

Sociology undergraduate study at UCLA 1958-60.
Some other reflections on Los Angeles are at
<http://web.mit.edu/gtmarx/www/hitherthither.html>

<http://web.mit.edu/gtmarx/www/whatsit.html>

Gary T. Marx gtmarx@mit.edu www.garymarx.net

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Professor Roger Waldinger
Sociology
2201 Hershey Hall Box 951551
UCLA
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1551

Dear Roger:

Am back from Spain/Portugal and wanted to respond to your question about Garfinkel and UCLA. Doing this fits well with my current interest in (or need for) reflection regarding careers and life stages. I will take the occasion to ruminate a bit and tell you far more than I am sure you wanted to know.

During 1958-60 when I had contact with the department, I have no memory of Garfinkel, although I had some communication with him years later. As a detached undergraduate, I was unaware of the department as a corporate entity. I think I first heard about him through Goffman in 1961 and through Harvey Sacks who entered graduate school when I did in 1960. Mel Pollner came to Berkeley about the same time and continued as a good friend and colleague.

Garfinkle's experiments were clever and revealed something that had been missed, but the incomprehensibility of a lot of his writing and that of his students was a turn-off, as was the cult-like quality that surrounded him.

I will attach a few pages at the end that I wrote about Ralph Turner for the book honoring him. This captures some of the carefree spirit I felt at that time. I chose the major because UCLA said you had to have one. In the first semester of my junior year I (probably because it met at a good time, satisfied a requirement and looked interesting), happened into a deviance and social control class taught by a recent very ivy league Harvard Social Relations PhD whose name I can't recall. He was a part time teacher and worked either at Rand or at Systems Development. He was young and hip and somehow spoke a literal and stylistic language I responded to. He was not the stereotypic professor. I also got an A and, for one thoroughly steeped in the Southern California youth culture, that was a rare and exciting event.

The next semester I took 4 soc courses (or rather 4 soc/anthro courses since the departments were then one) and got an A in each. At the time, I had a girl friend from Fairfax high School not far from my alma mater John Marshall high school. She was very serious about grades and she validated and encouraged my doing well in school and working hard. I then

became a sociology major.

I am not sure of the sequence of the courses, but think the next ones were with a renowned anthropologist named Goldschneider; another with an older, European anthropologist on pre-literate societies. He had an accent and was hard to understand. I took a race relations course with Mel Seaman who had only recently arrived from Ohio. I recall his Socratic method and his making problematic just what prejudice and discrimination were, analytically separating them. There was a need to differentiate forms (e.g., not letting blind persons drive cars was a positive form of discrimination because it had an empirically justifiably base). We used Simpson and Yinger's race text book and I was pretty hooked by then amidst the early stirrings of the civil rights movement. I had the great satisfaction 20 years later of helping keep the book in print through a series I was then editing, after Harper and Row dropped it.

I also took Ralph Turner's class and did well in it. Ralph asked me to tutor a student who was failing the class. That was a shock and a great change. I went from just getting by in college (indeed I even failed a business math class and was threatened with being kicked out of school if I did not improve my performance in the required ROTC class that was then mandatory for male students). Jim Coleman got it right about the anti-academic subculture in high school. But for many of us it also carried over strongly to college. In a collective behavior text done with Doug McAdam (*Collective Behavior and Social Movements*, p. 40) I describe being a participant-observer in the Spring of 1960 in Hershey Hall in what used to be called a panty raid. This unfortunately came too late for the analysis in Ralph Turner's class.

I took the undergraduate first social theory class (soc. 12) from a man named Dick Morris. That was a good class. He loved the material and related it to our lives. He had worked at Bell telephone before. As a senior, I recall asking him what it took to do well as a professor. He said something like, "you have to be smart and be a nice guy." The latter point re civility and collegiality had an impact on me as I glided through 3 decades of university life. I also took a course from a visiting USC professor. He had written a social problems text. I think his name was McDonough. He gave multiple choice exams, as did intro soc. but most classes involved a combination of essay and objective questions.

I also a course from Don Cressey that met in a Quonset hut near Sunset at the edge of a parking lot. Those were left over from WW11 I think. My mother went to UCLA sometime around 1928 and recalls it then being on Vermont where LACC now is, moving to Westwood a year later. We used the Sutherland text that Cressey had revised. He had a very closely cut crew cut, wore tan creased pants and had a kind of street no nonsense, even slightly dour manner. He tried very hard to be unsentimental. I recall his dispassionate remarks about the death penalty. He said he didn't care much either way, but since the evidence was not yet available that it worked we should probably go slowly. I still recall a statistic from his text that cited a study of executions at Sing Sing that 12% of those put to death were later found to have been not guilty.

I also took a course from Melville Dalton, (*Men Who Manage*). He was a warm and caring person who had extensive experience in the business or manufacturing world, although he also seemed old, and by youthful standards, straight and out of it. I am sure Hughes' ideas about informal systems came through strongly there and I recall liking the course, partly because I seemed intuitively to get it and to anticipate findings and arguments.

My senior year I took the methods course or maybe it was combined with statistics from a very young Wendy Bell and stayed in touch with him over the years. When I was at Harvard he offered me a job at Yale sometime in the late 1960s, but through informally poking around I learned that tenure was uncertain and it didn't seem wise at the time to go from one untenured job to another. It was probably in that class that I encountered the work of Robinson on the limits of ecological correlations (what Hannan Selvin later termed "the ecological fallacy"). I think Robinson was in the department, but am not sure. That idea became central to my worldview and teaching. It helped account for the illogic of stereotyping and was easy for students to grasp.

The TA in that class was Sheri Cavan. She was what used to be called a "beatnik." I recall her dressing in black, wearing no makeup and with dangling jewelry. I was fascinated and also a bit bemused by her style that so contrasted with the conventional 1950s American culture. She later transferred to Berkeley and we became friends. She worked with Goffman and did good ethnographic work on bars. My last semester I took the intro soc course from a woman named Huntington. She had her Phd from Columbia and I think worked with Lazarsfeld. She was probably part-time. I loved the course and it was easy at that point.

The courses were small, never more than 20 or so students and usually less. They were not very demanding relative to what was expected at Berkeley, but there was some modest writing (mostly in the form of pick a topic, read two articles about it and summarize what you learned). We only used textbooks as I recall. I don't remember any of my fellow students, although I can recall the face of a TA or two and still have some of the papers I wrote, or in one case made up. Ralph Turner asked us to analyze an incident of collective behavior illustrating concepts from his recently published collective behavior text. I mastered the reading, but didn't really have any real world experience to analyze, so I invented something and received an A. I had mixed feelings about that. On the one hand, I was surprised and pleased that I was clever enough to get away with it and could pull it off. The exercise did much of what it was intended to do -we had to write something original, understand and apply concepts etc. My efforts might even be seen as a kind of simulation. The problem of course is in not labeling it that. I also recall some deception in making up references for a paper on juvenile justice because there was a requirement that a certain number be cited.

While I received all As and one B for grades over the 2 years, I don't recall any departmental ceremonies or honors or activities and I don't think there was any kind of senior thesis. I don't think there was any effort to include undergraduates in the collective life of the department. I viewed the department bureaucratically as something to get through, rather than as a group with shared values of which I was a part. I have no recollection of who the chair was and may not even have been aware that departments had such things. I would be interested to know what kind of a vision there was for the department in the late 50s and who was most influential within it. Surely, Blumer's coming to Berkeley in the mid-50s must have had some impact. The strongest impact seems to be from Chicago and other mid-western schools. Jerry Platt, Chad Gordon and Troy Duster were at UCLA then, but I got to know them only later at Berkeley and Harvard. Donald Trieman was a year behind me at Marshall High School and I saw him at some ASA meeting in the distant past. I think we shared a wonderful debate teacher Mr. Hanks --who sparked interest in social issues and encouraged public speaking. In one of the 94 boxes I took from Boulder when I moved to Bainbridge Island in Washington I found the graduation list for Spring 1960 and didn't recognize any of those who graduated in sociology.

The Spring semester of my senior year I took a series of tests at the UCLA counseling center and was told that, according to the aptitude and other tests I had taken, I could be a

professor. That was something of a revelation since, while I had always thought of myself as quick and smart enough, I had never seen myself as a scholar, nor one who could do very well in school. I considered both law school and graduate school in sociology. Since most of my friends were going to law school and since sociology seemed so much more fun and interesting I opted for it. I think Ralph and Mel wrote letters for me to graduate school. I chose to enroll at Michigan to be closer to a romantic interest and traveled in Europe that summer. But in Innsbruck, when I received a letter breaking off the romance, I chose Berkeley for reasons of price and climate.

I stayed in distant touch with Ralph and sent him my master's thesis done with Lipset on Father Coughlin (a topic he had covered in his class) and later sent him my book on black protest --*Protest and Prejudice*. I was able to invite him to come to Washington DC to help the Kerner Commission social science staff in 1967-68. I then had no contact with him until serving on the Annual Review of Sociology starting in 1978. I had minimal contact with Mel Seaman and am sorry for that and not sure why. I did send him the race relations material I wrote and told him he was responsible for my interest in the field. His paper on intellectuals and alienation remains a classic for me and probably speaks to my role distance and renaissance person needs. One quote from the paper I recall is from a professor who proudly tells the researcher something like, "I can work with them [carpenters] and get dirt under my fingernails and they never know" [that he is a college professor].

I have an ambivalent relationship with Los Angeles and became an adult by escaping. So I rarely returned, although I often went to Palm Springs and La Jolla where my parents were. Sometime in the late 1970s I gave a talk at UCLA and I recall Kathryn Tierney introduced me. I looked for familiar faces and my former professors then, but they were not around. I think I saw Maurice Zeitlin as well, he had been a few years ahead of me at Berkeley. On that visit UCLA seemed overbuilt and paved over, its' graceful Mediterranean, slightly rural beauty hinting of L.A. in the 1930s, existent only in my memory. Mostly I saw parking lots and very tall buildings and minutely managed space. I went to see the fraternity house I had lived in for several years at the corner of Gayley and something (where Gayley dies as I recall across from a tennis court or botanical garden) and in its place, and in place of the gas station on the corner, was a large building stretching over several lots. Westwood which was literally a village with not much traffic and a few well-known hang-outs (and even dark places to park with a date) was unrecognizable and overwhelming.

My other memories are of failing the subject A English exam and passing it by taking a course at LA City College and satisfying the science requirement by taking geography and geology at Santa Monica City College in the summer of 1959. I also recall a noon rally the Spring of 1960, probably after the HUAC affair in San Francisco. This was called by a group of students in solidarity with those in the student political party SLATE at Berkeley. I listened with fascination, but also distanced from the activists. At least I was curious and listening, something I don't think I would have been or done my first couple of years on the campus. That new interest was certainly related to what I had been abstractly studying the last two years. With the civil rights movement starting to kick up, it all became much less abstract. CR Mills' writings about how sociology could bring the personal and the political together began to make sense. Sociology came to be personally fulfilling as a sense-making tool and by happy coincidence, offered a job/career/profession. But in those days it was the former not the latter that was driving. My generation did not face the stark challenges of the depression that so shaped our parents quest for economic success, not that I was unhappy about being raised in the Hollywood Hills in home with a view and a pool.

I have watched the department over the years and have been pleased to see it grow and develop and avoid some of the problems and direction Berkeley took. As I note in the tribute to Ralph, I am grateful for the education the department offered me. The major gave some coherence and continuity to an otherwise disjointed experience and pointed me towards a future. While I, in the post FSM period of juvenile wisdom, came to have grave doubts about the loose, impersonal, mass university experience I had at UCLA – e.g., the scale, fraternity-sorority, athletic, trade school character of much of it had down sides, my memories of the department's teachers are very positive. They were serious and competent adult professionals with active scholarly lives fighting against the great odds of the culture of the 1950s, youthful biology and the beach to communicate their knowledge to generally unappreciative, privileged youth there under some duress, striding between the worlds of childhood and adulthood and the 1950s and 1960s. The initial exposure they gave me to the field and its values made the transition to graduate school and new attitudes easy and helped compensate for the lack of breadth and ignorance of science, history, literature and art offered by my general high school and college educations.

Should you be in touch with others at UCLA during the 1950s and early 1960s reflecting on these issues I would be interested in communicating with them, or if you know of any history of the department during this time I would be interested. All the best, Gary

A Remembrance and Appreciation of Ralph Turner*

Academic researchers are nourished by a rich network of inherited ideas. As [John Donne](#), and even cinematic character ET, remind us—we are not alone. In a culture as individualistic and psychologistic as ours this is often hard to remember. Our indebtedness rarely receives its due. The culture of science rewards originality and breaking with the past. However, archaeological remnants of this debt remain within our teachers. In that regard, I am very grateful that I happened into Ralph Turner's undergraduate class on collective behavior in 1959. Ralph introduced me to a disciplined stance toward social inquiry; a way of viewing the world; and a specific subject matter.

In his systematic approach to understanding collective behavior Ralph Turner's work demonstrated not only the patterning of social life, but also the promise that with hard work and careful observation, one could make sense out of it. Prior to his class, I took the social world as given, much as one unreflectively accepts the backdrop of a stage set.[1](#)

As a carefree college student one sun-drenched day in Southern California, I remember going to Ralph's office on the second floor of Heynes Hall to discuss my term paper. I was stunned by the staggering array of neatly arranged 5 x 7 index cards he had created for cataloging instances of collective behavior.[2](#) His pioneering book with Lewis Killian was rich in description of intriguing events and offered concepts and ideas for ordering this material.

Underlying this discipline was a perspective on group life that Ralph had learned from his mentors at the [University of Chicago](#). This told one how and where to look. It stressed the facts on the ground or, in Robert Park's words, "getting the big story." It also stressed the importance of interaction and process. This did not mean that structures were irrelevant. But within the broad parameters they established, social life was dynamic and fluid. Meaning was not a given, but needed to be searched out by staying close to one's subject and observing, asking questions, and trying to imagine what the other experienced. In applying this perspective to the subject matter of collective behavior and social movements, Ralph raised issues that helped form my research and teaching interests.[3](#)

With his balanced, soft-spoken, inquiring manner Ralph served as a role model. While having a point of view, he was open to other approaches and ecumenical in his work for the discipline. He is a sociological statesman in an age of centrifugal specialization that is all too often debilitating. He is above all civil, and was gracious under pressure (especially during the challenges he faced as president of the American

Sociological Association). It seems fitting that a paper on manners is in a volume honoring such a gentle and fair-minded person.

This paper on how new telecommunications technologies are leading to new forms of behavior relates to Ralph's work in several ways. It is consistent with the emergent norm tradition. Emergent norms can be categorized in a number of ways. Thus, [Weller and Quarantelli](#) (1973) differentiate new ways of behaving from new groups. [Marx and McAdam](#) (1993) consider emergence versus cultural specificity with respect to factors such as location and timing, beginnings and endings, membership, leadership, resources, and expected behavior, attitudes and emotions.

Such efforts to differentiate among types of emergence are generally applied to face-to-face behavior and to what is often a one-time only solution. But in this paper I deal with electronically mediated interaction and to the emergence of more enduring norms. The processes of interest here do not occur at one point in time or place, nor is there pressure to solve the problem immediately. The collective problem solving is much slower than with instances of crowd behavior. Yet viewed more abstractly, it shares with collective behavior new definitions and negotiations over meaning in the face of novel circumstances. Noting these parallels between collective and what would generally be thought of as noncollective behavior is consistent with [Turner's](#) (1984, p. 384) observation that research may eventually suggest "no special set of principles is required to deal with the subject matter" of the former ."

***From "New Telecommunications Technologies and Emergent Norms" in In G. Platt and C. Gordon, Self, Collective Behavior and Society: Essays in Honor of Ralph Turner.**
<http://web.mit.edu/gtmarx/www/telecom.html>