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ORGANICISM, REVOLUTION AND THE ORIGINS OF SOCIOLOGY

ROGER PADEN

Sociology was invented in the nineteenth century. The suddenness of its development is striking. Prior to the nineteenth century, with the exception perhaps of the work of Montesquieu and Rousseau, there was almost no work being done which could properly be called sociological. However, by the end of the century, as Durkheim wrote, "the word ['sociology' was] on everyone's lips".[1] This constituted something of a minor revolution, for at the beginning of the century not even the term itself had been invented. Not only did this new discipline receive its name in that century —coined by Comte in his *Cours de philosophie positive* in 1839— but it was during that period that its domain was first defined, its methodology first debated, and the outlines of its professional structure first established. Moreover, many of the classic works of sociology, works which stand at the beginning of the various sociological traditions, were written in the nineteenth century: by Comte, Tocqueville, and Durkheim in France; by Marx and Tönnies in Germany; by Sumner and Ward in America; and by Spencer in England. The nineteenth century also saw the establishment of the first departments of sociology,[2] the publication of the first sociological journals,[3] and the founding of the first sociological societies.[4] By the end of the century, sociology was so well

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[1] Quoted by Lukes, Steven. *Emile Durkheim: His Life and Work*, London: Penguin Press, 1973, p. 396.

[2] Lengermann, Patricia. *Definitions of Sociology*, Columbus: Charles Merrill Co., 1974, p. 18.

[3] Mitchell, Duncan. *A Hundred Years of Sociology*, Chicago: Aldine Pub. Co., 1968. pp. 1–21.

[4] *Ibid*, pp. 10–21.

established that, as Durkheim noted,[5] its name could even be used as a term of abuse.

The extraordinary development of sociology did not require special explanation, according to most of the early sociologists. Rather, it was usually thought to be merely a part of a much larger social development. Comte, for example, took the development of sociology to be nothing more than one event, albeit the crowning event, in the development of "Positive society".[6] This view, which is still widely held today, takes the development of sociology to be little more than the result of the application of scientific methods and attitudes, first developed during the Enlightenment, to society; to be, that is, merely one aspect of the spread of the Enlightenment. As the title of a recent history would have it, echoing Comte, sociology came about as the result of the development of *Social Thought from Lore to Science.*[7] According to this view, such a development required nothing more or less than the rationalization of the discipline. This process involved such actions as replacing speculation by observation and close argument, abandoning final causes in favor of efficient causes, purifying descriptive concepts of all normative elements, and, finally, mimicking the techniques of the natural sciences, most importantly their use of mathematics. According to this view, sociology was the product of such a process, the result of the extension of Enlightenment assumptions and methods to the study of society. Sociology was an integral part of the Enlightenment project.

I would like to take issue with this view. Sociology did not begin as an extension of the Enlightenment project, but as a reaction to it. Sociology, as distinct from Political Economy, was premised on the repudiation of some of the fundamental assumptions of the Enlightenment. Its development was not the result of an attempt to revise social thought according to the 'scientific' principles of the Enlightenment, but rather its development involved the explicit rejection of one of the most basic assumptions of the Enlightenment. Sociology developed, as it were, in an epistemological space denied by the Enlightenment, in *theoretical* opposition to it.

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[5] Lukes, *op. cit.* p. 396.

[6] Comte, Auguste. *System of Positive Polity,* London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1875–77.

[7] By Becker, Howard and Harry Barnes (Washington: Harren Press, 1952).

This point must be made with some care, however. Some authors, most prominently Robert Nisbet, have argued that sociology arose as part of a conservative political reaction against the social changes brought about by the liberal and industrial revolutions of the eighteenth century.[8] According to Nisbet, sociology was developed in *political* opposition to the Enlightenment as part of a conservative political program; sociology arose out of a nostalgia for the pre-industrial, pre-liberal past. I believe that this is a mistake. Although sociology originated in a political milieu, its success was due to the fact that it was neutral with respect to the political positions of the day. The political neutrality of sociology made its radical theoretical innovations more broadly acceptable. Nisbet's stress on the supposed political thrust of sociology not only distorts its political impact, but it obscures its conceptual innovations. Sociology could play its essential role in the theoretical Counter-Enlightenment because it was not essentially related to the political Counter-Enlightenment.

The central assumption of the Enlightenment denied by sociologists was what might be termed "abstract individualism." According to this assumption, individuals are conceived of as abstractly "given", as possessing interests, needs, goals, purposes, and abilities independently of their relation to society. Knowing and reasoning are thought to be, as they were by Descartes, individual acts, having no essential relation to society. Moreover, the individual was thought to be the source of morality, the supreme arbiter of moral values. Accordingly, it was thought, society must be explained —and judged— in terms of these pre-social individuals. Society is an artificial construction, the form of which is determined by the characteristics and decisions of these individuals. Social facts must be explained by reference to pre-social individual characteristics. This principle (which later, in a somewhat altered form, became known as "methodological individualism") was broadly accepted by most Enlightenment thinkers, perhaps most famously by the contractarians. Their attempt to explain and evaluate society as the creation of rationally self-interested individuals who, in a "state of nature" logically prior to society, design and institute society through an act of "contract", is a paradigm example of the abstract individualism which so dominated the Enlightenment.

It was against this assumption that sociologists, as a group, reacted. Sociology was based on the denial of abstract individualism and the ac-

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[8] Nisbet, Robert. *The Sociological Tradition*, New York: Basic Books, 1966.

ceptance of its contrary, "organicism". It was formed in reaction to this theoretical position, not, as Nisbet would have it, in reaction to the political changes with which abstract individualism was associated. This point can be best illustrated by examining the theories of Edmund Burke.[9] Nisbet correctly takes Burke to be one of the immediate precursors of sociology, but for the wrong reasons. Burke was of course a conservative, best known for his opposition to the French Revolution. However, his conservativism is less significant to the origins of sociology than is his opposition to abstract individualism, upon which he tried to ground his political positions.

Burke believed, correctly, that the French Revolution was grounded in the ideology of abstract individualism. However, because, according to Burke, this theory is false, the Revolution was based on a mistake and destined to issue in evil. Burke thought abstract individualism false because

> the state of civil society [...] is a state of Nature,—and much more truly so than a savage and incoherent mode of life. For man is by nature reasonable; and he is never perfectly in his natural state, but when he is placed where reason may be best cultivated and most predominates. Art is man's nature. We are as much, at least, in a state of Nature in formed manhood as in immature and helpless infancy. [...] To give, therefore, no more importance, in the social order, to such descriptions of men than that of so many units is a horrible usurpation.[10]

The essential idea which informs this passage, that "art is man's nature", implies that humans have no pre-social nature in terms of which explanations of social institutions could be cast. The characteristics which people come to possess are not logically prior to society, but are formed or "cultivated" by society, and are therefore social. The process of cultivation or enculturation instills in individuals the "habits", "manners", and "prejudices" which determine their behavior. These

> manners are more important than laws. Upon them, in a great measure, the laws depend. The law touches us but here and there, and now and

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[9] For a more complete exposition of Burke's political philosophy, see my "Reason and Tradition in Burke's Political Philosophy", *Journal for Value Inquiry*, **5**: 63–78 (1988).

[10] Burke, Edmund. *The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke*, London: Ballantyne, Hanson, and Co., 1865, vol. 4, p. 176.

then. Manners are what vex or soothe, corrupt or purify, exalt or debase, barbarize or refine us, by a constant, steady, uniform, insensible operation, like that of the air we breath in.[11]

Because these manners determine our behavior, our acts are most properly termed "customary". But customs, for Burke, are not just thoughtlessly repeated behaviors, rather they are complex, integrated patterns of behavior, feelings, judgments, interests, opinions, reasons, and values. We are, to use a more modern jargon, "thrown" into this customary world, and these internalized customs form the foundations of our behavior, of our powers of reason and understanding, and of our moral judgments. The origins of these customs are, as Burke put it, "dark and inscrutable [...] But out of [these] causes, unknown to us, perhaps unknowable, arise moral duties, which, as we are able perfectly to comprehend, we are bound indispensable to perform".[12] These duties in turn define and justify social roles. As a result, not only do we find ourselves thrown into a world of seemingly natural social roles, each one dictating a particular pattern of behavior, interest, and opinions, but these roles come with their own internal moral and practical justification

According to Burke, these social roles are intimately intertwined.[13] Enculturation to them instills in us mutually complementary interests, duties, responsibilities, and expectations which lead us to play roles which contribute to the general welfare. At the same time, enculturation causes us to develop interests which can be satisfied by the actions of other individuals playing their roles. This leads Burke to say that in its formation, society "has pursued not only every sort of social advantage, but it has cultivated the welfare of every individual. His [socially formed] wants, his wishes, even his tastes, have been consulted [...],"[14] or more correctly, his interests have been designed so that society can satisfy them.

On Burke's view then, society is an infinitely complex, historically developed, system of customs; of habitual and reciprocal patterns of behaviors, prejudices, values, interests, and opinions—all apparently morally sanctioned—which are so united as to provide for the maximum satisfaction of interests. Burke's theory is clearly an "organic" theory of

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[11] Ibid., vol. 5, p. 310.
[12] Ibid., vol. 4, p. 166.
[13] Ibid., vol. 4, p. 176.
[14] Ibid., vol. 5, p. 373.

society, in that it attempted to understand the relationship between individuals and society on the model of the relationship between cells and the body. In particular, it held that individuals, like cells, could not be understood except in terms of the whole. Society, not individuals, is logically prior. Whereas abstract individualism entailed that social phenomena must be explained in terms of a pre-social human nature, Burke believed that "human nature" must be explained in social terms.

Burke believed that the truth of organicism not only entailed the falseness of abstract individualism, but that it also had immediate political consequences. He believed that organicism was incompatible with the political individualism of the French Revolution and he used his organic theory to argue that all political changes, such as the Revolution, based on abstract individualism would turn out badly. Thus, we should resist all modern political "innovations". Burke grounded his conservativism in his organic theory of society. However, while Burke seemed opposed to most political changes, in fact the actual targets of his argument were just those changes based on abstract individualistic assumptions.

In one sense, however, he was suspicious of all "planned" political innovations simply because he believed it to be almost impossible to predict the results of any social change. "The real effects of moral causes are not always immediate, but that which in the first instance is prejudicial may be excellent in its remoter operation, and its excellence may arise from the ill effects it produces in the beginning."[15] However, he only directly opposed those changes which were justified solely by arguments based on individualistic assumptions. He thought that because those theories ignore the socially formed habits, desires, and interests of actual, real people, and base their programs on the characteristics of some abstract individual, a particular kind of unintended and harmful result is likely. Individualism will likely lead to a harmful "simplification" of society:

> France differs essentially from all those governments which are formed without system, which exist by habit, and which are [characterized by] the multitude and [...] complexity of their pursuits. [The government of France is wicked,] but it is spirited and daring; it is systematic; it is simple in its principle; it has unity and consistency in perfection. [To its rulers] the will, the wish, the want, the liberty, the toil, the blood of

[15] Ibid., vol. 3 pp. 311–12.

> individuals is as nothing. Individuality is left out of their scheme of government. The state is all in all.[16]

Burke's line of reasoning was simple. If individuals are formed by society and given their individual characters and interests by a complex process of enculturation, then social change based on a kind of reasoning which ignores those socially-developed particular interests in favor of some ideal universal rational interest must ultimately act contrary to those particular interests. It will attempt to satisfy "universal," "ideal" interests, rather than the diverse —and perhaps "irrational"— interests of the population. As a result the organic complexity of natural societies will be destroyed, causing a general decline, not only in the variety of interests satisfied, but also in the total number of interests satisfied.

This assumes that these changes could be instituted. However, Burke argued that the social structures which the French Revolution attempted to establish and which the Enlightenment philosophers advocated, cannot be successfully instituted given the present form of society and even if they were instituted they could not survive long. Central to Burke's argument was his view that our behavior is most properly characterized as customary. Because our lives are composed of customs, and because those customs form a harmonious whole, they will resist any change which is imposed from without. Moreover, this resistance to change will not just be the passive resistance of social inertia, but it will be a resistance actively driven by the values, opinions, and judgments of the citizenry. Externally imposed change grounded in some abstract political theory will not just seem to be disruptive to the average citizen, but it will seem to be immoral and unjustified. Such externally imposed change will, therefore, be resisted by the people and consequently must be imposed by force. Thus, the kind of "externally" motivated social changes advocated by Enlightenment thinkers will tend to lead to a "totalitarian" state.

This argument depends on a distinction between "externally imposed change" and "internally necessitated change." Burke was not opposed to all change. He favored changes —he called them "reforms"— such as the American Revolution which were the result of the natural development of society and which therefore were necessitated by the natural, internal, interactions of socially developed interests. His opposition to externally

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[16] Ibid., vol. 5, p. 375.

imposed changes —which he called "radical changes" or "political innovations"— rested solely on the fact that they are not internally justified modifications of old customs. Such changes, he believed, must therefore be imposed and maintained by force.

> On the scheme of this barbarous [Enlightenment] philosophy, which is the offspring of cold hearts and muddy understandings, and which is as void of solid wisdom as it is destitute of all taste and elegance, laws are to be supported by their own terrors, and by the concern which each individual may find in them from his own private speculations, or can spare to them from his own private interests. In the groves of their academy, at the end of every vista, you see nothing but the gallows. Nothing is left which engages the affections on the part of the commonwealth. [The] sort of reason which banishes the affections is incapable of filling their place.[17]

Social revolutions based on Enlightenment theories of individualism will lead to totalitarian societies because they can only maintain themselves by force. They must do this because they act contrary to the customary structure which holds society together. This opposition to custom, Burke believed, is a consequence of the abstract individualism of the Enlightenment. It is this theoretical individualism which, for Burke, is the root problem of modern society.

Burke's argument, however, is flawed in at least two ways. Because of these flaws his attempt to derive a conservative political program directly from organicism fails. This failure, however, was a productive failure; it lies at the root of sociology. In a sense, we might say that sociology was based on a set of mistakes. These mistakes arise, in part, from Burke's failure to make two of his assumptions explicit. In both cases, these assumptions were empirical assumptions about the nature of society, yet Burke implicitly treated them as if they were *a priori* truths.

The first implicit assumption can be found in Burke's conception of organicism. This conception is actually fairly complex, consisting of at least two propositions. The first proposition is that "human nature" is socially constructed. I will reserve the term "organicism" to refer to just this idea, although "anti-humanism" is a more common name for it today.[18] It

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[17] Ibid., vol. 3, pp. 333–34.

[18] Cousins, Mark and Hussains, Athar. *Michel Foucault*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984. p. 252.

is of course this proposition which directly contradicts the abstract individualism of the Enlightenment. In addition to this organicist assumption, Burke also holds a particular view of the nature of society. Burke believes that society is highly integrated. He speaks of society as being "a grand chorus of national harmony."[19] I will refer to this assumption as Burke's "functionalism". Burke tends to conflate these two ideas in his notion of organicism. However, the two assumptions are clearly independent and Burke's arguments for organicism proper do not establish functionalism. Moreover, this functionalist thesis clearly has empirical content in that the degree to which a society is integrated can only be established through observation.

However, it is clear that Burke's conservative conclusions follow only if organicism is combined with functionalism. Organicism (or "anti-humanism") by itself has no political content. Organicism together with the assumption of perfect harmony warrants the conservative programs which Burke advocated. However, organicism combined with the assumption of imperfect harmony would probably warrant a program of moderate change. Finally, organicism together with an assumption of social disharmony or conflict might warrant a radical political program. Conservative policies follow from organicism only if it is combined with a strong functionalist assumption.

This can be seen in the example which interests Burke the most, the French Revolution. On Burke's view, the Revolution would necessarily result in the Terror only if the ideas which motivated it were ideas which were external to French society and only if that society were otherwise a harmonious whole. If this were the case, then the attempt to impose those ideas on the social structure would provoke the kind of resistance which could only be overcome by force. However, if those ideas were internal to the society or if that society were not absolutely integrated, then the attempt to use them to reform society would not necessarily go wrong. Thus, to justify his conclusions, Burke must argue that pre-revolutionary French society was relatively harmonious and that the individualistic ideas which led to the revolution were in fact not "internal" to the French tradition. Both these points, however, are empirical points.

Burke's second mistaken assumption, that abstract individualism is external to French (and English) society, also has empirical content. It, too, is not argued. Instead of arguing that abstract individualism is exter-

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[19] Burke, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 309.

nal to French society, Burke argues that it is false. This, however, is irrelevant. Burke is confusing the epistemological merit of an idea with its origin and ideological force. Many highly integrated traditional societies have as important parts of their traditions theories of the universe or of society which are false. However, since these ideas form an integral part of those societies, actions based on them, even socially disruptive actions, do not necessarily lead to resistance and totalitarianism. Burke cannot argue that since an idea is false, it must be external.[20]

The degree of integration between an idea and a society can only be ascertained through an examination of the society and the idea in question. It would seem at first glance, however, that abstract individualism is deeply rooted in European culture; for example, in the Reformation, in the social organization of the Germanic tribes, and in Stoicism. Moreover, the presence of this individualism, which seems to conflict with the more organic thought of the middle ages, indicates that French society may not have been as functionally integrated as Burke supposed.

At best, Burke's argument is incomplete. To complete it, Burke would have had to justify his implicit assumptions that French society was functionally integrated except for the idea of individualism, which was "foreign" to it. To do this, he would have had to study French society. This might have led him to actually do some sociology. While Burke himself resisted this temptation, his arguments did contribute to the development of sociology in two ways. First, Burke's theory involves the explicit use of a new concept of "society" which differs from the Enlightenment conception of society. This new conception, which was adopted by most of the early sociologists,[21] takes society to be more than the sum of its parts (to use a common but misleading phrase); to be a thing independent of "natural individuals," to be subject to its own laws, and to be understood in its own terms. This new understanding of society was essential to the development of sociology. This development required an "epistemological break," the creation of a new "object," "concept," or "understanding". In Burke's work this new object is explicitly contrasted with the old for the first time. Second, as Burke's politically charged arguments clearly depended on empirical assumptions,

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[20] Interestingly enough, Burke took one kind of "cultural externality," namely individual intuition, to be a sign of falseness, while Descartes took it to be a sign of falseness, while Descartes took it to be a sign of truth.

[21] Notable exceptions to this rule are Tarde and Weber.

their evaluation required the development of an empirical science of this new object. Those interested in the new social developments of the modern age found in Burke's arguments a political reason for studying this new object. Thus, Burke not only helped reveal the object of the new science, but he gave people a political reason to study it.

I would not want to pretend that Burke was solely responsible for the development of sociology, or even the development of this new concept of "society". Clearly, several of his "predecessors" shared in this development; Montesquieu, Herder, and Vico were, perhaps, most prominent in this regard. However, the general acceptance of the new concept followed Burke and the problems revealed in Enlightenment thought by the aftermath of the French Revolution. Classical sociology was a nineteenth century phenomenon. Organicism originally belonged to that century.

However, during that century, and this, organicism did not belong exclusively to the conservatives. The concept was not used, as Burke (and perhaps Nisbet) believed it should, exclusively by conservatives. It was, for example, one of the fundamental assumptions of Marx—but not perhaps of all Marxists. For example, Marx argued that social theory must start from "real premises, [that is, from] men, not in any fantastic isolation and fixity, but in their actual, empirically perceptible process of development under definite conditions."[22] Thus, Marx, like Burke, rejected all theories which were based "on a simple view of the object, as it stands stripped of every relation, in all the nakedness and solitude of metaphysical abstractions."[23] "Man," Marx insisted, "is not an abstract being squatting outside the world. Man is the human world, the state, society."[24] "Man is [...] a *zoon polittkon*, not only a social animal, but an animal which can develop into an individual only in society."[25] Given these similarities, it is not surprising that Marx's criticisms of the "utopian socialists" are remarkably similar to Burke's criticisms of the Jacobins.

Despite the fact that Marx shared with Burke an organic assumption, they could come to such radically opposed political programs because they disagreed about the degree to which society was integrated: Burke

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[22] Marx, Karl. *The German Ideology*, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1976. p. 43.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 62.

[24] Marx, Karl. *Contributions to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right.* in Bottomore, Thomas. *Early Writings*, New York: McGraw-Hill, p. 43.

[25] Marx, Karl. *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, tr. Stone, Chicago, 1913, p. 267.

was a functionalist, while Marx, who made class struggle the centerpiece of his empirical assumptions, was *the* theorist of conflict. Between the two were a variety of thinkers, all of whom accepted organicism, but disagreed as to the degree of social integration. In this class, I would include such people as Hegel, who thought that society was fitfully moving towards true social harmony, and the French liberals known as the *Doctrinaires* —Royer-Collard, Barante, Guizot, and de Tocqueville— who argued, against the royalists, that post-revolutionary French society had incorporated the ideas of the Enlightenment to such a degree that a forced return to pre-revolutionary social structures would require political oppression, thus nicely standing Burke's arguments on their head.[26]

In a sense, the idea of organicism defined a new theoretical terrain on which the old political battles could be fought. This space was created by the denial of the abstract individualism of the Enlightenment. While the terrain was new, it was neutral with respect to the political positions of the day, allowing the arguments of the right, the left, and the center to be marshalled on it. Burke was mistaken in his belief that this new terrain favored conservativism and excluded radicalism. Instead, as Foucault put it, in a slightly different context:

> At the deepest level of Western knowledge, Marxism introduced no real discontinuity; it found its place without difficulty [...], within an epistemological arrangement that welcomed it gladly (since it was this arrangement that was in fact making room for it) and that it, in return, had no intention of disturbing and [...] no power to modify [...], since it rested entirely upon it. Marxism existed in nineteenth century thought like a fish in water: it is unable to breathe anywhere else. [Its opposition to the 'bourgeois' theories of economics (and to Burke's social theories)] may have stirred up a few waves and caused a few surface ripples; but [these were] no more than storms in a [child's] paddling pool.[27]

Sociology got its start on this new terrain. Most of the early sociologists were organicists and their organicism influenced both their ideas on methodology and their choice of subject matter. This influence was most strongly felt in Germany and France. In France, with the exception of

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[26] Siedentop, Larry. "Two Liberal Traditions," in Ryan, Alan. *The Idea of Freedom*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979, pp. 153–74.

[27] Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things*, New York: Vintage Press, 1973, pp. 261–62. Foucault mistakenly treats Marx as a "Political Economist", rather than as a sociologist. The quote applies, nevertheless.

Tarde, almost all the nineteenth century sociologists from Saint-Simon to Durkheim designed their work around this thesis. Comte argued that society "was no more decomposable into individuals than a geometric surface is into lines, or a line into points."[28] Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method,* which is essentially a discussion of organicist methodology, wrote, "Every time that a social phenomenon is explained by a psychological phenomenon, we may be sure that the explanation is false."[29] In Germany, with the exception of Weber, organicist methodology dominated the thought of the Marxists and the Hegelians, and thus the mainstream of the social sciences generally.

Organicism also helped determine the subjects studied by the early sociologists. Durkheim provides the best example of this. Durkheim was led by his organicism to study both the social construction of the individual —in his books on religion, the family, and the division of labor— and the social destruction of the individual —in *Suicide.* The latter work is of particular interest in this regard. Durkheim had many reasons for studying suicide,[30] however the fact that suicide must clearly be a somewhat anomalous action for individualist theories, probably played a role in his decision. To be able to explain this would represent a real triumph for organicism and a real blow to individualism. Suicide might have seemed to offer to this debate what Popper called a "crucial" test. Moreover, the explanation that Durkheim offered, that suicide was caused by problems in the relations between the individual and the social whole, would no doubt seem particularly satisfying to the organicist. As Durkheim himself argued, the study of suicide vindicated his "social realism" or his organicism.

I have argued that sociology was not essentially opposed to the political developments of the Enlightenment, but it was essentially opposed to the abstract individualism of the Enlightenment. This opposition helped shape the new science. The theory of organicism which lies at the heart of this opposition can be traced to Burke. Burke's work —especially its mistakes— helped bring about the epistemological break that made sociology possible and which made it distinct from the more individualistic "Political Economy" of the day. No doubt sociology had

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[28] Quoted in Lukes, Steven., *Individuals,* New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1973, p. 111.

[29] Ibid., p. 120.

[30] Lukes, *op. cit., Durkheim,* pp. 191–95.

other roots as well; in the Enlightenment notion that all sciences should seek to discover the natural laws which govern their particular objects,[31] in the development of statistics and epidemiology,[32] in the need of the new republic's bureaucracies to govern, and in the general professionalization of the sciences. I have discussed only one of these roots.

This root, however, is more than just historically interesting. It is also interesting because of the way that it foreshadows a more modern development in French Philosophy. Post-structuralism —one of the most recent developments in the quickly changing philosophical landscape of France— is famous for its radical anti-humanism, which is often presented as a new and potentially revolutionary position. As can be seen from this study, anti-humanism is certainly not new, it is merely a reformulation of organicism. Moreover, if the history of sociology is any guide, it will not be revolutionary either. It does not represent a theoretical revolution —although today's anti-humanist is often more willing to apply the theory to *all* aspects of culture, including science and morality, than were some of the organicists— nor is it likely to lead to a political revolution for, as I have argued, organicism or anti-humanism is politically neutral.

George Mason University

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[31] The writers of the "Frankfort School" have studied this connection in detail.

[32] Hacking, Ian. "The Avalanche of Printed Numbers," in *Humanities and Society*, **5**: 279–95 (1982).