuals are likely to retreat into narcissism and cynicism. The combination of psychic vulnerability (fear of loss) and the need for protection creates the social conditions for manipulation, megalomania, and delusional phantasies of grandeur on the part of those in positions of power or authority. These socio-political conditions are likely to create regulatory controls through institutional arrangements that induce emotional attachment and identification with organizational values and structures as a way to keep in check paranoid fears of loss.

Freud has been described as one of the three great practitioners of the "hermeneutics of suspicion," which is Ricoeur's (1970) term for the suspicion and critical deconstruction of our conscious understanding and experiences of our desires and our use of moral categories in social and political discourse. While the hermeneutics of suspicion seems like the opposite to paranoid thinking with its rigid frame and lack of questioning, Eve Sedgwick (2003), in her critique of Butler and Foucault, argued that critical theorists using the hermeneutics of suspicion displace and project their own paranoid fears onto other intellectual discourses under the guise of deconstructing ideologies, and in the process embody forms of cultural domination: "A hermeneutics of suspicion that supports critical theorizing, makes it less rather than more possible to unpack the local, contingent relations between any given piece of knowledge and its narrative/epistemological entailments for the seeker, knower and teller" (Sedgwick 2003, 124). Both the hermeneutics of suspicion and its component paranoid thinking, provide a false sense of emotional security, one grounded in an epistemological certainty that covers up aggressive impulses and closes off avenues for doubt, ambivalence, and access

to novel experiences. The point that I am making here is that social theories, from the most scientific to the most critical (including psychoanalysis), are based to some extent on paranoid thinking and the attempt at cultural dominance in a given field.

Psychoanalytic theories further suggest that paranoid anxiety and fears of separation are controlled through mechanisms of splitting. Splitting mechanisms help to keep separate negative and positive affects (horizontal split), isolate different levels of consciousness (vertical split), and de-link emotions from cognition (Lear 1998, Layton 2006). The multiplicity of vertical and horizontal splits keeps individuals in emotionally unstable, incommunicable, delusional and/or megalomaniacal states. Such a multiplicity of psychic splits, by making individuals feel helpless, confused and vulnerable, provides a fertile ground for a politics of paranoia in professional and organizational settings.

Paranoid thinking is found in all theoretical constructs that endorse assumptions about the unifying power of closed systems of thinking around linear projections and causal links (Edmond Roustang 1996). The rise of positivism and the use of scientific tools in the social sciences illustrate this process, namely, the creation of discourses that assumed a universalistic and synthesizing unity. Teresa Brennan (2000) suggests that the objectification and rationalization of knowledge in modernity fostered paranoid thinking by turning everything into a commodity framed by mechanisms of envy, jealousy, and suspiciousness. In her framework negative feelings especially are used as “emotional capital” to sustain a consumer’s economy that manipulates consumers’ desires. This “affect economy” by sustaining negative emotions, and acting out of paranoid fears through rage and destructiveness, prolongs the needs for mechanisms of social/economic

control that benefit the dominant economic structure.[4] Individual and social defenses against paranoid fears and anxiety that we discussed can now be applied to an understanding of sociologists' fear of loss of professional identity, as expressed in their reactions to the use of psychoanalytic frameworks in the struggle for legitimacy and recognition of sociology as a science in the academic marketplace in the 40s, 50s and 60s.

The Mis-alliance of Sociology and Psychoanalysis: A Socio-Psychoanalytic Interpretation

As the discipline of sociology was being consolidated in the 1940 and 1950s, sociologists wanted to separate themselves from neighboring disciplines such as economics, psychology, social anthropology, as well as psychoanalysis in order to create a unique sense of professional identity. The tendency toward the rejection of psychoanalytic ideas and the monopolization of a certain kind of scientific knowledge is illustrated by looking at the number of articles and reviews with psychoanalytic content that were published in the leading sociological journals between 1920 and 2000.

(Put chart I here)

After a steady increase in the number of articles and reviews from the 1920s to the mid-1950s, a precipitous drop followed. This pattern holds true for all sociological journals as

[4] For example an analysis of the politics of foreclosure clearly shows how the rage of those loosing their houses often results in acts of sabotage or destruction that lower the value of the houses and gives the banks greater control over the process (Andrews 2009).

well as for *AJS* and *ASR* separately. The proportion of articles and reviews in all sociology journals combined with any psychoanalytic content fell from an average of 8% in the mid 1950s to an average of 6% in the mid 1960s and to an average of 1.5% in 1990 (Cavalletto and Silver 2009). The drastic drop in ASR starting in the mid-70s reflects the publication of *Contemporary Sociology*, a journal of reviews where books with psychoanalytic content were reviewed . Even in *Contemporary Sociology* the drop from the 1970 to the 2000 was significant

From a psychodynamic perspective how to make sense of this trend? The need to separate and create distance as revealed in the gradual marginalization of psychoanalytic ideas touched upon fears of loss of professional identity that touched unconscious childhood narcissistic injuries. Such fears among sociologists triggered defense mechanisms that got expressed in a variety of ways: first through a combination of verbal attacks (projection of aggressive thoughts and the splitting between cognition and affect), then rational and measured argumentation (rationalization and intellectualization), and finally through the internalization of a positivistic unconscious as a way to deny the role of psychic realities.[5]

Despite the increasing interest at the time in the use of psychoanalysis by a number of sociologists, the general view of psychoanalysis as non-scientific, myth-oriented, and cult-like became widespread among mainstream sociologists. The early critiques of psychoanalysis focused on the nature of the unconscious and the role of repression of sexual and aggressive desires. These formulations were defined as non-

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[5] While there is a chronological sequence in the analysis of sociologists' reactions, these different types of defenses do not correspond to stages with clear boundaries between them.

behavioral, non-observable and thus inappropriate toools of social research. However, the rejection of the unconscious and the concept of drive went beyond an intellectual disagreement. What was being rejected was the general framework of psychoanalysis , the totality of a paradigm experienced as foreign and un-scientific.

Let me illustrate the discursive forms that these paranoid responses took using some quotes from articles and reviews in *ASR* and *AJS* between the mid 1940s and the mid 1960s. Richard LaPiere, for example, stated that "Psychoanalysis is poisoning the field of sociology" (1948a) and "Psychoanalytic ideas are endangering the scientific development of the discipline" (1948b). For Ellsworth Faris (1953), "Psychoanalysis is polluting social psychology and sociology," and "There is a danger of entrapment by inefficient concepts." Even C. Wright Mills (1940) labeled psychoanalysis as a system of "systematic motive-mongering." The use of words such as "**poisoning**," "**endangering**," "**polluting**," "**entrapment**," and "**systematic motive-mongering**" taps into aggressive tendencies and unconscious paranoid anxieties of loss of professional identity. The above words come close to the ways Melanie Klein described the expression of paranoid fears among children and adults around catastrophic anticipation, fear of annihilation that resulted in sadistic attacks around cycles of internalization and projection of negative affects.[6]

The attacks expressed in the above quotations were all pronounced in the name of "protecting" and safeguarding sociological knowledge as a science from contamination from an impure source. Fears of contamination from poisonous material and pollution were also major concerns that played a central role in the politics of paranoia under

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[6] Define internalization and projection here or before

colonial domination. The politics of paranoia took the form of protecting racial and cultural purity of the name of the "mother" country against the dangers of uncivilized populations and cultures (Fanon 1963, Memmi 1965)[7]. The ability to dominate in the name of modernization and "superior" Western civilization was based on the manipulation of paranoid fears in order to induce a sense of legitimacy and loyalty among the colonizers, and vulnerability and dependency among the colonized (Roland and Silver 2010). The processes of territorial domination and the colonization of the mind under the aegis of modernization and science occurred during the same historical period as the consolidation of the social sciences. Without making a clear parallel it points to a shared underlying processes of social and psychological regulatory procedures of control. Under the name of science, positivism, and rationality, mainstream sociologists dominated and controlled ways of knowing by keeping at bay psychoanalysis for being "primitive", immature and child like ( ).

Direct paranoid attacks on psychoanalytic ideas continued for a decade in *AJS* and *ASR*. They gradually became supplanted in the 1950s and 1960s by scientific arguments that, while blunting the crude expressions of paranoid fears, expressed them under cover of rational critiques (Sewell 1952; Sewell, Mussen, and Harris 1955; Bendix 1952; Kohn and Clausen 1954; Hyman and Sheatsley 1954, Glaser 1956). For example, Cameron and McCormick (1954, 556) had this to say in a book review: "The characteristic tone [of psychoanalytic work and clinical literature] is normative and propagandistic rather than scientific, and there has been no rigorous testing of hypotheses as yet. The usefulness of the subjective concept for any scientific purposes remains to be

[7] **The French term used to denote this relation is "La mere patrie"**

demonstrated." Other major criticisms of psychoanalysis as summarized by Robert Faris (1955) accused psychoanalysis of "Biological determinism; a lack of generalizability; a lack of objectivity; pathologizing social behavior; equating primitive, child, and psychotic behavior; dogmatic thinking; and double talk".

The above quotations, while reasonable in tone, reflect a totalizing certainty that leave no room for reflexivity, ambiva lence, or open discussions. They illustrate the split between mind (rationalization) on one hand and 'hidden' negative affects on the other. The negative feelings toward psychoanalysis that were expressed by earlier sociologists were translated into a rational discourse. These totalizing negative views became couched as legitimate critiques of psychoanalysis in the name of science. The certainty of paranoid thinking in this "rational" and coldly wishful scientific approach caused more damage to the emergence of psychoanalytic sociology than did the crude and direct expression of paranoid fears of the earlier years. The widely expressed methodological criticisms, especially the lack of hypothesis testing, were a recurrent theme that excluded any substantive intellectual discussion of psychoanalytic ideas in *AJS* and *ASR* articles and reviews. Methodological critiques became a way to legitimize a dominant sociological discourse in the name of science while discrediting psychoanalysis as a "useless" intellectual paradigm. The debate around Adorno and al., *The Authoritarian Personality* (Steward and Hoult 1959), demonstrate this point. While some of the criticisms were based on substantive differences, most of the attacks were based methodological critiques undermining any discussion regarding the creative new ways of linking quantitative and qualitative research that could have provided a useful model to link micro and macro concerns one in which psychoanalysis played a key role . The shift to a more scientific

framework among mainstream sociologists shaped their professional identity by providing both legitimacy and a sense of emotional security. As discussed previously, paranoid thinking with its totalizing, narrow, and rigid way of knowing created an enticing emotionally safe and supposedly neutral intellectual space within increasingly solid and distinctive disciplinary boundaries. From a psychodynamic point of view a positivistic orientation based on universalistic premises can be conceptualized as a social defense against the more disruptive and uncontrollable—but potentially creative—individual paranoid fears of loss of professional identity as discussed previously.

In addition to controlling personal fears, paranoid thinking shaped the creation of intellectua1 knowledge. For example, the field of "social personality" morphed from being open to a variety of approaches—especially psychoanalytic ones—to a narrow cognitive definition of personality traits that could be measured and tested empirically. In the 40s and early 50s the concept of character structure, first introduced by Freud (1916), had been one of the most fruitful areas in the integration of psychoanalytic and sociological ideas in ways that used a variety of methodologies to assess the links between the psyche and the social (Fromm 1951; Fromm and Maccoby; Mills 1940; Lindersmith and Strauss 1950; Mowrer and Mowrer 1951). By the late 1950s it had disappeared from sociological discourse. Erasure of the concept of "character structure" and psychoanalytic approaches to the study of personality were engineered through a change in the American Sociological Society (ASS) section on Personality in 1957. The section changed its name from "Culture and Social Personality" to "Social Structure and Personality." The change of wording was no mere accident. The focus on the role of culture and the social context as they shaped personality styles of functioning, was

replace by a focus on measurable personality traits and their impact on observable individual behavior. By the mid 1960s, "character structure" was no longer part of the sociological vocabulary. Furthermore a shift in the membership in the American Sociological Association section "Social Structure and Personality" was not random either. The new membership and, more importantly, the selection of the chairs show a clear change in theoretical emphasis from supporting psychodynamic frameworks to promoting cognitive approaches. Sociologists interested in analyzing the role of personality in the family and workplace allied themselves with methodological positivism and cognitive psychology leaving out any psychodynamic concerns.

These organizational changes in the profession point to the vortex of power/knowledge struggles. By the early 1960s, the use of scientific/positivistic formulations had become part of a widely accepted consensus in mainstream sociology, which had firmly situated itself behind institutional structures supporting mechanisms such as gate keeping, access to funding, segmentation into sub-specialties, and marginalization of interdisciplinary approaches. In major universities, especially Midwestern ones, the spread of "positivism" meant that quantitative approaches within functionalist frameworks became privileged research strategies and the ones most likely to be funded by large private foundations and governmental agencies (Manning 2005).

The institutionalization of positivistic thinking across sociology took the form of what Steinmetz called an "epistemological unconscious." By this he means the creation of knowledge around three components: the consolidation of methodological positivism around assumptions about the nature of the social order (ontological concern); the support of specific ways of knowing social reality through direct observation (epistemological

concern); and the scientific-naturalistic belief in the unity of the social order and the natural sciences (2006, 111). The epistemological unconscious suggests a successful internalization of modes of thinking as part of a normative structure of expectations. The spread of an epistemological unconscious contributed further to the gradual dilution of psychoanalytic ideas and limited the burgeoning discipline's access to other ways of knowing through interdisciplinary work.

Gradually, but surely, sociology had undergone a transformation whereby "scientific correctness" even among psychoanalytically oriented sociologists became the norm (Smelser 1998). The focus on narrow methodological issues impeded any serious intellectual engagement with psychoanalysis as a theory of the mind. During that time open discussions in *ASA* and *ASR* on psychoanalytic ideas were missing. This theoretical silence might reflect a potential embarrassment, and unacknowledged shame (Lewis 1971, Scheff 1988) that would surface in debates about an intellectual paradigm that was felt by sociologists as being intellectually inferior, nonacademic, and unscientific.

At this point we might think that the fears, dismissals and attacks of psychoanalytic conceptualizations came from those using statistically based and empirically oriented research (Elkin and Westley 1955; LaPiere 1960)? Actually they also came from symbolic-interaction theorists such as Blumer (1954), Goffman (1955, 1956), and Becker (1953). While not openly hostile, the way earlier sociologists were, they rejected psychoanalytic ideas as being irrelevant to their behavioral models of social interaction. Given the sophisticated ideas of Herbert Mead and Charles Horton Cooley about the role of the psyche and the self in the analysis of social action, the rejection of psychoanalytic ideas among their followers was arresting.

The social interactionists' focus on subjectivity, language, culture, and identity did not provide much of a bridge with psychoanalysis. Their rejection and distancing of psychoanalytic ideas encompassed Freudian as well as post Freudian theoretical orientations, even among psychoanalysts with broader social concerns, such as Karen Horney, Erik Fromm, and Harry Stack Sullivan. Social interactionists argued that concepts such as the unconscious, repression, projection, defenses, and narcissism did not add to their theoretical understanding of human action but distracted from an analysis of social interaction per se by imputing hidden motivations that were not observable and thus not analyzable. They argued that the inclusion of intrapsychic mechanisms such as inner conflicts blurs the role of social and normative structures in shaping human interaction defined as key theoretical assumptions. Compared to quantitative sociologists, interactionists monitored the expression of their hostility by distancing themselves. For example, Blumer was averse to using psychoanalysis in sociology, yet in his writings he did not criticized or engage directly Freud or Parsons' ideas. Interactionists developed what Philip Manning calls a strong "silent opposition" to psychoanalytic ideas (2005, 70) through their dismissal of "psychoanalytic dogma." Such a blank and collective rejection of psychoanalysis at a time when outside of academia psychoanalysis was one of the strongest and a most widely discussed cultural force in society is astonishing (Kurzweil 1989).

Gradually, under the banner of empiricism and positivistic orientations, the control of the wider sociological field spread to include ethnographies and the deployment of narratives. These approaches became another way to enhance what Patricia Clough calls "the ideological hegemony of empiricism and empirical

positivities." The realistic discourse of narrative was used to hide or erase the workings of the unconscious: "Ethnography provides a sociological discourse with a realistic narrative that elicits a certain scenario of unconscious desire in order to disavow the production of the unconscious all together" (Clough 1992, 9). With a few exceptions mentioned previously sociologists whether using statistical analyses, survey research, interactional analysis or ethnography, found no room for the unconscious or psychic mechanisms in their work. This general trend across sociology suggests the near ubiquity of the discipline's positivistic thinking, which crystallized around a deterministic theory of social action and the phantasy of a unified and controllable subject identity that illustrates a mode of paranoid thinking as discussed previously. Splitting and projective mechanisms were at work keeping at bay through rationalization, intellectualization and denial any consideration of psychic forces, especially unconscious ones involving the expression of sexual and aggressive desires. Such theoretical exclusions were made under the guise of an opposition to biological determinism, yet they hint at an underlying puritanical and conservative streak in main stream sociological thinking of the time.

The rejection of psychoanalytic ideas and the criticisms of sociologists who used psychoanalysis in the 40s, 50s and early 60s was one element in the power struggle to define professional identity, and legitimacy in a professional and national culture that were becoming increasingly geared toward statistical models and hypothesis testing with the rewards (grants, resources) and recognition (social and cultural capital) attached to such models. The need to join such a pragmatic and empirical culture of rationality was especially important for interactionists and ethnographers whose status in the field was marginal. In this climate of empiricism psychoanalysis became a collective scapegoat, a

way to unify sociologists against paranoid fears of being marginalized and ignored especially important for social interactionists. The rejection of psychoanalytic concepts across the discipline, in both quantitative and qualitative approaches, provided a ground for shared theoretical assumptions about the nature of the social order, the role of normative structures and the link between self and society—one in which the unconscious and intra-psychic mechanisms had no place.

During the same period social anthropologists, unlike sociologists, kept their work open to psychoanalytic ideas and especially the use of reflexivity in their research (Kirkpatrik 1939). Devereux (1943) saw no contradiction between scientific attitudes and the use of psychotherapeutic techniques in field research. Understanding the working of the unconscious as expressed through language, myth, and cultural artifacts was essential, he thought, to understanding of social institutions and interactional patterns. The articles and reviews in ASR and AJS show a gradual disengagement from social anthropology as exemplified by the decline in the number of articles and reviews written by anthropologists in *ASR* and *AJS* after 1950s. The trend toward separate sociology and anthropology departments in major universities was another indicator of theoretical distance and emotional distrust between them. As a result of this process of separation sociologists lost a connection to the theoretical and methodological possibilities of using psychoanalysis in their work. By distancing themselves from anthropological models using psychoanalysis, sociologists actively rejected an intellectual paradigm that put the self and the unconscious in the center of research. By the mid 1960s the positivist outlook defining sociology had touched everyone and psychoanalytic ideas became marginalized into research projects dealing with family dynamics, social disorganization, delinquency,

and criminology. These applied fields with lower academic status re-enforced the view of psychoanalysis as dealing with pathological behavior.

The sociological research that incorporated psychoanalytic concepts like personality or social defenses was used to explain social outcomes such as rates of delinquency, divorce or school dropouts, rather than being the objects of study. In studying the ways that normative structures shaped individuals' actions and emotions, these early sociologists selected aspects of Freudian theory and adapted psychoanalytic concepts to fit sociological models of social control (Glaser 1956; Gold 1958). For example, the superego as an agent of normative control was given a special place in highlighting the role of socializing agents (Miller and Swanson 1958, 1961), especially in the family. By being primarily concerned with controlling aggressive and libidinal drives, this view brought about what Dennis Wrong called an "over socialized conception and man" (1961). This selective appropriation of Freudian concepts for use within Hobbesian and evolutionary sociological models obscured Freud's cultural and inter-subjective paradigms that stressed the mutually reinforcing dynamics between individual, culture, and society (Kaye 1991). When sociologists employed psychoanalytic concepts in their research it took place within a functional-structural approach, one in which the self (Sanford 1966), emotions (Smelser 1968), character structure (Fromm 1944, Fromm & Maccoby 1970) or defense mechanisms (Swanson & Miller 1960). However, even when engaging in empirical work their efforts at integration of psychoanalytic ideas within sociological paradigms had little visibility and recognition. Many sociologists at the time

like Miller and Swanson started publishing their work and research papers in psychoanalytic or psychiatric journals (Smelser and Parsons 1950, 1951).[8]

The rejection of reflexivity as an instrument of research was another difference/contention between sociology and psychoanalysis that goes beyond concerns about the loss of objectivity. It touches on the hidden fears that private thoughts and feelings be revealed publicly breaking down the boundaries between the personal/emotional and intellectual/rational. The use of the personal and the idiosyncratic in research had not always been seen as detrimental to sociological research. Early on, Ogburn (1925) had argued that a researcher's ability to use therapeutic techniques in research would ensure more objectivity, by minimizing personal biases. However with the spread of Durkheim's definition of "social facts" ideas about reflexivity, crucial a psychoanalytic tool in clinical work was rejected as a way to access social knowledge. The awareness of transferential and counter transferential processes in research were not issues to be considered outside the clinical process.

For early sociologists, unlike social anthropologists, self-reflexivity became perceived as a form of "confession" that had no place in research. Using insight about oneself transgressed fundamental, some would say sacred, rules of sociological methods. The potential contamination of academic research through self-knowledge had to be contained, in order to ensure objectivity and acceptance as a social science but perhaps more significantly to protect researchers from acknowledging the underlying personal

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[8] There was a hope among sociologists that the psychoanalysis could be reshaped into a positivist science. Franz Alexander, a professor of psychoanalysis at the University of Chicago, was praised for "moving psychoanalysis from heroic to a scientific phase" (Warren 1954).

and emotional forces that guide their research and theoretical formulations. This was especially striking among researchers like symbolic interactionists engaged in doing qualitative and/or ethnographic work where what is objective has no standardized measure!

The exclusion of the personal in research even affected sociologists who had been in treatment or trained as psychoanalysts. In their work they maintained strict boundaries between personal experiences/insights and professional writing. Their extensive theoretical knowledge of psychoanalysis and clinical engagement as analyzands or analysts, so common in the 1950s and 1960s among academics, did not alter their adherence to the positivistic rule of separation between the personal and the theoretical. Many sociologists in departments such as Chicago, Harvard, and Columbia were being analyzed, and some, like Smelser, Parsons, Inkeles, Dai and Lindsey, also received training in psychoanalytic institutes. Their clinical experience was acknowledged as essential in their lives yet their insights into intrapsychic mechanisms did not get used into their sociological research or theoretical formulations.[9] Even personal memoirs (Parsons 1970) were not used as a starting point for sociological investigation about social issues. Sociologists who underwent psychoanalysis and/or trained as psychoanalysts in the US in the 1950s were analyzed within a classical framework, exposed to orthodox Freudian formulations ones in which the therapist is as blank screen, a neutral figure that would limit the intrusion of personal intra-psychic conflicts (counter-transference) into in the treatment process. Counter-transferences were to be avoided or controlled at all cost. Ironically, classical Freudian psychoanalysis, with its concerns

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[9] **This observation is based on an interview with Neil Smelser in New York 2009.**

about the infusion of the personal into the clinical process, contributed in some ways to the internalization of a positivistic unconscious in an attempt to make the clinical encounter more detached, objective and "scientific"! Yet, an "N" of one in sociological research was clearly unacceptable, not only because of the nature of sociological concerns about objectivity and the need to generalize but more fundamentally because it opened up the possibilities of relying upon and revealing deep psychic structures that questioned the limits of empiricism, positivism, and narrativity.

Another way of making sense of the transgressive nature of linking the personal to the theoretical brings us back to the use of splitting and disassociation as defenses against paranoid anxiety. In other words by splitting these two levels of analysis one could minimize the anxiety stemming from the potential conflict between these two spheres. Freud's linking the personal and the theoretical opened a creative space that sustained theoretical breakthroughs and groundbreaking paradigm shifts. Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) based on the analysis of his own dreams was an exceptionally daring gesture, because it posited a link between self-reflexivity and theoretical formulation undertaken in the name of science! Freud however recognized that the use of the self in doing psychoanalysis was double edged: it provided him with theoretical insights and clinical breakthroughs, but it also led him to see the arbitrariness of his own theoretical formulations. For example, he wondered whether Schreber's paranoid delusions might not be just as trustworthy as his own theoretical formulations, suggesting delusional and paranoid components to theoretical thinking: "It remains for the future to decide whether there is more delusion in my theory than I should like to admit, or whether there is more truth in Schreber's delusion than other people are as yet

prepared to believe" (Freud 1911a, 182). Freud's willingness to look into his own funnel vision is quite remarkable. Yet he did not go far enough in understanding the dangers of his own paranoid thinking.

Despite the constant questioning and reworking of his theoretical ideas, Freud succumbed to paranoid fears and paranoid thinking when he resisted certain ideas different from his and excluded dissenting voices among his early disciples such as Jung, Adler, and Rank. Not unlike early sociologists, Freudian psychoanalysts engaged in distancing psychoanalysis from other fields of inquiry such as philosophy, the arts or religion which would have given greater legitimacy to a variety of psychoanalytic orientations that provided a socially and culturally broader conception of the self (Sullivan 1953, Horney 1964,). These mechanisms of exclusion and marginalization within the psychoanalytic community that continue well though the 1960s imposed another split between traditional Freudian oriented drive models and other more socially oriented models. One consequence of this power/knowledge nexus was to put the controls of most training institutes in the hand of psychiatrists and Freudian psychoanalysts. Thus the distancing of sociologists from psychoanalysis in the 1950s and 60s was also a response to the theoretical and institutional struggles within the psychoanalytic community. The attacks and dismissals of psychoanalysis as a sect and the views of psychoanalysis as a biological and deterministic rather than a social/cultural paradigm, reflect the splits between schools and the emergence of a dominant classical Freudian discourse. The articles and reviews in *ASR* and *AJS* that we analyzed show clearly that the attacks of psychoanalytic ideas were primarily based on classical Freudian models regarding the unconscious, drives and repression. These views reflect the

selective readings of psychoanalysis making it a target of attack as biological based. The emotional, theoretical and institutional splits discussed above created rigid boundaries between disciplines cutting off access to social/cultural models. Thus a process of mutual re-enforcement took place between the use of sociological assumptions about objectivity and classical therapeutic guidelines. By the 60s regulatory controls, and the unconscious process of internalization of a positivistic unconscious had fully succeeded among sociologists across the discipline.

At this point, I want briefly to explore how institutional and regulatory controls as well as the internalization of a positivistic unconscious affected my personal attempts at combining sociology and psychoanalysis. Writing this paper I have come to realize that the issues raised illustrate my own struggles and even paranoid fears regarding the use of psychoanalysis in my work. As a student in sociology at Columbia University in the mid 1960s I had fully absorbed and internalized a positivistic/empirical approach that shaped the way I thought, taught and did research. It took a long time before I could deconstruct and undo the hold that positivism had in my academic life and writings. For years, even after becoming a trained analyst, it was difficult for me to merge the two disciplines. I tried to combine psychoanalysis in sociological research using a positivistic approach using empirical models in exploring psychoanalytic formulations about personality modes of functioning and their impact on occupational choice (Silver and Spilerman 1990) and on the aging process (Silver 1992). I collected empirical data and collaborated with statisticians to provide an analysis of the impact of the personality on social action. I had hoped that my research would create a bridge between sociology and

psychoanalysis but it received little attention in sociology and had no impact on the field of psychoanalytic sociology.[10] The fear of professional marginalization accounted for my cautiousness regarding what I would do research on, how I would research the issue, what I would write and where I would publish. Not unlike earlier sociologists who were trained as clinicians in the 1950s and 1960s, I kept separate the personal from the theoretical as well as the clinical from the academic. In other words I did not question my sociological interests and mode of inquiry by first turning inward self-reflectively; I also did not use my clinical experience as data into sociological writings. I was afraid of not being taken seriously and was seem by some colleagues as not loyal to the discipline. My clinical training and practice when it was mentioned among sociologists became a sort of embarrassment-- for me and for them. I was struggling intellectually to do psychoanalytic sociology (as distinct from using psychoanalysis in sociological research) outside the confine of empirical, structural functionalist paradigms. The institutional contexts that provided and sustained collaboration between psychoanalysis and sociology around porous boundaries and multi disciplinarity, as was the case with the Institute for Social Relations at Harvard in the 1950s, no longer existed. The separation of most training institutes from academia combined with paranoid fears and paranoid thinking on both sides made such interplay and cross-fertilization increasingly difficult.

It took years of clinical experience, exposure to new psychoanalytic paradigms (British Object Relations, Relational, and Lacanian orientations), combined with my

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[10] I should mention that later in my career I was able for a number of years to teach a course on Psychoanalytic Sociology at The Graduate Center of the City University of New York. The course was truly cross disciplinary and based on a variety of sociological and psychoanalytic models.

involvement with feminist and cultural studies as well as my work as an artist, to break the mold stemming from of a positivistic unconscious that had restricted my ability to understand the self and the workings of the unconscious in a dynamic way. Like other sociologists trained as clinicians I felt the pressure to make a choice between these approaches. Today as I write this paper it is hard to admit that I had internalized such a strong positivist unconscious that hindered me from an involvement with alternate ways of knowing and stopped me from questioning the basis of my assumptions as well as addressing my paranoid fears of loss. Since I started combining personal insights and clinical data into my sociological teaching and writings, I have been able to expand my theoretical reach, rethink existing sociological paradigms. I feel connected in new ways to other disciplines[11]. I am not dismissing the attempts at integrating sociology and psychoanalysis (applied psychoanalysis) within positivistic theoretical formulations and empirical research but I am aware that the struggles of the 1950s and 1960s to create psychoanalytic sociology have not been overcome.

Conclusion

I want to end this paper on a note of openness, a paranoid laugh of sort, by rethinking paranoid responses to the fear of loss of professional identity and of academic recognition. Was the enthusiasm and hope for a psychoanalytic sociology only a short-lived experience, perhaps only "a mirage" (Levine 1978) or wishful phantasy (Hinkle 1957)? Are the paranoid responses that affected early sociologists interested in

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[11] **(Silver 2006, 2007)**

psychoanalytic ideas still present today? Cultural studies, comparative literature, feminist epistemologies and neuroscience have provided new intellectual paradigms that can incorporate a mix of psychoanalytic ideas based on a multilayered and changing view of a non universal and non unitary conception of the self. The time may have come to embrace the return of the repressed by transgressing the rules of sociological method and inventing new methodologies, or at least by allowing ambivalence and social imagination to regain some ground in sociological thinking. Perhaps then there might be a chance for psychoanalytic sociology to re-emerge as a hybrid creature endowed with a multiplicity of unconscious desires.

Going back to Dr. Schreber's paranoia, it was experienced as a revolt of the imagination (a form of madness)—a place where porous boundaries between human/(in)human/(sur)human, animate/(in)animate, man/(wo)man, etc. gives rise to less polarized conceptualizations of the self. Freud's analysis provided us with a vision of delusion formation "that is not the product of a pathological formation but is in reality an attempt at recovery, a process of reconstruction" (1911b, 41). From a Lacanian perspective, the paranoid self in the pursuit of unattainable and frustrated desires embodies a multiplicity of broken and refracted mirrors that can stimulate a creative social imagination. Bion's rethinking of Klein's paranoid-depressive position stressed the importance of the destabilizing forces/energies of paranoia, which can challenge totalizing certainty through social dreaming (1992, 214–215). What I am suggesting is that paranoid fears and paranoid thinking, that characterized the relationships between sociology and psychoanalysis in the 40s, 50s, and early 60s may no longer induce distance and marginalization but can become a source of change and transformation in

the institutional context of cross-disciplinary work through an openness on both sides to new modes of thinking and methodologies without fear of loss of professional identity.

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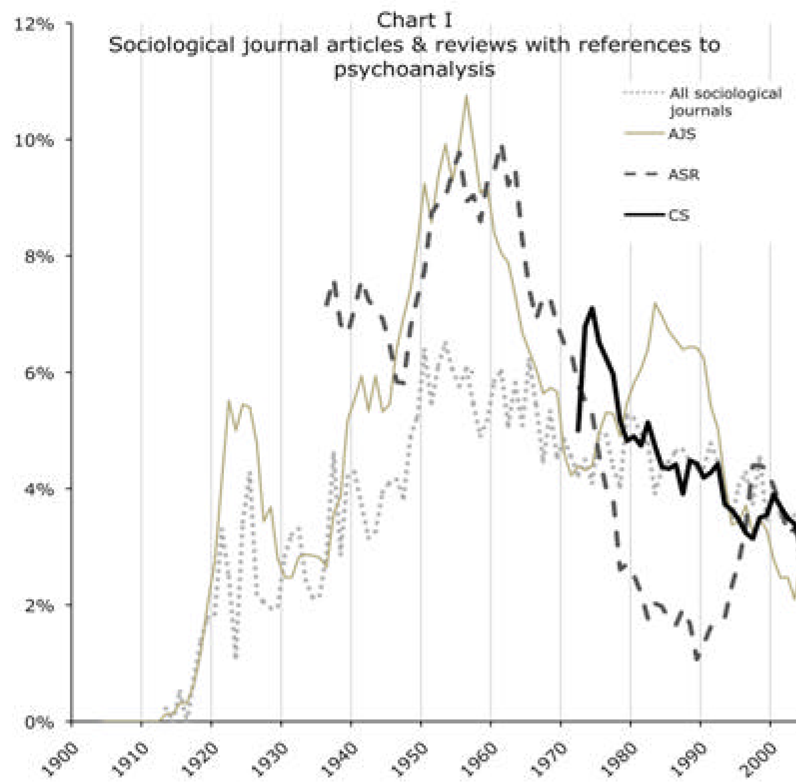
The containment took the form of strengthening boundaries between disciplines as well as by isolating sociological sub-specialties that received less visibility, resources and influence.



Data compiled from Sandbox, a beta search program of JSTOR. Lines represent percentages of items (articles, reviews) out of total items of each year that contain one or more of the following terms: Freud, Freudian, psychoanalysis, psychoanalytic, Horney, Lacan.