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Mike Forest Keen, *Stalking the Sociological Imagination: J. Edgar Hoover's FBI Surveillance of American Sociology*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999.

In *Stalking the Sociological Imagination*, sociologist Mike Keen uses documents retrieved under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) to examine the FBI's surveillance of a dozen prominent American sociologists. The book opens with a brief overview of FOIA, then discusses portions of the FBI's file on the American Sociological Association as a lead-in to his larger examination of Hoover's FBI surveillance of American sociologists. Most of the book follows a format that reviews one or two sociologists' FBI files in a single chapter. The sociologists examined in *Stalking the Sociological Imagination* are: W. E. B. DuBois, Ernest W. Burgess, William Fielding Ogburn, Robert and Helen Lynd, E. Franklin Frazier, Pitirim Sorokin, Talcott Parsons, Herbert Blumer, Samuel Stouffer, C. Wright Mills, and Edwin Sutherland. Keen opens each of these chapters with a concise overview of the subject's life and contributions to sociology before undertaking an examination of their FBI files. A final chapter struggles with the question of what impact these episodes of surveillance had on American sociology and concludes that these acts of surveillance affected the development of sociology through the adoption of self-censorship, and perhaps fostered the growth of more objectifiable quantitative methods. It is surprising to not find a stronger conclusion that sociologists adopted more crypto-Marxist methods of analysis as a result of the FBI's monitoring.

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The most resonant finding to emerge from Keen's work is his documentation of the extent to which Hoover's FBI hounded and monitored sociologists whose work supported the assumptions and practices of the status quo. We see Burgess under suspicion for his interest in American-Soviet relations; Sorokin became a threat due to his study of peace. Parsons, who enthusiastically worked with the CIA, State Department, and Defense Department, was suspect for his moderate views on civil liberties and campus associations. Ogburn was viewed with suspicion for his work on industrial dispersion; Stouffer, the author of the military-friendly *The American Soldier*, became suspect for simply studying American attitudes towards communism.

This is an important book insofar as it supplies us with vital documentation of the efforts of America's secret police to monitor the development of sociological thought during the Cold War. The narrative, combined with the summary of FBI documents, does much to establish some of the ways that the FBI monitored and influenced mid-twentieth-century American sociology.

Stalking the Sociological Imagination is strong on FOIA documentation, yet surprisingly weak on analysis—especially as Keen does not tie the structure and function of the FBI to the larger Cold War setting. His analysis of instances in which sociologists became FBI informers is inexplicably light. The book is a competent piecemeal presentation of the FBI's efforts to monitor the writings, politics, and, at times, private lives of a dozen American sociologists, but the analysis surrounding these dozen cases falls short of a synthetic sociology of the Cold War's impact on American sociology, leaving it to the reader to try to place these dozen cases in the larger context. Keen does point out many of the absurdities inherent in the FBI's monitoring of many scholars whose work fervently supported the status quo that Hoover's FBI strove to protect, but there is no central analysis which fully examines the larger meaning of these events.

Keen's critique of the FBI and its tactics is limited, and his overall approach to the FBI is seen in his friendly acknowledgment of the assistance of the FBI's former FOIA Chief, J. Kevin O'Brien, telling the reader that O'Brien and his staff were, "quite polite and cordial," all but ignoring the extent to which O'Brien and staff successfully strove to keep significant portions of this story unknowable. Repeated throughout the book is the suggestion that malintentioned or misguided individuals (e.g., Hoover)—rather than the FBI's commitment to working as protector of America's "power elite"—caused the FBI to hound and investigate these scholars.

The book leaves many methodological questions unanswered. It is unclear to what extent Keen undertook either in-house FBI or federal court appeals of the deletions appearing in these records, and thus it is unclear how many of the unan-

swered questions pertaining to things like the extent of Parson's or Sorokin's roles as FBI informers could have been answered with more work on Keen's part. Likewise, Keen apparently did not try to aggressively use the appeals process to get the names of now-deceased informers whose comments appear in these files released. We are told that many sociologists "were recruited to inform in the activities of their colleagues," but for the most part we are left to wonder about what exactly this means. More significantly, Keen does not specifically indicate how the dozen individual sociologists considered in this book were chosen for analysis. Most of their FBI files do reveal interesting information, but the almost complete lack of analysis of either women or Communist sociologists is striking, though Keen lists without explanation the names of several sociologists whose files were requested but are not discussed. Keen does not discuss the accounts of various sociologists (e.g., Robert Bellah, Sigmund Diamond, Joel Montague, et al.) who have used FOIA and other resources to document the FBI's surveillance of their own work, leaving his analysis of these dozen selected individuals somewhat lacking.

Keen's treatment of Talcott Parsons is revealing in its protective presentation and analysis of data. This chapter is reprinted from an article appearing in *The American Sociologist* six years previous and unfortunately does not draw upon others' work on Parsons. Keen did not adequately consult the detailed work of the late sociologist Sigmund Diamond concerning Parsons. He somehow completely ignores Thomas O'Connell's decade-old dissertation and other publications which present clear evidence that Parsons and Clyde Kluckhohn knowingly solicited the aid of Soviet and Nazi collaborators as part of Harvard's ties to the Munich Institute's Refugee Interview Project. Instead, Keen insists on presenting Parsons as a victim of McCarthyism, rather than as an informer. Keen fundamentally misreads the FBI documents on Parsons and their historical context by not addressing Diamond's findings that Parsons's extensive work with military and intelligence agencies prior to the FBI's investigation could have been cited by Parsons to deflect these attacks, for "to have revealed these matters would have embarrassed the parties and jeopardized the relationship." Similarly, Keen briefly notes that Sorokin became an FBI informer and then curtails his analysis of this practice with only minor commentary or analysis. Without further appeals or archival work, it is difficult to adequately examine both the extent of Sorokin's role as an informer and the impact of his informing on the lives of others and the development of the discipline of sociology.

As a fellow FOIA researcher, I understand that this work is complex and tedious under the best circumstances, and the actions of obstinate governmental censors add further difficulty to an already daunting task. Keen's summaries of these FOIA documents are quite good, but this work does not live up to its full potential to the degree that Keen did not expand upon either the non-FOIA archival sources

consulted or the breadth of his analysis and critique of the FBI's role during the Cold War.

Despite its analytical shortcomings, Keen's book makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of some of the ways that the FBI monitored the development of American sociology and academia. *Stalking the Sociological Imagination* firmly documents deplorable practices by the FBI about which many academicians have only been able to speculate.