

**An Introduction to the
Chicago School of Sociology**

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The “Chicago School” refers to a specific group of sociologists at the University of Chicago during the first half of this century. Their way of thinking about social relations was heavily qualitative, rigorous in data analysis, and focused on the city as a social laboratory. This paper provides a brief introduction to the school, as well as an overview of some of their most central themes.

An examination of the thought and practice of the Chicago School must be sensitive to its socio-historical context. Thus, in order to best understand the Chicago School, some inquiry into its background is required.

First, one must understand the period and the place. The influential years of the Chicago School spanned from the turn of this century until the late 1950’s, with its heyday between the first World War and the end of the Great Depression, periods of great growth and change. One significant trend during this period was the intensified population shift from the rural, homogeneous, agrarian community to the vast, heterogeneous, industrial metropolis. American cities were experiencing explosive growth, and none more pronounced than Chicago, which during this time period emerged as an “instant” metropolis. In the midst of this urban dynamism, a new university was founded on the principles of advanced research and given to iconoclastic experimentation. Athena-like in birth, this university, the University of Chicago, harbored America’s first department of sociology when it opened its doors in 1892.

Second, it is important to understand that the tenets of the Chicago School were a distinct reaction against the state of American sociology of that day. The often subjective, “arm-chair” philosophizing of such renowned scholars as Giddings and Sumner was yielding little consistency in the formation of social policy. The need for a paradigm shift in sociology was evident. The Chicago School embraced many of the concerns of American sociology (e.g. urban decay, crime, race relations, and the family), while adopting a more formal, systematic approach data collection and analysis which had been a trend in Germany to yield a “science” of sociology.

The final consideration is that of the particular, the personalities involved with the Chicago School. Much of the Chicago School was shaped by the unique interests, talents and gifts of its primary researchers. Not all faculty associated with the department of sociology at the University may be considered part of the Chicago School, but at least ten were integral. (Figure 1 maps the relations among them). The core members were:

Albion W. Small, the founding department chair, provided an invaluable link between German and American schools of sociological thought, being held in high regard by both, and culled an inaugural faculty based on those hybrid principles.

One of the earliest students and appointments, William I. Thomas, laid a firm foundation for the School with his urban interest and rigorous qualitative methodology, as evidenced in his classic study of the Polish Peasant.

Robert E. Park, a close friend and successor of Thomas, became the central figure in the Chicago School. Arriving at sociology through a circuitous route through philosophy, journalism, and an assistantship with Booker T. Washington, Park brought to Chicago a wealth of perspectives and urban themes. A strong proponent of urban ecology, almost every aspect of city life fascinated him from race relations to unions to ethnic neighborhoods to the role of the press. While he personally published little of note, significant exceptions being his collaborations with Ernest W. Burgess on *The City* and *Introduction to the Science of Sociology*, he invested heavily in the progress of all graduate students in the program.

Burgess, with his interest in urban ecology and geography, Louis Wirth with his acclaimed studies of immigrant communities, and Ellsworth Faris with his strong theoretical ties with both social psychology and anthropology rounded out the early faculty.

Many of the Chicago School faculty were alumni of the school, and this remained true with the “second generation” of faculty which arrived in the late 1930s. Everett C. Hughes, took on Park’s mantle as the central figure in the School, continuing the tradition with diverse studies of occupation. Also serving as important faculty were Herbert Blumer and W. Lloyd Warner. Students in the 1950s formed the nucleus of the so-called second Chicago School, including Howard Becker, Erving Goffman, Anselm Strauss, Gary Fine, and others.

There were additional researchers that were also central to the Chicago School. The Chicago School relied heavily upon the ideas of social psychology, specifically upon the concept of symbolic interaction as outlined by George H. Mead, a colleague of John Dewey.

The Central Themes of the Chicago School

The Chicago School developed a set of standard assumptions and themes in their work. This section discusses the key assumption underlying the Chicago School’s research as well as some of their more important themes.¹

The primary assumption for the Chicago School was that qualitative methodologies, especially those used in naturalistic observation, were best suited for the study of urban, social phenomena. This ethnographic closeness to the data brought great richness and depth to the Chicago work. However, over-reliance on qualitative methods, to the exclusion of reasonable quantitative measures, later became one of the School’s greatest liabilities.

To the Chicago School the city itself was of utmost value as a laboratory for exploring social interaction. For the Chicago School researchers, true “human nature” was best observed within this complex social artifice. This notion of “man in his natural habitat” introduces the first theme, that biological metaphor and ecological models were apt framing devices for the

¹ This assumption, as well as these themes, were applied to a variety of their work. In this paper, we primarily examine those areas relating to the social structure and activity of the city. We have omitted research streams relating to the family, race relations, and the role of newspapers, where the findings have been largely superseded by more recent work.

discussion of urban social relations. These social structures could be viewed as a complex web of dynamic processes, akin to components of an eco-system, progressing towards maturity. While these models were powerful explanatory devices, they were greatly oversimplified in their infancy. All too often a relative homogeneity of structure was assumed where later researchers found the situations to be significantly more diverse.

The resulting ecological models, then, emerged from actively examining the parallels between natural and social systems. In an attempt to understand why development and use varied over the city, land, culture and population were viewed as an inseparable whole. Burgess was one of the main proponents of this geographically based exploration and gradually developed a theory of ever expanding, or maturing, concentric circles of land use within the city.

Other researchers struggled on a more micro-level with why certain areas of the city attracted specific populations and exhibited particular patterns of use. The rationale for this being confounded in the balance of geography, land value, population and culture. They also explored the notion of an ecological niche, or “natural area.” Wirth describes the concept simply as “each area in the city being suited for some one function better than any other.”² Ethnic enclaves and low-income “slum” areas were often the focus of study, with a multitude of factors involved in such development.

For Chicago School researchers, these natural areas rarely existed in isolation; instead, the areas were constantly in symbiotic or competitive relation with each other. Certain “invasions” into a stable community, such as a new technology, policy or people group, would have drastically different effects in different natural areas. For example Reckless outlines the impact of mass transit in promoting both business and “vice resorts” within the city,³ while McKenzie documents the demise of small town relations with the introduction of a commuter rail line into New York City.⁴

These natural areas were also always in a state of flux, cycling through different developmental stages. One of the questions that plagued the Chicago School was how, in such a new city, could decay be so prevalent? Much research was dedicated to finding answers in the midst of crime, homelessness, declining property values and the like. Wirth’s observation of the decaying West Side, would be explained by Reckless’s elaboration of Burgess’ zone theory into a model of “twilight neighborhoods” where a cyclic declination of resident population and inclination of vice activity eventually lead to its reclamation as a business district.⁵

The second grouping of themes involves viewing specific group relations within a more holistic web of contexts. In exploring how to best describe the complex inter-group patterns of social interaction within regions of the city, the early Chicago School proffered a notion of “social worlds.”

² Wirth, 285.

³ Reckless, 239.

⁴ McKenzie, 26.

⁵ Short, 249.

To explain this, it would be beneficial to first focus on "group" itself. For the Chicago School the concept of group was broadly construed. Studies of groups would range from entire urban regions to occupational teams to extended family units. With this understanding of the concept of group, such a social grouping would exhibit a strong tendency toward being a social world if there were a high degree of "immersion," or completeness of the experience. In his classic study of Taxi-Dance Halls, Cressey flagged some of the unique attributes which support the immersion effect as "vocabulary, norms, values, activities, interests and 'scheme of life.'" ⁶

Social worlds often have a high degree of isolation, either internally encouraged or externally enforced, with social clubs being as examples of the former and Wirth's ghetto⁷ of the latter. The barriers to exiting a social world, specifically an ethnic community in most studies, were of interest to the school. Thomas often chronicled the ensuing devastation which follows from a community having its barriers to exit set too low. One such example was a Sicilian community which moved *en masse* to the exact same block in the city from their original Italian village, only to witness this cohesion dissolve when its youth were "contaminated" by the outside world.⁸ Wirth also recorded a similar phenomenon in the *Ghetto*; people would immigrate to the ghetto, eventually move out into the "real world" of suburban Chicago, only to return to the ghetto shortly thereafter. They had not realized how high the exit costs, both internal and external, had been for their social group. Eventually tolerance increased on both sides, these exit barriers lessened, and many moved en-masse to low entrance cost, ethnic suburbs such as Lawndale, Illinois.

Often with such "closed" communities there exists a tension between the perceived degree of isolation and the actual material reality of the situation. The early Chicago School tended to view these worlds as they were perceived, as isolated and protected from external influences. Later researchers tended to expand this notion considerably, notably with Becker's accommodation of external influences in his exploration of social worlds as "communities of practice."

The early Chicago School also tended to view social world interactions on a high level where the varied mappings of worlds in cooperation and conflict would sum to the mosaic of the urban experience. Two key examples of these problematic yet symbiotic social world interactions are the heavy business and cultural transactions between Wirth's Jewish Ghetto and adjacent Polish communities as well as Reckless' study of vice areas in the city and the collision of the "wealthy, proper" with the "low, criminal."⁹ The later social worlds models, such as Becker's, viewed interaction on a much more micro level. Here individuals were inhabitants of many, complex and overlapping social worlds each with varying entrance and exit barriers.

The Chicago School had a number of additional themes. One of the major early Chicago School themes, originally proposed by Thomas in his Polish immigration studies, was that of "disorganization." The central idea of disorganization theory is that the environment of the city, dramatically different from that of the agricultural communities of most immigrants, actually

⁶ Short, 194.

⁷ Wirth, 226.

⁸ Short, 123.

⁹ Reckless, 239.

acts as a force to render the structures, relationships, and norms of their “homeland” irrelevant to their new living situation. With their traditional social structures in flux, the immigrant had to radically restructure those relationships to fit the new environment or abandon them altogether and build anew. This overall process is rapid and generally highly traumatic.¹⁰ Many of the Chicago School researchers explored the effects of this transition on all aspects of social life from vocation to religion to family. This research also expanded into more high level discussions of cultural accommodation versus assimilation of specific immigrant populations.

One of the most interesting themes came about in the exploration of the factors which might promote stability and maintenance of community in the midst of disorganization. What was it that allowed to some groups to weather the transition better than others? The answer, while simple, was equally profound. The effects of disorganization are mitigated only by the degree to which there are stable constants in the transition. The key factors in Wirth’s *Ghetto* were the role of the local synagogue, colleagues from their village of origin (*Landsmannschaft*), and ties to common humanitarian causes. For Thomas’ Polish immigrants, it was the local parish church and the maintenance of many tightly-bound communal living practices. For the Italians in Whyte’s work it was the stability of the gang, family relations, and common communal space such as the settlement house.

The final thematic focus, present as a thread in many of the aforementioned themes, concerned potential threats to social order. This was a logical maturation of the interest in crime and urban decay. Some unsettling forces they uncovered were mobility, transience, anonymity, and gender imbalance. North carefully measured the degree of social cohesion in a community based on its corporate self-interest and action. Reckless found that these forces worked to the opposite end, stating that “commercialized vice almost inevitably develops in these areas of great mobility which, after all, become the natural market-place for thrill and excitement.”¹¹ The creation of “immoral flats” on the suburban fringe of the city were “a very inviting field of commercialized vice, not merely because of the lively and mobile character of these regions, but also because of the anonymity and individuation produced by the highly mechanized living conditions.”¹² Cressey agreed that “the triumph of the impersonal in social relations”¹³ was an enabling factor in urban exploitation.

While the concerns of the Chicago School were of their day, their situation resonates with the study of many more modern social systems. Many of their methods and themes are not directly applicable to the study of electronic social spaces, however, their approach to studying complex, rapidly evolving social environments does speak to such current endeavours. There is a call to be sensitive to context, careful with appropriate methodologies and immersive in study.

¹⁰ Wirth states that “the slum is the outgrowth of the transition from a village to an urban community. In Chicago this transition took place in a single generation,” 198.

¹¹ Reckless, 250.

¹² Short, 244.

¹³ Short, 200.

There are many exceptional biographies of the early Chicago School faculty.¹⁴ The following is a brief overview of some highlights from the lives of these men culled from such sources. It is not intended to be comprehensive in scope or depth, but instead is offered as an augmentation to the descriptions provided in the paper. The additional context should help better acquaint reader with the characteristics, interests and key contributions of the early Chicago School affiliates.

The University of Chicago's first president, William Harper, had high expectations for one of his bold, new experiments -- a graduate department in sociology. He sought out a department chair whose tested managerial skills, extensive experience in the field and respect of his colleagues would enable him to build a firm foundation for the fledgling department through the recruitment of extraordinary faculty. This man was none other than the president of Colby College, **Albion W. Small** (1854-1926, *chair* 1892-1925).

Small had strong opinions about promoting a "modern science" of sociology and a unique understanding of the state-of-the-art in the field. After graduating from Colby and spending some time in the ministry, Small studied social philosophy in Germany, for a number of years, in both Berlin and Leipzig.¹⁵ Upon completion of these studies, he returned to the States and completed his doctorate in philosophy at Johns Hopkins. His immersion in the German philosophical tradition and its contemporary manifestations coupled with his firm affiliation with established American sociology allowed him the unique position of acting as a bridge between the two methodological worlds. He was able to blend much of the passion, enthusiasm and focus of American sociology with the mature, robust, systematic science of the Germans.

While this unique heritage is not readily evident in his scholarly work, which dealt mostly with the broad historical sweep of social change, its marks are on everything he touched. He recruited a faculty which best represented a balance of the American and German ideals. He encouraged "active and objective research" on relevant humanitarian topics and promoted an atmosphere wherein it could flourish. His introductory text book, co-authored with George Vincent, was widely accepted as the standard for over twenty years. Lastly he co-founded an institution committed to the ideals of a more scientific approach to sociology, the American Sociological Society, and edited its journal, the *American Journal of Sociology*, for its inaugural years.

Small's most influential appointment was **William I. Thomas** (1863-1947, *professor* 1895-1918), a sound researcher with a kindred world view. Thomas, as well, had studied under the German sociological paradigm, having attended university in both Berlin and Göttingen,

¹⁴ Faris and Deegan are fine examples. Please refer to the bibliography for others.

¹⁵ Small actually played a significant role in the development of German sociology by introducing Simmel and his colleagues to American sociological technique and building a bridge between the two cultures. (Deegan, p. 23).

before completing his doctorate as one of the University of Chicago's first graduates. He was also a firm believer in a systematic approach to sociology, having completed massive data collection in New York City for a series of urban studies.¹⁶

The Polish Peasant in Europe and America (1918), was Thomas' most influential work at Chicago and speaks volumes about his character and interests. His passion for exhaustive, comprehensive study is superficially evidenced in the five volumes which comprise this work. His dedication to advancing the science of sociology is exhibited in the influential volume dedicated solely to explaining the methodology used in the study.¹⁷ Lastly, his interest in anthropology, ethnology, social psychology, race and ethnicity, biological causation of social action and the immigration experience are all well represented within.

Of Thomas' theoretical contributions to sociology, "social disorganization," has proved the most lasting. Originally introduced in *The Polish Peasant* to explain the changes which occur when a family relocates from the rural region in one country to an urban region in another. The exploration of such cross-cultural social adjustments, both internal and external, became a hallmark of "Chicago School" studies and a cornerstone for urban sociology.

During his tenure at Chicago, Thomas did more than any other first generation faculty to bring international attention to the School's research and acclaim for its work. For all his success, Thomas' career at Chicago ended tragically. On a train ride back from Washington, D.C. to Chicago in 1918, Thomas was discovered by an F.B.I. agent sharing a room in a Pullman sleeper car with a woman nearly half his age. This created a public uproar back at the University and he was summarily removed in disgrace within weeks.

Some hypothesize that the severity of discipline Thomas' experienced was an act of vengeance on the part of the Chicago vice commission, for which Thomas had served for a number of years. It was well known that the board disagreed with many of Thomas' liberal leanings in his research, but one event in particular caught their ire. Thomas was on a sub-committee to study regulation of "red-light" districts within the city. He was vocal in his stance that prohibition of these areas would only make the situation worse and, when he did not find a receptive audience for this stance, quit the team in disgust. All of these interactions received much coverage in the local press and focused unwanted public attention on the commission.

He was the only faculty member in the school's first half century not to remain with the department until death or retirement. After spending years in academic exile around Chicago, he relocated to California and was loosely affiliated with Berkeley.

Following this fiasco came a period of significant transition for the department. With Thomas gone, and Small retiring as chair in 1925, an entirely new generation of faculty swept in to build upon their foundation and take the department in new directions.

¹⁶ While much of his early work utilized quantitative methodology, Thomas was an early and ardent advocate of the appropriateness of qualitative methodology in conducting scientific sociological research.

¹⁷ The Social Science Research Council in 1937 polled its members with regard to the most significant American sociological text written in the field to date. *The Polish Peasant* was elected and the SSRC devoted an entire conference to its honor and evaluation. (Faris, p. 17).

This new generation shared much in common with Small and Thomas, however it is their differences which are the most illuminating. Their pre-Chicago personal histories were even more diverse. Not all had had formal religious training, Park was a journalist, Faris had strong anthropological interests from his time in Africa, and Burgess was one of the department's early graduates in sociology. While they mostly shared the humanitarian spirit of the first generation, these men were "scientists" not reformers. Their key contribution to the School was the maturing of the department from a backwater reaction against traditional American sociology into movement all its own. Through their paradigm played out on the streets of Chicago they sought to redefine sociology itself on an international scale.

The man who presided over this significant turnover of faculty was **Ellsworth Faris** (1874-1953, *professor* 1919-1924, *chair* 1925-1936). Faris had received his doctorate from Chicago in psychology after an extended assignment as missionary to central Africa. He had been hired to continue Thomas' tradition of urban studies and interest in social psychology. His promotion to department chair was a logical choice as he provided a bridge in personal background, research interests and methodology between the two groups and as well as being the most politically astute of the bunch. In addition to his firm commitment to Park and Burgess' urban ecology, Faris had a strong interest in anthropology and cross-cultural studies. During his tenure he nurtured an anthropology group within the department, which later spun-off to establish itself as an independent department.

Robert E. Park (1864-1944, *professor* 1914-1933) enjoyed Faris' interest, favor and funding becoming, without a doubt, the dominant figure of this period (some would argue of the entire history of the Chicago School). While all the early faculty had arrived at Chicago from widely differing career paths, Park's was the most tortuous and unique, much of it reading as a "who's who" of American intellectual thought at the dawn of the century. He completed his undergraduate degree in philosophy with John Dewey at the University of Michigan and began a career as a "muckraking" journalist in New York. Later in his journalism career he returned to take his Masters degree in psychology and philosophy from Harvard under William James. Intrigued by the nature of man and society, Park studied in Berlin under Simmel and in Strassburg under Windelband. This interest eventually parlayed itself into a doctorate in the philosophy of society from Heidelberg. Returning from Germany, Park spent time lecturing at Harvard and being a press agent for the Congo Reform Association before accepting a position as personal assistant to Booker T. Washington at Tuskegee. It was here that, nearly a decade later, he met Thomas. Thomas was greatly impressed with Park's insights and ambition and invited him to spend a summer lecturing at Chicago. Park accepted. Engaged by the work of the Chicago School, he remained with this provisional, part-time position for six years before a tenure track position became available and he began his decades long tenure.

At first he was not well welcomed among the faculty, no doubt partly the result of his emphatic, and at times too public, belief that the only research of consequence from the first generation had been Thomas'. Soon, however, the tide turned, as both the department transitioned between faculties and his legendary work ethic began to yield results. His experience as a journalist gave him insight into the value of vigorous firsthand data collection

and he became a spokesperson for qualitative methodologies, specifically rich ethnographic description of behavior in context.

The “most influential of all early Chicago sociologists” certainly did not become so as the result of his publication record. He wrote relatively little and what he did was not always well received by the academic community. His most influential work was *Introduction to the Science of Sociology*, the introductory text he had written with Burgess. As the first comprehensive text regarding sociology as a scientific discipline, it helped define the boundaries of this new social science. Its impact was immediate, even in spite of its opaque style, replacing the earlier Small and Vincent reader and remaining the most popular text for almost twenty years.

Park’s personal research never met with such critical success. His seminal text, published at the start of his career, *The City*, containing many of the central themes of his research in the rough, was never fully elaborated by him during his career. Instead its themes of urban ecology, ethnicity, race relations, social worlds, crowd behavior, crime, deviance, social organization and ethnography would serve as fodder for his numerous, talented graduate students, who over the years would synthesize the material and bring his theoretic explorations to fruition.

Indeed, graduate education was the focus of Park’s career. Long before disillusioned with his own ability at academic publication, he invested heavily in his graduate students and was regarded as the “research engine” for the department for most of his career. Thus through his text, and his graduate students Park helped shape an entire generation of American sociologists.

Park’s lifelong officemate, **Ernest W. Burgess** (1886-1966, *professor*, 1919-1957) also suffered from the same malady as Park, finding acclaim from the publications of his graduate students instead of his own. One of the early graduates of the program, Burgess was the first formally trained sociologist to join the faculty. Although a lifelong bachelor, he was hired to continue Charles R. Henderson’s focus on the metropolis and the family when he retired.

A man of sharp intellect, he was mostly a “follower,” first of Small then of Park. Most of his writings are co-authored, and those that are independent are not generally held in high regard. In addition to *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* he is also remembered for *The Family: From Institution to Companionship*, a seminal text for the sociology of the family co-authored with Harvey J. Locke. One of his most important theoretic contributions to the Chicago School stemmed from his intense interest in urban ecology, specifically urban geography. Long having a methodological preference for demographics and maps, his major research thread involved shifting patterns of populations and land use. The “Burgess Zones,” named posthumously in his honor, describing concentric circles of differing land use radiating from a cities’ commercial center, became a standard concept in urban demography. The social origins and impact of organized crime, became his central research focus late in his career. This interest helped shift the focus of the department, influencing many of the most gifted graduate students to begin studies of small scale organizations and occupational life.

During the same period as Burgess' tenure **Louis Wirth** (1897-1952, *professor* 1926-1952), a recent Chicago graduate as well, had taken Park's previous instructor's position and had begun the research which would lead to his seminal work in urban ethnic studies, *The Ghetto*, in 1928. Along with Thomas' work, this text became the cornerstone of Chicago School work on immigration and community maintenance.

An accomplished graduate of Park's and a contemporary of Wirth, **Everett C. Hughes** (1897-1983, *professor* 1938-1961) became the most accomplished of the post-WWII Chicago School faculty. Hughes would continue Park and Burgess' later interest in occupational relations through a great diversity of studies whose settings ranged from the Chicago Real Estate board to Nazi prison camps to the French Canadian workforce to college administrations and to nursing departments.

Finally, **Herbert Blumer** (1900-1987, *professor* 1931-1952), a student of Faris' and collaborator of Mead's actively explored the interplay between social psychology and urban ecology. Later, an outgrowth of these explorations, he proposed "symbolic interactionism" as an independent social theory.

Mentioning Faris and Blumer, no discussion of the "founding fathers" of the Chicago School would be complete without addressing the three social psychologists who provided its valuable theoretical building blocks.

John Dewey (1859-1952), "the organizer," one of the great American philosophers of the last century, had taught for many years at the University of Michigan. While there he collaborated heavily with **Charles H. Cooley** (1864-1929) in laying the theoretical groundwork for symbolic interactionism. He also provided the intellectual impetus for his colleague, **George H. Mead** (1863-1931, *professor* 1894-1931) to actively engage these theories with the domain of sociology. Mead had come to Chicago from Harvard when Dewey arrived from Michigan. Having studied sociology in Berlin, he was the perfect candidate for a joint appointment as the resident "social psychologist" for the sociology department. In this role he taught a highly influential introductory graduate class on social psychology for over thirty years which profoundly influenced all Chicago School graduates. He also actively collaborated with most of the faculty at one time or another. His cross-fertilization of the ideas of symbolic interactionism with sociology helped form the theory of identity development through social interaction which became a core tenet in Chicago School research.

The Chicago School of Sociology

An Annotated Bibliography

1.0 The Chicago School¹⁸

•• BLUMER •••••

Blumer, Herbert. (1939). *Critiques of Research in the Social Sciences: an Appraisal of Thomas and Znaniecki's The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*. New York: Social Science Research Council.

Blumer, Herbert. (1967). *The World of Youthful Drug Use*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

* Blumer, Herbert. (1969). *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Other Blumer texts focus on criminology, popular culture and the role of the media in shaping mass behavior.

•• BURGESS •••••

Burgess' most important Chicago School texts were *The City* and *Introduction to the Science of Sociology*, co-authored with Park.

Other influential Burgess texts include his textbook reader on the family in America and the significant academic examination of the institution of marriage. Other interests included gerontology, retirement, criminology (especially with Shaw) and the census data books for Chicago in both 1920 and 1930.

•• CRESSEY •••••

* Cressey, Paul Goalby. (1932). *The Taxi-Dance Hall: a Sociological Study in Commercialized Recreation and City Life*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Cressey's best remembered research piece deals with social groupings for the purpose of entertainment. Exploration of the theoretical concept of social-worlds is a highlight.

•• FARIS •••••

* Faris, Ellsworth. (1937). *The Nature of Human Nature and Other Essays in Social Psychology*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

The central essay in this book, "The Nature of Human Nature" is Faris' most respected work. It focuses on the iterative social / cultural construction of both individual identity and society itself.

¹⁸ Note: Works denoted by an asterisk (*) are often considered to be that author's most seminal and / or popular text.

•• **HUGHES** •••••

Hughes, Everett C. (1931). *The Growth of an Institution: The Chicago Real Estate Board*. Chicago: Arno, Press.

This is Hughes' Ph.D. dissertation. It is believed that this well received research project shifted Park's later career interest toward organizational studies.

Hughes, Everett C. (1943). *French Canada in Transition*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Hughes, Everett C. and Helen M. Hughes. (1952). *Where Peoples Meet: Racial and Ethnic Frontiers*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.

This book discusses the ecology of racial interaction specifically in Chicago and generally throughout North America.

* Hughes, Everett C. (1958). *Men and Their Work*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.

Many agree that this is Hughes' seminal work regarding the study of human vocation and occupation.

Hughes, Everett C., Helen M. Hughes, and Irwin Deutscher (1958). *Twenty Thousand Nurses Tell Their Story*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott.

Hughes, Everett C. (1971). *The Sociological Eye: Selected Papers*. Chicago: Aldine • Atherton, Inc.

Other Hughes' texts focus on race relations.

•• **MEAD** •••••

Mead, George H. (1903). *The Definition of the Psychical*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mead, George H. (1932). *The Philosophy of the Present*. Chicago: Open Court Publishing.

* Mead, George H. (1934). *Mind, Self, and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Written toward the end of his career, this text embodies many of the principles espoused in his highly influential graduate class in social psychology. Most of Mead's published work did not focus on these specific issues, thus many posthumous collections have sprung up elaborating these, often from the notes of his most notable students.

Mead, George H. (1938). *The Philosophy of the Act*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press .

Mead, George H. (1962). *The Social Psychology of George Herbert Mead*. [edited by Anselm Strauss] Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mead, George H. (1964). *On Social Psychology: Selected Papers*. [edited by Anselm Strauss] Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mead, George H. (1964). *Selected Writings*. [edited by Andrew J. Reck] Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mead, George H. (1982). *The Individual and the Social Self: Unpublished Work of George Herbert Mead*. [edited by David L. Miller]. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Other Mead texts focus on the intellectual history of social thought.

•• **McKENZIE** •••••

•• **THOMAS** •••••

Thomas, William I. (1909). *Source Book for Social Origins; Ethnological Materials, Psychological Standpoint, Classified and Annotated Bibliographies for the Interpretation of Savage Society*. Boston: R. G. Badger.

* Thomas, William I. and Florian Znaniecki. (1918). *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America: Monograph of an Immigrant Group*. Boston: Richard G. Badger

Volkart, Edmund H. ed. (1951). *Social Behavior and Personality; Contributions of W. I. Thomas to Theory and Social Research*. New York: Social Science Research Council.

Janowitz, Morris. ed. (1966). *W. I. Thomas on Social Organization and Social Personality; Selected Papers*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Other works by Thomas include studies on childhood, gender and "primitive" cultures.

•• **WIRTH** •••••

Wirth, Louis. (1925). *Dissertation: Culture Conflicts in the Immigrant Family*. University of Chicago.

* Wirth, Louis. (1928) *The Ghetto*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

His classic study of the Jewish ghetto through the ages. While much of the historical presentation (nearly two thirds of the book) is interesting, it serves more as an introduction to Jewish culture in the Diaspora. The concluding chapters of the book, dealing with a general ethnographic study of the ghetto in Chicago, are the most illuminating.

•• **ANTHOLOGIES** •••••

Burgess, Ernest W. and Donald J. Bogue, eds. (1964). *Contributions to Urban Sociology*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

This is an all Chicago School anthology containing an excellent introductory article by Burgess regarding his personal experience with the authors.

Short, James F. Jr. (1971). *The Social Fabric of the Metropolis: Contributions of the Chicago School of Urban Sociology*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Probably the most representative anthology of early Chicago School. This text contains the following key selections:

- Cressey, Paul Frederick. (1938). "Population Succession in Chicago: 1898-1930."
- Cressey, Paul G. (1932). "The Taxi-Dance Hall as a Social World."
- Faris, Ellsworth. (1926). "The Nature of Human Nature."
- Hughes, Everett C. (1931). "The Growth of an Institution: The Chicago Real Estate Board."
- McKenzie, Roderick D. (1924). "The Ecological Approach to the Study of the Human Community."
- North, Cecil C. (1926). "The City as a Community: An Introduction to a Research Project."
- Reckless, Walter C. (1926). "The Distribution of Commercialized Vice in the City: A Sociological Analysis."
- Thomas, W. I. (1921). "The Immigrant Community."
- Whyte, William Foote. (1943) "Social Structure, the Gang and the Individual."
- Zorbaugh, Harvey W. (1929). "The Shadow of the Skyscraper."

2.0 The Second Chicago School

•• BECKER •••••

* Becker, Howard S., et. al. (1961). *Boys in White: Student Culture in Medical School*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Becker, Howard S. (1973). *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*. New York: Free Press.

Becker, Howard S. (1977). *Sociological Work: Method and Substance*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books.

Becker, Howard S. (1982). *Art Worlds*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Becker, Howard S. (1986). *Doing Things Together: Selected Papers*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

•• GOFFMAN •••••

* Goffman, Erving. (1959). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.

Goffman, Erving. (1961). *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.

Goffman, Erving. (1961). *Encounters: Two Studies in the Sociology of Interaction*. Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill.

Goffman, Erving. (1963). *Behavior in Public Places: Notes on the Social Organization of Gatherings*. New York: Free Press.

Goffman, Erving. (1963). *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Goffman, Erving. (1967). *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.

Goffman, Erving. (1971). *Relations in Public: Microstudies of the Public Order*. New York: Basic Books.

Goffman, Erving. (1974). *Frame Analysis: an Essay on the Organization of Experience*. New York: Harper & Row.

Goffman, Erving. (1981). *Forms of Talk*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Other works by Goffman include studies of asylums and mental health as well as gender based advertising.

•• STRAUSS •••••

Lindesmith, Alfred Ray and Anselm L. Strauss. (1949). *Social Psychology*. New York: Dryden Press.

Strauss, Anselm L. (1959). *Mirrors and Masks: the Search for Identity*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.

Strauss, Anselm L. (1961). *Images of the American City*. New York: Free Press.

* Glaser, Barney G. and Anselm L. Strauss. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company.

3.0 Specific Biographies

Baugh, Kenneth Jr. (1990). *The Methodology of Herbert Blumer: Critical Interpretation and Repair*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

This is a chronological, developmental history of the evolution of his research methodology.

Christakes, George. (1978). *Albion W. Small*. Boston: Twayne Publishers.

Cook, Gary A. (1993). *George Herbert Mead: The Making of a Social Pragmatist*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Deegan, Mary Jo. (1988). *Jane Addams and the Men of the Chicago School, 1892-1918*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books.

Dibble, Vernon K. (1975). *The Legacy of Albion Small*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Lawrence, Peter A. (1976). *Georg Simmel: Sociologist and European*. Sunbury-on-Thames, Middlesex, UK: Thomas Nelson and Sons.

This is an intellectual biography of Simmel.

Matthews, Fred H. (1977). *Quest for an American Sociology: Robert E. Park and the Chicago School*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

One of the best biographies of Park available, this was an excellent source document including extensive notes and citations.

Rauschenbush, Winifred. (1979). *Robert E. Park: Biography of a Sociologist*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
[do not have]

Whyte, William F. (1994). *Participant Observer: An Autobiography*. Ithica, NY: ILR Press.

4.0 About the Chicago School

Bulmer, Martin. (1984). *The Chicago School of Sociology: Institutionalization, Diversity and the Rise of Sociological Research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Carey, James T. (1975) *Sociology and Public Affairs: The Chicago School*. [Volume 16 in Sage Library of Social Research], Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications Inc.

Faris, Robert E. L. (1967). *Chicago Sociology: 1920-1932*. San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Company.

Without a doubt the most outstanding history of the “golden years” of the Chicago School. In addition to its excellent history, it contains an essential resource -- a complete listing of all doctoral dissertations and masters theses from the founding of the school through 1935. Should be read in conjunction with Fine (1995).

Fine, Gary Alan. (1995). *A Second Chicago School? The Development of a Postwar American Sociology*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

This noteworthy history follows on where Faris (1967) leaves off. A history richer in detail than Faris, Fine explores the evolution of the Chicago School in the era post World War II. As with Faris, Fine provides a listing of all Ph.D. dissertations from 1946-1960.

Harvey, Lee. (1987) *Myths of the Chicago School of Sociology*. Brookfield, VT: Gower Publishing Company.

Hinkle, Roscoe C. (1994). *Developments in American Sociological Theory, 1915-1950*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Follows the developments of the Chicago School in relation to other trends at other American institutions. This is helpful for building the larger picture of sociology in the United States during the ascendancy of Chicago. It also provides brief overviews of the central theories of key researchers.

Lindstrom, Fred B., Ronald A. Hardert and Laura L. Johnson, eds. (1995) *Kimball Young on Sociology in Transition 1912-1968*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, Inc.

A rather intimate look into the personalities of the founders of modern sociology in America. This collection of anecdotes by Young provides rich detail about many of the early researchers at Chicago (especially Thomas) as well as exploring the web of relations among the different sociology schools at the time.

Shils, Edward. (1948). *The Present State of American Sociology*. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press.

Shils describes the contributions of the early Chicago School and describes the shift away from that school to other schools of sociology.

Short, James F. Jr. (1971). *The Social Fabric of the Metropolis: Contributions of the Chicago School of Urban Sociology*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

In addition to the anthology listed above, Short provides a significant historical overview of the early school.

Smith, Dennis. (1988) *The Chicago School: A Liberal Critique of Capitalism*. [Contemporary Social Theory -- a series edited by Anthony Giddens]. Hampshire, UK: MacMillan Education.

5.0 General Interest

Abel, Theodore. (1965). *Systematic Sociology in Germany: A Critical Analysis of Some Attempts to Establish Sociology as an Independent Science*. New York: Octagon Books, Inc. [original 1929]

Able helps to recreate the atmosphere of German sociology prior to the turn of the century which so heavily influenced the members of the first Chicago School. This good overview explores four distinct trends in social philosophy through the work of the most able spokesperson in the area, including: Georg Simmel, Alfred Vierkandt, Leopold Von Wiese, Max Weber.

Shils, Edward, ed. (1991). *Remembering the University of Chicago: Teachers, Scientists, and Scholars*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

A graduate of the Chicago School, looks back on the department and the university as a whole. This provides a more holistic portrait of how the department fit into the over all history of the university. There are good mini-biographies on the most influential of the early faculty.

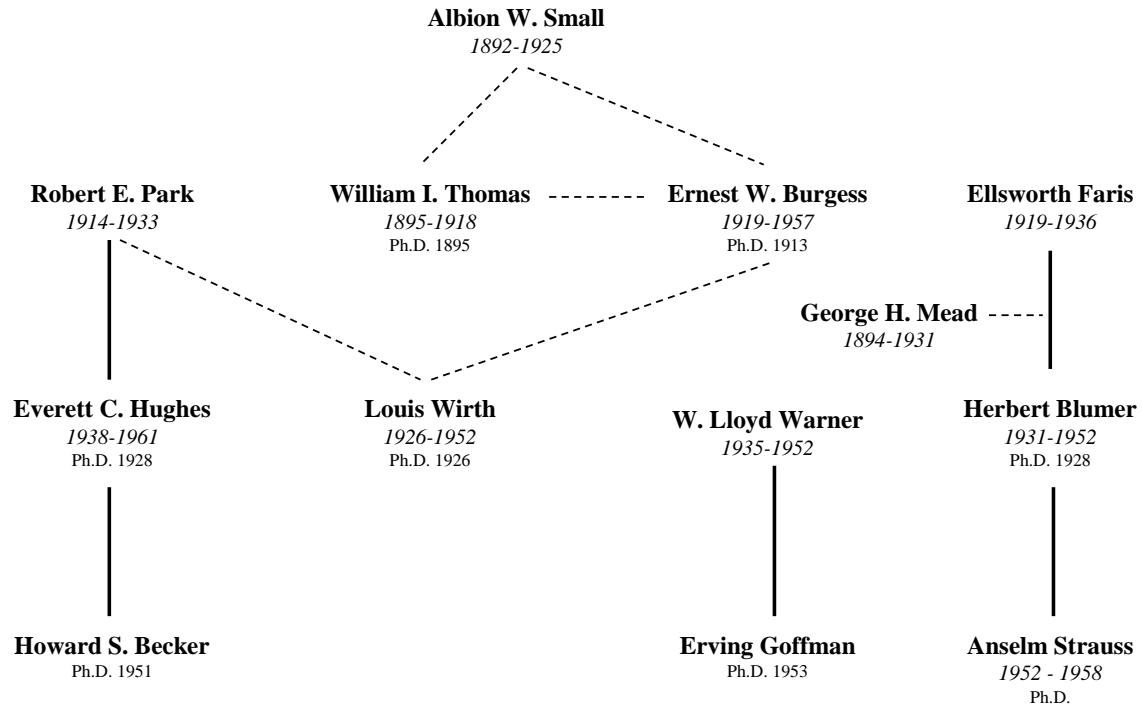


Figure 1. This diagram maps the relations of the central Chicago School researchers. Advisor-student relations are denoted by a solid line, other influential relations by a dashed line.

A Chronology of the Chicago School

First Chicago School

**First
Generation**

Albion W. Small
William I. Thomas

Charls R. Henderson
George E. Vincent
Charles Zeublin

***German
Formalized
Sociology***

Georg Simmel

**Second
Generation**

Ellsworth Faris
Robert E. Park
Ernest W. Burgess

William F. Ogburn

***Social
Psychologists***

George H. Mead
John Dewey
Charles H. Cooley

Second Chicago School

**First
Generation**

Louis Wirth
Everett Hughes
Herbert Blumer

**Second
Generation**

William F. Whyte
Howard S. Becker
Erving Goffman
Anselm Strauss
Gary A. Fine

Chicago School of Sociology During the First Half of the 20th Century. Edited by CHRISTOPHER HART. develop one of the most internationally influential departments of sociology. There are many excellent introductions to the history of sociology and in particular the history of the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago such as Bulmer (1984), Kurtz (1984) and Deegan (1991). In this introduction I would like to tease out some of the theoretical traditions and sources that influenced different members of the department. The reason for this paper provides a brief introduction to the school, as well as an overview of some of their most central themes. An examination of the thought and practice of the Chicago School must be sensitive to its socio-historical context. Thus, in order to best understand the Chicago School, some inquiry into its background is required. First, one must understand the period and the place. Not all faculty associated with the department of sociology at the University may be considered part of the Chicago School, but at least ten were integral. (Figure 1 maps the relations among them).

EARLY INFLUENCES COMING OUT OF THE CHICAGO SCHOOL THAT SHAPED AMERICAN SOCIOLOGY

- STUDIES OF SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION
- STUDIES OF HUMAN NATURE AND PERSONALITY (Social Psychology)
- STUDIES OF SOCIAL CHANGE
- STUDIES OF RACE AND ETHNIC RELATIONS (Minority Groups)
- URBAN STUDIES
- QUALITATIVE/ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDIES
- MICRO-SOCIOLOGY
- SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM.

Presentation on theme: "The CHICAGO SCHOOL Of SOCIOLOGY Robert Park W. I. Thomas Charles H. Cooley George Herbert Mead." Presentation transcript: 1 The CHICAGO SCHOOL Of SOCIOLOGY Robert Park W. I. Thomas Charles H. Cooley George Herbert Mead. 2 1892 - 1930. 3.