The Nature of 'Schools' in the Sociology of Knowledge: The Case of the 'Chicago School'

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Abstract
The nature of 'schools' as a metascientific construct is reviewed. Tiryakian's (1979a) increasingly popular construction of a school of sociology is examined and the case of 'The Chicago School' is considered in detail. The efficacy of a 'schools' approach to understanding the nature of the growth and development of scientific knowledge is called into question. It is suggested that schools, as used in the literature, tend to be convenient groupings of practitioners rather than metascientific categories and that they fail to adequately engage knowledge transformative processes

Introduction
The term school is a term widely used in the history and sociology of sociology. It refers to groupings of academics and researchers who may or may not constitute an identifiable administrative unit. A school, as an institutional grouping of academics takes on a variety of forms. It may be a small informal sub-group within a department; a formalised subgroup of a department, identified as such for academic purposes; a complete department; an informal grouping of sub-groups across departments; a formal interdepartmental sub grouping of only some members of the participating departments; a formal interdisciplinary and/or interdepartmental grouping (possibly independent of any faculty structure); an interfaculty grouping or entire college; or, an autonomous (research) organisation attached to a college.

A school may also cut across institutional boundaries, the term is often used to refer to some form of grouping of like-minded academics from various institutions, which may or may not have an institutional focal point. Such a grouping is of two key types. First, a contemporaneous network that may be organised in various ways. It may be a co-operating group of interacting researchers; a group of communicating researchers; a group of contemporaries adopting similar ideas (basic presuppositions, core theories, subject areas, or a combination of these) who attend conferences, and/or read publications of the group, thus keeping abreast of developments; or a more 'frail' network, usually based on a tentative link such as nationality, preferred methodology or theoretical orientation. Schools of this sort are sometimes referred to as 'invisible colleges' (Crane, 1972), or 'networks' (Mullins, 1973).

Second, a cross-temporal and/or cross-spatial ensemble based on convergence of ideas. The congruent ideas school is, thus, a loose grouping which is not constrained by time or space and is usually designated by adherence to a development of particular theoretic positions. (See, for example, the use of the term 'School' by Sorokin (1928)). This notion of school is also extended to national boundaries, so that commentators refer to a Russian school of sociology or Polish sociology, for example, where the members of the 'school' never communicate and are probably unaware that they constitute a 'school'. At its most general, such cross-temporal or cross-spatial schools may have no physical referents of importance, and rather reflect a 'school of thought' in the sense of a group of theorists sharing the same philosophy; or of an identifiable theoretical or philosophical perspective to which significant figures in the history may be attached; or a 'general theoretic orientation' (Merton 1968), a 'tradition' or 'paradigm' as in Marxism or functionalism; or may be simply based on their content (Szacki, 1975).

The construction of schools serves two ends. First, it is used by historians and sociologists of the different disciplines in order to assist in unravelling complex interrelations of ideas, research practice and personnel in all branches of the sciences and the humanities. The notion of school, in this respect, tends to be rather unsystematic. It is a convenient nominalist shorthand for a group of academics acting in some co-operative, coincidental or other common manner, usually incorporating the idea that they are using the same basic theoretical or conceptual presuppositions. Second, the term is used more specifically within a metascientific [1] thesis which sees knowledge as in some way consensual and thus sees the social academic unit as having a role in the production of scientific knowledge.

References to 'schools' in the latter sense (e.g. the Chicago School, the Frankfurt School) thus imply more than particular institutional affiliation. There is an implication that within the institution there is an accepted way of working. This applies also to 'schools' identified with a particular practitioner such as the 'Durkheimian School' and the 'Parsonian School' (Tiryakian, 1979a). However, the profusion of usages of the term 'school' leads to a variety of overlapping schools and an ambiguity as to the precise nature of any given school. In many respects the criteria for demarcation of 'schools' is somewhat vague and the concept should not be taken for granted, its genesis and usage are important areas of investigation. Of importance here, as the case study will show, is the extent to which 'schools' are retrospective constructions or are recognised at the time by the members [2]. Recent attempts have been made to sharpen the concept of school as a historical category (Bulmer, 1985) and as a metascientific construct (Tiryakian, 1979a; Amsterdamska, 1985). These developments are grounded in a consensus view of knowledge which owes much to Kuhn's (1962) paradigm thesis.

Paradigms and Schools
The developments in the philosophy of science which stemmed from the publication of Kuhn's (1962, 1970) thesis of the paradigm nature of knowledge and, to a lesser extent, from Lakatos' methodology of scientific research programmes (Lakatos, 1970, 1975) have initiated a concern with metascientific units, and, consequently, attempts to develop a more analytic notion of a 'school' of sociology.

Kuhn's reworking of his paradigm thesis was influenced, among other things, by Price's (1961, 1963, 1965) idea of invisible colleges as the basic metascientific unit. Price (1963) argued that invisible colleges arise as a pragmatic response to the growth of science from 'little science' to 'big science'. Essentially, the rapid development of science, the escalating education of, and generation of scientists, the massive cost of research, the spiralling numbers of publications and the continual splitting of sciences into specialist areas means that a researcher, if determined to 'progress', needs to become

involved in one specific area. However this does not mean that science is comprised of non-communicating closed shops. According to Price, research scientists tend to congregate' in communicating groups with an upper limit of around one hundred members. These invisible colleges are characterised by an unofficial network that confers status and

> effectively solve a communication crisis by reducing a large group to a small select one of the maximum size that can be handled by interpersonal relationships.... For each group there exists a sort of communicating circuit of institutions, research centers, and summer schools, giving them the opportunity to meet piecemeal, so that over an interval of a few years everybody who is anybody has worked with everybody else in the same category. (Price, 1963, p. 85)

Crane (1965, 1969, 1972) elaborated Price's notion of invisible college, and related it more directly to the social context of scientific work. The essential feature of invisible colleges is the inter-personal contact. Such contact serves two functions. First, it provides a communicative network and thus enables the work of research sub-groups. Second, invisible colleges connect a research area to other research areas, through the interaction network of influential (and usually highly productive) research area leaders. These leaders are intermediaries who are fundamental for the cross-fertilization of ideas from one research area to another.

Crane argued that invisible colleges are distinct from, and more important in the growth of science than, schools. A school is characterised by the uncritical acceptance on the part of disciples of a leader's idea system (Krantz, 1971). It rejects external influence and validation of its work. By creating a journal of its own, such a group can 'by-pass the criticism of referees from other areas' (Crane, 1972, p. 87). Crane saw schools as fragmenting scientific knowledge thereby inhibiting its growth. She likened schools to religious sects.

> Schools have similarities to religious sects the latter break away from the church and build separate organizations, emphasising aspects of doctrine or policy that they believe have been ignored or misrepresented by the church. The religious sect is a relatively closed system that resists external influences rather than attempting to adopt them. Members who deviate from orthodox views on any issue are quickly expelled (see for example Coser 1954, Johnson 1964, Yinger 1957). (Crane, 1972, footnote to p. 87) [3]

The school, unlike the invisible college, is thus a small unit of detached researchers without the benefit of cross-fertilization of ideas to promote innovation within the research programme. Determined to safeguard its theoretical stance a school will actively reject alternative conceptualisations from within its own discipline. It is essential for interaction *between* groups if research is to lead to cumulative growth. Invisible colleges, unlike schools, exist to promote cross-fertilization of ideas, and they cannot be easily boundaried. Indeed, invisible colleges are able to embrace, and possibly encourage, interdisciplinary study and peripheral or hybrid work on the boundaries of disciplines or research areas. When a research area abandons non-directive searching for new ideas its level of innovation declines (Back, 1962; Crane, 1972).

This is not, however, meant to imply that invisible colleges are simply loose associations of similarly motivated workers. Invisible colleges are more than an *ad hoc* grouping, they have an autonomy grounded in the prevailing paradigm which constrains innovation, while not denying inputs of ideas

from parallel realms. Invisible colleges, according to Crane, set norms of research orientation, of social interaction, of citation practice and of information utilisation. Invisible colleges are at the core of the social structure of science, they act to constrain scientific work within a manageable framework whilst providing a forum for innovation and critique.

Taking up the Kuhnian view of the history of science, Tiryakian (1979a, 1979b) argued that, in relation to the development of sociology a schools approach provided a framework consistent with historical evidence. He argued that the growth of sociology is not characterised by cumulative growth of theory based on empirical evidence; on the contrary it is uneven and discontinuous, and to a large measure, is a series of episodes, of periodic infusions of theory. The infusions, he argues, are brought about by the work of a small number of 'major schools'. Tiryakian has, thus, revived the specific concern with the 'school' as the focus for metascientific enquiry. He confronts doubts about the utility of the notion of schools in the history, philosophy and sociology of knowledge. He attempts to refine and systematise the notion of school as a metascientific construct.

On the basis of investigation of two schools, Tiryakian has built up an ideal-typification of the concept of school as scientific community (Tiryakian 1979a). Schools vary in size and tend to grow from a core of less than a dozen to around three dozen, with admission to membership being *ad hoc* and largely dependent on the decision of the founder-leader who is a charismatic figure. The leader is committed to teaching students and presents a clear expression of the way in which reality is to be approached. This forms the basis of a revolutionary paradigm. The leader draws on the theoretical ideas of a significant precursor and, usually, develops a programme of validation and modification of the precursor's constructs. Tiryakian labels the other members of the school as either followers (usually students) or converts. The followers are committed to the paradigm and validate it through empirical study. From the ranks of the followers emerge lieutenants who are the 'agents of institutionalisation' of the school and who also act to recruit additional members. A number of auxiliaries operate in relation to the school to patronise, popularise and help promulgate the work of the school [4].

For Tiryakian (1979a), then, a school consists of a small group of practitioners in close contact who consciously and explicitly establish an alternative approach to a subject discipline and gradually get themselves established as an identifiably distinct and viable sub-group. A school is similar in its formative stage to a religious sect, providing its members with a sense of mission, ostensibly in the form of taking on the 'conservatism' of the prevailing views of the profession. In turn, the new school is excluded from the mainstream and develops its own organs of diffusion.

A successful school eventually loses its distinctiveness as more and more practitioners take up elements of the school's central ideas. The core ideas are disseminated in more formal ways (through established journals and in conferences rather than through face to face interaction) and becomes popularised. The charisma of the school becomes institutionalised or routinised and its ideas become part of the standard conceptions of the discipline. The 'paradigm' becomes depersonalised and its conceptions become utilised by new generations of sociologists unaware of their specific socio-intellectual origins. Gradually, the presuppositions of the school get lost.

Tiryakian, having based his model on Kuhn's analysis of the growth of scientific knowledge adapts Kuhn's thesis to his own ends. First, Tiryakian sees Kuhn's idea of scientific community as an assemblage of 'practitioners of a scientific speciality' as too vague and too broad for sociology. The

notion of school provides a less generalised community. Thus school is idealised by Tiryakian as a group of intellectuals comprising a small community whose origins and formative period can be localised in time and place. For Tiryakian, schools in science are similar to schools of art, constituted by an interactive group clustered around a founder-leader, as he imagined that Surrealism was around Breton [5]. So, Tiryakian adopts a 'master-apprentice' type model, where the role of an intellectual leader is crucial in developing ideas.

Second, Tiryakian dispensed with Kuhn's idea that paradigms monopolised their relevant fields and that subsequent paradigms in a field were incommensurable. For Tiryakian, there may be more than one dominant paradigm at any one time, and, while a scientist may feel a 'mission' in spreading the 'school's' paradigm, this does not necessarily imply an immersion in a paradigm that predetermines the way the world is viewed (in respect of a particular discipline area).

Third, there is, therefore, little concern in Tiryakian's models with the paradigmatic nature of the transformation of scientific knowledge. The concept of paradigm used by Tiryakian is that of Kuhn's notion of exemplar rather than the wider concept of metatheoretical orientation. For Kuhn (1970), scientific progress was located within a paradigm which encompassed 'the entire constellation of beliefs, values, and techniques' shared by a scientific community. Sub-disciplinary paradigms, to which Tiryakian alludes, do not fulfil this criterion. (Kuhn, 1970; Martins, 1972). Kuhn's secondary concept of paradigm as exemplar has no meaning outside this wider paradigmatic framework. In concentrating on the exemplary element of paradigms, Tiryakian has disengaged Kuhn's notion of paradigm from his thesis of the production of scientific knowledge. Kuhn's model of puzzle solving, anomalies, crises and revolutions is laid aside. Instead, knowledge is seen to be a function of social groupings and the access to means of legitimation. The focus of attention is not the subject matter but the social interaction networks (Hull, 1978). The institutionalisation of a school is thus concerned with the way a group carve out a niche within a paradigm, rather than the role of the network in transcending a paradigm.

Further, while clinging to Kuhnian concepts, Tiryakian explicitly adopted Lakatosian concepts and attempted to integrate them into his epistemological base. Tiryakian attempted to relate his notion of 'school' to Lakatos' idea of scientific research programme. Thus the 'presuppositions' of a 'school' are defined by Tiryakian as

> those often implicit ontological groundings of a general theory: presuppositions are not empirical constructs like hypotheses, empirical propositions, and articulated theories. They are the existential as well as metaphysical foundations, the basic definitions of the situation, the basic approaches to reality which are not falsifiable by any rational or empirical means.... (Tiryakian, 1979a, p. 218).

This closely reflects the 'hard core' of a Lakatosian scientific research programme. Indeed, the 'school' approach concentrates more on the programmatic nature of the research enterprise than on its paradigmatic qualities (Tiryakian 1979a; Faught 1980; Farberman 1979). The scientific research programme is formulated by the leader and is the product of an on-going school which disseminates its product to the whole profession. The leader provides the basic 'hard core' of the scientific research programme which is passed on to 'immediate followers and associates.' (Tiryakian 1979b, p. 2).5

Tiryakian, however, failed to provide a convincing connection between 'schools' and 'research programmes' because he nowhere disentangled the incompatible Kuhnian and Lakatosian concepts. He also concentrated on the 'hard core' of research programmes (the search for presuppositions tends to reflect this) rather than on the 'positive heuristic' which is the driving force behind Lakatos' model of the growth of science. Tiryakian's model, then, drifts away from its Kuhnian moorings. But does it matter whether it is as closely aligned to Kuhnian precepts as it claims, and, does it not in itself, provide a useful way of assessing the production of scientific knowledge? In one key respect the answer to these questions are the same. In drifting away from Kuhn's thesis, Tiryakian has sacrificed the explanatory mechanism that Kuhn projected and has not replaced it with a satisfactory alternative. In deviating from Kuhn's model, Tiryakian has tended precisely towards the very approach that Kuhn set out to challenge. Kuhn's paradigm model aimed at an explanation that attempted to account for the progress of science, one which was not committed to a view of scientific progress as linear and rational and also attempted to provide a basis for explaining the apparent quantum leaps in scientific progress. Tiryakian is much less concerned with the progress of science and is preoccupied with the identification of units and, in so doing, the investigation of how knowledge develops is of secondary importance to him.

Tiryakian ignored the process of discovery. While the isolationism of the 'school' may be a suitable arena for nurturing a new research programme, it does not provide the cross-fertilization from other areas of work so important in innovation. For Lakatos, the 'school' is the cloister of dogmatism. In this respect, Tiryakian's 'schools' thesis ignores critiques of the use of 'schools' as metascientific units (Crane, 61972; Mullins, 1973). For Crane, the school is stagnant and does not add to scientific knowledge except in an esoteric way. The school, for her, must run out of steam because of its isolation. In effect she sees it as a stubborn, narrow research programme with nowhere to go. Tiryakian sees schools as part of normal science. He has taken schools to replace paradigms, which represents a return to the approach which Crane originally questioned.

Tiryakian's schools concept has been reflected in the work of other historians and sociologists of sociology (Faught, 1980; Snizek *et al*., 1979; Wiley, 1979; Bulmer, 1984, 1985; Monk, 1986) and as such provides a useful model to address in assessing the potential of a 'schools' approach to metascience. In order to further the assessment, a specific case study utilised by Tiryakian, the 'Chicago School', will be considered.

The 'Chicago School'
According to Tiryakian, following World War One, the Department of Sociology at Chicago gelled into a 'community marked by organic solidarity' and fulfilled the criteria for a school. Park was the leader-candidate because of his direct involvement with students and his encouragement of direct empirical research. Indeed, Park's innovation was methodological, namely his suggestion that the city be treated as a natural laboratory. The *Introduction to the Science of Society* co-authored with Burgess (1921) became the manifesto of the new school.

For Tiryakian, then, Chicago sociology was rooted in the ecological model. However, there was also another important input from a different direction. This was the 'intersubjective dimension', inspired by German idealism and Simmel's formalism, but also 'greatly reinforced' by Mead's work and ideas. This element was encouraged by Park, who communicated it to his 'lieutenants', notably, Blumer, Wirth and Hughes, who themselves trained a later generation of students. Thus, Tiryakian argued, the school's

paragigm incorporated both an internal subjective and an external objective approach. Following Park's departure in 1933, the school lost its inner cohesion and by 1940 the paradigm had lost its vitality.

Tiryakian's reconstruction of the 'Chicago School' is misleading. Tiryakian's primary source of information was Faris (1967), augmented by Carey (1975) and Matthews (1977), but even given this reliance on secondary sources he has been very selective in his interpretation (Bulmer, 1984; Kutrz, 1984; Harvey, 1985) [6]. First, he delimited the 'Chicago paradigm' to two basic theoretical orientations: ecologism and Meadian social psychology. Second, he portrayed the Chicagoans as essentially concerned with ethnographic approaches. Third, in constructing a 'school', he presents the Chicagoans as a sectarian group.

In Tiryakian's account of the 'Chicago School', Park's ecological model is of central importance and the work of the 'followers' is seen as their elaboration of the ecological model of the city. Despite Park's impact on the work of the Chicagoans during the second and third decades of the century, Park can hardly be said to have developed a revolutionary paradigm. It is arguable that an accolade must go to Thomas, if it is to be given to anyone; yet Tiryakian ignored Thomas's influential concept of social disorganization. Conversely, Tiryakian attached little importance to Park's development of race studies and the assimilation thesis.

Tiryakian also emphasised both the active role of Mead in the early years of the school and his influence on the early Chicagoans. Tiryakian was thus able to identify a precursor for the 'School', as demanded by his model. Mead is shown as influencing Park who, in turn, influenced Blumer and others. The role of Faris in developing Mead's ideas is ignored altogether. Indeed, the Chicagoans had wide theoretical interests and Mead's influence was quite limited (Lewis & Smith, 1981).

Tiryakian's model places methodological development at the centre, as the dynamic for change, and Park is seen as the focus for methodological development. While Park certainly encouraged the analysis of different facets of the city there is a strong case for arguing that the innovation lay with Small and Thomas and that Park's contribution lay in implementing it (Park, 1939; Dibble 1972). Tiryakian also assumed that the methodological approach adopted at Chicago was predominantly ethnographic, particularly emphasising participant observation. He under-represented the Chicagoan's use of case study and overlooked their involvement in more 'quantitative' approaches (Bulmer, 1981).

Important for Tiryakian's close knit, master-apprentice model of a school is an awareness of the academic community amongst the members. This awareness necessarily takes two forms. First, an appreciation of a set of roles amongst an intercommunicating group of practitioners. Second, awareness of, and adherence to, a set of presuppositions. Thus, Tiryakian portrayed the school as a sect with an inward-looking orientation and exclusive organs of dissemination. He also attempted to establish a set of core presuppositions representing the 'Chicago School'. However, it is purely arbitrary to select, as Tiryakian does, aspects of the work done at Chicago as somehow preceding more general adoption in the discipline as a whole and then to suggest that they constituted the presuppositions of a school.

An investigation of the Chicagoans suggests that, contrary to Tiryakian, they did not see themselves as a 'school' with a 'founder-leader', nor as working within a set of core presuppositions. There are virtually no references to the 'Chicago School of Sociology' in the published literature during the first half of the century. Nor did the Chicagoans use the term informally. Indeed, the Chicagoans have been more

inclined to see themselves a diverse group with wide interests rather than as a sect-like solidarity grouping pursuing common goals.

As Kurtz (1984, p. 99) notes, the 'Chicago School' is a convenient and frequently employed term, but that should not lead the historian of sociology into assuming that there was a 'monolithic, homogenous tradition'. Indeed, 'like all "schools" of thought, the Chicago school evaporates under close inspection'

As early as 1911, Small noted that 'There is quite as much difference of opinion in matters of detail between members of our sociological staff as will be found between representatives of different institutions' (Small, 1911, p. 634).

Half a century later, Janowitz (1966) stated that the Chicagoans were not a school: 'it is a disputable question whether there was a distinct or unified Chicago approach to sociology…the Chicago school contained theoretical viewpoints and substantive interests which were extremely variegated.' The brochure of the Department of Sociology at Chicago for 1981–82, similarly noted that 'The department has never been dominated by a single individual or by a single school of thought.' Cavan (1983) stated in her review of the 'Golden Era' of Chicago sociology (1918–1933), that she can not ever recall hearing the term 'Chicago School' during the 1920s and quotes Everett Hughes, who was a graduate student at Chicago from 1923 to 1927 as saying, 'I don't remember where or when I first heard of the Chicago School. That phrase was invented by others, not the Chicago people. I suppose there was some sense in the term, but it implies more consensus than existed' (Cavan, 1983, p. 408). And in 1969 Hughes indicated that he still disliked talking of a 'Chicago School' or 'any other kind of school' (Hughes, 1980, p. 276).

The Bulletin of the Society for Social Research at the University of Chicago [7] makes no references to a 'Chicago School', nor to a 'Chicago Approach', nor to a specifically 'Chicago Sociology'. Neither of the two reviews of the social scientific research work of the Chicagoans published at the end of the twenties and thirties talk of a 'Chicago School'. Smith and White (1929) reviewing the work of the Local Community Research Committee during the twenties is silent on a 'school' and Wirth (1940), reviewing the work of the Social Science Research Committee at Chicago on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Social Science Research Building, similarly has nothing to say about a 'Chicago School'. In his review of the history of sociology (1915–1947), commissioned for the *American Journal of Sociology*, Wirth makes no reference to a 'Chicago School' or a particularly unique practice located at Chicago university.

Indeed, as Becker (1979a) recalled, Wirth did not recognise a 'Chicago School':
> When I was a graduate student at Chicago, one of the people who was really considered to be a leader in a 'Chicago School of Sociology' was Louis Wirth. And Louis Wirth used to say that he was constantly amazed at being told that he was part of the Chicago School of Sociology, because he couldn't imagine what he had in common with all those other people. (Becker, 1979a, p. 3)

The Chicagoans did not appear to see themselves as a 'school' and while there was a certain awareness that Chicago University was the 'place to be' if you wanted to do sociology [8], the lack of a self-recognition of a 'school' by its members, so essential to Tyriakian's construct, must raise doubts about designations of the 'Chicago School'. What constructions there were of the school appear to have come from outside.

The image [of a 'Chicago School'] was fashioned by other centers of sociology that competed on both academic and professional grounds. This image was also created by the other disciplines responding to the innovation of their sociological colleagues. And there was an image that emerged in the outside world among journalists, authors, and public leaders who were attracted and repelled by the substantive findings and the social pronouncements of these scholars. (Janowitz, 1966, pp. vii–viii).

The first reference to a 'Chicago School' by the Chicagoans themselves seems to be in a single reference in Park's (1939) retrospective account of the development of the Society for Social Research. Park recalled that the Society for Social Research was organised in the Fall of 1921, and that its aim was to bring together interested and competent researchers (students and staff). 'Research in the social sciences at Chicago began before the organization of the Society for Social Research. However, the particular type of research that has been identified with the "Chicago School" has found in this Society, in its Institute, and its publications an effective organ of expression. The Society was originally organized to stimulate a wider interest and a more intelligent co- operation among faculty and students in a program of studies that focused investigation on the local community' (Park, 1939, p. 1). Park, five years after retiring from Chicago, is referring to what others have identified as the 'Chicago School', and he sets it clearly in the compass of the Society for Social Research. In effect, he sees the Society for Social Research as the institutional manifestation of a general approach to sociology at Chicago, which was based on what, in retrospect, Park considered to be the unique contribution of Thomas. Park emphasised the empirical, anti-moralistic, disinterested and sociological aspect of the work at Chicago which he suggested, was rooted in

> a tradition at the University that the city was, or at any rate should be, a natural laboratory for the study of sociological problems. This suggested possibilities to Thomas and at his suggestion we started out to make the city the center and focus of all our studies. It was at Thomas' suggestion that I wrote the article on *The City* (1914) [Park, 1915] which was eventually expanded to make a book under the same title [Park & Burgess, 1925]. (Park, 1939, p. 3)

For Park, the success of the Society for Social Research was bound up with the new approach signified by Thomas's pioneering work and suggestions and its particular concern with empirical research in the urban environment.

However, this does not mean that Park saw Chicago as a distinct and isolated school. Rather, he saw the department as intrinsic to the development of empirical sociological investigation in the United States. As such, this reflected the intentions of the Society, as expressed in the Bulletin prior to the Institute of 1929.

> The Summer institute has become one of the most interesting and valuable events of the year for sociologists and students of sociology at the University of Chicago and neighboring schools. Its purpose is to serve as a clearing house for current research projects. Here students and faculty members bring their hypotheses, data, and conclusions and submit them to the shafts of friendly criticism from some 75 or 100 fellow research workers. (Bulletin of the Society for Social Research for June, 1929)

This view of the Society as a clearing house is perhaps most indicative of the nature of the 'Chicago School'. From the point of view of the Chicagoans, and its associates, Chicago was not a sect-like school but an integral part of sociology in the United States. It was, to some extent, the focus of a far-flung network of practitioners. However, the extent to which Chicago could be said to be a network in the sense proposed by Crane (1972) is debateable. Crucially, the interaction between members was very loose and sporadic and, despite the Bulletin, there seemed to be relatively little exchange of papers in preparation, and so on. Further, there was no particular sense of loyalty to Chicago by members of the 'network' outside the Department (Cavan, 1983; Legermann, 1979; Harvey, 1985).

While the Chicagoans, themselves, did not seem to adopt the notion of a school and were more or less unaware of the term 'Chicago School' until well into the 1930s (Bulmer, 1985), the term was apparently used by outsiders. However, there is little documentary evidence to point to a generally accepted notion of, let alone view about, a Chicago School prior to the 1950s (Kurtz, 1984). According to Cavan (1983) the earliest published reference to the Chicago School was Bernard (1930, p. 133), but this is merely indicative rather than in any way definitive [9]. Notably, Bernard does not refer to a 'Chicago School' of sociology during his engagement with the Chicagoans at the time of the 'coup' in the American Sociological Society in 1935 (Lengermann, 1979) despite his view that the University of Chicago, with the support of the quantifiers, constituted a far too influential political block within the Society. This view was also supported by Read Bain who had earlier referred to a Chicago social group, although not to a 'Chicago School'.

The conference on the Polish Peasant (SSRC, 1939) which was concerned with the 'objectivity' of the human document in social research, addressed a feature apparently central to the 'Chicago School'. However, despite Bain's participation, there was no reference at all to a 'Chicago School'. Only Thomas, in an oblique reference, mentioned the well established practice of using documents at Chicago.

Ex-graduate students from Chicago, who went on to produce sociology texts, such as Hiller (1933) and Young (1949), make no reference to the 'Chicago School'. Both Hiller and Young discuss the work of the Chicagoans. In Hiller's book Park, Burgess, Thomas, and Cooley get far more references than any one else (except Sumner) and Young has an extensive discussion of urban sociology which includes the works of the Chicagoans among others, but neither separate the 'Chicago School' from other American sociologists.

Similarly, R. D. McKenzie's contribution to the President's Research Committee on Social Trends (1933) about developments in Metropolitan Communities makes no reference to a 'Chicago School' although it discusses, in some detail, the various analyses of the city of Chicago undertaken through the University of Chicago. Thus at, what in retrospect is regarded as, its peak, few people explicitly referred to the 'Chicago School'. A general view of the distinctiveness of its contribution did not begin to emerge until after the Second World War. For example, Wilson of Harvard in writing to Burgess to recommend William F. Whyte to Chicago made no mention of a 'Chicago School' nor an exclusive style of sociology at Chicago. Wilson's (1940) recommendation was made primarily for administrative reasons, and secondarily because of the sort of work undertaken in the field by Whyte. Wilson saw both Chicago and Columbia universities as alternatives for the kind of empirical work Whyte wanted to undertake. 'I have suggested to him that as far as I know the best place in this country for him to work out a doctorate might be Chicago with you and I have further suggested that he might well look into the situation at Columbia where there must be people who would be interested in the sort of thing he is interested in—

possibly Lynd.' (Wilson, 1940) Wilson saw Columbia and Chicago as offering the same opportunities for Whyte, and not as antithetical institutions. Such a view reflects Coleman's (1980) understanding of the situation, at least prior to 1945. This is counter to the usual view that places the two institutions at polar extremes within the history of American sociology.

It seems, then, that although Chicago had a reputation as a leading graduate university for sociology, it is unlikely that there was any recognition of a 'Chicago School' before 1935 either by the Chicagoans or outsiders, and that any references to it up to the 1960s were unsystematic, vague and devoid of the implications that have become associated with it over the last quarter of a century.

Current Constructions of a Chicago School
The assumption of many historians and sociologists of sociology, however, is that there was a 'Chicago School' of sociology and that it had a considerable bearing on the development of American sociology during the first half of the twentieth century. However, the nature of the 'Chicago School', among these commentators has not been clearly defined, and has covered a wide range of people over a considerable period of time. In the main, designations of, and references to, the 'Chicago School' tend to be cursory and taken-for-granted. They are usually reliant upon secondary comments, are often fleeting references, or are particular constructs designed to lend legitimacy to sociological practices and theories. There are several broad designations of the 'Chicago School', and an examination of them will show the extent to which a current perception serves to define the nature of the Chicago enterprise.

The Golden Era
The most specific references and most sustained argument advocating a 'Chicago School' are those that refer to the activities of some members of the Department in the two decades from 1915. This period is often referred to as the 'Golden Era' (Cavan, 1983). This is the period when Chicago is seen to have been at its most prolific, inventive and dominant within the discipline.

Reconstructions of the 'School' at this period all include Park. One way of describing the 'school' has been to simply link together the faculty in the Department of Sociology at the time Park was a member. For example, Anderson (1983) defined the 'School' as Park, Burgess, Faris and Small. Burgess collaborated with Park on the *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* (Park and Burgess, 1921) and both Small and Faris were heads of the Department during the time Park was employed at Chicago. For Anderson, this simple definition involved nothing outside the institutional framework. There is no particular 'Chicago core' evident in the work of the four faculty members he designates either theoretically, empirically or epistemologically. Faris (1967) also adopts this approach and discusses the development of sociology in the 'School' by addressing the contributions of the different faculty members, of whom, Park emerges as most significant.

Other approaches have simply concentrated on Park and constructed a 'school' around him based on his interactive network. Becker (1979) has suggested that while there might not have been a community of sociologists with common interests, there were, however, some things that the majority of them had in common and that one of these was contact with Park. The underlying assumption, in elaborations of this view, tends to be that there were a core set of ideas and approaches that Park communicated to students. (Raushenbush, 1979; Matthews, 1977; Philpott, 1978). Blumer in limiting the school to three people (Park, Burgess and Faris) suggested that Ogburn had a very different intellectual stance to Park. However, he accepted that Faris and Park also had differences. The exclusion criteria, for Blumer, seems

to have been the nature of sociological generalisations. In this Ogburn, as a statistician, was more concerned with 'so-called objectivity' than 'dealing with the whole process whereby action came into being' (Blumer, 1972, p. 13).

Ogburn was, however, a very influential figure in the development of both sociological theory and method at Chicago. Among those he greatly affected was Burgess, and it was Faris who went to great lengths to attract Ogburn to Chicago (Faris, 1972). Clearly, however, Ogburn and Park did not work together and could not be seen as collaborators in a 'sect-like' school.

> When I went to the University of Chicago in 1927, September, Professor and Mrs. Park gave a large party in the first part of November to which neither I nor my wife was invited. I was sensitive on this point. Next I was told that repeatedly by various persons that Park spent a good deal of time in his classes belittling statistics and pointing out their limitations. I was invited to the University in part to teach statistics since none had ever been taught in sociology and none was then taught in any other social science. Perhaps I displayed too much missionary zeal for Park, who questioned whether there was any need of teaching statistics, so I was told. Next, one day he came in my office with a hand full of books and asked me to review them for the *American Journal of Sociology*, and then proceeded to tell me how to do it and what was expected of me. I took the books but never reviewed them. Though Park was twenty years older than I, I had been a full professor at Columbia for ten years, and was quite intellectually mature.... I never forgave Park, which is a trait very marked in me, not to forgive or forget a slight. I wish I were different and had not been so sensitive in regard to Park.... So I never saw Park except at meetings or greeted him as he passed. Oh yes, he did invite me once with all the department to his house and I went. I think Park was a great teacher for the few. (Ogburn journal, 4th & 5th April, 1955)

The constructions of a Golden Era school at Chicago, with their focus on Park are problematic. To accept such constructions means not only to exclude Ogburn from the school but also Faris. A Park-led 'Chicago School' could not include Faris as he certainly was not a follower of Park's (Cavan, 1972; Blumer, 1972; Faris, 1967) and openly disagreed with him in seminars of the Society for Social Research (Minutes of the Society for Social Research). This construction of a Golden Era picture of a Park-led school also tends to emphasise the ethnographic intent of the Chicagoans and ignore their quantitative work (Bulmer, 1981; Harvey, 1985). In short, if there was a 'Chicago School' of sociology it cannot simply be construed as a sub-group of the Chicagoans revolving around Park and preoccupied with qualitative sociology (Janowitz, 1980).

Several commentators have, however, gone further than a limited designation of personnel to imply an approach to sociology deriving from the work done in the Department of Sociology at Chicago. This has been developed in a variety of ways. The most general is to establish a long tradition of 'Chicago Sociology' through the 'generational' approach. More specifically, particular approaches to sociology are legitimated through reference to the Chicago heritage, such as the development of Chicago symbolic interactionism; the reconstruction of an urban studies heritage evident in the 'Chicago revival'; and the later work of the so-called 'New School'. These will be briefly assessed below.

The 'Generation' Approach
The Chicagoans are often referred to as comprising a succession of generations, (Tiryakian, 1979a; Becker, 1979; Kurtz, 1984). Three and sometimes four generations are alluded to. The first generation

consists of the tenured staff and their students up to 1914, principally Small, Henderson, Thomas and Vincent. These are seen as the founders of a 'Chicago Approach' in the sense of promoting empirical enquiry and concentrating attention on the city of Chicago (Diner, 1980; Dibble, 1972). The second generation usually refers to the 'Golden Era' particularly to Park and Burgess, to Ellsworth Faris and, in some accounts, to William Ogburn. These four staff members and their students are seen as developing the embryonic concerns of the first generation (Faris, 1967; Carey 1975). Out of these came the third generation, principally graduates who, often after a short absence, returned to Chicago and became tenured. Notable here are Blumer, Wirth, Hughes and Stouffer. The fourth generation again tended to be students of the third generation, but often developed much of their sociology away from Chicago, thus following up the precedents begun in the third generation. Becker, Strauss, Goffman and Janowitz are among the most clearly identified members of the fourth generation Chicagoans.

In effect this approach tends to divide up the personnel into a relatively simple temporal sequence, identifying the dominant characters at each phase of the Department's history. The implication being that some kind of core approach was retained and gradually developed over time by each successive generation (which was not the case). The result is that the 'Chicago School' is frequently discussed in terms of phases such as the 'early period' (Hunter, 1983) or the 'late Chicago School' or 'late symbolic interactionism'. The concentration on different phases of the department's history has led to different people and ideas being referred to by the single term the 'Chicago School'.

The Chicago School of Symbolic Interactionism
Meltzer, Petras and Reynolds (1975) and Carabana & Espinosa (1978) argued that the 'Chicago School' was manifested in Blumerian symbolic interactionism, and that this was but one variety of symbolic interactionism. Littlejohn (1977) also referred to the 'Chicago School' as led by Herbert Blumer and at variance with the 'Iowa School' led by Manford Kuhn. Snodgrass (1983), too, linked the 'Chicago School' to symbolic interactionism, which he dated back to the 1920s.

These designations are, quite clearly, constructions linked to a specific form of symbolic interactionism which has roots in practice at Chicago. However, such constructions do more than refer to a given style of interactionism. They do three other things. First, they imply a heritage that links Blumerian and post-Blumerian symbolic interactionism to the development of sociology at Chicago. Second, in so doing, these constructions provide Blumerian symbolic interactionism with legitimacy. A view of Chicago sociology is reconstructed which locates the concerns of the symbolic interactionists as the principal concerns of the Chicagoans. The most convincing reconstruction of this sort is Rock's (1981) 'The Making of Symbolic Interactionism'. The third effect of this reconstructed heritage is to award a role to Mead in the history of the development of sociology at Chicago in the 1920s that it seems likely he did not have. (Harvey, 1985; Lewis & Smith, 1981).

Awareness of the contradictions implied in the symbolic interactionist account of their Chicago heritage and the 'Golden Era' type accounts, has lead to the proposal of a dual tradition.

> There would, then, seem to be at least two interactionist traditions, each grounded in a different intellectual history.... While some interactionists owe little or nothing to a Meadian perspective, the work of others is rooted in both Mead and what is nowadays called the Chicago-style perspective, which derives in fact, mainly from Thomas and Park. A younger generation, coming more lately to interactionism and in a period after the Chicago Department of Sociology had

radically changed in character, seem to divide—some moving toward Meadian interactionism, others doing work in accordance with the spirit of Chicago-style sociology. Still others draw on both sources of interactionism. (Fisher and Strauss, 1978, p. 458)

Evidently, then, 'presentist' designations of the Chicagoans, for the purposes of legitimating a particular style of symbolic interactionism, have tended to determine the nature of the history of the school (Bulmer, 1985). Indeed, such designations may have actually construed a sect-like 'school', with a 'founding father' and set of core presuppositions, where none really existed. A similar sort of thing has happened with the 'Chicago Revival' and the 'New Chicago School'.

The Revival—Urban Life
A late 1960s revival of the Chicago School of Urban Sociology was heralded by Suttles (1968) *The Social Order of the Slum*. In the preface Janowitz (apparently contradicting his earlier statements about a Chicago School) noted that

> By the end of the 1950's, it would have appeared to the intellectual historian that the Chicago school of urban sociology had exhausted itself. Even at the University of Chicago, the intensive and humanistically oriented study of the social worlds of the metropolis had come to an end. The older figures had disappeared one by one, and a new generation of sociologists were interested in quantitative methodology and systematic theory. A few disciples of the traditional approach carried on in the shadows of the university or were scattered through the country. But intellectual traditions are transmitted and transformed as much by the intrinsic vitality of their content as by the institutions of academic life. A mere decade later the themes of a reconstructed urban sociology are once again at the center of social science thinking. The complexity of social behavior in the urban setting and the rise of concern with policy issues has meant that urban sociologists have come to focus on a particular social grouping or on a specific social institution, such as the family, the juvenile gang, the slum school, or newly emerging community organizations. Nevertheless, in the reconstruction of urban sociology, the community study remains a basic vehicle for holistic and comprehensive understanding of the metropolitan condition. (Janowitz, 1968, p. vii)

The revival of the 'Chicago School' heralded by Janowitz's comments, was put into more formal practice, albeit along different lines, by the establishment of the journal *Urban Life*, following the short lived endeavours of a group of 'Chicago Irregulars' [11], in 1969 with the aim of 'reviving an ethnographic tradition' and encouraging works of 'Chicago informed urban ethnography' (Thomas, 1983, p. 391). Matza, (1969) and Lofland (1980) are major works of these neo-Chicagoans.

Arguably, by 'recreating' a 'Chicago urban ethnography' these irregulars are constructing a heritage and providing a legitimation for their work. Thus, possibly, *Urban Life* presents nothing more substantial, by way of an elucidation of the 'Chicago Approach', than a picture of Chicago that fits in with its own requirements as a vehicle for ethnographic urban researchers.

The revival is, however, indicative of a view of the 'Chicago School' as something other than a group of people in an historical setting, rather it is indicative of a spirit of enquiry focussing on the urban

environment. Indeed, in his comments on Suttles' study, Janowitz evokes a tradition, noting that the research was a

> powerful expression of the contemporary effort to maintain a continuity in the tradition of the urban community study and to contribute to an urban sociology based on a more precise methodological base and a sounder theoretical frame of reference.... He proceeds with an empirical orientation reflective of the Chicago school when social anthropology had not yet separated from sociology.... Suttles joins a tradition that emphasizes the contributions of the sociologist to policy and professional practice. (Janowitz, 1968, pp. vii-ix)

The New Chicago School

Recently, there have been claims that a new 'Chicago School' emerged in the 1950s and flourished in the 1960s and 1970s. In the main, this new school was not based at Chicago although it derived from there. It stems from the post-war cohort of graduate students at Chicago, such as Becker and his associates who were heavily influenced by Hughes (Faught, 1980), as well as Goffman. Laperriere (1982), for example, argued that the 'New Chicago School' of sociology arose in the United States in the 1950s. It attempted to break the hold of 'quantitative' sociologists on the discipline, which had coincided with the theoretical sterility of sociology. She argued that the 'New Chicago School' aimed to develop a systematic, open and empirical approach to theory construction. This allowed them to take into account the richness of social reality while adopting rigorous sociological method. The 'New Chicago School', she argued, was characterised by a more systematic and wider approach than that exhibited by other qualitative sociologists.

In effect, this designation of a 'New Chicago School' is reflected in the accounts of those commentators who talk of the 'late Chicago School' or of the labelling theory of the 'Chicago School'. This is primarily in terms of the work of Becker, Geer, Strauss, the later work of Hughes and his students, and the emergence of the 'dramaturgical approach' found in Goffmann, Duncan and Burke (Littlejohn, 1977; Dotter, 1980). This idea of a new school reverses the usual process in that it disengages the 'fourth generation' Chicagoans from their earlier heritage. Quite clearly, Becker's (1967) explicit demand to make it clear 'Who's Side Are We On?' contravenes the earlier non-aligned search for 'objectivity' at Chicago (Carey, 1975). However, the notion of a 'New School' still construes a Chicago tradition of qualitative sociology that the fourth generation have developed, not as the dominant approach, but as a radical alternative in a discipline becoming increasingly sterile as a result of an over-commitment to 'reliability' and 'validity'.

So, while there is little evidence to suggest that the Chicagoans saw themselves as a 'school', more recent commentators have claimed to have identified the 'school' and its characteristics. The designation of a 'Chicago School' is not independent of a view of the activities, approach and impact of the school. In effect, certain preconceptions are amplified by the designation of the work of the Chicagoans as reflecting a school. What is taken to constitute the 'School' is influenced by what commentators take as characteristic of its work, while taken for granted views of the activities are perpetuated and reinforced by specific widespread designations, (Harvey, 1981, 1983, 1985; Lofland, 1983).

Conclusion: The Potential of the Unit Approach

The detailed analysis of the constructions of the 'Chicago School' does serve to illustrate the problematic nature of 'schools' in the history of sociology. If a 'school' is to be more than a convenient

grouping of practitioners, then close attention to historical evidence is necessary. A clear definition of the unit concept is also necessary, especially if the unit is to be somehow internally dynamic and regulatory. Taken-for-granted views of the constituents of a school, its activities, orientations and theoretical endeavours, must be suspended. A critical engagement with the historical evidence is essential.

As a case study the history of the 'Chicago School' highlights some severe problems for the unit approach. However, this, of itself, does not mean that a unit approach is an unsuitable way to proceed. It may well be preferable to the simplistic cumulative theses usually embodied in the 'great man' and 'great ideas' approaches (Mullins, 1973).

Indeed, Bulmer (1985) has taken up Tiryakian's model, developed it, and applied it convincingly to Chicago. Starting from a more thorough critical analysis of the Chicagoans, Bulmer (1985, p. 63) suggests nine features that can be 'identified as contributing to the creation of schools. Among other things, a 'school' has a central figure around whom the group is located, who is an inspiring and effective leader, whose school it essentially is. When the leader goes, the school soon fades out. The school needs an infrastructure that includes a propitious academic and geographic location, institutionalised links with existing bodies, external financial support and a means of disseminating its work. It must attract students and develop an intellectual attitude. The school, Bulmer argues, must be open to ideas and provide a climate for

> 'intellectual exchanges between the leader and other members of the group, whether they are colleagues or graduate students. Such scholarly networks are more closely- knit than is usual in academic departments or disciplines.' (Bulmer, 1985, p. 67).

Apart from a more rigorous approach to the historical data, Bulmer offers a more sophisticated yet flexible set of criteria for the construction of schools. Like Tiryakian's, these criteria are the result of an inductivist generalisation from a few cases. However, Bulmer's criteria are more a guide to historians of social science as to what to look for than a set of absolute criteria for the delimitation of schools. Bulmer expounds no explicit metascientific theory about the role of schools in the production of sociological knowledge. Yet, Bulmer's development is merely the beginning rather than the climax of such metascientific enquiry. In constructing a unit, decisions have to be made about the way it is circumscribed. The identification of the unit is of major importance because it clearly colours the way in which the historical evidence is approached. Linking people together into research units requires some thesis about the criteria for knowledge production. The problem, for unit approaches is, then, the determination of the criteria.

The key to the efficacy of a unit approach is that the criteria, which serve to identify units, should be consistent with theoretical ideas about how knowledge grows. Membership, citations, and so on, are merely indicators of interactive units rather than frames for assessing the process of science production. A unit approach would have more potential if, instead of concentrating on ideas, personnel or institutional groupings, the unit was viewed in terms of its knowledge transformative processes. One way to do this would be to focus on the processes of critique within a unit and how the critique is carried out, institutionalised and legitimated. There would be no need, then, to attempt to construct barriers around an intellectual enclave, either in terms of personnel or subject matter. The dynamic and changing nature of the enterprise would be the focus of investigation, rather than the underlying presuppositions, genesis and history of an idea, or gelling together of a group of practitioners.

The tendency towards an internalist perspective evident in unit approaches would also be avoided by adopting this approach. Tiryakian, for example, constructs the school as internally consistent, and as providing a set of internal justificatory and legitimating criteria. Apart from the problems of cross-fertilisation of ideas, particularly acute in Tiryakian's model, this internalistic orientation disengages the unit from both the wider discipline in which it is located and also the social milieu. The investigation of a school or unit is thus usually focused on how it develops a new sub-area rather than how it engages with the discipline and acts to transform the stock of scientific knowledge.

A suggestion is that rather than build a stage-by-stage model to accommodate a revised Kuhnian thesis, as, for example, Mullins (1973) does, or to tightly define roles within an ideal-type community in order to accommodate a research programme thesis, as Tiryakian (1979a) does, a metascientific unit analysis should concern itself with the processes by which the body of sociological knowledge, to which members apply themselves, is transformed through critique [12]. There is no requirement to concentrate on reconstructing groupings of ideas or people and thus, rather than adopt 'conventional' or taken-for-granted categories, a critical engagement with the historical evidence is encouraged. The unit is seen as dynamically interacting with established knowledge rather than as the harbinger of a segregated orthodoxy or the cultish development of a heresy.

In the case of the 'Chicago School', it incorporated an open, and accessible, critical process that was integral to the work of practitioners both directly involved in work, of various sorts, at Chicago and of others in communication with those based at Chicago. The Chicagoans' extensive involvement in American sociology made the 'Chicago School' one of the focii through which developments in sociological knowledge in the United States were directed. This critical process at Chicago was institutionalised, as Park (1939) suggested, in the Society for Social Research (Kurtz, 1982; Bulmer, 1983a, 1983b). The society acted as a supportive association of sociologists affiliated, in one way or another, to Chicago. The aim of the society, as set out in its constitution, was to disseminate knowledge and act as a clearing house of ideas. The accessibility of the society, its summer institutes, communication network, frequent discussion meetings, and regular bulletin all served to advance this aim. Essentially, then, the suggestion is that the focus of attention of metascientific analysis should be the supportive association of researchers (which must be able to attract or generate research monies and have the facilities to undertake research) which acts constructively to criticise the research endeavours of its members. The emphasis, then, is on the study of the development of knowledge through critique, rather than the pursuit of presuppositions, core ideas, subject boundaries or groupings of practitioners in and for themselves.

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Notes

1. The usage of the term metascience, here, draws on Radnitzky (1973). It is research into science as a developer of knowledge. Etymologically, it is something coming 'after' science, or 'about' science. Science is here taken to refer to any empirically grounded area of enquiry, through which theoretical

statements about the nature of the world (physical, natural or social) are made. This position is synonymous with such terms as 'Wissenschaft', 'scienza' and 'nauka'.

2. There is no room in this paper to develop the idea of the extent to which a 'school' is always a retrospective construction through an analysis of other schools. Bulmer (1985), Besnard, (1983), Mullins (1973), Tiryakian (1979a) suggest that, at least some schools, do have a self-conception. The circle round Durkheim is often seen as the 'paradigm' case.

3. Unfortunately, Crane neglected to reference Johnson (1964).

4. Tiryakian does not acknowledge Crane's earlier work. Nor does he refer to the more complex set of roles developed by Radnitzky (1973).

5. Bulmer (1985) also uses this analogy, although referring to the Bauhaus School and the Impressionists.

6. Critical examinations of the 'Chicago School' (Bulmer, 1984; Harvey, 1985) have suggested an alternative characterisation of the work and impact of the Chicagoans to that popularly held. The 'School' was an integral part of American sociology, developing as the discipline developed. It was early concerned with social reform but not in isolation from theoretical understanding, and rapidly moved away from reformist concerns as the discipline attempted to establish a more overt scientific basis. This shift coincided with the institutionalisation of the knowledge transformative processes in the Society for Social Research. The Chicagoans were concerned with empirical data collection and tended towards methodological eclecticism. They were not merely concerned with ethnography but were also involved in the development of quantitative techniques. They developed theoretical concerns in line with the general development of the discipline and drew on a number of different traditions, particularly pragmatism, of which Mead was but one source. Chicago sociology had been prominent in America throughout the first half of the twentieth century and was particularly dominant administratively in the discipline until the 1930s.

7. The Department of Sociology and Anthropology inaugurated a Society for Social Research in 1921. It produced a Bulletin in 1926 and continued to do so two or three times a year throughout the period of this study. The circulation list included current and past Chicago graduates. Membership was open to all social researchers (graduates and staff), election to the society was fairly straightforward and new members were constantly being added. By 1926 there were around one hundred and fifty members. Subscription, payable annually, was a nominal $1. Each year, from 1923, Summer Institutes were held which lasted about three days and included a substantial proportion of invited visiting speakers, some of whom were members. The format of the regular weekly meetings changed over the years, but generally they were addressed by graduates, staff, or outside speakers on matters of research practice, findings or philosophy. The society served to keep members informed of current research ideas and work in progress and also functioned as an informal network with contacts around the country.

8. Chicago University was recognised as 'the place' to do sociology. A reputation had been established by 1915 that identified Chicago as one of the most innovative and prestigious places for sociological research (Blumer, 1972; Bartlett, 1972). Cavan, (1983, p. 408) says that although there was no notion of a 'Chicago School' in the 1920s 'I am sure other graduate students felt as I did—that the department of

the University of Chicago was the place to study sociology. We had no doubt about the superiority of the department.... This feeling was shared by the faculty.' This was backed up by the expanding output of publications from the department, headed by the monumental and enduring 'Polish Peasant' (Thomas and Znaniecki, 1918). Chicago sociologists produced some influential textbooks in those early years, notably Small and Vincent (1894), Thomas (1909), and Park and Burgess (1921). The reputation was further sustained by graduates who left and encouraged students from their own institutions to take up a place at Chicago. (Anderson, 1983; Carey's interviewees, 1972, see note 10).

9. An article by Smith (1936), promisingly entitled 'The Chicago School' turns out to be a reference to Chicago University itself and the article a review of Hutchins (1936) collected speeches.

10. In 1972 James Carey interviewed a number of ex-graduates who had been at Chicago in the 1920s. The transcripts of these tape-recorded interviews are lodged in the Special Collections Department of the Regenstein Library, University of Chicago.

11. According to Lofland (1980, pp. 251-252), The 'Chicago Irregulars' were a group 'born in the living room of Sherri Cavan's San Francisco home on April 11, 1969, when Sherri Cavan, John Irwin, John Lofland, Sheldon Messinger, Chet Winton, Jacqueline Wiseman, and I met and agreed that a "mutually supportive association of sociologists and others interested in the study of natural settings, everyday life, everyday worlds, social worlds, urban lifestyles, scenes, and the like" was in order. It died in late 1969 or early 1970 when the energies required to keep it going simply ran out. In between it turned out three newsletters (mailed to a continually growing list), held several seminars, started an archives (long defunct), and, most memorably, organized the Blumer-Hughes talk [of 1st September 1969]' Sheldon Messinger, introducing the Blumer-Hughes talk added that the 'Chicago School Irregulars' had 'had the strong feeling that there is a substantial group of people in sociology for whom the Chicago School is still a very viable institution, notwithstanding the spread of its members away from Chicago to Berkeley and Brandeis, to name two places.... The group is devoted to keeping the Chicago School tradition alive. Many of the people in it do what is nowadays called ethnography—in the old days it was called nosing around. Others, who aren't themselves doing ethnography, are reading about it, talking about it, and trying to keep up the standards established many years ago by people at Chicago.' (Messinger, 1980, p. 254) During the talk, Hughes was disparaging about attempts to preserve a tradition but told the group 'go ahead and be a Chicago School if you like.' (Hughes, 1980, p. 277)

12. This is not meant to imply that the only way knowledge develops is through critique located within a scientific unit. Rather, that if the scientific unit is taken as the object of investigation, that its knowledge transformative processes, rather than its composition, should be the primary focus of attention.