Ellwood’s Europe


Stephen P. Turner
University of South Florida

Charles Ellwood is usually described as a junior member of the founding generation of American Sociology. Ellwood fulfils many of the standard stereotypes of the American sociology student of the era. He was born on a farm and, after winning a state scholarship, went to Cornell, as he himself noted, ‘because it was virtually the state university of New York’\(^1\). He then went directly on to the University of Chicago, where he was converted only partially from his concerns with social problems to a theorist. He was one of the first Ph.D.’s in sociology from the University, and the first Chicago Sociology Ph.D. to hold a position in Sociology at a major university other than Chicago itself: a large land grant university in the Midwest, Missouri. He stayed there for most of his career until leaving for Duke, an institution with a strongly religious orientation that prized him for his religious writings.\(^2\)

Ellwood wrote no great books, nor did he coin any basic concepts, with the possible exception of the use of ‘inter’ terms to describe the social process. He was the author of several successful textbooks, including one which invented the field of social problems, largely an American phenomenon, as a part of sociology (Sociology and Modern Social Problems 1910a). He was rumoured to have a million copies in print, most of which were of the various editions of this book. One suspects that this is an overestimate, though it was widely believed by his peers

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\(^1\) ‘Sociological Life History of Charles Ellwood’, Luther L. Bernard Papers, The University of Chicago Library Special Collections.

\(^2\) For a summary of Ellwood’s American career, see Turner (2007).
(Odum 1951), but it is still likely that he was the most widely circulated sociologist of his time, other than Herbert Spencer.

Despite this ‘American’ profile, Ellwood was among the most European of American-born sociologists. He made four major trips to Europe, each of which was consequential. His first was as a student in Berlin, where he encountered Georg Simmel, which stimulated the development of his own approach to sociology; to England in 1914, which turned his interest to anthropology and set him on path to writing as a ‘public sociologist’, and in 1927, when he came upon Italian fascism and returned to warn Americans of its dangers. His final trip was as President of the Institut International de Sociologie (IIS), where he struggled to create an international federation of national sociological societies, and to resist the fascist takeover of the organization. This apparently quintessential ‘American’ provincial was also the most translated American sociologist before 1945, with books in French, German, and Dutch, as well as Japanese and Chinese. The translated books included one of his books on Social Problems and also included his theoretical and social psychological works. All this occurred despite the fact that he had no significant academic power, and no connections with Rockefeller money, unlike his contemporaries at the University of Chicago, Harvard, and Columbia.

Something else makes him historically interesting. Ellwood’s connections in Europe, and especially his warm relations with small-country sociologists, such as those of the Netherlands and Czechoslovakia, point to a world of interwar sociology that has little connection with the world that emerged after World War II, and has rarely been studied as a part of the history of international sociology. They also point to a powerful division in sociology, but also a mysterious and complex one, concerning not Europe against or in contrast to American sociology but internationally, involving conflicts with Europeans and Americans in alliances against other groupings of Europeans and Americans. This material undermines some traditional images of the relation between European and American sociology. If one were to believe the famous thesis of Friedrich Tenbruck, according to
which there was a categorical distinction between European and American approaches to sociology, with American sociology marked by its moralism and European sociology by its rejection of moralism (1988), one would be puzzled by the fact that Ellwood had warm relations with many European scholars. In the 1930s he was President of the IIS (*L'Institut International de Sociologie*), the third American to hold that office, after Lester Ward and Franklin H. Giddings, and presided over the Congress of the International Institute of Sociology, then the major international gathering of sociologists. Ellwood’s successes and failures in Europe also suggest some possible interpretations of the divisions between European and American sociology, and to some extent undermine Tenbruck’s argument, by pointing to some different and more powerfully divisive issues between two different tribes of sociology.

**Student Days**

Ellwood was given a strong dose of German philosophy at Cornell University, where, from 1892 to 1896, he was an undergraduate. Ellwood’s Bachelor’s thesis (1896) was on the relationship between sociology and ethics, a topic that continued to interest him throughout his career. His thesis exemplifies Ellwood’s lucid and economical style, as well as his omnivorous intellectual appetite. The discussion included representatives of both contemporary French political theory, in the form of Paul Janet’s lectures, and recent German commentary on Kant, Fichte, and Hegel. The conclusion of the thesis also explains Ellwood’s choice to go to Chicago: Albion Small, the head of its

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3 This is not to say that there is nothing to Tenbruck’s argument, and Ellwood’s relationships provide some evidence in support of it. Ellwood wrote a polemical article in 1933 against what he called ‘Emasculated Sociologies’, which he sent to Leopold von Weise. Von Weise’s pained response was that he had hoped that his own sociology, which he thought of as being pure rather than ethical or political, would find a home in the United States, because, as he presciently saw, German sociology had become political in a way that excluded it. There is a similar response by a Czech sociologist, Emmanuel Chalupný, with whom Ellwood was especially close (Emanuel Chalupný to Charles Ellwood [March 17, 1940] Charles A. Ellwood Papers. Duke University Archives). But there is also evidence that European audiences responded to the idea that sociology ought to say something about the questions of the day.
Sociology department, was part of what Ellwood referred to as ‘the Germanizing School’ of social and political thinkers who believed, as Small is quoted by Ellwood, that ‘knowledge of reality passes directly and naturally into conceptions of contained possibility’, meaning conceptions of the ideal forms of social institutions (1896, 58).

When he arrived at Chicago, he pursued these interests, which were of course shared with John Dewey, whom he took two courses with at Chicago. This set him on the path toward a social process-oriented interactionist social psychology. But his interest in European thought continued, especially under the influence of Small. Small had him translate an essay on method by Frédéric Le Play for the *American Journal of Sociology* (1897), and Small encouraged him to go to Germany to study with Simmel, whom Ellwood later recalled as a special friend of Small, and to acquaint himself directly with the German scholars he had been studying. He spent time in 1897 and 1898 in Germany. The date is important here. Simmel was himself at an early stage of his career, and there was no ‘sociology’ as an academic subject, merely a philosophy seminar, which Ellwood attended.

At the time, Simmel’s books included *On Social Differentiation* (1890), an *Introduction to the Science of Ethics* (1892-93), and *The Problems of the Philosophy of History* ([1892]1977). Only the first had any claim to be sociology, and it was evolutionist in the same manner as much of the literature of the time, and also, as Max Weber later pointed out, evaluative in his use of the notion of progress (1949, 17). Ellwood disagreed with Simmel about the relation of ethics to sociology, which was the theme of the seminar paper he wrote for Simmel (1898, cited in Jensen 1946-47, 342). But unlike Weber, Ellwood retained the idea that evolutionary processes, both social and biological, had ethical implications, and that sociology had a special role in relation to ethics because of this. This was an idea that was basic to the community that made up the international sociology of the time, the IIS, which was especially concerned with the puzzle of whether socialism could be made consistent with Darwinism.

Ellwood, as we will see, was soon to be taken up by this community as one of their own.

Ellwood’s dissertation, on social psychology, was published as soon as it was written as a series of four
articles in Small’s *American Journal of Sociology* in 1899. It discussed such American figures as Mark Baldwin and Simon Patten, as well as Gabriel Tarde on imitation, and was, with Tarde (cf. Kalampalikis, Delouvée, and Pétard 2006, 28), among the first to use the term ‘social psychology’. The dissertation contrasted ‘mental phenomena dependent on a community of individuals’ to the ‘action and reaction of individuals in a group on one another’ (1899a, 656), and argued that the latter was fundamental. This phrasing marked what was the crucial distinction between interactionism and Durkheimian collective psychology, though Durkheim is not mentioned. Its argument was nevertheless immediately attended to both by the rapidly developing body of anti-Durkheimian opinion, and by the Durkheimians themselves. It was reviewed it in the *Année Sociologique* (Nandan 1980, 65-66), where it was dismissed for using the term ‘social psychology’ rather than ‘collective psychology’. The short review, characteristically for the *Année*, failed to present the main arguments and discussed it only in relation to Durkheim’s own views. There was an immediate positive response from one of Durkheim’s most vociferous critics, Gustavo Tosti (1898), who interpreted Ellwood as an ally. The two radically divergent reactions to the dissertation tell us something important about the world of early sociology. It had already divided sharply on an important intellectual fault line, and the divisions were international in scope. As we shall see, the Durkheimians and their opponents were already connected to different social institutions and networks of sociologists, and were to persist both on the intellectual and institutional level.

Who else was on the other side of the division with Durkheim? The answer is revealing, and proves to be crucial to Ellwood’s relations to Europe. The other side was ‘international sociology’ as it then existed: an activity carried on part-time by thinkers with interests in ethics, progress, the possibilities of socialism and anarchism, world peace, and the philosophy of history understood in terms of progress, that is, as Simmel understood it, with a strong emphasis on the problem of man’s social nature, especially in relation to the critique of the ‘nature red in

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tooth and claw’ view of Darwin. As I have noted, Simmel’s value-freedom debate with Weber and Weber’s critique of this kind of teleological view of history, and Weber’s identification of himself with sociology, were in the future, as was most of Simmel’s substantive ‘sociological’ writing. When René Worms established the *Revue Internationale de Sociologie* in 1893, these were the concerns that were reflected in its pages, and in his own work, which included such now forgotten works as: ‘De la Volonté unilatérale considérée comme source d’obligations’ (1891), ‘Précis de Philosophie’ ([1891]1905), ‘Eléments de philosophie scientifique et de philosophie morale’ (1892), ‘De natura et methodo sociologiae’ (1896), ‘Organisme et société’ (1896), ‘La science et l’art en économie politique’ (1896), and ‘Philosophie des sciences sociales’ (1903-5). This list reflects the concerns that were the common core of international sociology on which all of the early sociologists drew.

International sociology as it then existed, at the turn of the nineteenth century and before, was a surprisingly vibrant and self-aware community, and successful both in institution building and in establishing personal relations. The IIS was an odd organization, to be sure--it recruited eminent figures to its ranks by invitation and sought to legitimate itself and its subject matter in that way. But despite its elitist trappings it was an inclusive, intellectually open organization, as the intellectual community itself was. Worms was a bureaucrat rather than a Professor. He had no academic turf to protect and no reason to exclude or de-legitimate those who sought to participate in this discussion. Indeed, the remarkable feature of the IIS was its pluralism, and the extent to which it accommodated and turned into civilized discussion the great political issues of the age. In contrast, Durkheim and the Durkheimians loathed Worms, were bitterly hostile to and dismissive of their French rivals, and imperialistic toward any domain they could claim for ‘sociology’ as they understood it. Worms’ supporter G. -L. Duprat was later to write of the ‘autorité despotique’ exercised by Durkheim, his ‘ancien maître’, and Mauss, his ‘ancien camarade’, over French sociology, and those who were ‘victime de l’intolérance très spécifique des Durkheim,
Mauss, Hwalbachs, Lévy-Bruhl, etc.’. But there was something at stake for them that was not at stake for Worms-the Durkheimians sought to control academic appointments and secure them for themselves.

The history written by the winners has taken as true the Durkheimians’ own claims of their superiority over their rivals. And this much is true: Durkheimian thought won out in the French academy and was taken as a model of sociological thought by later professional sociologists, such as Columbia sociology during the 1950s, where *Suicide* ([1897] 1951) was taught as an exemplary text and was celebrated as a source of professionalized empirical research. But if we place the Durkheimians back into the context of the period before the World War II, they appear less ‘modern’ and not very different from their contemporaries. Durkheim was no less concerned with evolution, at least social evolution, and ethics and the possible ethical implications of sociology than his rivals. Nor was he less concerned with the possibility and conditions of socialism, the viability of political forms such as syndicalism, and so forth. His successor, Célestin Bouglé, taught sociology as the history of socialist doctrine, and applied the lessons of Durkheimian sociology to ethical enlightenment (1926). What differed was their militant exclusiveness, their unconcern with the problem of Darwinism, and their concern with academic power. It may be noted that this indifference (and hostility) to the views of others was not reciprocated: American students who came to Paris to hear Durkheim’s lectures, for example, regarded this as one stop on a European tour, and were receptive to Durkheim as a source of insight.

Ellwood was of interest to the Durkheimians only when he could be used in their own struggles with their opponents. He appears again in the *Année* when he criticized their enemy Gabriel Tarde, for which he was praised (Nandan 1980, 100). But Ellwood was of great interest to the rest of the international sociological community, and to the IIS. The antipathy of the Durkheimians is understandable--Ellwood’s writings represented a less mystical, psychologically more plausible approach that was a genuine rival to their own views. But these early encounters,

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and the circles in which Ellwood moved when in France (as he often was in the 1920s and 30s), set a pattern, so that Ellwood ignored the Durkheimians in return. In the 1930s, he had to be begged by Howard Becker to read a German defence of Durkheimianism in the 1930s that conflicted with his own characterization of it. The ground for his hostility was a kind of misunderstanding, or rather a small point of difference that both sides took seriously. He noted, as he put it in a letter in 1933, that what he heard consistently ‘when I was in France in 1927-8 that Durkheim wished sociology to be a pure science without any intermingling of science and religion’ and pointed out in the same letter that Durkheim’s interest in morals as a topic in sociology ‘does not prove that Durkheim wished sociology to be a basis for a sociological ethics’ as he did.\(^6\) And in a strict sense this was true: the Durkheimians believed that morals had to come out of collective processes that were not rational. This conflict with Ellwood’s pragmatist notion, found also in Small, that the realm of fact and scientific truth greatly constrained rational ethical choice to the point that sociology properly understood, namely as a science concerned with the structure and functioning of institutions, had a great deal to say that was relevant to ethics, even to the point of becoming, with respect to the ethical significance of particular social institutions, its basis (1910b).\(^7\)

**The Young Professor and Publishing Before 1914**

Ellwood was given one of the first academic appointments in the world to a professorial position exclusively devoted to sociology, in 1900, at the University of Missouri. This kind of appointment would not occur in Germany until 1920. Durkheim’s chair at the *École Normale Supérieure* was in Pedagogy until Sociology was added to the description in 1913. And sociology and anthropology in France were still done in the faculty of Philosophy at the Sorbonne in the 1950s. Even in the United States the term ‘sociology’ was slow to replace ‘social

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\(^7\) Ellwood’s paper on the subject, ‘The Sociological Basis of Ethics’ (1910b), was written as a companion piece to G. H.
science’ and other terms in professorial appointments. The event of creating a new chair was thus a novelty, and had an interested international audience. When Ellwood took up his chair he announced the course of study, complete with a detailed list of topics, which was circulated widely, and noticed as far away as Russia, from whence he received a congratulatory note from Jacques Novicow, a biologist and social theorist who was a part of the IIS community, and one of the Institute’s founding members.

Ellwood wrote a textbook on social psychology, or as he titled it, *Sociology in Its Psychological Aspects* (1912). It was this text which was to launch his international reputation as a scholar, and its publishing trajectory and international impact is revealing with respect to the lines of communication in international sociology at the time. The book was translated into French almost immediately on publication, as *Principes de psycho-sociologie* (1914). The publisher was the *Librairie Internationale de Sociologie*. The *Librairie* included ‘classics’, such as volumes of the writings of Bakunin and Kropotkin (who was extensively involved in arguments against non-cooperative interpretations of Darwin), as well as contemporary works. The language of humane scholarship was still, literally, the *lingua franca*, so that publication in French in the *Librairie* meant that the work would reach the international community of readers. Worms himself wrote the introduction, which exhibited both his recognition of the relation of the work to William James and his own admiration of James (Worms 1914: i-iv).

What did translation represent? Translation was the coin of international scholarly relations, a major means by which scholars did favours for one another. As we have seen, when he was a student Ellwood himself translated Le Play; something done with no expectation of return. Each translation served as a payment of sorts—typically a payment by a student or beneficiary to the teacher’s own master or friend, but more generally into a hierarchical

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9 It may seem that the inclusion of these topics is what marks this publication series as pre-sociological. But in the period after the Second World War, a similar series, dominated by the Durkheimians, included many of the same titles, Bakunin being a particular favorite.
network of personal relations and reciprocities. Translating and publishing was a source of power—albeit one that was more modest than control of academic appointments—and a means of reciprocity and homage. Ellwood was used by Small to pay homage to Simmel. But he engaged in the same activities on his own, and used Small to publish the results. He promoted the translation of the works of figures in the IIS: Novicow, for example, who had written a biologicist rationalizing argument for peace similar to current game-theoretic applications in evolutionary psychology, that in 1917 was translated in the *American Journal of Sociology* with a lengthy introduction by Ellwood. And Ellwood continued to be involved in the translation of other European sociologists throughout his career. Relations with translators were often intense, and especially so for Ellwood. Did any of this matter? Did anyone read the translations? Clearly they did, and they read Ellwood. French was more accessible than English to many scholars in the Romance language universe, and Ellwood’s book, in French, was read and had an impact in such places as Argentina, where Raul Orgaz and Jose Oliva were both influenced by Ellwood, but especially Oliva, who knew only the French translation (Bernard 1927, 23-25).

In 1914 Ellwood took a sabbatical in England, where he met the leading figures of the Sociological Society. He spent his time in London and Oxford, where he encountered Patrick Geddes, Victor Branford, Lord Balfour, L. T. Hobhouse, and the anthropologist R. R. Marrett. Hobhouse (whose views on evolution and ethics, especially in his book *The Rational Good* [1921], were very close to Ellwood’s own), Geddes and Branford were congenial figures and strongly supportive of Ellwood. They each carried on a long, warm, and mutually supportive correspondence with him until their deaths in the later 1920s and early 1930s.

**The European Sabbatical of 1927-8**

The foundational issue for the IIS was the problem of providing a social and co-operative version of Darwinism that illuminated the possibilities of new social forms. This was a common theme internationally, and could be
discussed in a variety of ways without becoming purely partisan or ideological. But national sociologies, as they became academicized and nationalized, especially in the larger academic communities of the United States, France, and Germany, went on their own distinctive paths. The French case was extreme, but each larger sociological community was similar: they no longer had much in common. This eventually led to the foundation-mediated exchanges that sponsored European visits to the United States and to a more limited extent American visits to Europe, which much of this volume describes.

In the 1920s, however, the earlier form of international contact, unsponsored, personal, and dependent on the relationships that had been developed under the IIS, had not yet been replaced. Ellwood was still visiting in the old way—taking the grand tour of European sociology—meeting with interested colleagues and sharing views. He would continue to do this until the mid-1930s. But his 1927-1928 sabbatical in Europe was especially consequential. He spent it partly in Paris, and went to Vienna where he was not only hosted by his admiring translator Bela Frank, but also inducted into the Masons by him. He also visited Turkey. His lengthy visit to Italy, however, was formative. As he wrote in his ‘Sociological Autobiography’ for Bernard’s book project on the history of American sociology: ‘the three and a half months which I spent in Fascist Italy were the most stimulating … They caused me to revise my estimate of human social evolution … It is now clear that democracy will have a bad quarter of an hour …’

He became acquainted with Francesco Nitti, a former Italian Prime Minister who had become an anti-fascist exile and activist, Nitti’s son who spoke English well and toured the US as a speaker on his father’s behalf, and Gaetano Salvemini. The IIS connection figured in these contacts--Nitti was an economist who was also a member of the IIS. When he returned to the United States, Ellwood became an anti-fascist activist--he made a public speech at his own University warning of the threat of fascism to democracy, and when he was interviewed on other topics when on speaking tours he turned the discussion to fascism--to the dismay of his

interviewers, who were interested in social problems in the US. He issued the same warnings to the sociological community, noting the disproportion between the attention given to ‘the Communist experiment in Russia during the last dozen years rather than the epoch-making events in Italy’, which he attributed to ‘the superficiality of American social and political thinking’ (1930, 323), and pointed out that ‘much Fascist philosophy and politics are rooted in Pareto’s sociology, a fact which is generally recognized in Italy’ (1930, 324).

The Travails of the IIS

It is difficult to recapture the world of 1920s international sociology as Ellwood experienced it, but a few vignettes are revealing. Ellwood came into contact with many ‘sociologists’, Enrico Ferri in Rome, Patrick Geddes who by then was in France, and spent time in Paris where he met others. This was very far from being a dead or even dying world. It was active and interested in more activity. Geddes reported a discussion with a professor of Philosophy who was starting a society of Les Amis de August Comte, for example, and was intensely interested in discussing sociology. They sought also to find grounds for consensus. Geddes wished to use Ellwood’s presence to arrange a meeting with Victor Branford to see where they agreed and disagreed, and also proposed to Ellwood ‘a conference of sociologists, whether here [at Montpellier], in Paris, or in London, and utilising the summer vacation visits of American sociologists, to have a discussion of fundamentals from Comte on’. But the generation that Geddes and Branford represented was soon to pass from the scene — both died in 1930.

Duprat, Worms’ successor and the long-time secretary of the IIS, approached Ellwood for the Presidency of the IIS, and Ellwood accepted. The constitution was designed to keep the organization international, and required successive presidents to come from different countries. Ellwood was the third American, after Lester Ward, the first president, and Giddings, who was unable to perform his duties because of the First World War. By the time
Ellwood took office the organization was under siege by one of the most extraordinary figures of European sociology, Corrado Gini. Gini was ‘Mussolini’s statistician’, and not only a brilliant statistician, but also a great organizer. He had created a body of followers in Italy who were associated with the IIS, and who outnumbered the membership of any other country. Gini, who had served in the organization as a Vice-president, wanted to get rid of Duprat and take over the organization. Duprat’s response was to mount a furious defence against him. The political issues of Europe were never discussed openly, but they were never far below the surface. Duprat at one point wrote to Ellwood that Gini was ‘n’est pas plus vice-président’ and ‘n’est pas encore dictateur’. Ellwood became Duprat’s strongest supporter.

The IIS faced a changing situation. The organization was originally designed as an elite organization with a small list of invited members, many of whom were not ‘sociologists’ but important intellectuals, often with administrative power, who were sympathetic to the idea of sociology, such as Nitti. The membership included Gustav Schmoller, the economist of the historical school, and Woodrow Wilson, who had been a professor of political science and university president before becoming the President of the United States. The relation between this honorific organization and national sociology organizations was a complex one. Duprat conceived the idea of a federation of national sociological societies under the auspices of the IIS, and tried to formalize relations with national sociology societies. It tried to serve as the international home for these organizations, but internal conflicts in particular countries prevented this. Worms was associated with a sociological society in Paris that the Durkheimians boycotted and treated as a rival, and this particular rivalry prevented the IIS from realizing many of its ambitions. Ellwood, as a past president of the American Sociological Society, as it was then called, actively worked to promote the idea if affiliation. The ASS was then the largest sociology society in the world. If it

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12 [‘is not vice president’ and ‘is not yet dictator’]. Guillaume Duprat to Charles Ellwood (May 5, 1936) Charles A. Ellwood Papers. Duke University Archives.
affiliated it would set a powerful example, and, incidentally, offset the influence of Gini. But there were enemies of affiliation, and the issue became the subject of a great deal of politicking.

At Ellwood’s urging, a committee of the ASS was set up to consider affiliation, with Floyd House, Ellwood, and William F. Ogburn proposed as members by Emory Bogardus, the president. Bogardus in some sense owed his presidency to Ellwood, who had supported him in the face of a rebellion against his candidacy by the young Turks of the ASS (Bannister 198, 141). One of the young Turks was William Fielding Ogburn, then at Chicago, who declined to serve on the committee. Ogburn was a member of the IIS, but was for ‘going a little slow’ and was ‘reluctant to commit to writing’ his reasons. House himself was generally aware of the issues in France, and stated the problem squarely:

I do feel that the Durkheim group are, on the whole, the most important of the French language sociologists, and that their idea of what sociology is corresponds more nearly to the dominant idea among American sociologists than does that of the followers of Worms, whom they seem to regard as rivals.

House suggested that perhaps the ASS might ‘bring some influence–perhaps even pressure–to bear to effect some sort of reconciliation or adjustment of the unfortunate situation’ of conflict. It soon became apparent that this was too optimistic, and that the Durkheimians were actively working against the cause.

During the late 1920s and early 30s, the Rockefeller philanthropies made major investments in European social science. As in the US, but less rigorously, they promoted what they called ‘realistic’ studies. Robert

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Merriam, a University of Chicago political scientist who worked from a base in Paris, was a major advisor for the Rockefeller funders. The Durkheimians soon gravitated to the money, and to the Chicago Department. Maurice Halbwachs visited, and produced a memo, critical of the IIS, which was then circulated. The effect of the memo was to undermine the affiliation effort.

Gini’s assault on the IIS from within took the form of complaints about its administration by Duprat. The issues were, as Sorokin, who wound up in the role of mediator, later observed, largely a result of the financial problems of the organization. The proceedings could not be distributed in accordance with the statutes of the IIS, because there was not enough money to print them. Yet Duprat, despite these problems, assured that the organization met, its congresses were well attended, and that it retained its international membership and position as leading organization. And he remained ambitious for the organization. The idea of creating a federation of international sociology organizations—a model that eventually became the basis of the International Sociological Association—was his, and he pursued it vigorously.

Gini’s relentless pursuit of power in the IIS tells its own story: that despite its fiscal troubles, the institute was still a prestigious and valuable institution worth fighting over. Gini was very much a man of the younger generation. He was interested in racial ideas and the statistics of racial health and demography and also in the expansion of statistical sociology. He had no need of Rockefeller money: in his role as an official statistician he was in a position to dispense patronage himself. Yet he was also eager to make his mark in the United States, and visited Harvard for a long period of time, receiving an honorary degree there in the 1930s. He used this visit to work on Sorokin with his demands for the IIS, which were then conveyed to Ellwood, who in turn worked to blunt them by making minimal compromises with Gini and protecting Duprat.

One of the ways in which Ellwood and Duprat resisted Gini was by convincing Sorokin to become President. Doing so would prevent Gini from taking over. In a Europe that was rapidly going fascist, there were
few alternatives. But Sorokin had to take office under the premise that he was serving as a Russian: the constitution forbade successor presidents from the same country. Because his selection was already announced, Gini, whose mantra was that the rules needed to be strictly obeyed, agreed to Sorokin serving for one year under this glaring fiction. In 1937, coincident with this, Duprat removed himself from public life. Sorokin was followed by a Rumanian sociologist. The meeting scheduled for 1939 was cancelled. The European war had begun; Rumania had become a kind of royal dictatorship. Gini revived the organization after the war, but it was shunned by the newly formed ISA. Louis Wirth, who had been a young Chicago Ph.D. when the Halbwachs memo was written and Chicago sociologists killed the effort to affiliate the ASS with the ISS, was the first President of the ISA.

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