

THE LEGACY OF THE *ANNÉE SOCIOLOGIQUE* AS A JOURNAL

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I

IN this brief comment, I wish to offer some reflections on the influence the *Année Sociologique* has had as a journal—explicitly, as a model for how a journal might be used in the dissemination of particular points of view by a group of scholars who, in the main, have theoretical tendencies in common. I cannot be comprehensive here and I shall not undertake a detailed review of its contents, which for some aspects is available elsewhere (recent examples include Parkin 1996: ch. 3; Llobera 1996, on Durkheimian reviews of anthroposociological writings). However, I shall say something about the circumstances of its founding by Durkheim, its rationale as he himself viewed it, and its impact on how the work of one neo-Durkheimian anthropologist in the second half of the twentieth century was organized for a limited period and purpose. For the *Année Sociologique* itself, I shall draw freely on others' work, especially Lukes (1973: 289–95) and Fournier (1994: 133–50, 482–99, 532–41).

I suppose no journal is launched without its founders having identified some niche or other in the academic market, though in some cases a very small one or one which may not prove to have a viable long-term future: many journals fade out of existence after a few issues, even one. In the case of the *Année Sociologique* the rationale was simple enough. Durkheim and his colleagues were engaged in the task of establishing academic sociology in French universities, a task which involved both intellectual effort and political battles with rival disciplines, especially philosophy, psychology and, a little further afield, the 'English school' of anthropology.

Actually, despite the fact that he had precursors in academic sociology like Auguste Comte and Frédéric Le Play, Durkheim was creating rather than identifying a niche, with the *Année Sociologique* as a tool, though from our perspective the format was unusual. Lukes suggests (1973: 248) that Durkheim gave up the work he was then doing on socialism in 1896 to concentrate on founding the journal because he felt a great need to systematize sociology, in order to make it more specialized and give it firm boundaries from other subjects—in his own words from Volume IV, ‘gradually to work out the natural divisions of sociology’, rather than extend them at this stage (Lukes *ibid.*: 289, n. 1; 290).

Although the decision to found the journal was taken in 1896, the first volume was published only in 1898, and it never appeared on time. One problem to begin with was that Durkheim was still, till 1902, in Bordeaux, his colleagues in Paris or elsewhere, the publishers Alcan in Paris. In the intervening two years (1896–8) there was correspondence with both leading colleagues (Bouglé, Simiand, Lapie) and Alcan about setting it up, some of which has been published (in Besnard 1983). According to Fournier (1994: 134–5), one of the inspirations was the journal *L'Année Psychologique*, also published by Alcan (from 1895); the title *Année Sociologique* was actually taken from a rubric in the *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*, founded in 1893 by the ‘social philosopher’ Xavier Léon.

When one thinks of the early *Année Sociologique*, probably two things stand out: its co-operative nature, its teamwork; and the fact that although it did produce substantive (and substantial) articles, its main effort was devoted to discussing the work of other schools and disciplines in often extensive reviews, showing where they were right or, more usually, wrong from the Durkheimian point of view. They must be among the least ephemeral reviews in the whole social-science corpus. There can be no doubt as to their importance. Fournier calculates (1994: 145) that by the end of the first series, in 1913, 4,800 books and articles had been discussed and 4,200 further items listed, as compared with 18 ‘mémoires’ (actually 22 by my reckoning). Of the 10–11,000 pages in the series, Mauss alone contributed about 25 per cent.

There was also a concentration on issues rather than authors, on showing what was being produced in sociology or of relevance to it and on drawing lessons from bad or indifferent as well as good work, while always bringing out what was most useful and could be built on. In the preface to the first volume, Durkheim states: ‘The critic must be the collaborator of the author, his grateful collaborator, for whatever little remains of a book after critical evaluation, that much is gained for science...’ (cited in Lukes 1973: 290). And according to Bouglé, writing in 1907, a basic task was ‘to develop lasting frameworks for future analyses and syntheses’ (cited in Lukes *ibid.*: 292). As regards the teamwork, Durkheim appears to have been influenced by Wundt’s psychological laboratory in Leipzig, which he had visited shortly after *agrégation* (in 1885–6) and which was also arranged co-operatively (Lukes *ibid.*).

A third principle laid down by Durkheim was the impersonal, because collective, nature of the work. However, this was hardly observed in practice. Durk-

heim's early colleagues, like Simiand, Bouglé, and Lapie, were no ciphers and felt free to express misgivings in print about aspects of Durkheim's own work, often in reviews for other journals. Parodi and Muffang (whom Durkheim later got rid of because of his lukewarmness to the project) are two other names that appear early on. The early volumes also had contributions from such luminaries as Simmel, Ratzel, and Steinmetz, later ones being restricted to the Durkheimian core. Later, Hubert and Mauss were key collaborators, with Fauconnet and others also well represented; Hertz's contribution was relatively modest, with about twenty reviews in all. Their work is noticeably more conformist on the whole. In Lukes's view (*ibid.*: 294–5), it was not until the fourth volume that Durkheim was really able to impose his stamp on the journal, making it less 'eclectic' (Lukes's word) and imposing the imprint of the great man rather than that of a truly collective effort.

The first series ended in 1913, not continuing because of the war, which also ended the Durkheimian group itself as originally constituted. Mauss revived it briefly in the 1920s on the same basis, ultimately unsuccessfully, partly, according to Fournier (1994: 532), because of difficulties in obtaining contributions. The tremendous burden of work that the *Année Sociologique* had meant for both Durkheim and his colleagues (and also his wife: see Lukes 1973: 99, n. 4), did not go away, and Mauss may have been less efficient at such things—he had led his uncle into despair over his tardiness in presenting reviews for the first series (Fournier 1994: 148). Mauss managed to produce a very fat volume in 1925, followed by a very thin one in 1927 (i.e. a year late), then gave up. The third series, launched in 1940 with the co-operation of others, among them some late Durkheimians, bears the imprint of its origins in having a number of reviews, but there are also more articles by a wider spectrum of scholars. Today, though a leading journal, it is no longer the Durkheimian house journal. It is also now purely sociological: the interest in anthropology has long since died. This, of course, reflects the respective fates of the two subjects by mid-century. Both as school and journal, the *Année Sociologique* was founded at least in part in opposition to an older, ethnological anthropology associated in the Durkheimian mind chiefly with England, which was mostly killed off by the Durkheimization of anthropology under Malinowski and especially Radcliffe-Brown. This deprived the *Année Sociologique* school of one rival through its own absorption of it, and its successor journal of any real need to discuss it.

II

If we turn to the possible impact of the *Année Sociologique* as a journal on later work, one plausible imitator, at least in part, is *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, launched in 1957 with Mouton as its publisher. It was also initially an annual

publication, though published in English in order to ensure itself of a readership in India itself. Also, although it discussed some contemporary literature, its format was one of articles rather than reviews (Vol. III is a partial exception). It contains no specific acknowledgement of the *Année Sociologique*, but its co-founder Louis Dumont had been one of Mauss's students and, like Durkheim sixty years earlier, he had an agenda. As a model, therefore, the *Année Sociologique* is a likely candidate for what was also a somewhat unusual format to begin with. None the less, Dumont's purpose was much more modest and restricted in that he was not trying to institutionalize a new discipline on a global scale but to revamp an old one on a regional scale. Although David Pocock's name is to be associated with at least the early issues, these are routinely taken to bear Dumont's own intellectual stamp.

Dumont's agenda related to the anthropology (in the post-Maussian sense) of India. He advocated a shift away from the hitherto predominant study of tribes, who formed a very small percentage (under five per cent) of the population, in favour of giving more attention to caste, as well as drawing on Indology and history rather than on just anthropological fieldwork. The aim was also to professionalize the anthropology of India, many of whose existing practitioners were strictly amateur in status—administrators, missionaries, and the like—as they had been for decades. Theoretically, their work was old-fashioned ethnology rather than the more sociological anthropology Dumont had learned from Mauss. Although Kathleen Gough was working in South India at about the time Dumont was there, few of the others had even managed to catch up with functionalism: Dumont soon learned that structuralism was the only way to make sense of Indian ethnography, whether on kinship or on the caste system itself.

Despite the criticism that has greeted the ideas about caste that Dumont first began to work out in *Contributions to Indian Sociology* and which were to bear fruit ultimately in his influential *Homo Hierarchicus* (1966), there is no doubt that the journal has contributed to and largely determined the direction of the professionalization that has taken place in South Asian anthropology in the last forty years. Although reviews were never as big a part of *Contributions* as to the *Année Sociologique*, the idea was still to examine critically current work on India, again with a view to showing its defects, and to produce new themes, approaches, and directions out of this endeavour—especially, as far as Dumont himself was concerned, in a more structuralist direction. Much of it was written by Dumont and Pocock themselves, especially the former. Indeed, the first three volumes consisted entirely of unsigned articles under their joint responsibility as authors and editors of the journal. From Volume IV other authors were invited to contribute, and there was some critical correspondence (e.g. with Bailey, Berreman). Among topics addressed by Dumont himself were the nature of the village community, kinship and marriage, caste and racism, kingship (including a study of Hocart's views), communalism, and renunciation. Other contributors, apart from the critics, discussed law, *dharma*, time, the *jajmani* system (Pocock on the last two), neighbouring states, etc., the whole being a co-operative effort, but more loosely than

with the *Année Sociologique*. Passages from Bouglé and de Tocqueville were also reissued in translation.

By 1966, Dumont had come to the conclusion that the original *Contributions* had done all it could to turn the anthropology of India in a more professional, caste-oriented, and structuralist direction. He gave up the editorship after Volume IX, but still continued to contribute to the anthropology of India. Pocock had had less and less to do even with the first series, and eventually turned away from India in favour of the Mass Observation Project in the UK. However, others decided to launch a new series from 1967 (so there was continuity, unlike with the *Année Sociologique*), which eventually appeared twice yearly (from 1973). In 1980 it acquired a still more conventional format by published reviews, a format it still follows. The new series has always been published in Delhi with a mostly Indian editorial team and is now one of Sage's growing inventory of academic journals.¹

III

A further comparison with the present journal is hard to resist. Launched in 1970 as a vehicle for Edwin Ardener's student seminars, *JASO* too had an agenda, not followed absolutely, but for many who were involved one of deconstructing Lévi-Straussian structuralism, often with the aid of other, then fashionable French intellectuals. It can claim to have contributed to the development of semantic anthropology, which although short-lived urged a reflexivity about personhood which 'pomo' tendencies have since absorbed as a necessary part of how researcher–informant relations should be conducted. It was also a co-operative effort in terms of how it was physically produced on a stencil machine, if not in the actual writing. It appears, in its turn, to have been an inspiration for other local anthropological journals in many parts of the world (see Ardener 1980 on its early history). Like the two other journals discussed here, however, it has become more conventional in time, with more book reviews, a more stable editorial team and a professional printer. This is perhaps the destiny of every journal—which may be why new ones continue to be launched, despite a very crowded field. Routinization is evidently not limited to forms of governance but is also the fate of academic charismatics, if the fate of the journals some of them have founded is anything to go by.

1. It is interesting to note that some of Dumont's followers in the *équipe* ERASME in Paris have also published jointly; see Barraud *et al.* 1994.

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