

**Mirrors and Windows**  
**Essays in the History of Sociology**

Edited by  
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## Preface

Research Committees of the International Sociological Association (ISA) meet every two years: to coincide with the ISA's congresses (held every fourth year) and at their own meetings between congresses. Although the ISA's congress has never met in Poland its Research Committees occasionally meet here.

During the ISA Congress in Montreal in 1998, the then Secretary of the Research Committee on History of Sociology (RCHS), Jennifer Platt, suggested that the next interim conference of this Committee should be organised in June 2000 in Toruń, Poland, at the Institute of Sociology of Nicholas Copernicus University (NCU). After a debate and voting, the Committee accepted this motion and we started to work. We were very pleased with that decision, particularly because in the 1990s, in the NCU's Institute of Sociology a number of significant research and dissemination initiatives were undertaken in the field of history of Polish sociology. The Research Committee on History of Sociology of the Polish Sociological Association has its headquarters here. Archive of Polish Sociology is also located here. In addition, this is the centre of research on the biographical dictionary of Polish sociology as well as on the almanac of Polish sociology.

When preparing the RCHS interim conference, we wanted to stress the idea of the establishing of the national archives of sociology and to make the co-operation between the existing archives easier. It seems to us that this task has been fulfilled.

At the Toruń three-day conference, about 30 scholars participated from 12 European countries and from the US, Canada and Australia. The programme, prepared mostly by the Secretary of the Committee, Christian Fleck, consisted of a number of sessions. There were the following thematic sessions: "Search of a 'Good Society': The Concept of Sociology as a 'Moral Science' in the History of Sociology" "Archives on the History

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## Émigré Social Scientists from Austria: A Prosopography

### Introduction

The migration of scholars from Nazi Germany and later on Nazi-ruled Europe abroad is a well-researched chapter of contemporary history. Some think it is an exhausted topic already.

Looking at the relevant literature published on the subject since the 1950s, one can see major shifts in emphasis, approach and perspective having taken place within the historiography of scholarly exile. The focus has been markedly moved away from the traditional narratives of individuals and their success and influence, towards a more “socio-historical” or “sociological” look at scientific emigration. In a number of investigations undertaken since the early 1980s, the interest has shifted away from a presentist portrait back to the historical facts, and from intellectual products and impact to the actual processes of scholarly production. Especially in the German speaking countries this development was encouraged by the publication of the voluminous “International Dictionary of Central European Émigrés 1933–1945”. Come to the fore have questions pertaining to the chances scholars belonging to different disciplines, generational units, informal networks and national “cultures of science” actually had (or had to take) in order to find their feet, or not, in their respective countries of refuge, and in what ways the very incidence and the experience of the emigration shaped the history of the respective disciplines (cf. Coser 1984, Strauss 1991, Feichtinger 2000). It is a more colorful and balanced picture that has begun to emerge from these studies, showing that emigration had neither been a guaranteed win-win situation for the individual exiles, nor, in total, a zero-sum “morality play” starring Fascism and Democracy, directed by History, as was still implied by notions like the “Exodus of Reason” (C. Wittke, *Flaming* 1996).

Our own project, the main findings of which we would like to briefly introduce on the following pages, owes a lot to these previous investigations, in terms of perspective as well as of data, which are especially hard to get at in the case of the émigrés. Right from the start, however, we faced yet another fundamental problem, i.e.: how to define our population “Austrian social scientists” in the first place.

### The Data Set

The aim of our investigation was to draw comparisons between émigrés and non-émigrés (“remainers”), in particular in the field of sociology. Since there was nothing like an established field of specialization or a profession of sociologists, we could not rely on ready-made inventories like lists of faculty members, course listings or scholarly yearbooks. To restrict the analysis to those listed in university directories would have led to a false picture from the start. In trying to identify social scientists in Austria between the wars, it is pointless to look only to the universities, because wherever the subject did exist at all, it was badly underdeveloped and underemployed. We therefore decided to construct a sample of social scientists in general, without any reference to occupational positions within or outside the universities, without any preconception with regard to the emigration aspect or to any narrowly defined field of specialization. However, we wanted to have data at hand to say something about commonalities and differences between refugees and “remainers”. How to do this?

We made the claim that someone could be accepted as a social scientist, if he or she had published at least one article or else two reviews in one of the social scientific journals during the thirty years between the middle of the 1920s and of the 1950s, respectively. Therefore, we identified a set of all the then well-known journals published in Austria, Germany ( $n = 14$ ), and England, France and the U.S. ( $n = 22$ ).

The reason why we included non-German language journals is a simple one: We had good reason to presume that the Austrian émigrés were relatively young at the time when they left their country of origin. Consequently, it would have been difficult for them to publish papers before they were forced out of Austria. Political partisanship and racial prejudice may have also played a role in preventing them from publishing. Additionally, one must bear in mind that politically active young university graduates submitted their first papers mostly to journals of opinion of their own respective ideological in-group and hence avoided academic journals.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Marie Jahoda, Paul Lazarsfeld, Hans Zeisel, Alexander Gerschenkron and many more.

On the other hand, it seemed fair against the “remainders” to stretch the period of investigation into the 1950s, because some of them did not have a chance to publish their papers during the Nazi period, but afterwards. Serving in the *Wehrmacht* and likely also being detained for several additional years as a prisoner of war caused delays in academic careers. To take this point into account, we extended the observation period up to 1955, so that everyone who was silenced during the war or had the burden of a second period of studying had a chance to publish something, at least one paper.

While in this way we derived a fairly reasonable and workable definition of social scientists, we came to see that it is also no easy task to define who was an Austrian. In our sample of Austrian social scientists between 1925 and 1955 ( $n = 297$ ), of which 202 or roughly two thirds left or were forced out of the country at one time,<sup>2</sup> Austrian does not signify citizenship or place of birth or other criteria of nationality. It only means that someone lived or studied in Austria for at least two years. However, most of the social scientists we included actually have stronger bonds to Austria, so the former is just the bottom line or minimal definition.

### Some findings

Still, to speak about Austrians might cause some irritation because of a seemingly arbitrary separation from the Germans. Apart from the fact, however, that, in both countries, scholars were forced to leave their posts, it is also true that there have been some telling differences between these two groups of victims of Nazi policy. To mention just the most important ones, with respect to the fate of the émigrés from these two countries: First of all, the Nazi movement took over power (it was handed over to them, to be historically correct) in 1933, but invaded Austria only five years later (again, to be completely correct, a remarkable part of her population, as of her academics, were in favor of the so called *Anschluss*). Other things being equal, the simple fact of the time of emigration, in terms of

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published their first more or less scientific paper in Social Democratic magazines, like *Der Kampf* or *Arbeit und Wirtschaft*, both journals beyond comparison to their present day counterparts.

<sup>2</sup> We checked the data more than once, but the ratio of two émigrés to one “remainder” is very stable and indeed surprising, compared with the overall rate of emigration from Austria and Germany. Roughly 1500 scholars of all fields who held at least a habilitation left Germany after 1933, which is about one fifth of all people of similar rank. Admittedly, the 65 per cent rate of emigration is congruent with estimates of German émigré economists and sociologists but the authors do not explain how they obtained their results

individual age, but maybe even more importantly so in terms of historical time, could eventually decide between success or failure, to put it strongly. Thus, one would expect that the Germans, in average starting the race for jobs with a comfortable five-year lead over the Austrians, should have been in a much better position to secure sound jobs. Yet, the late 1930s, and notably the early war years offered significantly more opportunities for social scientists, at the colleges and universities as well as in the different state departments, than were available during the aftermath of the world economic crisis.

However, one could also find scholarly more relevant differences. Institutionally, Germany's universities expanded during the Weimar Republic, whereas Austria was compelled to reduce its system of higher education due to the shrinking influx of students from the non-German-speaking parts of the old empire. New universities were established in post World War I — Germany, in Cologne, Frankfurt, Hamburg for example, whereas the newly created *Republik Deutsch-Österreich* lost at least one German speaking university, the one in Czernowitz, and experienced an increase of professors who opted for the German speaking successor state. As the true heir of the old empire, the tiny new state's civil servant population increased, while at the same time the institutional environment was shrinking.

As a consequence of these differences, some new fields of study could establish themselves in German universities but not in Austria. Chairs in sociology, e.g., were created in Frankfurt, Cologne, Hamburg and elsewhere in Germany, but nothing similar happened in Austria.

To illustrate the differences between the two osmotic neighboring countries further, we juxtapose some ratios, comparing the number of students, of all faculty, of the social scientists who received a fellowship from the Rockefeller Foundation before World War II, and the number of émigrés in economics (as we already mentioned earlier, there are not only no comparative data for sociology, but it wouldn't make sense to try to produce some). These ratios just illustrate some of the differences between Germany and Austria and hint to some of the problems each country was facing during the interwar years.

In 1930, approximately 100,000 students attended 23 universities in Germany, whereas approximately 15,000 students populated the three universities remaining from the larger academic market of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. However, around 1930 the ratios of Austrians to Germans looked very different at the following levels of the system of higher education.

These data suggest that Austria's better-educated part of the population experienced troubles in getting suitable jobs. Therefore, it is no surprise that graduates were looking for opportunities abroad long before the era of dictatorship started. The historical literature provides ample evidence for this intellectual migration during the 1920s.

The over-production of talents in Austria has had more than one root. The role Vienna played as the metropolis of the Habsburg Empire contributed to a constellation which for a very long period used to be called the "hydrocephalus syndrome". It refers to the oversupply of better-educated civil servants and other white-collar employees in Vienna, because there were the different headquarters for the huge empire, and well-educated fathers sought for their sons, rarely in these days for their daughters, similar status by investing in education.

Table 1: Ratios of academic indices for Austria and Germany around 1930

	Austria : Germany
Population	1 : 10
Universities	1 : 7.6
Students	1 : 6.6
Faculty	1 : 3.3
Rockefeller Fellows	1 : 2.5
Émigré Economists	1 : 2.3

Sources: For Population: Mitchell 1992; for Universities, students and faculty: Titze, 1987, Rockefeller Fellows: Rockefeller Archive Center (RAC) files, Economists: Krohn & Hagemann 1999 (our calculations).

Another reason, which is not independent from the former one, is the higher proportion of Jews or people of Jewish origin in Vienna compared to all other German-speaking university cities.<sup>3</sup> A third factor could be found in the troubles the Austrian governments experienced throughout the whole inter-war period. While the Weimar Republic went through a period of economic recovery in the midst of the 1920s, the Austrian government restricted the federal budget much more and the consequences were visible especially in higher education, where the over-aged faculty was a well-known phenomenon and could be seen by everyone.

Our data provide indeed ample evidence that the observation of a "hydrocephalus" also holds true when it comes to social scientists during the inter-war period. Overall, close to two thirds of this group (61%) had been born in Vienna, while the percentage is still more impressive when places of secondary education (80%) or of university attendance are concerned (74%). The table below hints at these remarkable regional differences, and it also shows that, while later emigrants showed much tighter links with

<sup>3</sup> According to statistics published by the *Bureau für Statistik der Juden* (1905 and 1908) the rate of Jewish students in Prussia in the first decade of the 20th century was about 9 per cent whereas the comparable number for Austria was nearly 16 per cent before the collapse of the Empire. Later data are not very trustworthy, because of the nationalist overestimation of the Jewish problem

Vienna, those who remained and often filled the positions left vacant by the émigrés came significantly more often from the German-speaking provinces.

Table 2: Places of origin and study of Austrian social scientists

	Emigrants		Remainers	
	born in...	studied in...	born in...	studied in...
Metropolitan Vienna	134 (66%)	135 (78%)	24 (42%)	30 (60%)
Present day Austria	9 (5%)	9 (5%)	11 (20%)	8 (16%)
Rest of Monarchy	44 (22%)	9 (5%)	15 (26%)	5 (10%)
Other countries	15 (7%)	20 (12%)	7 (12%)	7 (14%)
Total	202 (100%)	173 (100%)	57 (100%)	50 (100%)

The two samples vary in size due to different amounts of information regarding the respective variables. "Place of study" refers to the first university attended.

The case of those coming from the non-German speaking regions of the monarchy is somewhat trickier. However, while more than half of the later émigrés of this group originated from eastern regions with a relatively high proportion of Jewish population, like Galicia, two thirds of the later remainers of this group came from German-speaking enclaves in the western part of the monarchy, like the *Sudetenlande*.

Still, apart from these regional classifications, we very often lacked the necessary additional data — like religious confession ( $n = 93$ ) or information regarding the family background — to allow for more reliable claims regarding the actual motives of emigration, or of staying in the country. Motives were certainly manifold, though one can discern three different stages of the emigration from Austria in which one of the following reasons can be seen to have been dominant.

One could begin with the 1920s when an increasing number of scholars left Austria, partly as a reaction to the influx of educated people after the breakdown of the Habsburg Empire, when every citizen had to choose between one of the follower states. Many of the university graduates, referred to as *Akademiker*, earning nothing more than their cultural capital, to use Bourdieuan distinctions, opted not so much for the tiny new republic than for the advantage to live in the then still great and vital city of Vienna. During the 1920s, educated people were driven out of Austria primarily because of the job market. Often, Vienna served as a "transit station" when, e.g., Hungarians fleeing the Bolsheviks and later the anti-Bolshevik counter-revolutionaries were stranded for shorter or longer periods in Vienna, before leaving again for Berlin, Leipzig, Oberlin, or Moskva.<sup>4</sup> One could

<sup>4</sup> Oszkár Jászi finally became a professor at Oberlin College, near Cleveland, Ohio

call the migration during the 1920s the usual brain drain from an over-producing market to a more receptive one. Yet, we would like to add that, even then, there were also political reasons that forced scholars to leave Austria.

A well-known example for this mixture of opportunity and coercion is the sociologist Paul Lazarsfeld. He was away on a one-year Rockefeller fellowship in 1933 and about to find his feet at Columbia University, when notice came of the seizure of power by the Austro-fascist movement. Like his fellow researchers in the pioneering sociography about *Die Arbeitslosen von Marienthal*, Marie Jahoda and Hans Zeisel, Lazarsfeld had been active in the socialist movement since his schooldays, and chances were small that he could go on doing the kind of research which he had started in Austria at his *Wirtschaftspsychologische Forschungsstelle*. At any rate, the opportunities for following up on his projects were much better at Columbia. Lazarsfeld managed to extend his fellowship and remained — except for a brief visit back — in the USA, becoming one of the most influential sociologists, while Jahoda and Zeisel stayed politically active and in the country, until they were forced to leave, in 1937 and 1938, at first for England and then to the United States.

But to come back to the point made earlier, with regard to the first wave of emigration from Austria starting in the 1920s: we see from the following table that, when numbers are concerned, this conventional “brain drain” has been relatively insignificant, compared to the numbers of scholars leaving the country each year after 1932, until the peak year of 1938, when almost every second of the social scientists in our sample are recorded to have left the country.

Table 3: Years of emigration:

1925–1932	12	7.5%
1933	29	18.1%
1934	12	7.5%
1935	7	4.4%
1936	9	5.6%
1937	6	3.8%
1938	72	45.0%
1939	11	6.9%
until 1945	2	1.2%

Georg Lukács spent some years in Vienna but eventually ended up in Moskva as a member of the nomenklatura, Ernő Manheim studied under Hans Freyer in Leipzig before fleeing via London to the USA, Michael Polányi held a directorship at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Chemistry in Berlin before the Nazi takeover of power which drove him again into exile. Cf. as an overview on the Hungarian intellectual diaspora: Condon, 1991.

However, watched more closely, this small group of scholars — including people like Joseph A. Schumpeter and the psychologist Paul Schilder, but also promising younger ones like Friedrich A. Hayek, Herbert Feigl, Gustav Seidler, Joseph L. Kunz, Jacob L. Moreno and Paul Lazarsfeld — performed significantly better than their colleagues who were forced to leave a few years later. While the older ones had taken on appointments at renowned universities, the youngsters in this group, with the exception of Moreno, had had the chance to weld professional bonds while abroad on the pay-list of the Rockefeller foundation. All but three of these former Rockefeller fellows in our sample (13 up until 1933, 5 between 1934 and 1938) left Austria during the following years, most of them earlier than 1938, still roughly every fourth prior to 1933. Without exception, their destination of choice were the USA, and their careers were exceptional: as regards the positions they were able to secure, the speed in which they were able to do this, but also if one looks at their productivity and reputation as writers.<sup>5</sup>

The next wave, the first with a primarily political background, happened around 1933. But, unlike Germany, the first scholars who became victims were not Jewish, liberal, or left-wing academics but, astonishingly, Austrian Nazis who were forced out of their university posts by the right-wing Catholic regime, which was also opposed to the Left. There were practically no members of the Social Democratic Workers Party in the universities, not to mention Communists.

Still, roughly two thirds of the 1933 emigrants at this time had already been living in Germany. A few also held good positions at German universities — like Emil Lederer, Hermann Heller, Friedrich Hertz or Hans Nawiasky — from which they were dismissed, however, when the *Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums* against Jews and political opponents was being executed in April 1933. None of them, nor any of the others who had already moved over to Germany, however, actually came back to Austria. Either because of the political situation, or because they simply could not find a suitable job, at any rate all of them preferred to move on to the United States or England, the countries of refuge for most of the Austrian émigré social scientists.<sup>6</sup>

Under the authoritarian regime in Austria, however, the “normal” brain drain continued but at a slower pace. During the early 1930s, conditions

<sup>5</sup> We calculated a few measures of productivity and reputation according to publications and citations based on the data available in JSTOR, in which three of these former Rockefeller fellows lead the pack, while still 8 of them figure among the first fifteen.

<sup>6</sup> While the USA and England had served as safe havens for 43% and 33%, resp., of the Austrian émigré social scientists immediately after they had fled, most of the refugees moved on over the Atlantic during the war, so that finally about three quarters of them ended up in the United States.

worsened, more with regard to the lack of political freedom than as a consequence of specific restrictions of academic freedom. Only social scientists active in the underground movement of the Revolutionary Socialists were victimized.

The third wave of emigration, around the *Anschluss* in 1938, was the biggest one. At this time, political and racist persecution reached the universities, too. Within two months, the Nazi regime repeated in former Austria what it had done in Germany at a slower pace between 1933 and 1938.

Before elaborating on this wave of migration, let us make a jump forward in time and draw attention to the fact that, after the defeat of the Nazi regime, a politically motivated migration took place once again. At this time, former Nazi party members from lower ranks who were unwilling immediately to accept the new ideological conditions, by erasing their past political affinities, lost their jobs, and the brighter ones emigrated.

To come back to the Nazi purge of 1938, the picture is not entirely clear. On the one hand, about 400 scientists of all branches, affiliated in some way to the universities, lost their jobs, or 40 to 60 per cent, depending on whom one includes in the calculations, were forced out. However, the number of social scientists who were dismissed from their university posts is very small.

Indeed, overall just about a third of the émigrés in our sample were actually affiliated to the university in some way, compared to more than three quarters in the case of the remainers. Watched more closely, the breach opens up even more, showing that, for all ranks higher than *Dozent*, the considerably smaller group of remainers even had higher values in absolute terms. In part, this disproportion can certainly be attributed to the fairly open discrimination of Jews within the Austrian academic landscape, long before National Socialism. However, there is yet another reason for it to be found in the fact that later emigrants were not only significantly less progressed, but also considerably younger than the remainers. Indeed, by the year of 1938, the peak year of the emigration, the mean age of those who left was 38 years, compared to 49 for those who remained in the country. As is well known, averages show a certain bias towards the higher values, and they do not serve well to display the distribution within groups. However, as is shown by the modal value (30 years) and in the table below, the majority of the émigrés was still considerably younger than that.

Table 4: Age cohorts of emigration

Age	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	older
Numbers	10	14	27	29	27	20	12	7	7	10

The overwhelming majority of them, as already indicated before, did not hold any academic positions prior to their emigration. Only about 10 percent of those who managed to establish themselves within the social scientific community during our period of investigation, however, had not even started their studies when they left Austria. The biggest single group among the emigrants in terms of academic profile were those holding nothing but their university degree (36%).

When it comes to the disciplines the emigrants adhered to, we discovered the expected overhang of lawyers by degree (24%), followed by *Staatswissenschaftler* (roughly political scientists) (18%) and psychologists (15%), while all the other disciplines finished decidedly below the 10% mark.<sup>7</sup> The situation looked different, however, when we got back to the same group a few years later, when for most of them it should have turned out where in the academic landscape they would finally end up. It turned out that, virtually, only the economists and psychologists could stick to their subjects, which increased to 28% and 26% of affiliation by Austrian emigrants, respectively, while practically all of the studied lawyers, if they had not done so earlier, had to look for something else. Sociology, up from a meager 4% before the emigration, finished third with 17% of all the émigrés adhering to that subject. While close to twenty percent started or finished their studies in the emigration, every sixth in our sample had to go back to university and finished with a second or third degree.

Finally, when it comes to the careers the Austrians had, it can be said that, however, two thirds of those in our sample who stuck to academic life managed to attain a full professorship at one time. Certainly, the institutions they taught at were markedly different in terms of quality, size and reputation. While still a third served at one of the bigger, somewhat reputed institutions, only eight of the émigrés ended up at a blue-ribbon university, namely the sociologists Peter M. Blau and Paul Lazarsfeld, the economists Alexander Gerschenkron, Gottfried Haberler, Friedrich A. Hayek, Karl Polanyi and Joseph A. Schumpeter, and the philosopher Karl R. Popper.

Some of them came back to Austria after 1945 to lecture, though none of them for good. As is well known, the official Austria was not overexerting itself, to say the least, in order to bring back some of the scholars who had left or been forced out of Austria at one time. Overall, we counted only 31 scholars (roughly every sixth) who again re-migrated to Austria after the defeat of the Nazi regime, 24 of which also returned to an Austrian university to teach.

<sup>7</sup> The other disciplines we categorized were: economics, ethnology, history, philosophy, sociology and a residual category.

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## The Myrdals and the Thomases 1930–1940: The Trials and Tribulations of a Cross-Atlantic Research Collaboration

### Introduction: A Cross-Atlantic Friendship

Writings on the intellectual origins of sociology are on the whole framed by attempts to find factors explaining eventually successful intellectual products. Less attention has been paid to projects that went astray, through which visions were tempered and lessons learned. This paper presents a brief "story" about the rise and ultimate fragmentation of an ambitious plan for collaborative cross-national research. The proposed study on the relationship between industrialisation and socio-economic change was jointly conceived in the early 1930s by four equally eminent social researchers: William Isaac and Dorothy Swaine Thomas and Gunnar and Alva Myrdal. It was designed to encompass many of their complementary interests as academic researchers, social reformers, friends and partners. The project never happened in its planned form but the existence in the Myrdal Archives in Stockholm of a collection of letters between them, and a copy of the funding proposal, enables us to follow the progress of the collaboration through the eyes of the participants.<sup>1</sup> The content of these letters points to the complex relationship between theoretical sociological visions, the processes of fund raising, data collection and writing, and the political and personal contexts in which these researchers found themselves at a particular time in the development of sociology. The letters also bring evidence of

<sup>1</sup> The project is referred to in several biographical works about the Myrdals. See: Bok 1987, Jackson 1990, Nilsson 1994, Akerman 1997. See also entries for W. I. Thomas and D. S. Thomas in *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*, *American National Biography* and *De-*