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The November 2016 issue of *Contemporary Sociology* (American Sociological Association), has a review by Michael Strand of a book with the title "Sociological Amnesia: Cross-currents in Disciplinary History", edited by Alex Law & Eric Royal Lybeck. The book suggests that contemporary Sociologists suffer from amnesia as a kind of selective forgetfulness of the work of our predecessors. I have dwelled on this subject several times over the years. Whilst Michael Strand is not that impressed by the book, I think the subject is worth another look.

Lewis Coser's 1977 book "Masters of Sociological Thought - Ideas in Historical and Social Context" in which he reviewed the work of 15 Sociologists from Comte to Florian Znaniecki. I find his work very useful, yet his review does not include one sociologist, that I regard as one of the greats of sociology (Ferdinand Tönnies). Ferdinand's 19th century work, I think, has value for sociology in the 21st century. However, sociological theory and methodology is not restricted to the 19th century practitioners or even the 20th century. Many people have made a contribution to theory and methodology, some have been popular for a while whilst others have been ignored altogether. Me being one of the latter.

At the heart of not getting a picture of the sweep of sociological thought and methodology, is a subject I have written on and gave a paper on at the last Conference; the danger of dominant theories. Dominant theories exist in the professions, academia, politics, religion and industry, and in many powerful individuals. "I am right, everyone else is wrong". "There is no such thing as global warming, its only academics trying to get more funding". "The ideology of a political party", which we will standby because we are the only ones who know how to govern." and so on. You can make your own list. The danger in a dominant theory is that it cannot accept new or different ideas. The connection is emotional not logical. Emotion does not require evidence or put another way: Scottish physicist John C. Maxwell once remarked "*People may hear your words, but they feel your attitude.*"

Science and social science does need evidence, but evidence can be rejected when it clashes with our emotional based ideas, and when these are pressed for evidence all sorts of post-truth explanations can be added. Any idea can become a dominant theory in one place and a different idea may become dominant in another. When they clash they are reviewed by those who do not support either of them and who come to their own conclusion as to their value.

Over the years there have been a lot of dominant ideas in sociology. One University will have one central idea, another university will have another. So how can the situation be lightened. Perhaps one way is something I witnessed at a science conference many years ago. Two people who had been having a slanging match for a year or more in the journals, had both registered for the conference. The organisers were on tenterhooks about what would happen when they met. One of the men had registered and was talking to officials in the registration area, when the second man arrived. He got his badge then walked over to

where his protagonist was, and said, “good to see you Bill, lets go and get a beer”, and they walked away chatting happily. Look for dominant theories and present a wider view of the world and who knows, your might change the world.

Alan Scott, Continuing education Officer.