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## **Before and After 1968: The Paradox of Post-Structuralist Sociology**

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### *Abstract*

In this paper I understand '1968' as the metaphorical date at which the prevailing structuralist approach was challenged by poststructuralist ideas. Instead of referring to the actual event in French theory, I propose a poststructuralist view without poststructuralism. This view is specifically sociological in nature and builds upon Georg Simmel and Max Weber's theoretical conceptions of 'sociation' and 'meaning'. Contesting Emile Durkheim and his structuralist approach, this kind of poststructuralist theory aims to overcome sociology as a discipline locked in a meaningless term of 'society'. However, the paper's basic question stems from philosophical poststructuralism and reads: what can we see if there is neither a structure nor an observation point? Therein lays the so-called 'paradox of sociology' and what I would like to address as the paradox of poststructuralist sociology. Whereas the former refers to the fact that sociology is constructing the very same 'structure' it strives to analyse, the latter is conscious of the former paradox, but does not seem to be able to solve it. On this account the paper develops a strategy to facilitate introspection and to allow a holistic view beyond holism. Regarding the proposed type of sociological theory, it is concluded that before '1968' is after '1968' and that there is still a lot to learn from these classical poststructuralist ideas in comparison to what is known as poststructuralism.

### *Keywords*

poststructuralism, Simmel, Weber, society, paradox