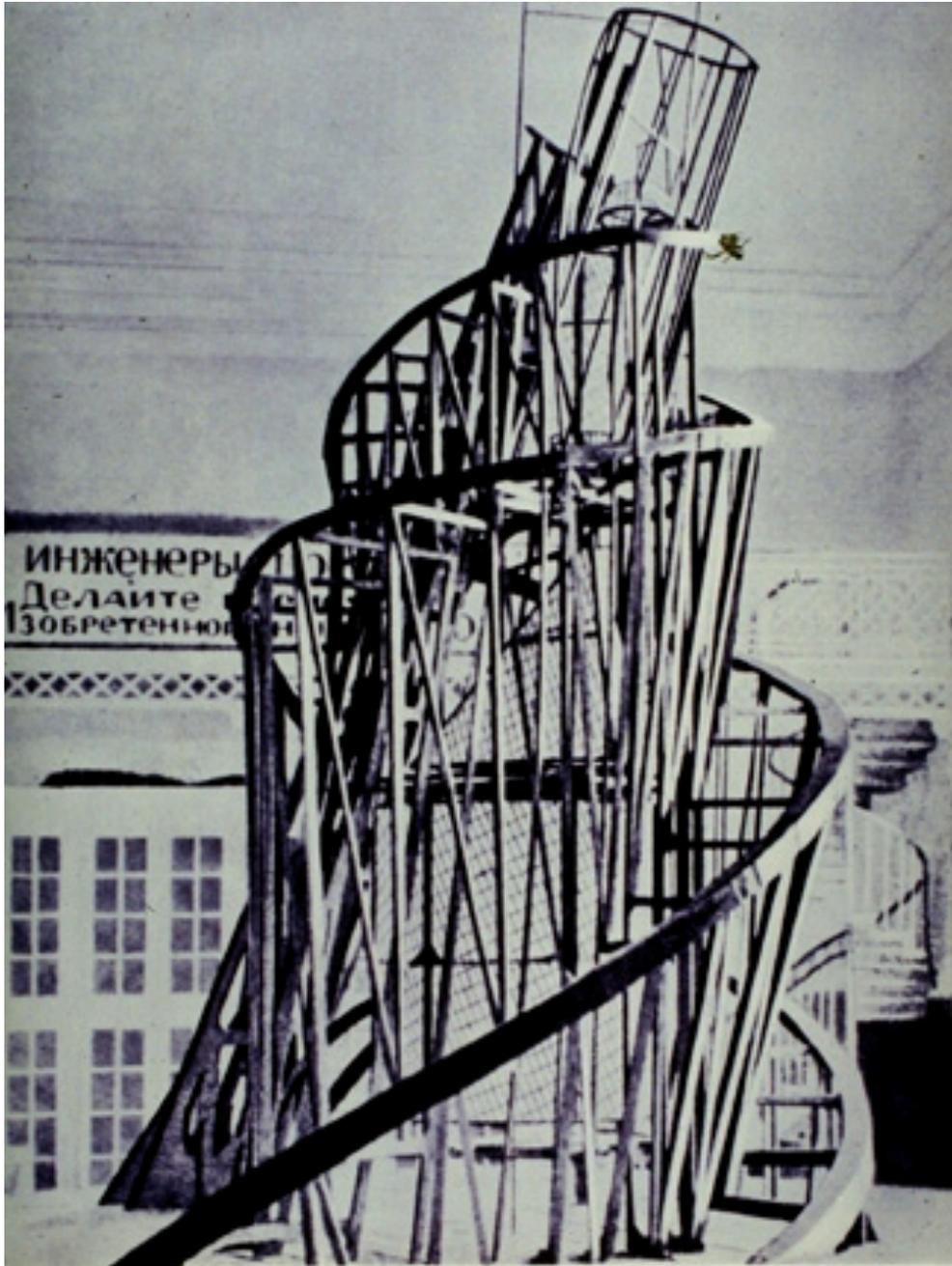


Comparative / Historical Methods

A GRADUATE SEMINAR / DEPT OF SOCIOLOGY, RUTGERS, FALL 2013 / 16.920.520.01

TUESDAYS, 9:30-11:50 PM, SEMINAR ROOM, DEPT OF SOCIOLOGY, DAVISON HALL (DC)



Convenor: Böröcz József

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office hours: TBA

This is a graduate reading and “hands-on” research seminar on comparative-historical methods, geared toward the needs of advanced graduate students in sociology. There is, of course, no method without a theory, so this is, at least implicitly, a theory-intensive course.

There is thinking without comparing, so this material could be useful for all people who think (including sociologists). All social objects have historicity, so, strictly speaking, sociology of any time point, including the present, ought to incorporate a historical dimension. In sociology, as it is done in north America today, ‘comparative-historical’ is a label under which we tuck a very heterogeneous set of research practices that:

- use more than one “case(s)” to address a substantive problem,
- address some aspect of social *change* instead of stagnancy,
- focus on places other than the U.S.,
- emphasize the connectedness of various geographically defined units of analysis, instead of separating them, including those that prefer thinking of such networks of connectedness as “systems”, e.g., world-~, etc.;
- try to understand a social phenomenon anchored in a time point other than, or not only, “now,”
- see the present (or any other time) as connected, in meaningful ways, to the past, and
- various combinations / critiques of the above.

This course is appropriately heterogeneous. In it, we discuss readings and do a set of exercises designed to enhance your skills in the comparative-historical “area.” The readings fall under the following types: (1) texts about various aspects of comparative-historical methods (research designs and techniques) and (2) examples as scholars employ those methods. The purpose of the class is gaining literacy, devising critique and inspiration. You are expected to:

- come to class fully prepared, with an active interest in comparative-historical sociology, an investigative curiosity and a mature intellectual agenda,
- contribute your unique perspective and experience to the discussions, and
- complete the exercises on time (no extensions).

Grading will be based on a judicious combination of the following factors and approximate weights:

In-class performance / contribution / constructiveness / creativity ☺	30%
Exercise 1 (macro-historical data)	10%
Exercise 2 (original historical source exercise)	15%
Exercise 3 (comparative original historical source exercise)	10%
Exercise 4 (oral history)	15%
Exercise 5 (your research design)	20%

SCHEDULE

9/3 **Introduction: people, course and issues**

+ Film-in-class + discussion: Forgács Péter: 1998. *The Danube Exodus*. Hungarian, 61 min.

9/10 **Invitation and critique**

Steinmetz, George. 2005. "Positivism and Its Others in the Social Sciences." Pp. 1-58 in George Steinmetz (ed.) *The Politics of Method in the Human Sciences. Positivism and Its Epistemological Others*. Durham/London: Duke UP.

Sewell, William H. jr. 2005. "The Political Unconscious of Social and Cultural History, or, Confessions of a Former Quantitative Historian." Pp. 173-206 in George Steinmetz (ed.) *The Politics of Method in the Human Sciences. Positivism and Its Epistemological Others*. Durham/London: Duke UP.

Eley, Geoff. 2005. "On Your Marx: From Cultural History to the History of Society." Pp. 496-507 in George Steinmetz (ed.) *The Politics of Method in the Human Sciences. Positivism and Its Epistemological Others*. Durham/London: Duke UP.

Abbott, Andrew. 1991. "History and Sociology: A Lost Synthesis." *Social Science History*, 15, 2 (Summer): 201-238.
See in <http://sakai.rutgers.edu>

9/17 **Archeology and Genealogy**

Foucault, Michel. 1972 (1969). "Introduction." 3-22, *The Archeology of Knowledge*. Translated by A. M. Sheridan Smith. London and New York: Routledge.

Foucault, Michel. 1977 (1971). "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History." 139-164 in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*. Edited and translated by David Bouchard. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP.

9/24 **Thinking "Big"**

Tilly, Charles. 1984. *Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Arrighi, Giovanni. 2000. "Globalization Meets Historical Macrosociology." Pp. 117-33. in Janet Abu-Lughod (ed.) *Sociology for the Twenty-First Century. Continuities and Cutting Edges*. Chicago: University of Chicago press.
See in <http://sakai.rutgers.edu>



Deadline for, and discussion of, Exercise 1: Macro-Historical Data!!

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“Large-N” Models

- Bornschieer, Volker & Christopher K. Chase-Dunn. 1978. “Cross-national Evidence of the Effects of Foreign Investment and Aid on Economic Growth and Inequality: A Survey of Findings and a Reanalysis.” *American Journal of Sociology*, 84(3):651-83.
- Kentor, Jeffrey. 1998. “The Long-Term Effects of Foreign Investment Dependence on Economic Growth, 1940-1990.” *American Journal of Sociology*, 103, 4(Jan):1024-1046.
- Böröcz, József. 1992. “Travel-Capitalism: The Structure of Europe and the Advent of the Tourist.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 34,4:708-41. <http://sakai.rutgers.edu> .
- Böröcz József. 2005. “Redistributing Global Inequality: A Thought Experiment.” *Economic and Political Weekly* (Mumbai, India), 26 February. <http://sakai.rutgers.edu> .
- Böröcz József. 2012. “Notes on the Geopolitical Economy of Post-State-Socialism.” Pp. 103-124 in Nina Bandelj and Dorothy J. Solinger (eds.) *Socialism Vanquished, Socialism Challenged*. New York: Oxford UP. <http://sakai.rutgers.edu> .
- Mirowski, Philip. 2005. “How Positivism Made a Pact with the Postwar Social Sciences in the United States.” Pp. 142-72 in George Steinmetz (ed.) *The Politics of Method in the Human Sciences. Positivism and Its Epistemological Others*. Durham/London: Duke UP.

“Small-N” Comparative Work & The Negative Case

- Skocpol, Theda. 1979. “State and Revolution: Old Regimes and Revolutionary Crises in France, Russia and China.” *Theory & Society*, 7, 1-2(Jan_Mar):7-95.
- Ertman, Thomas. 1997. *Birth of the Leviathan. Building States and Regimes in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge, Cambridge UP. ONLY the Introduction (pp. 1-34) and Conclusion (pp. 317-24).
- Burawoy, Michael. 1989. “Two Methods in Search of Science. Skocpol versus Trotsky.” *Theory & Society*, 18:759-805.
- Emigh, Rebeca. 1997. “The Power of Negative Thinking: The Use of Negative Case Methodology in the Development of Sociological Theory. “ *Theory & Society*, 26, 5(Oct):649-684.

10/15 **Single-N “Stories”**

Adams, Julia. 1996. “Principals and Agents, Colonialists and Company Men: The Decay of Colonial Control in the Dutch East Indies.” *American Sociological Review*, 61(Feb):12-28.

Markoff, John. 1988. “Allies and Opponents: Nobility and Third Estate in the Spring of 1789.” *American Sociological Review*, 53(August):477-96.

Kwee Hui Kian. 2013. “Chinese Economic Dominance in Southeast Asia: A *Longue-Durée* Perspective.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 55,1:5-34. OR: <http://sakai.rutgers.edu>

Wallerstein, Immanuel. 1991. “A Comment on Epistemology: What is Africa?” Pp. 127-9 in *Unthinking Social Science: The Limits of Nineteenth-Century Paradigms*. New York: Polity Press. OR: *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, XXII,2, 1988.

Wallerstein, Immanuel. 1991. “Braudel on Capitalism, or Everything Upside Down.” Pp. 207-17 in *Unthinking Social Science: The Limits of Nineteenth-Century Paradigms*. New York: Polity Press. OR: *Journal of Modern History*, LXIII, 2, June.

10/22 **The Extended Case Method—How Far Can It Be Extended?**

Burawoy, Michael. 1998. “The Extended Case Method.” *Sociological Theory*, 16,1(March):4-33. OR: http://sociology.berkeley.edu/faculty/BURAWOY/burawoy_pdf/The%20Extended%20Case%20Method.pdf

Eliasoph, Nina and Paul Lichterman. 1999. “We Begin with Our Favorite Theory . . .’: Reconstructing the Extended Case Method.” *Sociological Theory*, 17,2(July):228-34.

Derluigan, Georgi. 2005. *Bourdieu’s Secret Admirer in the Caucasus. A World-System Biography*. University of Chicago Press.

10/29 **Reflexivity: What is Reflected on What?**

Bourdieu, Pierre and Loic J. D. Wacquant. 1992. *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. The University of Chicago Press.

Ghosh, Amitav. 2002 (1986). “The Imam and the Indian.” Pp. 1-12 in *The Imam and the Indian. Prose Pieces by Amitav Ghosh*. Delhi: Ravi Dayal, Permanent Black.

11/5



Deadline for, and discussion of, Exercise 2: Guidebook to Europe!!!

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Clues: Taking Advice from Freud, Sherlock Holmes and the Inquisition

Ginzburg, Carlo. 1989(1986). “Clues: Roots of an Evidential Paradigm.” Pp.96-125 in *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method*. Translated by John and Anne C. Tedeschi. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP.

Ginzburg, Carlo. 1989(1986). "The Inquisitor as Anthropologist." Pp. 156-64. in Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method. Translated by John and Anne C. Tedeschi. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP.

Böröcz József. 2005. "Goodness Is Elsewhere: The Rule of European Difference." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 48,1,(January):110-38. OR:
http://www.academia.edu/162846/Goodness_Is_Elsewhere_The_Rule_of_European_Difference

11/12



Deadline for, and discussion of, Exercise 3: Guidebook in A Comparative Framework!!!

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What Is NOT An Archive?

Ginzburg, Carlo. 1999. *The Judge and the Historian. Marginal Notes on a Late-Twentieth-Century Miscarriage of Justice*. Translated by Anthony Shugar. London: Verso.

Ghosh, Durba. 2005. "National Narratives and the Politics of Miscegenation." Pp. 27-44 in Antoinette Burton (ed.) *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions and the Writing of History*. Durham, NC: Duke UP.

Sahadeo, Jeff. 2005. "'Without the Past There Is No Future': Archives, History and Authority in Uzbekistan." Pp. 45-67 in Antoinette Burton (ed.) *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions and the Writing of History*. Durham, NC: Duke UP.

Böröcz, József. Manuscript under review. "Whitened Histories: Reaction, Revision and Race in the Post-State-Socialist Politics of History in Hungary." <http://sakai.rutgers.edu>

11/19 **Silencing the Past**

Trouillot, Michel-Rolphé. 1997. Silencing the Past. Power and the Production of History. Beacon Press.

11/26



Deadline for, and discussion of, Exercise 4: Oral History

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Experience & Oral History

Sarkar, Mahua. 2013. "Between Craft and Method: Meaning and Inter-Subjectivity in Oral History Analysis." *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 25,4:578-600.

Scott, Joan W. "Evidence of Experience." Pp. 379-407 in Terrence J. McDonald (ed.) *The Historic Turn in the Human Sciences*. Ann Arbor: Michigan UP.

Sarkar, Mahua. 2006. "Difference in Memory." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 48,1:.

Passerini, Louisa. 1998. "Work Ideology and Consensus under Italian Fascism." Pp. 53-62 in Robert Perks and Alistair Thompson (eds.) *The Oral History Reader*. London: Routledge.

Portelli, Alessandro. 1998. "What Makes Oral History Different." Pp. 63-74 in Robert Perks and Alistair Thompson (eds.) *The Oral History Reader*. London: Routledge.

12/3

Interpretation

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Deep Play. Notes on the Balinese Cockfight." Pp. 412-54. in *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Ritual and Social Change: A Javanese Example." Pp. 142-69. in *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.

Esposito, Elena. 1996. "Observing Interpretation: A Sociological View of Hermeneutics." *MLN—Modern Language Notes*. 111:593-619.

Hadiz, Vedi R. 2006. "The Left and Indonesia's 1960s: The Politics of Remembering and Forgetting." *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 7,4: 554-69.

12/10



Deadline for Exercise 5: Your Research Design

Tying Loose Ends

No reading 8)

Take-Home Exercises:

Exercise 1: **Secondary Analysis of Macro-Historical Data**

due in class on Oct 1 Try a creative analysis with the Maddison data set provided through <http://sakai.rutgers.edu> . There is no need to get into high-power statistical techniques; the purpose is to examine the plausibility of ideas regarding the substantive phenomena that are represented in the data. Hint: graphs, tables and simple statistical tests constitute some of the most useful ways to do this.

Exercise 2: **Analysis of a Primary Document**

due in class on Nov 5 The purpose of this exercise is to give you some experience in the kind of interpretive work that historians and even some brave historical sociologists do with “primary sources.” For this assignment, we will use an old book, *A Satchel Guide for the Vacation Tourist in Europe*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1912. Study it carefully. (And *handle it carefully* as it is a rare book.)¹

Prepare a maximum 1000-words-long discussion, focussing on how the document was prepared, the nature of its contents, its strengths and weaknesses as an historical source, possible errors of commission or omission contained in the document, and the ways in which the information contained in it might be useful for answering sociologically relevant questions. In preparing to write, you might want to think about some of the following issues:

- Who composed the document, and why? Why has it survived and have any changes been introduced over the years? What methods appear to have been used to acquire the information contained in the document?
- What are some of the biases in the document and how might you go about checking them or correcting for them? Was there a time lapse between the writing and the publication of the document? How reliable or dispassionate was the person who wrote the document? Under what institutional constraints or routines was he or she probably operating, and how might these have affected the document?
- Evaluate the possible uses of the document as (1) a direct report about the past and (2) an index of institutional activities or cultural outlooks. What role did etiquette, convention, and custom play in the composition of the document?
- Are there any contradictions within the document, or with otherwise known facts, that might lead you to question the credibility of pieces of information contained in it? What other kinds of documents or sources of evidence might you consult to correct biases, check inaccuracies, or provide further evidence on issues connected with the document? If you relied solely upon advice contained in the document, how might your vision of the past be distorted?
- What are the key categories and concepts used by the writer(s) to organize the ideas presented? What are the selectivities or silences that result from these categories of thought?
- Identify some questions in historical social science that this document might help to answer. With what methods of analysis could one use this document (and perhaps others like it) to address those questions in a reliable and valid way? Are there questions for which this document might seem appropriate, but where, in fact, it could an investigator astray?

¹ If you wish to consult further sources on primary sources, look up the readings recommended in the annotated bibliography at the end of

Exercise 3 **Comparative Analysis of Primary Documents**

- due in class on
- Choose a contemporary item to serve as a comparative counterpart to the document used in Exercise 3. Keeping in mind the considerations developed with respect to the item in Exercise Two, sketch a 1200-2000 word comparative analysis of the two explaining
- Nov 12
- the most important facts that make the two documents comparable,
 - the most significant ways in which they differ from each other, and
 - what sociological inference you derive from those observations.

Exercise 4: **Secondary Reading of an Oral History Interview**

- Due in class on
- I have placed a link to the transcript of one of Rutgers Libraries' rich Oral History Archives—a life history interview with Clarence Wilson—in <http://sakai.rutgers.edu> . Read the transcript carefully, preferably several times, and annotate it as for pointers to possible historical-sociological issues that could yield interesting insights about the times, society at the time, and various specific social issues as narrated in the interview. Pay close attention to language, the interviewer-interviewee relationship, and implicit and explicit frames of social ordering as they emerge from the text. Bring to class, and hand in, the annotation in such a format that it should be intelligible to another researcher (in this case: József). Be prepared to contribute to an in-class discussion.
- Nov 26

Exercise 5: **Your Own Research Design**

- Due in class on
- Devise a research design (between 1500 and 2500 words) that addresses a substantive problem of your choosing that calls for a comparative and/or historical research strategy. Elaborate the research puzzle, argue the way in which you can ascertain answers to the puzzle by considering a selection of cases, periods, etc. Make sure the design is within the realm of the possible (imagine that you will have a chance to obtain some funding, but no more than \$ 15,000.00 for a year, to do this research). Of course you will not have to do the research itself (unless you really insist. 😊)
- Dec 10 (last class meeting)

The Rutgers Sociology Department strives to create an environment that supports and affirms diversity in all manifestations, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, social class, disability status, region/country of origin, and political orientation. We also celebrate diversity of theoretical and methodological perspectives among our faculty and students and seek to create an atmosphere of respect and mutual dialogue. We have zero tolerance for violations of these principles and have instituted clear and respectful procedures for responding to such grievances.