



# Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology

## Online Updates Newsletter

Spring / Summer 2010 – Updates 8, 9 & 10

Welcome to the spring 2010 newsletter for the **Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology ONLINE**. Within this newsletter you will find a brief summary of recent updates, including 31 new and 11 updated entries, as well as a sneak preview of future entries. We've very pleased to announce that the Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology was selected as a best reference work by *Library Journal*, see the reviews section for more details.

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### About the Encyclopedia ONLINE

The **Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology ONLINE** provides a living, breathing resource for the academic community in sociology, including faculty, students, and researchers. The most comprehensive reference work ever published in sociology, the Encyclopedia is updated three times per year with new entries and updates to existing entries. Suggestions for new topics to be covered are welcome, and for those who did not contribute to the print version, there may be an opportunity to contribute to the Online Encyclopedia.

To learn more about the **Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology ONLINE**, visit

[www.sociologyencyclopedia.com](http://www.sociologyencyclopedia.com)



## Reviews

### Named a Best Reference Work for 2009 by Library Journal!

"This is an example of a reference book turned into an e-product intelligently and in a way that transcends the print, i.e., you can find more and do more online. It includes 1,800 definitions and explanations of the key concepts in sociology, with expanded essays on major topics within the field and a time line of over 600 key events in sociological history."

*Library Journal*

*"The most up-to-date work on this topic ... Essential. Lower-level undergraduates through faculty/researchers."*

**Choice**

*"The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology will increase students' understanding of important concepts, people, and trends in social sciences, and serve as a ready reference for scholars and teachers who need a well developed but concise exposition of a concept. Recommended for purchase in academic libraries."*

**Reference Reviews**

*"Attractive, easy to use and pleasingly set out, the site offers features that work well and are refreshingly straightforward ... There are useful bibliographical references at the end of each entry, and it is possible to find related topics of interest very quickly."*

**Information World Review**

## Recommend to your library!

Recommendations from academics are one of the most important deciding factors for librarians when choosing whether to purchase or renew a major reference work. You can recommend the Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology to your library by using the following form, or by passing along a copy of this email to your librarian with a note of recommendation:

### To recommend:

[Click here](#) to fill in the online Library Recommendation Form.

Simply fill in the required fields and paste the following information into the 'Recommended Titles' field: Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology ONLINE, Edited by George Ritzer, ONLINE ISBN: 978-1-4051-6551-8

**Remember:** your library must purchase the annual updates to receive access to the entries that are added to the Encyclopedia three times per year. Don't forget to remind your library of the continued importance of this valuable resource. [Recommend to your library today!](#)

## New Entries for spring 2010

(to see full text of entries, visit [www.sociologyencyclopedia.com](http://www.sociologyencyclopedia.com))

### Adolescent Sexual Health – Sarah Kendig

The sexual health of adolescents is an important and controversial topic among policymakers, social researchers and the public worldwide. Even though one in five people in the world is an adolescent and sexual activity in

adolescence is common, the sexual development of adolescents is often seen as problematic and often deviant, especially for girls.

#### **Anarchism and Urban Planning** - Charalambos Tsekeris and Theodore Tsekeris Panteion

In general terms, anarchism has been very influential on urban planning. Its most significant influence is particularly associated with the non-violent and reformist process of social transformation suggested within the theories of Kropotkin and Proudhon. In terms of planning theory, anarchism historically represents the ultimate edge of a varied structural reform process within community (Friedmann 1987) that aims at the decisive abolition of the state as an instrument of class coercion and inequality.

#### **Apothatic Reflexivity** - Charalambos Tsekeris & Anna Lydaki

Apothatic reflexivity, a term coined within sociological theory by Nicos Mouzelis (1999), signifies a wholly different, less rational and more spiritual way of theorizing the complex processes of self-awareness, self-experience and self-identity, in the contemporary context of “late” or “high” modernity. It more generally refers to possible ways in which spirituality can substantially contribute to current academic debates regarding the internal conversations of the social subject, as well as the emerging shift toward post-secular and post-materialist values.

#### **Committed Social Psychology** - Stamos Papastamou & Gerasimos Prodromitis & Charalambos Tsekeris

The emerging conception of committed social psychology implies that it is not easy to draw clear and sharp boundaries between social psychology and ideology, and more generally between social science and social action, facts and values, rational arguments and political beliefs, or “pure” and “applied” social research. This implies that social psychology, therefore, must not be regarded as biased just because it involves value presuppositions or ethical non-neutrality. On the contrary, this is a strong “natural” involvement that waits to be reflexively exposed and elaborated as a basis for action.

#### **Corporate Social Responsibility** – Paul Dean

In an era of increasing awareness about the large-scale biological, social, and environmental damage caused by many corporations, corporate social responsibility (CSR) has become an increasingly popular, and important, topic. Although defining CSR can be difficult and there is significant debate over what its goals are, or should be, there is little doubt that CSR is an issue that has moved (or been forced) to the agenda of nearly all major corporations.

#### **Disaster Tourism** – Kevin Fox Gotham

Disaster tourism is the movement of people to disaster affected areas to visually consume trauma, devastation, and catastrophe. Examples include guided tours of former concentration camps in Germany, Ground Zero at the former site of the World Trade Center, and the areas of New Orleans affected by Hurricane Katrina.

#### **Environmental Problems** – Riley E. Dunlap

Building from the emergence of environmental sociology in the mid 1970’s the sociological concern for environmental issues has been on the rise in recent years as news of global warming, air and water pollution, and changing weather patterns have garnered increasing attention from the media and public eye. This entry takes an ecological perspective to clarify the nature of such environmental problems.

#### **Fitness Culture** - Roberta Sassatelli

In contemporary Western societies, the “fit body” has replaced body decoration as a potent symbol of status and character, both for men and women. As clothes are ever more revealing, what is fashionable is the sculpting of the body itself. Fitness gyms and health centres have become highly visible as the sites where such a body is produced and are at the core of a much broader fitness culture, comprising a variety of commodities.

#### **Gay and Lesbian Politics** - Danielle Antoinette Hidalgo & Tracy Royce

Gay and lesbian issues have been at, or near, the center of politics in many countries in recent years. This entry examines some of the historical markers of gay and lesbian politics including World War II and the Lavender Scare, the U.S. based homophile movement, the Stonewall Riots, the removal of homosexuality from the APA’s

*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*, the election of Harvey Milk, ACT UP, and the ongoing battle for marriage equality.

#### **International Monetary Fund** – Susan Hagood Lee

Few international organizations have been the subject of as much influence, criticism, or debate as the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The IMF is, in essence, a gatekeeper of the international financial system. Although its future was coming into question as its portfolio dried up in the last half decade, the recent global economic crisis has again brought life, as well as criticism and renewed debate, to the IMF.

#### **M.A.U.S.S.** - David Graeber & Frédéric Vandenberghe

The anti-utilitarian movement of the M.A.U.S.S. - an acronym for *Mouvement Anti-Utilitariste dans les Sciences Sociales* – was founded by Alain Caillé and an alliance of largely francophone intellectuals in 1981 to counter the hegemony of utilitarianism in the social sciences (rational choice) and society (neo-liberalism). Its organ, the *Revue du MAUSS*, is a bi-annual journal devoted to the study of the gift in which anthropologists, sociologists, economists and political philosophers on the left explore the contours of an alternative science and society that are not based on self-interest and egoism.

#### **Mediology** - Frederic Vandenberghe

Situated at the crossroads of social sciences, mediology is a relatively autonomous discipline that analyzes the totality of the processes of mediation that make the transmission and diffusion of ideas possible. With its focus on the interplay between social and technological forces that connect culture to practices, it is, first and foremost, a political sociology in the Marxist tradition that analyzes how ideas are transformed into a material force that can change the world.

#### **Meta-Power** - Patrick McGinty, Tom R. Burns & Peter M. Hall

Meta-power is a process defining the capacity to construct the conditions, rules, and institutional formations under which individual and collective actors mobilize and apply resources to accomplish their intentions. Such structuring may involve the manipulation of norms and values as well as institutional arrangements. The conceptualization of meta-power breaks with the past by extending understanding of power and control over social structures across time and space.

#### **Microcredit** – Becky Hsu

Microcredit is the practice of distributing very small loans to people who have a very low income as a means of poverty alleviation and economic development. The very poor often do not have access to any financial services, and microcredit enables individuals to borrow for a profit-making enterprise in hopes of beginning an upwards spiral out of poverty. In 2009, there were an estimated 150 million borrowers in 10,000 microfinance institutions

#### **Neurath, Otto (1882-1945)** – Michelle Henning

Some writers have described Otto Neurath as a representative of the politically committed, left-wing of the Vienna circle. Neurath made logical positivist thought the basis of his social theory and was committed to social action and the capacity of people to change their lives for the better, as well as social and cultural pluralism.

#### **Positive Sociology** – Robert Stebbins

The author of this entry, Robert Stebbins, is also the academic who coined the term “positive sociology”. He defines it as the study of what people do to organize their lives such that those lives become, in combination, substantially rewarding, satisfying, and fulfilling. This proposed new branch of sociology follows the lead of positive psychology and leisure studies to move beyond the traditional concentration on life’s many problems and to focus instead on how, why, and when people pursue those things in life that they desire.

#### **Professions, Gendered** – Marina Loos

The term ‘gendered professions’ denotes that gender meanings are inscribed in the construction and changes of professions, historically and at present. Professions are established and change in a social context that mainly

draws on a prevailing gender ideology, supported by extensive gender segregation within and between the professions as well as through everyday interaction.

#### **Prosumer** – Nathan Jurgenson

Alvin Toffler (1980) coined the term “prosumer” in his book *The Third Wave*. Prosumers consume what they produce and/or produce what they consume. Thus, prosumption involves both production and consumption rather than focusing on either one (production) or the other (consumption). In recent years, the prosumer is of increasing relevance online through “user-generated content” on what has come to be known as Web 2.0.

#### **Scheler, Max (1874-1928)** – Frederic Vandenberghe

Scheler, a German catholic philosopher and social theorist, developed his own intuitive brand of phenomenology; proposed a material ethics of values as a systematic alternative to Kant’s formal ethics; presented a series of subtle phenomenological investigations of emotions like shame, guilt, repentance, resentment, sympathy, love and hate; laid the foundations of philosophical anthropology and sketched out, towards the end of a his life, a panentheistic metaphysics in which God progressively becomes, manifests and realises Himself in and through human history.

#### **Social Bond** – James J. Chriss

Explanations of the forms of human cooperation have preoccupied philosophy, the humanities, and science since the time of the ancient Greeks. It was not until philosophy was able to separate itself from religious doctrine, beginning with Hobbes (the state) and Locke and Rousseau (the social contract), that a search was launched for the mechanisms that hold persons together or drive them apart. Building upon the thought of Vico, Mill, and Comte, by the late 1800’s sociology was finally positioned to conceptualize and research human sociality bringing to bear the latest statistical and methodological techniques.

#### **Status Shield** – Ken Kolb

Arlie Hochschild coined the term “status shield” in her influential book, *The Managed Heart*, to describe how status serves to protect individuals from the “displaced feelings of others” (Hochschild 1983: 163). Recent research on status shields has gone on to explain the processes by which these shields are used in interaction. For example, in many cases, professionals construct status shields by insulating themselves behind intermediaries who act as emotional buffers.

#### **Stereotype Threat** - Kerry S. Kleyman & Markus Kimmelmeier

Stereotype threat describes a situation when members of a stigmatized group perform poorly on a task because they are concerned about confirming others’ negative stereotypes about them. Individuals feel great pressure and anxiety resulting from the belief that their performance will reflect not only on themselves, but also on their entire group. In turn, this pressure and anxiety leads to subsequent underperformance.

#### **System Justification Theory** - Markus Kimmelmeier

System justification theory seeks to explain how, in many instances, maintaining intergroup inequality is a cooperative project. It notes that members of low-status groups often actively embrace and promote existing inequalities, sometimes even to a greater extent than members of high-status groups themselves. The theory argues that this occurs as a consequence of low-status groups wanting to see the status quo as legitimate, even to the detriment to their own group.

#### **Think Tanks** – Thomas Medvetz

Think tank is a half-century old notion commonly invoked in political discourse to refer to civil society organizations specializing in the production and dissemination of knowledge related to public policy. In recent decades, the number and apparent political significance of think tanks have increased worldwide, making them a focus of growing scholarly and popular attention. Even so, ambiguities surrounding the proper definition of a think tank and the appropriate classification of their affiliated “policy experts” have hampered the development of a general theory of their political effects.

#### **Transport and Virtual Technologies** - Charalambos Tsekeris & Theodore Tsekeris

This entry examines how traffic congestion, as well as the increasing complexity of trip making in most major metropolitan areas, has encouraged the adoption of advanced virtual technologies for transmitting (real-time) geospatial travel information to transport network users.

#### **Unpredictability** – Ioannis Katerelos

Many of the founders of sociology sought to make predictions about the future course of society. Likewise, many current sociological endeavors seek to do the same, although more implicitly than explicitly. Unpredictability in the social sciences implies a frequent incapacity to foresee future behaviors and hence an inability to make predictions about them.

#### **Virtual Communities** – Charalambos Tsekeris

The sociological conception of “virtual communities” signifies a decisive historic break with material human geography and the subsequent emergence of dynamic Net-based networks of relations. Various social networking sites, such as YouTube, MySpace, Facebook, and Twitter, potentially empower individual users with surprising (often unpredictable) possibilities to seek and achieve visibility, express themselves, manage their identities, broadcast their opinions, re-arrange their lives and re-construct their biographies.

#### **Weak Social Theory** - Charalambos Tsekeris & Nicos Katrivesis

Weak social theory, having much in common with postmodern thought, refutes compelling truths, the search for certainties, and grand methodologies. Instead, it encourages theory to see itself as weak, refutable, soft, and unwilling to be a hegemonic ideology.

#### **Winch, Peter** – William Sharrock

Since coming to widespread attention with the publication of his first book, *The Idea of a Social Science and Its Relation to Philosophy* in 1958, Peter Winch has become something of a scapegoat, for encouraging what are widely understood as very undesirable ‘irrational’ trends in recent thought. The critiques of Winch’s ideas gave early expression to a rapidly growing skepticism toward the thought that sociology should follow the example of the natural sciences, though few accepted Winch’s view that sociology was effectively a province of philosophy.

#### **World Bank** – Susan Hagood Lee

Like the IMF, the World Bank has been the subject of much praise, criticism, and debate since its founding in 1944. Despite dramatic changes in policy during its existence – from a focus on infrastructure to poverty and blends between, the implementation of structural adjustment policies, and the implementation of the “Washington Consensus” – the World Bank has remained as influential as it has debated.

#### **World’s Fairs (International Expositions)** – Kevin Fox Gotham

The first World's Fair took place in London in 1851 and, although of declining importance to the United States, they remain popular in Europe and throughout much of the rest of the world. World’s Fairs are short-term events officially organized by nation-states with exhibits and displays (including, historically the Eiffel Tower among others), meant to display signs of socio-economic progress, technological development, and cultural advancement.

## **Updated Entries**

Brands and Branding  
Cloning  
Global Economy  
Great Depression  
Military Sociology  
Surplus Value  
Olympics  
Online Social Networking

Popular Culture Icons: Jackson, Michael  
Same-Sex Marriage / Civil Unions  
Sport, Alternative

## Forthcoming Entries

The eleventh update (scheduled for September 2010) will feature additional new entries as well as updates to existing entries to keep the Online Encyclopedia at the cutting edge of sociology. Some of the planned new entries include:

[Artisans, Sociology of](#) – Koniordos Sokratis

[Burning Man](#) – Katherine Chen

[Film Studies](#) – Anna Lydaki

[French Revolution](#) – Andrew Wernick

[Hijra](#) – Najib Azca

[Sexualities Across the Life Course](#) – Laura Carpenter

## Access the Encyclopedia

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