

METASOCIOLOGY; AN EDITORIAL FOREWORD

In this Issue . . .

A new set of editors take over. Arturo R. Tanco, Jr. has an M.A. from Cornell University and presently teaches Sociology and Economics at the Ateneo Graduate School. Associate Editor Angelita Yap recently returned from the United States where she obtained her M.A. in Sociology at Catholic University. She teaches at the Assumption Convent and at Far Eastern University. Maria Teresa Colayco, another Associate Editor, also teaches at the Assumption. She holds an M.A. from Fordham University. Our last Associate Editor, Meliton Salazar, is presently Personnel Manager of Del Rosario Brothers. He is an A.B. graduate of the Ateneo and has had wide experience with labor union work. All the new editors were former Editors of their respective school publications.

With the new editors have come some changes in the Review. Since the Review is the official journal of the Philippine Sociological Society, the editors felt that it should also help serve as a medium of news about the Society and its members. Hence the new section "News and Notes" about the Society and the activities of its members, written by the President of the Society.

For their first issue, the editors have chosen to return to fundamentals with a symposium on the nature, scope and purpose of Sociology. Here in the Philippines, where Sociology is a relatively new science, it is important for Sociologists to pause occasionally and examine not only their methodology and approaches but also their assumptions about the nature of the science, its purpose, and the emphasis placed on some of the disciplines Sociology embraces. It might be argued that this is backtracking over familiar ground, that everyone agrees on the simple premises, that everyone agrees on the simple premises, that a symposium on this subject will be oversimplification of what every Sociologist knows or should know already. Perhaps. But no one has yet been hurt by a review of the fundamentals. Then it is also true that many of our foremost Sociologists in the Philippines have debated with each other over differences in the methodology, nature, scope, and purpose of Sociology as it has developed in the Philippines. In a country like ours, for instance, where industrial development is fast becoming not only a dream but a reality, less emphasis has been placed on sociological studies aimed at complementing our economic efforts than is necessary. For all these reasons, and with no apologies for what to some may seem oversimplifications, the editors present a symposium on the nature, scope and purpose of Sociology in the Philippines.

Also in this issue, the editors present an article on the Lo-on or Fumigation Ceremony in Leyte or Samar written by a regular contributor to the review, Reverend Fr. Richard Arens, S.V.D. Another priest, Rev. Fr. Arthur Weiss, S. J., reviews the latest book on Sociology, "Sociology and Social Living". Fr. Weiss is the editor of the Social Order Digest.

The subject matter of metasociology is not new. It has been discussed a great deal as a systematic formulation, as a distinct body of principles antecedent to sociology. The term, "metasociology," was introduced in sociological literature by Dr. Paul Hanly Furbey in his book, *The Scope and Method of Sociology: A Metasociological Treatise*.¹ The author holds the conviction that the subject matter of metasociology is of the utmost importance and its proper study is significant in the construction of any sociological system, in the study of sociology and its criticism, and in the methods that it employs. The differences between sociological systems point back to metasociological considerations.

It is postulated at the outset that sociology is a science. The assumption, therefore, is that there exists for sociology criteria of scientific quality, criteria of relevance, and practical procedural rules of the auxiliary science, Metasociology. In turn, it presupposes the logical structure and axiological foundations of sociology. The logic of sociology deals with the postulates of the science, its theorems and the interpretation of formal systems within sociology. The other part of metasociology involves certain value judgments which are referred to axiology for their justification. The construction of a system of sociology necessitates the inclusion of certain metasociological value judgments; for instance, that sociology is valuable as a form of knowledge (vital value), and that it is useful as an aid to social reform (useful value). Metasociological value judgments may take the form of postulates, and also of decisions regarding various sociological procedures.

The development of metasociology is implied in the history of sociology. Sociologists presuppose, either explicitly or tacitly, certain methodological principles in their systems. Except for George Lundberg's books, *Foundations of Sociology*, and *Social Research*, however, no complete system of metasociology as such has been developed. Metasociology indirectly underwent formulation in the scientific discoveries of Greek speculation on methodology. During the past century, beginning with Auguste Comte, sociologists concerned themselves with the problem of scientific methodology. Anologists, concerned themselves with the problem of scientific methodology. And their methodology implicitly express their philosophical frames of reference. Among these sociologists may be mentioned the Positivists who followed the Comtean tradition; the Classical Systematists who sought to explain society in terms of a simple concept, following the fashion of physical laws which explained the phenomena of nature; the reactionists against Positivism who proposed a methodology distinct from that of the physical sciences; and the Neo-Positivists who retained the basic Comtean principles, but in addition, supplemented these with a logic of science. Metasociology, however, has marked a significant advance in methodology in the American empirical movement, with its focus on objectivity. The contributions made by each of these groups to metasociology may be judged in the light of the

¹ New York: Harper and Brothers, 1953.

three fields of this auxiliary science: criteria of scientific quality, criteria of relevance, and practical procedural rules of research.

An important metasociological issue is the problem of postulates, particularly, of supra-empirical postulates. The question has been discussed with a great deal of disparity. The question does not refer to postulates drawn from the empirical sciences. Whether or not it is expedient or useful to include supra-empirical postulates depends on the sociologist's grasp of reality. While sociology may enjoy the autonomy of the purely empirical sciences, it is possible that this social science may turn to supra-empirical postulates for the understanding of an empirical reality in all its aspects.

This summary is not meant to oversimplify the much involved science of Metasociology. On the other hand, it is hoped that with this introductory remark, sociologists may be reminded to pause awhile and reconsider their metasociological assumptions. Such a step may lead to clarity and possible agreement, or at least, to an understanding of differences.

A. Q. Y.

THE SCOPE AND FIELD OF SOCIOLOGY

SISTER M. MECHTRAUD

According to a general and a very broad definition sociology is the science of society, the science which treats of man's relations with his fellow men. It studies human society, its customs and institutions and their development at all times and at all places.

There are certain key terms in this definition which in themselves delineate more precisely the scope of this comparatively new science of sociology. There is, first of all, the statement made that sociology is a science. As such it should bear the various characteristics of a science; above all, a theoretical framework and a well defined methodology to gain empirical evidence through the systematic gathering, compiling and comparing of actual data.

Another key term in the above given definition is "man" and in particular man's relations with his fellowmen, but always with the special emphasis on that concept of man himself. Speaking in a general way, we may say that today it is usually and generally accepted that so-called "pure sociology" aims at being a positive science, that men as, it only may admit the inductive method of all scientific research. It seeks the understanding of social phenomena by observing, describing and classifying actual social facts and conditions.

In its purely inductive limitations it refrains carefully from all value judgments and claims almost tenaciously that it is not a normative science and hence is not at all concerned about values and norms. This explains the fact that many sociologists today are not at all anxious to provide remedial means for the present maladjusted and chaotic social life. They confine themselves to the classification of available material and to the drawing of conclusions as to the processes involved, checking and re-checking them. This they believe will enable them to establish on the basis of their actual findings definite laws in order to make accurate predictions concerning the future social behavior patterns of man. Many sociologists today frown at all theory in the strict sense of the word; they call it a-prioristic and hence too vague and too little scientific to be applied.

As we have said, one of the key concepts in each definition of sociology is "man"—but man as he is in reality, the religious, moral, social individual. In their endeavor to guarantee the science character of sociology, pure sociologists of today aim at the establishment of almost invariable laws, as they exist in the so-called exact, natural sciences. Yet, the statistical findings of the positive method, as it is applied to sociological research, cannot in any way lead to the establishment of laws as we have them in the natural sciences. Many of the forces at work in social life can neither be measured nor predicted, for the simple reason that man is the main agent in all social relationships. Man possesses free will, he is influenced by many factors, and may act quite contrary to the normal patterns of human behavior. The formulation of so-called social laws may easily treat man as an automaton and, therefore, will not give a true picture of human reality.