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ABSTRACT

This paper concerns the influence of religion on the Chicago School of Sociology. After showing the marginal importance that religion had in early sociological American studies, this article takes issue with those interpretations that do not acknowledge that the Chicago School remained interested in the topic of religion even after it had freed itself of theological influence in order to concentrate more on solving the problems in America at that time. It is the author's opinion that the Chicago School promoted religious research not only during the time of Albion W. Small and Charles R. Henderson when theological interest was strong, but later too, when a number of studies concerning the problems of the city were written, as well as other studies that sought a greater understanding of the ethnic factor. The purpose of this paper is to try to interpret the role religion played in the various kinds of research produced by the Chicago sociologists during the golden age of the School.

Introduction

This paper sets out to explain how and why religion came to play such a prominent role at the Chicago School of Sociology. Although the School's explicit interest in religious research was never articulated clearly, the topic of religion was present from the very beginning within a varied and eclectic orientation.1

The Chicago School (Bulmer, 1984; Deegan, 1988; Harvey, 1987; Smith, 1988), whose interests focused on different aspects of the institutions of the city, worked hard on the construction and the development of sociological theory.
The different research methods used at Chicago—personal documents, social maps, ecological studies and the emphasis on field work—indirectly approached the theme of religion.

The technique chosen by the sociologists—the social survey, considered appropriate for describing a given territory, institution, or problem—inevitably led to their involvement in religious themes, especially when they were dealing with questions concerning administrative efficiency or welfare legislation. And, in fact, the Chicago School’s classic contribution to sociology lies in this precise context and in combination with a growing number of voluntary civil and welfare organizations which emerged in the period just before the First World War.

After illustrating the partial importance that religion had in early sociological studies in America, this paper sets out to show its role in the sociological research promoted at Chicago, contesting interpretations that do not acknowledge that the Chicago School was responsible for promoting research on religion.

1. The Impact of Religion on the Early American Sociological Studies

The social conditions prevailing in the United States of America at the end of the nineteenth century, particularly the problems caused by urbanization, industrialization, and immigration to American cities (Harvey, 1987, 109–124), prompted intellectuals to develop new interpretative approaches towards the understanding of society. This research, which tended to describe the formation of a “new social morality,” closely involved people professing different religious faiths. Not by chance, many of the early sociology researchers were Protestant ministers.

The poverty in the countryside and the squalor in the cities led to the creation of a collectivist and egalitarian movement which very soon undermined the Protestant ethic that had favored the “Natural Right” of powerful businesses in the states between 1860 and 1920 (Baltzell, 1964, 158). This new idea was spread across the United States by two movements: the “Settlement House” and the “Social Gospel,” both originating in England where the “Christian Socialists,” led by Charles Kingsley and Frederick Denison Maurice, were striving to reform the negative aspects of industrial capitalism (Baltzell, 1964).

Settlement House started in England when a group of socialists founded “Toynbee Hall” in London in 1884. This inspired Jane Addams and Ellen Starr (Fritz, 1989, 78) to open “Hull House” in Chicago in 1889 (Addams, 1910),
followed by the famous “House of Henry Street,” opened in New York in 1893 by Lillian Wald. The Social Gospel Movement (Hopkins, 1940; Morgan, 1969), whose ideas were based on the conviction that the salvation of a person’s soul was useless without a parallel effort to christianize urban development, made a fundamental contribution towards maintaining the new theories of social change. The two main theorists of this movement were Washington Gladden, whose book *Applied Christianity* appeared in 1886, and Walter Rauschenbusch, author of the fundamental work, *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, published in 1907 (Goldman, 1956, 82–85).

In the United States Protestant churches were receptive to the “New Social Gospel,” especially the Episcopal church, which founded two religious reform bodies: “The Church Association for the Advancement of the Interests of Labor” (CAIL) and “The Christian Social Unit” (CSU). The former was founded by Father James S. Huntington in 1882 and the latter by Richard T. Ely in 1891.

Parallel to the beginning of the Social Gospel, Settlement House, and the Political reform Movement was the emergence of the “New Social Science.” Many of the early sociologists, for example, William Graham Sumner, were clergymen and were profoundly influenced by the philanthropic spirit of the age (Sumner, 1910). The alliance between Social Reform and New Social Science was clearly symbolized when the National Institute of Social Science awarded its gold medal to Lillian Wald in 1912. The relationship between the Social Gospel and the New Social Science was further strengthened with the foundation of the American Economic Association in 1885; Washington Gladden and another 22 ministers were the signatories of the association’s charter (Baltzell, 1964, 157–158; May, 1949).

The need to institutionalize the reform movement both by the state and by the church was the basic task of the New Social Science, as was clearly emphasized by William James and John Dewey for philosophy and psychology, Charles W. Beard and Frederick Jackson Turner for history, Thorstein Veblen for economics, Lester F. Ward and Charles H. Cooley for sociology, Oliver Wendell Holmes for law, and Franz Boas for anthropology. All of them were opposed to racism, social Darwinism, and determinism of a hereditary form, and believed in the ability of human nature to respond to new social conditions. Although Edward A. Ross was a popular sociologist of the time and Lester Ward was the first president of the American Sociological Society, it was Charles H. Cooley who exercised a decisive influence on sociology by being an outspoken critic of Social Darwinism and the theory of eugenics.
Within this reform movement, various Protestants were interested in combining reform with nascent sociology. While Edward Cummings, minister of the South Congregational Church in Boston and one of the most important advocates of the Social Gospel Movement in the United States, was holding the first course in sociology at Harvard in 1891–1892 (May, 1949, 206–207), Graham Taylor, founder of the Chicago Commons and author of the syllabus of biblical sociology, was teaching Christian Sociology at the Chicago Theological Seminary (Muelder, 1948, 28–34; Warren, 1939). This religious interest spread to other large American cities, above all to New York through Walter Laidlaw of the Federation of Churches (Bliss, 1892, 45–46).

A decisive contribution towards religious research was made with the foundation of the Rural Sociological Society in 1912. Warren H. Wilson was the first person to carry out religious research in the countryside (De Brunner, 1957), followed by Giddings, Ch. Gill and Gifford Pinchot, the latter setting up the first study of rural churches in Vermont. These initial surveys led on the one hand to a greater comprehension of parish life and to an acquaintance with the needs of the faithful, and on the other hand to a growth in maturity of the science of sociology.

Slowly, the "religious survey," with its studies of rural churches promoted in the main by the Interchurch World Movement, spread to 357 American cities, aiming to learn more about the religious background of immigrant workers and the social conditions of blacks in particular (Fukuyama, 1963, 197). This wide range of research led to the foundation by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., in 1921, of the first institute of research for religion in the United States. The concept that religious studies could not be conducted in a disorganized way was widespread, and it was accepted that the foundation of an appropriate institute for applying scientific methods to the study of the socioreligious phenomenon could not be put off any longer. The most important work produced during the life of this institute (1921–1934) was definitely the classic study by the Lynds, Middletown (1929), and the collaboration set up with the "President Hoover Research Committee" on Recent Social Trends in the United States (Ogburn, 1927), on which some sociologists from the Chicago School worked, notably William Ogburn. Although much of the research promoted by this institute was descriptive, it constituted the basis for the development of further, mainly theoretical, work.

In the wake of research begun by the Chicago Theological Seminary through Graham Taylor (Fukuyama, 1963), Arthur E. Holt and Samuel C. Kincheloe carried out numerous sociological surveys of a religious nature in the metropolitan area of Chicago. Of the contributions by the Chicago Theological Seminary, three mono-
graphs by S. C. Kincheloe are of considerable importance; two concern "the types of behavior of the Protestant Church in the city of Chicago" (Kincheloe, 1928) and one is on "Religion in the Depression," written for the Social Research Council (Kincheloe, 1937). The singularity of these three studies lies in the author's sociological methodology of the Chicago School to the study of the churches, with specific reference to the administrative aspects. It is worth remembering that the Community Renewal Society of Chicago was also active in Chicago and it produced various studies on public education, on the government of the city, on poverty, and on ethnic groups.

Institutionalized religious research became extremely important in the decade following the war, when the churches were organizing research and surveying departments in order to plan and set up new church bases in growing urban areas. During this period, hundreds of new communities were surveyed in order to choose sites for building new churches. The researchers, whether by training or methodology, followed the tradition of H. Paul Douglass, and all of them were religious representatives who had received their scientific training in the schools of theology.

The 1940s saw the foundation by the state and the church of what were called "research and survey" offices. Slowly, however, with the growth of the bureaucratization of research, academic sociologists managed to break away from the religious influence. While at the beginning of the century sociologists and clergy were moving freely between their work and their faith, and the clergy was teaching sociology at the universities, now the more the churches institutionalized religious research, the less their work had to do with sociologists; in time the clergy proved to be more a consumer than a developer of sociological research (Fichter, 1954; Harrison, 1959).

2. The Influence of Religion on the Founders of the Chicago School of Sociology: Charles R. Henderson and Albion W. Small

The early founders of American sociology were Protestants whose culture reflected their faith, together with principles of a scientific tendency (Bernard, 1934; Swatos, 1984). The reformist and religious inclination, generated by strong scientific motivation, planned to build "a better world for humanity" because it recognized the role of values in social integration (Dynes, 1974, 169–176; Poloma, 1982, 92–108). In effect, sociology was a new creed derived from the American sociocultural background of the nineteenth century. Later it became more of a
specific discipline, and this was particularly brought out by the first sociology course held at Yale by William G. Sumner (Sumner, 1910, 577–591).

Although the methodological techniques of the early sociologists were not very sophisticated and their theories were not always supported by the evidence, they were dedicated to making sociology a science. For them sociology was an alternative both to the ills of American society and to the Social Gospel and Christian Socialism (Cavanaugh, 1892, 109–129; Hadden-Longino-Reed, 1974, 282, 286; Diner, 1980).

With this purpose, sociology was an attempt to form a system of knowledge with the aim of building a “healthy society,” and this came about after it was realized that Protestantism was incapable of seeking an adequate solution to the emerging crises of urbanization and industrialization and to the radical changes of the nineteenth century. For this reason, sociology was described in various ways: “Practical Christianity,” “Applied Christianity,” “Christian Sociology,” “Biblical Sociology” and “Social Gospel Movement.” All these found fertile ground in the sociology department of the University of Chicago, a university which promoted social reforms (Goodspeed, 1916; Mccarthy, 1982; Tomasi, 1989b, 10–18).

The golden age of the Chicago School arose when interest in “social reform” (Webster, 1932) and in “objective research” was over (Cavan, 1983, 407; Harvey 1987). The early foundation period, during which Charles R. Henderson and Albion W. Small were very influential, was directed more towards “moral reform” than to “scientific foundation” (Matthews, 1977, 93). In the city of Chicago, famous for its involvement in new reform movements in various social fields during the first 10 years of the century, there was a rapid growth in the voluntary service and civil organization sector in the period immediately preceding the First World War. This growth later developed into a systematic reform program (Diner, 1975; Shils, 1948).

The nomination of Charles R. Henderson (1848–1915) as professor in the sociology department of the University of Chicago was made with the aim of introducing “charities into the curriculum” and, for the occasion, Small stated that the “whole subject of the sociological facts and possibilities of organized Christianity should be treated by a man of broad intellectual outlook and practical experience” (Diner, 1975, 220).

Henderson saw sociology as being closely connected to reform, and under the auspices of his role as university chaplain, he published an article on the subject in which he wrote that “God had providentially placed the social sciences at the disposal of reformers.” Although he had a lot of experience in “practical philan-
acquired before his arrival at Chicago, he very soon turned towards an empirical approach to social problems, an approach based on deep religiosity, which was strongly moralistic in nature and aimed at linking the university to the city.

In his two best articles, "The Scope of Social Technology" (Henderson, 1901) and "Practical Sociology in the Service of Social Ethics" (Henderson, 1902), he sought to lay a scientific base for sociology by showing that it was not only an art but a "scientific discipline" essential for the salvation of society (Henderson, 1901, 465–486). The aim of these articles was to refute the recurrent theory which held that sociology could not develop a method which would lead to a growth in knowledge. For Henderson, the aim of the social sciences was to discover the causes and tendencies of society and to formulate a mode of behavior which corresponded as closely as possible to welfare conditions.

If Henderson’s interpretation of sociology was characterized by a specific religious aspect, the interpretation of Albion W. Small (1858–1926) was not different in that it promoted empirical research of a markedly Christian nature (Small 1924; Small-Vincent, 1894). However, notwithstanding the strong ethical considerations which pervaded his interpretation (Carey, 1975), he saw sociology as an objective science and not as an imitation of moral philosophy.

For him, sociology was a scientific and ethical discipline tending towards reform and based on effective knowledge; the ethical considerations formed the basis for those research areas which were suitable for sociology, while surveys could proceed in a more scientific manner. Since the value of neutrality meant objectivity in empirical research, science, according to his theory, could be seen more as inductive theorization rather than as a collection of simple facts (Matthews, 1977, 25–96).

Small agreed with this interpretation and understood sociology to be the means of moving from “theory” to “practice,” which he was convinced could be demonstrated empirically. He expressed this conviction clearly in his book, The Meaning of Social Science, where he stated that social science could not “be a substitute for religion, but it is getting plainer and plainer... that social science is the only rational body for religion” (Small, 1910).

Small was extremely interested both in the concepts of Christ and in the religious character of human nature. He strove to develop a sociology aimed at educating the world according to the teachings of Christ, and for this reason his project “from God to Man” did not start in the church or on the street, but at the academy. In a series of lessons called “Christianity and Industry” held at the
University of Chicago, he defined what it meant to be a Christian in the following way: "Christianity is thinking as Jesus thought about life, and feeling as Jesus felt about life, and willing as Jesus willed about life . . . the indicated function of Christianity is to promote the Christian spirit" (Small, 1916, 721–864; Small, 1920: 673–694).

Small clearly had a profound influence on the development of sociological theory in the United States even if the different theories that he had imported from Europe, especially the ideas of the Australian sociologist Gustav von Ratzenhofer, often met with numerous difficulties. His intellectual development coincided with the shift that came about in America at that time from moral philosophy to sociology, and in Germany from history to sociology. Believing in sociology as an ethical discipline, he combined empirical surveys with the universality of causal processes. Under the influence of different theories, including those of Lester F. Ward and G. Sumner (Sumner 1906; Ward, 1906), he concluded that sociology could not be a study of social statistics but part of a continual and open social process whose causes lay in group conflict. His interpretations, although they were not always very clear, had a decisive influence on two of his colleagues: William I. Thomas and Robert F. Park (Matthews, 1977, 96). Thomas, in fact, persuaded Park to dedicated himself to sociology and, after Thomas, Park abandoned research on social reform in favor of an ethnic approach which he considered more of a priority for understanding society.

So, in Chicago, from 1897 to 1915, Small and Henderson were promoting sociological research which was deeply influenced by contemporary discussions between naturalist sociologists and Christian reformers. When they refused to confine sociology to the New Testament, they had to consider both the post-Darwinian method and the spirituality of the New Testament valid, because they were unable to limit their research to a single approach. It was in this way that they developed Christian concepts in the context of an understanding of social processes.

With the dismissal of Charles Zeublin in 1908, the departure of George Vincent in 1911, and the death of Henderson in 1915, the religious ideas of the department became less obvious. A move towards a more secular kind of sociology began to take place despite the fact that, for Small, sociology continued to be an ethical science that could act as the moral basis of society. In fact, the department, founded at a time in which sociology and social reform were seen as closely related, developed a different approach in the new century. Slowly the links between sociologists and reform were loosened owing first to the establishment of the
Department of Ecclesiastical Sociology and later the Department of Practical Sociology.

Even the ties that bound sociology to religion and to social reform were steadily being loosened. Some courses held by Henderson were canceled after his death, and Small's course in "Ethics and Sociology" also was removed from the curriculum upon his death, together with Burgess's course "The Causes and Prevention of Poverty." The courses "Problems and Methods of Church Expansion," "Contemporary Charities," "Family Rehabilitation," and "Church and Society" were soon canceled as they no longer aroused any interest. From 1924 onwards, the separation of sociology from social reform became a more marked orientation, and scientific sociology prevailed.

3. The Partial Role Played by Religion at the Chicago School of Sociology

From what has been said it is clear that the Chicago School of Sociology played an important role in American sociology. Initially involved in social reform, but never isolated from theory, it rapidly evolved from reformist concepts to become a discipline with "a more solid scientific base," that is, moving from the "moral philosophy" of history to the "science of society." Slowly the changes and problems of society led to the conviction that nothing could be known without a more specific and detailed study of these changes.

Although William I. Thomas (Fritz, 1989, 76–77), by upbringing a Protestant, was influenced by Small, Henderson, and other members of the department, he did not develop the idea of social reform. The interests passed on to him by, among others, the psychiatrist Adolph Reyner, took him away from surveys of a Christian nature and directed him towards a material conception of life. Very soon he developed a disinterested line of inquiry, freeing sociology from its preoccupation with social reform and making it into a science of social reform and social welfare. He considered himself a scientist of society, so Thomas neglected moralism and sought to understand anthropological behavior rather than to judge it by changing it (Thomas, 1909).

This long and complex intellectual development led Thomas to assimilate a vast quantity of theoretical material and to develop a "theory of social change." This theory, systematically expounded in his *Source Book for Social Origins* (Park, 1915), was repeated and developed in *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* in 1918. In the latter volume he made a contribution toward the explanation of the
dynamic relationship between the individual and society, showing how every concrete action comes about through the transformation brought about by the impact of a particular structural and cultural situation on a specific type of attitude. A further theoretical development by Thomas was his "theory of crisis," which formed the basis of the doctrine of social disorganization formulated in *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* and was used to interpret many of the phenomena studied. This explains stability and change in terms of the consistency and the strength of the attitudes and values which cultures give to their members, and the ability of these values to satisfy the personal wishes of the individual.

However, Thomas emphasized that the disorganization of social norms did not automatically mean that the individual members of society were subject to a parallel personal disorganization. Social norms, together with individual temperament, as well as the particular differences in the life story of each person, are important in modelling personality but they are not always present.

Let us now move on to a brief analysis of Park's development of theory, where we see that, concentrating on social illness, he studies urban social conditions with their endemic disorder and conflict, and theorizes about new social control. While for sociologists like Cooley, urban disorder could be eliminated by professionals, for Park it could be reestablished without special assistance. He did, however, accept his predecessor's model of social disorganization, but he did not attribute to sociology a role in the reestablishment of this order. The definition of sociology that Park was successful in imposing, if perhaps in a limited fashion, on the sociology department of the University of Chicago was relevant to his implicit interests, which consisted of combining the naturalistic and rationalistic approaches of theoretical sociologists with the firsthand research methods of empirical sociologists.

Park's main contribution to the development of sociology can be seen in *The City* (Park, 1915). This essay offered a wide research program aimed at unifying the applied field of urban studies with general theory. It was also a collection of the previous developments of urban aspects with special reference to the ideas of Simmel, Thomas, and Sumner. On the whole, two categories were important for Park: the "ecology" category which involved the effects of the division of labor together with population distribution, and the "cultural" category which concerned the effects of knowledge of the human self and behavioral choice, and the particular kinds of characters which developed in the human environment. In other words, he sought to explore the variety of ways in which human nature was influenced by the complexities and specialization of the human environment.
Clearly Park, like Thomas, was trying to apply grand theory to the concrete examples of a changing society in order to build a bridge between theory and empirical research, by concentrating on small groups and communities, or on particular kinds of characters. These illustrated the impact of different social forces, but he did not consider religion to be important.

If we compare the contribution of these two sociologists, Thomas and Park, with respect to their analyses of society and the growth of sociology, we see that both contributed enormously to the discipline as such. Both broke away from the "sociology-reform" relationship, but with different methodologies and approaches. While Thomas was never directly interested in religious surveys, Park was, although not in a major way. Park had various contacts with the Committee on Social and Religious Surveys and the Institute of Social and Religious Research in New York, and with the Chicago Society for Social Research and the Survey of Race Relations in California. In particular he studied religion in the context of race relations, as clearly emerges from a letter about the "religious survey." An analysis of Park's letters clearly shows his interest in the relationship between race, religion, and religious journalism (Dewitt, 1931; Jensen, 1920). Although his approach to religion was never carried very far, he always kept it in mind as a "complement to sociological theory" (Park, 1924 b).

Within the Chicago School, Robert E. Park had an attitude of extreme skepticism towards statistics, whereas William Ogburn had developed the measuring of social phenomena, and Ernest Burgess had tried to mediate between the two by using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. It is worth emphasizing the contribution made by Ogburn who, coming from Columbia University, was strongly inclined towards the use of statistical methodology and quantitative analysis. His "Recent Social Trends" was extremely advantageous for the study of religion: he called the report's second chapter "Changes in Religious Organization." Whereas Ogburn made a further contribution to statistics, his arrival at Chicago caused a great deal of discussion and controversy. W. Ogburn, M. Cornick, and S. Stouffer, as the advocates of a new methodology, were on one side, and Robert E. Park, Herbert Blumer and Louis Wirth, defenders of the study of life histories, ranged on the other. William Ogburn expressed this interpretation clearly in his Presidential address to the American Sociological Society in 1929, when he dissociated sociology from reform and aligned it with what he considered to be the sole aim of sociology: "the study of knowledge" (Lyon, 1978).

There are several examples of religious surveys carried out by the Chicago School of Sociology. As far back as 1901 Morris Gillette wrote about religious
agencies, churches, and the bases they established in his thesis, *Culture Agencies of a Typical Manufacturing Group: South Chicago*. His observations were substantiated by a series of data which clearly showed the activities that the churches promoted at that time (Gillette, 1901).

The early period of American sociology, characterized by the impact of urban growth, the collapse of religious values, and the rise in immigration, provoked a response agreed upon by the representatives of the clergy and sociologists, a response that was aimed at inculcating religious values as an antidote to the illness of society (Blachley, 1920). This important interest led to important studies of contemporary social conditions, which were collected together in the *Encyclopedia of Social Reform* in 1897.

This interest in religion can also be found in the thesis by Manuel Conrad Elmer, *Social Surveys of Urban Communities*, 1914, written under the guidance of Charles Henderson. It is asserted here that the work of the church in the area of welfare was always directed towards moral evils. What distinguishes this study is its formulation of a constructive policy to serve as a basis for the future. Its aim was also to show the necessity of the social survey for understanding society and for the development of a policy aimed at the treatment of society. Speaking of the "religious activities," he also showed the need to formulate a comprehensive program of all aspects of society (Elmer, 1914).

In Thomas James Riley's thesis, *A Study of the Higher Life in Chicago*, there are three paragraphs on religion (Riley, 1905), the last of which describes the position of the churches in Chicago. It can be clearly seen that there was no conflict between "genuine scientific charity" and "genuine church charity" (Carthy, 1980). A lot of space is given to the relationship between the scientific community and the church, a relationship considered a priority for intervention on behalf of society.

Other studies, such as the one by Howard Eikenberry Jensen entitled *The Rise of Religious Journalism in the United States*, represented an attempt to analyze the religious periodical press with the aim of understanding religious attitudes during formative stages of the American mentality, together with the influence of religion on the various movements which emerged. The study analyzes 485 periodicals published before 1845 and includes the period of the organization of the churches in America. The missionary movement, the early voluntary services, the Baptist church, and the disappearance of the old order are analyzed competently and with precision (Jensen, 1920). There is a clear break here from the theses exclusively concerned with theology, written in the very early years of the Chicago School (Faris, 1937).
In summary, only a few studies specifically concerning religion were conducted by the Chicago sociologists, even if religion was frequently treated in a general way in many works produced by the School. Research of a religious nature can be thought of as falling into two categories. The first is of a "theological tendency" which stems from people who were in a sense "involved" with religion. For example, Ernest W. Burgess was the son of a Protestant priest and Ellsworth Faris had been a missionary for some time. The theological aspects can be clearly seen in the titles of early theses, among which are: *Stages in the Theological Development of Martin Luther*, 1893, by Clifford W. Bernes; *The First Three Years of Paul's Career as a Christian*, 1908, by Ruby Lee Lamb; *The Relation of Religion to the "On-Going" of the Social Process*, 1912, by Victor W. Bruder; and *The Influence of Modern Social Relations upon Ethical Concepts*, 1918, by Cecil N. Reep (Faris, 1967). This was due to the theological influence of Albion W. Small, George Vincent, and Charles Henderson. From theology at the beginning, research on religious phenomena underwent a more sociological but never decisive evolution. The interaction of ecology with religious dynamics shows that the collection of personal documents and life histories, as in general the approach to social behavior and the use of methods, rarely was aimed at religious analysis. Only the maps, needing to show various types of variables such as population density, distribution of nationality, economic business and occupation division, recorded the "religious ethnic groups."

The second category of religious research was concerned with the analysis of "religious sects." In particular, the study of religious sects from the ethnographic side of systems and the effects of social order on the processes of social psychology flourished. The sect is made up of sectarian and the sectarian is a personality who can be understood only if one is aware of the social matrix from which he comes. Faris stated that the sect supplies material for the study of leadership because of the exceptional success of some sect leaders. A considerable number of interpretations, some theses, and the work by Pauline V. Young have demonstrated this line of interest. Two further aspects were present in the Chicago School of Sociology, the relationship between "sacred and secular" and "religious policy," in particular electoral behavior, but these have never had sufficient treatment.

From the above, it can be seen that the study of religion has been sparse and fragmentary, because the areas of study that were given more attention by the School were deviancy and general social aspects of the city; religion, as has already been stated, was not considered an important subject for analysis.
At this point it is useful to remember that the nineteenth century was the time of centralization and uniformity of world Catholicism and that this produced deep ethnic conflicts. In the United States, and particularly in Chicago, these tendencies made themselves felt, not only by modifying the old-style American independence, but also by feeding ethnic conflicts between the various groups of immigrants, and by creating problems in the search for a genuine expression of Catholic life.

Conclusion

From the foregoing it is clear that the Chicago School of Sociology contributed integral parts to the development of American sociology. Initially involved with social reform but never isolated from theory, it rapidly drew away from reformist concepts to become a discipline that was trying to build "a more solid scientific base." Studies of religion at Chicago were mainly undertaken through the use of official statistics, and this has often given some scholars the occasion to assert, erroneously, that these sociologists did not make hypotheses that stood up to rigorous statistical checks.

This incorrect interpretation gives us the opportunity to make three observations to clarify the role played by religion in the Chicago School. The first consideration is that, although at the beginning the Chicago sociologists did not carry out planned interviews of a representative sample, this does not mean that they were against statistical analysis, but shows rather their "skepticism about the ability of the statistical method to convey the subjective aspect," which explains their choice of life histories first and then maps.

It is in fact in the collection of personal documents and life histories, in the approach to social behavior and in the use of survey methods (within a plethora of sociological surveys supported by an eclectic tendency, aimed at integrating the subjective and objective aspects using a many-faceted methodology), that religion was kept in mind as a variable for the greater understanding of the ecology and racial mix of Chicago.

A second consideration concerns the different ethnic groups living in Chicago at the beginning of the century, "ethnic groups that were more interested in asserting their identity on American soil than in studying their religious behaviour." More than once, this had led some scholars to assert that the theoretical contribution of Chicago was made only in the urban sector. This interpretation, in the light of recent studies, is clearly untenable, and instead it seems clear that the correct interpretation is one in which the Chicago School did not develop an empiricism unsupported by
theory, nor restrict itself solely to urban sociology, but instead promoted varied empirical research in different fields.

As a third and last consideration, it is necessary to remember that the existence of the Theological Seminary, the foundation of the Divinity Department, and "the lack of a sociologist devoted to religion within the Department of Sociology," were the three fundamental causes that definitely held back the development of religious studies started in this first American school of sociology.4

NOTES

1. The main series of papers consulted for the present article (papers on Albion W. Small, Charles Henderson, Robert E. Park, Ernest W. Burgess, William F. Ogburn) are located in the Special Collections Department of the Joseph Regenstein Library at the University of Chicago. Two major series, the official Papers of the President of the University of Chicago for 1889–1925 and for 1925–1945 contain some material about the impact of religion on the Chicago School of Sociology.

2. Landis (1961, 8) suggests "a survey of the home and foreign field in order to ascertain accurately what should be done by the churches and charitable agencies of the country."

3. Robert Park (1924a) wrote the following to Galen Fische: "I note in your letter of July 21st, that you say 'the religious aspect does not seem to be particularly well covered.' I might reply that this study, from my point of view, is a religious survey. We are getting materials and expect to get out a book which might, from my point of view, be called a book in religious education. I mean by that a book that is dealing with the cultural aspects of life, but I know that you refer to a more definitive body of materials, with reference to the churches, missionaries and Goodwill institutions. The materials that Mr. Day is working on are my notion of the sort of materials that would represent a report upon the work of the churches and other religious institutions in this field. I am, myself devoting more attention and time to that aspect and problem than to any other."

4. This synthetic statement of the problematics is part of a wider work that the writer has been undertaking for some time in association with the Committee on Social Thought of the University of Chicago with the aim of verifying the effective contribution of the School to general sociological theory.

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