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THE EMERGENCE OF SOCIOLOGY FROM POLITICAL ECONOMY IN THE UNITED STATES: 1890 TO 1940

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Professional sociology in the U.S. began as a field area within economics, but gradually emerged as a separate discipline. Using new data on joint meetings and the separation of departments, I track interdisciplinary relations through three phases: sponsorship (1890–1905), collaboration (1905–1940), and disengagement (post-1940). In the early years, sociology was mostly a branch of economics departments. With the formation of the American Sociological Society, relations with economics began to be more characterized by professionally autonomous collaboration. The 1920s saw a large wave of sociology departments separating from economics. Still, joint annual meetings (including joint presidential addresses) remained the norm until 1940. Paradigmatic conflict between institutional and neoclassical economists was the major force that sustained the economics–sociology collaboration. As institutionalism faded from the scene in the late 1930s, so went interdisciplinary contact. © 2009 Wiley Periodicals, Inc.

INTRODUCTION

Disciplinary history rarely gives much attention to neighboring fields.[1] The sociology of professions, however, emphasizes how fields of expert knowledge constitute a system of interacting professions (Abbott, 1988, 1991; Leicht & Fennel, 2001). What one profession does directly affects the opportunities and constraints of all of its neighbors. Sciences do not simply develop, but rather grow carefully in an environment rich with (potential or actual) competitors—other sciences which might expand to claim the territory of another, or retrench and give up some intellectual ground to others.

Interprofessional competition and claims of jurisdiction, Abbott argues, are the fundamentals of professional life. For over a century, there has been competition between psychotherapeutic professions and the clergy for the guidance of the distressed, rivalry between lawyers and accountants over the market for business services, and disputes between psychiatry and law over treatment of the "insane." Medicine, the icon of the professional world, engaged in territorial skirmishes with virtually every member of the modern medical "community": pharmacists, nurses, physiotherapists, chiropractors, midwives, et al. The outcomes of these disputes have defined, broadly, what doctors do. Professions, in this view, are fundamentally interrelated. They are "never seen alone" and "exist in a system" (Abbott, 1988, p. 33). From this perspective, the contours and content of academic disciplines are a result of their professional competitors, rather than just their own internal logic.

1. Notable exceptions include Ben-David and Collins (1966), Ross (1991), and Camic (1992).

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This suggests that disciplinary histories should look carefully at the fields adjoining them. In doing so, this paper argues that the theory is incomplete. It fails to capture the intermixing of competition with *cooperation*. The early years of American social science were not very competitive, and the emergence of professional sociology, in particular, cannot be understood as a game of disciplinary rivalry. At its inception, the jurisdictional mandate of sociology was to provide a framework to interpret and understand the vast socioeconomic changes brought on by the Industrial Revolution. This central theme—the nature of industrial capitalism—runs through all the classical works: Spencer, Durkhiem, Marx, Simmel, and Weber. This orientation inevitably placed the discipline in close contact with political economy. In America, sociology entered the curriculum of the expanding university system through departments of economics. Professional sociology in the United States—its entrance into the university world and its formation as a professional body—was *sponsored* by economics. The American Economic Association (AEA) was the early meeting place of aspiring sociologists, and it was in the company of broad-minded economists that sociological networks formed, ideas circulated, and momentum grew. The AEA's annual meeting was the birthplace of the American Sociological Society,[2] and for more than three decades the associations coordinated their annual meetings, held joint presidential addresses, and shared ideas on the socioeconomic problems of the day.

Abbott argues that the history of a profession is built out of episodes of territorial conflict with their neighbors. It is in these moments, he argues, that disciplines experience major changes—expand, contract, retool, or change focus. It is clear, however, that social sciences often benefit from the presence of other social sciences. Disciplinary advancement can come from positive-sum cooperation. They lend credibility and support, borrow or spark ideas, and occasionally even sponsor new applicants to the field. For early American economists, sociology was to be part of the reformation of economic thought. Sociology added a richness and breadth that was lacking in the "orthodox" economics of the time. Even as it became clear that sociology would be more than a field area of economics—and thus a potential competitor in the university system—economists continued to take interest in its works and support its advancement. It was not until World War II that notable rivalries emerged between the fields.

The task of this paper is to describe and explain the relationship between economics and sociology as it passed through three phases: sponsorship, collaboration, and disengagement. First, I discuss the intellectual background to early American sociology, emphasizing the different influences of Herbert Spencer on the one hand, and German historical economics on the other. From here, I document the distinctive patterns of professionalization seen in the three periods of sponsorship, collaboration, and disengagement. The precise timing and milestones in the separation of sociology and economics are identified. The primary data for this come from (1) the separation of departments at the top universities and (2) a 50-year time series on joint annual meetings. The final section of the paper examines the causal factors involved: What held the two disciplines together for so long, and what drove them apart? Neither disciplinary growth (*per se*) nor the rise of mathematical formalism in economics was an important factor. The major cause was the downfall of institutional economics and the corresponding rise of Keynesian macroeconomics. The shift in economic focus away from institutional structure made sociology less relevant to economists (and vice versa).

2. The American Sociological Society (ASS) is known today as the American Sociological Association (ASA). The change of name occurred in 1959.

The Roots of American Sociology

American sociology was the product of an expanding, resource-rich academic world. In the late nineteenth century, the U.S. university system began a transition from a collection of small, predominantly religious colleges to a system of large-scale research universities that were to become world leaders in graduate education. As late as 1890, American writers had contributed little to the social sciences; the U.S. imported its social-scientific knowledge and sent its best students abroad to acquire it. But by the end of World War II, American traditions in social science held unrivaled dominance in the world.

The sociology that developed during this process had two primary sources: Spencerian sociology and German historical economics. The former was constructed on a foundation of classical economics, while the latter sought to rebuild economics around a historical and institutional approach. Although differing in many respects, both intellectual roots placed sociology in an intimate relationship with economics.

Herbert Spencer's sociology was deeply rooted in the metaphors of the marketplace: competition and the division of labor. He spent five years as an editor at the *Economist* magazine, and was heavily influenced by Adam Smith and Thomas Malthus (Coser, 1971, p. 104). The Smithian marketplace was a great analogy for society—growth leads to specialization and interdependence. Population growth leads to an increasing division of labor in society; both individuals and social institutions become more differentiated and more interdependent (Spencer, 1967). The various aspects of society—family, work, market, and religion—were like factors of production, jointly producing a social whole. Malthus's contribution focused on how fertility and mortality respond to economic conditions (Malthus, 1993). He argued that people, much like plants and animals, have a tendency to produce more offspring than can survive. Humanity faces an inherent dynamic of competition—what Spencer called the "survival of the fittest."[3] This was the foundation for Spencer's *laissez-faire* worldview. Disrupting the competition for survival (for example, by providing aid to the poor) only "encourages the multiplication of the reckless and incompetent" (Spencer, 1851, p. 151).

Spencer had an enormous popular following in the United States. "During the last quarter of the [nineteenth] century [Spencer] enjoyed an international reputation and influence almost comparable to that of Charles Darwin" (Coser, 1971, p. 106):

> To the numerous advocates of laissez faire in America, Spencer contributed both the great prestige of his name and an almost inexhaustible supply of arguments against the general-welfare state. No authority was more often cited by the opponents of state action than Herbert Spencer. (Fine, 1956, p. 43)

For many years, sociology was widely defined by the writings of Herbert Spencer. His was a sociology that was adamantly *laissez-faire*, waded belligerently into public policy, and denied a simple distinction between the economic and the sociological. Even among economists, critics of *laissez-faire* framed their work as attacks upon Spencer (e.g., Adams, 1887). In fact, Spencer's framework was sometimes criticized for being too much a theory of "economic aggregates" that lacked a genuine sociological perspective (Patten, 1894).

The second intellectual root of American sociology was the German historical school of economics, within which many American students were trained. For most of the nineteenth century, graduate education in the U.S. was nonexistent. Most schools were small religious

3. Charles Darwin also credited classical economics for his theory of natural selection. After reading Malthus, he wrote, "I had at last got a theory by which to work" (quoted in Schweber, 1978, p. 322).

colleges with few resources and even less sense of serious academic inquiry. Social science was ill-regarded at best. As late as 1875, training in political economy basically amounted to reading "one good book" (Parrish, 1967, pp. 2–3). Sociology was even less developed.

Germany, in contrast, offered one of the best university systems in the world, as well as a highly prestigious collection of broad-minded political economists. It became a haven for ambitious American students (Parrish, 1967, pp. 3–5). The academic flood into Germany was so great that few of the founding generation of American social scientists missed the experience. German economics was altogether different from the British classical tradition. The German school put forth "a theory of political economy upon a basis of historical sociology" (Hasbach, 1891, p. 509). The leading works were theories of the "stages" of socioeconomic development, together with rich histories of entrepreneurship, trade unions, and industrialization. They emphasized the cultural and religious groundings of economic life and the close interrelation of cultural and economic history. "Economic life had to be understood . . . by interpreting it as part of a particular cultural pattern of a society" (Münch, 1994, p. 160).

Indeed, the broad emphasis on culture was one of the tools that the German school used to differentiate itself from the British classical economics. Their program, by all accounts, was enormously influential for American students. Simon Patten, a key American figure in both economics and sociology, commented that "like other returning students, I thought the last word on all subjects was in German" (Patten, 1912, p. 1). While the migration to German universities only lasted for a generation, much of the spirit of the school was passed along to the institutional economics movement.[4]

The Era of Sponsorship: 1880–1906

By the beginning of the 1890s, there was a growing American literature with a (albeit ill-defined) "sociological" viewpoint. However, there was little indication that sociology was emerging as a distinct profession (Howerth, 1894). Both the Spencerian and German-historical sociologies were extensions of the inquiry into economic life. Spencer's sociology, as an application of the market metaphor, did not need sociologists to have fundamentally different training than economists. The German tradition in economics justified itself in part by its broad sociological foundation, and encouraged economists to study sociological works. In the U.S., there was a widespread view that "a new economic world needs a new economics" (Ely, 1936, p. 147), and sociology was welcomed as a part of, or at least as a contributor to, the reshaping of American economic thought.

In the early 1880s, German-trained economists began plotting a professional association along the lines of the German *Verein für Sozialpolitik*. The platform of the American Economic Association, when it was founded in 1885, declared that the "conflict of labour and capital" had brought on a "vast number of social problems." Free-market doctrine was politely dismissed. The platform rejected the methods of fact-free "speculation" and endless deductive reasoning; it called for the "historical and statistical study of actual conditions of economic life" (Ely, 1886, pp. 6–7). Richard Ely, the founder of the AEA, saw it as a coup against "the sterility and barrenness of the old [British] economics" (Ely, 1910, p. 69). Many saw it as a venue for "protest . . . against the current political and social ideas" (quoted in Ely, 1910, p. 80).

4. Institutional economics was also much affected by the work of Thorstein Veblen and by American pragmatic philosophy.

This was the meeting place for the group of early sociologists. It was within the AEA that the sociology profession began to take shape: Networks of practitioners were formed, papers were presented, and reputations were established. While sociologists were a minority among the AEA membership, they held important leadership roles, including positions as vice-president, secretary, and editor of publications. Prominent figures included Franklin Giddings, Charles Horton Cooley, Edward Ross, and Albion Small. These individuals went on to establish sociology at Columbia, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Chicago. The AEA became not just a meeting place for sociological discussion, but also a job market. This meant that the departments of economics, by default, became the main entry point for sociologists aspiring to a university career.

The literature on the history of sociology has focused heavily on the University of Chicago. It was here that the first sociology department was founded, the major journal (AJS) was established, and where some of the most innovative research was generated (particularly in the 1920s). Chicago sociology is also unique, however, in never having a strong relationship with economics. While Chicago was in many ways the flagship department for sociology, it did not set the pattern for sociology's introduction into the university system. In this, it was Columbia University that provided leadership; Chicago provides an intriguing—and illuminating—exception.

At Columbia, the push to introduce sociology was launched by the economics department, made up of professors Richmond Mayo-Smith and Edwin Seligman. Mayo-Smith "pioneered in the teaching of statistics in social science," and authored classic texts on statistics for both economics and sociology (Dorfman, 1959, Vol. 3, p. 92; Mayo-Smith, 1895, 1899). Seligman, for his part, defined economics broadly as "the study of the social relations of individuals" (Seligman, 1904, p. 64). Later in his career, as editor-in-chief of the first *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, he wrote that sociology was "deeper" than economics and, indeed, "the most important of the human sciences" (Seligman, 1937, Vol. 1, p. 5). Both professors were trained in Germany, and both were enthusiastic about the potential of sociology.

In 1894, Franklin Henry Giddings was appointed professor of sociology in the Columbia economics department. While his academic credentials were thin—he was largely a self-taught social scientist—he enjoyed much prominence and respect at the AEA. Indeed, Giddings was the editor of the AEA's *Publications* (precursor to the *American Economic Review*). In his early writings, Giddings emphasized "the Sociological Character of Political Economy" (Giddings, 1888). Sociology, he argued, constituted an important but neglected branch of economics, which would study how "wealth-production and distribution" interacts with "human nature and social organization" (Giddings, 1888, p. 29).

Under Giddings' direction, and with the support of a top-rank economics faculty, Columbia rose to be a leading center of American sociology. In particular, Giddings was a great proponent of statistics, though more of a visionary and enthusiast than a technical expert. He led the push for quantitative empiricism in American sociology, though in the early days it was the economists on the faculty who provided his students with advanced statistical training.[5]

Over the years, Giddings trained more than 50 Ph.D. graduates "who held top positions in college, university, publishing, and public affairs" (Odum, 1951, p. 87). Six of his students became presidents of the American Sociological Society (Lipset, 1955, p. 292). In Turner's

5. By the 1920s, sociologists like Robert Chaddock (a Giddings student) were teaching the statistics courses for economics students.

assessment, “no sociologist since, with the possible exception of [Talcott] Parsons, was to so deeply mark his students, and none, including Parsons, had so many successful students” (Turner, 1994, p. 45).

Columbia was an extremely prominent university, and the Columbia model of sociology within economics became the norm. At Michigan, the economics department established a course in sociology in 1894; Charles Horton Cooley, who had just completed his Ph.D. in political economy, took responsibility for the course (Cooley, 1969, pp. 3–7). At Harvard, the economics department promoted one of its instructors, Edward Cummings, to a position as associate professor of sociology in 1893 (Mason, 1982, p. 398). At Pennsylvania, the Wharton School of Finance and Economy hired an instructor—one of its own graduates—to teach sociology in 1894 (AAPSS, 1894, p. 418).[6]

A survey of universities from 1909 drives the point home. By now, sociology courses were offered in some 173 schools in the U.S. Yet only 65 schools (36%) had an academic department that even had the word “sociology” in its title. Most often, sociology was taught in the department of economics. Table 1 shows the departmental residency of sociology courses.

The dominant image here is of sociology as a sort of “young sibling” under the wing of economics. Yet most of the 173 schools summarized in Table 1 were minor colleges that had little influence in the formation of the discipline. They generated little research and rarely trained the professors that would instruct the next generation of students. The important work in sociology was happening at a handful of elite universities. And here, the sponsorship of economics held even greater importance.

To look specifically at the top schools, I ranked sociology departments by the size of their doctoral programs—the number of Ph.D.s granted during 1920–1939. Data on Ph.D. output were extracted from the Doctoral Records File, which contains a listing of all Ph.D. graduates in the U.S. (by department) since 1920.[7] The origins of sociology at each university were determined primarily by examining historical course calendars, supplemented by published histories of the universities/departments. The top 20 sociology departments of the day, and their origins, are shown in Table 2.[8]

Among the top schools, the Columbia model of economics sponsoring the entrance of sociology is overwhelmingly dominant. In 17 out of 20 departments (85%), sociology entered the university curriculum through the economics department. The eclecticism of the smaller colleges is not found among the elite universities; here economics was absolutely central in the career path of sociology. From a departmental view, early sociology began largely as a field area of economics.

In light of modern department rankings, there are a few notable surprises and a few notable absences in this top 20 list. First, Catholic schools—the Catholic University of America (CUA) and Fordham University—have a surprisingly strong presence.[9] Both these schools—especially

6. Sociology, economics, and political science were the only social sciences to be established in the Wharton School. All the other social sciences were later founded in Penn’s School of Arts and Sciences.

7. The Doctoral Records File was constructed by the National Science Foundation and is currently housed at the National Opinion Research Center (the database was queried by special request). The DRF is considered a “virtually complete” record of Ph.D. recipients during this period (Thurgood, Golladay, & Hill, 2006, p. 119).

8. Other data can be used to check the validity of department rankings using these Ph.D. numbers. Hughes (1925) provided a reputation-based ranking for 14 departments. Hughes’s top 12 departments are the same as the top 12 on the list here, with the exception of the Catholic University (which is not on Hughes’ list). Hughes’s last two departments are odd selections: Bryn Mawr, ranked 25th in Ph.D.s, and Illinois, ranked 49th, with no Ph.D.s at all.

9. In general, early sociologists (as well as left-wing economists) were strongly affiliated with Protestant church movements.

TABLE 1. Title of Departments Teaching Sociology in 1909 (department title includes the term listed)

	Number of Schools
Economics	95 (55%)
Sociology	65 (36%)
History	38 (22%)
Political Science	30 (17%)
Philosophy	11 (6%)
Psychology	6 (3%)
Anthropology	3 (2%)

Source: Bernard, 1909, p. 186.

TABLE 2. Origins of the Top 20 Sociology Departments in the U.S., 1920–1939

University	Ph.D.s Granted (1920–1939)	Year Sociology Department Formed	Previous Location of Sociology
Chicago	101	1894	*Original Department*
Columbia	66	1924	Economics and Sociology
Wisconsin	55	1929	Political Economy
Yale	37	1937	Economics, Sociology, and Government
Catholic University	34	1897	*Original Department*
Pennsylvania	32	1913	Economics, Politics, and Sociology (Wharton School of Finance and Economy)
Minnesota	30	1910	Economics and Political Science
Michigan	29	1929	Political Economy and Sociology
Cornell	25	1939	Economics and Social Psychology
North Carolina	25	1920	Rural Social Economics[a]
Ohio	23	1922	Economics and Sociology
Harvard	22	1931	Economics/Social Ethics (two separate departments)[b]
New York University	22	1919	Economics (undergraduate)/ Social Science (graduate)[c]
Pittsburgh	17	1926	Economics
Iowa	16	Late 1930s	Economics and Sociology
Southern California	16	1915	Economics and Sociology
Fordham	12	1916	*Original Department*
Stanford	9	1948	Economics and Social Science
Northwestern	8	1926	Economics
Vanderbilt	8	1926	Economics and Sociology

[a] The department of rural social economics lobbied for the creation of the sociology department, and had a very similar research focus, but it was not merged into the new sociology department and continued to have a separate existence (Snider, 1992, p. 178).
[b] At Harvard, sociology was split between the department of economics and the department of social ethics until 1931. However, economics took the leadership in creating the sociology department and recruited its professors (Sorokin and Parsons).
[c] Between 1895 and 1918, undergraduate sociology was taught by the economics staff. In the graduate school, sociology did not have a tenure track professor until 1919 (NYU Catalogue, years 1895–1930).

CUA—showed strong early leadership but have since declined as centers for sociology. Neither survives today as an important department. Neither of these departments was sponsored by economics, and their short-lived prosperity was presumably due to a temporary Catholic enthusiasm for sociology. Both were very much on the "social work" wing of sociology. Fordham stands out because after the sociology program was established, the graduate courses in economics were folded into sociology (Fordham, 1925). The top 20 list is also notable for excluding a few of today's leading sociology departments. Berkeley and Princeton, for example, are absent from the list. At Berkeley, a sociology department was not established until 1946, after extensive lobbying by faculty in rural sociology (in the College of Agriculture) and from the economics department (Buroway & Van Antwerpen, 2001). At Princeton, sociology was in the Department of Economics and Social Institutions until 1962.

The major exception to the Columbia model, the University of Chicago, deserves attention. Sociologists have spilled much ink over the history of the Chicago school, but a key distinction has rarely been noted. Unlike almost every major American university, at Chicago sociology began independently from political economy. Indeed, the creation of the department was "half an accident" (Bannister, 1987, p. 38).

In the early 1890s, the fortune of John D. Rockefeller was financing the construction of an unprecedented academic empire. The newly formed University of Chicago had resources and ambitions unlike any other. Record salaries—two to three times what other universities were offering—attracted the top thinkers and even presidents of other schools. It was here, in the context of a seemingly unlimited budget, that the first independent department of sociology in the world was founded.[10] Yet it was largely a byproduct of Chicago's interest in recruiting a promising young professor by the name of Albion Small.

Albion Small had studied historical economics in Germany, and completed his Ph.D. under the supervision of Richard Ely, the founder of the AEA. Small had taught only one course in sociology, and published nothing under that name. Indeed, he was originally recommended for the chair in history. Another was chosen for the history department, but the administration was enthusiastic to keep him. Small was the president of Colby College; he had symbolic value and administrative experience, and was to be appointed Dean of Liberal Arts (Bannister, 1987, p. 38; Goodspeed, 1926). In the end, the department of sociology was created to find him an office.

From the beginning, there was considerable uncertainty over what this department would look like. When Small was first assigned head of the new department, he hoped to recruit two leading sociologists (Lester Ward and Samuel Dike) and two prestigious economists (Francis Walker and Francis Wayland) (Bannister, 1987, p. 38). The agenda was a department of socio-economics. This was a faculty that would offer broad social theory (professors Small and Ward), political economy (professors Walker and Wayland), and applied social policy (professor Dike).

In the end, Small had little say in how the department took shape. None of Small's initial cast of faculty was hired. The first professor hired was privately recruited by the university president; Small learned about the appointment in the university newsletter (Goodspeed, 1926, p. 8). The department was ultimately combined with both anthropology and "sanitary science." The venture was not an immediate success. "In its first decade Chicago produced only minor and scattered pieces of research" (Shils, 1970, p. 770). Small established the *American Journal of Sociology*, though by his own account it was a scramble to fill its pages with worthwhile scholarship (Small, 1916, p. 786n). It was not until the 1920s that a coherent "Chicago school" of sociology emerged. Contact with economics was never institutionally established, and Small often complained that Chicago "divides departments so that many

10. In France, Emile Durkheim became the first professor of sociology in 1887, and soon after established a journal, *Année Sociologique*. However, rather than an institutionalized department, the project was built around Durkheim himself. And "when Durkheim passed from the scene . . . French sociology as the study of modern society practically disappeared for more than a quarter century" (Shils, 1970, p. 767).

students never see that the departments are still actually concerned with one and the same subject matter" (quoted in Bannister, 1987, pp. 36–37).[11]

It was understood from the beginning that sociology was something different from economics, even if the difference was not well understood. Sociologists were working on a broad perspective of industrial society and its many ailments. This was welcomed by many economists who sought a broader and richer foundation for their own discipline. What is striking here is the lack of disciplinary conflict and competition.

For the first 25 years of American sociology, the fledging discipline existed more or less under the wing of economics. There seemed two motivations for economics departments to incorporate sociology. First, there were many leading economics departments that had a strong German historical/institutionalist element and wanted to see a greater richness and breadth in their own discipline (Columbia, Michigan, Pennsylvania). In another vein, many economics departments were keen to teach Spencerian sociology (Yale, Harvard, NYU), seen as an extension of classical economic logic. In either event, early sociology was largely taught in economics departments (especially in the elite schools); as a network of professionals, sociologists made their home at the AEA. This was the era of sponsorship.

The Era of Collaboration: 1906–1936

The first strong step towards a separate profession of sociology came with the founding of the American Sociological Society. This was the initiative of Charles Veditz, an economics professor at George Washington University, who spent the summer of 1905 writing to prominent academics with sociological leanings. Everyone he contacted agreed that some organization of sociologists would be ideal, but opinion was split over whether they should form as an official section of the AEA or as separate body. Edward Ross, Lester Ward, and Simon Patten advocated a distinct association. Thomas Carver and Samuel Lindsay believed "that it would be unwise, perhaps, to separate at this time from the Economic Association, with which most sociologists are connected, and in which almost all sociologists are interested" (ASS, 1906, p. 555). Albion Small, for his part, did not offer a strong opinion, though he doubted that an AEA sociology section should be formed "simply for the practical reason that most of us are members of that body" (ASS, 1906, p. 556). He did, however, suggest that a session during the next AEA meeting be organized for sociologists to discuss the matter. This would be at a time during the meeting "when the economic papers would be of a sort not necessarily of interest to the sociologists" (ASS, 1906, p. 556).

With the assistance of the AEA, an activist core of nine sociologists arranged and promoted the session.[12] It is notable that of this group, all but one were AEA members. Seven had graduate training in economics, and four were past or future AEA executives.[13] More broadly, they were the leading figures at Chicago, Harvard, Yale, Pennsylvania, and Columbia.

11. Sociology and economics at Chicago were not, however, entirely isolated. Small often sent his students to study with Thorstein Veblen and others in the economics department (Dorfman, 1934, p. 247). In sociology, W. I. Thomas attracted many economics students (Mitchell, 1941, p. 880).

12. These were Albion Small, Edward Ross, Franklin Giddings, Lester Ward, Samuel Lindsay, Charles Veditz, Thomas Carver, William Graham Sumner, and Simon Patten (ASS, 1906, p. 557).

13. Sumner never joined the AEA due to political disagreement with its original platform. Edward Ross was AEA secretary during 1892–1893. Giddings was vice-president during 1896–1897. Simon Patten was president in 1908. Thomas Carver was president in 1916.

At the 1905 AEA meeting, a group of about 50 began organizing the American Sociological Society. The debate over separating from economics continued, but the energy of the gathering was perhaps best captured by Charles Ellwood, who commented:

> The American Economic Association has occasionally had on its program papers dealing with sociological problems; but if this can satisfy the group of American sociologists, we shall but proclaim to the world our lack of interest in, and enthusiasm for, the science in which we are working. (ASS, 1906, p. 560)

Indeed, the situation had an unfavorable appearance. Psychology had formed a professional association as early as 1892, anthropology in 1902, and political science in 1903. Sociology had become conspicuous for its lack of an independent professional organization. A professional body, as Albion Small argued, would allow sociology "to stand up and be counted more definitely" (ASS, 1906, p. 558). Edward Ross agreed that a separate body would "exalt the dignity of sociology in the public eye" (quoted in Calhon 2007, p. 25).

Countering this ambition was a sense that sociologists might be overextending their reach. Charles Horton Cooley, after the meeting, privately confessed that "I have no great expectations from the movement" (Jandy, 1969, p. 60). It was not clear, nor even claimed, that the research productivity of sociologists had outgrown their place at the AEA. More than two-thirds of those attending the organizational meeting were AEA members,[14] and almost all of them continued to renew their AEA memberships (Oberschall, 1972, p. 221). In short, sociologists had great desire to proclaim their autonomous professional status, but as of yet seemed to have had little practical need for a separate organization and had no interest in severing their ties with economists.

A sort of middle ground through this dilemma was struck: The new organization would meet at the same time and place as the AEA.

> There ought, to be sure, to be one or more "joint meetings," in which problems are discussed which are germane to both economics and sociology; and these meetings would emphasize the close relationship which subsists between economics and sociology. . . . (ASS, 1906, p. 563)

These joint meetings, as the archival records show, continued consistently over the following decades.

Joint Professional Meetings

Joint professional meetings have been almost completely neglected in the history of the social sciences. This is an unfortunate oversight. It is here where we find large numbers of academics meeting together purely out of mutual interest. While it is difficult today to think of sociologists and economists assembling together for joint presidential addresses, this was the norm for a very long time. To quantify this relationship, I constructed an original data set documenting 50 years of interdisciplinary meetings (1906–1955).

The primary source of the data is the published programs of the American Sociological Society's annual meetings. In general, the programs are highly detailed, listing the speakers and often the presentation titles. A typical record (this one from the 1911 meeting) reads:

14. There is no record of who attended the first meeting (December 27, 1905). The ASS properly came into existence at a meeting the next day. Of the 36 listed as present, 26 (72 percent) were AEA members in 1905 (ASS, 1906, p. 565; AEA membership list).

8 pm. Joint session of the American Economic Association and the American Sociological Society. . . .

Presidential Addresses:

1. Prof. Franklin H. Giddings, President of the American Sociological Society. The Quality of Civilization.

2. Prof. Henry W. Farnam, President of the American Economic Association. The Economic Utilization of History. (AER, 1912)

For the first eight years of the ASS, the programs of the annual meetings were not generally published (1908 is the only one available). For these years, data were taken from the programs of the American Economic Association, the American Political Science Association, and the American Statistical Association. These three associations cover the groups that had the closest links to sociology.[15] From 1914 to 1935, the final programs of the annual meetings were printed in the *Publications of the American Sociological Society*. From 1936 to 1955, the preliminary programs were advertised in the *American Sociological Review*.[16] From these sources, I extracted the number of years in which each professional association attended the annual meetings of the American Sociological Society.[17] More precisely, this measures the number of years each profession held a *joint presidential address*, at least one *joint working session*, or both, with the ASS. The raw data set is printed in the Appendix A (presidential addresses and working sessions are listed separately).

The first three decades of the ASS contained the most intensive contact with economics. Only data for these years are discussed in this section. The full time series, showing changes in the pattern of contact over the years, is taken up later.

Figure 1 shows the frequency of joint meetings during 1906 to 1935. Economists officially attended 21 of the 30 annual meetings (70 percent), primarily via the American Economic Association, but also through the American Farm Economics Association and the American Association for Labor Legislation (see Chasse, 1991, for a discussion of the AALL). Joint presidential addresses were organized, on average, every second year. Statisticians were also prominent at the sociology meetings. The American Statistical Association attended 19 annual meetings. This reflects a period in which sociology had a strong interest in, and played a key role in developing, quantitative methods. Political science had a noticeable but quiet role, organizing joint meetings in eight years scattered throughout the period.

These four associations—economics, sociology, statistics, and political science—made up the "allied social sciences group." Even when they did not plan any joint meetings, the associations coordinated their meetings to happen at the same time and place (e.g., Chicago, December 27– 29). Economics was the core member. One can find explicit statements that a certain time and place was chosen for the annual meeting, "following the decision of the

15. Both the American Psychological Association and the American Anthropology Association were established before the ASS, but neither held a joint meeting with sociology until the 1940s.

16. The program for the 1953 meeting was not published. Given the variety of professional associations assembling with the ASS in the later years, no attempt was made to find supplementary data. This year is excluded from the analysis.

17. Other sociology associations attending the ASS meetings—including the regional associations, the Society for the Study of Social Problems, and the Rural Sociological Society—were not counted in this analysis, on the grounds that they do not represent a different academic profession.

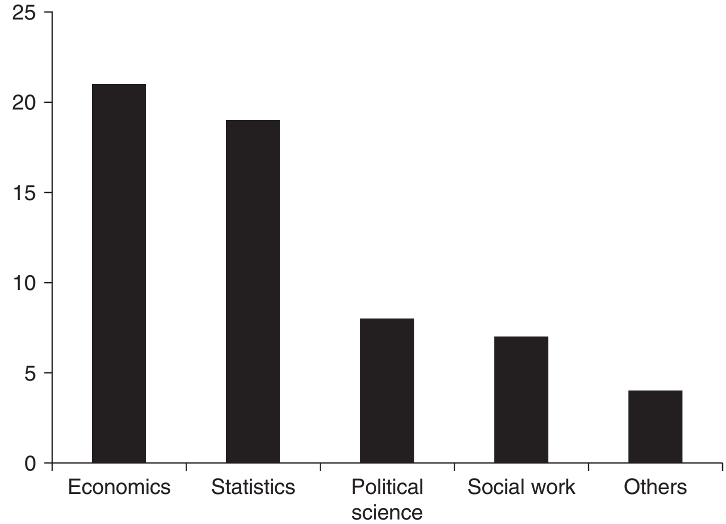


FIGURE 1.
Joint annual meetings of the American Sociological Society. Number of years when a joint annual meeting was held with each group, 1906–1935.

AEA" (AJS, 1922, p. 91). Neither psychology nor anthropology participated; as a rule, they did not coordinate their meetings with the allied social science group.

During the 1920s, sociologists took a strong interest in meeting with social workers, largely represented by the National Community Centers Association. Seven joint annual meetings were held with the social work group—all of which occurred between 1922 and 1930.

Thus, for the first three decades of the American Sociological Society, its interdisciplinary relations were heavily grounded in economics, followed by statistics. The path of professionalization for sociology was completely separate from that of psychology or anthropology. These groups never held joint meetings. Sociology was almost never taught in the same department as psychology or anthropology. These professional connections did not begin to emerge until after World War II—after the link with economics was broken.

THE ERA OF DISENGAGEMENT: 1930–1950

The era of disengagement did not signal the onset of a new, intensified competition between the disciplines. Rather, it was a gradual retrenchment into specialized studies—fields that would have not just little overlap, but would actually have a considerable "vacant lot" separating them. This is sometimes called the "post-war division of labor." But in this new social science factory, the differentiated workers were not producing pieces of knowledge that could be readily fit together.

The disengagement between economics and sociology can be charted across three quantitative measures: the decline of joint professional memberships, the establishment of separate departments, and the eventual termination of joint annual meetings. Overall, it seems the separation of economics and sociology was a gradual drift over several decades, but coming to an abrupt conclusion around World War II. Over this time, the professional impetus for collaboration faded away with the downfall of institutionalism in economics.

Measures of Disengagement

The Sociological Society was founded at the American Economic Association. For two decades (1885–1905), sociologists had relied on the AEA to provide an annual meeting place for the building of a professional network. But once the ASS was formed, sociologists did not need an AEA membership to carry on the business of sociology. Of the first-year ASS membership, 53 percent were AEA members, and this declined rapidly. While few ever gave up their AEA memberships, younger generations of sociologists did not opt for joint membership with the AEA. By 1928, only 12 percent were AEA members (Rice & Green, 1929). But economics remained the strongest tie of joint membership. Political science was next in line, with only a 4 percent membership overlap.

The declining importance of economics as sponsor and collaborator is also seen in the trend of joint departments. In the 1909 survey of universities, sociology was most frequently taught in the departments of economics. Only 36 percent of the departments teaching the subject had the term "sociology" in their title, and only 12 percent were independent sociology departments (Bernard, 1909). By 1945, a full 90 percent of the departments had the term "sociology" in their title, and 70 percent were independent entities titled "department of sociology" (Bernard, 1945, p. 543).

Looking specifically at the top 20 departments in the U.S. reinforces this picture (see Table 3). In 17 (85 percent) of these schools, the sociology department was formed by splitting off faculty from a joint economics department. At three other universities there was no immediate precedent for sociology (Chicago, CUA, and Fordham). The major wave of department separation happened in the 1920s. North Carolina established a department in 1920. At Ohio State, sociology separated from economics in 1922; Columbia followed in 1924 and Northwestern, Pittsburgh, and Vanderbilt followed in 1926. At Michigan and Wisconsin, the

TABLE 3. The Creation of Separate Sociology Departments: Top 20 Sociology Departments in the U.S. (ranking during 1920–1939)

Decade	Departments	Previous Location of Sociology
1890s	Chicago (1894)	*Original Department*
	Catholic University (1897)	*Original Department*
1900s	None	
1910s	Minnesota (1910)	Economics and Political Science
	Pennsylvania (1913)	Economics, Politics, and Sociology
	Southern California (1915)	Economics and Sociology
	Fordham (1916)	*Original Department*
	New York University (1919)	Economics/Social Science
1920s	North Carolina (1920)	Rural Social Economics
	Ohio (1922)	Economics and Sociology
	Columbia (1924)	Economics and Sociology
	Northwestern (1926)	Economics
	Pittsburgh (1926)	Economics
	Vanderbilt (1926)	Economics and Sociology
	Wisconsin (1929)	Political Economy
	Michigan (1929)	Political Economy and Sociology
1930s	Harvard (1931)	Economics/Social Ethics
	Yale (1937)	Economics, Sociology, and Government
	Iowa (late 1930s)	Economics and Sociology
	Cornell (1939)	Economics and Social Psychology
1940s	Stanford (1948)	Economics and Social Science

separation occurred in 1929. At Harvard, plans for a sociology department began in the late 1920s, and the project was completed in 1931. By this time, only a few of the major departments were still joined with economics (Yale, Iowa, Cornell, and Stanford). It seems clear that by the late 1920s or early 1930s, sociology was firmly established as a separate academic profession. When the American Sociological Society was formed in 1905, sociology could claim independent status at only two important departments (and only one elite university). By 1929, three-quarters of the leading sociology departments were independent faculties.

A third measure of disengagement is the pattern of joint annual meetings of the American Sociological Society and the American Economic Association. Working sessions, and particularly presidential addresses, were a crucial venue for economists and sociologists to keep informed of the leading work in each other's discipline.

Joint meetings with the AEA were regular and steady until the mid-1930s. The Great Depression, at first, sparked heightened interest in joint discourse. From 1929 to 1933, sociology and economics held five back-to-back joint presidential addresses. American society was facing its greatest crisis since the Civil War. The stock market collapsed, with prices falling 85 percent. Bank failures spread like fire, and millions lost their savings. Unemployment climbed to 25 percent. With the New Deal, beginning in 1933, the role of government in economic life was reinvented ad hoc. Institutional change was sweeping—the Wagner Act, minimum wage laws, wealth taxes, stock market regulation, and the introduction of unemployment insurance (Himmelberg, 2001).

Yet, after 1933, collaboration between economics and sociology faded, with only two meetings with the AEA over the rest of the decade. The two disciplines were somehow running out of topics of mutual interest. With the beginning of World War II, signs of separation were coming from both sides. In 1940, economics broke off from the allied social science group and held their meeting separately for the first time. In 1941, sociology and economics both met in New York, exactly 20 days after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. No joint sessions were held. Instead, the ASS passed a resolution that "the practice of regularly meeting with the American Economic Association and allied organizations be *discontinued*" (ASR, 1942, p. 74; emphasis added). Global warfare, economic depression, and institutional upheaval, it seems, somehow conspired to separate the two disciplines.[18]

Sociology held its meetings separately from economics and the allied sciences until 1949, and the two never met again after that. A 1946 membership concluded that the ASS "should hold some meetings 'by ourselves,' but every second or third meeting should be held with other groups." While there was a faction of the ASS with a "strongly held preference" to resume regular joint meetings, this was not the majority view (ASR, 1946, p. 632). Meeting with economics remained as a strong preference, but now ranked second to meeting with anthropology.[19] In the 1940s and 1950s, there were several meetings with anthropology, and some other groups made one-time appearances (psychology, the National Institute of Mental Health, etc.). But after the break with economics, sociology never reestablished a strong tradition of joint meetings with other social sciences.

In summary, there are three general measures of interdisciplinary relations, which give somewhat different indications of when, exactly, the separation of economics and sociology took place. The view from joint memberships is that the drift apart began with the formation of the American Sociological Society in 1906. Particularly for the following generations of

18. Camic (2007) emphasizes that sociologists made few substantive contributions to understanding the Depression (or even its sociological impacts).

19. In terms of votes, the ranking was anthropology (1st), economics (2nd), psychology (3rd), and political science (4th).

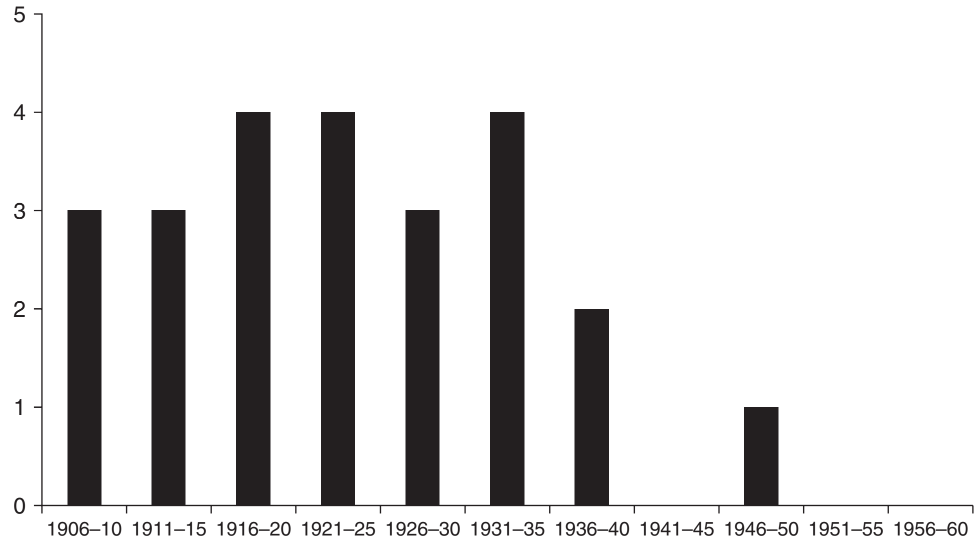


FIGURE 2.
Trends in joint annual meetings with economics. Number of joint annual meetings with economists, 1906–1955. Five-year totals.

academics, there seemed little need to hold a dual membership. Joint departments tell a different story; among the top U.S. universities, the major wave of separation occurred in the 1920s. This was likely a separation of opportunity: The economic prosperity of the 1920s expanded faculties and provided resources for sociologists to realize their ambition of autonomous professional status. Joint meetings provide yet another image of disciplinary relations. Professional gatherings of economists and sociologists peaked in the mid-1930s, and effectively ended by 1940 (see Figure 2). Here we find the termination of active dialogue between economists and sociologists.[20]

ACCOUNTING FOR DIVISION

Sociology and economics were close allies stretching from the emergence of American sociology in the 1890s up until about 1940. If professions are fundamentally competitive, what held these disciplines together for so long? What generated the abrupt demise of discourse between them?

Interdisciplinary work is not simply the product of intellectual curiosity. To occur on a large scale, it must feed into a career track. If economists are to consistently read sociology, it must enhance their ability to publish or otherwise advance in their profession.

Something happened around 1940 that changed the academic payoff to interdisciplinary work between economics and sociology. This section addresses several plausible hypotheses. The first is that professional growth encouraged specialization. As the academic market expands, scholars become less like broad-minded public intellectuals and more like narrowly specialized researchers. The second is that economics used mathematical formalism to build

20. Camic, in a detailed analysis of the Depression years, also identified the late 1930s as the time when sociology's "alliance" with economics broke down (2007, p. 279).

up walls around its professional territory. Economics alienated/excluded sociologists and others from studying the economy using a rhetoric of mathematical sophistication. The third is the demise of institutionalism in economics. The "institutionalist controversy" drew sociology into the center of contention in economics. As institutionalism faded, so declined the relevance of sociology within economics.

Having dated the separation as complete by 1940, one can focus on events that precipitated separation. Neither academic growth nor mathematical formalism were precipitating factors in the separation. The demise of institutionalism, however, corresponds closely to the separation of the disciplines.

Disciplinary Growth and Division of Labor

One of the oldest propositions in social science is that market growth leads to division of labor (Smith, 1776; Spencer, 1851). This seems like a good baseline hypothesis. In the early years, economists and sociologists were broad-minded scholars with a "public intellectual" flavor to them. They provided wide-ranging analysis of the major social and economic issues—labor unrest, urban poverty, crime, immigration, eugenics, business monopolies, war, and the income tax. Breadth of knowledge, in this era, was a mark of sophistication and was crucial to one's career.

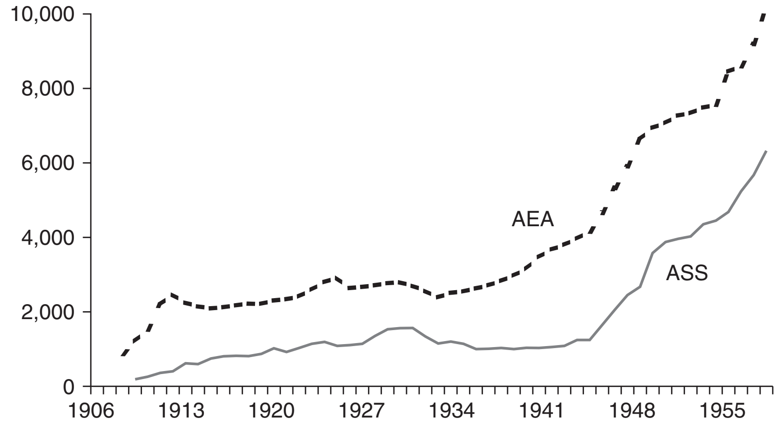
As the academic market becomes saturated, professors start to take up the task of narrowly specialized, detailed research. To make their voices heard in an increasingly competitive academic space, professors focus on flushing out the finer points of their theories. Attention turns to secondary or tertiary questions: not, "Should we restrict immigration?" but "How long does it take for immigrants to learn English?" In the era of public intellectuals there is disciplinary overlap; in the era of technical researchers there is functional specialization. It is growth that brings on this specialization. Sociology and economics, as they expand, naturally diverge—they carve out smaller and more distinct pieces of the intellectual terrain.

However, disciplinary growth does a poor job of explaining the separation of the disciplines. Judging from membership in the academic associations, neither profession had enjoyed any substantial growth in the two decades leading up to the separation.

ASS membership grew steadily during the 1910s, from about 250 in 1910 to just over 1,000 in 1920 (see Figure 3). Membership flat-lined from there. Despite a bubble during 1928–1932, the ASS saw no overall growth until after World War II. In 1940, ASS membership was actually below its average for 1920–1940. Economics did see some growth in the late 1930s and during the war years, which probably reflected their growing role in the administration of government. Nevertheless, membership in 1940 was only slightly higher than its average over the 1920s and '30s.

Sociology and economics separated at a time when neither profession had seen any substantive growth in at least two decades. The professional associations *have* grown tremendously, but this occurred after World War II—when the separateness was already well established. From the end of the war in 1945 to 1960, ASS membership expanded by 400 percent. This was the period when the university system broke away from its narrow elite origins and became an institution of mass education (Thurgood, Golladay, & Hill, 2006). The sociology profession reached its current size by 1970 (about 14,000). More than 90% of the current membership materialized after World War II (during 1945–1970).[21] If growth was the cause

21. The same is true for the AEA. Some 70 percent of its membership levels appeared between World War II and 1970 (Siegfried, 1998).



Note: Membership data for sociology are available at the American Sociological Association Web site. Accessed October 2006. Data for economics come from Siegfried (1998).

FIGURE 3.
Membership of the ASS and AEA, 1906–1955.

of the so-called "post-war division of labor," the separation would have occurred some time after World War II, when the professions were actually growing.

The Emergence of Formal Abstraction

Abbott (1988) argues that formalization is—at least in part—a strategy for jurisdictional control. "Formalization—the elaboration of knowledge at several levels of abstraction—uniformly strengthens jurisdiction" (Abbott, 1988, p. 103). This suggests that the "formalist revolution"—in which economics was entirely rewritten into the language of mathematics—may have played an important role in the separation of disciplines. Economists have built up an area of study that has been studiously ignored by other social sciences, protected behind a wall of formal abstraction. As formalism advanced, scholars became more reluctant to comment on the economy (without first studying formal economics). And the sheer difficulty and/or tedium of technical economics deter a great number of people.

Again, however, the timing indicates that mathematization was not a factor in the initial separation of the disciplines. The "formalist revolution" was something that captured economics in the 1950s. Before World War II, mathematical economics existed as a rather obscure specialization.

A study by Backhouse (1998) documents the development of mathematics in economics journals. In modern economics, "theory" means "equations and derivations." If a paper is *not* grounded in mathematical models, it might be a discussion paper, but it is certainly not a "theory" paper. This, however, is a post-war phenomenon. Before the 1930s, pure theory papers were rare in the top journals and few of these ever used mathematics. The proportion of theory papers using algebra rose from 20 percent in 1930 to 40 percent a decade later (Backhouse, 1998). The real breakthrough, however, did not come until 1947, with the publication of Paul Samuelson's *Foundations of Economic Analysis*. In form, the book is difficult to distinguish from a modern calculus textbook. The twin pillars of the methodology are (1) simplify an issue as much as possible, and (2) describe whatever remains as an optimization problem. Thus was fashioned the core of postwar economics. The use of math in theory papers rose from less than 40 percent in 1945 to nearly 80 percent by 1960 (Backhouse, 1998).

These works "might as well have been written in Sanskrit for all the incomprehension with which they were received by the older generation of pre-war economists" (Blaug, 1999, p. 257; Young, 2005).

There can be little doubt that mathematics has presented an imposing barrier between the disciplines, alienating sociologists (and many others) from the economics literature. But the timing of the separation does not square well with the "formalist revolution" (Blaug, 1999). Formalization was largely a postwar phenomenon. The 1930s were a time of early, foundational writings in mathematical economics. But mathematics did not capture the mainstream of the discipline until the 1950s (Backhouse, 1998; Blaug, 1999).

The Decline of Institutionalism and the Keynesian Aftermath

Before World War II, there was no single dominant tradition of economics in the U.S. Institutional economics was a powerful force in the interwar years, with its advocates occupying the presidency of the American Economic Association, building centers such as the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), and leading the indices of cited publications (Rutherford, 1997; Snowdon & Vane, 1997). Paul Homan, a critic of institutionalism, observed at the beginning of the 1930s that the project had "caused the whole structure of economic theory to be subjected to searching and critical scrutiny." The "incompleteness" of neoclassical economics, its "waning importance" and even "disrepute," had "been made sufficiently plain" (Homan, 1932, p. 15).

The institutional economists were the American continuation of the German historical tradition. The institutionalist project was to study "the conventions, customs, habits of thinking, and modes of doing which make up . . . 'the economic order'" (Hamilton, 1919, p. 311). The work of Thorstein Veblen had tremendous influence; sociologists like Charles Horton Cooley also contributed foundational works for the movement (e.g., Cooley, 1918). Cooley trained a number of the leading institutional economists and was often said to be "second only to Veblen in his general influence in establishing the institutional point of view" (Homan, 1937, p. 392; Hamilton, 1919). Talcott Parsons was initially trained as an institutionalist—and taught by two of its leading figures (Walton Hamilton and Clarence Ayres)—as an undergrad in economics at Amherst. In his economics courses, Parsons "read Sumner's *Folkways*, and a whole lot of things by people like Charles Horton Cooley and Emile Durkheim. We also read a lot of Thorstein Veblen" (Parsons, 1959, p. 4).

The origin of the term "institutional economics" itself tells us much about its relationship to sociology. The term "social economics" was frequently used in the early days, both in economics and sociology (Tolman, 1902). J. M. Clark, one of the leading theorists in the institutionalist school, differentiated narrow "price economics" from the broader "social economics" of authors like Veblen (Clark, 1919, p. 281). David Friday used the term "sociological economists"[22] to describe himself and other institutionalists. Veblen, even in his most "economic" work, *The Theory of Business Enterprise*, felt that he exceeded the "bounds of economic discussion" and ventured into "the field of the sociologist." He insisted that the "features of general culture . . . bear too intimately on the economic situation" to ignore them (Veblen, 1996, p. xx). The term "institutional economics" gained currency around 1920, when

22. David Friday to Walter Stewart, September 21, 1912, H. C. Adams Papers, box 13, David Friday folder. Friday was a professor of economics at Michigan. Friday studied under Charles Cooley and H. C. Adams, and was a graduate student with Walton Hamilton and Walter Stewart.

the movement took on a new aggressiveness.[23] Institutionalists sought to "recapture the American Economic Association" and the mainstream of the discipline. As one contemporary put it, the discipline was split "between following in the tradition of Alfred Marshall and taking the standpoint of Thorstein Veblen" (Anderson, 1933, p. 598). The *internal* divide between institutionalists and neoclassicists, in some ways, was more important than the *disciplinary* divide between economics and sociology. Institutionalists self-consciously sought to differentiate themselves from the neoclassical school. Institutionalism was opposed to both the *laissez-faire* philosophy and the conceptual narrowness of "price economics." The task remained, however, to construct a coherent and compelling alternative to price economics. For this, institutionalists drew heavily upon sociology (as well as other social sciences). The proper focus of economics, they argued, was not supply and demand, but rather a much more sociological conception of "the economic order" (Hamilton, 1919). In this view of economics, sociologists might make direct contributions; more importantly, the concepts and ideas from sociology were useful building blocks in the reconstruction of economics. This constituted a major "pull" factor, bridging what would otherwise be a disciplinary divide, and keeping sociologists close to economics. The alliance between sociology and economics survived until the downfall of institutionalism and the rise of Keynesian economics.

The point at which the tide turned against institutionalism can probably be traced back to a book by Lionel Robbins (1932), *Essay on the Nature and Significance of Economic Science*. Robbins attacked both the German historical and American institutionalist schools for bringing in "all sorts of sociological and ethical elements which cannot, by the widest extension of the meaning of the words, be described as economic . . ." (Robbins, 1932, p. 40, 83). Studies of how culture, values, and traditions shaped people's economic pursuits (Sombart's "spirit" of an age, Weber's "Protestant ethic," Hamilton's "economic order," etc.) constituted a black box of subjectivity "out of place in a scientific explanation" (Robbins, 1932, p. 87).

A strategic entrance was made, at this point, by a young Talcott Parsons (Parsons, 1991, 1935). In Robbins's offensive Parsons saw an opportunity to expand the domain of sociology. Parsons explicitly attacked institutionalism for being too sociological. Writing in the *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, he warned that institutionalism was rewriting economics to be an "encyclopedic sociology" and a "complete philosophy of history" that included everything but price economics (Parsons, 1935, p. 439). Economics, in Parsons' view, should focus on its strengths in rational choice theory, and keep within those bounds, as Robbins had argued. Institutions, particularly economic institutions, should be considered "a specifically non-economic factor" in society—the subject matter of sociology (Parsons, 1991, p. 530). Parsons followed on the tail of Robbins' attack, not to eliminate institutional theory (Robbins' goal), but to reframe institutionalism as sociology.

Parsons was trained as an institutionalist; his early research was either institutional economics or economic sociology (Parsons 1928, 1929, 1954a, 1954b), and the question was sometimes publicly debated (according to Parsons, 1970, p. 834). He himself had just been transferred from Harvard economics to the new sociology department (Camic, 1992). Nevertheless, Parsons soon came to be the institutionalists' "semi-enemy"—a label that he playfully embraced in correspondence with his former professor Walton Hamilton. Parsons sent a copy of one of his papers with the attached note: "another blast from the semi-enemy's camp for your delectation."[24] Karl Polanyi's comments about Parsons are also interesting.

23. It appears that a sociologist, Max Handman, thought of the term and suggested it during a conversation with Veblen (Rutherford, 2000, p. 278n). Handman himself left sociology to take a position in economics at Michigan, a career transition that was not uncommon in those days.

24. Walton H. Hamilton Papers, box J53, folder 3.

Though Polanyi today is often regarded today as a (economic) sociologist, he was in the Columbia economics department and a close member of the institutionalist circle. Writing to an institutionalist colleague, Polanyi refers to Parsons as "our friend and opponent."[25] This seems an apt description. Sociologists like Parsons had long been "friends" of (contributors to) the institutionalist movement. Yet, once matters of jurisdiction and territory boiled up to the foreground, they were opponents.

Parsons' attack was symptomatic of the cloud of disrepute settling over institutionalism. From the very beginning, there was extensive overlap between sociology and economics. Jurisdictional conflict had been kept in check by the success of institutional economics. As the future of institutionalism came under doubt, the spirit of collaboration began to weaken.

The arguments of Lionel Robbins were a call to arms for neoclassical economists, and it helped usher in a severe backlash against institutionalism. At the same time, institutionalism was unraveling from within, losing focus and theoretical unity (Rutherford, 1997). By the end of the 1930s, "institutionalism" had become a term of abuse, and economists were eager to distance themselves from it. By the early 1940s, there was little left of the movement. Sociology's major linkage to the economics discipline was essentially gone.

Yet the downfall of institutionalism did not simply clear the ground for the unquestioned dominance of *laissez-faire* neoclassical economics. Institutionalism burned out precisely as a new, more powerful opponent to the neoclassical school was rising. This was the Keynesian revolution. It swept across the economics profession like a fire. Within a few years of the publication of *The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money* (Keynes, 1936), its ideas were the centerpiece of American economic policy (displacing institutionalist designs). Just as quickly, this became the new axis of controversy among economists.

Most sociologists probably supported Keynesian policies. But the Keynesian revolution eliminated the need for a sociological perspective on the economy. The old questions were, What is the nature of the economic order? and How do institutions shape the economy? This was an approach that called out for sociological viewpoints. The new questions were, How can the government ensure full employment? and What is the optimal amount of deficit spending? On this, sociology had little to say. Some of the institutionalists, such as J. M. Clark, hoped that the Keynesian revolution was leading to something much broader and more sociological (Clark, 1947). A few sociologists did try to connect Keynesian economics with sociological foundations (Lekachman, 1957; Parsons & Smelser, 1956). But the economists were more interested in simplifying Keynes' 400-page tome into a set of "IS–LM curves," and working out some basic equations that government could use to pull the levers of the macroeconomy (Johnson, 1971). The nature of controversy in economics had changed sharply. In a sense, it was the end of paradigmatic conflict in American economics. Disagreement over *laissez-faire* remained, but its critics no longer looked "abroad" for critical ideas. Henceforth, disputes were contained within the accepted methods and theories of "economics proper," and no longer spilled over into neighboring disciplines. Once the focus turned from "institutions of capitalism" to "Keynesian government spending," the alliance between economics and sociology was over.

Conclusion: Eras and Systems of Academic Professions

There were three eras of interdisciplinary relations between sociology and economics: sponsorship, collaboration, and disengagement. The task of this paper has been to both describe and explain this evolving relation between the two professions.

25. Carter Goodrich Papers, box 3: General Correspondence L–Z, Karl Polanyi folder.

The first generation of American sociology was immersed in economic questions, a product of its two foundational influences. From England, the works of Herbert Spencer brought an economics writ large, built around the concepts of division of labor and market competition. From Germany, where so many Americans sought advanced study, there came a tradition of historical (and critical) study of capitalist institutions. American sociology began with the task of understanding the socioeconomic changes brought on by the industrial revolution. At almost all leading universities, sociology was introduced (and long remained) in the department of economics. The imagery of these early years is of sociology as a young sibling under the wing of economics. This was the era of sponsorship, stretching from the 1880s until the formation of the American Sociological Society.

The era of collaboration emerged as sociology established itself more firmly as an autonomous academic profession. From 1906 to the late 1930s, departments were separating, but joint annual meetings of sociologists and economists were a fixture of their professional world. On average, there were joint presidential addresses with the AEA every second year.

The pre–World War II history of sociology rebuts the notion of competitive professions struggling for territory and jurisdictional control. In strong form, Abbott insists "it is the history of jurisdictional disputes that is the real, the determining history of the professions" (1988, p. 2). Yet the period in which sociology was established and its central foundations built was one of close cooperation with economics.

Internal rivalry within economics was the primary factor that kept sociologists and economists in such close contact for so long. In economics, schools that competed with the "orthodox" classical and neoclassical approaches tended to distinguish their movements by appealing to broader social science. Both the German historical and the American institutionalist schools made a sociological orientation part of their identity. Thus, their professional project—building up their respectability in the academic world—contained a strong incentive to interact with sociology and follow new developments in the field. Once Keynesianism replaced institutionalism as the center of controversy, interdisciplinary contact faded away.

From a "system of professions" perspective, a most fruitful next step would be mapping out professional interaction among all the social sciences using the empirical methods developed here: a full network analysis of joint annual meetings and joint departments. This might, in turn, help to construct a theory of "network holes" in the social sciences—why, for example, psychology was so professionally distant from sociology, despite obvious overlaps of subject matter. A tempting explanation is that psychology needed its own higher-status sponsor (philosophy) (see Ben-David & Collins, 1966), and building ties with another young discipline would do little to help the advancement of either in the university system. It also seems that paradigmatic conflicts within a discipline (such as the rivalry between institutional and neoclassical economists) encourage bridges across disciplines—that *intra*-disciplinary conflict promotes *inter*-disciplinary cooperation. Mapping out the whole set of professional relations among the social sciences—strong ties, weak ties, and missing ties—will provide promising empirical leverage for testing broad theories of the development and interaction of disciplines.

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APPENDIX

JOINT ANNUAL MEETINGS DATA, 1906–1958

	Joint Presidential Addresses with:						Working Sessions with:						
Year	AEA	ASA	APSA	AALL	NCCA	Others	AEA	AFEA	AALL	APSA	ASA	NCCA	Others
1906	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
1907	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1908	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
1909	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
1910	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1911	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
1912	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1913	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1914	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
1915	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1916	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
1917	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
1918	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
1919	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
1920	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1921	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
1922	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
1923	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
1924	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
1925	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
1926	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
1927	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
1928	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
1929	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
1930	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0
1931	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
1932	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
1933	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
1934	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
1935	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
1936	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0

(*Continued*)

APPENDIX (*Continued*)

Year	AEA	ASA	APSA	AALL	NCCA	Others	AEA	AFEA	AALL	APSA	ASA	NCCA	Others
1937	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
1938	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
1939	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
1940	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
1941	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
1942	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
1943	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
1944	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
1945	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1946	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1947	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1948	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1949	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1
1950	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1951	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
1952	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3
1953	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
1954	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1955	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
1956	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
1957	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
1958	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Sum	18	19	7	3	3	3	10	14	10	5	17	7	20

Notes: AEA: American Economic Association. ASA: American Statistical Association. AFEA: American Farm Economics Association. AALL: Association for Labor Legislation. APSA: American Political Science Association. NCCA: National Community Centers Association