"WHITHER HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY?":
A REVIEW ESSAY ON
THE CURRENT SCHOLARSHIP

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Ten years ago, Theda Skocpol noted how historical sociology in the mid-1980s brought in new scholars and new visions to almost revolutionize sociological practice. Describing this process of transformation, she asserted that (1984, 357):

> (H)istorical sociology is no longer exclusively the province of the odd, if honored, grand older men of the discipline. Students and rising young sociologists, even women and middle-Americans, can and do make modest or major contributions to sociology through historical genres of research. Nowadays, historical questions or methods are the stuff of which conferences, courses, and sessions are made...

Historical sociology did indeed bring in a new cadre of scholars and an innovative approach to historical events and, with it, a growing body of literature that continues to flourish. Partly as a consequence of this expanding corpus of work, greater attention than ever before is being devoted to questions of research strategy. A decade ago, Skocpol (1984, 362-3) identified three research strategies comprising what can be termed the "extensive" strategy, whereby a general, overarching model was applied to explain numerous historical instances, the "intensive" strategy which employed concepts to develop a meaningful historical interpretation of a single case, and the "broad" strategy which analyzed causal regularities in history. Do these research strategies still define the practice of historical sociology today?

This review essay argues that research strategies in historical sociology have recently gravitated around three approaches with distinct epistemological and methodological features, namely the experimental approach which has dominated the field since its inception, and the experiential and evenemential[2] approaches which have recently emerged to counter that domination. Although these approaches take diverse positions on the primacy of structure, agency and contingency in historical explanation, there is also much overlap.[3] The experimental approach applies the scientific method of sociology to history by investigating manifest patterns in

the social structure, often relying on secondary[4] sources of evidence often lodged in the public discourse[5] to illuminate those patterns. The evenemential approach problematizes the event as a theoretical category, focusing on sources of evidence often embedded in the public discourse to historically reconstruct the structure and agency involved in the event. The experiential approach explains patterns in history through the interpretation of social action, typically utilizing sources of evidence located, instead, in the private discourse to illuminate the role of agency. Hence, whereas experimental approaches utilize a significant number of historical cases within a comparative scientific framework, evenemential approaches focus on events and the social actors engaged in them, centering their research problematic around the ordering of historical events. Experiential approaches tend to focus on one historical case in depth, investigating it mainly through bringing in sources often embedded in private discourse.

Within this framework, the essay reviews nine recent examples of scholarship in historical sociology which range from the experimental to the evenemential to the experiential as follows: McDaniel (1991), Brubaker (1992), Goldstone (1991), Skocpol (1992), Abbott (1988), Kimeldorf (1988), Aminzade (1993), Rose (1992), and Dorothy Smith (1990). A tenth current study (Dennis Smith 1991) tracing the rise of historical sociology sets the stage for the argument.

The Resurgence of Historical Sociology

Dennis Smith (1991) contextualizes the postwar resurgence of historical sociology within larger political and social processes. He argues that historical sociology searches for (1991, 1) "the mechanisms through which societies change or reproduce themselves," and in a related manner, inquires into "the social preconditions and consequences of attempts to implement or impede such values as freedom, equality and justice." These endeavors also demarcate the three distinct phases in the development of historical sociology as a field: the battle with totalitarianism and ensuing political transformations covering the period before the mid-1960s constitutes the first phase; the rediscovery of domination, inequality and the subsequent emergence of resistance movements in the early 1960's marks the second phase; and, the impact of the fragmentation of

the stable bipolar world of the Cold War in the 1970's and 1980's comprises the third and final phase. Although one could criticize this periodization for its almost exclusive reliance on the Western European experience, it nevertheless captures the reflexive link between large scale societal transformations and the development of a scholarly field. This periodization also enables Smith to speculate on the future course of historical sociology.

Smith argues that the most relevant issue of the 1990's for historical sociology (1991, 156, 163) will be the tension between involvement and detachment. While involvement necessitates "the capacity to empathize with and evoke the situation of particular participants in specific historical situations," detachment requires "the capacity to observe processes and relationships objectively, discounting political/moral commitments and emotion laden responses." This tension between involvement and detachment is reflected, Smith contends, in setting the research agenda of historical sociology: should one profess detachment in order to analyze historical processes objectively, or should one openly embrace subjective commitments to fully capture the human agency? Yet, this tension between involvement and detachment has pervaded the social sciences from their inception in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Issues of objectivity have been discussed from the onset by social thinkers such Emile Durkheim, Max Weber to C. Wright Mills. Hence, even though all nine scholars reviewed here attempt, based on the insights they gain through historical analysis, to delineate the factors that would facilitate human progress towards a more democratic social existence, the research agenda Dennis Smith sets for them is not novel, but reiterative of an old sociological agenda. Yet, following the model of their predecessors who had conflicting interpretations of the agenda in the past, the nine scholars reviewed here also widely disagree on how to operationalize that agenda. While some experiment with the structural processes that inhibit or enhance historical transformation, others focus on the events that construct the particular configuration between structure and agency, and still others highlight the agency of the actors in producing such a transformation.

This review essay argues that the prevalent experimental approach in historical sociology has been currently challenged by the formation of the evenemential and experiential approaches.

It traces the epistemological and methodological roots of each approach to the works of three scholars, Barrington Moore Jr., Fernand Braudel and E.P. Thompson. Barrington Moore, who emphasizes the application of scientific rigor to historical analysis, and the significance of structural variables in formulating the ensuing sociological explanation, molds the research agenda of the experimental approach. The works of Fernand Braudel and E.P. Thompson, which alert historical sociologists to the significance of events and actual experience in the construction and reconstruction of history, form the bases of the evenemential and experiential approaches.

Barrington Moore Jr.'s (1967) seminal work on the social origins of dictatorship and democracy analyzes the structural patterns that generate different political outcomes. As Moore (1967, 485) compares England, France, the United States, Germany, Russia, China, Japan and India within this structural framework, he often reduces the agency of the historical actors in each society to cultural values of slight significance. Given that Moore places little or no analytical emphasis on variations within these societies other than those surrounding class variations, it is not surprising that the reinterpretation of historical accounts located in the public discourse forms his main research strategy. Among the historical sociologists reviewed in this essay, McDaniel (1991), Brubaker (1992), Goldstone (1991), and Skocpol (1992) follow Moore's lead. Abbott (1988), although starting from this lead, develops a more historically textured experimental approach.

Fernand Braudel's (1975) outstanding analysis of the Mediterranean sea in the sixteenth century focuses on the social conditions that generate this unique historical space. In explaining his organizing narrative, Braudel outlines (1975, 21-22) three types of histories, that of the environment referring to "a history of man in his relationship to the environment, a history in which all change is slow, a history of constant repetition, ever-recurring cycles," that of the groups and groupings indicating a history of "economic systems, states, societies, civilization and warfare, where time has slow but perceptible rhythms," and, finally, that of the history of events, "surface disturbances, crests of foam that the tides of history carry on their strong backs." It is Braudel's insistence to study all the structural, social and contingent forces which merge to produce that

foam which enables historical sociologists to generate a sociology of the event. Among the historical sociologists reviewed in this essay, Kimeldorf (1988) and Aminzade (1993) expand on this approach by undertaking extensive analyses of the structural and narrative construction of historical events, as substantiated by primary and secondary sources embedded in the public discourse.

E.P. Thompson's (1963) pivotal analysis of the making of the English working class departs from this experimental approach. Thompson explicitly states that (1963, 9) "the notion of class (which) entails the notion of historical relationship (has) a fluency which evades analysis if we attempt to stop it dead at any given moment and anatomise its structure." To capture the agency of social actors, we are told to focus on historical processes, and specifically on the experience of the worker within them.[6] Thompson's emphasis on social action leads him to employ a research methodology that involves the in-depth analysis of one case through a multiplicity of archival sources, especially ones that capture the everyday lives of the workers. Among the scholars reviewed here, Rose (1992) and Dorothy Smith (1990) follow E.P. Thompson's approach in attempting to reveal the agency of social actors through in-depth sociological analyses of the historical experience, as documented through sources located in the private discourse.

This essay concludes by stating that only a *synthesis* of the experimental, evenemential and experiential approaches can capture the complexity of the structure, agency, and contingency interaction in historical sociological analysis.

The Experimental Approach to Historical Sociology

Tim McDaniel's work (1991) on autocracy, modernization and revolution in Russia and Iran, Rogers Brubaker's study (1992) of citizenship and nationhood in France and Germany, Jack Goldstone's analysis (1991) of revolution and rebellion in England, France, and the Ottoman and Chinese empires, and Theda Skocpol's examination (1992) into the political origins of social policy in the United States exemplify the experimental approach. Andrew Abbott's study (1988) on the system of professions and the emergence of the expert division of labor improves this approach by

introducing a new historical/sociological methodology. In defining and explaining historical transformation, all confer priority to independent variables embedded in the social structure, and all define these variables with the rigor of scientific analysis. McDaniel emphasizes the nature of political authority, Brubaker stresses political and cultural geography, Goldstone highlights the significance of concomitant demographic and political crises, and Skocpol focuses on policy formation within the context of the polity. Abbott systematically delineates the boundaries of professions. Another common feature is their emphasis on culture in defining the meaning frameworks around political structure; all tend to explain differences in outcome in these meaning frameworks. All, with the exception of Abbott,[7] underline the need for the employment of the comparative method where the small number of cases in historical analysis renders the application of mainstream statistical methods impossible. Hence they reiterate the main scientific research paradigm of sociology.

Tim McDaniel's analysis on autocracy, modernization and revolution in Russia and Iran offers a corrective to Barrington Moore's possible routes to dictatorship and democracy. Focusing on the 1917 Russian and the 1978-9 Iranian revolutions, McDaniel argues that these historical events display a distinct, previously neglected route to industrial society. Both occur after autocratic modernization, "a distinctive route to modernity not identified in Moore's work" (1991, 5). McDaniel states that (1991, 11-2) it is his new research strategy which, rather than employing Moore's model of studying development across a large number of cases, focuses on two cases within a single development type, that enables him to uncover this new route. He presents this approach as a partial compromise between the historian's attention to a single case and the sociologist's inclination for maximizing the number of cases. McDaniel argues that his approach compares similarities and differences more carefully, incorporates the historical context of the cases more successfully, and thus develops a more historically textured approach to the study of revolutions, premised on "a new sense of historicity" (1991, 13). He also does include cases that extend beyond Russia and Iran, such as corporativesness in Europe (1991, 40), and the Chinese, Vietnamese and Mexican revolutions in the Third-world (1991, 112).

Within this framework, "historically shaped physiognomies" (1991, 15) emerge as the determinants of the disparate patterns of revolutions in Iran and Russia. When these physiognomies are analyzed in more depth, the nature of political authority emerges specifically as "the independent variable which cannot be reduced to economic or class variables alone" (1991, 70). While political autocracy in Russia and Iran explain the occurrence of revolutions in both contexts, the historical particularities of each case account for the differences in revolutionary outcomes. McDaniel first sets the stage for the problem through a thorough analysis of the historical legacies, the political nature of autocracy, and the dimensions of modernization, and then introduces cultural and social elements of the historical contexts as the explanatory variables of the differences. It is specifically the urban character of change, the social agency of landlords and peasants, and the cultural frameworks of revolution that determine the outcome in Russia and Iran. The discussion of Russian Marxism and Shi'ism as revolutionary cultural frameworks (1991, 189-202), and of the decisive agency of the socialist parties and workers in Russia and the ulama and urban groups in Iran (202-17) is original, fascinating, but very brief. Only then does McDaniel discusses the human agency in revolutions, still leaving behind a strong sense of the determinacy of the political structure, rather than social agency, in the occurrence of both revolutions. McDaniel's research strategy suffers from a problem that has been directed to comparative analysis in general: by focusing on the similarities and differences between the two cases, the researcher ends up missing the whole picture in both. Rather than focusing on the historical processes and narrative discourses in either society in their own terms, McDaniel focuses on the comparable dimensions in both. What emerges is not an explanation of two historical processes that produced similar outcomes at different historical junctures, but instead a description of the similarities and differences between the two processes.

Rogers Brubaker's study on citizenship and nationhood in France and Germany (1992) examines the difference between the two cases with respect to civic self-definition and patterns of civic incorporation. Brubaker attempts to explain why the French citizenry is defined expansively as a territorial community whereas the German citizenry is interpreted restrictively as a

community of descent. He argues that it was the disparate political and cultural geography of the two cases that produced these opposing constructions of citizenship. Brubaker's innovative use of cultural geography as an independent variable and his redefinition of the state as an association of citizens rather than as a territorial organization, partially restores the agency of social actors. The role of citizens in generating meanings and maintaining political boundaries is recognized. Still, in empirically grounding his argument, Brubaker traces these cultural idioms to "pivotal moments in the shaping and reshaping of citizenship law" (1992, 17). He undertakes a very thorough analysis of citizenship law in France and Germany, and employs, as his sources (1992, 79), legal codes, state statistical tables on naturalizations, public reports and speeches. His analysis ably demonstrates the different interpretations of civic definition that emerges in France and Germany.

Brubaker's study of interests that shape citizenry gets narrowed to legal policy analyses, however. By concentrating on legal texts as his source, he bases his analysis only on formal civic forms of participation, narrows the social interests that shape citizenry to legal policy analyses, and thus inadvertently privileges the agency of the state and of those social actors who are already included in the French and German citizenry. Brubaker does not adequately cover the possible perspectives of the dispossessed, of those excluded from citizenship. Even though he does indeed cite (1992, 146) interviews with Franco-Algerians in France and Turks in Germany, and other immigrant groups excluded from citizenry, these brief references are based on already published interviews from newspapers. The agency of these marginalized social actors is sacrificed to the structural determinants of legal codes as they are interpreted by the state; hence law is privileged over other possible independent variables such as class dynamics, ethnicity, racism. This stand may also account for his cynical conclusion (1992, 189) that the nation state and national citizenship "will remain very much -- perhaps too much -- with us." By not adequately focusing on the agency of those excluded from citizenry in each case, Brubaker reifies the political power of the state and minimizes the possibility of social change.

Jack Goldstone's analysis (1991) of the periodic waves of state breakdown in the seventeenth century through the English, French revolutions and the Ottoman and Chinese crises closely follows Moore's model of comparative research on political transformation across several cases. Focusing on the historical conjuncture of the English Revolution (1639-42), the French Revolution (1789-92), and the Ottoman crisis (1590-1658) and the fall of the Ming dynasty in China (circa 1644), why was it, Goldstone asks, that only the European breakdown produced "the rise of the West" (1991, 3-4)? Hence, like McDaniel and Brubaker, Goldstone puzzles over a difference in political outcome. By focusing on the pre-modern era and on a spectrum of societies ranging from the West to the non-West, Goldstone is able to develop a finely textured sociological analysis. He argues that the simultaneous occurrence of four factors -- a state financial crisis; severe elite divisions; a high potential for mobilizing popular groups; and a subsequent increase in the salience of heterodox cultural and religious ideas -- lead to revolutions. State breakdown occurs (1991, 24), in turn, when the demographic factors of population growth and climate changes combine with these social structural changes. The pattern of ensuing state reconstruction, Goldstone contends, is shaped by the cultural frameworks of each case. Hence Goldstone, like Brubaker, highlights the significance of culture in shaping the political structure. Goldstone's other contribution to historical sociological scholarship is methodological. He analyzes social structure at a multiplicity of levels that expand beyond the micro-macro, ideal-real, and conflict-consensus dichotomies; he identifies a "fractal" scale of causal factors (1991, 46) whereby structures show similar features, regardless of the scale on which they are observed. Goldstone also combines quantitative statistical methods with case-centered approaches more typical of qualitative research (1991, 37-8). It is his development of a quantifiable and therefore empirically testable model of revolutionary change that distinguishes Goldstone's research strategy. Focusing on population movements and their consequences, particularly as measured through price movements, he deals with measurable quantities so that his argument "could definitely be proven to be wrong." He even empirically defines types of state breakdown through the bivariate analysis of 128 different kinds of events (1991, 10-1).

As Goldstone himself also readily admits (1991, xxvi), there are two serious problems with this novel approach. One is that he may be accused -- wrongfully, he contends -- of espousing geographic determinism. The other, more serious, problem concerns the use of mathematical models. Goldstone argues that "because the data for the Asian cases are *weaker* than for the European cases" (emphasis mine), he "has dispensed with the mathematical models entirely in addressing those cases." The grave issue that lies behind both of these problems concerns Goldstone's capacity to methodologically and epistemologically overcome the determinism of his "Western" cases. He analyzes the English Revolution at length with a full mathematical model, the French Revolution "somewhat differently" by "using only very slightly the mathematical model developed for England," and, in the cases of the Ottoman crisis and the fall of the Ming dynasty in China, he proceeds "much more rapidly, providing briefer analyses of these political crises and examining how they resembled or differed from those of Europe" (1991, xxvi-xxvii). By analyzing England and France in depth at the expense of the Ottoman empire and China, Goldstone inadvertently ends up privileging his Western cases. Furthermore, Goldstone explains (1991, 61-2) Western cases in terms of "structural" differences versus the Eastern ones in terms of "cultural" variations. This structure/culture difference in explanation is reminiscent of Orientalism that contrasts Western rationality (read structure), with Eastern emotionality (read culture).

Goldstone defends his epistemology as a function of his limited which makes his discussion of the Asian cases "*necessarily* more discursive" (emphasis mine) (1991, 351). Yet, by defining his research strategy in this manner, Goldstone shortchanges the agency of the margins; like Brubaker's neglect of the agency of the immigrants in France and Germany, he neglects the agency of the Ottoman and Chinese empires. It is therefore not surprising when he concludes that "England and France had *dynamic* futures after their revolutions, and China and Turkey entered long periods of *stagnation*" (emphases mine) (1991, 450). One is left to contemplate how Goldstone's causal explanation would have been different had he anchored his analysis in the Ottoman and Chinese cases rather than in the English and French ones.

One of the most interesting aspects of Theda Skocpol's recent work (1992) on the political origins of social policy in the United States is her shift in historical methodology. Rather than employing the multiple-case approach to revolutions in France, Russia and China which she developed in her earlier work (1978), Skocpol follows, in her recent study, a single case-approach to social policy construction in the United States. She argues that her approach is a comparatively informed historical case study of U.S. social provision, and, that even though she brings in comparative material at various points, no national history besides that of the United States is fully explored. Skocpol explains how she delved into Civil war pensions, and how this source led her, in turn, to the involvement of women's voluntary groups, the exploration of which soon became an "obsession" (1992, vii). Her analysis and discovery of (1992, 525) a maternalist welfare state is a novel contribution to the field which had so far been dominated by a model of the paternalist welfare state followed by other Western nations. Skocpol's lessons for the future (1992, 531-9) pungently point out how, unlike in the past, the recent advocates in the United States for mothers and children are not supported by federations that attempt to encompass all politically active women.

The change in Skocpol's research strategy also makes her model more processual and contingent (1992, 58, 531); policies, once formed, have feedback effects on state capacities and on social groups and their political goals, and therefore also make some future developments more likely than others. This change in research strategy affects her selection of historical evidence as well. Rather than focusing on secondary sources as she did in her previous book, Skocpol employs (1992, 61) "fresh cross-state quantitative data," with "secondary" evidence from published historical studies, government records and the organizational records of women's groups and their activities as recorded in state records and national compendia, as well as the records of the American Federation of Labor." Skocpol also mentions that she probed into the sources mentioned in the works of historians when "secondary works were sparse or not fully convincing" (1992, 61). The use of archival evidence is the most significant methodological change that enables Skocpol to capture the agency of the people engaged in policy construction, especially that of women. She

employs illustrations, including period charts, cartoons, title and content pages of books, charts, programs for the Congress of Mothers and the like; each part of the book also starts with quotations from speeches, newspapers and period works.

Yet, Skocpol, like McDaniel, Brubaker and Goldstone, relies solely on historical sources that have been exclusively constructed for the public political arena. There is no mention of diaries, memoirs, poems, personal accounts which would have located the social actors in society at large and would have also brought in their ties with other underrepresented groups. Also, the focus is exclusively on carefully constructed causal narratives where there is no mention of evidence that does not fit her model. Her insistence on a "polity-centered approach" (1992, 41) also arrests Skocpol's brief focus (1992, 25) on the subjectivities of the social actors. The agency of these actors is often based on ethnicity, race and gender, and is also frequently textured by class. Hence, like McDaniel, Brubaker, and Goldstone, Skocpol once more focuses, and reifies, the agency of the causally relevant, the visible, the public, and the politically included. Yet, in doing so, she overlooks variations in policy formation and execution within and between immigrant groups, blacks and lower-class women, and avoids all those historical instances that do not fit her model. Had it not been for the visible participation of white upper and middle class women in policy formation, Skocpol would have missed the gender dimension and does, still, largely overlook the agency of social groups underrepresented in the polity. Even though Skocpol admits to spending hours gaining a "feel" for the perspectives of policy actors, and to following her "working hunches" (1992, 61), whenever she brings in the subjectivity and the agency of social groups, her narrative becomes uneasy, rampant with quotation marks, and she becomes, in her own words, "unsystematic." Hence, confined by the experimental approach, Skocpol fails to fully capture the agency of social actors.

Andrew Abbott's study (1988) on the emergence of the system of professions and the division of expert labor captures both the epistemological and the methodological issues of the experimental approach. Abbott is able to break, for the first time, the iron hold of the experimental method on historical sociology by problematizing the nature of historical events.

Rather than treating them as facts upon which to build structural variables, Abbott takes into account the social construction of these historical facts. He first problematizes (1988, 16-7) the "natural" temporal order of professions by studying the order of eight events that occur in the establishment of 130 American and British professions. Abbott analyzes the gathered data by calculating the mean distances between the events to establish an "order of professionalization" based on a single one-dimensional scaling algorithm. In both the British and American professions, Abbott finds no empirical support for the view that organizations seen in professionalization arrive in a particular sequence. Yet, his methodological rigor lies not only in this empirical refutation, but also in the "system model" through which Abbott proposes to study professional development. The three questions that his system model asks are (1988, 226) "what are the external disturbances and their effects on social action, what internal changes in knowledge and structure create jurisdictional competition, and how internal differentiation interacts with system structure to create temporary stabilities." Abbott combines quantitative and qualitative data, employing a narrative presentation of contrasting cases with a quantitative analysis of the testable ideas one generates from them. This system model encompasses the whole spectrum of professional experience from success to failure, thus overcoming the selectivity bias of the experimental approach which inadvertently focuses on the survivors at the expense of the failures. Another significant aspect of the system model is its ability to operationalize historical contingency through (1988, 316) the "fractal interpretation reappearing within itself at many different levels of measurement," a concept Goldstone also employs.

One problem still remains, however, in the constant interaction between the historical sociologist and his\her subject matter. This interaction affects both the epistemology and the methodology employed in the analysis. Abbott notes the nature of this interaction as he portrays how the historical sociologist (1988, 386) "disentangles the threads of determinants, structures, and intentions, then reweaves them into an analysis, and then recounts that analysis in some readable form." The most significant challenge then becomes the development of a research strategy that could capture the agency of the social actors lodged in these multiple sites, one that

would provide explanatory space to both the objective reality of social structure *and* its subjective consequences. Even though Abbott's system model develops a more textured approach in this respect, it nevertheless does not yet come up with a universally applied research strategy. How, for instance, can one study social issues such as gender oppression, racial discrimination, political representation through the system model? Or can one investigate a social phenomenon such as prostitution, which unlike high skilled professionalization is not readily visible in the public sphere? The succeeding works by Kimeldorf (1988), Aminzade (1993), Rose (1992) and Smith (1990) analyze sociological issues surrounding the working class, political issues and gender and therefore help develop a more articulated conception of agency.

In summary, the analyses of McDaniel, Brubaker, Goldstone, Skocpol have refined Moore's experimental approach in historical sociology by providing elegantly textured causal explanations, introducing culture as an independent variable to capture the structures of meaning, and attempting to include the agency of social actors through an innovative use of historical sources. Yet, given their emphasis on structural factors the blueprints of which always rest on the Western experience, these analyses cannot revise the "tyranny" of structure in their analyses. The one constructive deviation in this mode is Abbott's as he attempts to operationalize an analytical model that studies the error terms, the mismatches and the unexplained in addition to the meticulously defined variables of the experimental approach.

The Evenemential Approach to Historical Sociology

One can argue that, in capturing the agency of the social actors through the thorough analysis of historical events, the evenemential[8] approach succeeds where the experimental approach falls short. Focusing on the historical ordering of events, this approach assumes that events are normally path dependent, whereby earlier events qualify the temporal and causal construction of later events. As such, the approach introduces a sense of reflexivity that takes into account both the social structure and the human agency in the formation of events. While events are assumed "to be capable of changing not only the balance of causal forces operating but

the very logic by which consequences follow from occurrences or circumstances," they also transform "the very cultural categories that shape and constrain human action" (Sewell 1990b, 16-17).

Howard Kimeldorf's analysis (1988) of the East Coast and West Coast longshoremen in the United States attempts to explain why these two groups came to embrace different political orientations. Although both groups were based in the same industry, confronted the same shipping lines, and belonged to the same occupation, the East Coast longshoremen developed a conservative union while the West Coast longshoremen formed a radical one. Rather than explaining away, as labor historians tended to do, the West Coast radicalism as an exception, Kimeldorf asks instead the neglected question of why there was some "socialism" in the West and why radicals attained positions of prominence. By thus reconstructing the research question in a manner that encompasses the agency of the workers themselves as well as the structure of production relations, Kimeldorf develops a research strategy that takes into account both structure and agency. It is this posing of the question that leads him to capture the agency of his workers by "poring over rare archival material, seldom used documents, and other primary sources," and by interviewing retired longshoremen "as a way of interrogating the data" (1988, x). Only then is he able to reconstruct the distinct experiences of longshoremen "from the standpoint of those who actually lived it." Hence the historical sociological analysis that Kimeldorf develops is one that (1988, 16-7) "combines a classical narrative approach in emphasizing the importance of timing, unique events, and conscious choice with a more sociologically focused analysis of how such historical particularities were played out within the limits and possibilities established by existing social structural arrangements." Indeed, Kimeldorf's research strategy of combining sociological analysis and historical narrative, simultaneously constructing narratives and explaining causal patterns through analyses of the social structure, brings historical sociology closer to overcoming the structure-agency tension. Kimeldorf concludes that, in the final analysis, both human agency and social structure were significant in the formation of the radical union, with the final outcome resembling "Weber's historical analogy of throwing "loaded dice," where each toss is partly

contingent on the one before it and where a particular outcome becomes more favorable" (1988, 161).

Yet, one needs to ask if this proposed resolution to the structure-agency tension does indeed capture the agency of the working class in its entirety. Kimeldorf's research strategy focuses on the longshoremen's experience in so far as it relates to the workplace. But one needs to consider the multiple sites of worker's experience that extend beyond the workplace to the family household, the neighborhood, and the political arena. Kimeldorf does, as Sewell (1990a) suggests, bring in the objective structures that condition the worker's actions concurrently with the subjective interpretations of the workers which he captures through his interviewers. But the works of Aminzade (1993), Rose (1992) and Smith (1990) explore the other political and gender dimensions of the working class experience that need to be incorporated into Kimeldorf's research strategy.

Ron Aminzade's (1993) study on early industrialization and class formation in the French cities of Toulouse, Saint-Etienne and Rouen seeks to understand the different political consequences in each city. Even though the three cities shared a common cultural, political and economic experience, Toulouse moved from liberal republicanism to an alliance of radicals and socialists, Saint-Etienne witnessed the triumph of radical republicanism, and Rouen represented the triumph of liberalism. Aminzade argues that (1993, 10) it was "the prior local histories of republican party formation...which varied through the intersection of changing national political opportunity structures with divergent local patterns of industrialization and class formation" that produced these varying outcomes. Aminzade's contribution to historical sociology lies in bringing together structure, agency and historical contingency, and also employing the narrative as a research tool in his analyses. He stresses (1993, 7) the "role of nonclass factors including shifting opportunity structures, and the importance of contingency, of temporally and spatially specific events" in class formation. Spatially and temporally, by comparing three cities in one nation-state at relatively close time periods, Aminzade (1993, 25) develops a historically grounded theory which, unlike the comparisons of McDaniel or Goldstone, incorporates more fully the concept of

contingency. He also undertakes an in-depth discussion of narrative as a methodological tool in historical sociology. Using analytic narratives which are (1993, 26-7) "theoretically structured stories about coherent sequences of motivated actions," Aminzade develops a more event-centered historical sociology, one that treats events not simply as manifestations of large scale processes but as key causal factors in trajectories of political change. This, for Aminzade, (1993, 27) is much more preferable to the "formal logical or mathematical proofs often devoid of events and even of actors" of the type that Goldstone undertakes to argue for structural and environmental determinacy. What sources does Aminzade use for his novel approach? Newspapers, public lectures, photographs and lithographs from the city archives, as well as records on local factories, number of workers employed and their wages in each city form the main historical sources. Having restored the agency of the social actors, in the end, Aminzade argues, (1993, 252) it was the "timing and content of local economic development with respect to party formation processes, shifting national political opportunity structures, and differences in balance of power within parties" that determined the character of political action in the three cities.

The Experiential Approach to Historical Sociology

Hence, with Aminzade's analysis, the component of historical contingency gets systematized and restored into the evenemential approach. But it is specifically this contingency and the role of the dominant social groups within that produce another epistemological problem. Even though contingency takes into account temporal and spatial factors as well as structural ones, it favors the agency of some actors over others. Even though Kimeldorf (1988), and Aminzade (1993) capture the agency of social actors in history through their evenemential research strategies, their social actors are almost exclusively males participating in the public sphere: in Kimeldorf, they do so through their labor, in Kimeldorf through their labor, and in Aminzade through their political behavior. Yet, would the evenemential research strategy[9] they develop apply equally to all social actors across class, race, gender and ethnic lines?

E.P. Thompson's analysis of the formation of the working class in England provides the blueprint for the experiential approach to historical sociology. Thompson captures the agency of social actors by studying one historical case in depth through a wide collection of sources that map out the worker's experience. The works of the two scholars (Rose 1992, Dorothy Smith 1990) engage in similar in-depth analyses of one case through primary sources; Smith further proposes to revise sociological methodology to capture the agency of one often underrepresented social group, that of women. Given the nature of multiple social realities that fragment along gender lines, both[10] Rose and Smith alert historical sociology to the need to further problematize the concept of agency and the role of experience[11] in reconstructing it. Only with their works does the significance of the agency of women in historical analysis come to the forefront.

Sonya Rose's study (1992) on gender and class in nineteenth century England demonstrates how, in the massive reorganization of lives and livelihoods that accompanied the development of capitalism, gender was involved in the process from the start. Rose argues that work and wages in this transformation acquired meanings outside the workplace; economic relations were defined and reified in the families and households of men and women. By focusing on the non-public, informal social experience, Rose is able to extend the worker's agency beyond the workplace and to thus reveal the multiple realities of their lives (1992, 197). What differentiates her approach from Abbott (1988), Aminzade (1993), Kimeldorf (1988) is the inclusion of the multiple sites of experience that expand beyond the public arena to particularly capture the experience of underrepresented groups such as women. Yet, one should add that by doing so, she runs the risk of losing depth of analysis by spreading across multiple locales. In addition to studying the multiple realities behind the public, political rhetoric on women, Rose also extends beyond the realm of observable behavior to take into account structures of feeling, namely "experience not interpreted (that) remains in the imagination, and, is capable of being mobilized as a resource" (1992, 17). It is this epistemological stretch beyond the formal into the informal, the experiential, and the imagined that enables Rose to encompass the agency of women in historical sociological analysis. This research strategy brings with it the necessity to analyze a wide

spectrum of historical sources, in particular those extending beyond the public realm, and it is the introduction of these that enables Rose to capture the agency of women. The sources Rose analyzes (1992, 70, 75, 80-1, 124, 163, 183) range from formal state documents such as government bills, state commissioner reports, census reports, to the informal information contained in these government documents such as oral histories, to printed sources in the media such as letters to newspapers (a source Skocpol also utilizes), newspaper editorials, to oral evidence of the rhetoric of trade union leaders at congresses, in the press and in labor disputes, to literary evidence in the form of verses of poems. In concluding her analysis, Rose argues that it is specifically this "spider's web of interacting forces, all with gender distinctions built into them (1992, 189), "that makes it impossible to overcome gender inequality.

Although Rose's research strategy generates significant insights into gender dynamics, is this new realm of the informal, the experiential adequately developed? And, more important still, does the analysis of this new realm have the legitimating power of the formal, the institutional sources of knowledge? Rose's attempt to develop a new research strategy in historical sociology that would bring in the agency of women is just a starting point, even though a significant one, since the underrepresented include, in addition to women, racial, ethnic and religious minorities, and the Third-world -- all categories that are increasingly significant in contemporary world crises.

These concerns lead to Dorothy Smith's analysis (1990) of the conceptual practices of power and the way these practices negatively affect the sociological analysis of gender. Smith delves into the epistemological barriers in sociological analysis that inhibit the agency of women, and with it, the agency of the underrepresented. She argues (1990, 27) that it is the sociological practice of "analyzing experience and writing about society to produce an objectified version that subsumes people's actual speech, eliminates the presence of subjects as agents in texts, and converts people from subjects to objects of investigation" which arrests this agency. Instead, Smith proposes (1990, 51) to ground sociology in the activities of actual individuals, rather than in interpretations of them, and in the material conditions as Marx articulated them rather than on ideological reflections, so that sociological processes do not, as they tend to do, legislate a reality

rather than discover one. How would Smith's critical standpoint, which delves into "people's lived experience, the social organization and relations of objectified knowledge, and the structure of power that underpin them" (Smith 1990, 6-7), alter the way historical sociology is practiced? Like Skocpol, Abbott, Kimeldorf, Aminzade and Rose, Dorothy Smith emphasizes the needs to extend beyond structure to the site of experience, where the connection between knowledge and power is also lodged. She argues that it would be impossible to restore the agency of the underrepresented without bringing this experiential realm into the domain of sociological analysis. For these reasons, Smith methodologically proposes to explore the social relations of power and their institutional base that underlie (1990, 84-6) "the factual surfaces of textual realities."

Hence Dorothy Smith, like Sonya Rose, cautions against the complex structural, institutional and organizational factors that inhibit the human agency from fully surfacing in society. As William Sewell also notes (1990a), the experiential still remains undertheorized, however, and it is unclear if it would ever be adequately theorized to include the subjectivities of both the social actors and the researcher. Even though Smith highlights the significance of the materialist analysis in developing an alternate research strategy, she does not reestablish its ties with the social structure. The site of experience and the process through which it converts to social action remain undertheorized. The structural variables that influence the construction of experience are not adequately studied. Hence, within the context of the experiential approach, even though human agency in historical sociology is necessary, it is not sufficient unless accompanied by a thorough analysis of social structure.

Future Directions for Historical Sociology

Dorothy Smith's critique is not yet able to provide an alternative epistemological and methodological framework for historical sociology. Even though it explicates the epistemological assumptions in sociological analysis that arrest human agency, it has not produced an alternate research strategy. After reviewing recent scholarship in historical sociology with respect to the emphases placed on social structure, human agency and historical contingency, this review essay

argues that a novel approach to historical sociology needs to combine all of these components into a new synthesis. One needs to delve into sources embedded in private discourse to capture human agency, and, at the same time, analyze the underlying structure that shapes social action. What is thus called for is a textured, multi-dimensional approach to historical sociology, one that looks at silences in texts as well as articulated positions, and one that brings in the social experiences in the everyday, informal, private aspects of people's lives as well as the public and the formal. Only then can one bridge the current divide in historical sociology among experimental approaches that marginalize human agency, the evenemential approaches that focus on the event to capture both structure and agency, and the experiential approaches that privilege human agency at the expense of social structure.

Even though the evenemential and experiential approaches provide significant insights into these epistemological and methodological issues, they have not been able to develop a research strategy that combines social structure and human agency. Among the works reviewed here, Andrew Abbott's system model carefully reviews the methodological issues surrounding structure and agency, and Kimeldorf and Aminzade self-consciously integrate structure and agency. The multiple sites of activity that the experiential approaches underline needs to be yet included in the emerging research outline, one which needs to be carefully and systematically developed to include the multiple sites of human agency and social structure. Only then can historical sociology overcome the ascendancy of certain overpowering historical agents, organization and institutions at the expense of other, and can thus capture more of the multiple dimensions of social reality.

Andrew Abbott, in his analysis of the system of professions, comes closest to repairing the structure-agency divide, and it is therefore befitting to conclude this essay with a quotation from his work where he points out that (1988, 280-1):

> To search for all the causal ancestors, or causal descendants, of a given event is merely a rhetorical convenience...Openings created by one sequence of events may or may not be taken advantage of by another; structural necessities constrain, but sufficient actions determine the outcomes of situations. An analytic rhetoric must preserve this adventitious but structured character. Such a rhetoric must leave events in their immediate temporal context. It must follow the blind alleys as well as the thoroughfares by which history produced the present.

Hence the current literature in historical sociology alerts the sociologist to the multiple sites of human agency and social structure in history, and commands the study of successes as well as failures, but does not yet provide the analytical tools that could contain all these sites.

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ENDNOTES

[1] I would like to thank Howard Kimeldorf and Myron Gutmann for their astute comments on this essay. The remaining weaknesses are no doubt my responsibility alone.

[2] The three terms partially draw upon William Sewell Jr.'s (1990b, 2) problematization of the concept of temporality in historical sociology into the teleological, evenemential and the experimental. His delineation of the evenemential temporality has been a novel contribution to historical sociology.

[3] For analytical purposes, this review essay sets apart the three approaches as ideal types. In practice, the differences among the approaches are less distinct.

[4] This essay defines primary sources as those historical texts that reflect phenomena without mediation of knowledge except that contained in the text itself. Secondary sources comprise texts that include the mediation and interpretation of a scholar in addition to that contained in the text itself. A sixteenth century imperial decree would constitute a primary source, and its discussion by a historical actor or scholar would comprise a secondary source. Even though both sources include mediation, the latter has many more layers that need to be critically analyzed than the first.

[5] This essay distinguishes public and private discourse in historical sociological analysis in terms of the speaker and the audience to which a particular historical text is addressed. Hence, public discourse includes those documents such as state promulgations, policy reports, newspaper columns that are often drafted by civic actors for the populace at large; private discourse entails those records such as poems, songs, and diaries that are usually composed by private individuals themselves for their own interests without an explicit audience in mind. The essay once more bases the differentiation of public and private discourse in ideal terms; the distinction between the two discourses is often much more mute in practice.

[6] E.P. Thompson fully criticizes the experimental approach in another work (1978).

[7] Abbott attempts to develop a system model that takes into account the epistemological constraints of the experimental approach. Rather than employing the experimental approach, Abbott develops a "system" model which problematizes the selectivity and contingency of historical events. Although one can argue that Skocpol also does not employ a comparative research strategy in her recent work, she still uses the scientific rigor of this strategy by bringing in other cases to the U.S. policy analysis.

[8] The term "evenemential" is the "anglicization of the French 'evenementiel'"; a concept coined by Lucien Febvre but theoretically articulated by Fernand Braudel (Sewell 1990b, 25, footnote 5).

[9] Due to the nature of the reflexive relation between structure and agency, Sewell proposes a new research strategy for the evenemential approach, one that includes "a dialectic between the structural and experiential, and between the synchronic and diachronic moments" (Sewell 1990a, 72). Such a multifaceted approach may overcome the epistemological constraints of the evenemential approach.

[10] One must note that, among the works reviewed above, even though Theda Skocpol (1992) also focuses on gender in relation to policy formation and attempts to capture the agency to women through her analysis of women's clubs, she stops short of confronting the epistemological issue of recovering women's agency in historical analysis. For her, recovering the agency of gender is not

the starting point of her research, she happens upon it while searching for the social origins of the welfare state.

11 Yet, as William Sewell, Jr. notes (1990a, 59), it is exactly the concept of experience that also renders the experiential approach problematic because "the meaning of the term is intrinsically amorphous." E.P. Thompson's conception of experience, Sewell points out, captures not the events themselves, but the way social actors construe them. Hence, the agency of the social actors still remains structured in this conception.