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| Abstract | <p>This article reviews the process whereby Theda Skocpol and other pioneers of the “historical turn” in the 1980s, by employing J. S. Mill’s methods and other comparative research designs, have led a generation of sociologists to claim legitimacy for historical sociology and how they have been involved within the so-called “methodological debates” with mainstream sociologists in the 1990s. The debates show more than confirming the already confirmed. The warnings proposed by critics help sociologists rethink and deal with the possible limits of historical sociology. Historical sociology is viewed as a gray area not only because of its obscure relations both to sociological theories and historical data, but also because of its being “domesticated” as a methodologically oriented subfield in the discipline rather than maintaining its critical spirit and its longing for reviving the classical tradition since the early postwar period. This article discusses several waves of the methodological debates over historical sociology. By analyzing these debates, it aims to provide us a useful frame of reference to define historical sociology among relevant academic disciplines and to overcome the challenges we are going to face with.</p> |
| Keyword(s) | Historical Sociology, Comparative Sociology, The Historical Turn, Methodological Debates, Mill’s Methods. |