

# Handbook of **historical sociology**



Edited by  
**Gerard Delanty and Engin F Isin**

SAGE

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*Handbook of Historical Sociology*



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Edited by Gerard Delanty and Engin F. Isin



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# Introduction:

## *Reorienting Historical Sociology*

GERARD DELANTY AND ENGIN F. ISIN

The title of this volume is an aporia. 'Handbook' implies that the volume guides the reader toward the established and the known. Yet the volume is not a panoramic view of the contemporary practice of historical sociology, nor does it offer a comprehensive view of the field. Moreover, historical sociology occupies an ambiguous space between history and sociology. While it would be impossible to sum it up in a few sentences, one of its defining characteristics is a concern with the formation and transformation of modernity. In this respect the orientation of historical sociology concerns the present, viewed as both shaped by and shaping the past.

Some of its most influential representatives – those in the Weberian, Marxian, *Annales* traditions, for instance – wrote works on long-run historical processes that took the formation of modernity as the key question. Perhaps because they were products of times that had experienced major social crises in modernity, these approaches looked to the defining events in the formation of modernity, in particular those epochal transitions such as the transition from feudalism to capitalism, the formation of the modern state, the revolutionary movements that heralded the modern age, such as the Reformation, the French Revolution, the workers' movement. The works of such prominent figures as Karl Marx, Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges, Max Weber, Werner Sombart and F.W. Maitland combined explanatory with interpretative methods; they were pre-disciplinary, being

neither exclusively historical nor exclusively sociological. Neither Marx nor Weber, for example, saw himself as a sociologist: Weber, influenced as he was by the German historicism, came to sociology relatively late in his life, and Marx was not exposed to sociology as such. Benedetto Croce was explicitly opposed to sociology, believing that it was not a true science. Yet Braudel, not being a sociologist as such but a historian, consciously drew upon sociology. It is evident that these pivotal figures did not distinguish sharply between history and sociology. German sociology does not have an explicit historical sociology, perhaps because German sociology is already historical in its self-understanding. Similarly, French historiography also lacks an explicit designation of historical sociology, but under the influence of Simiand and *Annales*, French historians have always drawn upon sociological concepts and methods. The turn to historical sociology was a development within postwar Anglo-American sociology, which, awakened by the Second World War, had emerged out of its earlier retreat from history.

The early historical sociology was a product of an older tradition going back to Auguste Comte (1875 [1854]) and Émile Durkheim (1984 [1894]), on the one hand, and the philosophy of history as envisaged by Giambattista Vico (1999 [1725]) and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1956 [1830]), on the other. What distinguished their historical orientations, grounded as they were in sociological

or philosophical conceptions, was a reaction against the nationalist historiography that dominated the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, recording the birth and 'progress' of nations and the march of liberty. Indeed, it is in this reaction that the seeds of modern historical-sociological orientation were sown: it was more concerned about the formation of modernity as the essence of the present than articulating 'natural' histories of nations. Yet it was also in this reaction that the seeds of another perspective were sown: Eurocentrism or orientalism. For in beginning to interpret the essence of modernity, new histories in the nineteenth century increasingly turned toward that which was never modern – the Orient – and began articulating occidental history as one continuous march toward modernity, beginning with ancient Greece. Throughout the nineteenth century, histories of Greece, Rome and medieval Europe were written from the perspective of articulating a distinct occidental culture while at the same time inventing an occidental tradition juxtaposed against an oriental one. The traces of these seeds would eventually disseminate themselves into the most prominent practitioners of historical sociology, whether as a belief in the 'Asiatic mode of production' (Marx) or 'oriental patrimonialism' (Weber).

If orientalism constituted an unresolved tension of historical sociology, so did scientism. For in concerning itself with the essence of the present as the formation of modernity, historical sociology was split between two orientations: scientific, where this essence was seen as explainable by laws and regularities immanent within societies themselves; and interpretative, where the concern with the present was seen as building narrative series. It was this latter tension that was to dominate the early twentieth century, whereas the former slowly came to the fore in the late twentieth century. We shall return to the tension regarding orientalism later.

The tension between scientific and interpretative approaches opened the twentieth century with a debate over method. This tension was most visible in the well-known attack of François Simiand (1887 [1903]) on the empiricist and positivist historians, accusing them of setting out impossible goals by considering facts as given and attempting to develop laws. Instead, he urged for a sociologically grounded history where the aim would be to develop series. Yet it has been often overlooked that Simiand himself developed a rather rigid view

of 'historical sociology' with his emphasis on verification, validity and rules of method. His accent of emphasis was certainly on the sociological rather than on the historical.

When founded by March Bloch and Lucien Febvre in 1929, *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale* owed much to Simiand and his 'historical sociology'. The accent of emphasis was, however, historical rather than sociological. In a remarkable way, the issues of method and the tension that defined the debate in the early century between Simiand and the historians continued to dominate historical sociological imagination throughout the century. Recognizing, then, that the founding figures of the broad field of historical sociology were shaped both by history and sociology and by the tension between the two, it may be suggested that the subsequent trajectory of historical sociology also moved in two directions. These trajectories were disciplinary ones, one emanating more from sociology and the other from history.

Historical sociology as a subfield in sociology emerged initially in the 1960s in the United States as a product of modernization theory, with some major works authored by sociologists influenced by Talcott Parsons, such as Seymour Martin Lipset, Stein Rokkan, Reinhart Bendix, Neil Smelser and Robert Merton. In Britain T.H. Marshall's famous work on citizenship and social policy established a point of reference for another tradition of historical sociology that also had its roots in modern liberal thought. New, and much more sombre, interpretations, for example Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), offered this new field a reference point and a rationale – to rethink the very foundations of modernity. A new interest in the history of sociology and the history of ideas coincided in works such as Robert Nisbet's *Social Change and History* (1969), reinforcing the turn to history in sociology. With the decline of Parsons's influence and the gradual waning of modernization theories in the 1970s, a more critical and Marxian-influenced generation emerged, with notable names being Barrington Moore, Perry Anderson and Immanuel Wallerstein. This kind of historical sociology saw its task to be the analysis of the genesis and transformation of modernity. It was heavily influenced by Marx and the *Annales* approaches, in particular Bloch and Braudel, who were all encompassed by a new era of 'grand theory'.<sup>1</sup> Karl Polanyi's *The Great Transformation* (1944) also greatly shaped a historically oriented

sociology. Important contributions were made by Randall Collins and later by Charles Tilly, Theda Skocpol and Michael Mann.<sup>2</sup> The work of Norbert Elias brought the classical tradition further into the domain of everyday life, but the more historical sociology moved in this direction, the more it moved into a post-disciplinary context.<sup>3</sup>

In this tradition of grand historical sociology the subject matter is less past events than the formation of modernity. It is a sociological and theory-driven approach to history. Comparative analysis figures very strongly in it, as does a concern with explanation. The work of historians is used by sociology to serve a sociological end, which is generally explanation in a comparative framework and with a particular focus on large-scale processes, such as capitalism and the state. What distinguishes historical sociology from history is that it uses history for an explicitly sociological purpose. While some proponents did argue for the convergence of history and sociology – for instance, Philip Abrams in *Historical Sociology* (1982) – most historical sociologists generally did not want to reform historical writing. With some other exceptions – perhaps Barrington Moore and Perry Anderson – they did see themselves not as historians but as sociologists. Several leading figures in this tradition regard the subject matter of historical sociology too wide to be dependent on empirical work, which is generally exploited by a theory-driven comparative approach.<sup>4</sup>

It is important to recognize that the emergence of this particular orientation in historical sociology coincided with and was influenced by structuralism as a dominant method in the social sciences. At times structuralism was explicitly anti-historical and wanted to break free of the intellectual and institutional influence of the discipline of history, so much so that the debate was indeed focused on history versus structure (Schmidt, 1981). This resulted not only in an accent on sociology but also in a particular understanding of sociology as the science of society. It was inevitable that with the demise of grand theory and the critique of structuralism – whether modernization theories or Marxist theories – this tradition would lose its direction as historical sociology and could continue only as a social theory of modernity.<sup>5</sup> We return to this shortly.

The second approach in historical sociology might be characterized as one that remained more explicitly historical than sociological. In contrast to the sociologically driven historical

sociology that is represented by Tilly, Skocpol, Mann and Wallerstein, with its characteristic comparative nature, some important developments have also occurred more specifically within the historical discipline. In this tradition, which has been very British-influenced, historical sociology takes a more empirical and past-related form. Historians receptive to sociology and the other social sciences use theory but see their task as a different one. In this tradition, as represented notably by Peter Burke, an interpretative method is more explicit, although not one that is opposed to explanation. Undoubtedly this more interpretative approach has been influenced by the subject matter of recent developments in the 'new history', which in going beyond the earlier 'new history', which was primarily driven by social history, has included new topics such as knowledge, death, childhood, health, everyday life, popular culture. Peter Burke (1980) has strongly argued for the convergence of history and sociology.<sup>6</sup> For him there is no essential difference between history and sociology: good historical writing must use sociological theory, and historians must be able to contribute to the sociological enterprise. This is a position that is represented within sociology by Craig Calhoun (1998). Although some of the major exponents of this kind of historical sociology cannot be characterized as Weberian, a distinctive interpretative strand characterized this approach in much the same way as a Marxian slant characterizes the other and more dominant tradition discussed above. In French history this tradition was advocated by Paul Veyne (1971) and Michel de Certeau (1988 [1975]) in quite different but homologous ways (Frijhoff, 1999). A historian of ancient Rome, Veyne (1976) was inspired by German historicism and Weber as well as by British and American epistemological concerns of historical sociology. In a manner almost reminiscent of, but very different from, Simiand's trenchant 1903 critique of scientism, he severely criticized the scientific pretensions of structuralist histories and instead advocated historical writing as the construction of narrative plots. Similarly, de Certeau advocated narrative interpretations of everyday life as the concern of historical sociology. None the less, it would be well into the 1980s and 1990s before either elicited a response or engagement by historians or historical sociologists. In fact, two decades after these critiques of scientism, Jean-Claude Passeron (1991) was still dispelling the

'nomological illusion' and reasserting the historical character of all sociology.

There can be little doubt too that the emergence of social history was the most decisive development in breaking from the older traditions of functionalist and structuralist writing. The work of British social historians such as E.P. Thompson, Raymond Williams, Samuel Raphael and contributors to the British journal *History Workshop* did a lot to establish the prestige of social history by introducing a new history 'from below', and one that, unlike the older social history, was not merely a supplement to a dominant political history of 'events'. Although not particularly sociological, Eric Hobsbawm's work aroused within sociology a great deal of interest in new ideas, such as nationalism and invented traditions. The volume edited by Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (1983), although almost exclusively written by historians, has had a huge impact on sociology, and not just historical sociology. Within social theory, Bauman's *Modernity and the Holocaust* (1989) introduced an important critical dimension into historical inquiry. Similarly, Furet (1992, 1998) and Chartier (1997) made a significant impact on interpretative approaches to modernity (see Carrard, 1992).

But perhaps the most significant impact of social history on historical sociology was the new interpretations of the ancient and medieval past. As mentioned above, ancient Greece, Rome and medieval Europe had come under the gaze of nationalist histories throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. But the social historians of the ancient and medieval past introduced new interpretations, so much so that their work also began changing our conceptions of periodization, duration and narration in occidental history, especially that of the 'medieval' being enveloped between the 'ancient' and the 'modern'. Opened up by an earlier generation of social historians such as de Ste Croix (1981), Finley (1973, 1981), Lévêque and Vidal-Naquet (1996 [1964]; Vidal-Naquet, 1986) and Vernant (1992 [1962], 1988 [1974]), and continued by a new generation of social historians such as Cartledge (1977), Hartog (1988), Loraux (1986), Manville (1990), Murray (1993) and Osborne (1996), ancient histories have been interpreted with an increasing conceptual and theoretical vigour that has blurred the boundaries between history and sociology. Similarly, inaugurated by an earlier generation

such as Duby (1980), Le Goff (1980, 1989) and Martines (1972, 1979), and continued by a new generation such as Damian-Grint (1999), Frazer and Tyrrel (2000), Freedman and Spiegel (1998), Gentrup (1998), Jordan (1998), Ravid (1999), Rosenwein (1999) and Tyerman (1998), social historians of medieval Europe reconstructed a much more heterogeneous, fragmented and multifarious image that did not fit into the grand narratives of an earlier generation.

Yet, if these historians began changing our conception of the Occident, a new generation of postcolonial historians began taking on the orientalism of historical sociology. Influenced by the impressive growth of postcolonial studies in literature, historians such as Gyan Prakash (1995) and Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000) have initiated a similar critique of the master narrative of Europe or the Occident. This new development in effect begins to address the tension we have alluded to above as regards the orientalist origins of historical sociology. The master narrative of Europe or the Occident as homogeneous, coherent, stable and continuous identity has always underscored historical sociology, and the beginnings of postcolonial critique of that narrative will certainly influence the new trajectories it may take (see Delanty, 1995, 1996).

If social history represented and spurred one kind of convergence between history and sociology, cultural history represented another. The later development of cultural history enhanced the emergence of an interpretative approach within history. The 'cultural turn' – itself a product of the 'linguistic turn' in the human and social sciences – emerged in history in the 1980s, bringing with it a whole range of new ideas, especially in the wake of the English translations of the early works of Michel Foucault.<sup>7</sup> It is important to note that in his methodological overview of these early works, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972 [1969]), Foucault drew a parallel between his approach and that of the *Annales* school by emphasizing the importance of series, systems and discontinuities in discursive formations, his objects of analysis. As Gertrude Himmelfarb has written: 'Where once the great masters of history were Gibbon, Macaulay, and Ranke, today they more often are Weber, Freud, Lévi-Strauss. Where history was once primarily (often entirely) narrative, now it is primarily (often entirely) analytic' (1987: 34). Veyne and de Certeau picked up and developed these themes in different

directions, which were to offer new orientations for social and cultural history. Other important developments were developments in narrative and metaphor, such as Hayden Whyte's *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (1973), and post-colonialism with its characteristic concerns with unconcealing hidden histories.<sup>8</sup> The implications for method were significant, with new qualitative approaches such as oral history attracting attention (Passerini, 1992). The English translation of Jürgen Habermas's seminal work *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* in 1989 had a huge impact on social theory as well as in history.<sup>9</sup> Ernest Gellner's *Nations and Nationalism* (1983) became a pivotal reference point for nationalism studies in the 1990s.

The concerns of social history now were overtaken by a much wider and more interdisciplinary kind of history, which incorporated social theory, philosophy, literary studies, anthropology and sociology (Le Goff and Nora, 1985 [1974]).<sup>10</sup> Objects such as memory, festivals, habits, identity, rituals, music, drama and reading entered into analysis as cultural history and began making significant impact on historical-sociological ways of interpreting. These new objects were convincingly illustrated in two influential collections by Ariès and Duby (1987) and Duby, Perrot and Pantel (1992). The new developments in intellectual history, such as the work of the Cambridge historian Quentin Skinner (1998) and others such as Randall Collins (1979), with his mixture of the sociology of knowledge and historical sociology, Reinhart Koselleck's historical semantics (1985, 1988), as well as the work of Roger Chartier (1991, 1994, 1995) and Christophe Charle (1987, 1990), led to a marriage of cultural and intellectual history.<sup>11</sup>

At this point historical sociology enters a post-disciplinary phase, one which is not exclusively dominated either by history or by sociology, but is influenced by elements of both, and is situated in the context of a wider and more multidisciplinary field in which sociology is only one player. In terms of method, this has been reflected in a turn from explanation to interpretation as well as the adoption and encouragement of multiple points of view. We consider historical sociology as post-disciplinary precisely because it now provides a series of sensibilities that can be found in varieties of historiographic and sociological practices spread across disciplines. There is also a

greater awareness in it of the collapse of a unitary method, especially with regard to the nature of historical explanation.

It is interesting and of considerable significance that this more interpretative turn began more in history than in sociology, where a certain reaction has been felt. Perhaps sociology was too much embedded in the older tradition of 'grand theory' to adapt. Indeed, as the full implications of the cultural turn were becoming apparent, much of American historical sociology in recent decades went in the opposite direction, micro in focus, explanatory rather than interpretative, and with a strong orientation around rational choice theory. This led to a debate in the *American Journal of Sociology*, with Kiser and Hechter (1991) defending rational choice and Craig Calhoun (1998) arguing for a wider positioning of historical sociology.<sup>12</sup> Kiser and Hechter argued that historical sociology must become more theoretical (which they equate with rational choice) in order to make it adequate as an explanatory science. The concerns of the older tradition with macro and long-term processes have been played down in a more specialized sociological approach based on a concern with explanation in order to make empirical generalizations. This has also been reflected in an article by the British sociologist John Goldthorpe (1991), who argued that history and sociology are two quite different forms of inquiry.<sup>13</sup>

It would thus appear that the interpretative and explanatory approaches are diverging at precisely the same time as history and sociology are converging in core areas. The dispute is about the status of explanation and theory construction, with some sociologists defending a particularly strong position. In that very specific sense, historical sociology still feels the tension that Simiand stirred up in 1903. Yet much has happened since then, and looking at the wide spectrum of historical sociology today it is evident that the strong sociological position has lost the argument. Not all approaches take as strong a stand as Hechter and the proponents of rational choice, or the extreme, and in our view untenable, position of Goldthorpe, yet, even leading historical sociologists Skocpol and Tilly, while not holding to a rigid position on historical sociology, clearly see it an exclusively explanatory approach to history and also one that is based on a distinction between particular and the general. Tilly remains particularly close to rational choice analysis, as Hechter argues (1992: 372).

Exactly where this tradition lies in relation to the developments in historical scholarship is not very clear. Nevertheless we detect a bifurcation in historical sociology today between, on the one side, the explanatory and theory-testing approaches that are characteristic of a more sociological historical sociology and, on the other, a more interpretative approach that is characteristic of a more post-disciplinary historical sociology. The division is of course not clear-cut, but in so far as historical sociology aims to be comparative, the division tends to be reinforced since comparative analysis is predominantly explanatory. (see McMichael, 1992). In our view, historical sociology, like many approaches to inquiry, has entered a post-disciplinary and, to coin a new word, post-orientalist period. It cannot claim an exclusive methodological approach as its own. While we are not arguing for a new dispute on method, our claim is that explanatory and interpretative as well as Eurocentric and postcolonial approaches cannot be reconciled but will probably coexist as competing and contested ways of doing historical sociology. Could there be another wave of Weberian sociology without his orientalism?<sup>14</sup> It is at this critical juncture that this volume is located.

#### NOTES

1. The collection of essays edited by Quentin Skinner entitled *The Return of Grand Theory* (1985) contains a chapter on Braudel.

2. See Smith (1991) for a good account of this tradition of historical sociology, and for more specific studies on some key figures, see Skocpol (1984).

3. On this question of post-disciplinarity and the history of sociology, see Levine (1995).

4. See Robert Fine and Daniel Chernilo's critical comments on this dispute over the place of empirical research in historical sociology in Chapter 16.

5. A good example of this turning from historical sociology to social theory is the volume edited by Haferkamp and Smelser (1992).

6. A revised and enlarged version appeared as *Social Theory and History* (Burke, 1992).

7. See Bonnell and Hunt (1999) for an account of the cultural turn. See also Hunt (1989), McDonald (1996) and John Hall's chapter in this volume.

8. See Jenkins (1995) for an interesting discussion of new theoretical developments in historical writing.

9. See Calhoun (1992) on the reception of this work.

10. See also the volume edited by Peter Burke (2001) on new historical writing.

11. See Peter Wagner's chapter in this volume. See also Strydom (2000).

12. See also on rational choice, explanation and historical sociology, Hechter (1992), Kiser (1996, 1997), Kiser and Hechter (1991) and Quadagno and Knapp (1992).

13. On this debate see also Lustick (1996).

14. See Hobson (1998a, 1998b), Hobson and Seabrooke (2001) and Turner (1996).

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# PART I

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## *Foundations*

The five chapters in Part I discuss the classic founders of historical sociology, beginning with Marx. In his chapter Duncan Kelly offers a broad-ranging interpretation of Marx as a founder of historical sociology. While for Marx historical sociology was not itself a specific subdiscipline, Max Weber's sociology was more explicitly historical sociology and went beyond Marx's concern with material life to a broader analysis of the formation of modernity. For both, however, historical sociology was central to an understanding of the present and neither saw a clear disciplinary separation of history and sociology. While this view of social-scientific knowledge was implicit in Marx, Weber explicitly advocated it. In Chapter 2 Robert Holton stresses the comparative focus of Weber's historical sociology, which was also characterized by its interpretative and conceptual approach. Weber's comparative sociology, with its distinctive multi-causal approach to explanation, marked a decisive break from Enlightenment-inspired philosophies of history, but the traces of evolutionism and Eurocentrism remained: the key question underlying his sociology was the idea, shared with his contemporaries, of the historical distinctiveness of the West. None the less, Weber differentiated himself from his contemporaries by attempting to construct a less conjectural and philosophical approach in favour of a more analytically grounded and empirically plausible framework for the analysis of social change; by setting himself against the prevailing evolutionary approaches,

and indeed against any attempt to produce a general philosophy or theory of history, thereby producing a more open-ended comparative account of social organization and social change; and by developing a multi-causal approach to analysis, designed to transcend previous debates between materialist and idealist accounts of history. While Weber did not create a specific tradition, his legacy, Holton argues, was an enduring one. This claim is well borne out by various contributors to this volume as well.

In Chapter 3 John Holmwood and Maureen O'Malley examine the functionalist tradition in historical sociology, showing that the developmental assumptions of this tradition, which marked mainstream historical sociology from Spencer to Parsons, led to its unpopularity in recent years, with the result that both functionalism and evolution have been jettisoned, to the cost of historical sociology. They argue that some of the criticisms have been unjustified, and a balanced appraisal of evolutionary functionalism reveals that, when divested of its biologism and the now discredited Enlightenment/ethnocentric teleology, the idea of evolution as an explanation of social change is not entirely deficient and cannot be reduced to development. The idea of 'functions' as opposed to 'ends' or 'purposes' marked a theoretical breakthrough, especially since Durkheim. The problem is not evolution as the assumption of development based on general laws and the resulting linear conception of history. Rather, in Holmwood and

O'Malley's view, evolution can admit of many developmental paths, depending on the processes of selection. Understood in this way, Parsons was a more faithful adherent and elaborator of Weberian historical sociology than has been recognized.

Running parallel to the functionalist tradition in mainstream mid-twentieth-century historical sociology, another approach emerged from within history but drawing closely from sociology. This is the subject of Chapter 4, by Peter Burke on the *Annales* approach. Burke outlines a distinctively French tradition from Durkheim and his school to the *Annales* historians, Marc Bloch, Lucien Febvre and especially Braudel. Burke argues that Braudel had been a pivotal figure in historical sociology.

Following on from this, John Mandalios in Chapter 5 looks at another and more Weberian tradition in comparative historical sociology. With a focus on the idea of 'civilizational complexes', he discusses the work of Norbert Elias, Benjamin Nelson and S.N. Eisenstadt. Beginning with Elias, he shows how the very idea of civilization was constituted as sociogenesis and psychogenesis. In this, Elias's 'processual' historical sociology marked a turn from macro-civilizational analysis towards micro issues of everyday life, the consciousness of the self and cultural practices. However, Elias did not constitute a school and his claims to be a founder must be qualified. His importance in the present context consists of his critique of presentism: the ahistorical obsession with present issues to the neglect of historical processes that have shaped the present. But Elias's distinctive approach has

been overshadowed by genealogical approaches, to be considered in Part II of this volume. None the less, Elias can also be seen a precursor to genealogical approaches with his insistence that our perception of what is necessarily natural, barbaric or moral is always already conditioned by the historic figuration of social relations, cultural practices and norms of civility, and the appropriate object of genealogy is to trace moments when these values are transversed. More important figures in historical sociology are Nelson and Eisenstadt, who, unlike Elias, established a comparative world-historical sociology. In the tradition of Weber, Nelson examined structures of consciousness, stressing civilizational complexes, Mandalios argues, but avoided Weber's Eurocentric obsession with the uniqueness of the West. The chapter concludes with a discussion of Eisenstadt's work, which can be seen as a continuation of Weber's comparative civilizational sociology and long-run historical analysis. Mandalios offers insights into how historical sociology may orient itself toward its fundamental questions concerning the nature of social organization within the context of shifting frameworks of time and space. He draws the attention of historical sociologists to Heidegger, Levinas, Gadamer and Derrida, whose work also concerns these fundamental questions, albeit with different emphases.

These five chapters raise some fundamental questions that remain in historical sociology as well as pointing toward emerging approaches and themes that are the subjects of Part II and Part III.

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# *Karl Marx and Historical Sociology*

DUNCAN KELLY

This chapter reflects on the relationship between the thought of Karl Marx and the study of historical sociology. In so doing, it defends two claims. One is that Karl Marx can be understood as a ‘practitioner’ of historical sociology. The other is that there is something that we can learn about this discipline from a study of Marx’s writings. Clearly, these claims are mutually reinforcing, though they require a word or two of explanation. For although Marx’s place in a collection concerned with exploring the depth and vitality of historical sociology as a method of intellectual inquiry might seem self-evident, two principal issues must be clarified. One relates to the legacy of Karl Marx, and the other concerns the nature of historical sociology itself.

As a specific type of intellectual enterprise, historical sociology tries to make explicit the relationship between social theory and historical change; that is, historical sociology uses social theory in a self-conscious way to outline general propositions about the nature of historical development. And as the editorial introduction to this volume makes clear, such a broad understanding permits a healthy degree of interpretative latitude. This freedom seems to be immediately constricted, however, when considering the work of Karl Marx, particularly in the present climate, when it is often assumed that everything that needs to be known about Marx is already known. Indeed, it is one of the most stunning about-turns in contemporary academia that writing about Marx and Marxism, which up until the fall of the Berlin Wall at least had

become an industry in itself, has so rapidly declined. The general consensus, at least among many contemporary liberals, seems to be that Marx was an astute analyst of capitalism, but the political, social and historical theories associated with his writings can comfortably be left behind (see, for example, Holmes, 1998). A better illustration of the interrelationship between theoretical argument and contemporary political concerns surely could not be conceived, and the irony of his posthumous reputation – given his understanding of the relationship between ideas and interests – would doubtless not have been lost on Marx.

Nevertheless, such critical assessments tend to offer only partial and one-sided readings of Marx. It is certainly true that one could not fully understand his life and work without exploring his own political radicalism, but such a full-blooded exploration is not undertaken here. In outlining his relationship to the theory and practice of historical sociology, such overt political preferences need not bear too heavily on the analysis in any case. Based on the understanding of historical sociology outlined previously, Marx’s thought clearly offers a powerful explanatory social theory based on an understanding of human progress; to that extent, it is worthwhile considering it in its own right. Moreover, very much like Max Weber, Karl Marx saw no clear distinction between historical and sociological analysis. By teasing out elements of Marx’s intellectual formation – especially his historical and theoretical interests outside of the

well-known critique of political economy – the range and depth of his contribution to the study of historical sociology can be more easily appreciated.

In the discussion that follows, therefore, four principal arguments are put forward. First, an attempt is made to provide a background context for the development of Marx's famous historical and social theory, historical materialism, by looking at his early engagement as a student in Berlin with the disciplines of law and legal history. His criticisms of the Historical School of Law form an important, and usually neglected, prologue to his more famous 'coming to terms' with the work of Hegel. Second, Marx's theory of historical materialism is discussed in the abstract, and an account of historical materialism as a general theory of historical trajectories is outlined. Third, some of Marx's later interests – those associated with the discipline of anthropology – are discussed, in order to show that by developing and amending his own type of historical sociology, Marx towards the end of his life reconnected once more with his earlier critique of legal history. Throughout all of this, the claim is upheld that Marx's historical sociology is neither rigidly determinist, nor closed to contingencies, as many of his critics have suggested. To further endorse this claim, some illustrations of Marx's own historical-sociological writings are outlined. Fourth, and finally, these suggestions about contingency are explored in some concluding reflections about the legacy of Marx's writings for the development of historical sociology.

At first glance, however, and as perhaps the most rigorous interpretation of Marx's theory of history has argued, in general his account of historical-political change appears at once both evolutionary and structurally deterministic. Here, the resolution of particular crises and contradictions (exemplified in the form of class struggles) within economically defined 'modes of production' provides the motor force of human development, leading to the replacement of one mode of production with another, more progressive variant. Thus outlined, as G.A. Cohen suggests, Marx appears to subscribe to a version of the 'primacy thesis' and the 'development thesis', whereby the 'production relations of a society is explained by the level of the development of its productive forces' (1978: 134). That is, social relations of production develop to the extent that they are functional for the maintenance of the regnant mode of production. This reading has

strong textual support in Marx's work. In particular, Marx suggested that the transition from one stage of historical development to another – 'in broad outlines Asiatic, ancient, feudal and modern bourgeois modes of production' – comes about because, 'at a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production' (Marx, 1975d [1859]: 425–6). Discussing some of the contexts in which Marx's theory of historical materialism came to be developed and modified is therefore the central purpose of this chapter, which also aims to show that the rigidly deterministic reading of his historical sociology is not the only reading available to us.

**SOME BACKGROUND TO KARL MARX  
AS A THEORIST OF HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY:  
FROM LAW TO THE UNIVERSAL  
CLASS OF THE PROLETARIAT**

Karl Marx began his student life at the University of Bonn in October 1835, enrolling in the law faculty. During the year he studied there, over half of the courses he took were in either law or legal history, and all his professors in this field were adherents to the broad methods and assumptions of the Historical School of Law (Breckman, 1999: 260). The impact of romanticism was also profound, and at Bonn, Marx attended the lectures of A.W. Schlegel (McLellan, 1973: 17). It was, however, the move in October 1836 to the law faculty at the University of Berlin, where he remained until 1841, which represented a major turning point for Marx. In the famous letter he wrote to his father on 10 November 1837, he reflected that he 'had to study law and above all felt the urge to wrestle with philosophy', hoping to get to grips with the 'craggy melody' of Hegelian philosophy in particular (Marx, 1988a [1837]: 5–9). Youthful concerns with romantic lyric poetry and the cult of honour associated with the student fraternity were to be channelled into positive and disciplined study, and in this regard, his criticisms of the Historical School are intriguing. In fact, given the broad-ranging nature of his legal education, many of the ideas and theories that he would later develop in a more systematic form as the method of historical materialism find their basis in his early relationship to contemporary jurisprudence.

Under the German educational system, legal studies included philosophy, politics and political economy (*Nationalökonomie*) within its remit – in fact, the separate study of economics in German universities did not actually occur until much later. Perhaps one of the reasons why ‘classical’ historical sociologists like Marx and Weber did not distinguish at all sharply between sociological and historical analysis was because – as legal scholars – neither was explicitly trained to think in such oppositional terms. The all-encompassing character of the nineteenth century German study of law also blended practical administrative relevance (a legacy of the cameralist tradition) with the wider claim that jurisprudence was a universal ‘civil science’. The study of law on these terms in nineteenth-century German legal science was dominated by the classical tradition, deriving authority from continued study of the sources, the Pandects, whose premier sentence suggested that ‘jurisprudence is the first true philosophy’ (Kelley, 1978: 351f.).

At Berlin in 1836–7, Marx studied classical jurisprudence with the renowned legal historian Friedrich Karl von Savigny, and criminal law with the Hegelian professor Eduard Gans. Given what is known about Marx’s later reactions to Hegel’s philosophical system, it is surprising that so little attention has been paid to his critical reflections on the early relationship between abstract legal concepts and historical contingency. In fact, this was the terrain on which an early battle between these two professors had been played out. The principal subject of the *Methodenstreit* between Savigny and Gans came about through the publication of Savigny’s treatise *The Right of Possession (Besitz)* of 1803. In this work, on which his early reputation was built, Savigny attempted to resurrect scientific principles of Roman law and apply them to contemporary discussions.

As Peter Stein writes, ‘Savigny found the central principle of possession to be as a manifestation of the human will and re-arranged the Roman texts on possession in order to illustrate this principle’ (1999: 119). Possession here was analysed in terms of the consequences flowing from existing possession of something in fact, and not of any theoretical ‘rights’ to possession that might otherwise exist. Dividing the ancient sources under the headings of *usucapion* (whereby non-owners of something may become owners) and *interdiction* (possession in fact), Savigny was able to

apply generic Roman conceptions of possession to contemporary debates over the social question (for the legal background, see Johnston, 1999: 57; also Kelley, 1978). And in Germany in the first third of the nineteenth century, a particularly pressing problem of possession concerned the relationship of the peasantry to the land (see Steinmetz, 1993). As Stein recounts, under the

German version of the *ius commune*, peasants were considered to be *coloni*. In late Roman law, *coloni* were tenants who were tied to the land in a way that foreshadowed medieval serfdom. Savigny pointed out that this conception of the colonate was the product of the period of Roman legal decline and that it should not serve as a model for nineteenth-century peasants. On the contrary, in true (classical) Roman law *coloni* had been free tenant farmers, and that version was a better model which legal science could recover. (1999: 119)

Savigny attempted to recover and restore a pure system of Roman law, free from the distortions and additions that had developed during its transplantation to Germany in the sixteenth century. Gans, however, criticized Savigny’s own transplantation of timeless Roman principles onto contemporary discussions as a form of sophistry, chastising the founding father of the Historical School of Law for an insufficiently historical analysis. Opposing the ‘valorization of the historical development of positive laws, Gans insisted on an identity between the universal history of law and the conceptual evolution of legal philosophy’. As an independent-minded, yet resolutely committed, defender of Hegel’s philosophy, Gans argued that Savigny ‘failed to see the broader pattern of development underlying the disparate facts of historical development’ (Breckman, 1999: 166).

When in 1814 Savigny published what is typically referred to as the manifesto of the Historical School of Law, a polemic against his long-time rival A.F.J. Thibaut entitled *On the Vocation of Our Age for Legislation and Jurisprudence*, these themes were developed with even greater clarity. In this piece, written as a riposte to the increasing calls for the codification of German law along the lines of the French *code civil*, Savigny argued that law and legislation are not simply products of abstract reason, but develop according to the nature, tradition, customs and institutions of particular societies. Three generic stages of legal evolution could therefore be identified. First comes an ‘early period’, where law is

insufficiently developed to be codified. Next follows a period of 'maturity', where the laws of a particular society are shaped by juristic debate, and their relationship to socio-political development has proceeded in such a manner that codification is not required anyway. Finally, a period of 'decline' ensues where codification would be pointless in any case. As Stein remarks, such an account of legal development clearly modelled itself on the corresponding periods of the birth, maturity and decline of the Roman Empire (1999: 117). For Savigny, contemporary German society – like Rome in the 'classical' period – was 'noble' enough a nation to be able to do without a civil code in the first place.

Interpretation of the past, therefore, clearly impacted on an understanding of the present. Indeed, after the split in the Historical School between 'Romanists' like Savigny and 'Germanists' such as Georg Beseler and his pupil Otto von Gierke, these claims became even more polemically oriented, particularly towards the later years of the century (see John, 1988). Nevertheless, according to Savigny, illustrating the truths of the Roman jurists of the classical period was a matter of correctly reconstructing their intentions and purging incorrect interpretations of their meaning that had developed over time, particularly through the distortions of the Middle Ages. A concentration on original texts was therefore of paramount importance. And it was this context – the manner in which the Historical School approached its evidence and corroborated its claims – that first led Marx to write his little-known rhetorical counter-blast to Savigny's lecture, 'The Philosophical Manifesto of the Historical School of Law'. The text was clearly written with Savigny in mind. Yet, probably for prudential reasons (given Savigny's subsequent elevation to a powerful state position), the explicit target of Marx's attack in the piece was Gustav Hugo, a writer he christened as the 'forefather' of the Historical School (Marx, 1975a [1842]: 203–10).

'It is commonly held that the *historical school* is a *reaction* against the *frivolous spirit* of the *eighteenth century*,' suggested Marx in his opening flurry. However, 'the currency of this view is in inverse relation to its truth. In fact, the eighteenth century had only *one* product, the *essential character* of which is frivolity, and this *sole frivolous* product is the *historical school*' (Marx, 1975a [1842]: 203, emphasis in original). Marx's damning indictment, particularly pointed given the monumental erudition

and learning encompassed within Savigny's voluminous histories of Roman law, for example, was that the Historical School of Law was far too uncritical in the use of its sources. In this regard, Marx's critique of Hugo's *Textbook of Natural Law as a Philosophy of Positive Law* of 1809 could equally well be applied to Savigny's treatise on possession. Admitting of 'no distinctions', Marx suggested that the 'positive' method of the Historical School was largely 'uncritical'. Using Hugo as his target, Marx meant by this that '*everything exists* for him as an *authority*, [and] every authority serves him as an *argument*' (1975a [1842]: 205, emphasis in original). Such an uncritical approach to the sources of the past permits no evaluative leeway, and constructs a teleological history that is self-serving. Claiming that Hugo had misunderstood his master, Immanuel Kant, Marx argued that Hugo, by

supposing that because we cannot know what is *true*, we consequently allow the *untrue*, if it *exists* at all, to pass as *fully valid*. He is a *sceptic* as regards the *necessary essence* of things, so as to be a *courtier* as regards their *accidental appearance*. Therefore, he by no means tries to prove that the positive is rational; he tries to prove that the positive is irrational. (1975a [1842]: 204, emphasis in original)

The politically conservative implications of such a critique were clear – particularly in terms of the contemporary debates about social reform. If an extant political authority is to be obeyed simply because it exists, then all this means is that might justifies right, and a potentially arbitrary legal authority must be obeyed at any cost. Clearly, this was a position Marx had little support for and he rejected the Historical School on both methodological-technical and political grounds. As with the rest of his working life, moreover, this rejection was the result of particularly incisive self-criticism.

Besides translating the first two books of the *Pandects* into German, during his early student years Marx had tried to develop his own comprehensive system of law in accordance with the scholastic fashion of rationalizing and systematizing the classical texts of Roman law. Marx's reaction to his own 'unhappy' 300-page work on the subject is revealing in its self-conscious contempt towards the barbarity of forcing ideas and legal precedents out of their context and into his own schema – the tripartite division of Roman law into persons, things or actions. Unfortunately the manuscript has not survived.

His comments have though, and it is clear that Marx thought such writing was of purely anti-quarian interest, and could therefore be of no help to securing the contemporary 'common good', which was the stated goal of classical jurisprudence, and which was clearly of profound concern to him.

The whole problem, as Donald Kelley has made admirably clear, was what Marx saw as the 'metaphysics of law', which divorced from 'all actual law and every actual form of law' its 'basic principles, reflections, [and] definitions of concepts' (Marx, quoted in Kelley, 1978: 354). Instead of building rational systems that bore little relation to reality, and prefiguring his later suggestions about the proper method of scientific research – rising from the abstract to the concrete – Marx suggested that 'the rational character of the object itself must develop as something imbued with contradictions in itself and find unity in itself' (quoted in Kelley, 1978: 355). The account clearly recalls Gans's critique of Savigny – indeed as a student Marx attended with Gans the *Doktorclub* of Berlin's progressive Hegelians, as well as taking his courses at the university. His early criticisms of Kantian idealism and the methodology of the Historical School were imbued with Hegelian themes defended by Gans – for example, the idea of 'transcendence' (*Aufhebung*) as a unity of opposites, and a recognition of the necessity of mediating between 'philosophical norm and historical fact' (Breckman, 1999: 261; see also Berlin, 1995 [1939]: 50ff.). However, where Gans attempted to reconcile Hegel's system with his own liberal reformism in mid-century, looking for inspiration from both Saint-Simon and Tocqueville about the virtues of associational life, Marx was to politicize his criticisms of Hegel's philosophy in a more radical way (Breckman, 2001: 564).

Building on the insights of his doctoral dissertation – submitted to the University of Jena in 1841 – in his early journalism for the *Rheinische Zeitung* Marx contrasted a 'true' or organic state, which self-consciously rational human beings could affirm, with the contemporary reality of a fragmented, individualist Prussian political order. Such an idealistic form of critique was drawn from his close association with the young Hegelians. The practical import of his concerns was clear, however, in his coruscating polemics about freedom of the press and government censorship, for example. This continued too in his discussion of the nature of property relations

and their social function, given seminal form in his denunciation of the draconian new Prussian laws relating to the theft of wood from private land. These laws threatened to enshrine particularistic laws to defend rich landowners and aristocrats, and were clearly far from being truly 'customary' in a Hegelian sense, or rational-general in their intention. Marx in fact wrote that 'the rights of aristocratic custom run counter by their content to the form of general law'. Furthermore, 'the fact that these customary rights are through their content in conflict with the form of law, i.e. its universality and necessity, proves that they are unjust customs and that, instead of being enforced in opposition to the law, they should be abrogated because of this opposition' (Marx, 1988b [1843]: 21; see also Draper, 1977). If the Hegelian background to these criticisms was clear, Marx soon moved towards a much more concrete and polemical critique, one from which the more conflictual and antagonistic elements of his wider social theory developed.

In his critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, Marx famously continued his attack on the methodological inadequacies of the Historical School of Law. As he argued, a contemporary 'struggle against the restricted nature of the German *status quo* is not without interest, for the German *status quo* is the *undisguised consummation* of the *ancien régime* and the *ancien régime* is the *hidden defect of the modern state*' (1975b [1843–4]: 247, emphasis in original). Marx suggested that the German philosophy of state and law is 'the only German history which stands on an equal footing with the official modern present'. Yet, he continued, the mismatch between the ideals of philosophical reflection about the character and development of the state, and the realities of the contemporary situation, which certainly did not adequately reflect these abstract theories, were conjoined in Hegel. In the *Philosophy of Right*, then, a 'critique of the modern state and of the reality connected with it' exists alongside 'a decisive negation of all previous *forms of political and juridical consciousness* in Germany, whose most refined and universal expression, elevated to the level of a science, is precisely the *speculative philosophy of law*'. The reason for this, argued Marx, in what has since become a common trope of discussions about the origins of modernity, was that 'the Germans have thought in politics what other nations have done. Germany has been

their *theoretical conscience*' (Marx, 1975b [1843–4]: 249, 250).

Two consequences flowed from this. First, 'if the *status quo* of the *German political system* is an expression of the *consummation of the ancien régime*, the completion of the thorn in the flesh of the modern state, then the *status quo of German political thought* is an expression of the *imperfection of the modern state*' (Marx, 1975b [1843–4]: 249ff., emphasis in original). Second, and a corollary of this imperfection, was the focus in Hegel's political philosophy – at least as Marx understood it – of a hypostatized role for the Prussian bureaucracy as representing a 'universal class'. Understood in the context of his prior criticisms, such an account simply made Hegel an apologist for the contemporary Prussian state. Most contemporary scholarship has successfully refuted Marx's claims on this front (see Franco, 1999; Hardimon, 1994). For Marx, however, Hegel not only mistook the contemporary state for an illustration of the best of his own philosophical system, but also misunderstood the potential of the idea of a 'universal class' actually to realize the aims of Spirit. If this 'universal class' could be taken out of Hegel's hypostatized schema, and juxtaposed with other instances of both 'rising' and 'declining' historical classes, then it might well offer a 'vehicle of historical explanation', a motor force for historical change (Avineri, 1968: 58). With this theoretical displacement, Marx arrived at his first discussion of the modern proletariat as the universal class:

So where is the positive possibility of German emancipation? *This is our answer*. In the formation of a class with *radical chains*, a class of civil society which is not a class of civil society, a class [*Stand*] which is the dissolution of all classes, a sphere which has a universal character because of its universal suffering and which lays claim to no particular right because the wrong it suffers is not a *particular wrong* but *wrong in general*; a sphere of society which can no longer lay claim to a *historical* title, but merely to a *human* one, which does not stand in one-sided opposition to the premises of the German political system; and finally a sphere which cannot emancipate itself without emancipating itself from – and thereby emancipating – all the other spheres of society, which is, in a word, the *total loss* of humanity and which can therefore redeem itself only through the total redemption of humanity. This dissolution of society as a particular class is the proletariat. (Marx, 1975b [1843–4]: 256, emphasis in original)

**CAPITALISM AND  
HISTORICAL MATERIALISM:  
STRUCTURAL DETERMINISM  
OR HISTORICAL TRAJECTORIES?**

Having discovered the practical collective agent capable of 'realizing' the goals of Hegelian *Aufhebung*, or reconciliation, Marx quickly turned to the more pressing matter of constructing an account of historical development that would back up such a claim – historical materialism. And one might well begin a discussion of historical materialism with what is perhaps Marx's most famous aphorism – that 'men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past' (Marx, 1973b [1869]: 146). Outlining a theory in which individual action could be analysed and located within a wider conception of the social structure and its development was the purpose of historical materialism, and what follows tries to outline some of its central tenets.

Marx's preferred method of analysis, as suggested in the *Grundrisse*, was one of 'rising from the abstract to the concrete', of developing concepts which could be used deductively to analyse empirical events (Marx, 1973a [1857–8]: 100f.). It was this understanding, for example, that enabled Max Weber to talk of the heuristic value of historical materialism as a set of analytical tools when outlining his own constructions of an 'ideal-type' methodology. Far from being a rigidly deterministic analytical method, it was precisely Marx's claim in *Capital* that social formations are irreducibly complex, but that their inner structures can be unmasked with the application of a correct method. Theoretical analysis enables an understanding of the 'rich totality of many determinations and relations' brought together in any particular social structure (Marx, 1973b [1857–8]: 100). In itself this also builds on elements of his discussion of the masking function of ideology. For just as ideology masks the real relationship between surface appearance and the true essence of the subject under investigation – most notably apparent in Marx's discussion of the 'fetishism' of the commodity under capitalism – so too does empirical history only describe, rather than explain, the inner workings of society (see Marx, 1976a [1867]: 163–177).

Hence, there can be no understanding without theory, without what Derek Sayer (1987) has referred to, paraphrasing Marx, as the 'violence of abstraction'.

For Marx, labour represents the defining attribute of humankind, and production through labour distinguishes human beings from other animals. Social being determines consciousness, and not the other way around, and because labour is a co-operative activity, human beings are, by nature, social animals. Furthermore, Marx's focus on the 'value' associated with human labour – crucial to his analysis of 'use' and 'exchange' value in *Capital* – as well as underpinning his critique of political economy, illustrated his perennial fascination with Aristotle (cf. Marx, 1976a [1867]: 151f.; see also DeGolyer, 1992: 141; Tribe, 1978: Ch. 6). A concern with the relationship between economic exchange and political equality or justice conjoins both writers. In fact, Marx's most developed work immediately subsequent to his critique of Hegel, the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* of 1844, made clear two crucial themes that flowed from this concern. One was the alienation of man from his 'true' self under a society divided along class lines, and the other, a corollary of the former argument, was that man's individuality could only be realized under a just political regime (see Brudney, 2001: 364–94; Mészáros, 1975). In a mixture of Hegelian, Aristotelian and also diffuse Romantic themes, Marx outlined a vision of individual self-realization that remained impeded by the general alienation attendant upon all class-divided societies, and in so doing he outlined a radically anti-individualist theory – communism. Equally, this romantic heritage – which also informed his critique of the Historical School mentioned earlier – underscored the importance of historical and contextual specificity, alongside the relevance of tradition, for his discussions of historical development (see Levin, 1974: esp. 406ff.).

More obviously, Marx developed in a particular way the stagist vision of historical development outlined by luminaries of the Scottish Enlightenment such as Adam Ferguson and Adam Smith. Indeed, if one wanted to read into Marx a particularly evolutionary account of historical progress, one might well apply the same terms as the late Duncan Forbes (1953–4) suggested for understanding the historical theories of Smith and John Millar – that of 'scientific Whiggism'. As Lisa Hill has

very recently suggested, Ferguson's approach to the study of civil society

shares much in common with dialectic (Marxian) conflict theory. To begin with, both models see social change as evolutionary and as an 'ascensional spiral towards progress'. Secondly, the dialectical notion of evolution assumes that a 'given state of the social system presupposes all previous states, and hence, contains them, if only in residual or modified form'. Finally, both are fundamentally equilibrium models. (Hill, 2001: 292, and quoting Ferguson, 1967 [1767]: 10–11)

The theory of the four stages of human development in the broad social theory of the Scottish Enlightenment – hunter gathering, shepherding, agriculture and commerce – were distinguished by the particular technologies on which they were based, each surpassing and encompassing the benefits of the last. Marx's preferred historical schema concerned distinct 'modes of production' (Asiatic, ancient, feudal and bourgeois capitalist), which are to be distinguished by the particular social relations they engender. Thus, any given 'mode of production' combines a different level of development of the productive forces – labour power and the material means of production – on the one hand, with a specific set of production relations, on the other. Marx's account of the nature of productive forces therefore encompasses claims about both human nature and technological development. However, recognizing the concrete labour process underpinning the development of the forces of production is only half of the discussion – and this was the point of his criticisms of classical economists such as Smith and David Ricardo. For Marx simultaneously claimed that the real 'laws of motion' of capitalist society in particular, but of any society in general, can be understood by examining social relations of production.

These social relations of production relate to practical or effective (not necessarily legal or juridical) control over the means or forces of production, so that the specific connection between forces and relations of production at any one time is what is distinctive about particular epochs. In itself, this is a consequence of constantly evolving adaptations in the division of labour in society – a general feature of historical development. Hence, distinguishing between owners of the means of production and the labour on which production is based (a reflection of the evolution of the division of labour) suggests that all hitherto existing modes

of production have rested on exploitation. The division of labour, which began with the family unit, has culminated in contemporary class antagonisms. Capitalism, therefore, is simply the most developed form of this general movement, illustrated by the division between capital and labour. The general principle – that the division of labour corresponds to a division of ownership – nevertheless remains just the same. It is here, moreover, that Marx's earlier discussion of the proletariat as the 'universal class' takes centre-stage. Because class and class struggles are the material expressions (or reflections) of inherently exploitative social structures, it is the relationship between exploitation, class struggle and the resolution of these struggles which forms the basis for Marx's account of historical progression.

There have been numerous debates about the status of 'class' in Marx's writings. On the one hand, class appears to be an 'objective' relationship, understandable in terms of one's position within the overall relations of production. On the other hand, consciousness of one's class position does not necessarily flow from this, and nor therefore does political action. This fact has allowed classical historians such as Geoffrey de Ste Croix to suggest that 'class' is a critical analytical tool for understanding ancient society, although instances of 'class-conscious' revolts and uprisings were hardly a common feature of the ancient Greek world. Thus, class is a relationship of exploitation that can be understood 'objectively', and yet it does not require active consciousness of its existence to nevertheless remain present. Clearly, class is more than the epiphenomenon of an economic base (cf. de Ste Croix, 1981; Thompson, 1963).

The suggestion that class struggle and its temporary resolution is the motor of human history was not a theme newly discovered by Marx – the famous opening lines of the *Communist Manifesto* could have been drawn almost verbatim from the works of Guizot, for instance (see Siedentop, 1979). What Marx claimed originality for was the argument that the very existence of classes 'is merely bound up with certain historical phases in the development of production', and that the class struggle will 'necessarily lead to the dictatorship of the proletariat'. Even more specifically, this dictatorship would itself be a way station on the path to a classless society (Marx, 1983 [1852]: pp. 38–9). Therefore, what is peculiar to modern capitalist society is the particular

structure of its class divisions – between workers who have only their labour power to sell as a commodity, and capitalist owners of the means of production who extract surplus value from the worker as profit. Moreover, the particular character of the interrelationships between class, exploitation and historical development were made clear, for instance, in the famous passage of the third volume of *Capital* where Marx wrote that:

The specific form, in which unpaid surplus-labour is pumped out of direct producers, determines the relationship of rulers and ruled, as it grows directly out of production itself and, in turn, reacts upon it as a determining element. Upon this, however, is founded the formation of the economic community which grows out of the production relations themselves, thereby simultaneously its specific political form. It is always the direct relationship of the owners of the conditions of production to the direct producers – a relationship always naturally corresponding to a definite stage in the development of the methods of labour and thereby its social productivity – which reveals the innermost secret, the hidden basis of the entire structure, and with it the political form of the relation of sovereignty and dependence, in short, the corresponding specific form of the state. (1976b [1894]: 927)

This outline offers a particularly sophisticated gloss on what is usually seen as Marx's crude or mechanical conception of the relationship between the forces and relations of production, reflected in a one-to-one relationship between an 'economic' base, on the one hand, and a legal-political 'superstructure', on the other. For example, 'the sum total of production relations', according to Cohen, represents the economic base. The legal and political superstructure, therefore, refers to those 'non-economic structures' whose character is 'explained by the nature of the economic structure', and which are seen as functional for the maintenance or stabilization of the economic base (Cohen, 1978: 216). This seems to me to be an overly restrictive reading, underpinned by the Primacy Thesis, and it masks the very real historical contingencies allowed for in Marx's own writings.

In fact, more recent theorists have explicitly rejected the necessarily evolutionary account of historical progress that defence of the Primacy Thesis supports. In so doing, historical materialism has been redefined as a theory of 'historical trajectories', supporting the weaker claim that 'there is a directionality to historical change'. Yet this directionality does not necessarily imply 'a unique path and

sequence of development' (Wright, et al., 1992: 79). The distinction between forces and relations of production, mirroring somewhat the distinction between base and superstructure, is therefore perhaps best thought of as an analytical or heuristic distinction, based on the specific property relations of a particular mode of production. This is how Marx distinguished between an 'Asiatic' mode, for example, where property and political coercion were controlled by the same political authority, and a 'feudal' mode, where economic rent or surplus was not produced through an economic relationship, but took the form of the 'extra-economic coercion' of the labourer by the lord. In the former, 'direct producers are not confronted by a private landowner', but are 'under direct subordination to a state which stands over them as their landlord and simultaneously as sovereign' (Marx, 1976b [1894]: 791; see also Rigby, 1998). Under the latter mode, as contemporary Marxist historian Robert Brenner (1989) has elaborated, 'direct producers' had immediate access to their means of subsistence. As a result of this, feudal lords and other members of the 'exploiting' classes obtained their own surplus value not through economic coercion, but through 'extra-economic' – that is, political – coercion.

According to Brenner, the decline of serfdom in England confirmed Marx's account of the importance of 'primitive accumulation' and the 'fettering' of productive forces by production relations, though it simultaneously stymies the validity of the idea of a 'bourgeois revolution' in the transition from feudalism to capitalism (1989: 295). English capitalism was fundamentally agrarian, argues Brenner, and only in England did land, labour and capital develop in a manner conducive to the promotion of capitalist relations of production. This is perhaps somewhat ironic, given the critically important position Brenner now ascribes to entrepreneurial merchants in the rise of capitalism (cf. Anderson, 1993; Brenner, 1993). The point remains, however, that distinguishing between different relations of production allows Marx to pinpoint the arena in which exploitation takes place, and therefore permits a differentiation of historical periods. The particular form in which surplus value is extracted under capitalism reflects, then, the separation of the 'economic' from the 'political' spheres, previously bound together under the feudal mode of production. But although the feudal mode led to circumstances in

which capitalism could develop, much recent work has shown that the political structures that policed feudalism in the West were less sophisticated than many of the so-called 'Asiatic' states. The 'uniqueness of the East' was exemplified by what several scholars have termed a 'tributary' mode of production (Wickham, 1985: 166–96).

As the innumerable debates about the transition from feudalism to capitalism in particular make clear, there is neither agreement about Marx's own position, nor is there any linear progression in his historical vision (see Hilton, 1976; Hobsbawm, 1974). Because of this, although critics from Max Weber onwards have gratefully acknowledged the utility of the framework, they have often (unlike Weber) understood Marx mechanically. But to read into historical materialism a crude explanation of change in terms of the relationship between production, ownership and class would be grossly unfair. As Philip Abrams suggested, the problem of historical materialism is 'not that it too crudely explains all historical events and developments' in these terms, but rather 'that it makes such generous provision for the mediation of those influences by political, cultural and ideological factors that the causal connections between economic relationships and historical change become extremely difficult to trace' (1989: 49). This means that rather than disavowing 'ideational' factors, as numerous neo-Weberian detractors have suggested, Marx's method placed a great emphasis on 'ideological influences, of belief, perception and ideas' (1989: 49–50). It should therefore be viewed not as a deterministic science, but rather – as contemporary reformulations have made clear – a particular *interpretation* of history based on developmental trajectories. Some of the further developments of Marx's ideas and Marxist historical sociology are taken up in other chapters in this volume. Here, though, it might be helpful to present some of Marx's most obvious practical contributions to historical sociology, to shed light on how his own historical and social theory could effectively be put into practice. Before doing so, however, it seems appropriate to show that Marx, rather than deciding *a priori* that particular modes of production were set in stone, was always eager to develop his own account of historical materialism in the light of new research. And by looking at the impact of anthropology on his later writings, we can see this quite clearly.

**HISTORICAL ANTHROPOLOGY,  
HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY**

In his later writings after *Capital*, Marx's interests reflected more clearly the impact of the developing science of anthropology. However, in his notes and critiques of 'bourgeois' anthropology, there are clear traces of both his earlier attempts to make sense of the inadequacies of the Historical School of Law, on the one hand, and more broad-brush theories of socio-historical transformation, on the other. Thus, in this final substantive section of the chapter, I would like to point out some of the issues involved in Marx's thinking about anthropology. This permits us one more context with which to foreground some of Marx's more practical illustrations of historical sociology, in particular his noted writings on post-revolutionary France.

Whilst studying law at Berlin, Marx undertook a course in anthropology within the degree scheme. Yet, although the interest remained, it was only towards the end of his life, after numerous political setbacks, that Marx turned towards the study of anthropology in the same systematic manner that he had approached *Capital*. The writings of Henry Sumner Maine, for example, and his famous discussion of *Ancient Law* in 1861, which outlined the development of modern society as a movement from 'status to contract', were particularly important. Equally so was Lewis Henry Morgan's *Ancient Society* of 1877. The chance to weave anthropological themes into his more general social and historical theory, particularly in regard to the ancient world, was irresistible to Marx. And although his work remained uncompleted – a typical pattern, rectified by abridged and more didactic accounts offered later by Friedrich Engels – enough remains to illustrate some central themes of Marx's historical sociology.

Having already outlined Marx's critique of Hugo, it only needs to be added here that for Marx, Hugo's philosophical anthropology could be boiled down to the idea that the 'sole distinguishing feature of man is his animal nature'. This, Marx argued, served further to justify existing forms of power as 'animal law' (Kelley, 1984: 253). Marx's own contention, on the other hand, was that only 'positive' historical research could inform us of the true nature of institutions, rather than relying on any pre-inscribed notion of man's 'animal nature'. In this context, his prior attribution of

importance to the division of labour (property) within the family – as an early instance of exploitation – was one of the main areas in which anthropology informed his discussions after *Capital*. As Kelley (1984) suggests, the anthropological development of the idea of 'primitive communism' was central to Marx's rethinking of the question of the origins of private property. Indeed, the concept of primitive communism had already received notable formulations by Georg von Maurer, for example, in discussions about Germany's past in general, and the importance of village communities (*Markgenossenschaft*) and guilds in particular, whose structures were early illustrations of free political communities (see Black 1984; von Maurer, 1854).

Marx elaborated on these accounts to suggest that the 'universal historical process' began with a primitive, communalist phase of development (Kelley, 1984: 255). Indeed, primitive communalism, according to Marx and Engels, was the precursor of feudalism or 'estate property', which itself preceded the full development of private property relations under capitalism. Similar to the way that Otto von Gierke's discussion of the post-imperial communities as exemplary Germanic associations (*Genossenschaften*) has been characterized as a form of 'juristic socialism', Marx's vision was one in which an original collective society could be seen as the earliest instance of an organized political community.

This did not mean, however, that all forms of discussions about the 'village community', for example, were to be accepted as worthwhile. Maine's seminal discussions of these issues, for example, were ridiculed by Marx for attempting to 'project the English, perhaps the Victorian, family into prehistory' (see Kelley, 1984: 256; cf. Burrow, 1974). Marx was equally critical of Freeman and Stubbs, whom he brusquely chastised. He was much more favourable towards the work of Morgan, particularly *Ancient Society*, though he was probably also aware of Morgan's earlier discussion of consanguinity. Indeed, Marx's notes on Morgan famously made their way in considerable detail into Engels's book *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* of 1884. For example, Marx was considerably taken with Morgan's account of human progress onwards from savagery and barbarism, which could be uncovered through the analysis of customs and traditions, for example. Moreover, property and the desire

for property were recognized as a principal rationale behind human progress towards civilization. Read backwards, then, a focus on common material interests – underpinned by kinship and familial relationships – could be said to lie behind a historical materialism applied to the period of pre-history.

By concentrating on the understanding of clans, families and tribes, Marx developed an account of primitive or primordial society out of which ‘political’ society developed, pointing out social units – ‘Aryan, Semitic and Uranian’ – based on blood ties, and the relatively late development of the ‘monogamous bourgeois family’ (Kelley, 1984: 259f.). Such a focus had particular implications for Marx’s understanding of those peoples outside of mainstream Western civilization, such as Australian Aborigines, and was related to the idea, common to much nineteenth-century political and social theory, of native savages and peoples ‘without history’. Equally, however, these concerns also impacted on Marx’s analysis of the Highland Clearances, and the importance of ‘primitive communism’ in Scotland (for the complex details, see Davidson, 2001), just as much as they did for his discussions of modern India and the relationship between colonialism and capitalist ‘progress’. Indeed, by outlining the challenge of capitalist development for a traditional society in the north of Scotland, in fact, Marx’s analysis could be fruitfully compared with Weber’s much more systematic study of the condition of the *Instleute* east of the Elbe, for example (see Löwy, 1993; Tribe, 1984).

Marx read about Australian Aborigines and their social organization in Morgan’s *Ancient Society*. The interest can be traced to an earlier period though, when, shortly out of university, both Marx and Engels read the second 1803 edition of Malthus’s *An Essay on the Principle of Population*. Both men imbibed Malthus’s reliance on some ideas from Smith. And although they savaged his arguments about over-population, they would have been aware of Malthus’s use of particular ethnographic and anthropological observations, drawn from such voyages as those of Cook to New South Wales towards the end of the eighteenth century, concerning non-Western indigenous peoples. Yet, despite other anthropological sources being available, the account offered in the *Essay on the Principle of Population* helped set the tone for much contemporary discussion of primitive man – with a poor diet, bizarre marriage practices such as

polygamy, constantly at war with other tribes, subject to illness and uneducated. However, as Matthew Spriggs suggests, the notebooks on the Australian Aborigines compiled by Marx and based on Morgan primarily focused on marriage patterns and accounts of inter-group relationships, and were used to bolster his evolutionary account of the origins of human institutions (Spriggs, 1997: 207).

Equally, although the idea of the ignoble savage was a common European trope, writers with whom Marx was certainly familiar, such as Ferguson, Smith and other members of the Scottish Historical School, shared the idea that primitive social ‘ranks’ predated the emergence of private property (see Berry, 1997: 100). By outlining the importance of marriage practices in particular, therefore, Morgan provided a baseline from which studies about ‘humanity’ and the rise of civilization could build on, to offer, that is, an account of the development of different forms of political community. However, grand nineteenth-century theories of development – of which Marx’s historical materialism was clearly a part – did not only build on certain contemporary anthropological ‘advances’ to outline a theory of the ‘stages’ of human progress.

A clear distinction was often drawn, to return to the previous discussion, between political and pre-political, or primordial, societies, and an ideal of ‘community’ (*Gemeinschaft*) outlined that could then be opposed to a contemporary capitalist state based on alienation and exploitation. This is the typical format of the ‘status to contract’, *Gemeinschaft* versus *Gesellschaft*, and modernization theoretical approaches to understanding the historical transition to modern society. Yet, as Patricia Springborg makes clear (1986: 186), for most nineteenth-century theorists, Marx included, the veritable ideal of community that was defended was not the primordial society of either village-community or that of the ‘noble savage’. Instead, it was the Athenian communal *polis* that was considered to be the most elegant and enduring expression of the virtues of political community.

This is surprising, because, as Marx recognized, the *polis* was clearly a social institution based on the ‘twin principles of kinship and landed property’. Underpinned by a distinction between the role of the family or clan and that of the state, this gave rise to a distinctive interrelationship between private and communal property in the form of the urban city-state. And by bringing together communal and

private property in this way, the *polis* was a unique political form, a development *away* from primordial – and by further implication, ‘oriental’ society – and it was a communal model to be cherished and aspired to. The surprise is that Marx should so highly esteem a society based on property relations, as opposed to idealizing a vision of the allegedly pre-political, primordial society. Furthermore, as Springborg writes, Marx developed his arguments on the basis of two conflicting and indeed incorrect (in the light of subsequent research) assumptions.

First, influenced by Morgan, Marx was in later life won over to the view that classical antiquity was a form of primordial community, one based principally on clan (*gens*) membership. Springborg suggests that it was the genetic nineteenth-century concern with social progress that blinded Marx to the implications of a simple fact that he had in fact much earlier recognized – that the ancient Greek (pre-*polis*) clans and families were inherently political, not primordial, in structure (Springborg, 1986: 191, 194). Denying this certainly had implications for Marx’s otherwise broadly Aristotelian view of the importance of the interconnections between families that were the very substance of the *polis*. For these various clans and households (*oikoi*), which, together in partnership, were the units of the independent and autarchic city-state or *polis*, devoted to friendship (understood contractually) and good living (see Aristotle, 2000: Book 8). To defend the *polis* was therefore to defend what was thought of as a modern communal existence simultaneously more advanced than primordial or ‘oriental’ cities, and yet more urban and closely connected than the other major instance of communal organization focused upon by Marx, the Germanic tribes. However, underpinning this communal organization were those self-same contractual and hence ‘political’ units of families and households. There appears to be a double bind here.

The second of Marx’s misapprehensions, Springborg suggests (1986: 192), can be seen thanks to modern archaeological evidence. This shows that the Mediterranean and Eastern cities that Marx also classified as primordial, and which did not develop into forms similar to the Greek *poleis*, were, in fact, highly sophisticated and contractually linked social structures. In this, their existence was not at all unlike that of the Athenian city-state so exalted by Marx and others. Further, there are

clear implications here for the entire debate about the origins of capitalism out of a feudal mode of production in the West, which somehow managed to entrench favourable conditions whereas the more advanced and sophisticated urban trading centres of the Mediterranean and the East did not.

Historically, Springborg continues (1986: 202–3), the idea of an original *Gemeinschaft* was itself misplaced, and the examples provided as evidence of such *Gemeinschaften* were themselves misleading. The point remains, though, that such debates about the origins of ‘community’ had very specific implications for how one might conceive of the emergence of political society. For out of these origins, one could then suggest more broadly both why and how political-historical change might occur, naturally leading to an explanation of the rise and fall of particular modes of production according to the development of relations of production based on property. If modern anthropological insights challenged Marx to rethink elements of his historical schema to incorporate new data, the overall structure remained intact, with the basic triangulation of exploitation, class struggle and mode of production. To conclude this part of the chapter, though, it might be useful briefly to illustrate some aspects of Marx’s own historical sociology; that is to say, to outline his own written reflections on direct political events, underpinned by this overarching schema, in order to show how he might have envisaged a broader-scale application of his theory. For as Kelley suggests (1984: 261), even if Marx is interpreted as focusing excessively on class or economic issues, the import of his writings on anthropology surely gives grounds for the argument that Marx himself saw his thinking in much broader terms than these anyway. That such a movement was not only a product of his interest in anthropology, however, was clear in his own illustrations of historical-sociological analysis, which clearly show an awareness of the myriad relationships between ideas, action and social relations of production.

In his obvious works of historical sociology, and in particular his writings on France after 1848, as Abrams argues (1989: 50), Marx deftly moved between two levels of analysis – political, and socio-historical or structural. His was historical sociology with a polemical purpose. In his discussion of Louis

Bonaparte's *coup d'état* of 1851, 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte', this comes through particularly clearly, and disavows any notion of a rigid or deterministic analysis. The structure of the piece is very well known, and focuses to a large extent on the social preconditions for Bonaparte's 'rise' to power. What is particularly interesting for its utility as an illustration of historical-sociological writing is the way in which the general narrative of events is underpinned by a specific analysis of the myriad social forces that were balanced, in Marx's eyes, by Bonaparte. Indeed, this precarious pacification and incorporation of many antagonistic social groups (particularly the peasantry) and various 'fractions' of capital in particular gave rise to modern, social-scientific understandings of Bonapartism, which have themselves been enormously influential in many later Marxist analyses of fascism, for example (see Beetham, 1974). Marx's analysis shows how the 'knavishly naïve' Bonaparte gathered up all the seething discontent with the contemporary republic, presenting himself as the true embodiment of the national interest. In his discussion, we find no explicit discussion of relations of production altering according to evolutionary or functional criteria. There is, however, a clear awareness of the direct relationship between class-consciousness, political development and the opposing interests of the working class, on the one hand, and the interests of the bourgeoisie, on the other, which is simply the conflict between capital and labour (see Marx, 1973b [1869]: 189f.). Thus, only when a particular mode of production becomes more fully developed do the antagonisms between classes within it become clearly apparent to the members of those exploited classes, and in so doing this provides, at least in theory, the necessary conditions for the progression to another type of regime through active struggle.

Overall, therefore, Marx combines an analysis of the interplay of high (and low) political drama alongside socio-political transformations, from within a wider framework focusing on social relations of production. This is how his focus on political intrigue is grounded in terms of the balance of class forces at a particular moment, so that the argument is implicitly linked to a wider theory of historical sociology, concerning the importance of relations of production and exploitation with social transformation.

Moreover, and as an aside, Marx's ideas about the balance of forces in this argument did not necessarily come from *a priori* theoretical preferences. In his journalistic writings on England, for example, which both informed and developed his account of such French political intrigue, Marx produced an analysis of Victorian society from 'indigenous conceptions of class and politics' (Taylor, 1996: 228). Moreover, there was a clear interplay between domestic English concerns and the analysis of a French Bonaparte, as Miles Taylor (1996) has argued. A fortnight before Marx outlined his own account, in the English press – *Punch* and the *Examiner* – the idea of Bonaparte as 'accomplishing his 18th Brumaire' had been presented in easily available formats that Marx would certainly have consulted. Similarly, influenced by the Chartist press domestically, Marx quickly came to ascribe political-economic positions to the English Whigs, for example, as the 'advocati' of the bourgeoisie, whose ascendancy was surely in decline and who stood in opposition to both free-traders and the rising middle classes. The radical republicanism of Marx's earlier youth seems to have reconnected here with the demands of the *Red Republican* and *Notes to the People*. The point, though, is simply that Marx's own historical sociology, as evidenced most clearly through his extended journalism (although obviously in evidence in *The German Ideology*), depended upon an awareness of national and local specificity, which could be incorporated into a wider theory of historical change. The subtlety of his own writing clearly shows that this is not best understood as a one-dimensional and mechanical set of correspondences.

## CONCLUSIONS

Against those who criticize what we might, somewhat tenuously, call the middle-period Marx associated with 'scientific' historical materialism, by examining some of the contexts and illustrations of his writings, a better appreciation of the overall range, depth and concern for historical context in his historical sociology is at least possible. By so doing, it is to be hoped that perhaps the resources necessary to rescue Marx, should he need it, from what E.P. Thompson famously called the

'enormous condescension of posterity' might be more clearly visible. For the impact of Marx on the subsequent development of historical sociology has been profound, and yet his own account of historical sociology is today routinely criticized for its lack of attention to historical contingency. In particular, his theories have been severely challenged by the raft of studies that have recently appeared, inspired more by Weber and his 'ideal-type' methodology, and focusing on social evolution and the concept of power, for example. The contemporary predominance of neo-Weberian historical sociology, though, seems to have been brought about somewhat at Marx's expense when it in fact need not have been. Much contemporary social theory has in fact recognized that there is not so great a distance between the two writers as there might at first glance appear to be. Indeed, the idea of having to 'choose' between them represents a really rather unnecessary intellectual imposition (see Sayer, 1992).

As Weber himself recognized, there is much of value in historical materialism understood as a set of analytical tools, or theories, which empirical research can test and modify as desired. Moreover, there is nothing necessarily deterministic in Marx's writings if he is read as a theorist of historical trajectories that have a weak tendency towards progressive development. Indeed, this is how most writers implement in practice what they see as a Weberian research strategy, with many neo-Marxist and neo-Weberian works of historical sociology in fact displaying marked signs of convergence, rather than divergence, even if this convergence is often vigorously denied (see Callinicos, 1995; cf. Kelly, 2000). Of course, to apply the term 'Weberian' to so much of contemporary historical sociology is to rely on a particular understanding of what Weber was actually trying to do in his own 'methodological' writings. And like Marx, Weber's methodological strictures had very little to do with any conception of interpretative neutrality (Hennis, 2000a, 2000b). Nevertheless, as many of the chapters in this book illustrate, the range and scope of a historical sociology that builds on the insights of Max Weber in particular is potentially extraordinary. Equally, however, in so doing, it is necessary that the very real strengths of Marx – strengths that Weber well knew – as an exponent and theorist of historical sociology in his own right are not completely forgotten.

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## Max Weber and the Interpretative Tradition

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As a first approximation, historical sociology may be thought of as the study of social change. While sociology itself emerged as a critical commentary on the Industrial and French Revolutions (Nisbet, 1967), the concern to analyse patterns of social relations through time has not been intrinsic to all versions of the sociological enterprise. In this sense *historical* sociology has been seen by many as a subset rather than a core feature of the discipline, on a par with *industrial, political* and other such specialisms. For the German sociologist Max Weber (1864–1920), like most of his contemporaries, sociology was, by contrast, inherently historical in the questions it set out to address.

Understanding the present, and the direction in which social change was leading, required a profound grasp of long-run processes of social change. The distinctiveness, the dynamics and the inertias of the present could only fully be grasped in historical perspective, which for Weber stretched over 2,500 years. And the same was true of the criteria of relevance by which social scientists selected intellectual questions for attention, thereby bringing certain types of evidence into the foreground for analysis. In Weber's case the key question underlying his sociology was the idea, shared with his contemporaries, of the historical distinctiveness of the West (Weber, 1930b [1920]). This was to be seen within its characteristic institutions and attitudes and social practices, as they had emerged over

time, and in comparison with other non-Western forms of social life. This view of the West encompassed the application of distinctive forms of rationality to economy, government and cultural practice, manifest in what Weber took to be particularly Western forms of capitalism, rulership, administration, religion, science, architecture and music. The counterpoints to Western distinctiveness centred on the major civilizations of China, India and the Middle East, associated in large measure with the world religions of Confucianism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam.

This historical perspective was, in the broadest sense, common ground between writers of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, nineteenth-century thinkers like Alexis de Toqueville and Karl Marx, and a whole host of Weber's contemporaries from Werner Sombart and Otto Hintze in Germany, Joseph Schumpeter in Austria and Frederic Maitland in England, to Émile Durkheim in France. Weber's work can none the less be differentiated from this broad historically sensitive common ground in three main senses. First, he attempted to construct a less conjectural and philosophical approach than did his forebears, in favour of a more analytically grounded and empirically plausible framework for the analysis of social change. Second, he set himself against prevailing evolutionary approaches, and indeed against any attempt to produce a general philosophy or theory of history. His intention was rather to produce a more open-ended

comparative account of social organization and social change. Third, he developed a multi-causal approach to analysis, designed to transcend previous debates between materialist and idealist accounts of history.

A crucial feature of this endeavour was to bring back 'idealist' elements into the picture, if only to correct for the one-sidedness of many 'materialist' approaches to social change. This 'interpretative' approach to historical sociology attends to the meanings which individuals give to their actions, and to questions of what might be called social psychology, expressed above all in religious experience. Questions to do with the meaning of human suffering and of uncertainties about salvation are at the forefront here. However, Weber's interest is in what people *do* in the practical everyday world in the light of their beliefs, and in the tensions between beliefs and activities, rather than theology in the abstract.

The classification of Weber's historical sociology as interpretative stems, then, from this corrective focus, and not from any desire to replace materialism with idealism. In the much-cited, much-criticized but much-misunderstood 'Protestant ethic thesis' (Weber, 1930a [1904–5]), it is made quite clear that the interpretative emphasis is only one dimension to the causal analysis. It is therefore a gross misreading of Weber to see his interpretative approach as mutually exclusive of characteristically materialist concerns for themes like the economic organization of land, capital and labour, technology, demography, geography or military aspects of *realpolitik*.

**LOCATING WEBER'S  
HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY:  
FROM CONJECTURE TO ANALYSIS**

It has become customary to locate Weber's sociology in terms of the twin reference points he himself identified, namely Karl Marx and Friedrich Nietzsche. One disadvantage of this approach is that it forecloses on broader historical and interdisciplinary considerations that help put Marx and Nietzsche, as much as Weber, into perspective.

There is a tendency within the history of social thought to regard historical sociology as a product of Western modernity associated above all with the Enlightenment. This assumption is often tied to what might be called a 'Great Transformation' view of social

change. Before the French and Industrial Revolutions, so the story goes, social life was mostly static and spatially bounded. Tradition and religious faith enveloped social thinking, such that awareness of the social causes of social change was dim or non-existent. After the Transformation, the modernization of humankind led to a greater appreciation of the sense in which social institutions could be shaped and reshaped by human action.

Marx's analysis of the dynamics, crises and class struggles of the capitalist Industrial Revolution and Nietzsche's pronouncement of the death of God and hence of transcendent moral standards have been forced into the service of the Great Transformation argument. Yet both thinkers were, in their different ways, more subtle than this in so far as they understood continuities as well as contrasts between ancient and modern worlds and world-views. Weber's historical sociology may be seen as a more explicit and thoroughgoing rejection of the Great Transformation argument. Reason in the most general sense is not a product of the Enlightenment, nor is tradition absent in the present.

Weber's position, like that of the twentieth-century world historian William McNeill (1986), is to think of human history over several millennia as being characterized by significant elements of social change and diverse orientations to the world. Weber recognized a range of changes in areas such as the economic ethics of religion, or the construction of rationally codified law, while for McNeill change is evident in the construction of empires through conquest, long-distance trade and population mobility. Such developments encouraged not only a sense of human agency in practical life, but also an awareness of 'others' different in certain respects from one's own social group. It is not therefore surprising to find speculation about social change and the reasons for and implications of cultural difference among ancient classical authors such as Aristotle or medieval Islamic scholars such as Ibn Khaldun (Issawi, 1998).

The historically informed eighteenth-century Enlightenment writings of Montesquieu, Adam Smith or Millar, ranging over matters such as the determination of differences in political institutions, the extent of the division of labour or the origins of social ranks and distinctions, do not announce an entirely new epoch in social thought. While some of these themes are given a clearer formulation and new centrality, much Enlightenment

history, like that of its forebears, is contained within a highly speculative or conjectural framework. This is typically short on evidence and long on rhetoric. Montesquieu's perception that the Italians were more excitable and less reserved than the English, for example, drew upon his observations of their behaviour at the opera rather than any more systematic evidence. Yet from flimsy data such as these he went on to develop an elaborate theory of the influence of climate on behaviour (Hawthorn, 1976: 16).

One reason for the prevalence of rhetorical presentation was that the historical imagination was still largely undifferentiated from two central discursive genres. One was a literary essayistic idiom in which aesthetic style and conjectural argument were deemed sufficient criteria for intellectual endeavour. The other was the intimate immersion of historical thought within moral and political philosophy. Enlightenment history recognized that prevailing standards of justice or liberty might be connected with certain kinds of institutions and social practices, and that social patterns had non-divine causes, whether climatic or social. None the less the treatment of these connections was generally speculative, lacking the logical or empirical rigour and scientific methodology that had come by the end of the nineteenth-century to characterize the academic profession of history.

This methodological change was evident in biblical, philological, classical and legal scholarship, as well as in economic history. Weber became a protégé of the legal historian Goldschmidt and of Mommsen, the classical historian, while studying at the University of Berlin (Kalberg, 2000: 145). His early research into the legal history of trading companies and later work on religion bear the hallmark of advances in scientific method developed within these circles, including the systematic scrutiny of historical documents in their original language. When Weber investigated the relationship between Protestantism, Catholicism and business activity, over 150 years after Montesquieu had noted the distinctive Protestant contribution to economic endeavour, he did so equipped both with statistical material and with documentary evidence on the economic ethics of Protestantism, including cultural variations in the idea of the calling in a variety of social settings. Conjectural history was now no longer the dominant discourse.

But Weber brought one further dimension to his scholarship that was not typical of

historians of his day, and which helps us to identify what was distinctively sociological and interpretative about his work. This dimension is concerned both with the problematic epistemological foundations of social science, and with the characteristic methods of conceptual analysis which Weber developed for use in historical analysis.

For unlike protagonists of positivist historiography and sociology, Weber upheld the Kantian objection to empiricism. Facts were never spontaneously or naturally available to knowledge, but were necessarily grasped through categories such as space, time and causality which were prior (that is, *a priori*) to the experience of the senses. Whereas Ranke, the celebrated German political historian, assembled documentary evidence to tell it how it was, Weber saw this enterprise as misguided. Even the most empirically minded historian must necessarily rely on abstraction and on organizing concepts (such as the medieval economy, Christianity or the Prussian state) in order to conduct his or her historical narrative. Weber, in this respect, sided with the neo-classical economists (see Holton, 1986b) in their methodological debate (*Methodenstreit*) with the historical economists. Whereas the latter eschewed abstraction and general pattern for rich empirical narrative, the former upheld a key role for abstraction and concept construction in the social sciences. Yet for Weber, the deductive axioms of mainstream neo-classicism represented an insufficient basis for concept formation. Those who chided economists for their abstract Robinson-Crusoe-like postulates of individual sovereignty should really come up with an alternative conceptual framework, he wrote, if the theoretical edifice was to be challenged (Weber, 1949 [1904]). Such an alternative should be less deductive and deterministic, and amenable to greater multidimensionality in substantive interpretations of social life.

Weber developed the notion of the ideal-type as an alternative way of identifying the critical heuristic importance of conceptual abstraction in social analysis. Ideal-types were ideal in the sense that they were designed by the analyst as the pure expression of the abstract logic underlying ideas about social institutions and relationships. The economists' notion of perfect competition in the marketplace was one such ideal-type. It was not primarily to be seen as a description of reality, but designed as a conceptual standard against

which more complex empirical evidence could be analysed. Ideal-types assisted analysis by helping to identify how far evidence deviated from the pure type. This stimulated the construction of researchable hypotheses to guide research, and, where necessary, the construction of further alternative ideal-types where systematic deviations from the original were found. Ideal-types should also be discarded where they proved inadequate. Weber warned that to prolong the use of concepts beyond their usefulness in research was merely to perpetuate a conceptual game (Weber, 1949 [1904]), but this advice has often gone unheeded.

Weber came in the final decade of his life, between 1910 and 1920, to devote more time to the development of ideal-types suited to sociological rather than economic analysis. The use of multiple ideal-types reflected a shift away from the axiomatic certainties of orthodox neo-classicism and all theories of strong causal determination, towards a more complex and uncertain form of analysis. This broadening endeavour led in his unfinished work *Economy and Society* (1968 [1921]) to the construction of multiple ideal-types of social action (value-rational, instrumentally rational, habitual and affectual), and wide-ranging forms of legitimate rulership (traditional, rational-legal and charismatic). These were interpretative in character, in that for social action or legitimate rulership to take place, action must be meaningful to the actor, and oriented to other actors. Rulership, in this way, depended on an element of compliance amongst those subject to rule, whether it be compliance with the habitual ties of tradition, the legitimacy of the rule of law or the charismatic appeal of individuals believed to possess exceptional personal qualities.

Causal analysis of particular processes or developments should include an account of how social actions were regarded as meaningful by those involved, but should also utilize the normal logical procedures of causal analysis. While Weber never explicitly laid out what these were, his methodological practice was quite clearly based on the logic of comparisons, where the presence or absence of a particular feature from a broadly similar set of cases might be deemed relevant in explaining other variations between the cases in question.

Weber's development of an array of general ideal-type concepts represents what has been identified as the sociological dimension to his work. Some have even argued that this

preoccupation led him to retreat from history to sociology, in the sense of retreating from the analysis of particulars to the construction of a generalized conceptual framework for social analysis. While there is some merit in this view, there is equally clear evidence that Weber intended his conceptual framework to serve historical analysis, rather than transcend it.

Returning to questions of epistemology, it must be emphasized that Weber's conceptual framework, and the evidence analysed within it, was dependent on criteria of value relevance. This does not render facts as any less fact-like, but it does, according to Weber, mean that the social-scientific gaze is inevitably partial rather than comprehensive in scope. Different value-relevant interests bring different facts into view. More than this, even science itself only has meaning for those who believe that the fruits of the search for truth are worth knowing. In arguing that science could not be used to prove or disprove particular values, Weber drew on Nietzsche's arguments against any transcendental grounding of ethics in God, science, reason or any other metaphysical entity. This led Weber to the position that individuals must be in a position to articulate their own value commitments and to act upon them. It also underlay his ontological assumption of the heterogeneity of human purposes. In other words, the social being of humankind was and would continue to be constituted through conflicts over the meaning of life, human conflicts that resembled the mythical contests of the Gods over mastery of human fate.

Value relevance for Weber, as a member of the nineteenth-century German liberal Protestant *Bürgertum*, centred on several interrelated issues. One was the circumstances under which Europe had become the contemporary cock-pit of world history (at least as members of his class liked to believe). Another was the extent to which modern rationality could remain a way of life which individuals would want to live. While Weber's discussion of rationality is complex and not always consistent, in this context it refers to the development of an increasingly calculative and intellectualized mode of social action, geared to the choice of means appropriate to reaching a given end, rather than ends in themselves. Did rationality have its limits, creating perhaps the spectre of a disenchanting world dominated by routine, bureaucratic administration and machine politics, encapsulated for Weber in the metaphor of the iron

cage? If so, then questions arose of the possibility of living an ethically responsible life. Issues of uncertainty and the ironies of living out a fate unintended by the protagonists of modernity are paramount within Weber's value-relevant sociology.

Weber's combination of methodological rigour in the name of scientific objectivity with a neo-Kantian awareness of the value relevance and in-built uncertainty of social knowledge is somewhat unusual in the English-speaking world. This has led to significant misunderstanding on two sides. The first trap is to assume that scientific rigour means that scholarship can be free from values, the mistake made by a number of postwar American scholars seeking an objective sociological antidote to the perceived partisanship of Marx. Yet for Weber, scholarship is never value-free. The second trap is to believe that value-relevance means epistemological relativism, in which any interpretation is as good as any other. Yet Weber, by contrast with much contemporary postmodernism, held that knowledge could be objective even though it derived from a particular viewpoint arising from value relevance. In this sense parallel scientific knowledges could coexist dependent on the perspective of the observer.

**COMPARATIVE HISTORICAL  
SOCIOLOGY: PUTTING INTERPRETATIVE  
APPROACHES IN CONTEXT**

For much of the nineteenth century, and indeed for a good deal of the twentieth century, evolutionism dominated much thinking about social change. The nature of history was to be resolved through the discovery of endogenous laws of development which would explain the unfolding of changing modes of social life and organization. Evolutionism of this kind is usually to be found in periods of optimism both about the possibility of social progress in general, and about the capacity of reason and science to unlock the puzzles of how human society has progressed from past to present, and where the future will lead. This was the mid-nineteenth-century context within which Marx's historical materialism set out to do for human history what Charles Darwin had done for natural history. For Weber, and a number of his German contemporaries, by contrast, the meaning of history could not be laid bare according to laws (or at

least law-like regularities) which indicated stages through which human societies might pass under the causal influence of a prime mover. Historical understanding, for Weber, could be resolved not by laws, but only, if at all, by will, as Hawthorn (1976) puts it.

For Weber, there was no intrinsic meaning or purpose to history. Philosophies of history which posited the emergence of some overarching and transcendent teleology, such as progress towards universal reason (Hegel) or communism (Marx), were rejected. Although Marx's critique of Hegel sought to link human evolution with the revolutionary potential of real-world entities, such as social classes, for Weber any attempt to provide a unitary meaning to history – idealist or materialist – was untenable. The grounds for Weber's critique were epistemological, in the sense that history had no knowable mission, and methodological, in that social life was constituted through a multiplicity of individuals with a multiplicity of interests, both material and symbolic. Weber's 'methodological individualism', derived in large measure from neo-classical economics, rejected any kind of organic thinking, whether about the nature or evolution of human society. The conventional sociological notion of societies as (nationally) bounded and internally integrated wholes was for him a misleading fiction. It presumed levels of organic unity which were at variance with the multiple conflicts of interests that characterized social organization, and which were played out through the exercise of power.

The corollary of this position, which draws on the legacy of both Kant and Nietzsche, was that individuals, through their actions and the institutions created through action, must be in a position to create meaning for themselves. The ways in which meaning has been created and become institutionally embodied, and the dilemmas that arise from these endeavours, form the centre-point of Weber's historical sociology. In this sense Hawthorn's reference to Weber resolving history through human will should be understood as an empirical project amenable to research as much as a philosophical injunction for strong individual virtuosi to assert their moral wills.

But if evolutionism was to be rejected as the appropriate mode of historical analysis, what was to be put in its place?

Weber's reply was that historical sociology should take a comparative form. Using the general organizing framework of ideal-type

concepts already discussed, his commitment was to the analysis of common and contrasting features of an array of individual cases of the phenomena in question. Such phenomena might comprise different forms of economic organization, different world religions or different constellations of power within a given social setting. The point of this comparative framework was not to rule out any reference to the developmental significance of the processes in question, but rather to conduct the analysis without reference to any kind of underlying evolutionary purpose. The net effect was to render history more amenable to an open-ended appreciation of the developmental significance of many different but intersecting forms of social life. Unlike Parsons, who saw Weber as an evolutionist, Roth (1979) and Kalberg (1994) see him as a protagonist of a non-teleological developmental history (*Entwicklungsgeschichte*).

The objection has none the less been raised that Weber was not entirely true to his intentions. While formally rejecting evolutionary philosophies of history, it has been noted that the thrust of much of his work centres on notions like 'rationalization' or 'bureaucratization' that appear to come very close to an evolutionary argument. Rationalization, for example, which Weber sees as the basis for a greater administrative and technical mastery over social life, and something very difficult to dismantle once erected, appears to contain clear evolutionary advantages for all those interests able to harness this mastery to their purposes. The discussion may be fateful, and is certainly ironic, in that Weber sees in such mastery a form of enslavement to routine, but is it not, for all this, still evolutionary? The Weberian reply is that rationalization, for all its centrality, is neither a necessary feature of evolution, nor an unchallenged feature of history. Against the formal rationality of impersonal rule-bound organization is set a counter-tendency toward substantive rationality, whereby commitment to ultimate values erupts to disrupt or transgress compliance with the existing order. This is often articulated through the personal charisma of individuals, and carried within the intimate networks of social movements or sects. While charisma can itself become routinised, it is not possible to deduce if and when it will arise, whether its routinization will be successful, or to rule out the emergence of new charismatic forms. If this counter-movement is taken into account, Weber cannot be

regarded, in any meaningful sense, as an evolutionist.

#### MULTI-CAUSALITY IN HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY

Weber's rejection of evolutionism is also closely connected with his use of a multi-causal approach to historical sociology. In contrast with monist approaches to history that reduce change to a single causal prime mover, Weber, as we have pointed out, upholds a radically multi-causal position. This has sometimes been obscured when particular works are taken out of context. While *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1930a [1904–5]) has often been taken as an anti-Marxist assertion of idealist causation focusing on the determining role of meaningful human agency, *Economy and Society* (1968 [1921]) has been seen in more materialist and structuralist terms, as an account of the way in which the institutions of the market, kinship, law, power and religion structure the life-chances of individuals.

The attempt to force Weber's sociology into mutually exclusive categories, emphasizing structure or agency, or idealism as against materialism, is, however, profoundly mistaken. His intention, reflected throughout his writings, was to transcend these dichotomies. There was no sustainable general causal theory able to undergird historical sociology. What was required instead was analysis open to the interplay of different elements in the constitution of the particular problem in question. The precise nature of this interplay needed to be arrived at in each case through empirical research guided by hypotheses stimulated through the construction of ideal-types.

In his careful exegesis of *Economy and Society*, Stephen Kalberg has laid bare the multi-causal architecture of Weber's approach. While meaningful social action is carried out by individuals rather than societies, such action tends to be patterned in form and to cohere around particular domains. These include 'the economy, rulership, religion, law, status groups, and universal organisations (family, clan and traditional neighbourhoods)' (Kalberg, 1994: 167). Each of these domains had an internal logic, structural forms and characteristic themes of its own. These are embodied in social meanings, articulated through values, traditions and norms, and borne by 'carrier

groups', such as class or religious organizations. Each domain may also be analysed as causally effective in its own right as well as being influenced by others. Neither the economy nor religion is causally pre-eminent in principle, even though there may be particular circumstances in which certain kinds of causal influences may be stronger than others. In situations of economic dynamism, for example, market inequalities may engender power conflict between social classes, whereas in periods of stationary or declining economic development, conflicts over social status may predominate.

In his important essay 'The Social Psychology of the World Religions' (1946c [1922-3]), Weber clarifies, in a most explicit way, the thorough-going character of his multi-causality. Here he returns to themes raised in the Protestant ethic debate, notably the relationship between the practical ethics encouraged by different religions and different types of economic activity. In examining the relationships between economic structures and economic ethics, and between religious ethics and economic ethics, he argues:

An economic ethic is not simply a function of a form of economic organisation; and just as little does the reverse hold true, namely that economic ethics unambiguously stamp the form of the economic organisation. No economic ethic has ever been determined solely by religion ... the religious determination of life-conduct ... is only one – note this – only one of the determinants of the economic ethic. (Weber, 1946c [1922-3]: 268). Multi-causality also extends to the possible causal influences of the social location or interests (for example class position and interest) of the carrier groups. These neither determine religious ethics, nor are determined by them.

The consequences of Weber's multi-dimensionality are profound. Methodologically, his approach is at variance with the practice of enumerative induction that is so widespread in sociological inquiry. This is based on the collection of empirical cases that support a particular version of causal primacy. If material or class determination is found, as in instances of the class basis of religious or ethnic conflict, this is often taken as a rebuttal of Weber, while if symbolic or religious determination is found, as in connections between Confucianism and the Asian Tiger economies, this is taken as confirmation. Neither approach engages with Weber's multi-causality

Substantively Weber's multi-dimensionality enabled him to develop the rich and complex, but ultimately unfinished, research programme,

encompassed in *Economy and Society*. Multi-causality did not, then, lead to a facile interactionism in which everything was causally related to everything else. Weber's comparative historical method led rather to exploration of the reasons for commonalities and differences in a wide range of economies, legal systems, religions and civilizations, and to a richer account of the uniqueness of the West. Meanwhile, in the completed sections of the historical sociology of religion, his interpretative inquiries generated extraordinary advances in comparative understanding of the determinants and consequences of patterns of religious ethics. Weber's range spanned analysis of Puritan this-worldly asceticism and Buddhist contemplative other-worldliness, to Confucian adaptation to this world, and Hindu absorption in devotional ritual and caste-based exclusion.

The common element here was the demonstration of the meaningfulness of social action within the religious domain. In contrast to notions of oriental otherness and exoticism, Weber strove to connect the pursuit of different religious values with his universal historical array of ideal-types. In this way Eastern religions were not irrational contrasts to occidental rationalism, but exhibited an internal rationality that connected means and ends. Once again we find historical sociology aiming beyond the speculative and conjectural play of cultural difference and anthropological unity inherited from the Enlightenment.

#### WEBER'S IMPACT ON HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY

Weber left no enduring school of historical sociology in any direct or straightforward sense. There is certainly no subset of Weberian historical sociologists working to the unfinished research agenda of interpretative sociology outlined in his writings. For several decades after his death his work was little used in Germany, and, with a few exceptions, such as the early work by Talcott Parsons (1937), little known outside. From the 1950s, Weberian influences and reference points became more prominent, but usually in a more diffuse or indirect sense. Early postwar American scholars tended to mine Weber, as one source among many, for 'variables' or 'factors' relevant to the transition from traditional to modern society and to variations

in the capacity of national societies to produce 'modern' institutions such as democracy. These might include ideology (for example, Protestantism), institutional arrangements within markets (for example, double-entry book-keeping), law and government (for example, the rule of law), and bearer classes and groupings (for example, lords and bureaucrats as well as emergent bourgeois).

Much of the use made of Weber was, moreover, mistaken or inaccurate, as in the grossly misconceived arguments about the idealism of the Protestant ethic thesis, and the presumption that he could be read simply as a theorist of modernization. Meanwhile the more subtle and historically informed contributions to historical sociology often looked more to the Marxist tradition than to Weber (for example, Skocpol, 1979; Wallerstein, 1974, 1979), pursued implicitly Weberian themes without any significant awareness of similarities with Weber's scholarship (for example, Marshall Hodgson's three-volume *The Venture of Islam* [1974]). And while Bendix's *Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait* (1962) established Weber's intellectual richness as a historical sociologist, it tended to downplay the theoretical and conceptual dimensions of his work (Kalberg, 1994: 16).

In more recent years, however, Weber's distinctive contributions to an interpretative version of comparative historical sociology have received closer attention. This has stemmed in part from a collapse of confidence in the evolutionary project of American modernization theory, underpinned more by structural-functional argument (Eisenstadt, 1963; Parsons, 1964; Smelser, 1959) than Weberianism. This approach is not as ahistorical as sometimes supposed, a larger problem being its tendency to underestimate the significance of social conflict and competing forms of 'societal community' within social change. With the industrial, student and counter-cultural conflicts of the 1960s, and subsequent challenges to an ever onward and upward future based on limitless economic growth, evolutionary optimism has become contested once more within society and scholarship. Weber's appreciation of the dark or fateful side of occidentalism, 'rationalism', alongside its enabling contributions to mastery of the material world, struck a more resonant chord among many who, like him, sought to tread the difficult path that lies behind discredited evolutionary optimism, on the one side, and cultural pessimism, on the other.

Work by Turner (1974) on Islam, Marshall (1982) and Poggi (1983) on the Protestant ethic, Holton (1986a) on cities, Collins (1986) on the historical geopolitics of state formation, Mann (1986, 1993) on social power and Gellner (1988) on the structuring of human societies represents, in different ways, a closer engagement with Weber's historical sociology, within the terrain of history as much as theory. This work is founded on comparisons between historical cases across time and/or space. It is also profoundly anti-teleological in temper. In no case, however, can it be regarded as representing a new school of neo-Weberian scholarship. There are several reasons for this. Some relate to the characteristics of Weber's work. Others are connected with the subsequent development of scholarship.

Weber's work is difficult to translate into a school of interpretation because it is not codified into an explicit set of general rules and propositions. Unlike Marx's historical materialism, or the axiomatic core of neo-classical economics, Weber's general legacy to scholarship is more complex, more alive to paradox and dilemma, and more ironic. While he is clear enough about the ideal-type methodology and left behind an array of general concepts and arguments about historical particulars, Weber's epistemological and existential temper is anti-systemic. All scholarship is value-relevant, and any given focus or relevance, with its attendant concepts, hypotheses, bodies of empirical research and findings, is subject to both challenge and change over time. This does not make scholarship transitory. Key questions persist, and what counts for scientific method in the social sciences does allow sounder explanations to be differentiated from the less sound, that is, for those who think scientific argument worthwhile. Beyond this, however, the dynamic flux and conflict between heterogenous world-views is all-pervasive. To be a Weberian is to believe that individuals must ultimately construct meaning and value relevance for themselves. Weber himself was personally attracted to the life-world of liberal anarchism. Although he did not go as far as Feyerabend, the twentieth-century philosopher of science, in proclaiming himself 'against method', the de-centring thrust of his work is clear. These characteristics are not propitious for the construction of a unified school of Weberian interpretation.

It is also the case, as Ernest Gellner points out, (1988) that the substantive Weberian

legacy is almost impossible to verify or falsify. Analysis of any particular issue or question is necessarily composed of a range of causal influences, and necessarily incomplete due to the infinite complexity of possible interactions. This applies to Weber's analyses as to any other. These 'open' generic features again make it hard to turn Weberianism into a relatively closed school of interpretation. If Weber really were simply an idealist, all would be different, but he was not.

Second, contemporary scholarship has proven more syncretic in character than a world of competing schools might imply. Marxist traditions in historical sociology, for example, are scarcely self-subsistent. Wallerstein and world-system theory, for example, has drawn on the economic anthropology of Polanyi, on the Braudelian historiography of the *longue durée*, as well as on a late twentieth-century Marxism, itself influenced by feminism. Intellectual history is characterized by a succession of canonical and iconoclastic phases, and we currently live more in the latter than the former.

As far as the Weberian legacy is concerned, it therefore may be more useful to think of the various syntheses that have been made between Weber's thinking and other lines of thinking which he failed to develop or take very far. These move us more explicitly into issues of evaluation.

#### SOME EVALUATIVE PROBLEMS

There are several ways in which Weber's historical sociology may be evaluated. One is to consider his substantive contribution to particular questions of historical interpretation. Before embarking on this, it is important to clarify some more general theoretical problems with and limits to his work, and the extent to which syntheses between Weber's and other positions have proven possible and useful.

Interpretative sociology of the kind that Weber practised is only one of a number of possible versions of interpretative sociology that can be applied in historical sociology. Weber's approach to establishing the meaning of action was pursued, so many of his critics argue, in a direction that neglected or foreclosed on a number of alternative meaning-related perspectives. Subjectivity, as understood by Weber, was typically pursued in a monologic rather than dialogic fashion

(Habermas, 1984). This focus, evident throughout his sociology of religion, his discussions of charisma and in his influential essays on the vocations of science (Weber, 1946b [1919]) and politics (Weber, 1946a [1919]), emphasized the driving personal force of the individual virtuoso performing leadership roles, rather than the inter-subjective negotiation of meaning between individuals. To be sure, this monologic focus did not exclude discussion of the social milieu, including 'bearer' groupings and institutions within which action took place. Yet its paradigmatic model of social action was skewed to individual assertions of moral or political will, and to the clash of heterogeneous wills and purposes. While Weber was keenly aware that individual agency of this kind might become rationalized into impersonal routines, this spectre was treated as fateful precisely because it challenged his privileged model of autonomous actors.

For Weber, as Hennis (1988) points out, there was great moral concern to establish the kinds of individual people or personality-types to which particular social and political arrangements gave rise. This focus, like so much of his work, had strong origins in classical thought, especially Stoicism, with its emphasis on self-command, and the virtuoso ethic of personal responsibility for the living of one's life according to self-directed principles. This legacy, as mediated through Puritanism, and the work of Kant and Nietzsche, gave Weber's work its strong monologic quality. There are several profound consequences of this. One is to draw attention away from interest in inter-subjective moral and political milieu as might be found in collective organizations and social movements. The social history of E.P. Thompson (1963), in which inter-subjective experiences of communities is at variance with quantitative data on improving living standards, while largely Marxist in inspiration, is none the less indicative of directions that Weber might have followed had his sociology encouraged a greater interest in democratic self-determination.

Another consequence of Weber's monologic sociology is to underplay alternative forms or modalities of subjectivity. These include mentalities as studied by Georges Lefebvre in *The Great Fear of 1789* (1973) and by the *Annales* school, or work on historical narrative, language and memory. Another form of social action, the emotions, figures briefly in Weber's typology, only to be neglected in his

theoretical and substantive historical work (Barbalet, 1999). It is certainly true that Weber's personal anchorage in Stoic liberal Protestantism was shaken by involvement with anarchist culture, extra-legal politics and adventures in eroticism, leading to a certain distancing from the ascetic ethics of self-command (Mitzman, 1971). Barbalet is not at all clear, however, that these did much to loosen the grip of his conventional ethical standpoint, or to encourage a greater awareness of emotions as autonomous elements in social action (1999: 343-4).

For all these limitations, it is equally clear that Weber's interpretative sociology does provide a key reference point in a number of broader syntheses of a multi-causal kind. Both the Frankfurt School of critical theory and Talcott Parsons, for example, sought to integrate Weber with Freud (Kaye, 1992). There are limits to this endeavour, however, especially where Weber's radical scepticism about the possibility of social integration is pressed by Parsons into the service of the development of a binding normative order, akin to Freud's super-ego principle. The Frankfurt school's use of Weber to answer Marxist-inspired questions about the failure of revolutionary protest against capitalism utilizes his 'iron cage' argument about compliance through rationalization, alongside a Freudian emphasis on sublimation. These two examples indicate, amongst other things, the availability of Weber for very different purposes, and draw attention to the ambivalence of his work for subsequent theorists.

A rather different synthesis, offered by Michael Mann (1986), picks up Weber's opposition to teleological constructions of evolutionary change, his methodological resistance to the idea of society as an organic entity, and his emphasis on multiple sources of power. These are integrated by Mann into a somewhat different conceptualization of power into four types, the ideological, economic, political and military. This list, as can be seen, combines what might be termed structural and interpretative elements. The particular emphasis on military power (in its technological and organizational features and consequences) as a distinct element in social analysis takes Weber's emphasis on *realpolitik* much further than Weber himself was to do. But it also, like Parsons, returns to the issue of normative order and to Durkheim. While citing the importance of the 'rational restlessness' of occidental psychology, Mann also sees normative pacification, whether

religious or class-based, as a crucial element in explaining the history of power and the rise of rational capitalism.

Mann's synthesis of the structural and interpretative, and of Weber with Durkheim, is striking not simply for its radically multi-causal orientation, but also for its sympathy with Weber's open-ended and agnostic approach to macro-historical patterning. It is, however, one thing to reject causal prime movers and another to reject 'partial patterns'. These are effectively explanations of particular historical questions or developmental sequences. What is remarkable, when we come to do this, is not the many limitations, silences and misconceptions in Weber's grand historical sweep, but the sense that his sociology was able to ask so many of the key questions.

To take a broad sweep, his sociology of religion, while incomplete, is certainly weak on Catholicism, underplays the rationalist emphasis in Islam (Turner, 1974, 1992), over-emphasizes the other-worldliness of Buddhism (Gellner, 1982; Tambiah, 1973), and is superficial in its treatment of the syncretism of Japanese religion (Robertson, 1992: 92). Mabbett (1999) points to a tendency in Weber to essentialize the world religions around contingent historically specific features, thereby downplaying the internal variations in religious traditions. None the less his work remains of crucial importance for its analysis of the tensions and dilemmas as well as the consequences connecting religious practices with different kinds of social action. Similarly in political sociology, the tensions between rationalization and both charisma and the politics of conviction continue to be a major analytical theme. Weaker aspects, by contrast, include a discussion of democracy which fundamentally downplays the creativity of civil society from below in favour of plebiscitary leadership-democracy from above (Baehr, 1999), and Weber's highly simplistic assumptions about the impersonal characteristics of bureaucratic organization (Coleman, 1990).

In areas of historical sociology where key contributors such as Foucault or the *Annales* school make few explicit references to the Weberian legacy, there are none the less clear parallels with a number of aspects of his work. In Foucault's case these parallels are evident, as Turner (1992) points out, in discussions of the construction of and (especially in technologies for the) cultivation of self, arising in Weber's case from issues of spirituality and

suffering. These are evident in spite of a very different approach to epistemology and the validity of science. In the case of *Annales*, Roth (1979) has argued that many *Annales* school emphases were foreshadowed within the circle of social and economic historians like Gothein and Sombart, with whom Weber mixed, and for whom the integration of cultural history with structural processes in geography and the economy was crucial. While Weber broke with the historians on issues of conceptualization, he shared both the multi-causality and interest in the long run that is evident in Braudel, and in what might be conjunctural 'middle-range' interactions, positioned, as it were, between the long term and everyday life.

The overall evaluation of Weber's historical sociology is, then, a paradoxical and ironic one. While he left no school of interpretation behind, he remains profoundly influential both in relation to issues of general approach and methodology and in matters of substance. While his work was unfinished, his substantive legacy is in many respects so ambivalent and open to further multi-causal development that it is difficult for later writers to be clear (assuming they are interested) whether they are following or departing from the Weberian approach. What is clear is that the project of interpretative sociology is far broader than Weber's vision of it, even though many who seek to broaden the approach are sometimes rather unwitting Weberians in their commitment to meaning and the irreducible nature of culture. What is even clearer is that Weber's vision is ultimately focused on the problems and dilemmas of social actors and the answers they identify and act upon, rather than on the search for emancipatory solutions to social problems.

Weber may be the doyen of historical sociology, but many suspect the further paradox that this relentless analyst of social change has a strong commitment to the status quo. A fitting Weberian riposte to this charge would be that all references to the status quo depend on a particular evaluative viewpoint. The continuing existence of social injustice is one amongst many value-relevant viewpoints and thus many viewpoints from which to conceive the status quo. Weber, in his lifetime, was critical of the rhetorical posturing of both conservative and radical perspectives on the future of Germany. This was reflected in broader scepticism *both* towards pious special-pleading connecting specific institutions with emancipatory change *and* towards the spurious orderliness of the status quo.

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## *Evolutionary and Functionalist Historical Sociology*

JOHN HOLMWOOD AND MAUREEN O'MALLEY

Of all the so-called 'foundational' approaches to historical sociology presented in this volume, the two least likely to find adherents are evolutionary and functional accounts. There are three standard reasons for why such approaches are held to be inadequate. The first is that evolutionism is tied to a positivistic and an over-generalizing view of history; the second is that functionalism is inherently teleological and conservative; and the third is that evolutionary functionalism invariably produces a developmental scheme of human history. These deficiencies are frequently traced to a common problem, a neglect of human action. Our intention in this discussion is to show why and how these criticisms are themselves deficient, and to demonstrate that they exacerbate the problems of evolutionary functionalism while proving inadequate in the alternatives they suggest for explaining social change.

### **HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY AND THE SCIENCE OF SOCIETY**

Sociology's very first formulations proposed evolutionary theory as the foundation of a scientific approach to social change. These early aspirations to a science of history have often been diagnosed as a conceit of nineteenth-century historiography, in which, as Garland Allen puts it, 'social evolutionists ... sought to

discover the laws of historical development that would provide the basis for understanding the past and even possibly for predicting the future' (1992: 217). Historians of the last fifty years, as well as more recent postmodern sociologists, have been largely intolerant of such 'grand' evolutionary approaches. On the one hand, historians have tended to emphasize the importance of the particular and subjective meaning; on the other, postmodernists have cast doubts on continuity and large historical narratives of any kind.<sup>1</sup> Many critics now would simply argue that history is not a science at all, and that evolutionary sociology's claims otherwise mean it misunderstands the nature of historiography and is founded, therefore, on a false basis.<sup>2</sup>

However, attempts to discount the appropriateness of scientific criteria to historical inquiry have been undermined by recent developments in post-positivist philosophies of science. These approaches to science emphasize the explanatory successes and progressive character of science, but do so by transforming the once-dominant positivist framework. Kuhn (1962), Lakatos (1970) and Laudan (1996), for example, focus in different ways on the problem-solving nature of scientific activity in which 'truths' are reconstructed rather than accumulated in a linear fashion. In this way, science appears discontinuous in terms both of its categories and of its

objects, and as organized into paradigms or research programmes. Significantly, for our argument, post-positivist theorists of science have either utilized evolutionary metaphors in order to capture the progressive character of scientific change in terms of lines of descent,<sup>3</sup> or have explicitly espoused an evolutionary theory of science in order to capture its history (Hull, 1988; Toulmin, 1972). We believe that these applications of evolutionary frameworks are contemporary exemplars for evolutionary historical sociology. They demonstrate the viability of general evolutionary accounts of change in domains other than that of biology.

Post-positivist theories of science have also called into question another common criticism of the ambition for a science of history. The standard view of explanation within positivism is that of the 'covering-law model', which posits the symmetry between explanation and prediction. According to Hempel (1942, 1965), historical explanations did not have the form of the covering-law model and could only be characterized as mere 'explanatory sketches'. The problem with this position, however, is that if it were true for human history, it would also have to be true for natural history. Evolutionary biology, therefore, would also have to be excluded from lawful science. This was indeed the attitude of many philosophers of science, including (at least, initially) Popper (1974: 136). Post-positivism shifts the terms of the debate by looking more carefully at the history of scientific change. This indicates that older understandings of the natural sciences were modelled too closely on a single discipline, that of physics. From a reconstructive point of view, it becomes obvious that defining biology as a science requires a different understanding of successful explanation (Scriven, 1959). Indeed, looking at the history of successful biological explanations leads commentators such as Robert Richards (1992) to argue that *all* explanations are explanatory sketches and that the covering-law model exemplified in physics is no less dependent upon wider narrative devices to fix its terms. Under a post-positivist understanding of science, then, the idea of a science of history looks much less problematic than it does under positivism, and the first criticism against evolutionary historical sociology is no longer a serious obstacle. The next criticism, however, would appear to be less tractable.

For many sociologists, it is precisely because evolutionary theory is associated with

functionalism that it is rejected. Functionalism is straightforwardly regarded as an illegitimate, teleological form of analysis where consequences are held to call forth their causes (for a discussion, see Isajiw, 1968). There are two aspects to this problem. One is that while it is clear that the teleological form of explanation is inadequate and that many functionalists have committed this error, illegitimate teleology is *not* a necessary consequence of functionalism (Isajiw, 1968; Turner and Maryanski, 1988). The evolutionary paradigm in biology since the Modern Synthesis, for example, has succeeded in removing teleology from functional accounts of change.<sup>4</sup> Evolutionary theory there encompasses variation as the explanation of the origin of a new form, with fitness as the explanation of its survival and reproduction. Why should the situation be logically different in historical sociology? Why shouldn't the integration of evolution and functionalist approaches be the solution to the problem of teleology in sociology, rather than its accentuation?

The second point is that the mere recognition of the problem of illegitimate teleology does not solve or prevent it. In the case of Spencer, his theoretical weaknesses are at least partly the result of his failure to understand the problem.<sup>5</sup> He explicitly claimed that 'to understand how an organization originated and developed, it is requisite to understand the need subserved at the outset and afterwards' (1897: 2). Parsons's teleological errors, on the other hand, occurred *in spite of* his clear recognition of the illegitimacy of backwards causation. Durkheim, too, was careful to distinguish between the explanation of the reproduction of an item and the causal explanation of its origins, writing that, 'when... the explanation of a social phenomenon is undertaken, we must seek separately the efficient cause which produces it and the function it fulfils. We use the word "function", in preference to "end" or "purpose", precisely because social phenomena do not generally exist for the useful results they produce' (1964 [1895]: 95). Yet Durkheim's care was to little avail, for he too slipped into a deficient form of functionalist teleology that was similar to Spencer's. The problem of functionalism cannot, therefore, be simply solved by recognizing the dangers of attributing causal powers to effects, and we will elaborate below on what the solution actually is and why the replication occurs.

The other standard charge of functionalism is that it nurtures conservatism and promotes

social arrangements to maintain the status quo. This criticism, we believe, is unjustified (and, indeed, frequently only arises as an adjunct of the previous criticism). Functionalist explanations are invariably adaptationist (or adjustment-oriented) accounts, and understanding change is built into them (Hempel, 1965: 323–4; Nagel, 1956: Ch. 10). Although functionalist approaches may have trouble identifying how to intervene in processes in order to bring about desired change, it would be hard to think of any intervention that would not have unintended consequences, no matter the explanation that informed it (see Hull, 1988: 355–6, and our discussion of Spencer, below). It is the empirical interconnectedness of any system's elements and processes that is the source of the problem, not functionalism *per se*, and Spencer clearly recognized this issue. Functionalist accounts *can* be used to justify conservative politics, but they can also be used in the service of any other political agenda (Merton 1968 [1948]; Nagel, 1956: 282–3).

The greatest problem remaining in these common criticisms is that when conjoined with evolutionary theory, functionalism has almost invariably produced a linear and developmental approach to history. In functional-developmental history, the modern capitalist West is always presented as the outcome of a necessary and progressive sequence of stages. Critics of this interpretation of history usually consider development to be a mechanical social process, which, while being historically inept, is also (more importantly) irredeemable, because it does not give due consideration to human agency. These criticisms of the unsatisfactory teleology of functionalism, where *system needs* apparently call forth their fulfilment, usually set out a different teleology of *human purposes*. This argument proposes that a proper recognition of the role of intentional action would, in fact, resolve many of the problems of functionalism.<sup>6</sup>

The history of sociological theory, however, does not advance the critics' cause. Each generation of evolutionary functionalism has set itself the task of fully accounting for human agency and its capacity to bring about change. Spencer's teleological functionalism was deeply concerned with individual human action, conceiving of it as the driving force of social evolution and one with a superior moral claim. He was followed by a wave of sociologists whose overriding objective was also to reconcile evolutionary theories of social change

with a theory of purposeful human action and individual responsibility (for example, Ward, 1897 [1883], 1906 [1893]; Giddings, 1906 [1893], 1922 [1896]; Hobhouse, 1913 [1911], 1966 [1924]). All of these evolutionary sociologists are now largely forgotten, except as historical curiosities, precisely because they failed to produce that reconciliation. Parsons, as we shall show, is a more recent representative of that same failure.

The argument of this chapter is that understanding why sociology has so far failed to achieve such integration will allow us to see more clearly both how to deliver the promise of evolutionary and functional historical sociology, and how it is distinct from its usual representation in the sociological literature. In the process, we shall identify a paradox at the heart of current understandings of historical sociology. We shall show that a deficient, teleological and developmental approach to history *frequently derives from attempts to overcome the problems of evolutionary functionalism by resort to what is believed to be an alternative emphasis on human agency*. In part, this explains the curious phenomenon of why writers as diverse as Giddens (1976, 1981) Habermas (1976 [1973], 1979 [1976]) and Eder (1992, 1999) can identify the limitations of functionalism and argue for the peculiarities of the human species in terms of the special role of communication through meaning and symbols, and yet be brought back to a developmental scheme of evolutionary history. Thus, Habermas and Eder emphasize collective 'learning', where, as Habermas puts it, 'not *learning*, but *not-learning* is the phenomenon that calls for explanation at the socio-cultural stage of development' (1976 [1973]: 15).<sup>7</sup> Paradoxically, then, the early foundations of evolutionary sociology appear to be 'true' foundations, however deficient they are, because they persist in a variety of theories which claim their validity through 'refuting' this historical basis.

In this chapter, then, we are concerned with two ways in which the task of explicating foundations can be understood and the relationship between them: the first is that of the historical roots and assumptions of the approach, while the second is that of identifying the factors that ensure its replication. Although the history of sociology offers many evolutionary functionalists who would typify the troubled nature of functionalist analysis, it is the relationship between Spencer and Parsons that most clearly exemplifies both

aspects of the problematic with which we are concerned. In what follows, we shall argue that Spencer's evolutionary functionalism is, indeed, deficient. However, the problem is not one that can be solved by resort to a teleology of 'action'. This is Parsons's solution and, after him, it has become the *default* response in sociological theory. We shall conclude by suggesting an alternative interpretation of the evolutionary paradigm in historical sociology.

#### SPENCER: THE PROBLEMS OF TYPOLOGICAL HISTORY

Spencer typifies the ambivalent relationship evolutionary sociology has had with history, and exemplifies why evolutionary approaches are not often considered to be proper candidates for historical sociology. History on its own, Spencer argued, was far inferior to a synthesizing evolutionary framework: 'Until you have got a true theory of humanity, you cannot interpret history; and when you have got a true theory of humanity, *you do not want history*' (1852, in Duncan, 1908: 62; 1929 [1860]: 34–5; 1961 [1873]: 26–33).

Such a theory of humanity, Spencer continued, was to be found in observable facts and the general laws of life<sup>8</sup>. These laws, his investigations told him, were fundamentally evolutionary. 'There are not several kinds of Evolution having traits in common, but one Evolution going on everywhere after the same manner,' he proclaimed (1937 [1862]: 490). To establish this, he outlined an over-arching theory of evolution based on universal principles which were applicable to all phenomena and observable in their effects as an increase in complexity. Deducing from the primary principles of existence (the indestructibility of matter, the continuation of motion and, most fundamentally, the persistence of force), he defined evolution as '*an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion; during which the matter passes from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a relatively definite, coherent heterogeneity*' (1937: 358–9).

Spencer conceived of the specialization of functions and their increasing interdependence as the 'incidental' effects of a constant drive to equilibration, in which a temporary balance was reached between dissipating and integrating forces external and internal to the system. All systems, therefore, were in a

perpetual process of equilibration even in fairly stable environmental conditions. Within his statement of the different aspects of human evolution (biological, psychological, social and moral) he posited a dual evolutionary process in which Lamarckist and Darwinian mechanisms worked hierarchically to achieve *development*.<sup>9</sup> This is where the key flaw of Spencer's 'evolutionary' theory is located. Evolution in terms of *selection* is opportunistic.<sup>10</sup> It follows no pathway, and is exogenously determined. Development, however, means a sequence of changes driven by the internal state of the developing entity, in a way that overrules environmental influences (Nisbet, 1986: 42; Sober, 1984: 153). Spencer's conflation of evolution and development continues to bedevil evolutionary accounts in historical sociology and, of course, contributes to its teleological character, where evolution is conceived as the progressive realization of higher forms.

Spencer's analysis of society depended explicitly on the close parallel he drew between social organization and the way in which organisms worked. The 'scaffolding' of the organic analogy<sup>11</sup> at least partly transformed the principles of classical mechanics on which his more general evolutionary theory was based, by emphasizing that social evolution was the *adaptive* increase of differentiation and integration. Von Baer's developmental embryology was Spencer's means of fusing differentiation and development into a 'universal law of change', since it specified a direction to evolution through a progressive increase of organizational complexity. Societies exhibited the same processes of equilibration as any other system, and their evolutionary paths were responses to environmental factors ranging from resource availability to inter-societal conflict. Natural and social environments were the substantive forces behind evolutionary change. Environmental conditions worked either *directly* on system units to bring about equilibration, or *indirectly*, through the elimination of the maladapted by natural selection or survival of the fittest.

The direct process was Lamarckian,<sup>12</sup> and it explained individual difference as a consequence of ongoing and direct adaptation of individuals to environmental change. The indirect was Darwinian, and it explained species or society difference as the greater adaptive success in a competitive situation of certain structural adaptations. This conceptual strategy allowed Spencer to absorb Darwin's natural selection as merely a supplementary

mechanism within his theory of social evolution.<sup>13</sup> 'Survival of the fittest' became an account of collective and *not* of individual processes; the development of the socially integrated individual was accounted for by the Lamarckian mechanism. The mechanisms worked together<sup>14</sup> since individual habits were inheritable (through embryonic germ cells), and eventually, the better adaptations would dominate quantitatively (through elimination or preservation). Social progress was the overall result. The complete fulfilment of individual human nature and interests was, in Spencer's vision, the final development of society. Progress, therefore, was an indivisible goal that was achieved by the accumulated action of all individuals within a society (1888 [1850]: 482–3, 490; 1978 [1892–3]: Vol. 1, 332).

The progressive Lamarckian emphasis makes it very difficult to write off Spencer's social evolutionism as a ruthless 'social Darwinist' culling-out of inferior individuals and groups. While he did accept the trials of life as necessary to the emergence and development of good qualities, he also genuinely believed that altruism and a sensibility for justice were progressive developments in the minds and behaviours of individuals, as well as in societies. It was state-administered forms of benevolence which he condemned (1981b [1871]: 473; 1981c [1884]).<sup>15</sup> Even here, his object of attack was not so much intervention itself as the over-simplified understandings of social processes and simplistic conceptions of what intervention could achieve. The very complexity of social phenomena in advanced societies meant unintended effects were rampant and development could as easily be obstructed as fostered by social engineering. 'A fly seated on the surface of a body has about as good a conception of its internal structure as one of these schemers has of the social organization in which he is embedded,' he complained (1897: 403). Only by realizing the functional needs of a society in relation to particular external or internal conditions could even limited state intervention be justified, especially since he correlated the increasing limitation of the state's functions with the progressive increase of individual liberty (for example, 1893b [1879, 1882]: 660).

To analyse the needs of social systems, Spencer distinguished between three basic requirements of regulation, sustenance and distribution. They governed the evolution of the structures that carried out those functions (1893a [1876]: Pt 2, Chs 6–9; 1898–9 [1864,

1867]: Vol. 1, Pt 1, Ch. 3; 1961: 54–6). He conceived of 'the multiplication of particular structures *adapted to particular ends*' (1893b: 659, emphasis added), and stressed that these 'specially-adapted' structures naturally performed their 'purpose' better than a more generally adapted structure. Here we see a theoretically laden interpretation of adaptation. Instead of simply adapting to present and prior circumstances, adaptation is made in relation to achieving certain purposes. Divergence, rather than underlying adaptation as it does in modern biology, was held by Spencer to be an *effect* of adaptation (for example, 1888: 75–6; 1898–9: Vol. 1, Pt 2, Ch 9; see also La Vergata, 1995: 223). 'Structural changes are the slowly accumulating results of functional changes,' he repeatedly insisted (1937: 406). Spencer was obviously minimizing the significance of *chance* variation (Darwin's perspective), overriding it with a more 'meaningful' Lamarckian law of structures and systems constantly meeting the demand for fitness 'until the[ir] adaptation is complete' (1888: 74–5; 1892 [1886]: Vol. 1, Ch 9; 1908 [1899]: 558–9; 1937: 455–63).<sup>16</sup>

While all see that the *immediate* function of our chief social institutions is the securing of an orderly social life by making these conditions [of harmonious social life] imperative, very few see that their *further* [more important] function is that of fitting men to fulfil these conditions spontaneously. The two functions are inseparable. (1961: 318, emphasis added).

Such a strategy not only conflates causes and effects, but can also lead to the general presumption that all structures should be analysed as actually adaptive or functional. As Alexander Rosenberg points out in his discussion of sociological functionalism, with such a perspective, 'nothing will refute the hypothesis that the institution has some function or other' (1995 [1985]: 149–50). If survival 'needs' cannot be established independently of the actual survival of an institution, a circular argument results: the structure persists, therefore it meets needs (or the other way around). Consequently, the approach can be 'empirically empty' and condemned to explanatory vacuity.

Further to this problem, however, is how functionalism generates developmental classifications of social change. 'Functional adaptation is the sole cause of development,' said Spencer (1908: 541), making it clear that

his version of functionalism did not account for *all* change as adaptive or functional. By building criteria of progress into the evolutionary functionalist model, he compared existing societies' structures to ideal standards and diagnosed some of them (such as an interventionist government in a complex society that was without external threats or internal fractures) as maladaptive or dysfunctional. Freedom was the measure of progress in Spencer's social evolutionary analyses.<sup>17</sup> 'The greatest attainable amount of individual liberty' was, as far as he was concerned, 'the true end' of social evolution (1892: Vol. 3, 382). The key functionalist question Spencer asked throughout his evolutionary analyses was, therefore, not 'how does it function to achieve order?', but 'how does it function to achieve freedom?' Spencer's conception of an ideal social trajectory, then, is a perfect illustration of Rosenberg's claim that 'functionalism is a natural development of the strategy of finding meaning in human affairs' (1995: 146). Social institutions and their evolution are invested with purpose (above and beyond individual purpose), and a progressive pattern attributed to social history.

On the basis of an eclectic array of evidence gleaned from secondary sources on past and present societies, Spencer constructed two typologies of societies which were obliquely and directly concerned with categorizing social structures and organization in relation to how they facilitated freedom. The first divided societies into four stages of organizational complexification, which he termed simple, compound, doubly-compound and trebly-compound. The primary categorical distinction was 'the degree of composition', or how many units clustered together to form the society. The subsequent categories were secondarily described by the type and stability of political leadership as well as level of sedentariness or settlement. Shifts from one category to another were driven by population growth, followed by the integration of simple social units, and the increasing heterogeneity and co-ordination of an evolving society's components and their functions (1893a: Pt 2, 537–44; 1961: 309–11). War functioned to catalyse this consolidation process, since 'simple growth' and 'direct union' did not lead on their own to the next stage. That function, however, was cancelled by the social arrangements of the most complex societies.

Heterogeneity of structure was not itself invested with ethical desirability, and for this reason, the differentiation typology was only

supplementary to the second. Spencer's second typology made the connection between complexity and freedom clearer by positing a polar categorization of social modes of organization: militant and industrial (1893b: Pt 5, Chs 17–18). The former described a society in which the outer system needs for defence (and offence) predominated; the latter, one in which the inner system needs for sustenance dominated the organization of activities. These types were 'distinct in origin and nature': one arose consciously from the coercive pursuit of social ends, whereas its alter arose unconsciously from the co-operative pursuit of individual ends. For the most part, the militant-industrial schema could be mapped into the first typology so that all societies (except the very simplest) had both features, with one type relatively dominant over the other (1893a: Pt 2, 544). Spencer also, however, presumed that social systems with less centralized regulatory systems and more developed sustaining systems were more advanced evolutionarily (1893a: Pt 2, 567; 1893b: Pt 5, 568; 1897: 361; see also Peel, 1971: 208).<sup>18</sup> Consequently, even though his ideal typology claimed these two modes of organization to be antithetical and distinct in their origins, it also implied an optimal directional shift from a militant to an industrial phase,<sup>19</sup> one that occurred within advanced compound societies in particular.

In this evolutionary incorporation of organizational types, Spencer further proposed that the industrial stage was not the ultimate or most desirable end of social evolution. Beyond it lay the achievement of an 'ethical state' of humankind, a state that he occasionally speculated on as a shift from 'life to work to work for life', and sustenance to gratification (1893a: Pt 2, 563).<sup>20</sup> It obviously represented the most progressive synthesis of individual and society described by his two mechanisms, and embodied the full realization of equal freedom. The real purpose, then, of Spencer's second typology was to capture the conditions necessary for the achievement of this future ethical state as well as to describe freedom's increase. Institutional heterogeneity was one of those requisites, and this is why the first typology is subordinate to the second.

Spencer's undoubted drive towards internal cohesion of the typologies and mechanisms within his theory, however, by no means indicates his theory of social change to be adequate. We do not believe that it is possible to forgive Spencer the deficient form of his

functionalism and focus on the 'profound substance' of his sociology, as Jonathan Turner urges (1985: 55). The problem is that Spencer's functionalism is all-pervasive when his sociology is looked at in the light of his moral theory, which, in turn, is a necessary part of his synthetic ambition. Moreover, the typologies his functionalism helped produce have little to commend them from a historical-sociological point of view. The militant-industrial distinction exhibits all the problems of unfalsifiable ideal-types, and both it and the differentiation typology impose a stage model on history and its interpretation, pressing historical evidence into a pre-defined shape. Spencer is notorious for discarding many items that provided counter-examples to his classifications, with the justification they were 'incidental' rather than 'essential' pieces of evidence, or for accepting travellers' narratives with little substantiation simply because they fit the typologies (Brinton, 1937: 703; Haller, 1971: 128-9; Peel, 1972: xxviii).<sup>21</sup> These failings are part of a bigger problem, in which sociological typologies are derived from *a priori* categories and ruled by a developmental logic (Nisbet, 1969: 162-3). The whole scheme becomes simply a template to be applied to the historical record.

We must stress here the distinction we are making between the two processes of development and evolution. Development is not evolution:<sup>22</sup> 'they are altogether different phenomena,' says biologist Peter Medawar, who is unable to make up his mind as to 'whether Spencer grasped this point or not' (1967: 45-6). Spencer certainly made a distinction between the two processes, but only to claim that development was an '*increase of structure* and not [an] *increase in bulk*' (1898-9: Vol. 1, 162). Evolution, however, entailed both processes and so was itself developmental. This conceptual conflation of evolution and development consequently put Spencer's vast historical data collection at the service of a project with little capacity for further theoretical reconstruction. Although evolution in Darwin's day *did* mean development and complexification (Bowler, 1975: 109), the reconstructions of Darwinism (through probabilistic reasoning, Mendelian and molecular biology) into the Modern Synthesis no longer permit the conceptual conflation of development and evolution.<sup>23</sup> Only by conceiving of evolution as a process of directionless selection could the functionalist impasse have been avoided, and with his ideas of purpose and

freedom at stake, Spencer was not prepared to submit to selectionism. He thereby perpetuated a tradition of conceptualizing social change as purposeful, meaningful and directional, which was precisely the source of his appeal to Parsons.

#### PARSONS: TELEOLOGICAL HISTORY AND THE TELEOLOGY OF ACTION

It is our claim that the attempt to find a solution in *action* to objectionable functionalist teleology is precisely what leads Parsons back to Spencer, just as it is the resort to action on the part of Parsons's critics that takes them back to the forms of functionalism they object to in Parsons (and Spencer). Parsons (1937: 3) began his first major work elaborating an action frame of reference with a repudiation of Spencer, and yet, scarcely two decades later, he came to rely on a Spencerian concept of differentiation to understand social change. In conjunction with his own four-function paradigm, Parsons set out a developmental account of the emergence of modern societies in terms of stages derived from the application of his functional requirements to historical societies (1966, 1971). As with Spencer, Parsons's typologies were generated by the logic of his *a priori* categorical scheme. For both of them, concrete empirical systems were not themselves the basis for the re-specification of types and underlying categories: they were either taken as confirming them, or they were ignored.

Although he believed he disagreed with the early evolutionists about what progress entailed, Parsons was as convinced as any of them that social evolutionary theory was a 'paradigm of a progressive, developmental social change' (1977: 297). He summarized this paradigm's guiding statement as follows:

The assumption is that, in the complex of 'goal directed thrusts' in a system of action, there will on the one hand be some kind of balance between internal pressures towards innovative change and factors of situational and environmental opportunity for it. If the combined 'pressure' of these factors is sufficient they will bring about some kind of 'outlet' for the tendency to change. For this to happen new structures and processes may be necessary. (1977: 275)

The criterion he considered to be the measuring stick of advance was 'greater generalized adaptive capacity' (1966: 26; 1977: 230-1).

Adaptation concerned 'the relations of a living system to its external environment' (1977: 111).<sup>24</sup> Adaptive upgrading occurred with the improvement of a social system's capacity to adapt to its environments,<sup>25</sup> and was, he believed, observable and measurable. Parsons's ability to 'measure' this increased capacity, however, depended entirely on his description of the process that supposedly enabled it: differentiation.

Differentiation occurred with the splitting of a generalized structural unit (meeting a number of functional requirements) into functionally specialized units. These specialized structures were able to attain their functional goals far more efficiently than their more general predecessors (1977: 51, 282). The system goal, over time, was more *effective* performance, a claim Parsons justified by citing Mayr's (1974) famous account of teleonomy or direction-seeking behaviour in organisms (1977: 112). The higher the species, the greater the importance of this factor. A divergence from Spencer's differentiation can be noted here. Parsons focused on structural differentiation and did not theorize the differentiation of the four general functions (which remained static categories, features of all societies), whereas Spencer foregrounded functional differentiation rather than general functions.<sup>26</sup> Just as for Spencer, however, Parsons's differentiation led to the system problem of integration and how the solidarity of the social entity was to be achieved. Since differentiation was concerned with the relationship of structures to external phenomena, the concept of integration, conversely, was about the internal relationships of the system. Integration could, therefore, be considered to be adaptation in relation to internal environments. Foremost amongst integrative processes (from the point of view of development) was inclusion, which, according to Parsons, referred to the incorporation of newer, more functionally efficient structures within the normative framework of the societal community (1971: 27; 1977: 293).

Parsons made an explicit turn to biology as a source of analogy for the process of social development in terms of 'evolutionary universals'. Vision was an example of an evolutionary universal in the animal kingdom; the hand and brain were good examples of evolutionary universals for human biological evolution. All organisms, said Parsons, had to develop vision *in order* to evolve to 'higher levels'. The structures of vision might have been somewhat different, but their function was the same.

Hands and brains illustrated the increased adaptive capacity of a species, even though losses of lower-level functions (locomotion, infantile independence) may have been incurred as a result (1964: 340). In societies, the most basic evolutionary universals were fourfold: religion (as the most basic form of culture), language (for communication), kinship (for organization) and technology. These complexes were definitional of human society in its most *primitive* form, and came as a set (1964: 341–2).

After these, in the next tier, come the evolutionary universals that shifted society into the *intermediate* level: social stratification and cultural legitimation. They were accompanied by the emergence of written language. These processes could most generally be described as the differentiation of the cultural and social systems. Initially unified, these systems had now lost their identity with each other and could never be reunited. Stratification was the 'hierarchical status differentiation that cuts across the overall seamless web of kinship' (1964: 346). It functioned to permit dynamic leadership and more flexible use of resources by 'releasing' the society from the obstacles of ascription (in the early stages of stratification at least), as did its partner universal. Cultural legitimation was closely connected to stratification, according to Parsons, and both together were prerequisites for social advance. Legitimation entailed the 'differentiation of cultural definitions' from 'taken-for-granted fusion with the social structure' and the institutionalization of the legitimating function (1964: 346). Parsons was most concerned with the institutionalized identification of a society's members with that society. It was invariably political in its effects, he claimed, although always based in religious sentiment. This identification functioned to co-ordinate action collectively, once the traditional adherence to a non-differentiated kinship system had been supplanted (1964: 345–6). Written language was the critical breakthrough which assisted this process by giving a society an objective record of its culture and norms, thereby further crystallizing the independence of the cultural system from the social system it circumscribed (1966: 26–7).

These universals laid the ground for the next advance, from intermediate to *modern*. The prerequisites that had to stimulate such a shift were administrative bureaucracy, paired with money and markets, and universalized norms in partnership with democratic association.

Bureaucracy was institutionalized power, backed up by the system-wide legitimation of that power. As was Weber, Parsons was convinced that bureaucracy was the most efficient form yet invented of administration, and the only form capable of organizing the specialized operations of a modern society (1964: 347–9). Power had to be concentrated for performance to improve, and that was why bureaucracy was needed for social advance. It was connected to the capacity to utilize resources effectively and to meet general *collective* goals. Money and markets, which ‘liberated’ resources from ascriptive and particularistic bonds, allowed these resources to be used flexibly in achieving social goals (1964: 349–50).

Neither of this pair of universals would be stable or effective enough without the next pair of evolutionary universals: generalized universalistic norms and democratic association. System-wide norms, especially those institutionalized in the legal system, defined and regulated power structures and their administration. They also regulated market relations and the resources represented by money. So important were these universal norms that Parsons considered their ‘crystallization into a coherent system’ to have been more important than the Industrial Revolution in bringing the modern world into being (1964: 351). Just as the development of written language had been the developmental impetus of the shift from primitive to intermediate, the institution of a formal universalized legal system had launched modernity from the intermediate stage (1966: 27). The fullest early exemplar of such a universalistic normative order was English common law, claimed Parsons, and only once it had developed could the Industrial Revolution have materialized in England (1964: 353). Such a legal system then allowed the final evolutionary universal to emerge: a full-blown democracy of elected representation and universal adult suffrage. Since power depended on consensus, it had to be not only legitimated at the level of universal values, but also legitimated by ‘structured participation’ (1964: 356). Totalitarian organization would eventually prove unstable, predicted Parsons, who was obviously thinking of the USSR in particular. Altogether, these ‘organizational complexes’ constituted the ‘structural foundations of modern society’. They conferred ‘adaptive advantage(s)’ on their vehicle societies over societies without such ‘structural potential’ (1964: 357).

With this model of social development, Parsons clearly felt he had overcome problems in his earlier work, such as *The Social System* (1951), which had emphasized static, structural categories over dynamic processes of social change. Parsons now classified societies according to the extent of institutional specialization around functions, such as the extent to which political institutions are separated from economic institutions, or economic institutions separated from the household, and how the household then becomes specialized around functions of socialization. His scheme of functional imperatives was, however, supposed to apply to all societies. Societies with lesser specialization, therefore, could be no less ‘adequate’ than those with greater degrees of specialization. There could, therefore, be no ‘internal’ requirement for greater structural differentiation *except by assuming an over-arching system goal of more effective performance*.

At the same time, the idea of ‘superiority’ carried the implication of evolutionary change, where better-adapted forms are realized out of the deficiencies of ‘lesser’ forms. Furthermore, the way in which structural differentiation occurred around the four functions, each with its characteristic ‘subsystem’, suggested an ‘end’ to the process of development. This end coincided with the realization of the institutional structures of modern capitalism. Unlike Spencer, Parsons and other modernization theorists did not self-consciously organize their functional analysis in terms of a direct affirmation of a final ‘ethical state’, but it was implicit in the logic of structural differentiation.<sup>27</sup> Progress was guaranteed by the very way in which they theorized social change.

Even Parsons’s sympathizers were uneasy about the implications of his scheme as they began to emerge around the writing of *The Social System*. One early critic was Merton, whose codification of functional analysis as a sociological paradigm (1968) was also intended as a coded critique of Parsons. Merton characterized existing functionalist approaches in anthropology in terms of three distinctive postulates: ‘universal functionalism’ (where every item was assumed to have a function), ‘indispensability’ (where each function was held to be necessary) and ‘functional unity’ (where each item was held to contribute to the functioning of a whole). Merton’s concern was to establish functionalism as what would now be termed a research

programme, in which these postulates were addressed as variables and the circumstances of their variation made the object of research. At the heart of his critique was the postulate of 'functional unity', or the idea of society as a functioning whole or totally integrated system, in relation to which functions could be defined.

While Parsons's theory increasingly came to exemplify the problems which Merton had associated with the postulate of 'functional unity', Merton's elaboration of his own argument led him directly onto the terrain occupied by Parsons. In order to come up with a more satisfactory statement of functional analysis, he argued that it would be necessary to make a further distinction between *latent* and *manifest* functions. The latter referred to the conscious intentions of actors, and the former to the objective consequences of their actions. According to Merton, most of the unfortunate consequences of functional analysis in sociology were the result of the conflation of these categories. In turn, he argued that the distinction was constitutive of the problems social inquiry had to address, although it was unnecessary in biology. This feature, as far as Merton was concerned, explained both why functionalism was relatively unproblematic in that discipline and why there were limits to the organic analogy. Thus, for Merton, 'the motive and the function vary independently and ... the failure to register this fact in an established terminology has contributed to the unwitting tendency among sociologists to confuse subjective categories of motivation with the objective categories of function' (1968: 115).<sup>28</sup>

Simply put, Merton's proposed codification of social inquiry in terms of an analytical distinction between subjective motivation and objective function was the resolution that Parsons himself had proposed in *The Structure of Social Action* and associated essays. Later generations of critics, such as Habermas and Giddens, make similar arguments to those of Merton. Habermas conceives of social inquiry as divided between two conceptual strategies, one of systems which 'ties the social scientific analysis to the external perspective of the observer', while the other 'begins with the members' intuitive knowledge' (1987 [1981]: 151). This is quite similar to Merton's distinction between latent and manifest functions, even if it is dignified with a deeper philosophical discussion. According to Habermas, 'the fundamental problem of social theory is how

to connect in a satisfactory way the two conceptual strategies indicated by their respective notions of "system" and "lifeworld"' (1987: 151), and he offers his own theory as just such a generalized integration of categories.

For his part, Parsons had taken it as axiomatic both that the social sciences required a general framework of categories and that it must take as its point of reference human action.<sup>29</sup> Hitherto, he argued, the dominant emphasis had been upon 'positivistic' schemes which sought to explain behaviour in terms of the 'external' influences upon it. Action, he said, was a process oriented to the realization of an end. It occurred in conditional circumstances that had to be calculated and utilized by actors in the pursuit of their ends. However, 'ends' and 'conditions' (including 'means') had to be understood as analytically distinct categories. This claim was important because it meant that action could not be understood as an emanation of cultural values, which is the case with some forms of idealism. Parsons's action was not free from determination by circumstances. Consequently, his idea of action involved 'effort' to conform with norms (which governed ends and the selection of their means of realization), since action had to transform circumstances and, therefore, accommodate and assess its conditions in order to be successful. Additionally, in order to be rational, action had to be based upon an adequate understanding of the factors necessary to the realization of ends. Thus, Parsons referred to the 'intrinsic rationality of the means-end relation' in terms of the necessary role of 'valid knowledge as a guide to action' (1937: 600). Action, however, could not be reduced to its conditions, since an understanding of the agency of the actor and, consequently, of the subjective meaning of an action was necessary for an adequate account. With conditions and means classified as technical in substance and, as such, external to any given actor, the 'subjective' voluntary aspect of action was associated with the actor's capacity to form ends.<sup>30</sup>

Parsons saw the problems of positivism as consisting of the problematic role of the category of 'ends' within such schemes.<sup>31</sup> He addressed his criticisms primarily to the 'utilitarian' conception of action, where ends are 'given'. By this he meant that the way in which actors arrive at their preferences had not been addressed, and attention had been focused solely on the processes by which they are realized. The implication, Parsons

suggested, was that ends varied 'at random relative to the means–end relationship and its central component, the actor's knowledge of his situation' (1937: 63).

A discussion of 'unit acts' provided only the basic elements of an action frame of reference. Explanation, argued Parsons, required a further step in the analysis, from 'unit acts' to their location within 'systems' of action. This step, he said, 'consists in generalizing the conceptual scheme so as to bring out the functional relations in the facts already descriptively arranged' (1937: 49). This further generalization of the scheme was intended to identify emergent properties of systems of action; that is, properties which appeared in relation to any consideration of the co-ordination of actions and which were not reducible to analysis in terms of unit acts alone. Thus, Parsons wrote that,

action systems have properties that are emergent only on a certain level of complexity in the relations of unit acts to each other. These properties cannot be identified in any single unit act considered apart from its relation to others in the same system. *They cannot be derived by a process of direct generalization of the properties of the unit act.* (1937: 739)

The concept of emergent properties, then, served to identify the 'elements of structure of a generalized system of action' (1937: 718), and these elements of *structure* were to be further analysed in terms of their *functional* relations; that is, in terms of the logical relations established within the theoretical system.

As Parsons developed his theory – in *The Social System* and after – he offered a distinction between different *levels* of analysis, namely personality, social system and culture. He added a fourth level of 'organism' once the four-fold scheme of functional imperatives had been fully elaborated. These levels corresponded to the analytical distinctions made in the earlier statement of the action frame of reference. The level of personality, therefore, matched the individual actor viewed as a system. The level of culture referred to the symbols and meanings which were drawn upon by actors in the pursuit of their personal projects as they negotiated social constraints and facilities. As Parsons said, the three key features of the cultural system were

that culture is *transmitted*, it constitutes a heritage or a social tradition; secondly, that it is *learned*, it is not a manifestation, in particular content, of man's genetic constitution; and third, that it is *shared*.

Culture, that is, is on the one hand the product of, on the other hand a determinant of, systems of human social interaction. (1951: 15)

Finally, the social system corresponded to that level of interaction among a 'plurality of actors' which was the primary focus of the analysis of the 'problem of order' in the earlier work. The social system was a structure of positions and roles organized by normed expectations and maintained by sanctions.<sup>32</sup>

Parsons proposed that each of the levels formed a system in its own right, where the characteristics of a system are relations of logical coherence among its parts. At the same time, each system functioned in relation to the other systems and interpenetrated them. In other words, their interpenetration, or interdependence, also constituted a system. This is what Parsons had previously referred to as the 'total action system'. His real focus of sociological attention, however, was the social system, and he proposed four functional prerequisites, or imperatives, which were necessary to its constitution and operation. Two of the imperatives (pattern maintenance and integration) were concerned with normative issues, and two (adaptation and goal attainment) were concerned with the non-normative. Similarly, two were concerned with cultural principles (integration and goal attainment) and two with issues of integrity in a potentially hostile lower-level environment (pattern maintenance and adaptation). Together they supplied the axes of the two by two tables that proliferated throughout Parsons's later writings.<sup>33</sup>

It is not necessary to follow Parsons through the details of every additional specification of his scheme, where everything was divided by four and four again. The social system will serve as one example. This subsystem was further divided into 'sub-subsystems', which were defined by the priority accorded to one or other of the functional prerequisites in its organization. The economy subsystem was defined by the adaptation prerequisite, the polity subsystem by the goal attainment prerequisite, the societal community subsystem by the integration prerequisite, and the socialization subsystem by the pattern maintenance prerequisite. Each subsystem, however, was also specified by the subordinate but mutual operation of the other prerequisites. The diagrams of exchanges between systems and among subsystems within systems became increasingly complex, but they could never shake off the problems that defined them.

Were the prerequisites to be merely the categories of a descriptive approach to societies, as Parsons sometimes suggested in the context of his application of the scheme to the evolution of societies, then it might be argued that they could have served a heuristic purpose where the extent of their realization in practice would be an 'empirical' issue. However, the *variance* of empirical systems in terms of the specific 'values' of their elements was supposed to occur alongside *invariant relations* between their elements. Consequently, the idea that there could be an 'indefinite number of concrete empirical systems' was already compromised by the theoretical logic of the categorical scheme.

As we have seen, Parsons (1966, 1971) did describe more extensive differentiation as an improvement in 'adaptive upgrading', and this affirmed the 'superiority' of more specialized systems over those which were less specialized. This strategy, however, reproduces the position he initially criticized in Spencer, where the only source of change was adaptive reaction to the external environment. It is very difficult, overall, to find any improvement on Spencer's supposed evolutionary theory in Parsons. Several commentators, in fact, believe Parsons's version to be the inferior one (for example, Peel, 1969). Certainly, his resort to an action frame of reference only served to reinforce the Spencerian elements, rather than to transcend them. An ongoing examination of evolutionary sociology would demonstrate that just as Parsons reproduced Spencer's core approach and its problems, so too do Parsons's critics reproduce the central elements of his scheme (see notes 6, 7, 31 and, especially, 32).

#### **EVOLUTION WITHOUT DEVELOPMENTAL SCHEMES**

The key issue for an evolutionary approach to historical sociology must surely be to allow a proper role to historical research through which theoretical claims can be revised and transformed, similar to the manner described by post-positivist accounts of science. If so, it would seem that the answer will not be found by founding evolutionary theory on an *a priori* scheme of categories. The standard resolution of seemingly antithetical orientations toward the particular and the general in terms of a general framework of *action* produces the very

deficiencies it is self-consciously designed to overcome. It is precisely that proposed resolution that gives to this form of historical sociology its underlying ahistorical character of being dependent upon a set of logical presuppositions that transcend research. Moreover, if action is made universal, so, too, will any functions that are derived from the elaboration of the scheme. Functions become definitional of societies, rather than the means of distinguishing among empirically variable social practices and institutions with the consequent reification and teleology that has discredited functionalist and evolutionary approaches in historical sociology. If the impasse of developmental typologies imposed upon the historical record is to be avoided, then the appropriate objects of analysis in historical sociology would have to be *institutions*, not whole *societies* (as Merton implied in his critique of the postulate of functional unity).

Succumbing to developmental functionalism is, of course, not a uniquely sociological fault. Biological 'Darwinism', until the 1920s at least, fell into the same habit when natural selection was assimilated to a directional model of biological complexification (Bowler, 1988). It took biology several decades from the publication of Darwin's *Origin* to find methods, supplementary theories (of inheritance) and evidence by which to realize the implications of selection. Both Rosenberg's (1995: 147) and Turner and Maryanski's (1988: 116) cogent analyses of sociological functionalism point out that the only way effectively to 'ground' functionalist analyses as causal accounts and purge them of illegitimate teleology is by invoking selectionism.<sup>34</sup> Sociology, with the notable exception of Runciman (1998), however, has shied away from an explicitly selectionist explanation of social change.<sup>35</sup> Such an account would have to describe a causal process, premised on variation and transmission, and its functional effects. It would explain successive changes by adaptation and fitness, but insist on empirical analysis to establish such explanations. By integrating levels of analysis, it would refuse reduction.

If, as we have argued, natural history and the history of societies are epistemologically equivalent undertakings, the way is open to consider that each might be approached in terms of a common evolutionary framework. We should be careful at this point, however, to suggest that this is not at all to recommend a reduction of history to biology, such as the

project of sociobiology (although we do not accept that sociobiology is as straightforwardly reductionistic as critics like Rose and Rose [2000] make out). Nor do we wish to propose that evolutionary sociology be couched at the level of biological change.<sup>36</sup> Social change is not independent of biology, but its entities and processes are quite different objects of analysis. Indeed, current arguments by philosophers and researchers of evolution are largely anti-reductionist. They deem evolutionary explanations to be specific to the different levels and characteristics of phenomena manifest in species and societies, populations and individuals.<sup>37</sup>

Not only has selection proved to be highly successful in explaining biological variety and speciation, but it has also marked out a conceptual space that is separate from age-old developmental accounts of change. If evolutionary and functionalist approaches are to win any support in historical sociology, it is clear that presuppositions of general needs have to be abandoned for empirical research programmes, in which testable claims are made about adaptation and functionality. Non-tautologous criteria of fitness are not easy to establish about any phenomena, but without their establishment, evolutionary sociology is condemned to tendentious speculation, rediscovered and then denied for its all too evident faults by each generation of sociologists.

#### NOTES

1. Since Weber, a tendency in sociology has been to concede that the immediate object of inquiry, in history and sociology alike, is the particular case or historically specific event, but then to argue that general concepts can be useful as means toward that understanding. Weber suggested that sociology, in contrast to history, was more oriented to the development of general types, rather than concrete, individual types: '[W]e have taken for granted that sociology seeks to formulate type concepts and generalized uniformities of empirical process. This distinguishes it from history, which is oriented to the causal analysis and explanation of individual actions, structures, and personalities possessing cultural significance' (1968 [1922]: 19). The general types are then argued to derive their form from the characteristics of action in general, as distinguished against the meanings of specific actions which give rise to particular and individual objects of analysis. In essence, we shall suggest that it is Parsons (1937) who offers the most systematic elaboration of this argument.

2. This position is advanced by some advocates of neo-positivism. Jonathan Turner, for example, writes that

we must recognize that positivistic and historical explanations are fundamentally different modes of understanding the universe, making criticisms of one by the other somewhat inappropriate. Historical explanations are causal descriptions of sequences of empirical events (or classes of such events), whereas positivistic explanations are deductive, seeking to explain empirical events with abstract laws. The two kinds of explanation simply yield different kinds of knowledge; and while science usually seeks deductively organized theory, historical analysis serves other useful purposes. But, when historical sociologists insist that positivism is an inappropriate approach to sociological analysis because deductive explanation and scientific explanation are impossible ... they have made sociology redundant with history (1992: 163–4)

Alternatively, a pro-science critic of evolutionary sociology might claim that science was more properly served by historical research that assiduously collected evidence and reached its localized conclusions inductively – a process not generally believed to be a feature of evolutionary schemes.

3. Kuhn, for example, invokes evolutionary criteria to deny any charge of relativism made against his work, writing that,

I believe it would be easy to design a set of criteria – including maximum accuracy of predictions, degree of specialization, number (but not scope) of problem solutions – which would enable any observer involved with neither theory to tell which was the older, which the descendant. For me, therefore, scientific development is, like biological evolution, unidirectional and irreversible. One scientific theory is not as good as another for doing what scientists normally do. In that sense I am not a relativist. (1970: 264)

4. We do not say, as we might have been expected to, that teleology has not been an issue in biology 'since Darwin'. Marx, for example, perceived Darwin's contribution precisely in those terms, writing in a letter to Lasalle that, 'despite all shortcomings, it is here that, for the first time, "teleology" in natural science is not only dealt a mortal blow but its rational meaning is empirically explained' (1986 [1861]: 247). However, that 'mortal blow' to teleology is now judged to have been undelivered until the Modern Synthesis of evolutionary biology was achieved. Only then did the conflation of selection and species development become unsustainable (Bowler, 1988). (For a discussion of Marx and Darwin, see Allen, 1992.) We shall not deal with Marx in this chapter because he is the topic of Duncan Kelly's contribution. In any case, Marx's account of modes of production has many of the features we attribute to developmental approaches

which cannot be properly translated into *selectionist* evolutionary accounts. It is the latter, we believe, that will prove more satisfactory to an effective evolutionary historical sociology.

5. Spencer did recognize a difference between 'vicious' illegitimate teleology and legitimate teleology, but still insisted that the latter was compatible with claiming 'the welfare of the organism, or the species, is in every case the end to further which a structure exists' (1978 [1892–3]: Vol. 2, 483–4). What is his justification? Illegitimate teleologies would simply state a structure was 'put there to further the end', which he found too stark an explanation. Legitimate teleological functionalism, he asserted, explained the existence of something 'as having gradually arisen by furthering the end'. Such a distinction is hardly persuasive and gives him no defence against the standard criticism of teleological functionalism.

6. The following statement from Giddens is typical in that it shows how the idea of 'system needs' is introduced – through the idea of feedback mechanisms of which the actor may be unaware – even as the category is being denied:

[I]f there are no independent system needs ... the notion of function is superfluous for the only teleology that has to be involved is that of human actors themselves, together with the recognition that their acts have consequences other than those they intend, and that those consequences can involve homeostatic processes. (1977: 111)

7. In the sentence immediately before the one above, Habermas writes that 'the fundamental mechanism for social evolution in general is to be found in an automatic inability not to learn' (1976: 15). It will become clear in the course of this chapter just how statements like this one commit the writer to a stadial scheme of historical development, where 'deviations' from the societal types that are derived from the 'ideal history' as learning are assigned to 'not-learning' and as such do not call into question that ideal historical account. This is the opposite of the relation between theory and research in evolutionary biology.

8. See Haines (1992) for a discussion of Spencer's attempts to conform to the philosophy of science of the day, as set out by Herschel, Whewell and Mill. Spencer's commitment to the 'proper' practice of science was as strong as Darwin's, yet both his and Darwin's works were found methodologically wanting by Herschel and his adherents.

9. Lamarckian 'evolution' describes a process of physiological adjustment to changing environmental conditions through habits shaping physical structures that could be inherited by offspring. Darwinian evolution encompasses blind inheritable variation which is selected due to the greater fitness it confers on its possessors in particular environmental conditions.

10. It is important to make clear here that *selection does not mean 'choosing'*. This is what some contemporary sociological theorists have done, thereby turning

selection into a process of purposive human choice (for example, Luhmann, 1995 [1984]). As far as we are concerned, such a concept of selection is developmentalist and agential, and it is in these frameworks that all the problems of evolutionary theory reside. If there is an issue of purposive action here, it much more centrally concerns the role of unintended consequences of action. As Merton (1936) observed, unanticipated consequences are of supreme importance for explanations in historical sociology.

11. Spencer was explicit that social evolution had to be understood as a process in its own right, owing nothing to the completely separate process of organic evolution apart from a base of reasoning and a material substrate (1981a [1860]; 1893a: Pt 2, Ch. 2). In addition, he perceived natural selection to be able to 'operate freely in the struggle of one society with another', but to be hampered and overwhelmed in its operation amongst social units. Hence, within societies, only Lamarckism or the 'inheritance of functionally-produced modifications' was an adequate explanation of social differences (1898–9: Vol. 1, 553).

12. It is probably wise to differentiate between Lamarck's own four laws of evolution (1815, in McKinney, 1971: 18–19) and the more common application of the term. The latter, which could be called vulgar Lamarckism, is primarily concerned with direct adaptations and their transmission to descendants.

13. In biological analysis, Spencer believed that natural selection was the primary mechanism at lower levels of complexity, and that habit or Lamarckian processes were 'supreme' at higher levels of development (1908: 565).

14. See these Spencer references for details of how the mechanisms worked: 1898–9: Vol. 1, Pt 2, Chs 8, 10, Appendix B; Vol. 2, 618–23; 1892: Vol. 1, 389–466, 467–78; 1893b: Pt 4, 241; 1904: Vol. 2, 552; 1908: 558, 565. Since the two mechanisms worked in tandem, there is no need to divide Spencer's evolutionary theories into 'four quite different theories', as Perrin (1976) does. Even he admits three are interdependent (1976: 1356), and if we look at how the two mechanisms work on different explanatory levels and in different domains of phenomena, all 'four' are synthesized.

15. It was this anti-interventionism that was Durkheim's primary target in his criticism of Spencer, and, in relation to it, he misunderstood Spencer's 'social' individualism. Indeed, Spencer's explanation of the rise of the idea of the freedom of the individual in social differentiation and increased specialization was very similar to Durkheim's, probably because Durkheim borrowed a great deal more from Spencer than he admitted or is commonly recognized.

16. Statements such as 'all unfitness must disappear ... humanity must in the end become completely adapted to its conditions' (1888: 79) appear most strongly in *Social Statics*. In all the revisions and in the caveats Spencer offered in editions subsequent to the first, he did not revise this basic understanding of adaptation as outlined above. It is reinforced in *The*

*Principles of Sociology* and *The Principles of Ethics*, although the emphasis on the actual achievability of final perfection decreased.

17. Spencer's Law of Equal Freedom was: 'Every man is free to do that which he wills, provided he infringes not the equal freedom of any other man' (1978: Vol. 2, 62; see also 1888: 121). Equal freedom was the conceptual pivot of not just his moral and political philosophy, but also his psychology and sociology (see Weinstein, 1990, 1998, for excellent discussions). This interpretation runs counter to that of several commentators. J.N. Gray (1982), for example, argues that Spencer's evolutionary theory should be kept separate from his much better moral theory. Jonathan Turner also believes that the sociological and moral aspects of Spencer's work are distinct (1981: 79; 1985: 51). According to his argument, Spencer's moral theory is 'highly recessive' in his sociological work, and functionalism, therefore, does not 'drive' his analysis of sociology. Our argument above is that Spencer's moral philosophy connects his sociology, psychology and biology at multiple levels, and that his functionalism is far more 'intrusive' than Turner would have it. Given Spencer's synthesizing ambitions, it would be misleading, we believe, to try to isolate particular aspects of his work.

18. Turner, however, believes that Spencer's militant-industrial classificatory scheme was not evolutionary (1985: 93). This may be true where Spencer is emphasizing the ideal-type nature of the distinction, but not when he (contradictorily and much more persistently) discusses the types in a developmental way.

19. Regression was possible, and Spencer, in his later, less sanguine years, saw a great deal more of it happening (for example, the 'remilitarization' of Germany and England) than his theory had originally predicted. While he did see war as a progressive force, in that it brought about greater population density and culled 'relatively-feeble' groups, at a certain point in a society's evolutionary trajectory it became primarily negative, since it obstructed the conditions that maximized freedom.

20. Spencer noted a third type of society was possible, although not desirable, in which 'the diffusion of political power, unaccompanied by the limitation of political functions', resulted in a non-progressive communist society (1893b: 663).

21. See Goldthorpe (1991) for discussion of the problem of evidence as a more general issue in historical sociology.

22. Development here means a substantive process, and is not referring just to the 'illegitimate teleology' (a logical flaw) that troubles functionalism. A word of warning about a simple distinction between development and evolution is necessary, however. Although there are few grounds so far for believing laws of development shape evolutionary processes in biology, the possibility is under investigation. See Depew and Weber (1995) for a discussion.

23. By drawing upon the progressive reconstruction of the evolutionary paradigm in the Modern Synthesis,

we are necessarily offering a 'presentist' account in which Spencer's contribution is discussed in the light of modern understandings of evolution, in order to consider the possibility of a reconstructed version of social evolution. Presentism is usually understood as 'Whig' historiography, in which the past is looked at solely in terms of the future state nurtured within it (Butterfield, 1965 [1931]; Seidman, 1983; Stocking, 1968). We claim, however, that any account of science concerned with the progressive reconstruction of understanding is necessarily presentist, without necessarily being Whiggish (see Hull, 1979; Mayr, 1990; Ruse, 1987).

24. Parsons attempted to distinguish himself from Spencer by claiming his predecessor had a passive view of adaptation rather than an active one (1977: 51).

25. Parsons was emphatic that environments must be conceived of in the plural, since his analysis conceived of environment not as a simple physical geographical space, but as the 'enviroming' subsystems of organisms, personalities and culture, which mediated the physical conditions in different ways (1966: 10-16; 1977: 297).

26. In Parsons, specialization allowed the functional differentiation of the four general functions, and presumed functionally dedicated structures to be logically more efficient. Spencer, while he had set out his three functional prerequisites as an aid to classification, was overall more fascinated by the minutiae of functional differentiation than by his general categories. 'Functional adaptation', insisted Spencer (1908: 54), 'was the sole cause of development.'

27. In fact, Parsons claimed that the latest evolutionary universal in fully modern societies was the institutionalization of science and its technological application, although he did not discuss the level of society it would bring about. He also accepted that a wholly new "postmodern" phase of social development' could arise from very different origins to those of the current modern social system (1971: 3), but believed that this was only a weak theoretical possibility. Curiously, Alexander (1984) wishes to claim that the teleological implications of the scheme can be avoided by arguing that de-differentiation is a possible future development of any concrete system, though he fails to specify how it can be represented as an 'adaptive upgrading'. He also argues that there is a necessary ethical dimension to Parsons's work, which is the ideal of social individualism (Alexander, 1978). Ironically, for his part, Habermas's evolutionary and functional approach is organized in terms of an ethics of 'ideal speech' and so is rather closer to Spencer's approach, organized as it is in terms of an ideal ethical state, than he might appreciate.

28. From Merton's own perspective, however, it is unfortunate that he chose the categories of *manifest* and *latent* function to establish the distinction, since it is the common reference to function that has encouraged others to believe that the distinction is elided.

29. Parsons wrote that

the results of the analysis of human behaviour from the objective point of view (that is, of an outside observer) and the subjective (that of the person thought of as acting himself) should correspond, but that fact is no reason why the two points of view should not be kept clearly distinct. Only on this basis is there any hope of arriving at a satisfactory solution of their relations. (1991 [1935]: 232)

30. A detailed account of the correspondence between Parsons's concepts of action and system and those of Giddens can be found in Holmwood (1996) and Holmwood and Stewart (1991).

31. Parsons characterized evolutionary theory as a form of 'radical positivism'. His own view was that the grip of positivism over social inquiry was breaking down and this would lead to a more satisfactory resolution of the problems of social inquiry. In an early essay which prefigured the concerns of *The Structure of Social Action*, Parsons wrote that

the positivistic reaction against philosophy has, in its effect on the social sciences, manifested a strong tendency to obscure the fact that man is essentially an active, creative, evaluating creature. Any attempt to explain his behaviour in terms of ends, purposes, ideals has been under suspicion as a form of 'teleology' which was thought to be incompatible with the methodological requirements of positive science. (1991: 231).

Within positivism, an assumption of the 'randomness' of ends is also regarded as unsatisfactory (because of its implicit 'indeterminacy'), but the tendency is for theorists to move in the other direction to that suggested by Parsons. Thus, 'radical' positivists - in which category Parsons included social Darwinism - attempted to deny the 'analytical independence' of ends, reducing them to the 'situation' of action; that is, they attempted to see action as entirely the product of determining stimuli located in the external environment. There is, then, what Parsons called a 'utilitarian dilemma' within positivism, where

either the active agency of the actor in the choice of ends is an independent factor in action, and the end element must be random; or the objectionable implication of the randomness of ends is denied, but then their independence disappears and they are assimilated to the conditions of the situation, that is to elements analysable in terms of non-subjective categories, principally heredity and environment, in the analytical sense of biological theory. (1937: 64)

A recent, detailed criticism of Parsons's resort to evolutionary theory is Haines (1987), but she replicates the pattern we identify when she claims that the problems with his approach will be resolved by rectifying his neglect of action.

32. Giddens (1976) and Habermas (1987) also offer a distinction of levels of structure (or culture), society and person, characterizing them in much the same way

as did Parsons (see Holmwood, 1996; Holmwood, and Stewart, 1991).

33. Although Giddens argues vigorously that his theory of structuration has no 'functionalist overtones at all' and has declared that it would be helpful to 'ban' the term altogether, along with that of 'adaptation' (1981: 19, 16, 21), he proposes universal 'structural features' and forms of analysis to which they give rise which are remarkably similar to those of Parsons. Thus, he, too, identifies *four* structural principles with similar points of reference: signification, legitimation, authorization and allocation. He argues further that two aspects of how they are articulated can be identified:

one is how far a society contains distinct spheres of 'specialism' in respect of institutional orders: differentiated forms of symbolic order (religion, science, etc.); a differentiated 'polity', 'economy' and 'legal/repressive apparatus'. The second is how modes of institutional articulation are organized in terms of overall properties of societal reproduction: that is to say, structural principles'. (1981: 47-8)

Habermas (1987), for his part, identifies two sets of two functions associated with the dimensions of system and life-world, respectively, and, like Parsons and Giddens, uses them to produce a scheme of institutional differentiation with co-ordinating mechanisms operating through generalized media of interchange. Giddens and Habermas also provide a developmental sequence of societal types which mirrors that of Parsons. For all their hostility towards evolutionary thinking, they produce a developmental typology classifying major types of societies in much the same way as Parsons, namely: band societies, settled agricultural communities, city-states, empires, feudal societies, capitalist societies and socialist societies (Giddens, 1981: 96; Habermas, 1976; Parsons, 1966).

34. Neither discussion is very hopeful about selectionism, however. Rosenberg is dissuaded by various disanalogies. These can be circumvented by considering selection to be a general model of explanation of which biology is one example and sociology another. There is no epistemological reason why sociology should slavishly imitate every aspect of biological selectionism. Turner and Maryanski's doubts are due to the difficulty of carrying out an adequate historical analysis. The difficulties are serious, it is true, but not *a priori* insurmountable. The best use for functionalism, conclude Turner and Maryanski (1979: 31), is simply to look at how variation in one part causes variation in a social whole. Functionalism should be practised only as a method for collecting and organizing data; functional *explanation*, however, should be avoided. How theoretical categories might be wrong for explanation but useful for description is not made clear. Moreover, the 'social whole' all too easily becomes a statement of a pre-defined societal type, rather than a code for the interdependence of parts as the object of research.

35. In fact, Runciman is also concerned to construct typologies of major kinds of societies, which in our

view is not consistent with the selectionist approach to which he is ostensibly committed.

36. We are also, obviously, rejecting what might be called social Darwinism. This is a confusing metaphor that either takes a straightforward biological form, in which the genetically superior wipe out the inferior, or is conceived of as social eliminationism, where the more powerful (or socially 'fit') suppress or otherwise subordinate the less powerful. Neither is by any means adequate, and they are not necessary forms of social evolution.

37. Dupré (1994), for example, has addressed the issue of reductionism evinced in methodological individualism in the social sciences, where it is argued that collectivities must be reduced to their component individual acts. He argues that there is no parallel thesis in biology and that there are, therefore, no grounds for arguing analogically from biology that the social sciences must be reductionist. Nor, in any analogy between biological and social processes, is selection to be conceived of as a simple 'survival of the fittest' eliminationism; instead, vastly more creative processes of adaptation and fitness are conceptualized in the core ideas of modern evolutionary theory.

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## *The Annales, Braudel and Historical Sociology*

PETER BURKE

If they were asked to name a few great historical sociologists, I imagine that most people interested in the field would mention Karl Marx, Max Weber and Norbert Elias (a heretical Weberian who chose to combine the insights of the master with those of Sigmund Freud). The answer prompts an obvious question: what about France? Given the importance of the French in social theory from Émile Durkheim to Pierre Bourdieu, and also in innovative historical writing, from Lucien Febvre to Roger Chartier, one might reasonably expect a positive answer to this question. To explore possible answers is the purpose of this chapter. It will begin by discussing Durkheim and his followers, before focusing on the work of Fernand Braudel (1902–85).

### DURKHEIM AND HIS SCHOOL

Durkheim himself was interested in history, though also concerned to legitimate his own sociological enterprise by distinguishing its approach from that of history, on one side, and philosophy, on the other. On the one hand, his lectures on the history of French education (published posthumously in 1938 under the title *L'évolution pédagogique en France*) bear witness to a serious interest in the past. On the other hand, in the preface to his journal, the *Année Sociologique* Durkheim (1896), criticized the historians of his day for being too much

interested in ephemeral events, 'superficial manifestations' as he called them, and too little concerned with what mattered, with social structures and collective representations (cf. Bellah, 1965 [1959]).

Durkheim's interest in the past was shared by his major collaborators and followers. The famous *Essay on the Gift* (*Essai sur le don*) by Marcel Mauss, for instance, first published in the *Année* in 1923–4, is essentially a study in the comparative history of what Mauss called 'archaic societies'. The equally famous book by Maurice Halbwachs, *The Social Framework of Memory* (*Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*, 1925) was followed by the author's historical case-study of the legendary topography of the Holy Land, published in 1941.

Scholars in other disciplines also found the ideas of Durkheim good to think with in the course of their investigations of the past: the classicist Louis Gernet, for instance, and the sinologist Marcel Granet, whose *Chinese Thought* (*La pensée chinoise*, 1934) was a study of collective representations in the style of Durkheim. Most famous of all, the historian Marc Bloch made a constructive use of Durkheim in two masterpieces, *The Royal Touch* (*Les rois thaumaturges*, 1924) and *Feudal Society*, (*La société féodale*, 1939–40).

In the first of these studies, Bloch described medieval and early modern views of the kings of France and England in the Durkheimian manner as 'collective representations'. This approach, which may be and has been criticized

for emphasizing the group at the expense of individual variations, was and remains valuable for its stress on what is taken for granted, on beliefs which people do not know they hold. Bloch's approach has been followed and refined by one of the leading French medievalists of the *Annales* group, Jacques Le Goff.

In the second study, Bloch did not ignore conflict; indeed he explained the rise of feudalism as a response to the invasions of Western Europe by the Muslims, the Vikings and the Hungarians. All the same, he concentrated not on the tensions within feudal society, as did Marx, for example, but rather on the new forms of social solidarity characteristic of the high Middle Ages, notably the bond between the lord and his vassals.

Another sign of Bloch's interest in historical sociology was his participation in the Nineteenth International Congress of Sociology, held in Bucharest in 1939. His contribution on that occasion was a paper on the relation between social structures and types of dwelling in rural France (Mastrogregori, 2001: 74).

Together with his friend and senior colleague Lucien Febvre, Marc Bloch was the founder, in 1929, of the journal *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale*, a journal which was intended to revolutionize the practice of history and to a considerable extent succeeded in so doing. Modelled on the *Année Sociologique*, the new journal was avowedly trans-disciplinary from the start and the editorial committee included a sociologist (Maurice Halbwachs, who was succeeded in this role by Georges Friedmann) as well as a geographer, an economist and a political scientist.

For one example of what the journal was doing in practice, one might note the article in the first volume in which Halbwachs (1929) drew the attention of readers to the work of Max Weber. However, the journal itself was only the tip of an iceberg. It was associated with what is sometimes called the 'Annales school' of history, characterized by a broad concern with economic, social and cultural history, rather than with politics in the narrow sense, and with structures and long-term trends rather than events.

There was certainly a social group and an intellectual movement associated with *Annales*, and perhaps an 'Annales paradigm' as well, although it was a vaguer and more open one than, say, that associated with Karl Marx (Burke, 1990; Clark, 1985; Stoianovitch, 1976). The problem with the term 'school' is that it implies too great a degree of uniformity

within the group. Despite their admiration for each other, Febvre, for example, was a strong voluntarist, while Braudel was close to geographical determinism. Indeed, it was a strength of the *Annales* movement that the followers felt free to diverge from their leaders in many respects, thus sustaining intellectual creativity over three or four generations.

After the death of Marc Bloch in 1944 (fighting in the Resistance), and of his older colleague Lucien Febvre in 1956, the leadership of the *Annales* group or movement passed to Fernand Braudel.

#### FERNAND BRAUDEL AND SOCIAL THEORY

If we believe that sociology should be concerned with the past as well as the present, we have to consider a question rather like Plato's about philosophers and kings: is it better for historians to become sociologists or for sociologists to turn historians? Sociologists who turn to history rarely go beyond the secondary sources and show too much respect for the professional historians. On the other hand, historians are not accustomed, or indeed trained, to make grand comparisons or even to work with general concepts, and they often view the whole past through the lens of the particular period in which they have specialized. Even Arnold Toynbee, who created his own conceptual framework, viewed the whole of human history with the eyes of the classicist he was originally trained to become.

What is needed, perhaps, is a scholar who is unsure of his or her identity. One of the greatest – though insufficiently known – historical sociologists of the twentieth century, the Brazilian Gilberto Freyre (1900–87), entitled one of his many books. *Why I am and am not a Sociologist* (1968). Braudel, who knew and admired the work of Freyre, might very well have done the same. There can be no doubt of his lifelong concern with what he called the '*sciences sociales*', or '*sciences de homme*'. Like Durkheim and Lévi-Strauss (his colleague in São Paulo in the thirties), he was interested in structures rather than events, and tended to dismiss a focus on 'event-centred history' (*histoire événementielle*) as superficial. He found events interesting as evidence, signs of what lay beneath them, but considered them to be as ephemeral – to use a favourite metaphor of his – as the light of the fireflies of Bahia. He was an omnivorous reader of social science, in

German and English as well as in French, but he constantly criticized social scientists' preoccupation with the present, with the short term.

An academic man of action as well as a scholar, Braudel put a good deal of his impressive energy into organizing the social sciences in France, obtaining money from the Rockefeller Foundation which was used to set up the *École des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales* and, later, the *Maison des Sciences de l'Homme*. Braudel was in charge of both. He has often been accused of imperialism, of assuming the intellectual hegemony of history, but he was genuinely interested in the social sciences.

On the other hand, he was rather less enthusiastic about sociology in the strict sense than he was about geography, economics and anthropology. His debt to historical geography in general and to the work of Friedrich Ratzel and Paul Vidal de la Blache in particular is obvious enough in the first part of his masterpiece on the Mediterranean (Braudel, 1972–3 [1949]). Indeed, he once described Vidal as 'the author I have read most, who has most inspired me' (Braudel, 1997: 135). In later works too, Braudel discussed the ideas of leading geographers such as his friend Pierre Gourou, a specialist on the Far East, and the German Walter Christaller, the founder of central place theory. In the first volume of his last, unfinished book, *The Identity of France* (1986), Braudel once again privileged the theme of space and the discipline of geography.

In his second major work, *Civilization and Capitalism*, Braudel privileged the ideas of the economists, among them John Maynard Keynes, Colin Clark (whose discussion of the tertiary sector of the economy especially impressed him), the Austrian Josef Schumpeter, the Pole Oskar Lange and the Americans Simon Kuznets and John Kenneth Galbraith, together with the economic anthropologists Bronislaw Malinowski and Karl Polanyi, who warned against abstracting economic life from society and culture, especially in traditional societies (cf. Block and Sommers, 1984). In the orchestra of the social sciences, as Braudel viewed it, sociology played not so much second fiddle as fourth, after history, geography and economics.

That said, it remains true that Braudel's sympathy for and knowledge of sociology contrasts with the neglect of (not to say contempt for) the discipline displayed by many leading historians in the fifties and sixties (with important exceptions such as Asa Briggs). The special

appeal of sociology to Braudel was its holistic or 'totalizing' approach, the fact that it was what he called a '*science globale*', concerned with all human activities and the connections between them. In similar fashion, he described his own style of history as *histoire totale* or *histoire globale*, not because it included every detail or was concerned with every continent, but because it was an attempt to see history as a whole. No wonder then that he sometimes described sociology and history as inseparable and indistinguishable disciplines, 'a single intellectual adventure' (Braudel, 1980b [1958]).

Which sociologists did Braudel read? Within the French tradition, he cited Auguste Comte and Émile Durkheim (Braudel, 1997: 37–8), but he seems to have learned more from Mauss and Halbwachs. Mauss he met in 1937, and his *Mediterranean* made extensive use of Mauss's lecture of 1930 on the elements and forms of civilizations (Mauss, 1968 [1931]). Braudel later quoted Mauss on technology (1981 [1979]: Vol. 1). In a lecture of 1955, Braudel underlined the importance of a study by Halbwachs (1938) on social morphology for his own book on the Mediterranean. He also made references to the work of Roger Bastide, whom he knew in Brazil in the thirties, and, among the sociologists of a younger generation, to Pierre Bourdieu (Braudel, 1981 [1979]: Vol. 2, 422). Philippe Steiner's claim that 'for Braudel, sociology means Durkheim' (1988: 148n) is therefore an exaggeration. It would be closer to the mark to say that 'for Braudel, sociology was, above all, French sociology'.

Outside the French tradition, Braudel was most familiar with German sociology. His discussions of capitalism make regular reference to Marx, Weber and also to Werner Sombart. He also refers to Weber when discussing China, the modern state, bureaucracy and the city (Braudel, 1981 [1979]: Vol. 2, 490; 1997: 427–8). Guenther Roth is therefore a little unfair when he claims that 'Braudel's sparse references to Weber in his writings suggest that he barely knows Weber's work' (1979: 186). How well Braudel understood Weber is another matter. Like many readers, he oversimplified Weber by interpreting him as offering an anti-Marxist explanation of the rise of capitalism in terms of ideas, of mentalities (Steiner, 1988). All the same, Weber was a major point of reference for Braudel's studies of capitalism, as well as a stimulus to thought on a wider range of topics.

References to sociologists from other countries are more sparse: Vilfredo Pareto, for

instance, on the importance of elites (Braudel, 1997: 217); Neil Smelser in the context of industrialization (1981 [1979]: Vol. 3, 515); C. Wright Mills on the 'Power Elite' (1981 [1979]: Vol. 2); or Norbert Elias on the ways in which 'a society is forever marked and determined by its former phases, and no less by its earliest origins' (Braudel, 1981 [1979]: Vol. 2, 490).

Braudel surely appreciated the interest of Elias in *la longue durée*, but he seems to have discovered him relatively late, and, in any case, Elias's focus on attitudes rather than the harder facts of geography and economics would not have appealed to him – unlike Febvre, Braudel never took the history of mentalities seriously. Absent from his many publications is any reference to the work of Shmuel Eisenstadt (just as Braudel in his turn is conspicuously absent from Eisenstadt's collection of readings on the decline of empires). More's the pity, since Eisenstadt's comparative approach in *The Political Systems of Empires* (1963) would certainly have appealed to Braudel, while Braudel's theory of the alternation of periods when circumstances were favourable to great empires and periods when they were unfavourable to them deserves discussion in any sociology of imperialism.

### *Gurvitch, Freyre and Wallerstein*

I have left to the end two of the most important names, from Braudel's point of view. The first is that of Georges Gurvitch (1894–1965), with whom Braudel was in regular dialogue and debate, especially in the 1950s. The second is that of Immanuel Wallerstein, with whom Braudel virtually collaborated in the 1970s. To these a third name might be added, that of a sociologist to whom Braudel was apparently more reluctant to acknowledge his debt: Gilberto Freyre.

Braudel's relationship with Gurvitch was both amicable and adversarial. He invited Gurvitch to contribute an article on history and sociology to *Annales*, but prefaced the article with a note expressing his disagreement. In his turn, Gurvitch invited Braudel to contribute to a collective treatise on sociology under his direction. Both men believed in the close relations between history and sociology, but they described these relations in different ways. According to Gurvitch, the two disciplines share totalizing ambitions but differ in methods, sociologists being concerned with

the typical and historians with the individual. Both disciplines are concerned with time, but historians stress continuity while sociologists emphasize discontinuity.

Braudel could not accept these formulations, but he was happy to find a sociologist who was passionately concerned with what Gurvitch called 'the multiplicity of social times' (ecological time, institutional time, and so on). He also appreciated Gurvitch's holistic approach, and noted with regret what he called the 'fragmentation' of sociology after Gurvitch died.

Braudel's relations with Gilberto Freyre went back much further, to the years he spent in Brazil in the late 1930s. He wrote a long and enthusiastic review article for *Annales* on Freyre's work, published in 1943, when Braudel was a prisoner of war, describing Freyre as 'a sociologist, but also a historian – much more of a historian than he thinks'. *The Mediterranean* cites Freyre's work on the 'Big House', but the influence of Freyre is even more obvious in a later work, *Material Civilization and Capitalism*, especially the first volume, published in 1967. *Material Civilization* was a book commissioned by Lucien Febvre. At that point, 1952, the idea was for Braudel to produce a work of synthesis on the economic history of pre-industrial Europe, while Febvre himself wrote a companion volume on intellectual history.

The volume which finally appeared in 1967 was rather less conventional. In the first place, Europe was located in a world context, with comparisons and contrasts, between the grain-eaters of Europe, for instance, the rice-eaters of East Asia and the maize-eaters of the Americas. In the second place, Braudel's book turned into a history of everyday culture. In the preface, Braudel claimed to be 'introducing everyday life, no more no less, into the domain of history'. The claim was unjust not only to Norbert Elias, of whose work Braudel was probably unaware at the time, but also to that of Freyre, who had long been concerned with the history of food and clothes, housing and furniture.

Immanuel Wallerstein, on the other hand, like Gurvitch, received generous acknowledgements from Braudel. Wallerstein is an American Marxist sociologist who originally specialized in Africa and decided that he could not understand modern Africa without understanding capitalism. He turned to early modern history to discover the origins of capitalism and in the process discovered Braudel.

It is now somewhat difficult to work out exactly what Braudel owed to Wallerstein and what Wallerstein owed to Braudel. Each clearly learned something from the other. Wallerstein published his first volume in 1974, five years before the second and third vols of the Braudel trilogy, which make regular reference to his work. But Wallerstein's volume makes even more frequent reference to Braudel, and he is perhaps best known as the founder of the Braudel Center at Binghamton, New York, in 1976.

Wallerstein's achievement was to link two Marxist debates in economic history, one concerned with the Americas and the other with Eastern Europe. The American debate, in which Paul Barán, Raúl Prebisch, André Gunder Frank and others participated, was about the 'development of underdevelopment', especially in Latin America. The Eastern European debate, involving Polish scholars such as Stanislas Hoszowski and Hungarians such as László Makkai, was concerned with the increasing divergence between Eastern and Western Europe around 1500, the East's increasing dependence on the Western market, the consequent decline of the towns and the concentration on the production of raw materials. Wallerstein linked the two debates by introducing the idea of three economic regions: a centre in Western Europe; a periphery (associated with slavery) in the Americas; and a 'semi-periphery', associated with serfdom, in Eastern Europe – a worldwide division of labour which worked to the advantage of the West.

Wallerstein's global view of economic change in the early modern period appealed to Braudel, as well as being partly inspired by him, and the concepts of a 'world economy' and of economic centres and peripheries are central in the organization of Volumes 2 and 3 of *Civilization and Capitalism*.

#### BRAUDEL'S HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY

We have seen that Braudel took the work of some sociologists very seriously. Is it appropriate to describe his own approach to history as a sociological one? Yes, for two reasons. At a general, rather imprecise level, because Braudel liked to think on a grand scale and take a broad or 'global' view of human affairs. He possessed and he communicated a vivid sense of the importance of space in

human affairs, of particular micro-spaces or micro-environments such as islands or mountains as well as the macro-spaces of the Mediterranean, the Atlantic and the Pacific. At a more specific level, Braudel offered his readers three important contributions to social analysis which might be described as a sociology of time, a sociology of capitalism and a sociology of the informal economy or material culture.

The introduction to Braudel's *Mediterranean*, in which he suggests that time moves at different speeds, is one of the classic discussions of what sociologists call 'social time'. Elaborating the common-sense contrast between the long and the short term, he distinguishes the high-profile time of events from the time of institutions and from the still slower and almost imperceptible time of environmental change (Braudel 1972–3 [1949]). In the 1950s, in a well-known polemical essay, Braudel accused the social scientists not so much of ignoring time, or change, as of restricting it unduly to the short run, thus ignoring what he called *la longue durée* (Braudel, 1958). If this accusation looks somewhat odd today, when, for instance, Johan Goudsblom and André Gunder Frank have concerned themselves with thousands rather than mere hundreds of years, we should remember that the shift in the social sciences owes something to Braudel's example.

In the case of capitalism, one of his life-long preoccupations, Braudel was studying a subject which had interested sociologists since the origins of their discipline, which they had studied in a comparative manner, and which they had linked to the rise of modernity and the West. To identify what is distinctive in Braudel's sociology of capitalism is not a simple task. It is easier to say what it is not than what it is.

Braudel's approach was not a Marxist one, though he admired Marx as a master of *la longue durée* and found his models good to think with – or against. Nor was it a Weberian one, since – as might have been expected from the author of the *Mediterranean* – Braudel placed considerably less emphasis on the role of Protestant merchants and bankers than Weber had done, and discussed the economic hegemony of the Venetians and the Geonese before considering the role of the Dutch and the English. Braudel also thought it necessary to offer multiple or many-sided explanations of the rise of capitalism (political cultural and social as well as economic), and – rightly or

wrongly – he perceived the approaches of both Marx and Weber as unilateral ones.

Perhaps the best way to approach Braudel's sociology of capitalism is to link it to what is more obviously distinctive in his work, his analysis of the slowly changing structures of everyday life and material culture. His emphasis on the coexistence of the market economy with the older subsistence economy throughout the early modern period is very different from the views of Marx, Weber or Polanyi, but it is both well-documented and plausible. The idea that everyday life is an important object of study was not Braudel's alone – contributions have been made, for instance, by Weber (notably the idea of *Veralltäglicdung*), by Elias, by Freyre, by Henri Lefebvre and by Michel de Certeau – but he both practised and preached this approach to good effect.

Again, Braudel was neither the first nor the only historian of his day to take material culture seriously, but the rise of studies of this topic by economists, anthropologists and sociologists (for example, Appadurai, 1986), and even by specialists in literature, as well as by historians, owes not a little to Braudel's example, as well as to that of theorists such as Thorsten Veblen.

#### CONCLUSION: BRAUDEL'S LEGACY

To what extent sociologists take Braudel seriously today it is difficult to say. In the 1960s, I remember being struck by the lack of reference to his views in the social sciences in general and in particular in Barrington Moore's wide-ranging analysis of *Democracy and Dictatorship*. In the 1970s, Perry Anderson avoided intellectual engagement with Braudel's studies, although his *Lineages of the Absolutist State* included chapters on Spain, Italy and the Ottoman Empire (in the 1980s, he devoted a long review to Braudel's last book, *The Identity of France*). The situation was somewhat different in anthropology, where the rise of a distinctive 'Mediterranean anthropology' in the 1950s and 1960s was in part a conscious reaction to the stimulus provided by Braudel's book.

By the 1990s, it was not uncommon to find Braudel cited in books written by economists, geographers and even archaeologists, as well as by sociologists. Some historical sociologists, notably Charles Tilly, have of course been familiar with Braudel's work for a long time.

Others, such as John Hall and Michael Mann, have drawn on his work in order to construct their own interpretations of change over the long term. All the same, it is my impression that Braudel has not been utilized as much as he might have been and that the challenges he issued to social scientists still await an adequate response.

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## *Civilizational Complexes and Processes: Elias, Nelson and Eisenstadt*

JOHN MANDALIOS

The study of the forms of society, culture, polity, religion and economy that ordinarily envelop human beings throughout their lives is an integral part of historically informed social analysis. This tradition of analysis stems back to the ancient scholars of war – Thucydides – and geoculture – Herodotus, gaining new impetus with the study of industrial capitalist societies (Marx and Weber), the rise and overthrow of noble or decadent values (Nietzsche) and, more recently, the formation of nation-states and nationalism. The comparative and historical analysis of the different ways in which Heidegger's 'being-in-the-world' can be understood has been a central tenet of social analysis oriented towards conceptualizing the deeply historical, social nature of being (*ontos*). To be human is, as Aristotle first observed, to give expression to our essentially gregarious nature as mediated and realized through various forms of social intercourse, deliberation and institutionalization. This gregariousness takes on various colourations according to time, space, symbolism, corporeality, affect structures and long-term social learning processes. The complex ways in which the latter perform their work to produce the interesting human being<sup>1</sup> may be denoted as a *civilizational complex*. In this chapter, I will expound upon different aspects and conceptions of this complex,

discussing the necessity to conceive of late modern individuals (and social forms) within the parameters of a civilization-analytic framework. The comparative dimension of this discussion will serve to also highlight the heuristic value of conceiving of social life in all its multifarious forms, particularly when the person is now constantly subjected to media-saturated images of 'globalization' that misleadingly suggest the overcoming of diverse civilizational lineages, that is, cultural traditions.

### **SOCIOGENESIS AND PSYCHOGENESIS OF MODERN EXISTENCE**

Discourses on the particular way in which the human being has come to belong to a particular cultural tradition and, concomitantly, political community have raised the question of the most apposite unit of analysis for the task. Following the early modern initiatives made by Marx, Nietzsche and Freud towards an analytical framework of the civilized self, the European historical-social theorist Norbert Elias developed an interesting *processual* theory of the making of the modern individual as a distinctly disciplined (or regulated), reflexive creature of civilization. To be

more precise, Elias developed an analytics of individual existence based upon the concept of persons becoming transformed in and through a number of 'civilizing processes'. Thus, rather than focusing on the noun 'civilization', the verb *civilizing* is privileged in order to highlight the fact that individuals are both subjects and agents of long-term historical processes. Writing his *magnum opus* – *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation* – just before his father would die in Breslau (1940) and his mother in Auschwitz (1941), Elias drew out subtle historico-national distinctions between the German (preference for) *Kultur* and the French (preference for) *civilisation*, a derivative of the older concepts of *civilisé*, *cultivé*, *civilité* and *politesse* (1978: 4–5, 39). In the *History of Manners*<sup>2</sup> Elias argued that an important difference between the concepts of culture and civilization lies in their respective relation to motion: 'civilization' describes a process or at least the result of a process' (1978: 5). Whereas the concept *Kultur* 'delimits', that is, it highlights Kant's particular (as against the universal), *civilisation* refers to 'something which is constantly in motion' (1978: 5). For instance, human behaviour, psychological affects and modes of social identification are constantly undergoing change, or, more accurately, are always in a state of *becoming*. We understand this concept and its cognate – *civilizing* – as capturing the theoretical specificity of both particularity and universality in the transitive verb, *becoming*. A *civilizing* process hence points to how the individual becomes that which she or he is. To be is indistinguishable from the process of becoming civilized: socially acculturated yet simultaneously individuated and recognized as belonging to a certain society of humankind – an identifiable way of being and associating with others. Whilst this kind of empirical, historical and prescribed modality is not divorced from the holy trinity of modern sociology – class, race and gender – it nevertheless transvaluates the particularity of each of these specific logics to articulate a more transcendent form of identification; one which appropriately posits our essential relation to nature, the body, the rule of law, symbolic forms and facets of cultural life we commonly take for granted but rather anachronistically came under the spell of cultural studies at one point. While the latter approach has tended to reinforce the old idealist–materialist dichotomy, this theoretic eschews false oppositions to propound a more inclusive analytic

framework that pays heed to the multiple 'locations' of the human subject, on the one hand, and the interdependency of so-called 'material life' and self-consciousness, on the other. In Eliasian language, *civilizing* processes entail the facets of life which German philosophers ever since Kant have tended to privilege, promulgating the virtues of *Geist* manifest within *Kultur* rather than the more 'apparent' world conveyed by the concept 'civilization'. But they also give voice to that realm of objects which elude the romantics' concern with subjectivity and virtue, namely the objective social conditions and determinants of consciousness which comprise the *longue durée* that interests Elias and other civilizational analysts. The latter comes close to, though differs from, what Nietzsche – following the Greeks – called 'necessity'.

One of the central arguments within Elias's theory concerns the 'sociogenesis' and 'psychogenesis' of the modern individual. Elias undertook to explain the genealogy of the modern individual in a not too dissimilar fashion to Michel Foucault's historical archaeology of modern disciplinary institutions and discursive practices. Rejecting the reductionist tendencies of Marxist and liberal accounts of the rise of the modern individual and its peculiar *Weltanschauung*, Elias drew out the lineages from which there emerged and developed a more rational, self-regulated, 'civilized' human being of a higher level of development (cultivation) and therefore self-consciousness. Rather than attributing all this to the rise of capitalism or liberal constitutional democracy, he argued that contemporary modes and standards of behaviour are a result of long-term processes which gradually form the individual into a particular *kind* of person, one who as a result of numerous *civilizing* processes adopts a particular mode of existence: a *modus operandi* which fundamentally defines the person's relation to the world. This modality includes the self's relation to (and understanding of) the body, outer nature (the environ), the other or outsider, the affects, the social or institutional order and the *ratio*, the organ or faculty of reasoning. To understand the making of the modern self, therefore, requires an appreciation of the role which *civilizing* processes play, and how they mitigate the apparent utility of dualisms such as inside–outside, society–personality, subjective–objective, micro–macro, progressive–reactionary, high culture–low culture and powerful–powerless.<sup>3</sup>

The contours of contemporary life owe much of their present form to significant developments which antedated not only the emergence of the bourgeoisie or the scientific revolutions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries but also the modern juridical subject. According to Elias, modern consciousness can be traced back to a number of formative processes which over some centuries gave rise to an aristocratic order and absolutist state that had profound affects for how we come to see ourselves, our behaviour, the standards of acceptability (that is, civility) and the natural world. Principal amongst these are, first, the gradual process of pacification of the warrior leading to his 'courtization'; and, second, the courtization of ever larger numbers of warriors, which corresponded to the creation of larger princely estates that eventually came under the control of courtly society (Elias, 1982; 1983). The gradual demise of feudal parcellized sovereignties and localistic loyalties that testified to the predominance of violent forms of life and a certain pre-reflective disposition points simultaneously to (a) extensions in the networks of power traversing social spaces and (b) an increasing centralization of social, economic and military forces, initially around increasingly larger courts, and subsequently around the (absolutist) state. Discontented with the comparative emphasis and narrowness pervading much of contemporary cultural and historical inquiry, Elias admonished:

[I]t is not enough to see and describe the particular events in different countries in isolation. A new picture emerges, and a new understanding is made possible, if the many individual courts of the West, with their relatively uniform manners, are seen together as communicating organs in European society at large (1982: 6).

Before the nation usurped the imagination of the intelligentsia, civilizing processes imbued the people with common standards of civilization such as modes of conduct toward others (as well as oneself), cultivation, bodily regulation, juridical state apparatuses and symbolic exchanges between more reflexive, morally individuated persons. In particular, it is first with an aristocracy that spans Europe as a whole that there emerges a configuration of (courtly) manners which will eventually disseminate and thus permeate all spheres of society. For instance, by citing various literary fragments Elias (1978) shows historically how the much taken-for-granted practices of

blowing one's nose, curtailing spitting, table/eating behaviour, bedroom behaviour and changes regarding attitudes towards the other sex and toward aggressiveness became accepted norms of self-expression and conduct. What these taken-for-granted cultural practices evidence is more than simply socialization and acceptable standards of behaviour, namely civility; they also represent an achievement of social construction and thus the historicity of psychical phenomena which we may otherwise be inclined to naturalize, that is, claim are given by human ontology. Whilst changes in our material culture such as the emergence of eating implements, dress codes and regimes of bodily controls stand as 'civilizing spurts or thrusts' (that is, change in a particular direction, with higher or lower thresholds of restraints), they also serve to illustrate important changes in the personality structures of human beings. In other words, the sociogenesis of new standards of human civility (and state formation) is simultaneously also the *psychogenesis* of the individual: the inner life or so-called 'personality', 'soul', 'self', Leibnizian windowless 'monad', Kantian subject and Cartesian *cogitio* which the human sciences are still grappling with owing to the enormous conceptual power of *homo clausus*.<sup>4</sup> Historical sociology, by contrast, leaves such metaphysical notions as the 'transcendental self' or the 'Being of beings' (Heidegger) in agnostic suspension. Elias's social ontology, we might say, is summarized by the following observation: essentialists or atomic thinkers 'have difficulty conceiving people as relatively but not absolutely autonomous and interdependent individuals forming changeable figurations with one another' (1978: 248). An historical-figurational-sociological analysis of the centralizing networks of power – 'quanta of power' – of monopolistic mechanisms of the state would conjointly provide an account of the inner (intra-psychical) mechanisms of control over the affects which increasingly come under scrutiny as a result of ever-tightening circles of social constraint leading to corresponding levels of self-restraint. That is, social constraint has as its correlate levels of self-restraint that accompany the individual's greater ability (or necessity) for self-regulation and observation. In court society, persons substituted the power of the sword with the power of symbolic exchange, which meant that people inhabiting pacified social spaces had become dependent upon their relative

abilities to observe themselves – including their bodily comportment and affect thresholds – others, assess the relative value of persons analogous to the rise and fall of stocks on exchanges, evaluate the relative risks involved in exceeding one's status position, and develop the necessary foresight to anticipate fluctuations in the status distinction and power differential of persons or alliances within the operative ambit of power. Thus the drives come under the gaze of those forces of social constraint that require higher levels of self-restraint owing to an increasing interdependency between individuals who are now more individuated but less physically violent yet highly adept at symbolic manipulation, interpretation and political negotiation.

Lack of self-restraint now comes to stand for more than simply brutish behaviour; it increasingly becomes the prerequisite for survival in a quasi-social Darwinian struggle. But rather than simply being a mark of cosmopolitan sophistication – as the culturalists of today may be inclined to think – psychical mechanisms of regulation and sublimation are now centralized (so-called 'internalization') in the figuration of self, who is simultaneously enveloped by the civilizing processes of state formation, normative regulation and personality changes. The latter sees heightened–lessened levels of self-control, self-consciousness and reflection and thus – as is clearly evident today – a more individuated path of ego formation. Consistent with both anthropological and psychoanalytical findings that ego formation in the child is greatly altered by existence in a more complexly organized political society with higher levels of division of labour and signification, Elias's theory links ego formation with state formation and human civility. Ego and super-ego formations therefore undergo a transformation under the strictures of a *civilité* that originally emerged within the pacified (but symbolic-rich) spaces of court society, spread across aristocratic classes and eventually disseminated down to the middle classes and finally the urban and rural working classes. The universality, for instance, of the presence of forks and knives on tables and modes of self-regulation that produce self-restraint (particularly in relation to the body and morals) demonstrate the efficacy of centrifugal networks of power that give force to the disseminating power of both 'civilizing' and 'decivilizing thrusts'; the former generally standing for stricter or tighter regimes of self-comportment and moral conduct, and the latter

for more informal or 'looser' configurations. Relativistically speaking, the standard of acceptable behaviour in public spaces, including that relating to bodily functions, is nominal: behaviour-thresholds are historically established and socially determined but not necessarily unilinear in their direction, or (following Nietzsche) 'good' or 'bad' in themselves. Thus the argument that the so-called 'casualization' of social norms of behaviour (for example, 'grunge' and 'post-grunge' informality) cannot be properly accounted for by this particular theoretical perspective is seriously flawed. What Elias showed in *State Formation and Civilization* is that the modern subject consciously or unconsciously wavers or oscillates between 'thrusts' and 'countervailing thrusts' of *becoming* 'civilized', regulated or normalized. To dress or speak extremely casually in everyday life, in other words, is wholly consistent with Elias's argument that drive and affect structures which make individuals also yearn for 'simpler times' or a more natural existence reveal the fundamental ambivalence that marks civilizing processes.<sup>5</sup> That is, normalization today requires us to be totally *au fait* with our (historically specific) more relaxed, informal modes of presentation – of speaking, dressing, greeting, eating, *ars erotica*, working and writing. In fact, civility in the first place was never some kind of imposition from above; rather, it was constituted by an interaction between the more stricter controls of aristocratic culture and the looser arrangements of the bourgeois and working classes. A further extension of informal codes of conduct/representation is therefore an integral aspect of a civilizing process: that is, it becomes a signifier of civilized life to know how to be 'more relaxed with your body' or 'appear cool' amongst your peers even while we are becoming more stressed and stretched by the pace of technological life. We might say, then, that the more that civilized life demands as well as extracts from us, the more we seek relief from these pressures by resorting to informal, personal and quite often intimate modes of expression and intercourse. In this sense, Elias's work antedates the position which Foucault (1978) would later adopt in his genealogical inquiries into Western sexuality: the 'natural' is neither immediately at hand nor especially transparent to either the subject or observer. Self-perception for the historical social theorist, then, stems not from a theory of the mind (Ryle, 1949) but instead from historico-empirical and sociological analyses of

the sociogenesis and psychogenesis of modern existence, that is, consciousness. Our perception of what is necessarily natural, barbaric or moral is always already conditioned by the historic figuration of social relations, cultural practices and norms of civility.

### Habitus in Comparison

For this reason a comparison of extant forms of civilized behaviour and affect-control with previous (historical) or other (differential) figurations proves useful in identifying important differences and continuities. Elias himself did not undertake any systematic comparative research into civilizing processes, though some insights were proffered in various places.<sup>6</sup> First, in *State Formation and Civilization* we find Elias positing a quintessential difference between Western society and other high cultures: though 'there are central organs of some sort in every society', the

formation of particularly stable and specialized central organs for large regions is one of the most prominent features of Western history. ... But as the differentiation and specialization of social functions have attained a higher level in the West than in any other society on earth – and as they begin to reach this level elsewhere only through an impetus coming from the West – it is in the West that specialized central organs first attain a hitherto unknown degree of stability. (1982: 164)

Regarding revulsion levels associated with handling whole animals and their products at the table and the process of concealment that segregates this unsightly activity from the viewer, it is China that particularly stands out. 'In earlier Chinese civilization, above all, the concealment of carving behind the scenes was effected *much earlier* and *more radically* than in the West' (Elias, 1978: 121–2, my emphasis). Indeed the complete disappearance of the knife as an everyday implement of civilized consumption in China is, according to Elias's theory, further testimony to higher emotion control thresholds and their corresponding levels of revulsion. This is no accident, since the fundamental structural characteristics of civilizing processes were obviously present in an imperially immured China: the monopolistic means of control of social and economic life by a scholarly officialdom ('the mandarins') who relatively early secured (a) the pacification of feudal warrior-dominated spaces and (b) the 'means of orientation', that is, knowledge production, acquisition and dissemination.

These are, it is worth noting, only two of the important dimensions of monopolization which derive from Elias's four-fold conception of the fundamental logics of social order and development. Each of the following four logics helps determine the power-quanta and figurations of power that shape both a society and personality: monopolization of the means of violence; means of production; means of orientation; and the means of (learning) self-restraint which is of necessity more decentred than the others (Elias, 1987: 230–1). It is rather curious why Elias never expounded a historical comparative sociology – in similar fashion to his great German predecessor Max Weber – that could yield valuable insights into the arguably greater levels of affect-control, concealment and therefore embarrassment and shame thresholds in this civilization, which generally have been overshadowed by a preponderance of academic interest in the so-called 'triumph of the West' thesis (I add *thesis* because I take it to be precisely just that – a thesis with its own anti-thesis). Elias was right to condemn social scientists for their lapse into a kind of presentism: an ahistorical obsession with present issues and dominant social forms, a tendency perhaps most evident now in the ill-defined area of 'cultural studies'. And although he did incorporate a comparative analysis of national differences in his account of the totality of Western society – as well as linguistic conceptual differences – one can nevertheless discern an underlying presentism pervading his own programmatic concerns.

To conclude our discussion of civilizing processes, Elias did provide a more useful comparative dimension to his work in adumbrating the empirical and social basis for certain 'process universals' he took to be vital for explaining *difference* and the distinctly *directional* quality of scholastic, political, cultural, psychological as well as technological phenomena (1987: 226). Invoking the primacy of the 'establishment-outsider' relation, he traced out the historically different sources of social power, closure and civilization, comparing modern with medieval and medieval city-states with those of antiquity. Eschewing the Marxist idea of a ruling class gaining prominence by extracting a surplus from the great labouring masses, he argued the control of magical and mythological powers of signification was either equally or more important for both pre-literate and literate state-societies. Not only ancient Egypt and China but Phoenicia, Persia and Sumer exhibited similar

competition between social functionaries for the minds and imaginations of their subjects. Thus the establishments of each of these civilizations consisted of (at least) two rivalrous classes: the warriors and the priests, the former securing power through the palace (and monopolizing the threat of death) and the latter through the temple (monopolizing rites over death and other-worldly representations). Although he accorded a diminished significance to ecclesiastical forces in his *magnum opus*, Elias later recognized the central role which priests played and how they succeeded in making the temple a centralizing locale for communion with others. If 'present conditions may be seen more clearly by comparison with conditions in the past,' he postulated, and 'if the earliest state-like organization in ancient Sumer ... was in fact centred on a temple and headed by priests, it is perhaps *not unduly daring* to conclude that the social requirements of the state population which priests could satisfy were at this stage much more pressing and imperative' (Elias, 1987: 236, my emphasis). An incongruence between our highly secularized scientific *Weltanschauung* and the sacro-magical or theistic world-picture of the ancient Sumerians and Egyptians elides the historical fact that pre-literate and early city-state survival units were centred on the exalted position of the priesthood – the class of members who possessed the means of sacral dispensation and mediated between worldly and other-worldly affairs. This may put into proper historical perspective today's rise to prominence of the capitalistic entrepreneur and its spurious concomitant, *homo economicus*; a creature who for now at least seems to have greatly eroded the sacro-symbolic power of the Vatican and Canterbury. It remains to be seen whether another countervailing thrust will emerge, in a decidedly less New-Age way, out of Jerusalem, Mecca, Beijing or Amritsa to 'check' this momentum towards greater commercialization and commodification.<sup>7</sup>

#### CIVILIZATIONAL COMPLEXES AND ANALYSIS

A more polyvalent form of civilizational analysis was developed by an American social theorist (and medieval specialist) who worked across a number of discipline domains, including psychoanalysis, the sociology and philosophy of

science and religion, European philosophy and the problem of usury. Benjamin Nelson, an energetic scholar greatly influenced by the work of Weber, Freud, Maine and Durkheim, and based at one time at the New School in New York, was similarly concerned with long-term socio-cultural processes, overcoming the myopia of presentism and working out a frame of reference which encompasses the totality of concrete life and not merely a segmented part of social reality. Rejecting the predominance of partial perspectives clearly visible both within and without the academy – discourses punctuated by 'social systems', nationalistic prejudices and identitarian self-interests – Nelson sought to develop a distinctly civilization-analytic perspective that overcame the above-mentioned shortcomings, including the shortcoming I referred to earlier in relation to Elias's work, so that we are justified in saying that his historical comparative sociology of science, religion and, more precisely, structures of consciousness comes much closer to Weber's attempts at developing a comparative sociology of world-civilizations. Eschewing the more static ideal-type theoretic of Weber's macro-social analysis, as did Elias, Nelson developed a conceptual approach which simultaneously stressed the importance of understanding phenomena in distinctly *processual* terms yet with special reference to 'structures of consciousness' and their corollary 'symbolic designs'. Unlike Foucault and more vigorously than Elias, Nelson argued that symbolic designs are fundamental to understanding how both individuals and collectivities orient themselves and form fraternities, that is, Kant's moral communities. Such fraternal communities, rather than being founded on the more institutional notion of an 'establishment-outsider' relation, are conceived instead in terms of the 'Brother-Other' distinction. Before we examine this distinction – one derived not from a power-theoretic but from an analysis of constitutive identificatory processes – we need to look first at the constitutive element itself.

Although Nelson had for decades worked on key aspects of civilizational analysis – conscience formation, the emergence of the self, paradigmatic shifts leading to wider circles of moral membership – his idea of a *civilizational complex* was more properly explicated in the 1970s. In 1971 he translated and published a short essay by Émile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss left dormant for a half-century and consequently neglected in contemporary

analyses of the modern condition. 'Note on the Notion of Civilization,' as it was titled, laid the grounds for the need to transcend restrictive conceptual categories that prevented social observers properly identifying processes which were giving rise to phenomena formerly absent from the analysis. Durkheim and Mauss well understood – perhaps from Marx and Weber – the need to reconsider the idea of civilizational analysis: '[T]here are ... phenomena which do not have such well-defined limits; they pass beyond the political frontiers and extend over less easily determinable spaces' (1971: 809). The much valorized idea of national territory – augmented by the intervening Cold War years – required radical critique, as did also academe's penchant for specialist area or comparative studies. Although civilizations are 'susceptible to nationalization', without doubt their 'essential elements are not the product of the state or the [national] people alone' (Durkheim and Mauss, 1971: 811). Before either the Internet or globalization came to be considered revolutionizing forces, these French theorists recognized the saliency of wider frames of reference that could account for (a) commonalities spanning different linguistic, national or topographical terrains and (b) the expansive or migratory quality of most human activities, not just technological innovations. The supranationality of modern science, democracy, art, fashion, travel, languages and urban industrial capitalist life gave evidence to a constitutive unit other than that of 'society' or (Parsons's) 'social system'. In other words, modernity is inextricably bound up with civilizational analysis, especially since we know 'the global' is too thinly stretched and permeated by tangible cultural lineages and historic ontologies.<sup>8</sup> The most apt term for describing the way certain processes and their attendant effects exceed the nation-state yet embed themselves with the help of what Durkheim and Mauss called '*frontières idéales*' (symbolic frontiers) is *civilization*. They gave it the following definition: 'A civilization constitutes a kind of moral milieu encompassing a certain number of nations, each national culture being only a particular form of the whole' (1971: 811). And *symbolic* frontiers rather than actual physical frontiers tend to be more effectual in delineating the relativities of similitude (commonality) and alterity (otherness) that underpin human identity.

Nelson appropriated the insights proffered by these path-breaking thinkers to expound

upon the argument that only a *civilization analytic* perspective can properly examine extra-societal phenomena; this includes the increasingly significant realm of inter-civilizational encounters, which Weber, Durkheim and others had failed properly to account for. Such a framework, a civilization-analytic perspective on life, simultaneously lays claim to the significance of national and regional particularisms, civilizational phenomena and cultural changes or hybridity resulting from inter-civilizational collisions and exchanges. This an important contribution of Nelson's to the body of historical-social research concerned not only with acceptable forms of behaviour or state formation (Elias) but also with processes of identity formation that incorporate cultural renovations and different structures of consciousness. The notion of a *complex* signifies an intricate set of interdependent determinants, that is, processes generally predisposed towards high mobility but nevertheless co-determined by historically contingent degrees of closure. But Nelson cautions us: '[T]here is no warrant for confining "civilization" to one set of constructs, to one sort of fabric' (1981b: 92). Stressing the need to maintain a pluralistic<sup>9</sup> framework of analysis, he posited that civilizational complexes – based on their 'diverse geometries' – manifest a number of patternings: configurations of 'coordinates defining cultural ontologies, epistemologies, and logics; directive systems, dramatic designs, and sociopolitical frameworks; and technologies of different sorts – symbolic as well as material' (1981b: 92). And since Nelson was particularly interested in accounting for modes of 'spiritual direction' – for example, directive systems of regulation of conscience, casuistry and the cure of souls – he linked *structures of consciousness* to these all-important geometries.

Let us first examine what these geometries of ontology, epistemology, rationales and symbolic designs consist of and then go on to consider structures of consciousness. First, in order to understand the contemporary constellation of 'scientific management, efficiency engineering, time-and-motion' and scientific technocultural revolutions, we need to look at how human beings make sense of their ever-changing world(s) and rationalize divergent value schemas (Nelson, 1981c: 69).<sup>10</sup> Contemporary schemas of value orientation and reasoning, so-called *rationales*, evince certain fundamental continuities with systems of spiritual direction, symbolic

designs and rationales of intellectual interrogation which preceded the scientific revolution(s) of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. But such rationales also gave impetus to the theological juridico-political rupture that allowed the Reformationists – culminating with Martin Luther – to announce the arrival of the modern self. Thus much earlier than Foucault's birth of the penitentiary or his subsequent work on the confessional as an exemplar of technologies of the self, Nelson had already apprehended the great import of spiritual technologies of the self for the formation of conscience and thus moral self-images. Late modern (hyper-)individuated selves, it can be said, exhibit a propensity to extend further their self-image according to accessible logics of moral decision and modalities of rational adjudication or interrogation – juridical, justificatory, evidential. Key cultural innovations in and through axial institutions of society and logics of scientific inquiry preceding the (first) Renaissance and Reformation flowed from what Nelson called the 'medieval orchestration of conscience, casuistry and the cure of souls' (1981d: 52). This is an important point in Nelson's construction of a civilization-analytic perspective as it points to the significance of (a) symbolic and spiritual technologies of the self and (b) 'universes of discourse' that embody rationale structures which encompass our various modes of 'expression, existence and experience'.<sup>11</sup> The latter three existential-philosophical concepts relate to the centrality of discourse, existents and the formative trace of experiences articulated within modalities of making and acting. However, Nelson argued it was impossible to conceive of each of these important phenomena separate from rationale structures, which he described as 'structures of reasons, explanations, procedures establishing requirements in respect to truth, legality, virtue, fittingness and other directive norms' (1981c: 70). Now the above-mentioned medieval technologies of the self, which proved immensely significant for both the Cartesian *cogito* and Kant's 'Copernican revolution', are a case in point in how individuals understood their conduct in relation to, in the first instance, religious procedures and directives regarding the states of souls. In the second instance, individuals understood their conduct increasingly according to more rationalistic matrices of criteria, namely logics of moral decision and truth establishment. The regiment of right conduct, on the one hand, and determination of

certitude, on the other, began to undergo a decisive shift of the kind that would give rise to: an individuated sovereign or self over moral decisions within the sphere of moral regulation; and within the sphere of knowledge, a post-Aristotelian science of nature that eventually led to a decentering of Christendom's geocentric world-picture.

Finally the pertinence of structures of consciousness for civilizational analysis has become apparent. This shift away from a prescribed, traditional *modus operandi* of the self – symbolised by the presence of a *curator animarum* – represents an important insight into how consciousness itself undergoes a certain development: a definitive transmogrification integral to our being. When human beings are subject to changes which they themselves have instigated, as Marx eloquently observed in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1954), we see not only institutions and technologies undergoing change but also existing forms of consciousness, as Hegel previously showed. Nelson argues that rationale structures and structures of consciousness constitute configurations of coordinates defining cultural ontologies, epistemologies and logics which, conversely, also determine the structures of rationales and consciousness themselves. Thus particular structures of consciousness, that is, the sacro-magical or rational types, possess their own *sui generis* force in human history; their irreducibility to bourgeois or material forces means that something quite distinctive occurred when moral theology, for instance, was usurped by a natural theology of sorts. When, for example, Aristotle was first introduced to students of Oxford and Paris universities or Galileo some three centuries later disclosed his new cosmology to the Church authorities, we can observe a faith structure of consciousness beginning to move toward 'the rationalization of the contents of faith; that is, the systematic analysis of the contents of and evidences for faith' (Nelson, 1981b: 94). Revisiting Weber's basic thesis outlined in his *Collected Essays in the Sociology of Religion* (cf. Weber, 1993), Nelson maintained that notable changes in structures of consciousness were associated with particular forms of fraternal association: the city, religious sects, 'brotherhoods' of various kinds and wider universes of discourse (for example, Latin Christendom). A collective conscience, for instance, represents what Nelson called a sacro-magical structure of consciousness, whereby 'collective representations

prevail and affirm the absolute authority of magical-prescriptive structures which are fulfilled by all groups without notable deviation' (1981b: 93). The civilizations of Judaism, Confucian China and the Hindus are exemplars of this type of consciousness. The second order, faith structures, are found in phases of diverse religions and represented by a 'transmoral consciousness, a conscience beyond good and evil'; generally this type of consciousness is strongly manifested in 'mystical cosmic, mystical millenarian, mystic militaristic sects and inner worldly mystical groups' for example, Gnostics, Sufis (1981b: 95). The 'inner illumination' or the lighting up of the soul through the meditative contemplation of Christ is an instance of such a structure of consciousness, exemplified by the early neo-Platonists and Bernard of Clairvaux. The gradual development of a form of *natural* as against moral theology – theology itself representing a kind of systematic hermeneutical science of the Word – signified how this peculiar type of consciousness was already pregnant with the possibility of a nascent rationalistic structure of consciousness. Therein Nelson's type of civilizational analysis points us in the direction of changes to the conscience structure of an illuminist like Bonaventura to, say, that of an Abelard, whose conscience was underlined by a more Aristotelian-like logic of moral decision. Nelson's philosophy of the vicissitudes of consciousness, however, decidedly rejects any neo-evolutionary or linear developmental logic of history. *Contra* Habermas and closer perhaps to the genealogist Michel Foucault, Nelson argued: 'The history of the structures of consciousness or conscience is neither continuous nor consecutive, nor is there any consecutive or continuous understanding or awareness of man as an agent in all modalities of his personhood and existence, (1981f: 217).

Thus thrusts toward greater rationalization or universalization are neither inevitable nor over-determined. What the above instance exemplifies rather – in a decidedly depth-historical fashion – is the strong link between the existence of a 'transmoral conscience' in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and the move toward wider spheres of fraternization, discourse and intellectual engagement. In other words, as a student of medieval culture, and in particular of its perturbations regarding the use of usury, Nelson was able to identify the important role of the transcendental self (as circumscribed by a faith structure of

consciousness) in ushering in a universality of types that would find expression in 'rationalized structures of consciousness' (1981b: 96). The latter harbours a form of universality essentially because it sustains 'terms of discourse [which] are absolutely general and increasingly available through formalization into abstract languages which are technical ... and open to mathematical formulation at one or another level of abstraction' (1981b: 96). And perhaps this is why we moderns today intuitively feel tied to a transcendentalism of sorts which contemporary rationality nevertheless struggles to explain within its own terms. Part of the great difficulty in determining the exact grounding of such a transcendental self is the apparent demise in recognition of rationales and their *nomoi*; new social movements since at least the 1920s, coupled with the cataclysmic *epoché* of the twentieth century, have reignited the scepticism of old concerning the 'myth of the objective consciousness' (1981b: 103). Nelson himself expressed some doubt whether the 'remaining years of the twentieth century will witness an encouragement of other prerequisites of civilization, above all, widely dispersed rights to join together voluntarily for mutual benefit in cultural and associational purposes; freedom of conscience and consciousness; acknowledgement of answerability to universal rationales' (1981b: 105). Despite his repudiation of a Nietzschean cultural pessimism, Nelson, it could be argued, also fell susceptible to a kind of underestimation – a danger intrinsic to historical consciousness itself – of the symbolic power invested in civilizational complexes, their axial institutions and existents (that is, subjects). For in many regards, the last twenty-five years have witnessed a further extension and deepening out of a number of human rights previously only formally ratified by the Geneva Convention and now made manifest through the democratization of various spheres of social life, contrariwise to the colonization thesis.<sup>12</sup>

### **Habitus in Comparative Perspective**

Our discussion now turns to Nelson's contribution to comparative historical social analysis and then briefly to Samuel Eisenstadt's contribution to the field. We have already seen how within Nelson's schema civilizational analysis follows the logic that there are civilizational complexes which possess degrees

of social closure but are essentially porous; that is, symbolic frontiers not iron curtains form and shape their identity. Moreover, it will be recalled that inter-civilizational encounters form an integral part of the constitutive process of such complexes; complexes therefore are never hermetically sealed objects of analysis. Thus it is no accident that in Nelson's account of modernity we find the West referred to as 'the West' or the "so-called West"/or 'East'. Static conceptions of regional cultures or political communities are abjured. This is not to discount the reality of diverse forms of exclusion; exclusion practices, however, are just as evident *within* as without complex political societies. The point rather is that these more complex configurations of human association have never been Robinson Crusoe existences: socio-cultural formations of every kind have known (and exhibited) the imperative to learn from neighbours, enemies or 'barbarians'. Hence, the comparative analysis of structured social relations and associations of necessity is bound up with a distinctly processual account of civilizational formations. Others subsequently have shown similar epistemic reserve regarding the efficacy of the ideal-type methodology and, similarly, the evident penchant within the social sciences (at least before globalism) for static or statist models of social life (cf. Mann, 1986).

Although Max Weber previously set out to explain the uniqueness of the West, namely its rationalism, he had, according to Nelson, misplaced his conceptual emphasis. The analytical emphasis should rather have been why paradigmatic shifts were not sufficiently taken up by other equally if not more advanced civilizations such as China and Islam. Whilst maintaining a polyvalence with regard to the abundantly diverse forms of science and religious affiliation in history, Nelson at the same time was astutely aware of the need for theoreticians (or civilizational analysts) to be cognizant of the requirement to explain ascendancies, descendencies as well as morphological changes in civilizational complexes. Leaving aside the important dimension of inter-civilizational processes and elements, it becomes evident the concern here is less with the triumphalism of Western culture and more with providing a forensic analysis of how rationales and structures of consciousness in divergent cultural geometries have given force to different understandings (*cultural ontologies*) and knowing (*sciencing*).<sup>13</sup> In this context Nelson examined the morphology of Islamic science and, through a close analysis of

Joseph Needham's (1959) multi-voluminous work on Chinese science and civilization, medieval China as well. Consistent with the argument concerning shifting balances in the intellectual-cultural ascendancies of diverse complex societies, he observed that whereas medieval China and Islam had overtaken the Occident in astronomy, hydrology, optics, navigation, printing, chemistry and classical (Greek) learning, they began to decline comparatively about the time of Galileo. The expulsion from Spain and Austria of Islamic peoples by the mid-seventeenth century sealed this world-historical image. Nevertheless, why and how did 'the Franks' eventually overcome their comparatively languid state to surpass those Others who had bestowed them with the examination system, the zero, gunpowder and copies of Aristotle and other Greek texts? The explanation is dual: first, they benefited greatly from their interaction and engagement with Islam and China, not to mention New World civilizations; second, through the transvaluation of other-worldly asceticism partly due to the centrality of inner worldly asceticism, coupled with the rupture of 'invidious dualisms' such as the Brother-Other owing to the vital presence of universalities of thought and fraternization. Civilizations of Asia did not, for specific socio-political historical reasons, generate the conditions to sustain either the city as we commonly understand it today or the modern university. In other critical respects, however, China was ripe for a cognate revolution in ontological frames: the absence of slave labour caused less suspicion of the utility of inventions; Taoist precepts regarding Nature, whilst anti-nomothetic in form, assisted in the development of medical, alchemical and physical sciences; and the achievement of a high degree of ethical rationalism, as Weber had already alluded to, was historically surpassed only by the *irrationalism* of Protestant sects which later proved fateful for both the New World and *Europe*. That is, the Protestant ethic (of industrial capitalism) and Newton's physical laws of Nature became a potent, transformative amalgam that eventually would exceed even the closures of European society. The so-called 'rationalization' of structures of consciousness was nevertheless inhibited by constraints on both social intercourse – intensive yet exclusionary brotherhoods – and intellectual interrogation, fraternal communities of universal discourse. Nelson (1976) referred to this logic as his 'double-dialectic processes'. Why the more advanced Arabs did not make the next step forward to,

say, Newton or Galilean physics was due not to some shortfall in their *mentalité* or to flawed Islamic theological doctrine but rather to the dominance of the *ulama*. This caste of religio-intellectual figures 'never achieved the degree of rationalization which was achieved in Roman-Canonical jurisprudence; the various schools of Muslim law continued to be based upon the *hadith* ("tradition")' (Nelson, 1981b: 100). It is the historical sociologist and not the theologian or area-specialist, in other words, who can best explain why modern notions of science or discourse or political organization are linked to peculiar breakthroughs within a particular civilizational genealogy; a genealogy, Nelson assiduously reminds us, which itself embodies a number of breakthroughs achieved by the Other – formerly the 'barbarian' beyond the symbolic frontier of our 'civilization'.

Eisenstadt has undertaken a similar set of inquiries into the formative role of world religions and their corresponding 'Axial civilizations'. Undertaking historical-sociological investigations not dissimilar to Weber or Nelson, Eisenstadt, too, remains alert to the need to adopt analytic frames which defy the lures of presentism and yet appreciate the perspectivism long-term processes afford us. His point of departure is the influential work of Karl Jaspers on the world-historical significance of 'Axial-age civilizations' and their decisive breakthroughs (see Eisenstadt, 1986a).<sup>14</sup> Late modern societies are marked by many of the key elements and cosmological understandings of Axial-age civilizations, which carry and transmit through their own lineages traces of non-Axial and pre-Axial civilizations as well (Eisenstadt, 2000). What unifies these otherwise diverse socio-cultural formations is their revolutionary breakthrough to a wider, collective consciousness or identity – a *civilizational* identity – based upon 'the emergence and institutionalization of new basic ontological metaphysical conceptions of a chasm between transcendental and mundane orders' (Eisenstadt, 2000: 4). Whilst not inferring a lack of internal differentiation, this means that such complexes build identities which incorporate tensions (or conflicts) between ontologies which are instantiated by a cosmological vision and others by this-worldly religious ethics. In this case, the comparative analysis of civilizational structures refers us simultaneously to the common presence of a transcendental metaphysics of being or *arche* (origin, order) and a multiplicity of institutional forms within which the class of

intellectuals, or 'spiritual directors' broadly conceived, promulgate the cosmological vision of a transmundane world and its concomitant structure(s) of consciousness, that is, sacro, faith, rational or syncretic. Comparison, in other words, need not necessarily be teleological; the differential and developmental dimensions are both important aspects of theoretical analysis which do not *per se* embody deterministic, linear lines of development.

Under the category of similitude, Eisenstadt finds that China in one significant respect shared a common world-view orientation to the Axial-age civilizations of the east Mediterranean sphere. Diverging from its Hinduist and Buddhist counterparts, China developed a very strong this-worldly conception of 'salvation' which placed central emphasis on the social and political orders as the sites and foci of transcendental visions similar to those of ancient Greek and Hellenistic civilizations. It developed significant capacities for the 'rational' resolution of human or ethical dilemmas (that is, Confucianism and neo-Confucianism) in a fashion akin to those of ancient Greece and Rome (Eisenstadt, 1986a). This obviated the need for deistic objections and resolutions of existential-soteriological crises of the kind which came to define monotheistic civilizations as well as the other-worldly (non-deistic) oriented Hinduist and Buddhist civilizations.<sup>15</sup> In the antithetical mode, China also diverged from Greece and Rome in its mundane 'secular' orientation in the following ways: it more fully articulated the paradox of embodying a transcendental vision whilst resorting to a worldly conception of how to bridge these world-orders as result of acquiring an imperial form; it succeeded more forcefully than either Greek or Hellenistic civilizations in stressing the 'proper performance of worldly duties and activities within the existing social frameworks ... as the ultimate criterion of the resolution of the tension between the transcendental and mundane order and of individual responsibility'; it had very tightly interwoven the realms of speculative and political life, as exemplified by the Confucian literati; and, finally, China's 'special conception of its resolution' of the tension between world renunciation and affirmation was decidedly marked by a 'strong semi-sanctification of the imperial order' that was absent in the (ancient) Mediterranean cases (Eisenstadt, 1986b: 292–3). In Chapter 15 of this volume, Arnason examines further the import of Asian

civilizations and therefore provides a useful adjunct to our brief comparative discussion here.

Returning to our point concerning similitude, Eisenstadt pursues a strong institutional inquiry into the *sui generis* nature of the construction of collective identities; what brings people together into a common sense of belonging – ultimately predicated upon boundaries, trust and solidarity – as against what differentiates or estranges members of the human race. Distinct ‘codes or schemata’, it is argued, fundamentally shape the construction of such collective identities because ontological premises regarding social order affect the delineation of ‘major arenas of social interaction and the structures of preferences’ (Eisenstadt, 1998: 232). These major codes enable collective identities to be constructed and, drawing on the work of Edward Shils, Clifford Geertz and others, are determined to be primordiality, civility and sacredness or transcendence. The seemingly natural quality of boundaries that demarcate member from outsider owes to the primordiality of codes centred upon kinship, generation, gender, language, race and territory. Second, civic codes embody rules which form the core of communal identities: familiarity with implicit and explicit rules of conduct, traditions and social routines defines the boundary of a given collectivity (1998: 232). Finally, the transcendent code links the collective subject with a relation to the ‘realm of the sacred and the sublime, be it defined as God or Reason, Progress or Rationality’ (1998: 232). This major code of identification is particularly manifest in the Axial-age religions, *pace* Jaspers and Weber, which form a crucial part of Eisenstadt’s general theoretical concerns with elites and institutional clusterings as key determinants of comparative sociologico-civilizational analysis. Sacredness, as with Durkheim, Weber and Nelson, infuses both the civic and primordial codes. It is admitted, nevertheless, that each of these three codes is an ideal-type; and as analytic-universals they undergird Eisenstadt’s otherwise heterogeneous conception of civilizational structures and collective identities. Now, whilst it may be possible to discern how temporal instantiation produces a great degree of variance in the way boundaries or other-worldly cosmologies operate in people’s lives, this seems to be decidedly divorced from any understanding of *processes per se*. In a critical vein, we might say the analyst is somehow endowed with the

ability to identify – in quite objectivistic ways – the historical and social differences and essences of particular objects/subjects of analysis without ever needing to discern the process(es) from which their definitive morphology or metamorphosis emerged. So whilst Eisenstadt is correct in wishing to salvage the analytics of civilizational analysis from relegation to epiphenomenal status, the virtue of an autonomous logic of development comes at the cost of adopting a problematic ideal-typical framework of analysis which others such as Elias, Nelson and recent theoretical physicists have eschewed. Hence, a historical, comparative and civilization analytic appears most prospectful as a way to proceed until at least one encounters particular methodological and theoretical shortcomings.

#### CONCLUSION

To what end does historical sociology take aim if it is not that which pertains to fundamental questions to do with the nature of social organization within the context of shifting frameworks of time and space? If it is to avoid erroneously declaring social forms definitive of our present understanding of human society and morals as immutable, social theory will of necessity need to be (a) historically oriented and (b) processual in its analytic focus. This is vital in the present context of scholarly investigation because of two marked developments, one within the academy and the other within the popular idiom. There is, first, a tendency to shy away from these important characteristics of civilization theory under the prevailing pressure to publish for the simple professional reason of preserving one’s position within the academy. The second force to be reckoned with is the apparent disenchantment with the (systematic) study of the historicity of our civilizational forms in Western societies, including amongst many university humanities students. Indeed a certain nexus has formed between these two forces: academicians who work in more contemporaneous fields of study have come to a lesser or greater extent to embrace the quasi-positivistic penchant for ‘telling it as it is’ and turning social reality into foundationless, *genos*-free instances of the knowing of (present) facts – the facticity of cultural idioms. In this sense a civilization-analytic perspective has the possibility of redeeming

that which the 'forgetfulness of Being', to use Heidegger's language, has rendered oblivious. An exemplification of this point may, ironically, be gleaned from that fontal which inspired the emergence of Derridean deconstruction: the Talmudic and Cabbalistic insights of Emmanuel Levinas's philosophy. Levinas's unique kind of post-Heideggarian 'first philosophy' is a philosophy that challenges the egoism of our contemporary cultural milieu, arguing for the instantiation of the Other as the moral fulcrum of our very existence. Yet this post-existentialist philosophical outlook finally draws its sustenance from a long-standing tradition which popular commodified culture – and its attendant standardizing logic – appears to override with triumphant arrogance, claiming the 'end of ideology', the 'death of Man' and, most spuriously of all, the illusion of the end of what I call 'civil genealogy'. This kind of genealogy recognizes the indispensability of what Hans Gadamer understood as linguistic communities bound by a particular linguistic tradition that trajectories its own horizons of meaning. Civil genealogy traces the lineages which disseminate (spatial) and defer (temporal) rationale structures, universes of discourse and cultural ontologies (with their attendant triad of codes, *pace* Eisenstadt) through particular configurations of structures of consciousness which convey self-understandings that are not bereft of contradictions. The task before historical sociology is not only to identify new manifestations of what Nietzsche described as 'decadence' – devaluation of all noble values or valorization of destructive nihilistic forces in the name of democracy – but also to take up with great vigour a problematization of morals formative of modern disciplined existence. Without undertaking some form of 'civil genealogy', as I have put it, historical sociology will continue to omit the significance that morals and values – normative structures generally – have for the human being who becomes what s/he is. That is to say, its long-standing structural-functional systemic bias needs to come under strong scrutiny, as does also its theoretical penchant for disclosing the historical 'necessity' of modern institutions and practices. When it fully extirpates its classical Eurocentric orientations, historical sociology will have much to offer – both intellectuals and technocrats – by exceeding the limitations of postcolonial theory. And there are good reasons to believe not only that civilization

theory can fill this void – the aporia of 'non-European' *autarkeia* – but also that it could better discern the universalities and particularities of peoples, customs and morals in different parts of the globe without having to resort to reductionist methodologies which unnecessarily privilege one category (for example, colonialism) of analysis over all others. What is more, as nature has once again become a necessary concern for the human species, civilization theory – with its constant focus on the realms of nature – may prove more efficacious in challenging humanist modernization presuppositions by reconceptualizing the conquestive enslavement of Nature that traditionally was assumed to be integral to the civilizing process – the taming of the Wild Man. Indeed the rapacious expropriation of nature – ordinarily considered sacrosanct by classical historians of civilizations – has now become, in its new bio-genetical guise, something pivotal to the specific transformation(s) which human beings themselves will radically undergo, not to mention non-human species as well – a phenomenon less amenable to Elias's theoretic of civilizing processes. So in broad terms, broader than the mainstay of historical sociology thus far, civilization theory (encompassive of civil genealogy) has the capacity to bring in to full view the genealogy of the ethical subject that is now the fulcrum of modern democratized cultures, and the likely changes in its corporeal constitution it will undergo in this twenty-first century as a result of both an intensive scientific-technological civilization and an ever-present bio-politics ensuing from the voice of a *demos* that contrarily also seeks the good life through unconscious inauthenticity.

#### NOTES

1. Friedrich Nietzsche, in continuation of the Renaissance and Romantic traditions, promulgated the idea of the human being *becoming* an interesting creature as a result of the civilizing processes of human history.

2. This being the first volume in English of his original *The Civilizing Process* published in Switzerland as a single work in 1939.

3. It could be argued, however, that Elias's theory also articulates important points of distinction premised upon other dualisms such as 'establishment-outsider', violent-pacific, centrifugal-centripetal forces and European-non-European. Similarly it could

be argued that Elias eschewed the methodological prejudices of both structuralism and phenomenology whilst nevertheless incorporating elements of both: the former to explain class formation and the latter to give an account of the symbolic work of phenomenological disclosure involved in court society. Both of these aspects, however, are incorporated into his essentially *processual* account of social and psychological phenomena.

4. For an extensive discussion of methodological and philosophical issues related to the vexed question of how to explain modern (self-)consciousness or horizons of being, see Elias's 'Introduction to the 1968 Edition', in 'Appendix I', *History of Manners*. Derivatives of *homo clausus* in today's academy are *homo philosophicus*, *homo psychologicus* and 'not least *homo sociologicus* in his present-day version' (1978: 249).

5. It is important to stress that there is no single civilizing process in world history. Unlike some pundits of (the other verb) 'globalization', Elias's theoretical framework embraces multiplicity rather than singularity, thereby rejecting the problematical collapsing of diverse phenomena into a singular logic.

6. For a critical appraisal of Elias on this matter, cf. Mandalios (1999: Ch. 3).

7. Another form of dethronement which historical sociologists could examine in the present rush to commercialize, privatize and commodify the means of intellectual production, exchange and engagement is academe's intelligentsia. The 'God-professor' may have given ground to innumerable decentralized sources of information-bytes: disembodied 0-1 dyads appearing on easily accessible screens that are, rather anachronistically, objectively attached to well-established prestige symbols of high status and achievement, for example, MIT or Oxford.

8. Outside North America, globalism frequently stands for the apparent liberal end-of-ideology utopia of contemporary America. In (so-called) newly developing countries it more specifically represents another, more extensive, transformative phase in imperial modernization, but this time proclaimed as 'democracy'.

9. Against both Niklas Luhmann and Jürgen Habermas, Nelson argued it was vital to maintain a non-teleological, multiple conception of human societies and their historical trajectories. On his divergence with Luhmann, cf. Nelson with Luhmann (1976), and on his divergence with Habermas, cf. Nelson (1981a).

10. This of course does not preclude the forces of the unconscious or conflicting desires, as is evident from the following statement: 'Those who call us to the collective reappropriation of redeeming symbols through the collective unconscious may indeed prove to be more popular prophets than the defenders of rationality' (Nelson, 1981b: 103).

11. Towards the end of his life, Nelson described his sense of the social imagination as informed by a 'predicamental vision': since people everywhere find themselves in predicaments which demand action or co-operation, sociology cannot do without 'clearly

relating to the structures of *existence* of peoples, the structures of their *experience*, and the structures of their *expressions*' (1981e: 231).

12. Habermas's thesis concerning the colonization of the life-world, or Foucault's thesis concerning the disciplinary practices and technologies governing everyday life, represents a negative teleology which requires critical evaluation in the light of *countervailing* thrusts against the domination of persons. The former's discourse ethics at least acknowledges this requirement.

13. 'Diverse settings of sciencing' was part of Nelson's theoretical position that stopped decidedly short of a fully blown relativist position. (See further Nelson, 1974.) None the less, one can discern a modernist preoccupation with how rational world-science came into being – a certain kind of retrospectivism at work.

14. The Axial civilizations consist of ancient Greece, ancient Israel, China, Brahmin India, Zoroastrian Iran and early Christianity, Islam and Buddhism.

15. Although not predisposed toward the kind of this-worldliness which defined China, Hinduist and Buddhist Axial civilizations did not, however, embody a deistic cosmological conception. The paradox is that their transmundane focus nevertheless transformed this concrete world of existence in significantly influential ways. Moreover, the monotheistic civilizations of Christianity, Judaism and Islam display elements of both other-worldly (but deistic) and this-worldly orientations towards the central questions of ontology, salvation, nihilism and political order.

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# PART II

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## *Approaches*

In Part II, building upon the founders of historical sociology, the main approaches are discussed. These chapters illustrate how historical sociology has progressively become diversified not only by incorporating new approaches, but also by allowing these approaches to shift their focus to different kinds of objects. The result is quite remarkable in that historical sociology has remained concerned with classical themes such as modernization, racialization, individualization, civilization, nationalization and statization in new ways while investigating new themes such as spatialization, institutionalization, intellectualization, orientaliation and historicization.

Beginning with the Western marxist tradition, George Comminel looks at the largely Marxist-inspired literature on the transition from feudalism to capitalism, and more generally the transition from medieval society to modernity. In his view the pivotal significance of the French Revolution figures very strongly in these analyses and serves as a kind of archetypal model for the notion of bourgeois revolution.

In Chapter 7 Wolfgang Knöbl assesses the fate of modernization theory, which can be associated with functionalist evolutionary theory, discussed in Chapter 3, but is more eclectic and is not based on a single theoretical tradition, although in its classical phase in the 1950s it sought to historicize Parsons's pattern variables. Many of its major proponents aimed to make differentiation more central to functionalism in order to explain social change. It

was characterized by a concern with the dichotomy of tradition and modernity; it was a macro-sociology of historical change and also sought to be a global theory of social change that would rival Marxism. While much of it has been discredited, Knöbl argues that the 'new modernization' theory has not solved the problems of the older version and has engendered fresh problems. None the less, one of its enduring legacies is the concept of societal differentiation.

One of the features of many of the older approaches was a concern with temporal issues, such as the transition from feudalism to capitalism, the transition from tradition to modernity, community to society. Susan Friedman in Chapter 8 brings in an additional dimension, namely the spatial turn. In her estimation, the spatial turn must now be seen to rival the well-known historical and cultural turns in the social sciences, and it is in this respect that historical sociology must take account of historical geography. Historical geography was originally more history-based than geography, unlike historical sociology, which had always been very sociological. It overcame its anti-theoretical bias and reliance on economics and history to become a subdiscipline by the 1970s, although historical geographers continued to have reservations about theory and the comparative method adopted by historical sociologists. The fact that historical geography matured to the point that the other social sciences, especially sociology, were embracing the cultural turn did not

hasten convergence. Recently, however, there has been greater convergence, which may be due to historical geography's overcoming of its earlier severance with political geography and its association with economic history. As is best illustrated by the work of David Harvey, geography and sociology have overcome much of their earlier disciplinary separation. However, the extent of mutual cross-fertilization has yet to become apparent. The picture painted by Susan Friedman is that these two subdisciplines with their different approaches have been too separated. The importance of historical geography for historical sociology is that the latter has privileged time to the neglect of space. Yet, time, or, rather, its social constitution, has increasingly become problematized in the social sciences and humanities with a 'spatial turn' that began highlighting space as a condition of possibility of historical experience. Thus, encounters between historical sociology and historical geography could have far-reaching consequences in a transvaluation of fundamental categories of otherness such as 'Orient' and 'Occident', 'East' and 'West', and 'North' and 'South'.

The following chapter concerns less structural approaches than institutional approaches, which are particularly characteristic of sociology and anthropology. The difference, Chris Smaje explains in Chapter 9, is one of the markers of a major strand in contemporary historical sociology. Institutional history draws attention to the ordering of social relations, and, unlike the structural sociology of the classical sociologists, it is more 'connective', seeking to show how different parts of the world were connected rather than being separated by incommensurable cultures. In short, Smaje argues for the linking of institutional history with comparative analysis. Rather than appeal to European exceptionalism or a singular global process, he stresses several mutually connecting modernities. Taking race and class (in the European case) and caste (in the Indian case) as examples, he suggests that by exploring their homologous logics, these categories can be seen as different institutional ways for the ordering of relations between persons and things (economics) and between persons and other persons (politics and kinship). Despite these institutional contrasts, there was also a common economic order based on globally organized capitalism, and also the fact that, despite their institutional differences, similar economic orientations developed.

Chapter 10 develops the theme of culture that is already apparent in institutional approaches. John Hall in his chapter on cultural history recounts some of the formative stages in the cultural turn in the social sciences, but also effectively announces the end of cultural history as a distinctive body of knowledge in our post-disciplinary age. Culture has penetrated so many domains of inquiry in the social sciences and humanities that it no longer occupies a distinctive territory or one that can be contained within a particular discipline. We are in a sense beyond the cultural turn, he suggests, and disciplines such as history and sociology have been pulled apart by the reflexivity of cultural analysis. But Hall does not argue against cultural history; instead, as his invocation of the Greek legend indicates, his argument is that cultural history has enriched social history of the hydra by bringing new objects of analysis into its view, including cultural ones, and, in doing so, it may have reached its destiny, living through many forms of social history.

In Chapter 11 Peter Wagner deals with the implications of the linguistic turn, which builds upon the cultural turn but has a different origin, more in philosophy than in history or sociology. However, today both disciplines have fully absorbed the linguistic turn and the broader impact of ideas on material life. It is no longer possible for a historically oriented science to ignore language in the constitution of both science and or social reality, he argues. Wagner discusses three major influences: the discursive approaches of Michel Foucault, Quentin Skinner and Reinhart Koselleck, who all shared a concern with the role of language in historical analysis. His chapter offers an appraisal of four major topics that bear the impact of the encounter of intellectual history with historical sociology, namely Keynesianism and economic discourse, early social policies and sociological discourse, class society and post-revolutionary liberalism, and accounts of the French Revolution. For Wagner the upshot of the encounter of intellectual history and historical sociology is a new chance for these domains of inquiry to be linked to political philosophy, thus allowing for a wider appreciation of historical transformation. He illustrates how far historical sociology has moved from various determinist themes that dogged its founding practitioners by becoming reflexive of its conditions of production.

Genealogical approaches are normally associated with the work of Michel Foucault

and his progenitor Friedrich Nietzsche. While considering genealogy *à la* Nietzsche and Foucault as an 'approach' to historical sociology may be seen as 'taming' and 'disciplining' these two thinkers, it is worth pointing out that Weber considered himself deeply indebted to Nietzsche's genealogical analyses. In Chapter 12 Mitchell Dean adds a further dimension to genealogy by including Carl Schmitt. In this respect genealogy is extended beyond moral regulation to an analysis of war and peace in the wider international context. In this characterization, the genealogical approach builds upon the central ideas of Michel Foucault in addressing issues of the condition of truth and knowledge and in conceiving of genealogy as an anti-presentist method that seeks to unburden history from the present. Genealogy can thus be called a problematization of present truths, a new version of post-disciplinary critique. Drawing from Schmitt's work on the international order and the concept of the 'Nomos' of the earth, Dean extends genealogical analysis into the domain of space and the conduct of war.

In Chapter 13 Dipesh Chakrabarty discusses the impact of subaltern studies on the writing of postcolonial history. Originally a series of studies specific to Indian history that emerged in the early 1980s concerning nationalism and colonialism, it has since become an influential area of specialization far beyond the discipline of history and has reshaped postcolonial writing, which had been characteristic of literature. The suggestion is that subaltern studies has influenced postcolonial writing in a more historical direction. Chakrabarty defends subaltern studies from

some of the charges levelled against it, that, for example, it was merely the application of radical history, such as that of the British Marxists, to the postcolonial context, or that its 'history from below' went into decline once it came into contact with postmodern deconstruction or Said's orientalism. Arguing that it was itself innovatory, especially in the work of the movement's founder, Ranajit Guha and the journal *Subaltern Studies*, Chakrabarty argues that a paradigm shift occurred with the idea that historical analysis must make subaltern groups the subjects of history. This necessarily led to a departure from some of the assumptions of British radical history, such as taking for granted the nation form and the assumption that peasants are an extinct group as far as radical politics is concerned and an anachronistic category in modernity. Subaltern studies also insisted on stronger emphasis on the relation of power and knowledge as well as the separation of the politics of the people from the politics of the elites. Historical sociology has not fully absorbed the implications of subaltern studies, which seems to suggest a major rethinking of Eurocentrism.

The approaches included here are of course by no means exhaustive. None the less, the eight chapters in Part II amply illustrate the range of approaches that have been incorporated into historical sociology while clearly indicating how these approaches arose out of appraising and elaborating its classical foundations. Within these approaches also classical themes are rearticulated and the new themes are formulated. Some of these themes constitute the subject of Part III.



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## *Historical Materialist Sociology and Revolutions*

GEORGE C. COMNINEL

One of the fundamental issues of historical sociology since its origins in historical social theory in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has been that of a transition between medieval and modern forms of society. There have, indeed, been so many variations on this basic theme that it would scarcely be possible to enumerate them all. What all have in common, however, is the delineation of two contrasting historical social epochs, comprising specific sets of social characteristics as distinctive forms of society, accompanied by some conception of systematic social change from one to the other.

The older form of society may not be conceived specifically in relation to the European Middle Ages, but such a fundamental transition is in every case identified as culminating in, coinciding with or occurring in the course of a European modern period that opened roughly five hundred years ago. The social forms involved in this transition have been variously described in terms of such oppositions as 'traditional' and 'modern', *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, 'feudal' and 'capitalist', 'agrarian' and 'commercial', 'simple' and 'complex', and 'aristocratic' and 'bourgeois'. The historical process of change itself has been identified with increased rationalization, desacralization, urbanization and/or commercialization; development of the division of labour; the rise of a bourgeois class; the growth of capitalism; or some broad amalgam of these and related processes conceived simply as 'modernization'.

This transition has most typically been understood as part of a larger historical process of 'progress', a protean concept that has underpinned much social thought during the modern era (Butterfield, 1931; Comninel, 1987: 61–74; Meek, 1976; Wood, 1995: 6–8). It is not, however, necessary to conceive history as a universal and unilinear whole, leading inexorably from the remote past to modern capitalism, in order to recognize the dramatic contrast between contemporary and pre-modern societies. And, with or without a narrative of historical progress, this inescapable contrast has been powerfully associated with the idea of revolution, and above all with the great French Revolution of 1789. Indeed, as exemplified in Eric Hobsbawm's classic *Age of Revolution* (1962), since 1789 the idea of social revolution has been caught up with that of epochal social change: a profound transformation of politics, the state and social institutions coinciding with or corresponding to a vast transformation of social and economic life. As at least an element in the transition to modern society, and often as its pivotal moment, the French Revolution has figured both as impetus to, and a prime subject of, historical sociology.

### **THE FRENCH REVOLUTION AND HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY**

In the first place, among the central elements of social change identified in all such conceptions

of transition, is the development of nationally integrated societies with effective state apparatuses. This development of the modern state is understood to involve a profound shift from the former political ascendancy of privileged, hereditary, rural and agrarian, regional feudal lords, to a more egalitarian, rational, urban and commercial, national political society. The classic formulation of this transformation has been as 'bourgeois revolution' – a historically progressive class of capitalist bourgeois taking political power from an outmoded landed class of feudal aristocrats – an idea directly derived from the French Revolution. While the transformation has been said in some instances to have been mediated or attenuated, perhaps drawn out through decades or even centuries, or to have been carried out 'from above' by a dominant aristocracy, the model generally postulates a distinct political revolution (Anderson, 1974b: 431; Comninel, 1987: 8–17, 24). Besides France, cases have been made for one or another example of bourgeois revolution in most states pre-dating the First World War, such as the English Civil War, the American Revolution or the Upper and Lower Canada Rebellions of 1837 and 1838.

Secondly, the French Revolution not only serves as archetypal model for the idea of bourgeois revolution within historical sociology, it is also widely recognized to have played a crucial role in the development of sociological theory as such. Irving Zeitlin has offered perhaps the clearest statement of this idea: 'Following the French Revolution, there occurred a Romantic-Conservative Reaction against the Revolution and its intellectual antecedents. It was in this context that the earliest concepts, theories, and methods of sociology crystallized' (1987: xi). Other theorists would characterize it differently (for example, Seidman, 1983) but there is broad agreement that the crucible for modern social theory was the aftermath of the Revolution. Whereas, it is said, the ideology of the Revolution emphasized equality and individual rights and liberties with respect to religious, economic, political and other social relationships, the 'counter-Enlightenment' emphasized order, harmony and coherence, shifting intellectual attention from the individual to the social whole. Moreover, the Revolution brought with it a profound awareness of history itself, as well as the potential for epochal social change, with lasting impact on social thought. As Karl Marx then developed his own ideas in critical response to both the Revolution and the counter-Enlightenment, the essential elements for

modern historical social theory might well be said to have been in place (Comninel, 2000b).

In addition, since the era of the French Revolution the experience of revolution, as well as its idea, has occupied a central position in social and political thought generally, and historical social theory in particular. Both the liberalism and the radical Jacobin republicanism of the Revolution persisted in the nineteenth-century politics of France, where revolutions erupted in 1830 and 1871, in addition to the revolution of 1848 that swept across Europe. Across the globe, revolutions and revolutionary ideology were if anything even more central to the major social and political developments of the twentieth century. And not only did the theory and practice of revolution remain alive, but the ideology and political example of the French Revolution of 1789 continued to have particular salience.

On the one hand, powerful political forces stood in fundamental opposition to the Enlightenment principles of the Revolution, as in the fascist regimes of Italy, Germany, Spain and Portugal, as well as in reactionary parties that figured importantly elsewhere, as in France itself. On the other hand, socialist revolutionaries both saw themselves building upon the historical advances made in 1789, and generally conceived proletarian revolution to be analogous to 'bourgeois revolution' in terms of class dynamics. It is unsurprising, therefore, that links between the great revolutions of France and Russia have been claimed on all sides, and that the legacies of both loomed large in the theory and practice of politics down to the collapse of the Soviet Union. When, in 1972, Henry Kissinger asked Chinese Premier Chou En-lai his opinion on the significance of the French Revolution, he replied 'It's too soon to tell.'

Finally, the idea of historical social change, and especially variations on the idea of progress, raises the question of 'to what end?' The idea that history moves through distinct and successive stages tied to fundamental economic differences dates to the middle of the eighteenth century, but it was particularly with the French Revolution that the idea emerged that historical social development reached a culmination in modern society (Chill, 1971; Meek, 1976). This idea of 'the end of history' has figured prominently in modern liberal social theory, both in optimistic form, as when Hegel conceived of the 'end of history' in his own time in terms of the consummation of human potential (1956: 442, 457), and in rather bleaker form, as when Weber conceived

of the self-containment of human energies in an 'iron cage' of modern institutions (Wood, 1995: 176–7).

Against this view that modern capitalist society marks the end of human history, Marxists, anarchists and others have held out the conception of continued social development to a further, qualitatively different form of society. By far the most developed social theory along these lines has been offered by Marxists, albeit in a very broad range of historical materialist formulations. All such ideas, however, raise the question of some further social and political revolutionary transformation, both as a concrete objective and as the subject of historical social theory. The persistence of the idea of revolutionary change *from* modern society into something new does not meet with universal approval, of course: most liberals and other non-revolutionary thinkers fear this would lead to bureaucratic authoritarianism rather than the withering away of the state (or to chaos, should the state disappear). Whether revolution is possible or desirable therefore remains a vital issue for social theory as a whole, making it necessary for it to come to terms with the revolutions of the past and whatever relevance they might have for the future.

#### **BOURGEOIS REVOLUTION AND MODES OF PRODUCTION**

For all of these reasons, the nature of the French Revolution as a historical event, and its relationship to modern capitalist society, looms large within historical sociology. The idea of a conjunction between political conflict and epochal social transformation found its classic expression in the idea of bourgeois revolution. While the idea figures centrally in Marx's work, especially *The Communist Manifesto*, and found its strongest expression in the work of Marxist historians (Hobsbawm, 1962; Lefebvre, 1947; Soboul, 1974), it was in fact broadly accepted by all but the most conservative historians for more than a century (Comninel, 1987; Doyle, 1980). Indeed, given the significance that the idea of bourgeois revolution would come to have in Marxist theory, as well as its apparent vindication of the historical role of class struggle, it was not often noted that Marx and Engels themselves gave credit for this concept to generations of liberal historians who had preceded them (Samuel, 1980). A full account of the Revolution in these terms had been published when Marx

was a child (Mignet, 1913), and a history of the English Civil War as bourgeois revolution before he was born (Thierry, 1851). The concept itself first emerged during the Revolution, in the ideology of progress with which the revolutionaries defended their project, building on ideas that dated back to Locke (Comninel, 1987: 72, 115–17). During the Restoration that followed Bonaparte's defeat, the idea of historical progress led by a rising bourgeoisie, compelled by circumstance to challenge outmoded aristocracy, came to be nearly universally accepted by liberals and radicals (Mellon, 1958). Perhaps the greatest spokesperson for this view was the historian Guizot (1972), and the extent of the success of the concept might be said to be mirrored in Guizot's own rise to become chief minister of the liberal Orleanist monarchy established after the July Revolution of 1830.

In the aftermath of the French Revolution, therefore, an ideological justification of the Revolution itself came to be accepted as a central tenet of historical social theory by virtually all – liberal, radical or socialist – who sided with the cause of the Revolution. Linking a conception of history moving through distinct stages, culminating in commercial society, with the idea that modern civilization emerged through the rise of town life out of the rural society of the barbarian Dark Ages, this view cast an urban 'middle class' – the bourgeoisie, who did not labour with their hands, but did not enjoy aristocratic privileges – as heroes in a sweeping historical narrative. Even Marx and Engels, in calling for a further class revolution to overthrow capitalist society, gave full credit to the prior accomplishments of this 'heroic' bourgeoisie (1976: 486–9).

If what Ellen Meiksins Wood has described as the 'bourgeois paradigm' (1991: 1–19) has had a pervasive influence on modern social thought, nowhere has this influence been greater than in Marxist theory. At the core of Marxist thought is the idea of historical social development impelled by the contradictions of class exploitation and class struggle. Drawing on the idea of economically defined historical stages, articulated by Adam Smith and others as successive 'modes of subsistence', Marxist historical analysis has been formulated in terms of class-exploitive 'modes of production'. Marx's central concept of class struggle became closely associated with the example of bourgeois class revolution, the French Revolution standing as an enduring model and inspiration, as well as a constant point of reference.

Bourgeois revolution was understood to be the decisive moment of transferring ruling-class

political ascendancy in the historical transition from feudalism to capitalism. The struggle of the capitalist working class – the immense majority – was in turn conceived to culminate in a transfer of political ascendancy through a ‘proletarian revolution’. Lacking the ‘particular’ interests of previous ruling classes in private ownership of the means of production, and having no other class to exploit, the proletariat would use their ascendancy instead to bring an end to class society as such, and with it an end to the state as an instrument of power and oppression. The history of class struggles detailed by the liberal historians, therefore, was conceived really to have its end not in capitalism, but in classless communism.

Beyond these overall structural links between bourgeois and proletarian revolution, there were a number of direct links as well. To begin with, the bourgeois class that achieved ascendancy in the former was understood in fact to be the same capitalist class that would be defeated in the latter. The gains realized (or at least attempted) by bourgeois revolution – such as the end to privilege, overcoming superstition, transcending the horizons of local society, bringing rationality and efficiency to complex social life, establishing individual liberties, promoting education and liberating women and slaves – would, moreover, be preserved and extended by the proletariat. Indeed, far from being diametrically opposed, in Marx’s conception there was profound continuity between bourgeois and proletarian revolution, so much so that he came to the view that where the former had not been carried through successfully or completely, tasks associated with the idea of bourgeois revolution might instead have to be carried out by the proletariat (Draper, 1978: 229–49). This idea, reaching fullest expression in Trotsky’s idea of a ‘permanent revolution’ that might begin with the agenda of bourgeois reform but carry through to the victory of the proletariat in communism, has continued to serve as an enduring link between the two forms of revolution for many Marxists (Anderson, 1974b: 431; Trotsky, 1931).

The concept of mode of production acquired a special theoretical significance in the structuralist Marxism that emerged in France after the Second World War. Largely concerned with political issues, most Marxists had long tended merely to rely upon the historical analyses provided by Marx himself, and to apply in various ways the modes of production he offered as a means of dealing with historical contexts he never addressed (Hobsbawm, 1965: 59–65). Such analysis

tended to become quite mechanical in the period of Stalinism, generally taking *ad hoc* forms that were entirely subordinate to political considerations.

Even more problematic than such *ad hoc* judgements were the strict limitations on social and political analysis allowed with respect to forms of society which Marx did address, and particularly capitalist societies as they appeared in the 1950s and 1960s. As Marxist social thought found a new venue in university settings, new issues of culture and philosophy – and new social phenomena, like the growth of a white-collar ‘middle class’ – called out for more sophisticated and flexible terms of analysis than that provided by the reductionist economic determinism of ‘war-horse’ Marxism.

Structuralist Marxism filled this need by emphasizing the rigorous theoretical formulation of the historical modes of production, but asserting that no society was composed of any single mode. Instead, societies were ‘social formations’ which comprised more than one mode of production (Anderson, 1974b: 22). While one mode would be dominant, observable social relations would reflect the ‘articulation’ of more than one mode in the social formation. Most importantly, while it was agreed that the ‘economic base’ of a social formation was determinant, as was expected by established Marxist thought, because of the articulation of modes of production it was now said to be determinant only in ‘the last instance’ (Althusser, 1970: 111–13, 212–13).

In opening up avenues for greater flexibility in Marxist theory, however, the structuralist approach insisted, as a condition, that theory have precedence over empirical evidence, and especially over what was broadly conceived to be ‘historicism’ (Althusser, 1970: 12). The observations necessary to the development of theory were said to have been made by Marx; his theoretical categories adequate to all problems of analysis through articulation of modes of production. As a result, this social theory was not merely *informed* by the key elements of the ‘bourgeois paradigm’ – the historical succession of modes of production leading to bourgeois revolution and ultimately proletarian revolution; instead, those elements became fundamental not only to historical analyses, but to all contemporary social analysis as well.

Yet, particularly in retrospect, it is clear that many substantial problems remained in any effort to translate from the abstract to the concrete the short historical sketches of the history of class society offered by Marx. To begin with, two of Marx’s most important

works were long virtually unknown: the 1844 Paris manuscripts were only published in 1932, and the *Grundrisse* only published in full in 1973. (The whole of the *Grundrisse der Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie* was published in Moscow between 1939 and 1941, but, given the timing, it understandably remained virtually unknown. Editions appeared in Berlin and Italy in the 1950s, but the complete work remained unavailable in French until 1968, and in English until 1973.) Coupled with the general deficiency of Marxian historical analysis throughout the Comintern period, these texts were difficult to reconcile with much of what passed for Marxist theory. Moreover, as Eric Hobsbawm argued at length in his Introduction to the sections of the *Grundrisse* dealing with pre-capitalist societies (the *Formen*) first published in the 1960s, the modes of production and their order were anything but certain. Recalling the modes of production offered in the Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Hobsbawm asserted:

This does not mean that we are obliged to accept Marx's list of historical epochs as given in the Preface, or in the *Formen*. As we shall see, few parts of Marx's thought have been more revised by his most devoted followers than this list – not necessarily with equal justification – and neither Marx nor Engels rested content with it for the remainder of their lives. The list, and a good deal of the discussion in the *Formen* which lies behind it, are the outcome not of theory but of observation. The general theory of historical materialism requires only that there should be a succession of modes of production, though not necessarily any particular modes, and perhaps not in any particular predetermined order. (1965: 19–20)

Moreover, even where the modes of production and their order were not seriously open to question – as in considering the uniquely important transition between feudalism and capitalism in Europe – Hobsbawm made clear that much remained uncertain. In the debate over this transition opened by Dobb and Sweezy in the 1950s, and resumed with additional participants in the 1960s, the crucial issue came to be identified in terms of a 'prime mover' that would explain the particular evolution of capitalism from feudalism, especially in terms of 'the internal contradictions of feudalism' (Hobsbawm, 1965: 45). A close reading of this debate, which continued into the 1970s, reveals the extent to which some of the finest Marxist theorists and historians of the day could be reduced to running in circles by the daunting task of constructing a complete and coherent historical materialist

account of even the most widely accepted idea in Marx's history of class societies (Hilton et al., 1976).

#### PERRY ANDERSON'S SYNTHESIS

It was precisely through confronting these problems – the identity of and relationship between historical modes of production; the nature of the transition from feudalism to capitalism in particular; the specific historical dynamism that gave rise to capitalism in Europe; the relationship among, and relative strengths and weaknesses of, Marx's various historical observations – that Perry Anderson came brilliantly to synthesize Marxian theory with the history of European pre-capitalist societies (1974a, 1974b). In Anderson's work, the idea of bourgeois revolution enjoys a special place. His early work particularly argued that as a result of the precocity of English social development, its seventeenth-century Civil War failed to be fully realized as a bourgeois revolution, yielding a mediated and less than complete transformation of state and ruling class, which in turn had enduring negative effects on British capitalism and the development of class politics (Anderson, 1964). His two sweeping volumes on pre-capitalist class society then broke off specifically at the point of the final crisis of feudal Absolutism, with the promise of a third volume on 'the great chain of bourgeois revolutions' (1974a: 11). That volume, however, has not appeared, and the very theoretical premises that would have informed it have, as will be seen, been called into question. None the less, Anderson's clarification of issues and arguments within Marxian historical social theory with respect to the history of class society leading towards capitalism remains a signal achievement. His work has, indeed, proved to be of lasting significance to historical sociology, particularly with respect to understanding feudalism and the Absolutist State.

At the core of Anderson's work, informing its historical sweep of millennia, and its geographic encompassing of the planet, is the concept of a unique pattern of historical social development in Europe. The first unique element – crucial, in his analysis, to the eventual development of capitalism – is said to have been a 'slave mode of production' in the ancient Mediterranean, to which Anderson attributes the precocious urbanism of the classical city-states (1974b: 19–22). In his analysis, the development of extensive urban

civilization depended, in the absence of a properly urban manufacturing economy, directly upon the wholesale exploitation of slave producers (1974b: 24). Since the slave supply depended upon war – and especially wars of expansion – there was an inherent limitation to the capacity of this mode of production to reproduce itself. Rome, after encompassing the whole of Western Europe to the margins of Scandinavia and Britain, a good part of settled Germany, Africa south to the Sahara, and across the Near East into the hotly contended reaches of central Asia, acquired an empire to defend; it lost, in Anderson's analysis, the influx of slaves necessary to maintain its urban character (1974b: 76–8).

In Anderson's account, the collapse of this precociously urban civilization was accelerated by the intrusion of displaced Germanic peoples (the 'barbarian' invasions), leading to a fusion of pre-urban social relations with the surviving elements of classical civilization based on the slave mode of production:

The feudal mode of production in Europe ... was the result of a fusion of elements released from the shock and dissolution of two antagonistic modes of production anterior to it: the slave mode of production of classical antiquity, and the primitive-communal modes of production of the tribal populations on its periphery. (1974a: 417)

Addressing the theoretical 'inflation' of the concept of feudalism into a nearly universal experience across the globe, noted by Hobsbawm, Anderson offered two enormously valuable points of analysis, grounded in an unprecedentedly insightful reading of Marx combined with the best work on medieval history.

To begin with, building upon an observation brought forward in the original Marxist debate over the transition from feudalism to capitalism (Hilton et al., 1976: 57–61, 70–1), he noted the emphasis given by Marx to the 'extra-economic' character of surplus appropriation in pre-capitalist modes of production, in contrast to the peculiarly *economic* surplus appropriation of capitalism itself:

All modes of production in class societies prior to capitalism extract surplus labour from the immediate producers by means of extra-economic coercion. Capitalism is the first mode of production in history in which the means whereby the surplus is pumped out of the direct producers is 'purely' economic in form – the wage contract: the equal exchange between free agents which reproduces, hourly and daily, inequality and oppression. All other previous modes of exploitation operate through *extra-economic* sanctions – kin, customary, religious, legal

or political. ... The 'superstructures' of kinship, religion, law or the state necessarily enter into the constitutive structure of the mode of production in pre-capitalist social formations. They intervene *directly* in the 'internal' nexus of surplus-extraction, where in capitalist social formations, the first in history to separate the economy as a formally self-contained order, they provide by contrast its 'external' preconditions. (1974a: 403)

Although this point is drawn from Marx's third volume of *Capital* (1959: 790–2), the saliency of its opposition between capitalist and pre-capitalist modes of production had not previously been posed in this way.

Anderson went on to argue that

A scrupulous and exact taxonomy of these legal and political configurations is thus a pre-condition of establishing any comprehensive typology of pre-capitalist modes of production. It is evident, in fact, that the complex *imbrication* of economic exploitation with extra-economic institutions and ideologies creates a much wider gamut of possible modes of production prior to capitalism than could be deduced from the relatively simple and massive generality of the capitalist mode of production itself. ... The possibility of a plurality of post-tribal and non-slave, pre-capitalist modes of production is inherent in their mechanisms of surplus extraction. (1974a: 404)

Identifying a unique sequence of modes of production in Europe leading first to the distinctive social form of feudalism, and then to the development of capitalism, he challenges the theoretical proliferation of 'feudal' and 'semi-feudal' societies in the rest of the world, inviting original historical materialist analyses of non-Western societies instead. There were, he argues, many different ways in which surplus could be appropriated from peasants by agrarian lords: 'Virtually any post-tribal social formation that did not rest on slavery or nomadism, revealed in this sense forms of landlordism. ... It was their specific organization in a vertically articulated system of parcellized sovereignty and scalar property that distinguished the feudal mode of production in Europe' (1974a: 408). The assertion that pre-capitalist modes of production have existed which never were identified by Marx is a little noticed aspect of Anderson's work. There is, in fact, a major theoretical contribution in his recognition that a broad range of pre-capitalist modes of production might exist based on different systems of lords exploiting peasants – and that only one specific form corresponds to feudalism proper.

In identifying parcellized sovereignty as the specific basis for feudalism as a mode of production, Anderson made a second contribution that is more widely recognized. Still, the

extent to which this observation directs attention to a particular transformation of social relations between the tenth and eleventh centuries is not sufficiently appreciated. Medieval historians have indeed identified the direct appropriation of sovereign political power by local and regional lords in the wake of the decomposition of Carolingian royal power as the basis for a specifically 'feudal' transformation of Europe in this period – lords became increasingly dependent upon locally levied taxes, legal charges and grants of monopoly for the bulk of their revenue (Comninel, 2000a). Notwithstanding the theoretical attention devoted to feudalism in the transition debate, none of its participants identified parcelized sovereignty as the basis for surplus appropriation by lords. Recognizing the specificity of this particular form of supposedly 'superstructural' political power in constituting the mode of production was a major contribution.

At the same time, Anderson's conception of the synthesis of slave and Germanic modes of production postulates a basis for the development of towns within the framework of feudal society – laying the foundation for the rise of a bourgeoisie. Turning the observation offered in the transition debate that towns developed in the 'interstices' of feudalism into an inherent aspect of the mode of production, he further set the stage for a classically structuralist Marxist conception of the Absolutist State. Arguing that the general European crisis in the century following the Black Death (1350–1450) particularly undermined the position of feudal lords as holders of parcelized sovereignty, he posits that as a class they reconstituted their position with respect to extra-economic coercive power by turning towards and taking positions within growing national monarchies, characterized broadly as the 'Absolutist State'.

While opening the possibility of new modes of production outside Europe, Anderson restricts his analysis of European historical development to Marx's terms. It is, indeed, in these terms that he offers what may be his most widely recognized contribution to historical sociology, conceiving the Absolutist State to be 'a recharged and redeployed apparatus of feudal domination' (1974a: 18). Rather than directly possessing parcelized sovereignty, the feudal ruling class comes to occupy – and particularly to own as property – offices within a state ultimately based on the feudal claims of the king as overlord. In response to the chaos of the feudal crisis, and the strengthening of peasant positions relative to their lords, the

rise of Absolutist States is said to have ushered in an era of increasing central taxation, increasingly effective central state power and increasing dependence upon the state for the preservation of ruling-class interests. The extra-economic surplus appropriation of feudal lords as direct possessors of sovereign political power therefore gives way to the many forms of their involvement in the complex privileged structures of political institutions, while they continue to draw substantial income from the ownership of estates and a variety of residual feudal obligations on their tenants (1974a: 29–42).

Simultaneously, however, the Absolutist State is said in structuralist Marxist terms to be 'overdetermined' by the continued growth of town life and the bourgeoisie as a class, to which it contributes (1974a: 39). In Anderson's analysis, therefore, the French state in the *ancien régime* constituted both a bulwark for the feudal nobility, and an agent promoting the development of what would eventually be a rival ruling class. The continued growth of the Absolutist State heightened the underlying contradictions to the point where a cataclysmic settling of accounts became inevitable: 'The rule of the Absolutist State was that of the feudal nobility in the epoch of transition to capitalism. Its end would signal the crisis of the power of its class: the advent of the bourgeois revolutions, and the emergence of the capitalist state' (1974a: 42).

#### THE HISTORICAL MATERIALIST CHALLENGE

Anderson's accomplishment is truly impressive. He sorts out the issues of pre-capitalist modes of production (his treatment of the 'Asiatic' mode of production is beyond the scope of this chapter), comes to terms with the unresolved issues of the transition debate, and integrates a refocused account of the European modes of production into a sweeping body of historical literature. In these first two volumes of a planned series, he set out to reformulate rigorously the terms in which Marx's familiar overview of the history of European class societies are expressed, forging a clear account of their unique social development, culminating in the modern capitalist societies established through bourgeois revolutions, to which he proposed to turn in a third volume. A fourth and final volume would then return to the issue of different national historical developments

within capitalism, as raised in his early work (1974a: 11).

Yet, shortly after the appearance of the first two volumes, a fundamental challenge to the very bourgeois paradigm that was central to Anderson's conception emerged from within Marxian historical materialism itself. Beginning with two seminal articles, Robert Brenner rapidly called into question both the widespread supposition that capitalism emerged in towns and through trade, and the near-universal belief that all of Western Europe developed through the same historical processes to arrive at a common transition to capitalism (1976, 1977, 1982). Targeting recent, essentially demographic explanations of the rise of capitalism in the wake of the feudal crisis at the end of the Middle Ages, as well as explanations tied to commercial growth that dated back at least to Adam Smith, Brenner marshalled substantial historical evidence to show that, despite substantially similar patterns of growth in population and trade, divergent paths of social development emerged not only in Eastern versus Western Europe, but even between England and France. Indeed, he argued that capitalism developed in England uniquely, through a historically specific transformation of agrarian class relations that had nothing to do with an urban bourgeoisie. In France, by contrast, the rise of the Absolutist State constituted a fundamentally different line of social development which had nothing to do with the emergence of capitalism.

Brenner's work therefore stands in fundamental challenge to one of the most basic presumptions of modern social theory, both Marxist and non-Marxist: that of an essentially common historical path of development to modernity in Western societies. It further challenges the very possibility of bourgeois class revolution. A widespread challenge to the long-established social interpretation of the French Revolution had already emerged from a range of non-Marxist 'revisionist' historians, and rapidly gained broad acceptance (Comninel, 1987: 18–25). A large and growing body of research, initially inspired by the idea of bourgeois revolution, instead revealed ever more clearly that the French bourgeoisie could not be considered a capitalist class, nor could any systematic class difference be drawn between the forms of wealth and income enjoyed by the bourgeoisie and the supposedly feudal nobility.

Ironically, the very conception of the Absolutist State as a class mechanism for appropriating surplus from peasants in the form of centralized taxation that Anderson

advanced provides the most compelling grounds for challenging his account of class contradictions, since the overwhelming majority of the bourgeoisie were themselves owners of state offices, or lawyers – and most of the rest were rentiers. It was not a difference in class interests that led to a struggle between aristocrats and bourgeois in France, but their common economic interest in the state. The ruling class of the *ancien régime* comprised both nobles and bourgeois. The source of the conflict that emerged between these status groups within the class was itself directly political, but tied to a state that (as Anderson argued) was directly implicated in pre-capitalist extra-economic surplus appropriation: aristocrats had an interest in preserving and extending the political privileges of noble status within the state which the unprivileged bourgeois had an interest in limiting or reducing.

The French Revolution was essentially an *intra-class* conflict over basic political relations that at the same time directly touched on relations of surplus extraction. It was a civil war within the ruling class over the essential issues of power and surplus extraction. The focus of the struggle was the nature of the state, giving the conflict its specifically *political* form, because the fundamental social interests at stake were directly tied to state relations. While private rent relations constituted the preponderant basis of class exploitation, the offices of the state played a key role: they were of extraordinary importance to the maintenance of the wealth of the aristocracy, essential to any hope for advancement by the lesser nobility, and at the same time the basis of the major part of bourgeois careers. (Comninel, 1987: 200)

Notwithstanding the efforts of many revisionist historians to claim that in disproving the so-called 'social interpretation' they have discredited Marxism as such (Comninel, 1987: 21–4), a historical materialist analysis of the *ancien régime* and Revolution therefore does readily sustain a class interpretation – but one leading to very different conclusions than those towards which Anderson was working.

The historical materialist challenge to the idea of bourgeois revolution is not restricted to the French case. Where both major parties to the French Revolution belonged to a non-capitalist ruling class, both major parties to the English Civil War instead belonged to a ruling class of capitalist landlords and merchants (Brenner, 1993: 638–59; Comninel, 1987: 203–4). Indeed, since by the terms of Brenner's analysis England is the only society in which capitalism arose indigenously, and it emerged there in the countryside under the dominance of a specifically capitalist, landlord ruling class, the

presumptive basis for bourgeois revolution – a capitalist class rising against the ruling class under whose domination they developed – simply does not apply to any historical case. In retrospect, recognizing that the concept emerged directly from the ideology of liberals who sought to defend the radical political project of the Revolution as necessary to ‘historical progress’, it should not be surprising to find that it does not fit the facts. The unilinear progressivism of the ‘bourgeois paradigm’ must, therefore, be rejected, and its pervasive influence on social theory critically reconsidered. Far from having parallel histories, England and France (after Rome) were probably never more similar than in the years just following the Norman Conquest, and never more dissimilar than in the late eighteenth century (Comninel, 2000a). The histories of Italy and the Netherlands may be contrasted with both, and with each other as well. There were, indeed, a number of very different historical paths out of medieval Europe. It was not until the industrial form of capitalism that developed in England began to spread across Europe in the nineteenth century – the original, specifically agrarian form of capitalism did not spread, aside from its imposition on Ireland by the English – that a powerful force promoting social convergence appeared.

As Robert Brenner and Ellen Meiksins Wood have argued extensively, this has profound implications for the whole range of non-Marxist forms of social theory inspired by Adam Smith, the Reverend Malthus and Max Weber (Brenner, 1976, 1977, 1989; Wood, 1991, 1995: 146–78; 2002). At the same time, the challenge of this historical materialist analysis is just as profound with respect to most expressions of Marxist theory. Indeed, at the core of this analysis there is the recognition that Marx himself, in coming to terms with the whole of the history of class society while being primarily focused upon the specifically capitalist form which was the subject of his critique of political economy, incorporated many specifically liberal ideological conceptions (Brenner, 1989; Comninel, 1987: 140–66). Marx’s original contributions to social theory – formulated specifically on the basis of a critique of liberal social theory in both its political and economic form – must be distinguished from the many instances in which he simply adopted prevailing liberal historical conceptions, which expressed liberal versions of both class analysis and materialism. Indeed, not only are there two strains of thought to be found in Marx’s work, but ironically it is

the strain informed by liberal ideas which, as a result of resonance with non-Marxist accounts, tends to be most widely accepted. This was most clearly the case with the idea of bourgeois revolution.

While this implies that many forms of previously established Marxian historical interpretation must be called into question, it certainly does not challenge the historical materialist principles upon which Marx developed his original social thought (Brenner, 1989; Comninel, 1987: 133–40, 166–76). Contrary to the presumptions of the historical revisionists, the fact that the idea of bourgeois revolution must be rejected does not mean that there can be no class-based interpretation of either the English Civil War or the French Revolution. Similarly, historical materialist analysis has revealed that there is no historical foundation for the concept of a ‘slave mode of production’ in the ancient world – yet this does not mean that there is no basis for a class interpretation of politics and society in Greece and Rome (Wood, 1988). Class interests can be identified behind all of the fundamental historical social and political developments and conflicts of European society, if not in the forms taken for granted by conventional expressions of Marxist theory, or the even more widely established approaches of liberal materialist theorists like Max Weber (Wood, 1995: 146–78). Such class analysis might well be guided by Marx’s central contribution – that class societies are shaped by social relations of exploitation:

The specific economic form, in which unpaid surplus-labour is pumped out of direct producers, determines the relationship of rulers and ruled, as it grows directly out of production itself and, in turn, reacts upon it as a determining element. ... It is always the direct relationship of the owners of the conditions of production to the direct producers ... which reveals the innermost secret, the hidden basis of the entire social structure, and with it the political form of the relation of sovereignty and dependence, in short, the corresponding specific form of the state. (Marx, 1959: 791)

The practice of historical materialism involves a fresh approach to history in terms such as these, unimpeded by the presuppositions of unilinear progressivist social theories.

The historical materialist challenge to the idea of bourgeois revolution has one further significant implication: the French Revolution cannot be taken as a model of one class consciously rising in challenge to another and seizing political ascendancy. It is not that there was no basis for the Revolution in the

contradictions of class, but that there was no class-conscious capitalist bourgeoisie rising up against a feudal class of lords. The epochal effects of the French Revolution as a social revolution must therefore be understood in quite different terms.

Fortunately, despite the attention usually devoted to the statement of the 'social interpretation' which opens his work, there is an excellent account of the Revolution as a complex social revolution in Georges Lefebvre's classic work *The Coming of the French Revolution* (1947; Comminel, 1989). Lefebvre recognized that it was the aristocracy who opened the revolution through their challenge to the monarchy. The bourgeoisie opened their phase of the revolution not as a capitalist class, but through growing opposition to the threatened dominance of the aristocracy, especially with respect to state offices. The political conflict between these social groups in turn created the space for the people of Paris to become politicized, as they came to see the aristocracy as opponents to 'the Nation', and instead identified with the bourgeois leaders of the Third Estate as its advocates. When, in July 1789, the urban crowds rose up and seized the Bastille while searching for arms with which to 'save the Nation', they not only thrust the bourgeoisie unexpectedly into power, but sent shock-waves across France. In the weeks that followed, the final social group of participants – the peasantry – rose up in their own local attacks upon the symbols of aristocratic privilege, and the obligations imposed by them.

There is much to be learned from this account of social revolution. In the first place, it fits very well with idea that the Revolution opened as a sort of civil war within the dominant class. It is not a difference in class interests that divides the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie, but their status difference as it may (or may not) relate to their *common* social interests. In this conflict, the bourgeoisie as a group did not gain ascendancy over the advocates of privilege on their own, but only through the involvement of the popular social groups in both Paris and the countryside. The popular movement, particularly in Paris, did not merely support one of the two sides in the political struggle, but came increasingly to identify its own interests and objectives in the form of affordable subsistence and the practice of direct democracy. The political course of the Revolution, then, follows from the complex interaction between these different social groups, each with its own agenda. The radical course of the Revolution emerges from the conjunction of interests

between successively more democratic and republican bourgeois politicians and the popular movement. With each spasm of popular uprising, the revolutionary leadership moved to the left, increasingly narrowing the shared basis of their social interests until the Jacobins in power can be recognized as essentially professional politicians and administrators, and having driven away successive waves of bourgeois more readily identified with property interests. In the end, however, not even the incorruptible Robespierre shared the interests of the popular radicals, and the people did not rise up to save him when the leadership swung back to the right in Thermidor.

Recalling that the revolutionary struggle in England also had the form of a civil war within a dominant class, the striking parallels between these two revolutions – so often attributed to the character of bourgeois revolution – can now be seen to lie instead in the similarity of the complex politics created by the opening of a political space for popular radicalism by contending groups within the dominant class. Social revolutions, then, might be seen to result from the capacity of the common people of a society – whatever its specific class character – to advance their own ideas and interests as a result of a fundamental political conflict dividing the dominant class. Where one part of the dominant class is willing and able to use popular support as a means of coming out on top, it will generally be on the basis of sharing more points of common interest with at least some among the people than the other part of that class. And it should hardly be surprising that the part of the dominant class that has less in common with the people will generally be more concerned about their political mobilization, and more intent upon maintaining 'order'.

In 1640, the great majority of the English parliamentary gentry had been opposed to the use of royal prerogative to evade financial restraints imposed by Parliament, as well as to the general direction of royal policies in religion and international affairs. The king's chief ministers were convicted and executed with little opposition. Yet, after a year of growing polarization between the crown and radical Puritans, in which the London crowd increasingly came to figure (Brenner, 1993: 352–63, 688–99), the relatively mild Grand Remonstrance passed in Parliament by only eleven votes. The resort to popular support as a means of defeating the crown became not only an issue in its own right, but in some ways the defining issue of the Civil War. What

made the subsequent Revolution of 1688 (more or less finally resolving the same underlying issue between Parliament and the crown) seem 'Glorious' by contrast might readily be seen to be the comparative lack of reliance on popular mobilization.

The idea that there is much to learn about the political dynamics of class from the experience of the French Revolution and other great social revolutions of the past is not, then, incorrect. Once freed from the restrictive yoke of unilinear social theory, the specific historical experiences of these struggles reveal new patterns, teach other lessons. The failings of both Marxist and non-Marxist historical sociology have unfortunately caused many thinkers to turn away entirely from the effort to understand historical social development systematically. It is to be hoped that, again inspired by issues of the French Revolution and the transition to capitalism, ongoing original research and analysis will both renew historical sociology, and restore to it a central position in contemporary social theory.

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## *Theories That Won't Pass Away:*

### *The Never-ending Story of Modernization Theory*

WOLFGANG KNÖBL

Although modernization theory has been one of the most influential theoretical paradigms in the social sciences since the 1950s, there is no canonical text expressing all hypotheses of the theory, and no author has really dominated and structured the whole debate. It rather seems to be that modernization theory often was not much more than a bundle of hidden, but decisive, assumptions in the minds of social scientists who tried to link empirical research to various large-scale historical and social processes diffusely called 'modernization'. This makes it extremely difficult to talk about 'modernization theory proper' as there are no true 'believers', no aggressive 'renegades' – the missing canonization of the theory obviously doesn't allow such clear-cut categories. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that it is possible to circumscribe the contours of the theory by pointing to ground-breaking works published between the mid-1950s and mid-1960s, mostly by American authors – for example, Daniel Lerner's *The Passing of Traditional Society* (1965 [1958]), Seymour Martin Lipset's *Political Man* (1988 [1959]), Neil J. Smelser's *Social Change in the Industrial Revolution* (1960 [1959]), Walt Rostow's *The Stages of Economic Growth* (1971 [1960]), David McClelland's *The Achieving Society* (1961) or Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba's

*The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (1989 [1963]). As a non-Marxist, macro-sociological and often interdisciplinary theory of social change, modernization theory tried to conceptualize either historically or typologically the development of societies, focusing in the beginning mostly on the relationship between culture and economic progress, but increasingly also on that between culture and political development and between economic growth and democracy. As has been shown by various interpreters of the history of this approach (see Alexander, 1994: 168ff; Harrison, 1988: 30ff; Huntington, 1971: 288–90), modernization theorists assumed that:

- modernization is a global and irreversible process, which began with the Industrial Revolution in the middle of the eighteenth century (or even earlier) in Europe, but which nowadays, that is, since the end of the Second World War, concerns societies all over the world;
- modernization is a historical process leading from traditional to modern societies, thus implying a sharp antithesis between tradition and modernity.
- in traditional societies and countries of the so-called 'Third World' there is a

dominance of personal attitudes, values and role structures which can be characterized by terms like 'ascription', 'particularism' and 'functional diffuseness', and which are to be interpreted as powerful barriers for economic and political development;

- in modern societies of the Euro-American civilization there is a predominance of secular, individualistic and scientific values and corresponding role clusters;
- modernization is a more or less endogenously driven process to be localized within societies which should be regarded as coherent wholes and – if possible – analysed with the theoretical instruments of structural functionalism; and
- social change towards modernity in different societies will take place in a rather uniform and linear way.

These were the guiding premises of research on developing countries leading to the further assumption that the Western economic and political model soon 'reappears in virtually all modernizing societies on all continents of the world, regardless of variations in race, color, creed' (Lerner, 1965 [1958]: 46). But modernization theory seemed not only well suited to analysing *contemporary* social change; the theory could obviously also bring forward *historical* explanations for the rise of *the West* in the nineteenth century (Rostow, 1971 [1960]) as well as detailed prognoses concerning the *future* structure of traditional, developing and already quite advanced countries in which processes like ever-increasing economic growth, a continuing structural differentiation and a further weakening of traditional values were to be expected. Thus, modernization theory could not only be applied to the rather narrow field of the sociology of developing countries; the theory very soon had a far larger claim, namely that it is really a *global* theory of social change comparable to Marxism.

It is well known that modernization theory as characterized had its good and bad times. It thrived from the beginning of the 1950s to almost the end of the 1960s; it was 'dead' – as Marxists like Immanuel Wallerstein (1979: 132–37) asserted, not without reason – from the beginning of the 1970s to the middle of the 1980s; and there has been another heyday since the end of the 1980s. Because of these ups and downs, it is necessary to historicize modernization theory, to ask why and how it suddenly appeared in the beginning of the

1950s, how the theory was related to the classical works of sociology, and how the theory began to change internally during the late 1950s and 1960s. Answering these questions is particularly important as the *new* modernization theory emerging in the last two decades of the twentieth century claims to have solved all serious theoretical problems of the older version of the paradigm. This, however, is open to considerable doubt, as the structure of the new theory – as will be shown at the end of this chapter – is not very different to the structure of the old one.

#### THE ORIGINS OF MODERNIZATION THEORY

The emergence of modernization theory was certainly related to political events: to the Cold War in general and Harry S. Truman's so-called 'Point Four' programme in particular. Truman's Second Term Inaugural Address from January 1949 focused almost exclusively on foreign affairs and – this was Point Four of his speech – gave the American public a vision of how underdeveloped regions in the world could prosper with the help of American technology and know-how to counter the attractions of communist ideology. Soon new government agencies were founded for sending hundreds of technicians into these regions to increase agricultural production and to build up adequate health and educational systems. As it turned out, however, these projects often encountered huge difficulties because of unfamiliar social structures and cultural patterns. It was obvious that most of them needed support by social scientists, who, as historians, political scientists, anthropologists and sociologists, should have had expertise concerning these structures and patterns. Conferences were organized to pool existing knowledge and to spread information among the experts of different disciplines. One of the results of such a meeting in Chicago in the summer of 1951 was a quite influential reader edited by Bert Hoselitz (1963 [1952]), in which an essay by Marion J. Levy really tried to come to grips theoretically with the phenomenon of macro-sociological change by using *and historicizing* Talcott Parsons's 'pattern variables'.

Levy argued that industrial societies are characterized by rational, universalistic and functionally specific value orientations and

role structures; non-industrial societies, in contrast, are characterized by non-rational, particularistic and functionally diffuse values and roles. Economic growth – so he claimed – will sooner or later completely change non-industrialized societies and thus bring forward the same cultural and social patterns as known in the industrialized West. Levy didn't deny that there might be difficulties and even ruptures in this process; but they won't last very long as – this was Levy's argument – there is a functional interdependency between societal spheres and subsystems: wherever modern value orientations begin to dominate, they will have consequences in other fields: 'The allocation of goods and services is only analytically separable from the allocation of power and responsibility. Highly universalistic relations in the economic aspects of action are functionally incompatible with highly particularistic ones in the political (i.e., allocation of power and responsibility) aspects of action' (Levy, 1963 [1952]: 123). Thus, Levy formulated an extremely elegant theoretical position the other participants of the conference obviously could agree with, even if some of them were sceptical whether the transformation process would proceed as fast as Levy assumed. It was this elegance and especially the novelty of the theory which made it possible for Levy's 'pattern variables', or at least the very idea behind them, quickly to begin to serve as strong background assumptions for macro-sociological research on social change in the following ten or fifteen years, research done by psychologists, historians, political scientists, economists and – of course – sociologists. And a *new* theory – in various respects – it certainly was, even if the term 'modernization' wasn't used very often in the beginning of the 1950s, and the expression 'modernization theory' did not become familiar until the 1960s.

The theory was so new and attractive because of the lack of a strong tradition of macro-sociological research within American sociology, anthropology and political science from the 1920s to the end of the 1940s. Although at least some sociologists in the second decade of the twentieth century analysed large-scale social change – see, for example, Thomas and Znaniecki's brilliant description of economic and cultural processes in Poland and the United States in their *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (1974 [1918–20]. see esp. Vol. 1, 156ff.),<sup>1</sup> this kind of research and thinking became very rare later on within a sociological discipline specializing

more and more in meso- and above all micro-sociological processes. The same was true for social anthropology, in which the strong position of Boasian culturalism and relativism and a predominant focus on quite static 'tribal' societies constituted a largely unfavourable climate for theorizing social change. There were exceptions, of course, most notably Robert Redfield who specialized in Mexico, used – influenced by his father-in-law, Robert Park – the rural–urban dichotomy in conceptualizing social change, and thereby even spoke of 'modernization' (1968 [1930]: 4). But Redfield was not typical, and neither was the Austrian immigrant Hans Kohn, who – as a political scientist and historian of nationalism – also introduced the term of 'modernization' in conceptualizing social change in the 'Orient' (1937: 262).

Thus Marion J. Levy's conceptualization of social change, and especially the research which was built on these theoretical ideas, could be considered highly original and new. And all this was so attractive because the new paradigm seemed to incorporate the most valuable theoretical insights of the sociological classics (Joas, 2003 [1996]: 44). At least at first sight Levy's historicization of the 'pattern variables' was able to encompass Max Weber's ideas concerning the process of occidental rationalization, to clarify Ferdinand Tönnies's crude dichotomy between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* or Émile Durkheim's distinction between 'mechanical' and 'organic solidarity'. A closer look at this subject matter, however, could have raised the question whether Levy's theoretical position and especially his rather linear view of historical progress was at all compatible with the oftentimes rather sceptical view of the classics on historical processes. Was, for example, Weber's idea of rationalization, with his emphasis on the clash of value spheres and the concomitant occurring tensions, really compatible with Levy's rather simple thesis of a switch from non-rational, functional diffuse and particularistic values to modern ones? Did Tönnies really think that there would be a complete loss of *Gemeinschaft* as could be expected if one translated his terms into Levy's 'pattern variables'? And a last 'strange' relationship should also not be forgotten. For his conceptualization of social change, Levy used Parsonian theoretical tools – the 'pattern variables'. But was Levy's project really a fruitful concretization of Parsons's often highly abstract project? It seems rather doubtful that Parsons wholeheartedly supported Levy's use of the pattern

variables for theorizing macro-sociological change. Parsons had a much more complex understanding of modernity than had Levy and therefore could not have been very pleased by the latter's rather simple historicization of the pattern variables. Parsons never believed – as Levy seemed to – that modernity will bring forward a complete dissolution of all particularistic values, of all ascriptive ties and functionally diffuse role structures. The idea of a partial modernization, a modernization process which mixes modern and traditional elements, was not an alien element in Parsons's thinking, even if this idea became prominent only later on by internal critics of modernization theory (see Rüschemeyer, 1970). This was one of the reasons why Parsons – nearly at the same time as Levy began to historicize the 'pattern variables' – claimed in *The Social System* (1951: 534) that he has no general or systematic theory of social change. In regard to the analysis of cultural processes, Parsons argues that even Max Weber's theory of rationalization doesn't tell us very much about a clear direction of these processes as 'systems of expressive symbols and systems of value orientations' (1951: 498), cannot be rationalized like 'belief systems', so that there is always the chance of plural and thus un-predictable paths of development (500). This means that, according to Parsons, right now sociology has no chance to make reliable predictions on the overall direction of social and historical change, as this change is always dependent on more or less contingent constellations of various actors.

All these insights were in contrast to the kind of linear historical thinking so prominent in Levy's historicization of the pattern variables, which shaped the very roots of modernization theory. And this neglect of Parsonian insights, and the similar neglect of the complexity of Weber's and Tönnies's thought for example, haunted modernization theory from the beginning and was the decisive reason why this theory began a very fast process of internal revision which led to the dissolution of the theory at the end of the 1960s. The talk of 'modernization theory' as if it is one single and stable theory is therefore as misleading as the claim that there were quite different versions of modernization theory. The last statement is certainly true, but it is more than that. The emergence of different versions was in most cases not dependent on certain idiosyncratic tastes of particular researchers, it was more the result of a learning process within modernization theory, even if this learning didn't lead

to a happy end. Modernization theory had an extremely interesting early history, and this history has to be understood if one wants to judge the 'death' of the theory and its rebirth in the late 1980s and early 1990s (see Knöbl, 2001).

**A SHORT HISTORY OF  
MODERNIZATION THEORY IN THE  
1950s AND 1960s: PROBLEM-SOLVING  
WITHOUT A HAPPY END**

The first major empirical studies within the modernization paradigm tried to verify Levy's theoretical ideas concerning social change. As it turned out very quickly, demonstrating the alleged *dichotomy* between pre-industrial/traditional societies and modern ones was much easier than pointing to concrete *processes* which led to the coming of modern society: the search for typical structures of modern societies, for psychological characteristics of modern man/woman, seemed easier than looking for the causes of industrialization. This can be seen in the work of, for example, Daniel Lerner and David McClelland.

Lerner was one of the first authors who made the term 'modernization' central in analysing non-industrialized societies. However, in contrast to the title and subtitle of his famous book *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (1965 [1958]), his major arguments didn't focus on dynamic processes. He was more concerned with demonstrating the fundamental cultural and psychological differences between members of traditional and modern societies, arguing that one of the preconditions for modernization is a kind of psychological mobility of the population that he called 'empathy'. Empathy he defined as the ability of people to act and think along abstract criteria so that they are able to leave behind the somewhat narrow personal and familial horizon so typical of traditional societies, to think of themselves as active members of a modern and mobile society.

Traditional society is nonparticipant – it deploys people by kinship into communities isolated from each other and from a center; without an urban-rural division of labor, it develops few needs requiring economic independence; lacking the bonds of interdependence, people's horizons are limited by locale and their decisions involve only other known people in known situations. Hence, there is no need

for a transpersonal common doctrine formulated in terms of shared secondary symbols – a national ‘ideology’ which enables persons unknown to each other to engage in political controversy or achieve ‘consensus’ by comparing their opinions. (Lerner, 1965 [1958]: 50)

Working extensively on the psychological shape of modern (and traditional) individuals, Lerner’s answer to the question *how* this psychological mobility comes into being, or will be increased, was rather short and simple. He just pointed to the influence of the mass media, which would distribute new and modern role models and which would spread this ‘empathy’. However, this hint to the media, so often heard within modernization theory even in later times, was not very convincing because it naïvely assumed simple and one-directional effects of the media, which supposedly easily change enduring attitudes, capabilities and predispositions. That assumption was scarcely in accordance with the insights of contemporary media experts (not even those sympathetic to modernization theory), who argued that, although the media indeed might shape tastes, images or foci of attention, a change of deep attitudes is a much more complex process depending on stable relationships of interaction, on the influence of peer groups, on influential figures within a community, and so on (Sola Pool, 1963). The other problem with Lerner’s reference to the media was that he didn’t discuss the causes of the increasing use of mass media; thus one could doubt whether the spread of the media really is a valid variable as it might be too dependent on other variables, for example economic factors. If that doubt is justified, then Lerner’s explanatory model looks rather tautological as he seems to explain economic growth and industrialization by alluding in fact to economic growth.

David McClelland’s theoretical ideas in *The Achieving Society* (1961) were not too different from those in Lerner’s model. Psychologist McClelland presented a huge amount of comparative and historical data trying to demonstrate that the will for ‘achievement’ is one of the most important character traits of modern man/woman and the decisive precondition of economic activity and thus economic growth. But he was quite vague about the causes for the development of such psychological traits. Certainly, he argued that education will increase an achieving attitude. But he never really asked who in underdeveloped regions in fact will push forward educational measures

and what will happen if there are no major actors interested in such kind of reforms. And – even more important – he never analysed the *concrete* effects of the supposedly modern values and attitudes if they really emerge within a formerly traditional society. What are the societal consequences of those values if it is also true that attitudes and values are often difficult to translate into new political and social *institutions*? The existence of modern values might indeed be a necessary precondition for modern institutions, but it is certainly not a sufficient one as values have to be institutionalized by concrete actors.

Thus the theoretical debate already at the very beginning of the history of modernization theory clearly showed that it is not enough to establish typologies between modern and traditional society, modern and traditional man/woman. To paint a dynamic picture of modernizing processes and – above all – to explain them, it was necessary to focus much more intensively on concrete actors than Lerner and McClelland were willing to do in their research designs. ‘Who wants modernization?’ – that became the decisive question for those who saw the deficit of a purely typological approach.

Focusing on certain groups within a population should, of course, allow explanations why some countries modernized faster than others. But such a research design was far more complex than the one Levy, Lerner and McClelland had used because researchers now had to identify concrete constellations of actors which make possible or might accelerate the transition between traditional and modern societies. Who were the decisive actors? Strangely enough, most modernization theorists more or less neglected the majority of the population in underdeveloped or developing countries: studies of the rural masses and/or peasants were as rare as thorough investigations of the very different forms of land-ownership all over the world. It seemed as if modernization theorists didn’t regard these rural classes or groups (and questions related to them) as very important for the transformation process: as it was supposed that urbanization will quickly and completely change the demographic and professional structure of a population, as, thus, rural people were a group more or less doomed to disappear, most researchers didn’t problematize the neglect of these research questions (for an exception, see Stinchcombe, 1966 [1961]: 496).<sup>2</sup>

If it is not the rural population who will be the decisive group for the modernization process, who else remains to be focused on? Modernization theorists usually analysed two groups, *elites* and the *middle classes*.

Already in the mid-1950s, the economic historian Walt Rostow had argued that economic progress in the past has always been dependent on a certain constellation of actors which allows the emergence of an elite group willing to invest huge amounts of capital:

What appears to be required for the emergence of such élites is not merely an appropriate value system but two further conditions: first, the new élite must feel itself denied the conventional routes to prestige and power by the traditional less acquisitive society of which it is a part; second, the traditional society must be sufficiently flexible (or weak) to permit its members to seek material advance (or political power) as a route upwards alternative to conformity. (1966 [1956]: 249)

Thus, Rostow argued that industrialization is not an automatic process but one dependent on constellations of powerful groups within a society (see the similar argument in Hoselitz, 1966 [1957]). Although this was quite convincing, it didn't solve the most important problems: even if one is able to find certain actors in a given traditional or transitional society with a strong will to modernize, it was still not clear which kind of actions these actors will pursue. Will they push forward a modernization process similar to the one in the democratic West or one along the lines of the Soviet model? This was a scientifically and of course politically decisive question, and it also means that Rostow's allusion to constellations of actors was still not specific enough. Therefore it was reasonable to focus more strongly than before on *political* elites, on intellectuals, as these are the groups who usually shape the political outlook of modernization processes. However, as it turned out, the actions of political elites in many underdeveloped countries, and especially those of intellectuals, were also difficult to predict; their behaviour was often quite erratic,<sup>3</sup> so that it was impossible to answer definitively those questions which were left open by Rostow. The preconditions for a capitalist or socialist industrialization were still not clear.

One way out of this dilemma was a shift of attention to other groups the behaviour of which might be more predictable. This was one of the steps made by Edward A. Shils, who argued that the centre of a society has to be

made up by actors and opinion leaders who might counter the irrational impulses of the masses and those of (oftentimes left-wing) ideologists. He argued that especially those groups with explicitly rational value standards – a professional *middle class*, that is, scientists, engineers, and so on – might be able to push forward a persistent process of modernization as their rational values might – in the long run – diffuse throughout the whole population, thus guaranteeing a smooth transition to an institutional model shaped along Western lines:

Indirectly, the building up of the professional community or of professional sub-communities, will contribute to the civility by creating alternative modern objects of attachment, and will thus provide an alternative to hyper-politicization, which the demagogue practices and which he wrongly regards as the ideal. It will contribute to the civil culture through providing a field of sober, realistic, and responsible judgement. (Shils, 1963: 76–7)<sup>4</sup>

The problem even within this kind of argument, however, was that the role of the middle classes within developing countries was always a precarious one as the growth of these classes was dependent on economic growth. But what happens if, as actually happened between 1950 and 1966 (Packenham, 1973: 9), the annual growth rate declined and the developing countries thus fell further behind the West? In this case, the debate about the role of the middle classes was in fact an academic one, because there were in most countries not enough members of a middle class to be regarded as a critical mass for modernization processes along the Western path.

All in all, the debate about constellations of actors – elites or (professional) middle classes – turned out to be not very fruitful. In the end even the question arose whether modernization – against all assumptions – might possibly not be a uniform process at all, but one with very different political results. Was it possible to think about different modernities?

This was an increasingly important question in the 1960s. It was Joseph LaPalombara and again Edward A. Shils who most clearly saw the consequences for modernization theory if this question received a positive answer. Although Shils was still optimistic with regard to the establishment of more or less democratic regimes in non-Western regions of the world, he had to admit that these democratic structures would be different from Western ones: Shils called them 'tutelary democracies',

a specific form of government with strong executive institutions and with a really dominant position accorded to political elites, a form of government 'which recommends itself to the elites of the new states. It does so because it is more authoritative than political democracy, and also because the institutions of public opinion and the civil order do not seem qualified to carry the burden which political democracy would impose on them' (Shils, 1966 [1962]: 466). This kind of argument touched very dangerously one of the central hypotheses of modernization theory, a hypothesis already formulated by Marion J. Levy with his insistence on the functional interdependence of economic growth and democratization. Shils, as has been shown, talked about new forms of democracies, but he was still optimistic that at least *in the long run* this functional interdependence would show its relevance. But there were others, like Joseph LaPalombara, who seemed willing to abandon this assumption, who didn't believe in this interdependence any longer. LaPalombara (1963) made quite clear that in the theoretical debate on modernization it has become impossible to find a consensual definition of political development: everybody seems to define this term according to idiosyncratic tastes and there is always – so LaPalombara argued – the danger that the Western or US institutional system will be interpreted as some sort of a *telos* of history.

'It is precisely at this point that it becomes apparent that comparative analysis is not facilitated by a definition of political 'modernity' that is culture-bound and narrowly restrictive through its assumption of the evolutionary inevitability of the Anglo-American model. Only a rigid Wilsonian faith in the inevitability of democracy would justify a retention of a parochial and deterministic definition in the face of the historical and contemporary evidence that surrounds us. (1963: 38)

Thus LaPalombara pleaded for more open models of political change, arguing that the New States will develop quite new mixtures of institutions unknown to the West. This, of course, implied that he had foregone the idea of a functional interdependence of economic and political processes. Other authors within modernization theory didn't make such radical conclusions. But it could nevertheless be seen that even they – Shmuel Eisenstadt (1963: 96) or Lucian Pye (1966 [1965]: 90), for example – defined the concept of democracy in more and more abstract terms, thus

indicating that economic progress will *not* necessarily lead to Western-style political systems.

It became increasingly clear that central hypotheses, assumptions and concepts of early modernization theory *à la* Levy were mistaken, or diffuse – and that was even true with regard to the term 'tradition'. And if the interpretation of 'tradition' became increasingly difficult, what about the important dichotomy between 'tradition' and modernity? What, then, is 'tradition' if it is not the counterpart of 'modernity'?

These questions, too, began to be asked, even if implicitly, at quite an early phase of the development of modernization theory. This could be seen in the work of Robert Bellah on Japan as he argued that Japanese modernization was based on strong particularistic ties of all societal elites to the family of the emperor: 'The continuity of the imperial line and of the national religion served to symbolize an almost "primitive" particularism. The high evaluation of military achievements and the fulfillment of one's lords commands became generalized beyond the warrior class into a high level valuation of performance in all spheres' (Bellah, 1985 [1957]: 183). Thus a clear division of the pattern variables as suggested by Marion Levy was definitely missing in Japan: particularistic values were and are not just characteristic features of traditional societies, so that the assumption of modernization as a unidirectional, linear, process was wrong. Modernization – as Bellah (1958: 5) argued – doesn't lead to a clear dominance of rational and secular values.

Bellah didn't elaborate on the implications of such a statement for modernization theory, but other authors did: Bert Hoselitz, for example, began to realize that the term 'tradition', or even Max Weber's term of 'traditional action', was heavily under-theorized, often encompassing various and highly different forms of actions 'ranging from the purely automatic, often not meaningfully oriented, behavior to a highly self-conscious behavior whose underlying principles are reflected upon and often highly "rationalized"' (1961: 85). Hoselitz tried to clarify this and differentiated between the terms 'habit', 'usage', 'norm' and 'ideology'. This was certainly helpful, but provoked the problem that the former distinction between tradition and modernity began to disappear as habits, norms, and so on, certainly are not alien elements within modernity. Hoselitz was aware of this, admitting that

traditions might accompany modernization for quite a long time. And he was certainly not the only one who felt uneasiness regarding this simple dichotomy between tradition and modernity as suggested, for example, by Levy: especially researchers interested in the political consequences of modernization realized that there is no smooth path towards a rational society within underdeveloped regions. David Apter (1963) increasingly theorized the emergence of political religions like Marxism, which often served as modernizing ideologies and in which rational elements were hopelessly interwoven with irrational ones. And Clifford Geertz even radicalized such a position: whereas Apter still believed that at some time the rational elements within modernizing ideologies might overcome the irrational ones in the process of modernization, Geertz was more pessimistic as he could demonstrate that it was only by modernization that non-rational belief-systems like nationalism came into being. Nation-building in New States doesn't destroy ethnocentric feelings, it *creates* them or at least modernizes them (Geertz, 1963: 154). Primordial and civic feeling are not in an evolutionary opposition towards each other: ethnic differences are – as Geertz argued – not traditional remnants of past periods, but they will precariously interact with other loyalties and ties – not necessarily getting weaker.

If it turned out that the central dichotomy between tradition and modernity was not a very meaningful one, the question arose as to how to proceed without abandoning the idea of modernization. One of the solutions was pushed forward within the circle of theorists around Talcott Parsons. It was Neil Smelser who very early saw all the difficulties inherent in the term 'tradition' and thus began his famous book on *Social Change in the Industrial Revolution* (1960 [1959]) with the following two sentences: 'When comparing a society with its past or with another society, we often employ a dichotomy such as "advanced vs. backward", "developed vs. underdeveloped", "civilized vs. uncivilized", or "complex vs. simple". Sometimes these words yield too little information, because they claim simply that one society is superior to another' (1960 [1959]: 1). The concept of 'differentiation' – so Smelser suggested – is a better tool to deal with processes of modernization as it avoids all value judgements and especially this precarious dichotomy between tradition and modernity: differentiation, as 'the evolution from a multi-functional role

structure to several more specialized structures' (Smelser, 1964: 271), is a concept which allows us to think of smooth transitions and gradual differences, in contrast to the aforementioned dichotomy of early modernization theory.

Smelser's concept of differentiation was important for functionalist theorizing in so far as it allowed the countering of criticisms brought forward by conflict theorists like Lewis Coser arguing that functionalism is unable to analyse social change and prefers to deal with static structures. By working with the model of differentiation, this reproach seemed no longer to have any substance and – even more important – using this model also seemed to allow the incorporation of conflicts into functionalist thought: for Smelser, conflicts and social movements were decisive factors which would disturb old societal structures and allow the emergence of situations in which new social structures, structures of a higher level of differentiation, could be built.

However, there was one major problem with this concept: most of the early versions of modernization theory at least tried to find *causal mechanisms* which would lead to the take-off of a society; they at least tried – although without much success – to identify constellations of actors which allow a society to change its old structures. Differentiation theorists no longer did so – as if they had realized the futility of such attempts. Authors working with the differentiation concept almost automatically abandoned the search for causal statements with regard to 'differentiation' as 'differentiation' is in fact a *post-hoc* description of results of social processes, and not an explanation. Smelser saw the problems with such a theoretical move: he sometimes calls differentiation theory an explanation, but sets 'explanation' in inverted commas, or he defines 'structural differentiation' as a 'scheme ... certainly ... not meant to encompass all other possible explanations' (1960 [1959]: 384). Thus, in the end, the differentiation concept – as even Smelser seemed to have felt – didn't help very much in concrete empirical analysis of macro-social change: the concept just tells us pretty vaguely that – in the long run and by whatever causes – the disintegration of systems is followed by systems characterized by a higher level of differentiation.

A still more radical separation between a causal explanation and a pure description of the results of social processes can be seen in the evolutionary turn of modernization theory which was begun by Parsons (1964) and Bellah

(1964) around the mid-1960s. Although these interpretations of the development of human societies brought forward many interesting insights and caused many sociologists to take history more seriously than before (see the chapter by Holmwood and O'Malley in the present volume), this theoretical move meant in the end an almost exclusive analytical *focus on the logic* of social developments and a parallel *neglect of real historical and social processes* driven forward by certain groups and actors. One could argue that the theoretical debate within the modernization paradigm on the relationship between agency and structure was brought to an end by a somewhat arbitrary decision: as it was not possible to identify the carriers of modernization processes, influential theorists began to disband the action-theoretical ground of the theory altogether<sup>5</sup> and instead focused their research on somewhat static descriptions of sequences of social structures. The results were often highly abstract theoretical and historical schemes not very helpful for those who were really interested in the causes and preconditions of social change, in the causes and precondition of a process called 'modernization'. Thus, the original intent of early modernization theorists to offer and further develop an empirically fruitful theory of social change was certainly not fulfilled by those who stepped too deep into the field of evolutionary or evolutionist theorizing.

Regarding all these theoretical shifts within modernization theory in the 1950s and the first half of the 1960s, it became obvious that the deficits and aporetic problems of the original formulation of the theory as originally formulated by Marion Levy could not be eliminated. Although the theoretical debate undoubtedly showed some progress, many of the foundations of the theory turned out to be flawed or at least highly implausible. And this was recognized even by those who were at the beginning of the theoretical debate quite sympathetic towards the modernization paradigm.

Contrary to the interpretation of Jeffrey Alexander, who claimed that modernization theory died 'sometime in the later 1960s ... because the emerging younger generation of intellectuals could not believe it was true' (1994: 175), and contrary to his allegation that it was a different ideological (Marxist) *Zeitgeist* which brought modernization theory into disrepute, it was the internal debate *within* modernization theory or at its margins which led to massive criticisms and to its 'death' in the late 1960s. It was especially

since 1967 that more and more theorists and researchers argued and demonstrated that tradition is not at all the opposite of modernity (Gusfield, 1966–7; Levine, 1968; Singer, 1971), that the idea of a stable, homogeneous, inflexible 'traditional' culture is wrong (Lauer, 1971; Whitaker, 1967), that modernization means completely different things to different countries as the variable temporal starting points of national modernization processes have to be seen in an international context (Bendix, 1967; Huntington, 1971; Rudolph and Rudolph, 1967), and that the functionalist assumption of an 'eurhythmic' change of societal subsystems is a myth which nourishes, for example, the mistaken belief that a market society will automatically bring forward a democratic parliamentary system (Rüschemeyer, 1970; Whitaker, 1967). At that time the theory was really shattered and – to stress this again – not only because Marxism in its different guises became more and more attractive to younger social scientists. The theory was no longer convincing, and it seemed even difficult to imagine a future in which modernization theory could again play a dominant role within macro-sociological theorizing. But in the mid-1980s such a new future for modernization theory emerged.

#### **OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES: THE REVIVAL OF MODERNIZATION THEORY SINCE THE 1980s**

The reason for such a revival had above all to do with the economic rise of the so-called 'Asian tiger-states' in the late 1970s and early 1980s and the slow decline of the Soviet Empire. These political processes seemed to confirm *a posteriori* modernization theory's original assumption that – in contrast to the claims of dependencia theory or world-systems theory – there are indeed chances of sustainable development for non-Western nations, and that the very stability of Western modernity with its particular institutional system seemed really to be some sort of a *telos* of history: the fall of the Soviet Union could be interpreted as an indication that there is one, and only one, route into modernity, that the Soviet model failed because of its insufficient structural differentiation – a point always stressed by modernization theorists. Modernization theory – so Edward Tiryakian argued in 1991 – was verified by history itself; the theory could

be revived and start a new life. And indeed, American authors like Jeffrey Alexander and Paul Colomy (1990) tried to reintroduce into sociological theorizing a modified concept of differentiation which takes into consideration the actions of groups and social movements and their oftentimes contingent results; and Europeans like Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens (see Beck/et al., 1994) were heading towards a new description of modernization processes they called 'reflexive modernization', thus indicating that the process of modernization is not a simple story of progress but one in which many risks can be found.

The question, however, was whether these new modernization theories really were much better than the old paradigm, whether the theoretical debate in the 1980s and 1990s really got much further ahead than the one in the 1960s. There is some doubt about that. As Alexander (1996), in criticism of the writings of Beck and Giddens, has rightly remarked: the old and highly problematic dichotomy between tradition and modernity is again lurking behind their new approach, which makes the theory as vulnerable as the one Levy had proposed in 1952. Furthermore Alexander and Colomy were themselves critically asked whether their proposal for a new concept of differentiation really amounts to a new *theory*, as they admit that differentiation is so much dependent on actors, constellations and contingent actions that the explanatory value of such a theory must necessarily be quite weak (Joas, 1996 [1992]: 230). Thus, if one summarizes the history of modernization theory in the 1950s and 1960s, one quickly realizes that most of the arguments now being pushed forward to formulate a new concept of differentiation and to build a new theory of modernization have already been tried in the past. The chances that a solid and convincing new theory of modernization will arise are therefore quite small. Nevertheless, modernization theory is still alive, and one might even dare to predict that the theory will live on for quite a long time. Why is that the case? Why will the theory not 'die' despite all its weaknesses and failures?

Dean C. Tipps answered this question as early as 1973. He argued that the exact meaning of the term 'modernization' is unclear and highly contested, which paradoxically is one of the reasons why modernization theories will proliferate endlessly despite all criticisms: 'Every "theory" of modernization attacked and destroyed will only raise two in its place' (Tipps, 1973: 217). That endurance of the

theory is based on the fact that the term 'modernization', as well as the related concept of 'modernity', has a strange kind of (normative) attraction for all those – politicians or intellectuals – debating the contours of contemporary and future societies. Even the mostly philosophically inspired talk about postmodernity (for an overview, see Yack, 1997) hasn't changed the situation, since modernity is the nation's final goal and justification. Histories in which nations measure themselves against one another and vie for advantage fall easily into narrative patterns that imply linearity and convergence' (Cullather, 2000: 646).

So what is the conclusion of all this? Although modernization theory will not disappear in the social sciences in the very near future, one has to realize that there is no stable, empirically grounded *theory*, no theory at least with strong explanatory claims. All there is is some sort of modernization *discourse*, some vague ideas about possible developmental paths of contemporary societies. These ideas – Göran Therborn (2000: 69) argues – have an inspiring potential for those interested in macro-sociological change if approached sceptically. But they should certainly not be taken as theoretical premises for practitioners of historical sociology.

#### NOTES

1. Indeed, almost concurrently Thorstein Veblen used terms like 'modernized regime' or 'modernism' (1954 [1915]: 94, 169) in theorizing the interdependence of economic and political processes and thus came close to positions typical of later modernization theorists (see Diggins, 1978: 199ff).

2. It was only Barrington Moore who, in a sharp critique of modernization theory, focused very much on the landed population in his *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (1966).

3. This was not without reason as talking about 'the' elites, 'the' intellectuals, was a huge simplification of the situation. Edward A. Shils (1957–8) indicated this problem very early on in demonstrating that there are very different types of intellectuals with oftentimes completely different interests within one country, so that it is not 'the' intellectuals who will decide the political shape of modernization, but a highly complex constellation of elites (see Shils, 1965).

4. Similar arguments are to be found in Lipset (1988 [1959]), when he argued that a *broad* middle class is one of the preconditions for a smooth and democratic political process, as such a middle class will lessen the

political and economic conflicts between the rich and the poor.

5. I owe this point to Gerard Delanty.

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# *Historical Geography and Historical Sociology*

## *Our Honest Toil and the Spatial Turn*

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With the growing interest in space within sociology and a willingness among some in geography to begin to think theoretically, one might expect mutual interest and convergence between the fields of historical geography and historical sociology. Historical sociologists who have experienced the 'historical turn' and the 'cultural turn' may wonder just what form the 'spatial turn' could take. Despite some convergence, the interaction between these fields has been limited. What historical geography and historical sociology have shared is an interest in history, but what they have taken from history has differed, reflecting their divergent disciplinary histories and aims. Here I will attempt to introduce historical geography to those in historical sociology who may be intrigued with at least their conception of what such a field could include, and then turn to questions of convergence and overlap. To limit this unwieldy topic, I will concentrate on North American and British authors and, for historical geography, on those directly associated with the label. As a historical geographer, my reflections on historical sociology will be both suggestive and tentative.

### **PARALLEL AND DIVERGENT DISCIPLINARY HISTORIES**

At first glance, the histories of historical geography and historical sociology appear rather similar. Apparently subfields within the social sciences, they have defined themselves in part by their expressed interest in history. Following some currency and attempts at delimitation in the 1920s and 1930s (see, for example, Barnes, 1921; Becker, 1934; East 1933; Fairgrieve et al., 1921; Gilbert, 1932; Morris et al., 1932), both experienced renewed attention in the 1970s and 1980s, encouraging a flurry of conferences, the founding of flagship journals and other attempts at institutionalization. Both have strong Anglo-American biases and have felt the impact of a series of popular methods and approaches, including quantitative methods, world-system theory and feminism. However, once one begins to explore the particular relationships of historical geography and historical sociology with the field of history as well as their early attempts at self-definition, important differences emerge. Here I will concentrate on historical geography followed by

some brief comparisons with the history of historical sociology.

In Britain, the early practitioners of historical geography had often been trained as historians (Darby, 1983b). They saw their objects as two-fold, both subsidiary to history: first, beginning in the 1840s, the study of changing administrative and political boundaries (for example, E.A. Freeman, 1881); and, second, emerging at the end of the century, the study of geography's influence on history (for example, Mackinder, 1904; G.A. Smith, 1894). In both cases, the history to which geography was tied was a political history, and in fact, the field was often labelled historical and political geography (Darby, 1987: 117–18). As the prominent historical geographer Henry Clifford Darby later testified: 'I recall hours spent in disentangling the various connotations of the name Burgundy – the kingdoms, the duchies, the county, the imperial Kreis or "circle" of later times; little wonder that Freeman wrote: "no name in geography has so often shifted its place and meaning", (1983b: 421).

Clearly there were ties between this early historical and political geography and the imperial projects of the times. Deeply involved in both establishing geography as a discipline in Britain and British politics, Halford Mackinder promoted a form of historical geography closely tied to political history, made no attempt to hide the connection between the two. In a position paper prepared for the Royal Geographical Society, he stated: 'I believe that on lines such as I have sketched a geography may be worked out which shall satisfy at once the practical requirements of the statesman and the merchant, the theoretical requirements of the historian and the scientist, and the intellectual requirements of the teacher' (1887: 159). This paper was used by the society, led at the time by colonial administrators and men of affairs (Stoddart, 1986: 66), to persuade Oxford University to appoint a Reader in Geography, a position that was first held by Mackinder (Kearns, 1985: 72). However, as Felix Driver (1992) has argued, the ties between the discipline of geography and imperialism were not deterministic but instead were constituted in complex and often contested ways.<sup>1</sup> Although much remains to be done to uncover this complexity, Robin Butlin's study (1995) of the historical geographies of the British Empire from 1887 to 1925

has demonstrated that only some of these works gave a laudatory and a militaristic image of empire.<sup>2</sup>

By the advent of the First World War, imperialism was increasingly seen as problematic, and some began to question the wisdom of linking history and geography. For example, in a 1914 review of Mackinder's series 'Elementary Studies of Geography and History', P.M. Roxby, a geographer at Liverpool trained in history at Oxford, argued that the 'combined presentation of history and geography' could lead to 'too determinist a view of social development'. To illustrate the dangers of such an approach, he wrote, '[L]et us join furious battle with Feuerbach, who said, perhaps in grim anticipation of his country's recent action, that "history is nothing but the operation of geographical laws"' (1914: 407).<sup>3</sup>

By the late 1920s and the early 1930s, historical geographers were eager, in Darby's words, 'to forge a method and to create an academic discipline' at a time when geography still lacked a secure institutional base (1987: 131).<sup>4</sup> The great postwar expansions of both secondary and university education, which enabled geography to become more established and independent (T.W. Freeman, 1987: 9), provided the needed opportunity. Darby, who became the first Ph.D. in geography at Cambridge, later described this period: 'Whereas, hitherto, some historians had believed in the relevance of geography to history, now some of the increasing numbers of geographers in Britain began to reverse the thinking, and to consider the relevance of history to geography' (1983b: 422).

At the 'First International Congress of Historical Geography' held in Brussels in 1930, Darby was impressed by the archivist Charles Pergameni (1931: 212), who pleaded for a redefinition of the field as the 'human geography of the past', drawing on the earlier discussions of 'past geographies' by the German geographer Alfred Hettner. This view was in opposition to the 'older view' of geography's relationship to history held by Belgian historians who organized the conference. Two years later at a joint meeting of the Geographical and Historical Associations on the question 'What is historical geography?', the geographers present argued that the theme of the influence of geography on history was one of geographical history, mistakenly labelled

historical geography by historians, and that instead their field should be redefined as 'the reconstruction of the geographical conditions of past times' (Morris et al., 1932: 43) – an approach that soon became the predominant theme of British historical geography (see also East, 1933; Gilbert, 1932).

Although there were some notable exceptions, many of the academic geographers in the United States were trained in geology rather than history and often held posts of physical geography in geology departments (Dunbar, 1981; James and Martin, 1978). Among the early American publications associated with historical geography, the theme of the influence of geography on history was particularly strong, often drawing on the study of physiography. In 1903, Albert Perry Brigham, an early student of the physical geographer William Morris Davis, published *Geographic Influences in American History*. In the same year, Ellen Churchill Semple, who studied history at Vassar and geography with Friederich Ratzel in Germany, published *American History and Its Geographic Conditions*. Both Brigham and Semple used features of physical geography to help explain the course of a primarily political American history, stressing themes of natural defences, territorial expansion, the location of routes, the suitability of areas for settlement and the progression of events during battles in the French and Indian War and the Civil War.<sup>5</sup>

Attacks on these works came from historians including Frederick Jackson Turner, whose own frontier thesis was not entirely free from environmental determinism (the explanation of social phenomena by the physical environment).<sup>6</sup> Turner (1905), while finding much to praise in Semple's and Brigham's books, criticized them for relying on questionable secondary sources. Others were even more sceptical. In 1907 at a conference of the American Historical Association on 'the relations of geography and history', George Burr from Cornell criticized Semple's work, arguing that 'geography, though a factor in history, is only a factor', and that man 'too is a factor, and oftener the active than the passive', and George Adams argued, 'Most of the matters which they [the geographers] rightly call upon us to include in history are conditions, not causes' (American Historical Association, 1908).<sup>7</sup>

Despite these criticisms, other North American geographers took up the theme of geographic influence, and some would go to even greater excesses, lapsing into rather

blatant forms of environmental determinism often mixed with evolutionary theory. Two of the more extreme examples were Ellsworth Huntington, also a student of Davis who later studied and taught at Yale, and T. Griffith Taylor, who taught successively in Australia, at Chicago, and finally became the first chair of the new Geography Department at Toronto in 1935. Both were trained as geologists and became known for advocating climatic explanations for racial and regional character types, often invoking neo-Lamarckian themes (Livingstone, 1992: 225–31). Excesses such as these soon gave North American geography a bad name at a time when its institutional basis was still not solid, often being tied to geology departments. Some of the harshest criticism came from the anthropologist Franz Boas. Initially trained in physics and geography, Boas came to reject the deterministic explanations he had been taught in favour of historical and empirical modes of research (Livingstone, 1992: 291–4).

Against this background, several prominent historical geographers emerged who are now seen as the founders of the discipline, and in all cases, they attempted to sever the links between historical geography and both political history and environmental determinism. In Britain, the dominant figure became Darby.<sup>8</sup> Trained in the earlier versions of historical geography, he became the leading spokesperson in Britain for the redefinition of historical geography as the reconstruction of past geographies. In 1936, while he held both a lectureship in geography at Cambridge and a research fellowship in history at King's College, his edited *An Historical Geography of England before 1800* was published, in part due to the assistance of the economic historian J.H. Clapham, also at King's, who helped him receive backing from Cambridge University Press.<sup>9</sup> Through a 'sequence of cross-sections taken at successive periods', Darby (1936) intended to demonstrate historical geography's potential. As he later explained, 'Our aim was not to produce some broad general views, but geographical descriptions based as far as possible on primary sources; and our hope was to match the scholarship of contemporary historians' (1987: 124–5).<sup>10</sup> The book was, in fact, favourably reviewed by historians despite its challenge to their conception of historical geography. In the *English Historical Review*, after expressing surprise at the lack of attention to either 'the fixing of boundaries, whether civil or

ecclesiastical' or 'the course of military operations', Sir George Clark reported '[h]istorical geography, still a little uncertain of its place among the sciences, has great promise for the future. Mr. Darby and his collaborators have shown that it has already won an important place in the study of British history' (1937: 140).

The book was, as Darby (1960) later admitted, a methodological mix. It included not only cross-sections but also discussions of developments through time, including his own work on the draining of the Fens bordering the Wash, drawn from his dissertation. Nevertheless, in it the seeds of Darby's form of historical geography were clear: the interest in cross-sections and ways to combine them with narrative descriptions of change; the themes of active transformations of landscapes; and, most importantly, the determination to use primary sources – to meet the historians' standard of scholarship.<sup>11</sup> Darby's later substantive publications, which exemplified this approach, included his edited *A New Historical Geography of England* (1973), which alternated 'horizontal' cross-sectional chapters with 'vertical' chapters on 'geographical changes through time', *Domesday England* (1977),<sup>12</sup> and numerous papers on the changing English landscape discussing woodland clearances, drainage and moorland reclamation as well as the study of place names.<sup>13</sup>

In his promotion of the field, Darby made a series of methodological statements in which he stressed problems of presentation and organization, addressing, for example, 'the problem of geographic description' (1962). Paying particular attention to the relations between geography and history, he suggested four possible approaches: the geography behind history (corresponding to the geographical explanation of history), past geographies (cross-sections), the history behind geography (the vertical approach) and the use of history to explain features in the present landscape (1953). Conceptual issues were of less interest, making him leery of overly close relations with 'social studies' (Andrews, 1980: 205; Darby, 1983b: 424; Lawton and Butlin, 1989: 16; Williams, 2002). He preferred to cultivate relations with economic history promoting a careful examination of documentary sources, and ended his commentary on his writings shortly before his death with the following quotation from Clapham taken from his introduction to Darby's fenland books in 1940: 'He is a very imperfect economic historian who is not also a

tolerable geographer; and I cannot picture to myself a useful historical geographer who has not a fair working knowledge of economic history' (quoted in Darby, 1989: 8).<sup>14</sup>

Contemporary with Darby in the United States were two American geographers, Ralph Brown and Carl Sauer. Closest in interests and approach to Darby, Brown came to geography from a background in agriculture and economics. Like Darby, he identified historical geography as 'the geography of the past' (1948: iii), was particularly interested in the use of primary documents, and appeared to view historical scholarship as a model (McManis, 1978). Because of his early death in 1948 and his avoidance of methodological discussion, Brown never became an active spokesperson for North American historical geography, but is still seen as 'a major figure' in the field (Butlin, 1993: 36). In his substantive writings, he carried his determination to rely on primary documentation to an extreme. In his first book, *Mirror for Americans: Likeness of the Eastern Seaboard, 1810* (1943), he attempted to create past geographies, stressing landscape transformation and environmental perception, using only the data sources available in 1810,<sup>15</sup> and in his second book, *Historical Geography of the United States* (1948: iii), he gave sketchy and partial coverage given his insistence on sufficient primary documentation.

Although both men reacted against the character of much of American geography, the approaches taken by Carl Sauer and Ralph Brown were very different.<sup>16</sup> In common with Brown and even Darby, Sauer stressed the importance of primary research, bemoaning the tendency of those promoting geography as a synthetic field to base their work on 'borrowed materials' (letter to L.S. Wilson, 6 April 1848, quoted in Kenzer, 1988: 335). However, following the physiographer Rollin Salisbury, with whom he studied at Chicago, Sauer saw such primary research as closely tied to 'physiographic studies' and careful fieldwork (Kenzer, 1988: 335). Recoiling from the 'environmentalist tenet' taught by Semple, Harlan H. Barrows and others at Chicago, he, like the Pergameni paper Darby admired, turned to the writing of German geographers such as Hettner.<sup>17</sup>

Once at Berkeley, where he headed the new geography department, which had recently separated from geology, Sauer published a paper on the distinctiveness of a geographical approach. Citing the anthropologist

Kroeber (a former student of Boas),<sup>18</sup> 'The Morphology of Landscape' attacked environmental determinism, depicting it as a misguided attempt to make geography part of biophysics. His alternative vision of geography was based on the morphological study of landscape, a study which he insisted would include the 'modification of the area by man and its appropriation to his uses'. Here he defined historical geography 'as the series of changes which the cultural landscapes have undergone and therefore involves the reconstruction of past cultural landscapes' (1963a [1925]: 344), a view reinforced in 1927 when he described historical geography as the study of 'landscapes of the historic past' (1927: 200). Later Sauer would repudiate parts of this vision, stressing man's agency in changing the landscape, rather than the reconstruction of a series of landscapes. (for example, Sauer, 1963b [1956], 1963c [1941]). In his own substantive work, he would come to focus on agricultural origins and dispersals in Latin America and the American Southwest and the exploration and exploitation of the area by Europeans (for example, Sauer, 1952, 1966, 1968, 1971).

In addition to reacting against the 'environmentalist tenet', Sauer found himself out of step with much of the geography that replaced it in the United States. In 1940 in a presidential address to the Association of American Geographers (AAG), he protested against 'the neglect of historical geography' and charged that those who limited their work to the contemporary period were 'held by a peculiar obsession' (1963b [1956]: 366). Terming the period from Barrows's 'Geography as Human Ecology' (1923) to Richard Hartshorne's recently published methodological treatise *The Nature of Geography* (1939) as the 'Great Retreat', he lamented the attempt both to separate human from physical geography and to limit the former to 'a nongenetic description of the human content of areas, sometimes called chorography' (1963c [1941]: 353). In his attempt to distinguish geography from other subjects and give it academic respectability, Hartshorne had given a very narrow definition to historical geography, limiting it to a study of cross-sections and suggesting that some of Darby's and Sauer's writings were really works of history or anthropology, not geography (1939: 178, 184-8).

Although professing an interest in 'comparative regional geography', Sauer limited such

comparisons to a particular cultural area and those adjacent to it.

Such work obviously cannot be done by sample studies ranging widely, but may require a lifetime given to learning one major context of nature and culture. One may thus extend one's learning outward to the limits of a culture area and explore the contrast on the other side of the boundary line. Or one may undertake excursions to areas characterized by important kindred qualities. But always there must be the base, the area for which the observer is making himself expert. (1963c [1941]: 362)<sup>19</sup>

Accordingly, he argued, 'there are no general laws of society, but only cultural assents'. Instead of turning to sociology or economics, he suggested cultivating relationships with anthropology, 'the most advanced of the social sciences' (Sauer, 1963b [1956]: 357, 378), whose 'culture area' concepts he found particularly relevant.<sup>20</sup> With time, he would argue that even anthropology was becoming too much of a social science, interested in theorizing and universalizing, rather than a field of culture history as he envisioned (Williams, 1987: 220).<sup>21</sup>

In 1948, after Brown's death, Sauer was approached to write the chapter on historical geography for a fiftieth-anniversary volume for the AAG, a chapter that Brown had been expected to write. Despite repeated requests, he refused, being disillusioned with American geography, and suggested a student of his, Andrew Clark, who was working, in Sauer's words, on 'the overseas Anglo-Saxon culture world' (Williams, 1983: 18). Clark soon became the spokesperson for North American historical geography, fulfilling the role undertaken by Darby in Britain, in a way not done by either Sauer or Brown. Later, Clark would testify that his heart was never in his methodological pronouncements, which had been something thrust upon him due, among other things, to Brown's death (Meinig, 1978: 24).

Clark had come to geography from mathematics and economic history. In 1930, he received a BA in mathematics and physics from McMaster, and, after working as a statistician, completed a Master's degree in geology, economic history and geography at Toronto in 1938. There, he worked with both the economic historian Harold Innis and the geographer Griffith Taylor. Innis, who was closely associated with the geography department, was known for his 'staple theory', which explored the importance of commodity production (particularly cod and furs) for the economic history

of Canadian regions. He is still seen as a founder of Canadian historical geography.<sup>22</sup> From both Innis and Taylor, Clark gained an appreciation for the importance of the physical environment, even though he rejected Taylor's determinism (Ward and Solot, 1992: 14–15), and from Innis, training in the use of archival sources (Meinig, 1978: 11).

At Innis's suggestion, Clark had transferred to Berkeley to work on his doctorate with Sauer, whose emphasis on careful fieldwork fitted well with Clark's training under Taylor. Clark's thesis was on the impact of European settlement on the New Zealand landscape, focusing on the introduction of plants and animals.<sup>23</sup> Although a topic well suited to Sauer's interests, Clark's framing of it was distinctive in his emphasis on the region, a theme that he would develop in his later works. For his next monograph, *Three Centuries and the Island* (1959),<sup>24</sup> he examined Prince Edward Island, combining cross-sections with vertical studies of change, mapping selected phenomena, ratios between them at particular times, and the changes over time. In his last monograph, *Acadia: The Geography of Early Nova Scotia in 1760* (1968), Clark organized his discussion by eras and topics rather than by cross-sections, but still give a detailed picture of areal patterns. Throughout his substantive work, Clark strove to debunk easy explanations, whether they were those of environmental determinism or of cultural transfer. Instead he came to view historical geography as the investigation of the complexity of particular regions (for example, Clark, 1948; see also Meinig, 1978: 16–17).

In the AAG commemorative volume, Clark charted a course between Sauer, his former adviser, and Hartshorne, now his colleague at Wisconsin.<sup>25</sup> He refused to remove time, and Sauer, from the field, and yet, like Hartshorne, emphasized a cross-sectional approach to areal differentiations. Defining historical geography as the study of 'geographical change through time', he claimed that such an approach focused on processes because such cross-sections could be 'understood as momentary states in continuing and complex processes of change'. In contrast to history, which studied changes to human society, geography paid attention to 'the surface of the earth, in whole or in part, and to areal associations and differentiations thereon' (1954: 71–3, 85). Despite his characterizations, Clark has been criticized for examining the results of geographical changes

rather than the processes, and so really studying changing geographies rather than geographical change (Meinig, 1978: 21–2).

In 1972, Clark contributed a chapter on 'Historical Geography in North America' to *Progress in Historical Geography*. Having been subjected to attacks by those who thought Clark represented a very restricted view of their field (Koelsch, 1970; Prince, 1971), he was now less willing to provide a clear distinction between history and geography, speaking instead of the 'history-geography borderlands' and arguing that 'there are, indeed, no peculiarly "geographical" or "historical" "facts" or "factors"'. Nevertheless, he suggested that the more recent work of Sauer and his students was not historical geography, given their 'cultural-environmental interests' and 'often strong anthropological overtones', but instead a 'stream of geographical culture history, parallel to but often quite distinct from the work of the more historiographically focused historical geographers'. Although admitting that their particular approach had much to offer, he noted that 'difficulties have arisen through lack of documentary skills or of contextual information' when they tackled historical topics (1972: 130, 138–9).

Clark's work and his statements of intent were a study in contrasts. Despite his pronouncements on the nature of historical geography, he is perhaps best known within the field for his insistence on high standards of scholarship, a value that is still seen as central to the discipline. Although describing his research programme as a study of British rural settlement and land use overseas (Ward and Solot, 1992: 19), his insistence on the exhaustive use of both archival and field sources, or 'hyperempiricism', (Ward and Solot, 1992: 13) prevented him from making many comparisons or generalizations (for example, Clark, 1968: 371) and he came to focus on relatively small and isolated regions. He would also come to champion a humanistic vision of historical geography, and yet that vision was often obscured in his own painstaking empirical work. Admired for his scholarship, he has been attacked for his excessive 'scholarly prudence', a phrase that Clark used to justify his hesitancy to make generalizations (Meinig, 1978: 16).

None of these four historical geographers established close relationships with sociology, and all were hesitant to theorize, even viewing generalizations with scepticism. Instead their primary interdisciplinary links were to history, especially economic history, in the cases of

Darby, Clark and Brown, and to anthropology for Sauer. Although both Clark and Sauer expressed some interest in comparative studies, their insistence on prudent scholarship strongly limited the kinds of comparative work they found acceptable.

Unlike historical geographers with their active attempts to 'create an academic discipline', historical sociologists have been hesitant to proclaim a distinctive domain, and many leading proponents continue to claim that their aim is to promote an approach from which all branches of sociology could benefit, not to establish a subdiscipline (Skocpol, 1984; Tilly, 1988). Efforts to study earlier practitioners are often directed to social thinkers of all sorts whether or not they would have adopted a label of historical sociology (for example, Skocpol, 1984; D. Smith, 1991), and those who explicitly adopted the label are often ignored.

The term 'historical sociology' did have some currency in the United States by the 1930s, when it was identified by the American Sociological Society as synonymous with general sociology. F.N. House identified its approach as one studying the 'theory of social evolution and progress' (1936: 297), an approach that was soon seen as outdated and tainted by evolutionism (Schwartz, 1987: 2). There were, however, two American sociologists who tried to redefine the term and remove its association with abandoned evolutionary theories: Harry Elmer Barnes and Howard P. Becker. Barnes (1921: 17) suggested the earlier flaws could be overcome by turning to the 'historico-analytical method, introduced by Boas and his disciples', and Becker (1934: 26) suggested the same end could be best achieved by turning to 'Max Weber's ideal-typical method'. Nevertheless, both men were outside the mainstream of American sociology, and their efforts to revive the term were unsuccessful.

By this time, American sociology had become very distinct from history, and the Chicago school of sociology was becoming very influential. Albion Small, who started the sociology department at Chicago and had a background in history, later recalled a joint 1903 meeting of the American Economic Association<sup>26</sup> and the American Historical Association. At that meeting, Franklin Giddings, who was soon to publish his *Descriptive and Historical Sociology* (1906), presented a paper entitled, 'A Theory of Social Causation' (1904), which was harshly criticized by the historians, including George Burr,

who labelled it as a form of philosophy of history. In Small's words, 'In brief, as the sociologists understood it, the historians virtually declared that they had no use for the conception of social *science*, and especially not for the conception of history *as science*'. Even more appalling to Small was a comment attributed to Professor Emerton of Harvard: 'It is not even essential that what the historian writes down shall be true, provided it lends itself to dramatically interesting treatment'. According to Small, that remark 'marked the decisive parting of the ways between American historians and sociologists', and at the time of his writing their relations had still not recovered (1923: 45).<sup>27</sup>

In Britain, sociology was very slow to gain an institutional foothold, and for many years, there was only one professor of sociology and so little room to promote a particular kind of sociology. This chair at the London School of Economics (LSE) was held first by Leonard Hobhouse from 1907 until his death in 1929, and then by his student Morris Ginsberg. Hobhouse was interested in theories of social development, without associating development with progress, and led a study that assembled a large collection of reports on 643 pre-literate peoples, using records from anthropologists, travellers and missionaries. Ginsberg worked more directly with historical materials and saw the sociologists' role as 'the discovery of general laws' drawing on sources from history, anthropology and elsewhere (Banks, 1989). Although neither identified himself as a historical sociologist, both Barnes and Becker would point to them as precursors. Following the Second World War, there was an influx of students into sociology at the LSE and some interest in the use of historical materials but also a focus on contemporary issues. Little real growth in historical sociology came in Britain until the 1960s, when the sociologists at Leicester, many of whom had come from history, started to have an impact (Banks, 1989: 527, 532-3).

In contrast to the founding historical geographers, those first associated with historical sociology saw history as a source of materials but had little serious interest in the historical method. Their interest was in the big picture, and their goal to systematize history starting with unilinear evolutionary approaches and later with modifications of them to create more acceptable theories of social development. It was, in the words of Piotr Sztompka, 'sociology above history' (1986: 335), as compared with the 'sociology without history'

that had come to dominate in the United States.

### RENEWALS DURING THE 1960s, 1970s AND 1980s

When both Clark and Sauer died in 1975, their many students were well established, as were those of Darby, who continued an active presence until his death in 1992. It has been the students of Clark and Darby who have identified themselves with historical geography and so have dominated it, whereas Sauer's students have often chosen the label of cultural geography.<sup>28</sup> Clark's success as a promoter of historical geography made him an easy target during the 1960s and early 1970s, when historical geography came under attack from those both within and outside the field. In a review of Clark's *Acadia* in the journal *Economic Geography*, William Koelsch spoke of an 'intellectual crisis' in the field due to its neglect of 'those conceptual frameworks, models, and techniques which have distinguished geography in the 1960s' (1970: 203), and in the same journal, Martyn Bowden, noting the 'rift' between geography and historical geography, charged that historical geography had become 'the stronghold of a group of regional geographers whose prime objective is seemingly to make historical geography respectable in the eyes of historians' (1970: 203).<sup>29</sup>

Much of geography had indeed changed during the preceding decade as more and more geographers became intrigued with the use of quantitative techniques and more analytical approaches, including those of environmental perception. In part, Livingstone has argued (1992: 324), this quantification served to reframe geography as an objective science following the turbulent McCarthy era. The initial impetus for the quantitative changes began in economic geography during the 1950s but by the 1960s had become more widespread. At first, it was simply a matter of applying statistical techniques developed in other fields, but by the late 1960s, geographers were beginning to rework many of these techniques to take into account the particular problems encountered when applying them to geographical distributions, and some began to talk of reformulating the field of geography into a spatial science.<sup>30</sup>

Clark, with his background in mathematics, did not dismiss quantitative approaches outright, but was worried that the 'current

fad' would restrict information to 'very limited categories', leading to an inadequate understanding of the regional context (1972: 137). More critically, Cole Harris one of Clark's many former graduate students, questioned the logical foundations of a 'theoretical geography of spatial relations' given that all phenomena exist in both space and time. Even more broadly, he challenged the concept of theoretical geography, which suggested that 'all explanation must be either deductive and nomological or probabilistic'. As an alternative approach, he proposed that historical geography concentrate on geographical synthesis built around concepts such as region, landscape and place. Such a synthesis would pay more attention to both 'the actions of ordinary men' and the physical land than would typically be the case in historical synthesis and would not abandon the field's tradition of scholarship (Harris, 1971: 157–8, 160).

Some, however, pushed for great change. Hugh Prince (1968: 110) advocated 'fresh approaches', including the study of past perceptions and the use of models, and three years later complained, 'Knowledge and respect for material sources of evidence has, for a few zealous practitioners, turned into a narrow devotion to archives as the final repositories of truth' (1971: 22–3). Showing a similar disdain for the 'orthodox doctrines', Alan Baker argued that 'methodologically the main advances can be expected from an increased awareness of developments in other disciplines, from a greater use of statistical methods, from the development, application and testing of theory, and from exploitation of behavioural approaches and sources' (1972: 13). The 'other disciplines' from which he hoped to gain so much included economic and social history and anthropology, but he appeared to expect less from sociology.<sup>31</sup>

Despite a remark by Baker that historical geography should become less of a distinctive subfield and more of an approach within the 'branches of systematic geography' (1972: 28), this period was a time of institutionalization for historical geography marked by the founding of separate journals and the development of conferences.<sup>32</sup> What was to become the Historical Geography Research Group (HGRG) associated with the Institute of British Geographers (IBG) started in 1967<sup>33</sup> and by 1975 claimed status as one of the largest research groups of the IBG with over 200 members. At about the same time, a loosely organized group known as the Eastern

Historical Geography Association (EHGA) began meeting as well, drawing together historical geographers from both Canada and the United States. Following two joint meetings between the HGRG and a group of Canadian historical geographers (1975 and 1977), this Canadian and British group was expanded to include geographers from the United States, Australia and New Zealand, and given the acronym CUKANZUS, a group which would meet in Los Angeles (1979), Toronto (1981) and Oxford (1983). In 1986 at Baton Rouge, the conference was renamed the International Conference of Historical Geographers (ICHG) to encourage even wider participation.<sup>34</sup> This rapid growth in organizations and meetings caused Hugh Prince to wonder, following the Toronto CUKANZUS in 1981, 'Do historical geographers spend too much time and effort organizing and attending conferences?' (1982: 64).<sup>35</sup>

Journals specifically devoted to historical geography were also started. In 1971, the Historical Geography Group associated with the AAG launched the *Historical Geography Newsletter*, co-edited by Martyn Bowden, whose critical review helped to start the debates within historical geography.<sup>36</sup> Initially circulated free of charge, early issues were dominated by reports on meetings, thesis abstracts, research objectives and short book commentaries, but the hope was to include 'extended bibliographic contributions, inventory essays, critical appraisals of primary sources, and items similar to those now characteristic to the *Historical Methods Newsletter*' (Bowden and Vicero, 1972a: 2). Articles guidelines suggested a focus on specific research materials, methodology, the teaching of historical geography and literature reviews on a particular theme or region (Bowden and Vicero, 1972b). The circulation increased rapidly. More articles were included, and soon a subscription charge was imposed.

The success of the Newsletter soon led to plans for a more ambitious journal, the *Journal of Historical Geography*. Announced as early as 1973 in the pages of the *Historical Geography Newsletter* ('Journal of ...', 1973: 47), publication began in 1975 with an English base and both an English editor, John Patten, and a North American one, Andrew Clark.<sup>37</sup> The journal aimed to aid 'recruitment' to historical geography through an 'increase of courses, seminars and research activities in historical geography within universities and

colleges all over the world' (Clark and Patten, 1975). Despite this goal, British and North American historical geographers dominated the journal, which included substantial articles and a large book review section along with notes on conferences and other announcements. In 1978, the *Historical Geography Newsletter*, which had been growing as well, was reorganized to encourage lengthier submissions and retitled *Historical Geography*. Predominantly a North American journal, one of its mandates is to present the work of 'emerging scholars'. Both journals aimed to encourage interdisciplinary dialogue, the *Journal of Historical Geography* welcoming contributions from 'allied subjects' and *Historical Geography* promoting the field's contributions to the 'geographical, historical and social scientific disciplines'.

The institutionalization of historical sociology occurred later and was less explicitly oriented toward the definition of a subdiscipline. Accordingly, the growth of the field has often been charted by the publication of particular books and articles (for example, D. Smith, 1982), rather than by the organization of specific societies or journals.<sup>38</sup> This lack of enthusiasm for disciplinary definition is evident in Charles Tilly's 1988 statement:

Fearfully, I predict the institutionalization of historical sociology: fixing of a labeled specialty in sections of learned societies, journals, courses, a share of the job market. I fear these likely outcomes for two reasons: first, because the 'field' lacks intellectual unity and, by its very nature, will forever lack it; second, because institutionalization may well impede the spread of historical thinking to other parts of sociology. The other parts need that thinking badly. (1988: 709)

Another indication of this ambivalence has been the unwillingness of many to separate sociology from history, so, rather than arguments explaining the difference between geographical history and historical geography, one finds statements such as Abram's hope 'to integrate history and sociology as a single unified programme of analysis' (1982: xviii). Two other defining books in historical sociology, Theda Skocpol's edited collection (1984) and Dennis Smith's *The Rise of Historical Sociology* (1991), focus on key figures from the past and include some such as E.P. Thompson and Marc Bloch who probably would have been uncomfortable with the label. What tends not to be included in these disciplinary accounts is discussion of the

earlier evolutionists who had also used the label.<sup>39</sup> That history is forgotten as sociologists discover history with untainted eyes, marking a 'new departure' rather than reviving the past (Tilly, 1988: 706).

Despite this uneasiness with disciplinary definition, some of the feared institutionalization did occur. In the mid-1970s, there was an 'explosion of historical sociology Ph.D.s' in the United States (Abbott, 1991: 219), and in Britain, the Leicester sociology department, with its historical slant, was overtaking London as the major source of sociology teachers in British universities (Banks, 1989: 533). Norbert Elias and Ilya Neustadt, both European refugees from the start of the Second World War, led the department at Leicester and promoted the comparative study of societies, stressing their variety and changes over time and drawing on anthropology and history. A number of historians were recruited, and, according to Banks, this may have contributed to the more detailed historical studies of particular areas over short periods of time that came from the department as well. Nevertheless, few of the sociology students at Leicester from the late 1960s on engaged in historical research, preferring instead the techniques of participant observation and interviewing.

In 1976, both the *British Journal of Sociology* and *Social Forces*, published by the University of North Carolina Press, produced special issues devoted to historical sociology. That year also marked the start of three social history journals that were to become influential: *Social Science History*, *History Workshop* and *Social History*. The Sorokin prize was awarded to sociologists with a historical orientation in both 1976 and 1977, an event that Victoria Bonnell suggested marked its achievement of 'full status' within the field of sociology (1980: 157). For Theda Skocpol (1984: ix–xiii), a crucial event appears to be the Conference on Methods of Historical Social Analysis held at Harvard in 1979. By the early 1980s, according to Dennis Smith (1991: 3), articles with a 'historical dimension' accounted for nearly a quarter of those published in the main sociology journals.

There was not a major journal specifically devoted to the field until the *Journal of Historical Sociology* began in 1988. Historical sociologists during the interim period often published their works either in the older *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, begun in 1958, *Theory and Society*, begun in

1974, or one of the new social history journals. Not unlike the *Journal of Historical Geography*, the *Journal of Historical Sociology* sought to promote 'openness, exploration, and diversity' and not to define and therefore confine the field (Corrigan and Sayer, 1988: 3). Explicitly interdisciplinary in orientation, the editors pointed not only to history but also geography and anthropology as fields with shared interests.

When Daniel Chirot introduced the special issue of *Social Forces* on 'The Uses of History in Sociological Inquiry' in 1976, he argued that one could not yet identify particular schools of historical sociology or even 'recognizable clusters of positions' (1976: 232). By 1991 Abbott (1991) identified groupings associated with participation in the Section on Comparative Historical Sociology, one of the largest sections of the American Sociological Association by the early 1980s (D. Smith, 1991: 3), and the Social Science History Association (SSHA). These organizations, he argued, have served two very different groups of historical sociologists. The first was started by the 'Weberians' but after 1983 shifted focus to the macro-political sociology of the nation-state, with an emphasis on theory and a sceptical attitude towards quantification. The SSHA, by contrast, was strongly associated with quantitative history often at a micro-scale and attracted those sociologists interested in working more directly with the historians often on past social groups such as families and occupations.

The relationships that the very different strands of historical sociology developed with history have coloured their relationships with historical geography. For the macro-sociologists, the primary interest has been in the political history of the nation-state, although Abbott has argued that, at least in the 1980s, the degree of 'self-referentiality' in this group has worked to limit even that connection (1991: 221). For the sociologists attracted to the SSHA, the initial links were made with quantitative history.<sup>40</sup> These were forms of history that many historical geographers treated with caution. The legacy of geographical influence continued to hamper their consideration of political history. In addition concerns over the presentism of many of the 'quantifiers' in geography caused many to be sceptical of quantitative history, although some urban and historical geographers did make links to quantitative history, in part through the SSHA.<sup>41</sup>

**CONTRASTS, ENCOUNTERS  
AND INTERMEDIARIES**

Given the reluctance of historical sociologists and even historical geographers to define their domains, any discussion of their relationships becomes problematic. One way to compare these fields is to explore their reactions to approaches associated with the *Annales* and world-systems theory. Spokespersons for both fields have testified to their debts to the *Annales* 'school' of social history and named Marc Bloch as an important precursor. The interpretations of Bloch's message have, however, differed considerably. For historical geographers, Bloch has come to represent synthesis, a greater use of concepts, and a more social object of study, but historical sociologists have tended to stress his comparative approach, even going so far as to argue that he sought causal generalization and theoretical conclusions (Friedman, 1996: 174–5). Practitioners of both fields have also admired Fernand Braudel, but historical sociologists have tended to be less critical of his work. Abrams, for example, ended his influential book on historical sociology with the words, '[I]t is works such as Braudel's *Mediterranean* that point the way' (1982: 335).<sup>42</sup> By contrast, historical geographers have often been uncomfortable with his sweeping approach and have criticized Braudel's 'geographical' interpretations as being far too deterministic, coming too close to the earlier traditions of geographical influence and geographical history (for example, Clout, 1988: 71; Prince, 1975: 104–5).<sup>43</sup> World-systems theory, so central to much of historical sociology,<sup>44</sup> has also been treated with some scepticism within historical geography and portrayed as too simplistic and divorced from place. In the mid-1980s, when political geographers attempted to introduce Wallerstein's work on the world-system to geography, Kearns complained of his 'universalist rhetoric', which paid little attention 'to the history of market institutions, to the evolution of rationality', and so forth (1988: 282–3), and Peter Hugill (1988: 111–27), while proclaiming an interest in 'macro-historical geography', criticized Wallerstein for being historically inaccurate (1988: 111–27).<sup>45</sup>

At a broader level, historical geographers have had mixed feelings about two of the defining characteristics of historical sociology, the use of theory and of the comparative method, as well as the quantitative methodology

adopted by some in the field. Nevertheless, with time, some use of theory has become more acceptable. In 1975, Richard Dennis asked for a 'more sophisticated integration of diverse aspects of social, economic and demographic theory' (1975: 405), but in 1991 wrote of the dangers of an uncritical use of theory divorced from archival or fieldwork: 'A more recent danger is that of flirting with a trendy social theory which may provide the flimsiest of wrapping; almost anything can be dressed up as "structure" and "agency"; "narrative" is sometimes an excuse for the absence of a conclusion' (1991: 281). Even Cole Harris, who had defended of historical geography in 1971 as a field of synthesis, has argued for a closer examination of theoretical context but again without abandoning crucial links to empirical work (1988: 329; 1997: xiii)<sup>46</sup>. Whereas historical sociologists have been reluctant to use the writings of Foucault and Giddens as models, the former being too cultural<sup>47</sup> and the latter linked to a sociology seen as insufficiently historical, their writings have inspired a number of studies in historical geography.<sup>48</sup> One of the theoretical works from historical sociology that has had the most positive reception in historical geography is Michael Mann's *The Sources of Social Power* (1986), combining as it does an interest in the territorial arrangement of power with, in Harris's words (1991: 675), a 'command of the historical record'.<sup>49</sup>

Uneasiness over comparative and quantitative methods continues. In 1986 at the ICHG held at Baton Rouge, some, such as Cole Harris, advocated more generalized comparative studies, but others, such as Sam Hilliard, saw 'little need to move away from traditional concerns or methods' (Baker, 1987b: 195).<sup>50</sup> Many historical geographers feared that quantitative methods would reduce history to data for testing (Dennis, 1991: 267; 2001: 18; Mitchell, 1987). For example, in a critical 1987 review of a work by William Sewell, Michael Heffernan charged that he had replaced the historical voices with 'the formal language of quantitative sociology' and treated nineteenth-century Marseilles as a laboratory 'more concerned with data and method than people and places' (1987: 211–12). Despite these doubts, Dennis has called for a 're-integration of quantitative and qualitative perspectives' and, like many others, including Heffernan, has championed 'eclecticism' (2001: 19–20).<sup>51</sup>

Recently there has been somewhat greater convergence between historical geography and

historical sociology in terms of objects of study. After years of severing links with political geography, some have now turned to questions of colonialism and the state and a few have even begun to explore questions of war and public memory. The questions of modernity are also becoming topical.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, after limiting discussions to human transformation of the land in reaction to the determinist interpretations, some in historical geography are beginning to look more carefully at questions regarding the social construction of nature. The hesitancy to focus on events continues, so that rather than addressing particular environmental catastrophes, such as famine and floods, historical geographers have sought more broadly based environmental narratives (Demeritt, 1994; Williams, 1994). Although historical geography has come under attack for its failure to incorporate a feminist perspective (Kay, 1900, 1991; Rose and Ogborn, 1988), that too has begun to change.<sup>53</sup>

Another way to explore the relationships between these fields is to compare the *Journal of Historical Geography* with the *Journal of Historical Sociology*, both of which are international journals with strong Anglo-American slants and an aim to encourage open discussion about the nature of their respective fields. In part due to its expressed interest in publishing substantive rather theoretical pieces, the latter is probably less representative of historical sociology than the former is of historical geography, but that aim does make it a good site in which to look for any convergences between these fields.

The journals differ in both format and the character of their substantive articles. Reflecting its field's emphasis on a critical examination of sources, the *Journal of Historical Geography* has an extensive book review section, often exceeding thirty pages – a contrast to the *Journal of Historical Sociology*, whose editors declared that it would not carry 'regular book reviews'.<sup>54</sup> In the *Journal of Historical Geography*, books are often reviewed on the basis of their scholarship (particularly if it challenges stereotypes) and the effective use of primary sources, with a sizeable number of reviews devoted to books seen as research tools. Other criteria used for evaluation typically include the layout, maps and other visuals, and the writing style – again qualities that are deemed very important within the field. Another standard feature of the *Journal of Historical Geography*, lacking in

the *Journal of Historical Sociology*, is the conference reports. In many ways, it is a discipline-building project intended, in the initial editors' words, to monitor historical geography's 'undoubted and rapid progress' (Clark and Patten, 1975: 1). By contrast, there is no direct equivalence to the 'Schools and Scholars' section of the *Journal of Historical Sociology* within the *Journal of Historical Geography*. Disciplinary creation within historical sociology still seems to hinge on the identification of particular thinkers as precursors, rather than the chronicling of growth and 'progress' that is so characteristic of historical geography.<sup>55</sup> Both journals publish debates, with greater coverage and more theoretical discussions in the *Journal of Historical Sociology* in its 'Issues and Agendas' section. By contrast, in the relatively few debates published in the *Journal of Historical Geography*, discussion has often hinged on evidence and historical specifics, rather than on discussions of theory.<sup>56</sup>

The disciplinary affiliations of the contributors to these two journals also differ. For the *Journal of Historical Sociology*, the number listed as associated with sociology departments has been surprisingly small, and historians and anthropologists have been well represented. When it first started, geography was also indicated as a contributing discipline, and David Harvey's work was cited as a good example of the blurring of disciplinary boundaries. Harvey was listed as an associate editor from 1988 to 1991, but has not used the journal as an outlet, although he has published a few short pieces in the *Journal of Historical Geography*. In fact, very few geographers have contributed.<sup>57</sup> Contributors to the *Journal of Historical Geography* have been less interdisciplinary, being predominately geographers, with a good representation of historians, but very few sociologists.<sup>58</sup> The section of the *Journal of Historical Geography* that does include a much wider disciplinary representation is the book reviews, which include reviews from and about many different disciplines, including a few on historical sociology.<sup>59</sup>

For both journals, the bulk of the space is devoted to substantive articles. In the *Journal of Historical Sociology*, after noting that 'occasional pieces of a theoretical nature' would be published, they announced, 'The bulk of what we publish will focus on the particular and concrete – specific peoples, in specific places and times' (Corrigan and Sayer, 1988: 4). Nevertheless, their articles would include more

theory than typical of historical geography, and fewer visuals. Although both aimed at wide coverage in terms of place,<sup>60</sup> the sociologists were to be more successful. In the *Journal of Historical Geography*, with some exceptions, the majority of places covered were Anglo-American, European or British outposts such as South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.<sup>61</sup>

To give a more concrete sense to this contrast, I will compare seven recent articles on South Africa published between 1995 and 2000 written by those associated with geography or sociology departments. This selection was made both because of a recent shared interest in South Africa and because those writers have explored questions of colonialism, postcolonialism, the state and feminism, all topics with demonstrated potential for convergence between the fields.<sup>62</sup> Most of these authors have academic links to both South Africa and Britain or Canada,<sup>63</sup> and four hold positions at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg: the geographer Charles Mather and the three sociologists (Belinda Bozzoli, Jonathan Hyslop and Deborah Posel<sup>64</sup>). The sociologists have also been associated with the History Workshops there,<sup>65</sup> workshops with strong ties to the History Workshop in Britain (J. Brown et al., 1990: 6)<sup>66</sup> – particularly to the work of E.P. Thompson, whose writings have been so influential in historical geography.

Despite their common interests and ties, these geographers and sociologists differed in the objects studied and in how those objects were constituted and investigated. In general, the historical geographers relied more heavily on archival sources, often supplemented by oral histories.<sup>67</sup> As for the sociologists, there was a greater tendency to rely on secondary sources, including many theses, but Posel (1995) did provide extensive references to archival records and governmental reports and Hyslop (1999) used some archival records from Britain in addition to many secondary sources. Less use was made of oral histories by the sociologists, although both Bozzoli (2000) and Posel (1995) drew on sessions from the History Workshops.

Three of these authors tackled issues of gender relations. For the sociologist, Deborah Posel (1995), this was approached through an examination of the conflict over the registration of customary marriage and framed in terms of the relations between the state, power and gender. Exploring the competing constructions of male authority between tribal

chiefs and state officials, she argued that state power should be disaggregated into different 'styles of governance' corresponding to contradictions between urban and rural native administrations. To conceptualize these conflicts further, Posel turned to Barrington Moore's 'theorization of authority', stressing the contesting and renegotiation of the social contract. Both the geographers chose to approach gender relations through an examination of women's active roles, rather than conflicting constructions of patriarchy. Jennifer Robinson (1998) investigated the Octavia Hill Women Housing Managers and their relationships with their tenants in South Africa, stressing the active mediation between masculinity and femininity informed by specific historical experience linked to nineteenth-century female philanthropy. Accordingly, she criticized those who assumed state power and citizenship to be masculine, suggesting greater complexity. In her article on the migration of the Bechuanaland women to South Africa, Camilla Cockerton (1996) stressed their migration strategies, motives and agency, which came to subvert both colonial and Tswana male authority. Rather than explore theoretical links to governance and authority, she sought specific social and economic causes for the migration, categorizing it into three spatial types.

Both Belinda Bozzoli and Charles Mather expressed an interest in the state and space which they explored through case studies at a community level: the sociologist Bozzoli studying revolts in Alexandra Township in Johannesburg, and the geographer Mather, the forced removal of the Ngomene in the Transvaal lowveld. Bozzoli argued that her case strongly resembled both urban and rural revolts elsewhere in South Africa but not elsewhere in Africa (2000: 82–3, 109). By contrast, Mather (1995) stressed the regional variability of the struggles over forced removals within South Africa and their resistance to broad generalization. Accordingly Bozzoli framed her discussion within such broad concepts as the rise of modernism and governability, writing of two 'ideal typical eras' of welfare paternalism and racial modernism, and drew on such writers as Charles and Louise Tilly and George Rudé as she explored questions of 'style and repertoire'. Her central object was the township as a social system and the revolts were linked to the replacement of a system of patronage and clientism with one of bureaucratic racism, which removed the

bases of stability. Mather took a more internal approach focusing on agents other than the state, including land companies, white farmers and African communities, as well as divisions within the state bureaucracy, and stressed the economic and social bases of the struggle rather than the social system. In contrasting treatments of space, Bozzoli argued that spatial factors, such as 'architectural and spatial decisions' to exert control, were only a contributing cause acting in concert with the paternalistic nature of government, and for Mather space was depicted in terms of its redefinition and reconquest in the struggles and as roughly equivalent to rights over the use of the land in terms of access, hunting and agricultural practices.

The final two articles examined constructions of race: the sociologist Jonathan Hyslop (1999) through a study of the ideology of White Labourism and the geographer Alan Lester (1998) through one of discourses of racial otherness. In response to an earlier article in the *Journal of Historical Sociology* by the social geographer Alastair Bonnett, Hyslop argued that White Labourism was not specific to Britain but instead could be best understood through a historically connected comparison of the imperial working class in Australia, South Africa and Britain. To demonstrate this, he tracked the movements of ideas and specific people focusing on three 'vectors' associated with Australians, the Cornish and the Amalgamated Society of Engineers. Shying away from broad theoretical statements, he drew parallels to other writers in labour history who had argued that empire not the nation-state was the relevant geo-social framework and, reflecting his links with the History Workshops, argued for a history from below.<sup>68</sup> Rather than undertaking a comparative imperial study of ideology, Lester focused on developments in the Eastern Cape Colony at the periphery of empire and on the interaction between peripheral and metropolitan discourses. Showing some willingness to discuss theory, he shaped his article as a reaction to overly simplistic postcolonial approaches, which he criticized for abstraction of conceptions of otherness from their historical contexts and for a focus on metropolitan discourse. In addition he argued that the peripheral discourses were 'informed by material conflicts over land and other resources' and accordingly examined the 'spatial strategies' of the British to separate the colonists and the Xhosa, first through expulsions and later

through the incorporation of their labour while maintaining a racially segregated space.

These articles illustrate both convergence and remaining differences between the geographers and sociologists in terms of objects and methods. The legacy of historical geographers' links with economic history, their insistence on scholarship, and their reluctance to become overly theoretical is evident. Harking back to links with economic history, the geographers were more likely to seek economic and material causes, often tied to the ability to use the land, in contrast to the sociologists, who tended to stress community structures – a contrast which shaped their treatment of space. The geographers' historical approach was often that of an internal examination of competing groups and agents whereas the sociologists were more likely to stress structures of authority. Thus the sociologists tended to frame issues related to the state in terms of governance and citizenship and the geographers in terms of limits to state power associated with agents either within or outside the state – be they housing managers, land companies, Tswana migrants or settlers. All wrote of the importance of historical specificity, and yet the sociologists seemed more willing to generalize, if only within a South African context for a particular period. As one might expect, the sociologists were quicker to draw on the theories of others related to authority, rebellion and empire, while the geographers' references to theory served primarily to demonstrate the limits of pre-existing theories such those associated with feminist state theory or postcolonial theory.

Despite some convergences in interests and methods, a gap remains which is difficult to bridge. The nature of this gap can be illustrated by an exchange that took place in 1987 and 1988 between David Harvey, depicted at that time as the historical sociologist's geographer, and Richard Dennis, who was among those pushing for a more theoretical approach to historical geography. Dennis reviewed two of Harvey's books<sup>69</sup> that attempted to add a spatial dimension to Marxist theory and, in Harvey's words, to 'bring theory and historical-geographical experience together in such a way as to illuminate both' (1985a: xvii). Criticizing Harvey for relying too heavily on secondary sources, ignoring relevant work within historical geography inspired by Harvey, and an 'unnecessary obsession' with validating Marx, Dennis concluded, 'What matters are Harvey's own ideas, prompting us

to probe beneath superficial patterns, to seek connections and marry his perception to our own honest toil' (1987: 315). In his indignant reply, Harvey objected to the implication that '[t]he only "honest" form of academic labour in historical geography is that applied to the digging up of such primary materials and all other forms are (presumably) unproductive of value and therefore in some respect "dishonest"' (1988: 305). Furthermore, he charged that he had used primary materials in the form of novels and had dwelled in the 'archive of Marx's thought'. In turn, Dennis answered that his review had supported 'an introduction of theory' into historical geography, and that, rather than being a defence of unfocused primary research, it had been a plea for 'empirical research tailor-made to the argument' (1988: 308). The gap between toil and theorization remained even for the geographers Dennis and Harvey – one seeking to make historical geography more theoretical and the other to link theory to historical-geographical experience.

#### THE WEIGHT OF THE PAST

The legacy of historical geography's struggle against simplistic explanations lives on. The historical geographers of the 1930s fought environmental determinism by turning to historical sources to demonstrate the underlying complexity. As J.H. Andrews observed in a 1980 review:

What the 'descriptive' pioneers opposed was the now-forgotten doctrine of environmental determinism, and they did it by showing (with some relish) that the same putative causes had produced different results in different historical periods. Space does not allow a closer analysis of this anarchic, anti-theoretical strain, but it certainly should not be underestimated. It survives in many a present-day scholar as an urge to make the world look more complicated than had previously been thought. ... (1980: 205)

Historical geographers strove to distance themselves from political history, leaving aside questions of the state, and cultivated scholarly research instead of theorization, generalization and comparisons. By contrast, in their fight against grand theory and abstracted empiricism, historical sociology turned to political questions at the level of the state and, as a form of sociology, attempted to make history more theoretical. For some micro-sociologists,

there was also a temptation to treat history as a laboratory in which to test their theories. Demonstrating competing visions of geography, the historical geographers have identified their field as geography by stressing past geographies, landscape, region and place and have been sceptical of involvement with spatial analysis, whereas historical sociologists, have turned to space, stressing its social production, showing little interest in the concepts of landscape, region and place.

By their very refusal to draw strict boundaries around their respective fields, historical geographers and historical sociologists continue to encounter each other around topics such as urban and labour history, feminism, colonialism and the social construction of nature. Yet even there the degree of convergence has been limited. While the historical sociologists strive to compare, find similarities and explain, the historical geographers strive to poke holes in their arguments, highlighting the complexity with their scholarship and eclecticism. It remains to be seen whether their common interests will be enough to overcome their very different everyday work habits – whether in their turning and toiling, practitioners of these two fields can find common ground.

#### NOTES

1. In particular, Driver criticized the earlier articles by Peet (1985) and Hudson (1977). See also Smith and Godlewska (1994) on the 'wide range of intellectual agendas' that complicated the relationships between the discipline of geography and empire.

2. See also Livingstone, who argued that nineteenth-century British and American geography 'integrated the languages and practices of the imperial and the teleological' (1994: 137).

3. See also doubts expressed by Fairgrieve et al. (1921) regarding the advisability of jointly teaching history and geography. In an article criticized by Driver (1992), Peet suggested that environmental determinism became 'socially dysfunctional' in the 1920s since the First World War had settled the 'main issues of imperialist domination' (1985: 327).

4. In his words, 'It is difficult today to realize how fragile our subject had been during the twenties and thirties and how great was the need for intellectual underpinning' (Darby, 1987: 131).

5. For his part, Brigham paid greater attention to soil types and geomorphology and was somewhat more careful to temper potentially deterministic statements, noting, for example, '[t]hat environment influences

character need not be asserted; but we cannot be sure in weighing this influence' (1903: 65). Semple, who had contemplated using the title chosen by Brigham, was less cautious and drew frequently on Ratzel for general principles and even laws to explain the unfolding of American history. Also associated with the early phase of geographical explanation was Harlan H. Barrows, another geographer trained in geology, who taught a course at Chicago starting in 1904 which he initially called 'Influence of Geography on American History', but later tempered to 'Historical Geography of the United States' (Koelsch, 1969).

6. For various interpretations of environmental determinism in geography, see Livingstone (1994), Peet (1985) and Tatham (1953).

7. Barrows, who was also present, 'defended a position intermediate between that of Miss Semple and Mr. Burr', and N.M. Trenholme, from the University of Missouri, appeared to prefer mid-nineteenth-century historical geography, lamenting its underdevelopment in North America and proclaiming, 'The lack of a good atlas of political historical geography with names in English has recently been supplied, but we are still without adequate historical maps and charts for English and European history save such as are produced in Germany and France' (American Historical Association, 1908: I: 47–8).

8. While by far the most dominant, Darby was not the only founder of contemporary British historical geography. At Aberystwyth, Herbert John Fleure held a chair of geography and anthropology. Although trained in zoology, he promoted a historically informed regional geography inspired by the social interpretations of Le Play and Geddes with some links to evolutionary thought, leading to what has been described as a 'moralistic geography' (Livingstone, 1992: 282–9). Darby, for one, found his approach too speculative, writing, 'Many were fascinated, even exhilarated, by Fleure's broad sweep with its vague generalizations that often brought together seemingly incongruous facts and ideas. Others preferred a more cautious and more rigorous intellectual approach' (1983a: 22). In Ireland, E. Estyn Evans, quite taken with Fleure's approach, wrote evocative descriptions of the personality of Ireland (Glasscock, 1991).

9. According to Darby (1987), this explains why his volume ends at 1800, leaving the nineteenth century to Clapham's *Economic History of Modern Britain*.

10. Darby continued, 'We were very anxious that all the contributors should be professional geographers, but soon realized that there was no British geographer with expertise in the Scandinavian period. ... I was sorry that we had to go outside our own ranks' (1987: 124–5).

11. The potential for scholarly work with underused primary sources seemed to excite him the most. In his words, 'what we did know was that the work before the war had shown what immense riches awaited us – the Domesday Book, the Lay Subsidies, the Census Returns, the Tithe Returns, and other less known material such as Final Concords and the Probate Inventories to name only a few' (1987: 132).

12. This was the concluding summation of a seven-volume work co-edited by Darby, which included detailed mapping of the Domesday survey in five regional volumes, starting in 1952, and in 1971 a *Domesday Gazetteer*.

13. For a more complete account of Darby's publications, see his bibliography and commentary in Darby (1989).

14. This strong association has led the historian N.B. Harte to characterize historical geography as economic history with the difficult bits left out (cited in Gregory, 1974: 652).

15. Because of its unusual structure, the book was criticized by some, including Darby (1963). Despite calling the book a 'tour de force', Darby wrote that 'a study by Brown himself would have given us, in some respects, an even clearer view of the geography of the area in 1810' (1963: 155). Nevertheless the book received many positive reviews, especially from historians (McManis, 1978).

16. On hearing a speech by Sauer at a conference on Western history in 1929, Brown appeared to find Sauer's approach too speculative and commented, 'While in no way meaning to disparage Sauer's paper on the geographic side – it contributed little beyond emphasizing certain points of geographic philosophy largely detracting from the "influence" idea' (letter to Gladys Wrigley, 25 June 1929, cited in McManis, 1978: 75). For his part, at the time of Brown's death Sauer described him as 'most active worker in the field of historical geography' (cited in Williams, 1983: 18).

17. As Sauer later recalled,

My dissatisfaction with the environmentalist tenet came mainly from listening to Miss Semple and J. Paul Goode, both delightful persons, and hearing Barrows distinguish between geographic and non-geographic factors. That wasn't what I had come for to Geography. In the years I worked in the Loop I read German geographers evenings who were doing what I wanted. (Martin, 1986: ix)

Martin's citation is from a letter from Sauer to William Speth, dated 3 March 1972.

18. Kroeber was also at Berkeley and would become a close colleague. The extent and timing of Kroeber's direct influence has been debated by Livingstone and Kenzer (Kenzer, 1987: 471; Livingstone, 1992: 297). Later, when Boas was head of the board of directors of the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, which was published in 1934, Sauer would be commissioned to write the entries on Ratzel and Semple (Livingstone, 1992: 296).

19. Later he would modify this even further and suggest that 'if most younger students stayed on the trail of themes rather than of regions our contributions to knowledge would be more numerous and of a higher order', (Sauer, 1963b [1956]: 398).

20. Sauer developed collegial relationships with not only anthropologists but also botanists and

paleontologists in an effort to reunite human and physical geography (Leighly, 1978: 102; Williams, 1983). As one example in 1932, he founded the monograph series, 'Ibero-America', with Kroeber and the historian H.E. Bolton (Williams, 1983: 7).

21. In his role as chair of the 1953 conference on 'Man's Role in Changing the Face of the Earth', Sauer pushed for a greater inclusion of historical approaches and a minimum of 'crystal ball' discussion. Accordingly, he proposed that Darby be invited (Williams, 1987: 226).

22. See Harris (1967: 235) on the Laurentian interpretation of history. See also Harris (1987: dedication and preface, iii). At Toronto, Innis also held the title of Professor of Economic Geography.

23. This was later published in book form as Clark (1949).

24. His initial thesis topic had been on Prince Edward Island, where his grandparents and parents had lived, but he changed topics on taking up a teaching position at Canterbury in New Zealand.

25. In his role as editor (Ward and Solot, 1992: 17), Clark is credited with encouraging Hartshorne to soften his stance in his *Perspective on the Nature of Geography* (1959), admitting a place for studies of particular features through time 'as part of the character of the area as a whole' and accordingly suggesting that Darby's vertical themes were admissible (Hartshorne, 1991: 49).

26. Initially, most economists had belonged to the American Historical Association, but in 1885 a number of younger economists formed the American Economic Association in opposition to the older, more conservative generation (Oberschall, 1972: 196-7).

27. Five years later George Burr had not softened his position either. In a letter dated 1 December 1928, he wrote to sociologist Luther L. Bernard, 'I have never in my life taught history as a "social science", and I cannot remember that any of my historical colleagues at Cornell has done so'. His attitude, he continued, had not changed since the 1903 meeting of the American Economic Association (Burr, 1928).

28. There were of course many other important historical geographers who did not fit neatly into these groups. Within historical geography, there has been some resentment of the neglect of other approaches. Thus in Britain, one hears complaints of 'Darby's well-drilled chorus line' (Andrews, 1980: 204) and of the 'hegemony' of 'Cambridge historical geography' (Pratts and Pringle, 1985: 50). Influential North American historical geographers who do not fit neatly into the Clark grouping include Jay Vance and Donald Meinig. On Jay Vance, who recently died, see Groth (2000); Meinig is the Maxwell Research Professor of Geography at Syracuse.

29. David Harvey, who at the time was a spokesperson for analytical and quantitative techniques, had also argued (1967) that there was an unfortunate gap between the work within and outside the field.

30. For a discussion of the background of this change, see Livingstone (1992: 304-46).

31. 'The historical approach within sociology' was, he argued, best represented in America, 'where fruitful links were promoted with prehistory, archaeology and sociology', but less so in Britain due to the legacy of Radcliffe-Brown and the rejection of the 'evolutionists and diffusionists' (Baker, 1972: 16).

32. This institutionalization did not go unchallenged. See the exchange between Wilbur Zelinsky, a cultural geographer trained at Berkeley, who argued that the label 'historical geography' was divisive (being often used in opposition to quantitative geography) and had no logical basis (1973: 1), and Alan Baker, who replied that Zelinsky's concern with categories could only lead to 'dull, needless, and introspective uniformity' rather than the exploration of 'problem-oriented research frontiers and interdisciplinary studies' (1974: 19). Also, in 1988, as Michael Dear promoted 'realignment of geography with social theory', he charged that historical geography was 'overdetermined' and necessarily 'tautological, since all geography is (or should be) time- and place-specific' (1988: 270).

33. Initially, a small group formed to collect information for the International Glossary of Agrarian Terminology. They soon began holding biannual meetings, and in 1973 adopted the current name, reflecting a 'broadening of interests' ('The Historical Geography ...', 1975: 133).

34. In part this widening was to fill a gap created when the one international organization of historical geographers lost funding, the Working Group on Historical Changes in Spatial Organization of the International Geographical Union, a group which met from 1976 to 1984 (Wood, 1984: 407). Subsequent meetings were held in Jerusalem (1989), Vancouver (1992), Perth/Singapore (1995), Coleraine (1998) and, most recently, Quebec City (2001). There is currently an attempt to establish a formal association associated with this conference.

35. This would not, however, slow down the organization as joint British and German meetings and British and French ones were organized as well.

36. The other editor was Ralph Vicero, who became primary editor in 1973 when Bowden shifted to the review editor. By 1989, the Historical Geography Specialty Group claimed around 300 members (Earle et al., 1989: 157).

37. Clark died within the year and was replaced by one of his first doctoral students, David Ward.

38. For an important exception, see Schwartz (1987).

39. As that organization changed during the 1990s, there have been additional links between the sociologists and historians, particularly in the fields of feminist and labour history (Abbott, 1991: 220).

40. There are parallels here to the relationships of historical sociology and social history. The former grew out of a reaction to grand theory and abstracted empirical work within sociology and so turned to political history, and the latter reacted against political history and the history of events and prominent individuals and so turned to police and parish records (Abbott,

1991). Of the two, historical geography has been much closer to social history both in spirit and in practice. On the uneasy relationships between historical geography and quantification, see Dennis (1991, 2001).

41. This contact came much earlier for historical geography since Darby was well aware of Bloch's work in the 1930s. See, for example, his comments in Darby (1983b: 423).

42. Charles Tilly also had much praise for Braudel, calling his work 'sumptuous' and taking delight in his ambitious 'muse', despite his lack of consistency and his tendency to accumulate theories rather than develop a clear theoretical argument (1980a, 1980b).

43. One geographer with links to historical geography who has been more receptive to Braudel is Allen Pred (1984, 1990). See also Harris (1978: 136).

44. On the links between the macro-historical sociologists and world-systems theory, see Abbott (1991: 213) and Ragin and Chirot (1984).

45. See also Ogborn (2000). Nevertheless, Robert Dodgshon has drawn on Wallerstein for some of his work (for example, Dodgshon, 1993, 1998).

46. See also David Robinson (2000: 2) on the dangers of divorcing theory from empirical evidence.

47. On the uneasy relationship of historical sociology with the concept of culture, see Bonnell and Hunt (1999).

48. For the historical sociologists' reluctance, see Calhoun (1996: 324), McDonald (1996: 110), Skocpol (1987) and D. Smith (1982). For examples of works by those associated with historical geography drawing on Giddens, see Gregory (1982) and Pred (1990), and on Foucault, see Driver (1993), Hannah (2000), Ogborn (1993) and Philo (1992).

49. See also Driver (1993: 8–9) and Robert Dodgshon's review of the first volume in which he wrote, 'One hopes that historical geographers will be amongst those who respond to the challenge' (1988: 326).

50. See also the report on a 1987 paper given at the IBG by Pooley, which illustrated 'the problems of making international comparisons' (Johnson, 1987: 308), and Kearns' (1980) scepticism at Michael Conzen's IBG proposal for a comparative typology for nineteenth-century cities.

51. Historical geographers have long been proud of their eclecticism. For a few examples, see Baker (1987a: 1–2), Earle et al. (1989: 156–7, 182), Harris (1978: 130), Heffernan (1997: 1–2), Ogborn (1999: 98–9) and D.J. Robinson (2000).

52. For recent examples of all of these, see Graham and Nash (2000). On war and public memory see also the work of Karen Till (1999, 2001). On modernity, see also Dennis (2001). These themes were very evident at the ICHG held in Quebec City (2001).

53. For a recent bibliography see Morin and Berg (2001).

54. Longer review essays covering more than one book were welcomed, and some sources are discussed

in a periodic 'Resources and Recommendations' section (Corrigan, 1990).

55. This theme of progress has dominated many accounts of the discipline. See, for example, the many reports on 'Progress in Historical Geography' in the journal, *Progress in Human Geography* as well as Baker (1972).

56. For the *Journal of Historical Sociology*, early topics included gender, the state, colonialism, power, development, revolution and modernity. During the first twelve years of the *Journal of Historical Geography*, topics included building cycles, the use of the Gazette Corn Return, open fields and the distribution of wealth in medieval England. In 1987, just before the *Journal of Historical Sociology* first appeared, Alan Baker took over the editor's role, and during 1987 and 1988 debates were given much greater coverage and broader labelling, including such topics as the production of regions, the transition from feudalism to capitalism, world-system theory, feminism and the relative merits of analogy and theory, but were still focused on historical specifics.

57. The few exceptions include, Felix Driver (1990), who was at Exeter with the historical sociologist Philip Corrigan, on reformatory schools; Miles Ogborn (1993) on the English Contagious Disease Acts; and John Radford (1994) on 'Eugenics and the Asylum'. All three of these have also been contributors to the *Journal of Historical Geography*.

58. One of these is a review article on place by Philip Corrigan (1991), who was one of the initial editors of the *Journal of Historical Sociology*. David Meyer (1983), who contributed an article on the American manufacturing belt and teaches urban studies in the sociology department at Brown, is trained in urban geography.

59. One person who was quite active in both journals was the late Roy Porter from the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine in London. In addition to serving as an editor and active contributor for the *Journal of Historical Sociology*, he wrote numerous book reviews for the *Journal of Historical Geography*.

60. Both also sought wide coverage by time period. Whereas the first editors of the *Journal of Historical Geography* proclaimed, '[W]e intend that some of the contributions to the *Journal* will be modern to a degree that will be surprising to some' (Clark and Patten, 1975: 1), the editors of the *Journal of Historical Sociology* announced, '[W]e will make every effort *not* to confine what we publish to the historical sociology of "modern" western societies' (Corrigan and Sayer, 1988: 3).

61. In the late 1980s, a call for more international coverage met with only limited success (Mitchell, 1988: 1), but recently this has begun to change.

62. I also considered selecting those with the greatest number of citations, using the Web of Science, but found that for the *Journal of Historical Sociology*, those with the greatest numbers of citations were typically not written by authors identified as sociologists but rather by historians and geographers – symptomatic

of their very different working styles. The articles chosen were, for the sociologists: Posel (1995), Hyslop (1999) and Bozzoli (2000); and for the geographers: Mather (1995), Cockerton (1996), Lester (1998) and J. Robinson (1998). South Africa has been of interest to historical geographers for some time. Among those who have published and continue to work on the region are Anthony J. Christopher and Leonard Guelke, both of whom have given recent conference papers on South Africa: Christopher at the ICHG in Quebec City (2001) and Guelke at the EHGA in Richmond (1999). For one overview, see Crush (1992).

63. All seven received graduate degrees in either Britain for the sociologists (Posel: Ph.D., Oxford; Bozzoli: MA and Ph.D., Sussex; and Hyslop: MA Oxford and MA, Birmingham) or Britain and Canada for the geographers (Lester: Ph.D., London; Robinson: Ph.D., Cambridge; Mather and Cockerton: Ph.D., Queens, Ontario; and Mather: MA: British Columbia). Bozzoli and Hyslop also hold degrees from Witwatersrand, where all three sociologists hold positions (a BA for Bozzoli and a Ph.D. for Hyslop). Mather obtained his BA from Witwatersrand, and is currently a lecturer in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies. Jennifer Robinson, who received her BA and MA from Natal, held a position at the LSE at the time of her article, and currently holds a position with the Open University in Britain. Camilla Cockerton taught at Canterbury in New Zealand, and Lester taught at Surrey at the time of his article, and is currently at Sussex.

64. Posel held a post in the sociology department from 1990 until her appointment as director of the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research in 2000, an institute with which Hyslop has also been associated. Bozzoli is now head of the School of Social Sciences at Witwatersrand.

65. Bozzoli was one of the initiators of the first workshop in 1978 (Bozzoli, 1990: 242). For Posel and Hyslop, see Bonner et al. (1993: x).

66. Their sympathies tended toward the left, often taking a Gramscian approach, stressing historical and empirical work, with links to popular culture rather than the more theoretical stance taken by those attracted to Althusser (Bozzoli, 1990: 241, 260–2).

67. On the relations between the use of archival and oral histories, see Mather (1996).

68. See also Hyslop's statement on the Interroads website: 'I am also interested in debates about globalization and hybridity and their possible implications for moving toward a Historical Sociology which does not confine itself within the boundaries of individual nation states, but at the same time avoids crude systematic theories' ('Interroads directory: H' (1997: 3).

69. The books reviewed were Harvey (1985a) and (1985b).

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# *Institutional History:*

## *Comparative Approaches to Race and Caste*

CHRIS SMAJE

The key question posed by the classical sociologists which drew them to comparative historical analysis was how to explain the emergence of capitalism, or 'modernity', to use the broader term much in vogue today. This they regarded as a historical development initially unique to Western Europe in the modern period. Their preferred answers were couched in terms of some particular combination of more generalizable structural phenomena, whether this be – in Marx's case – the struggle between classes over access to the means of production or – for Weber – the developmental possibilities for rational action lodged in cosmological conceptions of the relation between the mundane and supermundane orders. Writing at much the same time, the pioneers of institutional history, such as Otto von Gierke, constructed more specific and continuist historical narratives of the collective institutions that framed the cherished 'freedoms' of Western European political culture, while somewhat romantically counterposing these institutions to the ill-starred progress of absolutism and individualism. The work of the early institutional historians paved the way for subsequent inquiry into the historical development of ideas underpinning political society and the way these ideas became manifested in actual institutional forms (Runciman, 1997), even if from a contemporary point of view the perspective

of a figure like Gierke seems flawed by an essentialism symptomatic of cultural or 'ethnic' nationalism. Nevertheless, in this chapter I will argue that the emphasis placed by such historians upon enduring institutional forms is a necessary complement to the structural approach of the classical sociologists if a convincing comparative historical sociology is to be constructed today; particularly, I shall argue, if 'institutions' are interpreted liberally to refer to regularities in the ordering not only of political relations, but also of social relations more generally.

More recent writers have indeed continued to draw from the well of these two traditions of social-structural and political-institutional history, as, for example, in Perry Anderson's influential account of the specifically European origins of capitalist modernity, which fused a Marxian emphasis on the social relations associated with surplus-extraction with an analysis of the post-imperial political structures of medieval Europe (Anderson, 1974a, 1974b). Asking how the 'unique dynamism of the European theatre of international feudalism' could be explained, Anderson averred that 'no historian has yet claimed that industrial capitalism developed spontaneously anywhere else except in Europe and its American extension' (1974b: 402). But in the succeeding quarter-century, historians have come increasingly close to

arguing precisely this, or at least that the priority of European industrialization is explicable in terms of contingencies affecting the modern world-system rather than any characteristics uniquely inherited by Europe from its past. In the contemporary historiography, medieval and early modern Europe emerges as simply one – by no means dominant – geopolitical constellation in an increasingly complex global commercial system. Thus, whereas classical comparative sociology was contrastive, seeking differences which could account for the putatively unique dynamism of Europe, the new approach has been characterized as a ‘connective historiography’, showing how different parts of the world were integrated into a broader political and economic system through interactive processes whose provenance was not restricted to particular regions (Lieberman, 1997). At the same time, the historiography of colonial societies emerging from postcolonial studies has suggested that the notions of static cultural difference framing comparative sociology owe much to the fictions of colonial ideology. Both strands of scholarship – the connective and the postcolonial – have tried to wrest attention away from the cultural-historical specificities that have long commanded the interest of sociologists, such as caste ideology in India. These tend now to be seen at best as matters of no great import, *curiosa* better left to academic specialists, and at worst as mere orientalist gestures of differentiation.

These recent strands of revisionism are salutary in highlighting the limitations of unilinear historical explanation and the notions of cultural totality favoured by conventional contrastive sociology. Yet, I shall argue, they do so at the risk of an over-stated universalism that neglects questions of institutional and cultural-historical difference, thereby failing to appreciate the genuine achievements of comparative historical sociology and institutional history. Moreover, in certain respects they replicate the very failings they have uncovered in these earlier paradigms. For example, since Weber conceived only one historical path to full-blown capitalism that emerged in a specific connection between religious ideology and economic action in Europe, the revisionist response has generally been to downplay the connection between culture and economy and to emphasize the singularity of a *common* trajectory toward economic rationalization in the early modern world (Lieberman, 1997; Perlin,

1993). But this is simply to accept the thesis of a single historical path, rather than to explore the possibility of convergent economic developments through different kinds of cultural interaction. Similarly, in seeking to recuperate people as rational, ends-maximizing authors of their social institutions rather than as the mere vehicles or victims of ‘culture’, the revisionist emphasis on a universal human ‘agency’ risks a reductionism which abstracts from the socially constitutive character of particular institutional and cultural-historical forms to inscribe people within a very particular (cultural) conception of what it means to be human.

My aim in this chapter, therefore, is to avow along with the ‘connective’ historians that the processes of economic rationalization taken to mark the onset of ‘modernity’ are not to be explained by European exceptionalism but emerged conjointly in a web of global political and economic connections, while attempting to show that this is compatible with local institutional configurations which, in the final analysis, differed from one another in quite fundamental ways. These configurations reflect specific ‘cultural traditions’ that did not simply secure a static and unchanging social order, but did (and still do) evince certain recurrent patterns. This, I will argue, is as true of Europe as anywhere else, so that in contesting the conventional story of European dynamism and non-European stasis, it is as germane to highlight the stasis of the former as the dynamism of the latter. In this respect, one might better speak of several mutually inflecting modernities, rather than a singular global process.

To develop this argument, the chapter focuses mainly upon Western Europe and the Indian subcontinent, pointing out – contrastively – some differences in the way that the relationship between persons and other persons (a domain conventionally understood in sociology under the rubrics of ‘politics’ and ‘kinship’) and the relationship between persons and things (conventionally understood as ‘economics’) have developed in these regions. By focusing upon ‘institutional’ history in this expanded sense with reference to two examples, the chapter shows how distinctive modes of status reckoning, characterized by the terms ‘caste’ in India and ‘race’ and ‘class’ in Europe, reflect the *specific* character and history of these domains in particular geopolitical contexts, while pointing to structuring principles which are homologous across domains. Yet, it is suggested, these

institutional contrasts are not incompatible with the idea of a common economic order that came to connect the two regions from the early modern period onwards, not only because of global processes of capitalist development that diffused into local circuits of production and consumption – though this is assuredly one part of the story – but also because the separate institutional complexes were capable of generating independently similar economic orientations.

Before proceeding to this material, some further words are required on the ideas of politics, kinship and the economy as a means to pursue a comparative sociological enterprise. Much criticism has been directed at the tendency in classical sociology either to reify these domains into a set of structural antitheses (such that a concept as generic as 'kinship' can simply be opposed to 'politics' or the economy without paying adequate attention to the specific forms taken) or to reduce one to another (the tactic of much Marxist historiography, however hedged by concepts of 'relative autonomy'). The work of the institutional historians reminds us that the history of specific institutions such as kinship structures or political formations matters, because these cannot be seen as epiphenomenal, mere forms of legitimation for 'real' causal forces such as economic interest or power. The distinction often enjoined between a (putatively 'real') 'mechanics of power' and a (putatively 'ideological') 'poetics of power' neglects its own 'poetics', its own constitution from a particular ontology of the social (Howe, 1991). To push this insight to its logical conclusion would involve the reflexive recognition that analytic entities such as 'kinship', 'politics' and the 'economy' are not given *sui generis* but are themselves the product of particular histories; nevertheless, I suggest that by exploring the homologous logics through which relationships among persons and things are in each case constructed and sustained within variegated and enduring institutional forms, the historical sociologist can employ them as a useful framework for comparison.

These points are now widely recognized in contemporary writings, and the legacy of Marxism and similar approaches lies less in their determinism and more in the idea that different social domains articulate in a multi-valent fashion, such that an ever-emergent social order is produced through the complex relation of its parts. It then becomes necessary to explain how this relation between parts can

embody the dynamism (or stasis) which produces temporally and spatially 'emergent social orders' of specific kinds, as in the classical question concerning the origins of capitalism or modernity. The contingent effects of creative human agency are often invoked in this connection. However, from the perspective of a contrastive historical sociology at least, 'agency' may not best be thought of as a transcendent or general human process of creativity *ex nihilo*, as is implied in a good deal of the 'structure-agency' literature (for example, Archer, 1995), even if this possibility is sometimes unduly neglected. Rather, it may be thought of as a process in which the structure of extant social orders is transformed through the elicitation of its immanent developmental possibilities by people acting as agents, but where the nature of this agency is constituted largely within the horizon of possibilities given by the prior ordering. Hence, the changes wrought upon social orders by human agency involve a process in which certain elements may be recursively elicited in ways that transform them, or even merely reproduce them, within a new ordering (Wagner, 1986), albeit in an unpredictable and emergent fashion. The level at which human agency or historical contingency may properly be lodged is in the unpredictable and emergent character of this process of elicitation.

#### RACE AND CASTE

Let us now turn to the examples of Euro-American race formation and Indian caste formation with the preceding discussion in mind. Racial ideology has often been thought of as a recent pathology of modernity, in contrast to caste ideology, which has been viewed as an ancient and static cultural system (see Cox, 1987: 37). However, my contention will be that both can be made intelligible with reference to different cultural orderings of relationships between persons in the domains of kinship and politics, orderings which are deeply rooted and historically recurrent, but need not by virtue of this be thought of as securing static social forms. I shall go on to suggest that, notwithstanding these differences, both kinds of status order are compatible with the processes of economic rationalization generally taken to be indicative of modernity.

Race has been defined as an 'antonym to politics' (Hannaford, 1996: 13). That is, racial

classifications involve defining sets of people as social wholes whereby one or more self-defined groups regard one or more others as partially or completely outside any reciprocal process of normative regulation of social relations, and therefore of mutual validation. Caste, on the other hand, has often been thought of as a 'failure of politics'. Here, normative regulation of social relations does obtain, but for some reason – suggestions have included the structural weakness of the regulating authority (Baechler, 1988) or its usurpation by a conquering power (Inden, 1976) – it is incomplete. Taking each case in turn, I want to suggest the utility of the first definition and the disutility of the second as starting points for the historical sociology of race and caste, respectively.

According to the preceding definition, race formation involves the construction of a political relationship which is conceived as an extra-political one. This apparent paradox is typically resolved by a somatization of the political relationship, so that racialized peoples are felt to differ *by nature*. A somatizing tendency of this kind can be discerned in the categories of social exclusion that began to emerge in medieval Europe from the tenth century, whereby Jews, heretics, lepers, homosexuals ('sodomites') and simoniacs (priests who had purchased ecclesiastical office) came to be conjoined by a hegemonic sense that political or religious non-conformity, moral failure and physical deformity transfigured one another, uniting these seemingly disparate groupings as a class outside normal social relations (Moore, 1987).

Scholars have tended to pass over this longer legacy of political somatization to locate race formation in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries, when the various evolutionary schemata promulgated in the emerging biological and social sciences were used to proclaim an intrinsic incompatibility of peoples or species that was grounded in a now secular sense of natural difference. This certainly contrasted with the pre-modern emphasis on the assimilability of the 'other', as in the traditional Christian view of Jews as 'witnesses to the faith' whose eventual conversion would signal the end of the Christian project, a view which began to be replaced in the high Middle Ages by the notion of Jewish guilt for the death of Christ and the poison of the Jewish presence within a healthy Christian body politic. Yet the construction of a somatized political boundary between

particular types of people probably betokens a continuity of greater significance than the changes marked by new estimations of its porousness, since its prior existence creates the historical possibility of either its collapse or its reification. This is particularly so in the context of a European political cosmology predicated upon absolute and ranked domain distinctions between the supernatural, the human and the natural worlds which thereby universalized its criteria for defining the human, for as Étienne Balibar has argued, no such definition of the human is possible without what he terms 'the infinite process of demarcation between the human, the more-than-human, and the less-than-human (or *Supermen* and *Untermenschen*)' (1994: 197). Of course, the way in which such *Untermenschen* were conceived differed radically over time in different places, but as I hope to show later it has nevertheless broadly corresponded to a continuity in European political cosmologies which survived the putative 'rupture' of modernity and secularization.

Of greatest significance here, however, is the way in which racial boundaries came to be stabilized around geopolitical ones first in relation to the self-conceptions of Latin Christendom, and then in the context of European colonial expansion. Self-consciously corporate political communities emerged in medieval European kingdoms within a broader conception inherited from Rome of a Christian (Western) Europe as an integral geopolitical unit (Hay, 1968; Pagden, 1995; Reynolds, 1997). The process of incorporation was not, of course, an entirely smooth one, particularly in early modern times, when, among other things, the religious struggles of the Reformation unleashed a spate of killings between Catholic and Protestant. Yet while such atrocities were rationalized through a dehumanizing and proto-racial language of political somatization, they were arguably pursued not in the process of constructing racial boundaries, but, on the contrary, like the bitterness of a family feud, in the millenarian fervour of an attempt to restore a sense of a prior collective unity (Greengrass, 1999). In this respect, one might contrast these struggles, in which the enemy was taken seriously enough to be paid the compliment of being killed, with the casual dispossession or enslavement – that 'fate worse than death' described by Orlando Patterson (1982) – more commonly applied to non-European peoples in the course of European colonial expansion. Arguably, then,

enslavement and dispossession in European colonial expansion were the mirror image of an emerging normative European political community (Eltis, 2000). What then needs to be explained in pursuing a historical sociology of race formation is how the flow of relatedness or similarity between people is averted, and a non-reciprocal sense of normative divergence in political relations formed. This question will be taken up in the following sections.

Turning now to caste, there has been a considerable scholarly reappraisal in recent years concerning its place in the historical sociology of the Indian subcontinent. Textbook definitions of a system of status closure based upon local ranked, endogamous and occupationally specialized corporate groups (*jatis*) within the broader *varna* categories of *brahman* (priest), *rajanya/kshatriya* (king/warrior), *vaishya* ('people') and *shudra* ('servant') have begun to look increasingly threadbare. So too has the influential theory of Louis Dumont (1980), which derived caste relations from an encompassing and organic ideology of ritual purity. The idea of caste as a static and conservative form of status closure is now generally understood to be a manifestation of the relatively recent rise to hegemony of a specific, universalizing Brahmanic ideology that has not always been dominant in the subcontinent, and not some total and perduring system definitive of Indian society in general. In recent studies, kingship has emerged as an alternative, more inclusive and muscular form of status reckoning than the minute discriminations of ritual rank associated with Brahmanism. It then becomes tempting to construe the brahman-king relation as a local manifestation of a general tension between sacred and secular authority in 'pre-modern' societies, akin perhaps to the conflicts between empire and papacy in medieval Europe. I will attempt to show, however, that the comparison is a misleading one, and that the king-brahman tension has a very specific ideological character which is partially constitutive of caste as it has traditionally been understood. It is sometimes argued, in fact, that the proliferation of endogamous, ranked corporate kin groups (*jatis*) which are often taken to be definitive of 'caste' can be found at historical moments when kingship weakened, for example with the decline of the Guptas after the seventh century AD (Chattopadhyaya, 1994), with the usurpation of 'Hindu kingship' by Muslim rulers from 1200 AD (Inden, 1976), and with the decline

of the Mughals and the arrival of the British in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (S. Bayly, 1999). If nothing else, these different periodizations attest to the recurrence of something recognizably 'caste-like' at different historical junctures, and similar features can be traced yet further into the past (Thapar, 1978). This is not to suggest that caste is static but, on the contrary, that, in Romila Thapar's words, it was 'never confronted with the shadow of its decline' (1978: 34) because its institutional structure permitted its constant elicitation in novel situations. In particular – and in marked contrast to the European case of race formation – caste ideology has proved able to combine normatively divergent and socio-politically dissimilar polities into a shared, over-arching political structure through a logic of incorporation in which the parts retain their distinctive integrity. Whereas this is often put down to the 'weakness' of Indian kingship in its inability to subordinate local nodes of political authority, I argue that this does not betoken a 'weakness' in any empirical sense, but rather the very ideological basis of political authority which pulses between multiple centres and their peripheries. Thus, in contrast to the question of race formation, a historical sociology of caste formation is required to explain how a flow of similarity between people is established which mitigates, but does not fully transcend, normative divergence in political relations. What is at issue in both cases is not the working out of two inviolable cultural logics, but the existence of logics with multiple meanings involving contradictions whose elicitation powers social change. Yet the recurrent features in each case would seem to point to certain dominant developmental possibilities, and it is these continuities that are worth tracing in the present context. The next two sections of this chapter, then, will examine how race and caste formation can be understood in relation to the 'flow of similarity' or relatedness between persons as it is manifested in two of the domains of human relationships singled out in the introduction, namely kinship and politics.

#### **RACE, CASTE AND THE ORDERING OF KIN RELATIONS**

When we examine kin relationships historically in our two areas of interest we find

substantial historical continuities. The evidence suggests that the bilateral,<sup>1</sup> ego-focused, 'nuclear' family without corporate affiliations has been a characteristic of kin relations since at least early medieval times in Western Europe (Goody, 1983; Laslett, 1983), a form especially amenable to 'individualist' notions of the biological human organism as the basic unit of society. In the Indian subcontinent, kin relations are subject to wide regional variation, but it is nevertheless possible to trace a similar antiquity to several such forms, including the preference for cross-cousin marriage in the south and the tendency towards expansionary, ranked agnatic lineages in the north (Uberoi, 1993). Again, this is not to suggest that kin structures are entirely static and unresponsive to changing circumstances, but that responsiveness tends to take place within an over-arching order of assumptions which has a certain historical resilience. In this section we examine these orders to help link the ideologies underlying political and economic formations to the social construction of the person in the context of race and caste formation.

Anthropological studies of kinship have recently moved away from the idea that systems of kin relations are built upon indivisible or 'natural' units constituted by certain human types which are inherently differentiated by gender and biological relatedness, as in labels like 'mother', 'father', 'daughter' and 'son'. Kinship can instead be modelled as a sense of similarity or analogy which is partitioned and differentiated in various ways to constitute a morally appropriate ordering or system of relationships, its 'basic units' constituted by the nature of this ordering, which establishes a flow of analogy between them. This approach was developed particularly in studies of South Pacific societies, and proved better able to model their complex orderings of kin reckoning, gender differentiation and exchange of objects than older models of descent and alliance (Strathern, 1985; Wagner, 1977; Weiner, 1985). One attribute of these systems is their totalizing or incorporative character. A status order is established within social networks which exchange persons (kinship) and objects (economy) not by excluding low-status parties from reciprocal relations entirely, since this would abrogate any social relation at all, but by attempts to augment the density of linkages to centres of prestige at the expense of inferiors. This supposes a 'holistic' conception of social relations of the kind that Dumont (1980) conceives at the root of Indian

caste relations. In the Indian case it receives indigenous textual theorization at the cosmological level through ideas such as *brahman*, described in the *Bṛhadaranyaka Upanishad* (c.700 BC) as a unitary cosmic substance whose partitioning is homologous with the hierarchical order of caste.

Nevertheless, the idea of kinship as a morally appropriate flow logically implies the possibility of a morally inappropriate flow, which, in Wagner's words, 'will appear as a kind of contagion, a moral degeneracy spreading from one kinsman to another' (1977: 624). Incestuous relationships can be regarded in this way as the 'morally undesirable flow of similarity' (1977: 624), a conception that establishes a principle of exogamy defining an internal boundary. In an Indian context, perhaps one might view some of the interdicts on inter-caste relationships in a complementary light as establishing external (endogamous) boundaries for the flow of similarity. Hence, we find a caste logic of careful discrimination between normatively divergent collective wholes which nevertheless figure as part of a more encompassing order, represented ideologically in the concept of *jati dharma*, the 'natural' human tendency to conform to a caste-appropriate code for conduct. This stands in marked contrast to the 'natural' human tendency towards unbridled individualism emphasized by Western philosophy in its constructions of a primal and anarchic 'state of nature'.

A caste logic of this kind permits a range of contextually varied strategies of status enhancement which turn upon maximizing the appropriate relationships with status superiors and minimizing them with status inferiors, strategies which in different circumstances result in characteristic forms of marital alliance such as hypergamy, isogamy or cross-cousin marriage, all of which delimit the appropriate flow of relatedness within a larger circle of possible relationships. Inappropriate flow produces degraded types, which in the cosmology of indigenous texts such as the *Manusmṛiti* (c.200 BC) are conceived by reference to hypogamous unions between people of different *varna* categories, such as the despised *Kandala*, the 'lowest of mortals', son of a *shudra* man and *brahman* woman (Tambiah, 1973). Of the range of possible relationships, this caste schema assigns purity to few of them and impurity to most of them, thereby constituting what Tambiah calls 'a convenient intellectual device for generating various disapproved categories, assigning them

degraded positions, and ideologically explaining and rationalizing why so many groups in the caste hierarchy are placed in low or down-trodden positions' (1973: 207). In this respect, the caste order is compatible with an agrarian class structure characterized by demographically small landholding classes and a majority class of 'peasant' cultivators, organized perhaps as client groups clustering around their landholding patrons, or as junior lineages within a stratified locality society loosely integrated by centripetal ties to a higher-order territorial state. Indeed, critics of the idealism and exceptionalism attending traditional explanations for Indian caste relations have been quick to emphasize these aspects of caste ideology, since they resemble the status order found in many agrarian societies throughout the world (Meillassoux, 1973).

This view can certainly help locate caste formation within a broader comparative sociology, but it risks underplaying some more specific ideological features which might help explain the persistence of caste in non-agrarian contexts, and the peculiar inability of territorial states in India to overcome kin-based local political orders. On the latter point, Fox (1971) suggests that what he calls the 'web of attributional genealogical linkage' binding the locale to the region vitiated larger-scale state formation, a point developed by Quigley (1993) in arguing that the strength of locality kinship reflected the weakness of regional kingship in ecological circumstances which were not propitious for the latter. However, rather than imputing an independence to kinship and kingship, it may be more germane to examine the specific character of their interaction in what Subrahmanyam (1986) has called the 'contact zone' or 'middle ground' between state and civil society. The emphasis here is upon the proliferation of low-level intermediaries such as revenue farmers between the state and the direct producers in a context where no single ruling centre monopolized the use of force, and where the political intermediaries of the 'contact zone' cannot easily be assigned a class status in accord with conventional depictions of the lineage or tributary modes of production. This, I argue, is because the particularization of political 'part-communities' within a totalized status order involved here reflects the specifically ideological character of state formation as much as the dynamics of the agrarian class order. We shall pursue this point in the following section.

The model of kinship as a flow of morally appropriate similarity can be applied to Western Europe as well as the South Pacific or India (Strathern, 1992), but not without registering certain significant differences. Most importantly in the European case, there has been no totalizing or unitary conception of the field within which social relations occur, but rather a series of domain distinctions through which conceptions of incommensurate 'natural' difference are sustained (Smaje, 2000; B. Williams, 1995). In this situation, the exclusion rather than the inclusion of dyadic relations becomes a viable, if not indeed preferred, strategy of status closure, capable of defining a category of effectively non-human persons to whom no social position is attached. This possibility is rendered easier by the fact that in Europe the analogy between flows of *persons* and flows of *things* has been weak, so that it is possible to engage in 'economic' relationships with others substantially lacking in implications for social status. Thus, as in India, the flow of morally appropriate similarity can be subverted to produce a series of degraded types, but the transgression involves a different generative principle (Smaje, 2000).

Both in India and in Europe, then, the logic of kinship as the flow of similarity created the counter-possibility of morally degraded types, but the implications of this differ. In keeping with the non-corporate, bilateral, ego-focused character of its kin constructs, the modality of relatedness in Europe was of the *individual* as citizen, or as non-citizen/slave bearing no moral entitlements. The problem then was to combine these atomized individuals into a political community. This was generally achieved by legitimating the state with respect to the nation – the latter conceived as an organic, pre-political community (though one that could none the less operate at various geopolitical levels) – in contrast to the encompassment of divergent political communities in Indian political systems. It is to these differences in the nature of the political formation that we now turn.

#### **RACE, CASTE AND THE ORDERING OF POLITICAL RELATIONS**

Sociological explanations for the different historical shape taken by particular states have generally been couched in terms of a

structural or 'realist' universalism, whether in relation to the dynamics of different forms of power (Mann, 1988), the oscillation of authority between decaying centres and emerging rimlands (Ertman, 1997; Lieberman, 1997) or the constraints of particular modes of production (Haldon, 1993). There has been little concession within this enterprise to the 'idealist' argument that the ideology of states, their particular modes of legitimation, have any constitutive effect upon historical outcomes (and, reflexively, upon the intellectual frameworks of social science itself). Yet I want to suggest that the nature of the political cosmologies invoked to legitimate state power is material to the shape that that power is able to take, and that this can manifest itself among other things as an independent force in the social relations of production (cf. Smaje, 2000: 35–79). In this section, then, I argue after Weber that different cosmologies evince different possibilities for political appropriation in the way that they construct and connect the mundane and the supermundane orders, with significant consequences for the relationship between the state and extra-state political institutions – 'civil society' – and thereby for the shape of the social relations of production, the institutional apparatus of the social order and the structuring of social status.

It has been argued that division into the 'four orders' of king/warrior, priest, landlord and commoner often figures in the structuring of political status in agrarian societies, as represented in the Brahmanic *varna* classification, or the social schemata of eleventh-century European clerics (Ertman, 1997; Milner, 1994). However, it needs to be asked whether such taxonomies should be regarded in terms of *class* – that is, as representative of actual social groups self-consciously organized around their interests – or as *categories*, that is, as mental constructs of the social world which may only have potentially informed class formation at particular junctures. In what follows, I abstract two ideal-typical political formations in relation to Europe and India, respectively, the former a 'sovereign polity', the latter a 'galactic' or 'segmentary' polity. Each represents a particular dynamic of legitimation in relation to cosmological principles of some historical persistence. Whereas the sovereign polity tends to collapse the four orders into a tension between king and commoner, or ruler and ruled, the galactic polity involves their full ideological articulation. The

contrast is necessarily somewhat overdrawn. Arguably, there are examples of sovereign-type polities in Indian history (Pollock, 1993) and galactic-type polities in European history (Bendix, 1978). Nevertheless, I do want to suggest that the distinction is useful, and that the internal contradictions of each form are capable of developing counter-types which do not thereby undermine the original formulation. It is worth adding that in taking social taxonomies as categories and not classes, this approach does not reify categories such as 'the Brahmins' as an actual group of people. This, ironically, often occurs in materialist approaches, which make much of the complicity of 'idealist' sociology with the self-conceptions of political elites (for example, Meillassoux, 1973).

### *The Sovereign Polity*

The Peace of Westphalia, concluded in 1648, is conventionally considered the birth of the European system of modern territorial polities, each possessing a comprehensive, supreme and exclusive sovereignty. Whereas this is sometimes viewed as the irruption of a new order – modernity – into the medieval realm of holistic political values in which political authority was partitioned between overlapping associations, subtler treatments have recognized the continuities between modern and pre-modern conceptions of political authority undergirded by the reconfigured apparatus of juristic thought (Gierke, 1934; cf. Runciman, 1997). More importantly for present purposes, I hope to show in the following discussion that the modern conception of sovereignty involves a similar ideological architecture to that informing the medieval ideology of Christian kingship, suggesting that continuities exist in the conception of political society across the supposed watershed of modern and pre-modern thought.

The roots of European political thought are often traced to Hellenic or Indo-European kingship, but these might be more safely glossed as 'charismatic' without geopolitical specificity. The charismatic king acts both sacerdotally in connecting his realm to the sacred, and politically as a generous benefactor and distributor of tribute. Herein lies the potential for a separation into two moral persons – the priest-king and the warrior-king – which doubtless parallels the personae of actual historical monarchs, for example in the

contrasting styles of the Frankish kings Childeric III and Pippin III. However, it is noteworthy that the powerful Pippin first usurped Childeric and then bolstered his sacerdotal claims by invoking papal legitimation. This establishes, if only metaphorically, the important point that in Europe the two personalities of the king have usually been conjoined whereas, as we shall see, the tension between them has been definitive of Indian kingship.

In pre-Christian thinking, the kingdom was usually conceived as a direct mimesis of the sacred order, whereas the Christianization of Europe introduced the now familiar dualism between the sacred and profane orders, at least in its Catholic rather than Orthodox version (Nicol, 1991). The separation was breached by the 'royal' personage of Christ himself as both man and god, and the claim to stand in Christ's place as his vicar was central to the assumption of political legitimacy for Christian kings. Just as Christ's mediation between the two orders was singular and unique, so was that of the Christian king. There could be *no* other legitimate point of supermundane authority within the king's sphere of jurisdiction. Hence, the political theology of Christian kingship was centripetal, strongly oriented to a single political centre. This is not to say that Christian kingship was necessarily 'strong' in actuality. The political and military weakness of certain medieval royal houses in the face of seigneurial assertion is notorious. Nevertheless, kings remained at the political apex of society in theory at least, and this unique authority gave them practical advantages – though by no means decisive ones – in the contest for political power. Despite all their reverses, the royal dynasties of Christian Europe remained very stable in contrast, for example, to the proliferating sovereignties of India, and cases where nobles pretended to the throne or kings subordinated themselves as vassals remained aberrant in contemporary political discourse (Baechler, 1988; van Caenegem, 1991).

During the High Middle Ages, the efforts of the reformist popes to assert their supremacy as secular rulers emerged as another rival to monarchical power. Yet this struggle precisely expresses the ultimate monism of Christian political authority, for while a truce between secular and ecclesiastical power was possible through an uneasy division of responsibilities, in the end there could only be one legitimate ruler. In the political tussles between popes and secular rulers, such as the eleventh-century

'Investiture Contest', intellectual partisans marshalled baroque theological arguments to support both the hierocratic position of the papacy and the 'dualist' case for royal supremacy, but as Olive Dickason has pointed out, the contest was not between separate secular and ecclesiastical power so much as between what she calls 'two versions of theocracy' (1989: 146), not least because both positions shared a conception of the polity as a single corporate body, the argument turning only on what kind of 'king' stood by right at its head.

More of an obstacle, perhaps, to monadic conceptions of political authority was the proliferation of territorial sovereignties in Christian Europe, which were never fully to be reincorporated into a single polity modelled after the Roman *imperium*. Indeed, much of the contest between the popes and kings had to do with attempts by the latter to delimit the former's sphere of intervention within their territorial jurisdictions. Appropriating the aura of Christian emperorship to their own more local ambit, they successfully established themselves as 'emperors in their own country', to use the juristic phrase. A conception of a kingdom as an indivisible territory associated with a particular 'people' and independent of the vicissitudes of any given king had long existed in Europe, but by the thirteenth century it was becoming a relatively pervasive reality. Nevertheless, the disjunction between *de facto* kingdoms and the universal empire established a tension which was to have longer-term consequences in constituting Europe as a political meta-community.

There is no need to state a position in the debate on the modern or archaic origins of nationalism in order to suggest, as an extensive literature attests, that the territorial European monarchies of the high medieval period enjoyed a popular legitimacy grounded in conceptions of a 'natural' connection between ruler, ruled and land, and sustained by a ramifying network of parochial communities under the auspices of a clergy largely subservient to territorial monarchy (Guenée, 1985; Hastings, 1997; Reynolds, 1997). To borrow a phrase of Peter Laslett's from a somewhat different context, the geopolitical pattern was a 'reticulation rather than a participation' (1983: 57), in which the interlinked ties of political allegiance were ultimately drawn centripetally into the monarchy at their hub. This, of course, looks like

something of an idealization corresponding to the 'elite' perspective of the hub or epicentre. But it is an important part of my argument to suggest that non-elite political visions, even ones radically opposed to the existing order, were typically based upon the same political geography. This is so partly in the sense that popular political activism often appealed to the unrealized ideals of the extant legal, political and monarchical system – or, in cases of revolutionary regicide, reconstructed a still-unitary 'supermonarchical' sovereignty in post-revolutionary times, most notably in terms of some idea of the sovereignty of 'the people' (Bendix, 1978; Burke, 1994; Sharp, 1985). But the reason for this lies in the more fundamental political cosmology referred to earlier – the unitary mediation between the mundane and the supermundane orders – which, as Roy Wagner (1986) has ingeniously shown, can be represented in both 'hierarchical' and 'egalitarian' terms in historical tension with one another (cf. Smaje, 2000).

One manifestation of medieval egalitarianism was lay Christian asceticism, in which the emphasis on an apostolic poverty oriented to the supermundane world stood as an implicit criticism of the worldly church. The Church was able to incorporate some forms of asceticism such as the Franciscan movement to its advantage in the struggle to assert its autonomy from the lay political sphere, but others such as the Cathars were ruthlessly suppressed as heresy. Heretics were represented as 'unnatural' deviants who stood outside the corporate unity of the church, and therefore of society, needing extirpation in order to guarantee the health of the social body. Robert Moore (1987, 1997) has argued forcefully that the concomitant formation of a 'persecuting society' from the eleventh century was fundamentally a political project of elites, corresponding to the emergence of a vigorous new civilization in northwest Europe based upon a literate executive cadre. This civilization attempted to make its highly unified politico-religious cosmology hegemonic, the process involving complex struggles in which prejudice was mobilized both to suppress the formation of an alternative literati among Jews and as a conservative tactic of critique in the face of eroding status hierarchies and the increasing abstraction of social relationships through the greater use of money. In Moore's words,

the rhetoric of crusade, like that of heresy and anti-semitism, and against sodomy, prostitution and

usury and indeed when it served their turn the cry for law and order, had a useful place among the battery of considerations with which courtiers might present to their masters, and the masters to their subjects, the continuing necessity for higher taxes, wider powers and a more insistent invasion of local communities and overriding of local custom. (1997: 595)

However, Moore rather understates the involvement of non-elites in the dynamic of persecution, which tapped popular asceticism and millennialism (Cohn, 1957; Rubin, 1991). As the preceding quotation attests, the 'othering' and somatization of deviance involved a hegemonic project in the proper Gramscian sense of bilateral equilibria between classes which resulted in a common political imaginary. In this respect, popular egalitarianism involved a corporate and corporeal essentialism of blood and belonging that was no less exclusionary than its hierarchical antithesis, an exemplar of the 'universalism' discussed by Balibar that necessarily seals the limits of the human. It was not inevitably so, perhaps. We have evidence of a popular materialist pantheism which, in breaking with any sense of the unitary mediation of the mundane and supermundane orders – and, often enough, denying Christ's divinity in the process – culminated in the anti-corporate political theology of the radical Reformation (Ginzburg, 1980; Hill, 1972). However, it is to be doubted how widespread these sensibilities really were. The Protestant doctrine of grace, adumbrated as early as the fourteenth century by Wyclif, was deeply ambiguous in its implications for dissolving corporate political identity, and – in learned debates at Constance and Valladolid – proved a superior tool for the proto-racist geopolitical reification of normative divergence, though whether this was replicated in popular unorthodoxy is harder to say (Ginzburg, 1980; cf. Reay, 1997). Although the political thought that emerged from the Renaissance in some ways sharpened the tension between hierarchical and egalitarian conceptions of the political order, its dominant development was to establish the rights of European states against their local populations, against each other and against the rest of the world in a descending order of mutual validation. This was certainly the direction taken by humanist thinkers like Grotius and Bacon who defined early modern political thought, but it was built upon an older theme in which geopolitical communities were defined inclusively and successively

from the level of the individual to the parish or locality and thence to higher levels such as the kingdom, empire or European Christendom (Hay, 1968; Reynolds, 1997). The process involved the definition of 'others', internal as well as external, who were excluded from the political formation. It also left as its residue more organic conceptions of political unity which were later to inform racist nationalism. But the construction of quasi-'natural' or 'racial' distinctions was not dependent upon organicist conceptions alone. Popular participation in the definition of sovereign political communities lies behind not only earlier examples of political exclusion within the emerging geopolitical entities of Europe, but also the lack of substantial opposition among Europeans of any stripe to the enslavement of non-Europeans in the Americas until the late eighteenth century (Eltis, 2000), aside perhaps from early – and questionable – evidence of biracial proletarian class formation (Allen, 1997).

A territorial expression to religious or political identity had emerged in Europe, then, by the High Middle Ages, and these identities were often expressed in somatic terms. The appropriation of Christ's mediating role to underwrite political legitimacy was manifested in a sense of Europe itself as the divine centre of Christendom which encompassed all lesser communities (Reynolds, 1997; R. Williams, 1991). This theocratic warrant for political rule did not survive the secularization of political philosophy between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, but the essentials of its structure were maintained. This can be seen, for example, in Thomas Hobbes's (1968 [1651]) bluntly 'realist' rationale for absolutism or monadic sovereignty as a necessary counterweight to the disutility of multiple sovereignties. In John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* (1993 [1689]), Hobbes's political problematic of unitary or multiple sovereignties was dissolved by articulating the doctrine that rulers and ruled held each other in mutual subjection. However, this agonistic conception of an emergent political order put the Hobbesian problematic of sovereignty into abeyance not by transcending it but by reconfiguring the multiple sovereignties of Hobbes's state of nature in the more positive light of a responsible right of resistance to oppressive rule by a subject citizenry, so that sovereignty is disintegrated into a kind of field or matrix suffusing the whole social body. This allowed Locke to draw boundaries

around political communities not on the basis of mere subjection to government, but according to the qualities of social and political life through which that subjection was conveyed. In the context of Europe this could underpin liberal checks upon absolutism, but it also enabled strong distinctions to be made between Europe and the Americas as political meta-communities. Locke's political theory, with its emphasis on a sovereignty suffused through the social body, was predisposed to the closure of political communities around a territorial space congruent with the cultural attributes supposedly necessary to the citizen's proper exercise of that sovereignty – in other words, to the ethnogenesis of territorial nation-states within the broader field of a European political meta-community.

This situation did not exist only in Locke's political imagination. After the Peace of Westphalia, it was the *de facto* condition of Western Europe. For Locke and his contemporaries, however, it was not the case that all the people who fell within European boundaries naturally assumed the moral cast of citizens. Rather, they had to be actively shaped into an appropriate citizenry through a pervasive disciplinary regimen which inculcated techniques of self-discipline and an increasing levelling of status distinctions between the individual and the political formation. The political formation was therefore actively and continuously constituted by working upon the dispositions of the people it enclosed and counteracting, as it were, the centrifugal forces tending to disturb their integration within the central values of the nation-state. Political theory of this kind paved the way for a nationalism which emphasized the necessary cultural attributes for membership of the national political community. If it was not to succumb to a racism which invested these attributes with the imprint of an inherent biology until the nineteenth century, the character of this and later ethno-nationalisms was surely dependent upon the potential for organic political closure which emerged within this earlier formation. That even so rationalist and universalist a thinker as Locke could coolly countenance the slaying of people 'not under the ties of the common law of reason' as 'beasts of prey ... dangerous and noxious creatures' (1993 [1689]: 123) betokens the generally limited opening for the normatively divergent 'other' within European political thought. This ever-present face of colonial racism emerges directly from the secularization of monadic sovereignty in Europe.

### *The Galactic Polity*

Of the ideal-typifications that scholars have offered for Buddhist and Hindu political formations, a recurrent theme is of a political authority which – unlike the sovereign state – is shared and divided, replicated several or many times at different levels of political inclusion, so that the polity is conceived as a cluster of political centres, sometimes drawn into the orbit of a major exemplary centre, sometimes with substantial autonomy between centres so that power ‘pulsates’ both centripetally and centrifugally within the polity, while the pattern is repeated at lower levels of geopolitical organization. This would apply, broadly speaking, to Stein’s (1980) concept of the ‘segmentary state’ or Tambiah’s (1977) analysis of the ‘galactic polity’. Both authors limit their analyses mainly to specific empirical cases, but their work arguably has wider applicability to Hinduized kingship. In this section, I want to draw out the implications of this type of political formation by contrast with the preceding analysis of the sovereign state.

Scholarly explanations for the form of the galactic polity have, predictably, divided between the familiar alternatives of materialism and idealism, notwithstanding ingenious but perhaps ultimately evasive attempts such as Tambiah’s (1977) to mediate between the two. Materialist explanations emphasize the empirical weakness of South Asian kingship, its inability to prevail over more local forces, due to the limitations upon the direct extraction of surplus value imposed by rice agriculture (Tambiah, 1977) or the capacity of non-dependent peasantries to escape economic exploitation by flight to other polities (Chibber, 1998; Quigley, 1993) resulting in enduringly ‘feudal’ relations oriented to weak political centres (Baechler, 1988). None of these explanations is especially convincing. It is difficult to read off the sovereign and galactic polities as forms determined in any sense by their respective dependence on wheat and rice agriculture, and the issue of peasant flight begs the question of why political alternatives were so readily available to a peasantry which is exogenously assumed to be non-dependent, especially when this is placed alongside the geographical expansion of the peasantry in medieval Europe, which occurred within the ambit of centralized political control (Duby, 1972). It may in fact be the case that the advantageous position of the Indian peasantry

stemmed precisely from the independent proliferation of political centres. Such a speculation is strengthened by the recognition that local political orders in India were not generally autonomous ideologically, as one might expect to be the case if a community fell under the suzerainty of a weak ‘alien’ centre, but were thoroughly penetrated by that ideology to the extent that local status distinctions precisely replicated the larger political cosmology. This might be taken as evidence that the particulation of political authority in India was written into the very conception of that authority.

Certainly, this is the implication of a good deal of writing on the political cosmology of the Indian subcontinent, particularly as manifested in its textual traditions, where, to quote Diane Eck, instead of a ‘discourse of exclusivity and uniqueness, more typical of the monotheistic traditions of the west’, Indian thought evinces a ‘system of meanings in which significance is marked not by uniqueness, but by plurality and duplication. Those things that are deeply important are important enough to be widely repeated’ (1998: 166–8). Perhaps, then, the impetus to find materialist explanations for Indian political ‘weakness’ stems from a particular cultural standpoint in which political ‘strength’ is always equated with the idea of the supreme, comprehensive and exclusive rule associated with the sovereign state.

Scholars who have taken seriously the particularity of the way that authority is constituted in Indian political thought have produced impressive analyses of the tensions between different figures in the Indian political firmament, such as the ascetic renouncer, the priest, the king, the bandit and the clown (Burghart, 1983; Dumont, 1980; Heesterman, 1985; Shulman, 1985). For whereas in the European sovereign polity all of these figures were subordinated to the king as the true and full embodiment of divine (political) authority – notwithstanding a certain ambiguity about who the king actually was – in India each of them could mount an autonomous claim for his own supremacy, though once again it is better to think of them as categories which various protagonists could appropriate to themselves, rather than as given kinds of person. The key tension here is between the king and the brahman, who each try to secure their authority by connecting with their supermundane ‘alter egos’: the king as warrior (*kshatriya*) to the priest-king (*rajanya*), and

the brahman as priest to the ascetic renouncer. Yet neither is able to achieve complete transcendence, and they fall back into a dependence upon one another that flows from their mundane personae. David Shulman characterizes this interdependence as an 'unending circulatory process', in which control 'is always threatening to break down as both the major figures, saddled with impossible ambivalence toward each other and toward themselves, cling reluctantly to the thin lifeline of their common ... distaste for disorder' (1985: 88). None the less the point is that here we confront two genuinely different forms of political legitimation, in contrast to the European case, where all forms of legitimacy terminate in the conception of the king.

Various strategies were available to Indian kings in overcoming their defective authority, some of which – such as temple patronage and land-grants to brahmins – were quite successful. Nevertheless, royal authority was ultimately circumscribed by the fact that the king was a partial embodiment, representing just a *part* of a more encompassing deity or cosmic order to which people had other kinds of access, in contrast to the appropriation of divine authority in Europe, where the sovereign *was* the representative of God (Inden, 1995; cf. Smaje, 2000: 106–27). Moreover, whereas the ideal king was characterized as a secular benefactor in both cases, in Europe this was an expression of a more fundamental paradigm – the gift relationship – in which dyadic exchange is constitutive of a set of solidarity relations and a status order, indeed of nothing less than 'society' itself (Mauss, 1979 [1922]). In India, on the other hand, exchange of this type was circumscribed by another conception of giving, in which one's impurity or evil is expunged by objectifying it into a 'gift' (*dan*) which is passed unilaterally to a status inferior (Parry, 1986). The 'society' that emerges from such a system is one that is particulated and not reticulated, and one of its consequences is the replication of rituals of status contest which are definitive of caste at every level of status.

The foregoing discussion is, of course, couched at the level of a somewhat idealized political theory. Yet one can discern this pattern of dislocation between centralized political authority and semi-autonomous locality societies as a persistent feature in many Indian polities, just as in Europe a monadic conception of sovereignty has persisted. Medieval India had witnessed a long and in some

instances violent theological struggle out of which emerged a devotional and theistic Hinduism centred on temple complexes, particularly in the south. These were able to encompass local cults – though not always without significant tensions – and offer up their local legitimacy to a higher level via royal patronage. Still, the resulting connections remained delicate and provisional and, as a large ethno-historical literature attests, kings were rarely able to cloak or dominate other foci of political authority very successfully, or for very long. Moreover, once again political opposition from lower levels was manifested through the same over-arching political imaginary (cf. Schnepel, 1995; Tooker, 1996). Nothing quite like the 'persecuting society' of Europe therefore manifested itself in India since the emphasis was always upon the subsumption rather than the excision of 'difference', as, for example, in the efforts even of Brahmanic texts to show that religious heterodoxy was inherent to the cosmic order, rather than an affront to revealed truth (Shulman, 1984; Thapar, 1992).

Thus, the galactic-type polity evinces a different kind of contradiction to that of the sovereign polity, the former involving a limitation to centralized political authority and the latter a limitation to political universalism in terms of the incorporation of normative divergence. Incorporation of normative divergence is indeed precisely the tactic effected through caste formation in India. And, although the changing elicitation of political legitimacy has arguably followed a less determinate historical trajectory of secularization there than in Europe, caste formation has nevertheless flowered at historical junctures when political power was in flux, as, for example, during the rise of Muslim polities in medieval North India, the decline of Mughal suzerainty in the eighteenth century and the rise of British hegemony in the nineteenth (S. Bayly, 1999; Inden, 1976). Certain features recur in these very different examples: the tension between king, brahman and renouncer as political models, with their different possibilities for cementing political hegemony; the logic of pollution, which can be used to regulate the boundaries of clean and unclean caste status; and a logic of incorporation where discrepant local political orders can be subsumed into larger ones without any need to lose their autonomy via some Lockean process of disciplinary citizenship. Susan Bayly (1999) has convincingly argued that it was only in

the British colonial period that the formal distinctions of caste became so general as to constitute a more-or-less all-India socio-political framework, despite the ancient roots of its composite features. But this is not the same as saying that caste ideology was sprung anew on hitherto unwitting peoples. The sub-continent had long been integrated around overlapping networks of political power, sacred space and trade, so that its manifest pluralisms of custom and political style can be inscribed with the larger ambit of a determinate meta-society. It can thus usefully be regarded, like Europe, as a 'culture area' in the old anthropological sense. This is not because of some mystical cultural connection uniting particular peoples but because cultural conceptions, promulgated through decidedly non-mystical means, are constitutive of perduring social orders in the face not only of their objectification in inherently conservative institutional structures, but also of the relatively limited human capacity for radical intellectual rupture in its conception of the relationships between persons.

#### POLITICAL ECONOMY

As we have already seen, comparative historical sociologists have conventionally argued that the emergence of industrial capitalism in Western Europe was the culmination of a unique historical trajectory, a 'European miracle' with deep historical roots. Scholars have singled out a variety of possible explanatory factors, including: the logic of this-worldly ascetic accumulation underpinning the potential for the complete alienation of the products of human labour (Weber, 1930); the peculiarities of a class structure in which peasantries were sufficiently strong to break seigneurial power but too weak to establish free tenures (Brenner, 1985); the development of a comprehensive law sustaining private property rights, including property rights in labour (R. Williams, 1991); and the peculiarities of a socio-economic system whereby the lower to middle strata were at once thoroughly integrated into higher-level political authority and yet enjoyed an unparalleled local autonomy in political and economic affairs – the 'multiple acephalous federation' described by Michael Mann (1988: 11). This situation is contrasted, in the orthodox argument, with pre-capitalist tribute-taking societies where the state acts as

a predatory, surplus-extracting mechanism from a peasant society with which it evinces no organic connection, instead standing astride otherwise autonomous locality societies. Although it is conceded that such states can develop these mechanisms into a sophisticated and quasi-modern apparatus – as, for example, among the Mughal rulers of early modern India – it is argued that they are ultimately unable to overcome the class contradiction between expanding state revenue exaction and the exertion of peasant interests. In the case of the Mughals this situation culminated in their eighteenth-century demise at the hands of military alliances between peasant cultivators and *zamindars* (landlords) squeezed beyond endurance by revenue extraction, precipitating a political instability which served British colonial interests (Habib, 1963; Haldon, 1993).

Yet a recent revisionist historiography has called into question such neat polarities. Taking the example of India, it has been argued that the apparent political 'chaos' of the eighteenth century conceals the retrenchment of more streamlined and economically 'progressive' polities (Alam, 1997; Perlin, 1994). One consequence of this has been a renewed emphasis upon the relative weakness of the central state apparatus, but the more important point for present purposes is the emphasis on economic dynamism rather than political stagnation that emerges from the revisionist historiography, which has shown how local economic decision-making in India, as in Europe, had already by the eighteenth century been incorporated into an increasingly global and certainly 'acephalous' system of commodity production. This system broke any substantial peasant autonomy remaining from resistance to local political incorporation in both regions (Perlin, 1983). At the same time, Indian mercantile structures had reached a level of sophistication and rationalization in no way inferior to European ones, which indeed began their colonial penetration of the Indian subcontinent rather lamely as small-time intermediaries in the larger circuits of the South Asian trading world (Chauduri, 1994). In this context, arguments for a European 'miracle' deeply rooted in its distinctive past look decidedly shaky, especially when it must further be conceded that it is not 'Europe' that underwent capitalist industrialization, nor even some entity within it such as England or the Netherlands. Rather, particular *parts* of these countries industrialized in the face of the non-industrialization of

other immediately neighbouring parts. These parts need not be thought of as belonging inherently to a given socio-political formation, as an implicit nationalism often leads one to suppose. Rather, the trading world of the eighteenth century comprised a set of powerful mercantile centres connected to extensive hinterlands of rural industrial production in both Europe and Asia.

In this context, the origins of European colonial hegemony lie not in any particular technical or fiscal superiority, but rather in the peculiar advantages conferred by the institutional structure of its overseas trading companies, which – drawing upon the impressive resource-generating potential of their joint-stock organization – were able to suppress autonomous European commercial activity and subordinate it to a rigorous political hierarchy (Chauduri, 1994; Guha, 1999; Richards, 1993). This degree of control proved a sharp weapon in undermining the more refractory political and economic forces of their Indian rivals, and in the longer run proved decisive in their usurpation. Whether the structure of the trading companies can simply be read off from the centripetal characteristics of European polities, or whether it is better understood as one pragmatically developed in the course of the long-term intra-European rivalries over far-flung seaborne colonial empires, is something that cannot detain us here. The point is that the eventual dominance of the global trading system by Europe and its American offshoots has to do not with its own intrinsic processes of economic development, as the orthodox position suggests, but with the particular circumstances of its insertion into that system. Ironically, in this context, it was not the acephalousness but the singularity of European commercial-colonial command structures which enabled them to achieve control. Only after the balance had been fatefully tipped towards the West did such arrangements come to seem anachronistic according to emerging doctrines of economic liberalism which did not in themselves constitute the decisive rupture with pre-capitalist economic organization.

There were, then, substantial similarities in economic agency between early modern Europe and South Asia. However, I now want to suggest that the entry of both regions into this unified modern trading world is compatible with prior developmental tendencies within their respective political cosmologies,

and need not be taken as some irruption into a homogeneous global modernity which makes those cosmologies marginal or irrelevant.

It is conventional to consider the emergence of capitalism in Europe as a consequence of institutional rather than ideological features in a pre-capitalist world whose Christian moral framework was antithetical to the rational accumulation of money as an end in itself. In this view, when the inevitable ideological transformation occurred, it came in the form of the thorough overhaul of Christian morality worked by the early rationalist prophets of modernity, who were able to synthesize urban commercialism and popular piety against the trappings of the *ancien régime* in a proto-nationalist context whereby property rights in personal labour had already developed as one element in a contractual nexus between ruler and ruled. This offered modest protection to the labouring peoples of Europe from the worst excesses of 'rational' labour exploitation such as chattel slavery (Eltis, 2000). However, there were also older roots to the commercial imperative, which more restrained medieval thinkers such as Thomas Aquinas had sought to reconcile with the contemporary critique of commerce. The emphasis of the church upon the fellowship of Christians over and against the more immediate ties of kin and community, and its devaluation of the trappings of the present world as against the truly significant spiritual world to come, both conspired to establish a logic of generalized and disinterested exchange in which persons were sharply separated from things (Parry, 1986). The emphasis of classical republicanism upon ethical relationships within an undivided community also leant weight to the same logic from a more secular direction when its influence was felt in the republican and commercial citadels of post-Renaissance Europe (Pagden, 1990). Thus, an ideological apparatus was available to support the emerging institutional order of European colonialism and capitalism through reconfiguring an older emphasis upon individual spirituality and domestic economic autarky into the idea of the nation itself as a gigantic community of kin where spiritual values were represented in a political 'manifest destiny' moving in lockstep with economic expansion.

When attention turns to early modern India, it is harder to find the same emphasis upon individualism, person–thing distinctions and a logic of market utility. Perhaps the situation bears greater resemblance to the kind of non-monetary 'gift' society classically

described by Marcel Mauss (1979 [1922]), in which exchange relations are entered not between individuals but between groups that figure as irreducible 'moral persons'; in which the things given embody social attributes of the person; and in which the logic of the polluting and inferiorizing religious gift or *dan* establishes internal social boundaries antithetical to the notion of collective fellowship.

These attributes have tended to be seen as representative of a form prior to, and incompatible with, capitalist commodity logic, but this evolutionary assumption is open to serious question. For example, David Rudner (1994) has shown that a 'rational' logic of accumulation among commercial castes in India can be lodged at the collective level of the caste itself, and the idea that a community of trust unified at the societal level is a necessary precondition for capital accumulation is then revealed as an unnecessarily restrictive assumption grounded in specifically European ideological struggles from which our contemporary conceptions of modernity and society were born. Moreover, even if it is the case that in India the interpenetration of persons and things hedges transactions with greater status ambiguity, this need not be incompatible with the ramification of exchange relationships. Higher-status trading castes might maximize transactions in 'subtle' substances like money, and minimize transactions in 'gross' substances. The latter might include the exchange of persons in kin alliances, something rigorously restricted within endogamous marriage circles; other 'gross' substances might include such items as vegetables and cattle, whose exchange fell to inferior trading castes (Grover, 1994; Rudner, 1994). There was therefore considerable scope for a ramifying process of capital accumulation based upon caste interdependencies around the margins of state agrarian revenue exaction, particularly as the grip of great imperial dynasties such as the Mughals weakened, allowing for the proliferation of local polities in which rulers drew upon the *kshatriya* ideology of the king as a recklessly generous benefactor whose insatiable and none-too-fastidious tastes fostered economic activity and ordered the difficult relationships between castes (C. Bayly, 1986; S. Bayly, 1999; Washbrook, 1988). The royal endowment of temples, and endowment by wealthy merchants aping royal virtue, was another mechanism of economic development built upon ancient foundations, although scholarly opinion is divided as to the potential

of temple endowment to circumvent the limitations of agrarian revenue exaction (Chibber, 1998; Washbrook, 1988).

## CONCLUSION

What I hope to have suggested in the foregoing analysis is that the emerging global trading world of the early modern period involved both Indian and European protagonists who, for a time, were on a roughly equal footing as participants in a process of capital accumulation. This was compatible with a certain combination of indigenous political and economic traditions in both cases. It is unnecessary either to de-emphasize caste relations and the refractory nature of Indian polities or to trumpet the arrival of a 'modernity' with a uniquely European provenance in order to establish this. Capitalism, understood as the ramification of social relations of commodity production, is compatible with both Indian caste society and the European nation-state, and the reasons for the priority of large-scale industrialization in certain parts of Europe under the impetus of capitalist relations of production are not to be found in any gross civilizational differences between it and other parts of the world. Nevertheless, such differences do exist and they inhere not only through material accumulations in given institutions but also in an enduring, though far from static, structure of *ideas* invested in institutional forms. In the contemporary political climate, where notions of culture and tradition so often serve the ends of repressive and authoritarian political programmes, there are doubtless good reasons for a historiography of multivalence, polysemy or ambivalence. Here, though, I have tried to argue that the questions of difference raised by the comparative historical sociology of institutions should not be prematurely foreclosed.

## NOTE

1. This section employs several terms from anthropological kinship jargon which will briefly be defined here. *Bilateral* refers to a situation where descent is traced through both the paternal and maternal line, whereas *agnatic* refers to a situation where it is traced through the paternal line only. A *lineage* is a group whose members trace descent from a putatively common ancestor through either the male or female line. *Cross-cousin marriage* refers to a marriage between

the children of different-sex siblings. *Endogamy* refers to marriage within a given group, *exogamy* to marriage outside the group. *Hypergamy* refers to a marriage between a woman and a man of higher status, *hypogamy* to that between a man and a woman of higher status, and *isogamy* to marriage between status equals. See Keesing (1975) for a detailed introduction.

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## *Cultural History is Dead (Long Live the Hydra)*

JOHN R. HALL

Unlike the birth of postmodernity at 3: 32 p.m. on 15 July 1972, during the dynamiting of the Pruitt-Igoe housing project in St Louis, Missouri, the exact date and time of cultural history's death cannot be pinpointed with any degree of accuracy. It was a quiet passing, so quiet indeed that many people did not hear about it for years, and some continue on as though cultural history lives. The present obituary takes the death of cultural history as an occasion not for grief but for celebration. For cultural history is like Hydra: all the heads of the serpent have been chopped off and killed, but twice as many grow in their place. It isn't the same serpent. There are now many heads. And whether they connect to a common body remains in question. But they live!

The historical analysis of culture has a long and distinguished history, some would like to say. For others, because of the 'cultural turn' itself, any such account is suspect. Thus, questions concerning culture have not only their substantive side; they also have fuelled debates about logics of inquiry. For historians during the 1980s, there was good reason to chart the cultural turn from within their discipline, in relation to other disciplines, by noting that the interdisciplinary alliances of history began in the 1970s to shift away from sociology, political science and economics, and towards anthropology and the humanities (Hunt, 1989: 10). But this view later required

revision. On the one hand, inquiries in the humanities have received inspiration from social theory for decades, while increasingly their concerns have been formulated in relation to history (for example, in the New Historicism) and social processes (such as citizenship, identity formation and nationalism). On the other hand, a wide range of disciplines and research programmes, from economics to English, from rational choice theory to cultural studies, have been affected by deconstructive, Foucauldian and other critical interventions. The upshot is that history is no longer contained within its core discipline, any more than sociologists can monopolize sociology. Instead, in the human sciences, ideas and agendas transcending any given discipline have become broadly influential. Now the question of how to proceed under those conditions confronts an emerging generation of scholars who, whatever their institutional homes, forge connections beyond disciplines.

'History' and 'culture' are the paramount issues in this post-disciplinary milieu, for different but interconnected reasons. History, because a diverse array of domains – from social theory to literature – have become historicized in their concerns, while, simultaneously, the 'craft' of historical method has become subject to critical doubt. Culture, because despite (or, perhaps, because of) the 'cultural turn', – there is no broadly engaged debate about how to theorize culture in its own

terms, and in relation to agency and unfolding history. The intersection of problematics concerning 'culture' and 'history' thus defines a potential Archimedean point that will be contested by scholars who wish to move the human sciences toward legitimation of one or another programmatic resolution to the dialectic of modernism and postmodernism.

To take up the 'social epistemology' of the cultural turn in historical analysis, it would be important to consider diverse intellectual movements – of feminist theory, poststructuralism, cultural studies, queer theory, subaltern studies, postcolonial theory and the New Historicism, to invoke some of the most influential developments. Efforts to trace the significance of those developments for history (Iggers, 1997; Poster, 1997) demonstrate that the analysis of culture has become highly contested just when it has become thematic. Today, 'cultural history' seems a little like 'rag-time' when it was all the rage at the beginning of the twentieth century: performers and audiences flocked to the musical genre, but perhaps for them, and certainly retrospectively, the task of identifying any definitive characteristics of this captivating music can prove difficult (Berlin, 1980). Similarly, today there is no single subject for a discussion of inquiries that seek to draw both culture and history within their orbs. To consider the many heads of the Hydra, in this chapter I survey cultural history in light of: (1) an archaeology of its practices; (2) the return to culture as a subject; (3) what I will call the 'full' cultural turn; and (4), paradoxically, the 'social turn' that has come before and through the cultural turn.

#### **PASTS THAT ENDURE IN MEMORY AND PRACTICE**

Today, any smooth narrative about cultural-historical inquiry that proceeded by the magic of connecting disparate intellectual events in a temporal series would be suspect. As an alternative, Foucault's idea of archaeology suggests the project of theorizing appropriations of artifacts that have survived their times to live anew in the collective memories and imaginations of our times. For the contemporary era, mostly these survivals come from Europe, even if recent critiques have emerged in countering responses to Western hegemony, and even if it would be possible to find much

of significance for cultural analysis in non-Western thought, for example in Confucianist philosophy, Hindu theology, African wisdom traditions and the work of early socio-historical analysts such as Ibn Khaldoun. As Donald Kelley (1996) shows, the 'early modern' European concern with culture (and sometimes 'civilization') grew out of binary contrasts: initially, between the cultivated societies of Europe and the 'barbarous' societies peopled by 'savages', and, with the rise of the anthropological sense of culture in the nineteenth century, between everyday popular culture and the capital-C Culture of elites. Cultural history in this tradition was a party to contested (typically nationalist) self-narrations of progress in modernizing Europe, narrations that with the rise of social theory and social Darwinism in the nineteenth century began to invoke stage models and evolutionism. The enterprise took strongest root in Germany. Though, as Kelley recounts, some scholars now look like real embarrassments for their soil-and-blood nationalism, others broke important new ground. In the late eighteenth century, for example, Johann Herder anticipated contemporary cultural critiques of epistemology by arguing that reason could not occur outside of historically embedded language. 'For Herder,' Kelley notes, 'cultural history aspired not only to criticize but even to replace philosophy as the foundational discipline of human understanding' (1996: 104).<sup>1</sup>

Most German cultural history was not so epistemologically inflected. During the nineteenth century, practitioners followed Leopold von Ranke in creating the object of analysis as an analytic whole. Ranke, of course, located his analytic object in the histories of elites, whereas the cultural historians were reduced to employing 'cultural abstractions and organic and spiritualist metaphors' (Kelley, 1996: 107). But to their credit, cultural historians did challenge Ranke's narrower elite political and religious history by depicting a complex social fabric woven of customs and daily life.

The dilemma of cultural history in Germany can be charted in relation to its greatest nineteenth-century practitioner, Jacob Burckhardt. As Felix Gilbert (1990) demonstrates, Burckhardt retreated from politics into culture, nevertheless working to identify how key cultural transformations contributed to unfolding developments of universal history by which the modern world was born. Burckhardt was a student of Ranke (and,

at one point, a colleague of Nietzsche), and despite substantial differences, Burckhardt shared Ranke's sense of elites as the key actors in forming the social world. Thus, his famous study of the Renaissance in Italy (1954 [1860]) gave its due to the mores of common folk, but emphasized the distinctive civilizational accomplishments of high culture. Burckhardt also shared with Ranke the key ontological problem that Gilbert describes as 'the problem of historical continuity' (1990: 102). Both of them consolidated 'history' as a quasi-empirical reality that could be referenced without explicit recourse to theory. Ranke's history was bound together by the deeds of elites over time, Burckhardt's by the elites' 'timeless' cultural achievements (to be found, for example, in literature), periodized in relation to political transformations. Either way, history as a naturalized entity is subjected to an objective practice of inquiry that constitutes its subject by fiat, and in isolation from self-conscious theory and methodology.

'Objectivity' has its own history in history. Georg Iggers (1975) has identified two appropriations of Ranke's credo – to tell 'what actually happened'. In the United States, it became associated with a scientific concern with facts, whereas in Germany, the enterprise sought comprehension of history's essence. However, American histories (Gordon Wood's political histories come to mind) are hardly mere accumulations of fact; they often seek out the essence of the story as much as German ones. Thus, although historians often parse idealism versus science, the two approaches are best seen as two sides of an overall practice of *historicism*, tied together by the shared interest in consolidating a topic beyond the intentionalities of individuals, but without resorting to thoroughgoing social theoretical constructionism (Hall, 1999: 220–8).

Yet an archaeology of cultural history during the twentieth century, and especially the genesis of the 'cultural turn', cannot be reduced to mapping the two faces of historicism, scientific and spiritualist. A richer understanding can be framed via alternatives that precipitate out of the late-nineteenth-century conflict over methodology in Germany. The *Methodenstreit* brought to the fore a bundle of epistemological questions left unresolved since Kant – whether historical science could be objective; what its relation to values might be; whether science requires a unity of method or special methods appropriate to the domain of human affairs; and what the

prospects for generalization might be in the face of the uniquenesses of history. Here, issues of culture, meaning and agency loom large. How are they to be incorporated into historical analysis? Three alternative approaches can be identified.

First, as I have already suggested, a bipolar *historicism* of science and idealism eschews any explicit theorization in relation to historical analysis, and so meaning has to be understood in relation to its particular moment and context, as unique. As in anthropology's 'emic' analysis, culture has its own internal frames of meaning, and these are not to be subjected to any external analytic frame of reference.

Second, an attempt can be made to theorize culture in its basic structures and forms, and their dynamics. This *structuralist* approach, of course, is anathema to historicism. Nevertheless, historicism and structuralism the logical inverses of one another that share a common premise: subjective meaning is to be excluded from the frame of structuralist theory, in a way exemplified by the formal sociology of Georg Simmel (Hall, 1999: 121–29). This division of *cultural content* from *structural form* leaves the content to historicist cultural analysis, while reserving for structuralist theory the task of delineating relationships and processes – both in matters of culture and in general. The two influential versions of structuralism in the twentieth century – social and linguistic – both connected with culture, but in different ways. In social structuralism, exemplified by the work of Émile Durkheim and Claude Lévi-Strauss, the task is to identify social structures emergent from the operation of basic cultural processes that can be theorized independently of meaningful content – in Durkheim's case, the elementary forms of religion, and for Lévi-Strauss, alternative rules of patriarchal bride-giving that give rise to distinctive patterns of interfamilial social relations. Linguistic structuralism – that is, in Ferdinand de Saussure and his followers – uses a parallel structural logic, but maps structures of meaning on the basis of binary oppositions in symbolic codes. Despite their analytic power, both structuralisms have faced the challenge of how to recoup historicity from the analytic separation embodied in the structure/content divide that occludes a theorization of contingent action in relation to culture.

Third, and in contrast to the structuralist/historicist partition that isolates the (historicist) analysis of meaning from (structuralist) theorization, it is possible to incorporate cultural content *within* theoretical concepts,

and, indeed, to base construction of concepts on this precept. This, of course, is the approach championed by Max Weber, with his deployment of socio-historical models, conventionally called ideal-types (Burger, 1976; Hekman, 1983; Holton, this volume). In contrast to structuralists, Weber treated meaning in its historical specificities, and explored cultural meanings not as simple binary oppositions, but as richer, more complex assemblages that shade off from any theorized type or binary pole. Most famously, in his classic and ever-controversial analysis of elective affinities between the Protestant ethic and the 'spirit of capitalism', Weber (1990 [1904–5]) contrasted the traditionalism of lay Catholicism with monastic asceticism, and then monastic with 'inner worldly' asceticism, exploring the approximations to this socio-historical idea complex of Protestant doctrines from Lutheranism through Calvinism, Methodism, the Baptist sects and the Quakers.

Through the twentieth century prior to the cultural turn, historians' disciplinary practices of cultural history were mostly contained within the cultural logic of historicism, even though both topic and scope of inquiry varied widely. Debates among historians tended to focus on which story should be addressed, rather than challenging the basic historicist assumptions by which the subject of any such story is constituted. Political history and metanarratives of modernity were ascendant, and cultural history *qua* history was on the wane. One notable exception, Perry Miller's *Errand into the Wilderness* (1956), described subtle interactions between the course of historical events of New England colonization and transformations of the originally European 'errand' (Hall, 1991). But for most scholars, historicist practice made it difficult to escape holism and metanarrative. Under these conditions, some notable exemplars of cultural history were written outside the discipline of history, by historical sociologists who had developed ideas about how to theorize culture. The strongest vein can be found in currents informed by the legacies of Weber. Karl Mannheim (1953) traced the origins of 'conservative thought' and its transmission through concrete social carrier groups, and Norbert Elias – Mannheim's friend and influenced by Weber – pursued his magisterial *The Civilizing Process* (1978 [1939], 1982 [1939]), which charted transformations in the construction of selfhood in Europe of the Middle Ages and beyond, and their relation to

the social organization of power (Chartier, 1988: Ch. 12; Mennell, 1992).

The Weberian legacy is to be found on a separate page from the initial reinvigoration of cultural history during the latter part of the twentieth century. Yet in tandem those developments burst the boundaries of historicism and structuralism and eliminated barriers to more richly theorized, broadly Weberian and hermeneutic, approaches to culture.

#### THE TURN TO CULTURE AS OBJECT OF INQUIRY

The cultural turn is not just driven by a shift toward anthropology and discourse as theorized in linguistics and semiotics. It gains dynamism from the dialectical interchange among diverse approaches. Indeed, the debates that have emerged in the wake of the cultural turn shift the central problematics of cultural history towards broadly sociological approaches concerned with historically located institutionalized cultural structures of discourse, meaning and practice.

Whether a sharp break periodizes a transition from social to cultural history is a matter of debate seemingly about the past, but this debate also amounts to a conflict over the future, specifically concerned with whether and how the cultural turn repositions the practice of history in relation to 'facts' and 'texts' (Iggers, 1997; Poster, 1997). The past threads come from diverse sources. A number of observers note the tendencies of social historians and scholars allied with the *Annales* school tradition to shift toward cultural histories concerned with discourses and texts as early as the 1950s. And beginning in the 1960s, it became increasingly difficult to ignore the implications for history of the broad intellectual breakdown of structuralism in the face of poststructuralist challenges mounted by Foucault, Derrida and Bourdieu, and the even broader challenges to modernist objectivity posed for science by Thomas Kuhn, and specifically for history by Hayden White, Michel Foucault and Michel de Certeau. Yet the upshot of these developments, both for the question of how to practise cultural history and for the relation of cultural history to historical inquiry more generally, remains very much in play.

The initial shifts among social historians and the *Annales* school can be sketched in relation

to the historicism–structuralism binary. Social history emerged concertedly the 1960s, at the time when historians and sociologists alike had high hopes for interdisciplinary projects of historical sociology and social science history. Yet the distinctive hybrids that emerged over the next quarter-century did not cross-fertilize very well. On the one hand, historical sociologists like Reinhard Bendix, Barrington Moore and Theda Skocpol typically sought to fuse sociological models of explanation with comparative analysis of institutionally decisive events such as revolutions or long-term macro-historical changes. In so far as these models were structural, they tended either to ignore culture or simply to incorporate it as a ‘causal factor’.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, historians continued to seek out ways to paint history on broader canvases than those framed by political history. But they were caught up in the modernist binary between structuralism and historicism.

On one front, social historians shifted history beyond politics, as Burckhardt had done, but with a Marxian twist, producing social and labour histories ‘from below’. Yet most social historians remained within the historicist frame, and they regarded any dialectical theorization of history as simplistic. History could not be construed simply as a structural process of class conflict that produced change, and, thus, questions of agency and culture came to the fore. Most famously, in *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963), E.P. Thompson considered the role that cultural traditions and moral outlooks played in how class was ‘made’ by living, breathing nineteenth-century English people. Thompson’s book has been enormously important, and not only for social and labour history: one entire lineage of the cultural turn could be traced in extensions of his argument – such as Gareth Stedman Jones’s (1983) even stronger turn to the analysis of language in the study of class formation, and critical engagements of Thompson’s approach (for example, Biernacki, 1995, 1997; Rose, 1997; Somers, 1997). For sociologists perhaps the most striking feature of Thompson’s approach is the one that would seem obvious to many historians – his steadfast resistance to theorizing class. At the outset, Thompson emphasized that ‘class is a relationship, and not a thing’, describing it as ‘defined by men as they live their own history’ (1963: 9–11). In short, Thompson is a historicist, in the specific sense of the term. Following the tradition initiated by Ranke (and, for

culture, Burckhardt), he rejected either any suprahistorical framework or any theoretical modelling of generic social processes.

The alternative side of the binary – structuralism – has its own variants, one leaning back toward historicism, and the other more concertedly theoretical. The historicist side of structuralism is exemplified most famously by the French *Annales* school (see Burke, this volume). Beginning early in the twentieth century, the founding scholars – Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre – researched enduring social complexes (such as feudalism) and long-term civilizational transformations (such as agrarian development) that exceeded the frames of political and religious history. In effect, Kant’s and Ranke’s projects of a universal history were amended to incorporate structural analysis. In the 1960s, Fernand Braudel consolidated these innovations in an ontological theorization that proposed to integrate different temporal ‘levels’ of history (long-term or ecological, institutional, and event history) into a structural history of the totality. To solve the enduring (historicist) problem of temporal continuity, Braudel invoked an orchestral metaphor in which multiple historical temporalities compose a grand symphony of History that could be mapped on the grid of objective historical time (Hall, 1980: 114–16).<sup>3</sup>

Lynn Hunt rightly suggests that the *Annales* is better understood as a school than a paradigm (1989: 2–3), because *Annales* scholars have operated under the banner of an interdisciplinary eclecticism – toward geography, economics, sociology, anthropology and indeed the whole range of the human sciences. Nevertheless, persisting presuppositions can be identified. As Georg Iggers observes, although *Annalistes* avoided the term ‘system’, they borrowed from French structuralism, foundationally in the work of Émile Durkheim, and more broadly in anthropological and linguistic structuralisms centred on systems of meaning founded on binary oppositions (Iggers, 1997: 53–5). Thus, the intellectual openness of the *Annales* transpired within a cognitive frame of structuralism, albeit a *historicist* structuralism that struggled against reification, and largely succeeded, by looking to structures as enduring arrangements *in* history rather than uploading history into a theoretical structuralism.

Historicist structuralism is a characteristic feature of *Annales* scholarship through the end of the 1970s. History was not so much a matter

of great and transformative deeds as an oceanic flow of tides and currents. Fitting easily within such an orientation, cultural topics abounded. *Mentalité* was an *Annales* *topos* from Febvre's (1982) study of religious thought published in 1942, and one that received continuing attention in such studies as Le Roy Ladurie's famous local history of a Pyrenees peasant village, *Montaillou: The Promised Land of Error* (1979 [1975]). Febvre artfully turned a question concerning whether Rabelais was an atheist into a question about what unbelief would signify as a *mentalité* in sixteenth-century Europe.<sup>4</sup> In *Montaillou*, Ladurie used Inquisition records to piece together a fascinating cultural inventory of Pyrenees village life in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. As for material culture, Fernand Braudel (1973 [1967]) offered a synthetic discussion of social routines that employ and produce it in the whole range of human endeavours – from food and shelter to technological innovations in printing and the production of metals. Material culture, Braudel affirmed, constituted the 'ground floor' of history, upon which capitalism was built.

With achievements such as these, the *Annalistes* established themselves virtually without rivals in the detailed, almost archaeological, documentation of symbolic forms and material practices. Yet an enduring shortcoming of the *Annales* tradition is especially salient for cultural inquiry. The *Annales* programme for correcting previous preoccupations with the history of events succeeded perhaps too well (Iggers, 1997: 56). As Hexter suggests specifically for Braudel's *The Mediterranean*, structuralist presuppositions overwhelmed analysis of the linkages between structures and events, leaving a narrative of political history to be tacked on at the end (1972: 533). More generally, in *Annales* studies, cultures typically were treated as enduring or slowly shifting structures in their own right, largely without reference to their interplay with the concrete lives of human beings.

These criticisms of *Annales* work begin to lose their force in the 1970s, first because *Annales* researchers increasingly participated in an international dialogue of scholars who were shifting the agenda of cultural history in relation to a range of histories from below, including social history and what Italian historians began to call *microhistoria*, and, second, because poststructuralist arguments drew into question the basic historicist and Enlightenment assumptions that undergirded both social history and the *Annales*.

The broad movement toward cultural analysis probably has its origins in social upheavals and generational, countercultural and anti-hegemonic social movements that swept North America, Europe and parts of what was then called the Third World during the 1960s. The generational rebellion produced critiques of bourgeois modernism and what came to be called the 'Old Left' (Iggers, 1997: 98). In the realm of scholarship the shifts that emerged in affinity with wider developments surfaced only gradually, as a new generation of scholars came forward in the 1970s. As the records of feminist scholarship and subaltern studies would suggest, the currents are complex. But in the social sciences and history, culture was a watchword. In sociology, both popular culture (Gans, 1974) and the counterculture (Hall, 1978) received growing attention in the 1960s and 1970s, and the sociology of culture took off, most notably in the work of Richard Peterson (1976) on the production of culture, Howard S. Becker, Jr (1982) on art worlds and Raymond Williams's (1982) overview from a Birmingham school perspective. The result is that sociology now theorizes and researches a wide range of cultural phenomena open to historical analysis (Chaney, 1994; Hall, Neitz, and Battani, 2003). Meanwhile, the work of anthropologists such as Clifford Geertz (1973) and Marshall Sahlins (1985) received broader attention outside their own discipline – Geertz because his emphasis on a *verstehende* 'deep reading' and 'thick description' tended to be appropriated over and against (or sometimes ignoring or embracing) his allusions to a systems theorization of culture (cf. Biernacki, 1999; Chartier, 1988: Ch. 4; Iggers, 1997: 126); Sahlins, because he began to explore intercultural relations in ways that emphasized historicity and contingency.

History took the cultural turn with as much force as most any discipline. From E.P. Thompson onward, social historians investigated the collectively meaningful (which is to say cultural) circumstances of social life and movement mobilization among the popular classes, and, increasingly, among dominated groups such as blacks and women. The *Annales* emphasis on *mentalités* and local history has its parallel in Carlo Ginzburg's microhistory, *The Cheese and the Worms* (1980 [1976]). And these studies share a broader palette of cultural history that emerged in the 1970s. Notably, Peter Burke (1978) linked social life and cultural repertoires by exploring topics such as the

emergence of popular practices of consumption in early modern Europe, while Robert Darnton (1984) began to explore relationships between popular and high culture by looking at topics like the links established by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century servants and wet nurses as intermediaries among social strata. By the end of the decade, Lawrence Stone (1979) was announcing a 'revival of narrative', which, *mutatis mutandis*, encompassed a greater sensitivity to issues of meaning, and therefore culture, than the structuralized social science history that had made its appearance in the 1960s. The following year, in the course of reviewing the seeming stagnation of *intellectual* history over and against the rise of *social* history, Darnton (1980) acknowledged (and statistically documented) the growing importance from the 1940s to the 1970s of a third force, *cultural* history, albeit as a genre of intellectual history (on the latter, see Wagner, this volume). This, however, was not quite what I will call the *full* cultural turn. It was a turn (or return) to culture as a theme of investigation, but framed within a practice that remained effectively historicist, and antagonistic to any philosophical reflection on history and *its* culture of inquiry.

#### THE FULL CULTURAL TURN

The full cultural turn had diverse roots beyond history – in linguistics, deconstruction, and phenomenological and poststructuralist critiques of structuralism. These intellectual developments consolidated new critiques of historical inquiry, but their significance remains open to debate. In some quarters, the 11 September 2001 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in the US are taken to signal an end to postmodern and postcolonial criticism.<sup>5</sup> But to dismiss major currents of thought on the basis of events that call out for concerted public discussion would seem vaguely McCarthyesque and decidedly anti-intellectual. Debates about the significance of the full cultural turn for historical investigation will continue to fuel the cascade of cultural-historical studies.

Four interrelated points sketch the full cultural turn itself. Even if they cannot be reconciled with one another, all emerge in critical reaction to structuralism.<sup>6</sup> First, the symbolic structuralist thesis that meaning is generated on the basis of binary oppositions becomes complicated by a more hermeneutic

recognition that some oppositions (and meanings) are blurred. Second, Lévi-Strauss's (1966 [1962]) structuralist opposition between diachrony and synchrony falls prey to phenomenological and deconstructionist considerations of temporality (Hall, 1980; Wood, 1989), and to Bourdieu's (1977) consideration of how agents play off of, and thereby destabilize, structures in the course of everyday life. Third, on the historicist side, the vaunted individual, as author and actor, dies (probably it is a case of murder), and in her place are inserted the discourses in which individuals partake. Fourth, the modernist assumption about specifiable relations between textual symbols and their relatively stable referents falls prey to rhetorical and deconstructionist critiques; in history, the narrative is held to lose its capacity to be 'about' any coherent object that exists outside its own textual structures (Cohen, 1986).

For cultural history, these shifts could be traced in relation to the third rail of modern historiography's combinatory bipolar of historicism and (*Annales*-style) structuralism, namely the hidden resistance of both to social theory. The appropriate version of theory to thematize here, I submit, is structuralist Marxism, most strongly advanced by Louis Althusser, with Étienne Balibar (1970 [1968]). Their work marks a radical break with historicism, with the conventional Marxist base–superstructure model that treats culture as epiphenomenal, and with atheoretical *Annales* historicist structuralism. Arguing that there is no single historical 'present' and no continuous historical time, Althusser rejects objective temporality as an ideological construction that obstructs the possibility of a scientific history. In its place, he theorizes a 'totality' comprised of diverse 'levels' (economic, political, scientific, and so on), each with its own historical time, its own historical 'punctuations' (transitions, breaks, revolutions), intersecting unevenly with other spheres, each thus developing on a relatively autonomous basis (Hall, 1980: 119–25). In Althusser's formulation, there can be no 'cultural history' in any conventional sense, because there can be no history, at least as understood in conventional Enlightenment approaches that posit a temporal continuity of History as an object. The alternative that Althusser proposes presumably would locate culture in particular forms, for example 'the historical forms of existence of individuality', but in keeping with Althusser's general crusade against all things Hegelian, these

forms could not be the subjects of history over chronological time, because they could not be posited as enduring transcendent 'spirits'.

Althusser's structuralist history profoundly challenges conventional practices, but the challenge is never really taken up. Quite to the contrary, the caricature of a structuralist clockwork animates 'The Poverty of Theory or an Orrery of Errors' (1978), E.P. Thompson's intemperate and immensely entertaining savaging of Althusser. Yet Althusser arguably created the spectral ur-text that still haunts history by its radical theorizing of historicity. No longer is 'the new' in history circumscribed by the taking up of new topics, or the redefinition of history's ontological subject. These sorts of revolutions merely constitute the 'turning around' of a durable historicism – one that can absorb intellectual movements like the new social history or *Annales* structural history while retaining a basic resistance to either explicit theorizing or reflexive attention to the epistemology of the historian.

'But what, really, is Althusser's legacy?' it may be asked. At the least, there is a lineage of ideas to be traced from Althusser to his student Michel Foucault (1970 [1966], 1972 [1969]), and to Michel de Certeau (1988 [1975]) – even if neither Foucault nor de Certeau is a structuralist. Obviously, Foucault is important for the substantive genealogies he offered – of madness, prisons, sexuality, and for the theoretical underpinnings provided by the construct of discipline as power and knowledge, and their relation to what has come to be called governmentality. And de Certeau both appreciates the substance of Foucault's work and builds upon it, seeking to push beyond the knowledge disciplines by which the social is conventionally known to explore the historicity of everyday world events that elude the categories of knowledge designed to contain them (1984 [1980]; see also Frijhoff, 1999). Yet behind the substantive topics, and more fundamentally, both Foucault and de Certeau contributed to the full cultural turn, whereby history is destabilized as a rationally coherent story. In Certeau's analysis, historical discourse is an intermediary that lies somewhere between narration and logical discourse, mixing the problems of 'temporal sequence' and 'truth' (1988 [1975]: 92–9). Foucault moves behind historical study that uses texts found in the archives to the study of how texts are themselves constitutive discourses that frame the world. In both Foucault and de Certeau, the deep basis of historicism – history as an evolving totality

(whether of agents or structures) – evaporates (on Foucault, see Grumley, 1989: 186–7). History is displaced by an archival archaeology of discourses and found fragments, arranged in patterns by acts of the historian.

Of course the cultural turn cannot be encompassed by Foucault and de Certeau as tokens of it. The changes are as radical, but of much wider scope. Marshall Sahlins argues, for example, that no conventionalized generic model of historicity is adequate, for 'different cultural orders have their own modes of historical action, consciousness, and determination – their own historical practice' (1985: 34). Facing a flood of such formulations, historians wonder how far to follow the full cultural turn. Thus, Georg Iggers observes, 'although many historians have taken contemporary linguistic, semi-otic, and literary theory seriously, they have in practice not accepted the idea that the texts with which they work have no reference to reality' (1997: 145).<sup>2</sup> Yet this construction of the controversy seems like a red herring. Historians from Ranke onwards have hardly been naïve about the complex relations between artifacts and the analysis of history, and Shiner (1969) has provided an acute formulation of the problem in phenomenological terms. How to establish 'facts' on the basis of artifacts is an enduring problem, but it ought not be construed as the central problem of the full cultural turn. Rather, as Hayden White (1973) emphasized already three decades ago, even if facts can be stipulated, even when texts are not quarantined from the spatio-temporal world, multiple rhetorical, analytic and narratological possibilities offer radically alternative ways of making sense of them.

Under the guiding star of Enlightenment historicism, it was a relatively straightforward matter to tend the garden of history by replacing old quadrants or adding new sections – now demographic history, social history, the history of *mentalités*, and so forth. With the full cultural turn, hordes of gardeners are planting exotics and hybrids in squatter claim plots that used to belong to the larger garden of history. The gardening has become undisciplined, and there is no end in sight.

#### THE SOCIAL TURN: THOUSANDS OF FLOWERS BLOOM

Certainly the linguistic turn and the infusion of anthropological approaches have fed what

Peter Burke (1997: Ch. 12) called the 'varieties of cultural history'. However, they are also a testament to a development often overlooked or misconstrued – a 'social turn'. Although the infusion of sociological approaches in history is often periodized in relation to the emergence of social history, this narrative masks a longer-term process. In effect, though not always explicitly, the drift of historical analysis since the inception of social science disciplines in the nineteenth century has been toward increasing 'sociological' differentiation in the analysis of events and structures – involving love, work, entertainment, conflict, religious life, crime, manifold groups and organizations, in short, the social in its broadest dimensions and most robust processes. This *longue-durée* social turn is not evenly represented in all recent historical work on culture, but it has shaped historico-cultural studies along at least three dimensions – topical, methodological and theoretical. The topical shifts largely follow the trail of social history, while the methodological and theoretical changes are the paradoxical consequences of the full cultural turn. Considered as a whole, these developments mark out a new situation in which the term 'cultural history' no longer captures the diversity of historical analysis concerned with matters of culture.

Scholars like Tocqueville, Marx, Weber and the early members of the *Annales* brought history to a broader 'sociological' vision of the social *qua* subject of history. Later, although E.P. Thompson was averse to theorizing history, he and other social historians further opened history to what C. Wright Mills famously called the 'sociological imagination' that would explore relationships among people's biographic trajectories, their social locations, their identities and their fortunes in relation to broad societal transformations centred in developments such as economic transformations, war and political upheaval. History construed in this way faced an archival challenge – that the record tended to be more robust for elites than for the popular classes. But social historians became quite creative in finding materials that cast new light on hitherto obscured social worlds.

Many recent historical studies retain this rich analytic exploration of the social, but in relation to a diverse range of cultural topics. To reckon this diversity, matters would be simpler if there were some straightforward, unambiguous definition of culture (Eley,

1995; Sewell, 1999). In the rush to culture, however, the challenge is to avoid formulating a new irreducible construct that reifies and essentializes its object, rather than opening up more nuanced analysis (Biernacki, 1997). In this light, I invoke an open-ended definition that includes the high and low, the material and symbolic, by designating

culture as (1) *ideas, knowledge* (correct, wrong, or unverifiable belief) and *recipes* for doing things, (2) humanly fabricated *tools* (such as shovels, sewing machines, and computers), and (3) the *products* of social action that may be drawn upon in the further conduct of social life (an apple pie, a television set, or an interstate highway, for example). (Hall, Neitz, and Battani, 2003)

This definition is open to the possibility that culture is not unified, but, rather, clumpish, and differentially drawn into *bricolages* of ideas, tools and products by people in the course of their lives.

### *The New Topics*

Understandably, once culture as coherent, systemic totality is deconstructed, the historical study of culture becomes a growth industry. To carry forward Darnton's (1980) quantitative analysis a bit, we can employ the admittedly arbitrary criterion of whether book titles use the term 'cultural history' – that is, how many authors have gravitated to the label – as a crude indicator of the expansion of cultural history as a genre. Basically, the number of such books increased by approximately 50 per cent from the 1970s to the 1980s, and another 50 per cent from the 1980s to the 1990s.<sup>7</sup>

In many of the recent studies, cultural history continues to provide the durable historicist basis for a metanarrative concerning a region, people or era. Sometimes authors cover all bets by offering a triumvirate of 'political, social and cultural history'. But there also has been explosive growth in very different topics. To name a few, we now have cultural histories of trees, publishing, destroyed buildings, science fiction, women writers, opera, horror movies, literary realism, sports, audiences, advertising, travel, memory, hallucinations (by Timothy Leary), hysteria, the philosophical concept of dualism, rumours, fashion, trade, war, race, menstruation, manhood, consumer credit, smell, law and jurisprudence, lipstick, ageing, gesture, disease, engineering, aesthetic surgery, love, stock-car racing, plastic, museums, tattooing, curiosity, bureaucracy and a number

of these topics not in themselves but as treated in literature.

The range of topics stands as a reminder that culture can no longer be regarded as a coherent 'system' – though questions remain of where and when cultures have been more coherent or less (Sewell, 1999). Just as social historians concerned themselves with groups and movements that tended to get left out of elite political history, now, especially given the sociological differentiation of strata, groups and publics, cultural histories explore a remarkable range of matters that go far beyond the summary charting of developments in art or literature or popular culture. Indeed, because culture is socially pervasive, there has been a shift from cultural history as the history of culture to the infusion of histories more generally with cultural analysis. Under these conditions, the possible investigations far exceed the available cadre of scholars to carry them out, and choices of topic depend on some criterion of selection. As Hunt warns, citing François Furet and Robert Darnton, 'a cultural history defined topically could degenerate into an endless search for new cultural practices to describe, whether carnivals, cat massacres, or impotence trials' (1989: 9). Thus, without gainsaying the importance of other topics, it is worth identifying research agendas in the rising tide of publications that hold particular potential to yield important new historical understandings. I will briefly note three such agendas.

One particularly fruitful cluster of topics concerns cognitive culture – encompassing cultural studies of science, reason, knowledge, morality, religion and art. Margaret Somers (1996) advances this agenda by pursuing a 'historical epistemology' to demonstrate that a fundamental category by which scholars make sense of the world – citizenship – is freighted with historical baggage that occludes embracing deeper and more communal possibilities of citizenship. In a similar vein, Mary Poovey (1998) explores how a basic category of modern knowledge – the numerical 'fact' – became privileged over direct experience. Painting a broader canvas, Randall Collins (1998) employs a comparative approach to the problem of how knowledge is socially constructed; for a wide range of cases from ancient China and India to the present, he identifies how patterns of social interaction yield networks of philosophy. In other studies, Halttunen, Perry and their colleagues (1998) explore moral problems in

American life; Guthke (1999) charts gendered personifications of death; and Dooley (1999) traces the rise of scepticism in seventeenth-century Europe. Overall, studies in the broad cognitive-culture agenda begin to unveil structures and habits by which knowledge and meaning themselves are historically constituted.

A second broad agenda concerns inequality. Of course class conflict is a staple of social histories. And much recent research studies class, race and gender in order to gain a sense of people's lived experiences. In the study of inequality and experiences of it, historical studies of culture have a great deal to contribute. For example, by employing 'contract' as a metaphor for the structuration of social relations, Carol Pateman (1988) investigates patriarchy in relation to other social forms – indentured servant, slave and worker – to yield a powerful basis for unmasking fundamental cultural features of the social order. Joan Scott (1988) and Sonya Rose (1997) explore gender by way of historical cultural analysis, especially in relation to class, work and identity. On a different front, subaltern studies scholars and others have focused on the cultural aspects of domination and the configurations of modernity wrought of the colonial encounter (Chakrabarty, 2000; Prakash, 2001). In these and other studies, power and domination are no longer solely material relations; they are inscribed by their cultural manifestations.

This brings us to a third emergent subject, public culture, which connects a rich array of themes, from eroticism, cultural performance and display to the public sphere and citizenship. On the first front, Lynn Hunt (1991) and her collaborators have brought the human body and the body politic into conjunction via investigations of reproduction, caricature and pornography. In *The Place of the Stage*, Steven Mullaney (1988) explores a genealogy of performance that moves from the public spaces at the margins of Elizabethan England to consider cultural practices such as parades and displays. This Foucauldian theme is brought forward in different ways by Tony Bennett (1994), Donna Haraway (1994) and Barbara Benedict (2001). Yet public display is not only a matter of power-disciplined exhibition. By comparing centennials and bicentennial celebrations, historical sociologist Lyn Spillman (1997) exposes cultural invocations of national identity. Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi (1997) uses Walter Benjamin's analysis of the

aestheticization of politics under fascism to explore the cultural framing of power under Mussolini in Italy. As these studies emphasize, public culture is imposed, contested and negotiated. Here, the legacy of critical theory is obvious. Already, in 1962 Jürgen Habermas (1989) had argued in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* that the public enactment of political dialogue is historically contingent. Whatever one makes of Habermas's thesis, it has been a rich inspiration for subsequent critiques (Eley, 1994) and historical research (for example, Zaret, 2000).

The agendas concerned with cognitive culture, inequality and public culture do not exhaust the important synthetic directions (which would certainly include culture and economy, for example), but collectively, they suggest that the historico-cultural studies do more than catalogue the exotic, the quaint and the transgressive. By now, research concerned with culture has expanded into virtually every cranny of history's mansion. Within and beyond the curiosity cabinet, it yields new insights about fundamental questions concerning who 'we' are and can be.

### **Methodologies**

Traditionally, historians have shunned explicit methodological considerations in favour of construing their work as what Marc Bloch called a craft, centrally concerned with archival analysis and historiographic criticism. This stance fitted well within the practice of historicism, in which the spectre of methodology threatened a kind of formalism where important specificities might be lost simply because they did not come through the mesh imposed by a particular investigative regimen. The cultural turn both reinforced and challenged this anti-methodological position.

On the one hand, deconstruction of history in the hands of White, Cohen and de Certeau can be read as undermining any rationalist claims for historical knowledge, by revealing arbitrary bases of its construction. Moreover, hermeneutic and interpretative strands of cultural analysis have always been resistant to formalization, and this resistance tends to be reinforced by deconstructionist claims that every reading of a text is recursively subject to its own multiple readings. This leaves no firm ground on which to stand. Ironically, historicism is reinforced in its virtues. However, the historicist object of analysis is upgraded. Thus,

Stephen Greenblatt (1982) champions 'New Historicism' as an approach that rejects both ahistorical (typically structuralist and post-structuralist) textual criticism and the old historicism concerned with metanarratives of literature and their times. In their place, the New Historicism celebrates rich elaboration of the often serendipitous connections between historically embedded literature and the social milieu where given literary works circulate. Methodologically, Stephen Greenblatt and Catherine Gallagher (2000: 19) affirm, the New Historicism embraces deep interpretative engagement with their subjects, and they would deem any effort to formalize method as sign of failure.

Yet this claim seems too coy, for the New Historicism makes a methodological as well as a topical shift. One of the central dilemmas of cultural history concerns how to connect culture with historical processes while avoiding the temptation to essentialize a given cultural phenomenon as having a life of its own (Burke, 1997: 184–91; Hall, 1990). True virtuosi at cultural analysis have been able to come to a solution that avoids both meta-narrative and formalization. How do they do so? By ferreting out enough evidence on a variety of fronts to portray broad cultural shifts convincingly, as a rich but not necessarily coherent tapestry. Thus, in *Murder Most Foul: The Killer and the American Gothic Imagination* (1998), Karen Halttunen charts a decisive cultural shift in American understandings of murder. In an eighteenth-century world where violence was a more central part of life, this most heinous of crimes was the occasion for sermons that treated it as the most visible and disturbing sign of the ultimate depravity and sinfulness of all human beings. But by the nineteenth century, public narratives about murder shifted from the genre of sermon to accounts of crime and its investigation. These accounts allowed their audiences both to sublimate pain, and to experience the horror and mystery of it vicariously, by obsessively consuming fictional detective novels and highly dramatized newspaper accounts of trials. *Murder Most Foul* achieves its compelling force on the basis of the far-flung details that Halttunen marshals to her thesis – points such as the change from eight-sided coffins to rectangular ones that obscured the shape of the human body. By drawing together diverse yet relevant observations, Halttunen convinces that she is pointing to a substantial cultural shift that resonates on

multiple fronts of American life. This resolution to the dilemma of historicism, resistant though it may be to methodological formalization, involves a methodological innovation that effectively jettisons metanarrative as the study of a cultural object with a life of its own.

Though it is seldom acknowledged, the full cultural turn also has its explicit methodological side. Foucault's proposal for an archaeology of knowledge was a methodological innovation that paved the way for the study of embedded discourses. In turn, once inquiry is construed as a cultural practice, it is problematic either to claim to inoculate any particular practice from methodological scrutiny or to privilege a given practice on the basis of its supposed methodological superiority. All inquiry proceeds under one form or another of 'impure reason'. Pursued to its conclusion, this view makes it possible to identify a series of alternative methodological approaches that can be directed to the historical study of culture (Hall, 1999). And indeed, sociological approaches provide alternatives to Haltunen's post-historicist solution, by structuring historical inquiry via explicit methodology. Thus, Wendy Griswold (1986) charted the revival productions of Elizabethan plays over centuries, as a way of tapping into questions about the resonance of texts with audiences under changing historical circumstances. The opposite explicit strategy – of tracing back the sources of cultural forms – can be found in my study of the 1978 mass suicide of Jim Jones's Peoples Temple. *Gone from the Promised Land* (1987) was subtitled 'Jonestown in American cultural history'. But the approach was not to fit Peoples Temple within a metanarrative about the 'promised land'; rather, by use of ideal-types, I charted the cultural sources, genealogies, mutations and temporal and social conduits of Temple cultural motifs and practices, and the emergent construction of 'revolutionary suicide'. The methodological strategy of this study seeks to connect culture directly to the historically embedded social interactions by which it comes into play. Culture is traced in the situated invocations, revivals and improvisations by people who work on, and through, culture.

### *Theoretical Controversies*

The full cultural turn disabuses scholars of the premise that they can engage in theory-free analysis. In the wake of this development, the

social turn necessarily involves reconsideration and redeployment of theory. Thus, some scholars now seem more willing to invoke explicit models through which to consider relations between culture and historicities. In a particularly bold move, Lynn Hunt uses a Freudian metaphor to explore the French political unconscious at work in what she calls *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (1992). Hunt is careful to distance her study from any universalistic application of Freudian theory; as she emphasizes, the romances played out in multiple ways. But Freud's model sheds light on everything from the assassination of Louis XVI to the status of women in the revolutionary aftermath. On a different front, but also in France, Catherine Kudlick draws on Foucault's analyses of disciplines and power to thematize her investigation, *Cholera in Post-Revolutionary Paris* (1996). These studies, beyond their specifics, signal the possibilities of using theory explicitly. For culture, there are rich traditions upon which to draw, ranging from the work of Freud, Weber, Durkheim, Gramsci, Benjamin, the Frankfurt school and Bourdieu's more recent sociological consolidation of a theory of cultural capital, to theories of texts, myth and narrative originating in the work of scholars such as Saussure, Bakhtin, Barthes and Ricoeur. All that is required is for scholars to overcome the cultural lag incumbent in the notion that theory is inherently totalizing – a view that might describe the work of Talcott Parsons in the 1960s or Louis Althusser in the 1970s, but which completely misses both the post-positivist turn in social theory and the increasingly nuanced ways that historical sociologists use 'deep analogies' to ferret out embedded social and cultural processes rather than subsuming whole cases under grand theories (Stinchcombe, 1978).

Theoretical work in historico-cultural inquiry is also driven by particular controversies. The broadest such controversy concerns the primacy of discourse versus practices, and the relations of culture in either conception to social processes. Bryan Palmer (1990) reacted with horror at the prospect of a discursive turn in which the very possibility of writing history would founder on a putative divide between texts and 'reality'. But in actual research, studying discourses *in* history has proven a rich way to link a narrower intellectual history with a broader cultural history, by identifying 'thought worlds' in which people at various times and places have participated.

Even a cursory list is impressive. William Sewell (1980) explored the symbolic character of labourers' political consciousness in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century France. Gareth Stedman Jones (1983) studied how language shaped the working-class agenda in England during the Chartist movement. And Keith Baker (1990) investigated, among other matters, how the word 'revolution' came to have the political significance in France that would make a modern revolution a meaningful occurrence.

What is the relation between discourse and historical process? And indeed, is the discursive model an adequate basis for general cultural analysis? Taking up the former question, Robert Wuthnow (1989) has compared the Protestant Reformation, the Enlightenment and the socialist movement in Europe, to explore the structural conditions and social processes under which new ideas articulated with the broad audiences that embraced them. Zeroing in on such processes, Marc Steinberg (1999) proposes to bridge the analytic gap between materialist and discursive approaches by using a 'dialogic perspective' to analyse 'discourses of contention' among silk weavers and cotton spinners in early nineteenth-century England (see also Ansell, 1997; Kane, 2000). Yet for all the attention to discourse, neither its poststructuralist nor hermeneutic variant has received universal embrace as a general basis on which to model culture. To the contrary, it is easy enough to think of culture (for example, visibility) that cannot be reduced to discursive analysis. Even for kinds of culture in which symbolic meaning is obviously central, its relation to social action remains undertheorized, and its historicity opaque. For this reason, Bourdieu (1977 [1972]) emphasizes *practice* over discourse, and a broadly phenomenological approach thematizes the interplay between cultural structures and meaningful action (Hall, 1990, 2000). In turn, tracing the historicity of culture in concrete phenomena helps researchers overcome the false analytic divide between discourse and practice. Thus, Roger Chartier (1989) brings issues of text and reading into a dynamic understanding of circulation and appropriation of the printed word. And Richard Biernacki argues for analysing the pragmatic relations that emerge between discursive signs and practices, so as to 'move away from a purely discursive notion of culture without, however, counterposing "corporeal" practice as a binary opposite that

is inaccessible and essentially dissimilar to language' (2000: 309).

Taken together, the proliferation of cultural topics, the anti-formalist as well as the more explicit methodological developments, and the emergent theoretical controversies suggest the contours of an emergent situation. 'Cultural history' as a genre no longer encompasses historical explorations of culture in their variety. After the full cultural turn, in the midst of the *longue durée* of the social turn, the historical study of culture becomes subject to a proliferation of research agendas, methodologies and theoretical approaches that construe culture no longer only as a temporally continuous totality or quasi-coherent 'system', but in the most diverse moments and sites of lived activity.

## CONCLUSION

Through the cultural turn has come a new phase of the long-wave social turn, where culture, no longer floating freely, no longer drifting across time, is connected to concrete episodes in which people create and deploy, disseminate and adopt or transform cultural products and meanings in their practices of life – from specialized culture worlds of theatre, art, philosophy, religion and ideology to the worlds of everyday life where, as Erving Goffman and Michel de Certeau remind us, different kinds of theatre, ritual and practice are carried out. Matters would be simpler if culture could somehow be contained within some narrow definition or theoretical framework, or if, in the old historicist fashion, it could be 'naturalized' as a self-evident topic of historical treatment. But these days, it cannot. Applying Randall Collins's investigation of sequences in the historical development of knowledge to historico-cultural analysis itself suggests that we live in an era of reflexivity about the intellectual operations that create knowledge. Describing such circumstances, Collins observes, 'The search for problems, for energizing points of attention and contention, which is the life of intellectual networks, has turned to exposing the inner truth claims of the various specialized branches to the alternative perspectives of different branches' (1998: 876–7). This development is hardly the threat to scholarship sometimes proclaimed. As Bonnell and Hunt suggest, 'Ironically..., the anti-positivist cultural

studies movement has revived one of the great dreams of nineteenth-century positivism: a grounds for making different branches of knowledge mutually intelligible, if not mutually transparent' (1999: 25–6)

Studies of culture in recent years have broken down boundaries of disciplinary turf. Now, manifold approaches and fields vie with one another for intellectual capital and cultural significance. The discipline of history, like other modern fields, has been pulled apart by the reflexivity of cultural analysis. When the dust settles from the turf battles and the dismemberment, what remains? Historicity, as a basic ontological and phenomenological given, frames the problem of understanding culture. But once the unity of history is abandoned as a temporal object, 'culture' has no history. Instead, we are at the threshold of a far more promising era of inquiry. The entire range of problems in socio-historical inquiry – from emotion and identity, household and community life, sociability and play, to religion, ethnic conflict, economic life, bureaucratic organization, state formation and social movements – are subject to synthetic analyses that treat cultural phenomena in social terms, and not just by incorporation of explanatory 'factors' or causal 'variables' that remain 'unmusical' concerning meaningful nuances of culture. Matters would be simpler if there were some single approach, theory, discipline or interdisciplinary venue within which the historical projects of this new era could be pursued. But we bear the fate of living in more interesting times, when the vitality of historico-cultural investigations will depend on intercultural communication among diverse practitioners, using methodologies often alien to one another, considering subjects that matter beyond disciplines.

#### NOTES

1. Herder developed his position in reaction to Kant's critique of pure reason, something I did not realize when I proposed more than two centuries later to supplement Kant with a 'critique of impure reason' (1999: 7).

2. To be sure, Bendix and Moore incorporated cultural analysis – Bendix in his *Kings or People* (1978), and Moore (1984) in his comparative historical sociology of privacy. However, their approaches did not attract much interest among the emerging generation of scholars in the 1970s and 1980s who took up cultural history.

3. On the problem of historical time, see also Hall (1994) and Toohey, this volume.

4. One could pursue a comparison of historicist versus linguistic structuralist analysis specifically on Rabelais by comparing Febvre's study to Bakhtin's (1968 [1965]) semiotic treatment.

5. See Edward Rothstein, 'Attacks on U.S. Challenge the Perspectives of Postmodern True Believers', *New York Times*, 22 September 2001, p. A17.

6. Iggers (1997) treats the cultural turn as a major subtext in his account of twentieth-century historiography, seeking to hold the barricades against the eclipse of history by textuality. Poster (1997) hopes to demonstrate the relevance of broadly postmodern approaches for shifting practices of cultural history. My own *Cultures of Inquiry* (1999) is an effort to theorize the heterogeneity of historical methodologies by way of a discursive analysis. Bonnell and Hunt (1999) have edited an important set of essays that raise questions about where to go from here. Other efforts directly to engage the consequences of the cultural turn for historical inquiry include contributions to the book edited by Patrick Joyce (2001).

7. A search for the term 'cultural history' was conducted on 11 June 2001 at the California Digital Library ([www.cdlib.org](http://www.cdlib.org)), using the University of California-Berkeley collection, and excluding museum catalogues, bibliographies, sound recordings and dissertations. Titles in which the words were separated but 'cultural history' was implied (for example, 'a cultural and social history') were included. The title count was 62 books for 1970 to 1979, 99 for 1980 to 1989, and 181 for 1990 to 1999. For the eighteen-month period from 2000 to mid-2001, 25 titles appeared; if this rate were to continue for the entire decade, it would represent a levelling off. Such a development would be consonant with my suggestion that historical studies of culture have transcended the label 'cultural history'.

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## *As Intellectual History Meets Historical Sociology:*

### *Historical Sociology after the Linguistic Turn*

PETER WAGNER

The past two decades have witnessed many claims that the social sciences were undergoing an interpretative, a cultural or a linguistic turn (for example, Bonnell and Hunt, 1999; Hiley et al., 1991; Toews, 1987). There is certainly no consensus as to what such turns entailed or even what the precise nature of them was, the variety of terms used being indicative of at least a similar variety of views. It seems nevertheless possible, however, to identify here one broad shift – rather than a range of disconnected phenomena – that emphasizes the significance of language for human social life, and thus for the study of human social life as well. Beyond its original and much more specific meaning, therefore, the description of this shift as a linguistic turn appropriately captures this feature of recent debates.

At the same time, however, the expression ‘linguistic turn’ has also been used, or interpreted, as a battle-cry introducing a cleavage in the social and human sciences and, in the view of critics, threatening to undermine the whole intellectual endeavour of those sciences. Not least on grounds of such controversy, the impact of this turn is difficult to assess. For historical sociology, we may legitimately ask whether the linguistic turn has at all taken place or whether it has not been

outright rejected. If we look at recent works that ambitiously aim at both continuing and modifying the long tradition of historical sociology, such as Christophe Charle’s *La crise des sociétés impériales* (2001), it is sometimes difficult to find any traces of the concern for language that has shaped meta-historiographical debate over the past quarter of a century. Other observers, however, may use the same example to arrive at the opposite conclusion. The striking phenomenon of our time is, then, rather the fact that works such as Charle’s that analyse entire societies over considerable stretches of time, and even in a comparative perspective, are so scarce. In so far as the linguistic turn raised the awareness of the difficulties inherent in analysing historical documents, in drawing conclusions from those documents about the past world, and in writing up those conclusions, its effects – intended or not – may, in this view, have been the destruction of the tradition of historical sociology.

Any further exploration of whether the former or the latter assertion tells us more about the relation between the linguistic turn and the social and human sciences will require both a prior delimitation of those areas of inquiry that are of interest here and an approximate definition of the range of possible

impacts of the linguistic turn on them. For the purposes of this chapter, a rather narrow approach to both questions will be taken. In the next section, I will try to define a core area of historical sociology within an otherwise enormously large area of historical social inquiry. Subsequently, I will propose to understand the linguistic turn for my purposes as the emergence of a reflexive consciousness about the structure and uses of language in intellectual history, broadly understood. The main purpose of this chapter is, then, to demonstrate what happens when historical sociology encounters such language-conscious intellectual history. Rather than being destructive of scholarly possibilities, such an encounter could revive historical sociology by opening new perspectives on old, but insufficiently answered, questions.

**DEMOCRACY AND CAPITALISM  
IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE:  
THE LEGACY OF HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY**

The understanding of historical sociology that will be used in this chapter is rather limited, but at the same time quite specific. A facile first approximation is by authors and works. The tradition of historical sociology under consideration here finds its start in works such as Alexis de Tocqueville's *La démocratie en Amérique* and *L'ancien régime et la révolution* and Karl Marx's *Capital* and the associated political writings, as well as, somewhat later but in evident discussion with the earlier authors, Max Weber's *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1976 [1904–5]) and his writings on the sociology of world religions. Overshadowed by world-political dispute as well as by intellectual doubts about its very possibility, the tradition is weakened between the two great wars of the twentieth century. Norbert Elias's *Civilizing Process* and Karl Polanyi's *Great Transformation* (1985 [1944]) found the attention they merited only after the second war. After that war, though, the tradition revived with a focus on totalitarianism, Hannah Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) and Barrington Moore's *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (1969) being landmark works. Drawing critical inspiration from the latter, in particular, historical sociologists such as Charles Tilly and Theda Skocpol aimed at consolidating the approach and securing it a legitimate place within the

discipline of sociology, which by then had undergone intense methodological debate with often rather stifling outcomes, especially in the US context.

Trying to go beyond a list of names in delimiting an area of interest, Theda Skocpol's attempt from the early 1980s is indeed useful. She defined historical sociology as 'research devoted to understanding the nature and effects of large-scale structures and fundamental processes of change' (1984a: 4).<sup>1</sup> In so far as the focus had long been – although never exclusively – on the history of European and North American societies, 'large-scale structures' easily translates as states and capitalism and 'fundamental processes of change' as democratization, commodification and bureaucratization as well as revolution as a crucial form of change. The authors mentioned above, taken together, certainly still provide the key reference to the study of these phenomena. In rough historical sequence, we can see them as being interested, first, in the emergence and breakthrough of novel forms of political and economic organization; second, in the cultural underpinnings of those forms and in their historical transformations; and, third, in the fragility of those forms, or, more appropriately, in the experience that their assertion cannot be taken for granted as the outcome of any linear process in history.

In this characterization, several aspects need to be underlined because of their relation to intellectual developments during the final quarter of the twentieth century. Methodological debate in the social sciences from the 1950s onwards had raised the stakes in terms of the evidence required for making assertions in historical sociology. A first response was a quantitative turn, a second and related one an emphasis on material-structural features apparently more easy to discern than ideational-cultural features (both approaches are discussed in detail elsewhere in this volume). By 1960, Weber appeared to have lost his debate with Marx against the 'economic explanation' of history (Weber, 1976 [1904–5]: 91), although the latter was now much more broadly conceived than by Marx himself. Furthermore, the raising of the methodological stakes also had an impact on the very notion of 'historical explanation' itself. Historical sociology had always tried to keep some distance from the older tradition of philosophy of history; this distance may indeed precisely constitute it as a genre of its own. Being interested

in 'fundamental processes of change', however, it proved impossible entirely to throw off the issue of a direction of history (for more detail on this issue, see Wagner, 2001a: Ch 5; 2001b). Finally, the historical sociology in question here certainly always was a political sociology, and this in a double sense. First, it was interested in political forms, such as democracy and totalitarianism, their conditions of emergence, their impact on the conduct of life, and their fragility and viability. Second, there was a normative interest behind these questions, as an interest in avoiding some of those forms, or some of their consequences on the conduct of life, and in promoting others.

More recent intellectual developments radicalized the debate on all these issues. As much of an outsider to the field as he was, Jean-François Lyotard's (1984 [1979]) observation on the end of the metanarratives in connection with his idea about a change in the social bond brought together the otherwise quite varied dimensions of epistemological and methodological criticism of historical sociology. By implication, what he and others were saying suggested that all preceding analyses of long-term processes of change were deeply flawed. They had worked with some version of a material concept of the social bond, whereas the latter should be seen as constituted linguistically and – by possible, though not necessary, implication – as existing in much more varied and open forms than hitherto assumed. As a consequence, that which had been conceived as 'large-scale structures' did not extend and persist in stable form across space and time but always remained dependent upon interpretation by present actors. Any political project or analysis, finally, that derived its conclusions from a structural analysis of those large-scale forms had become impossible.

This brief and almost caricatural synthesis provides a radical – but not entirely unsubstantiated – view of the possible consequences of the linguistic turn for historical sociology. In this form, it is used almost exclusively by critics of that turn and hardly ever by its proponents. To do justice to the linguistic challenge to conventional historical sociology requires a closer look at what it can be seen to entail.

#### LANGUAGE AND HISTORY

Put bluntly, the linguistic turn for the social and historical sciences means nothing else

than that sociologists and historians should take language – the fact that human beings relate to one another and constitute their world by language – seriously. This seems a strange thing to say, since it certainly implies that they have not done so before. And arguably, such neglect of language prevailed during the 1950s and 1960s, being closely related to the philosophical assumption that there is always only ever one adequate relation between reality and its representation in language, that is, that truth means correspondence between a linguistic statement and the piece of reality to which it refers. Within philosophical debate, from where it emerged (Rorty, 1967), the expression 'linguistic turn' describes the shift of attention towards philosophy of language that occurred in the middle of the twentieth century, partly with a view to grounding a correspondence theory of truth in an exploration of its linguistic prerequisites, but increasingly recognizing that philosophy cannot mirror nature, to use Richard Rorty's (1980) celebrated phrase, that the world for human beings is always open to change by redescription (Rorty, 1989).

Debate in the social and historical sciences has accompanied, though often only gradually and reluctantly, this shift in philosophical debate. The dispute on positivism in German sociology, for instance, marked the end of the old controversy in the philosophy of the social sciences in which the claim to positive knowledge was countered by a critique of ideology that itself relied on an alternative social theory and philosophy, that is, a theory of capitalism grounded in the tradition of German idealism. On either side of the dispute, expression in language was a rather unproblematic issue once the adequate philosophical stand had been taken. And while the dispute went on, research in the social sciences more and more proceeded on the positivist model, even though mostly in a quite unreflected way. The linguistic turn, which was gradually under way at that time, then opened (or reopened) a number of quite different issues.

First, and this may be a case of reopening rather than opening, it brought back the question of ideology, albeit in a new form. As mentioned above, historical sociology had increasingly come to focus on 'material' structures in a broad sense and had forgotten about the Marx–Weber dispute over 'economic' and 'cultural' historical explanation. The emphasis on economic and social factors shaping historical developments was so

pronounced that even the call for emphasizing politico-institutional structures had to be made by means of the battle-cry 'bringing the state back in' (Evans et al., 1985). Cultural-ideational factors, if one wants to use such a term, remained a rather neglected 'third level' of analysis (Ernest Labrousse, with reference to the *Annales* distinction between economy, society and – the third level – civilization). Within a Marxist frame of analysis, recourse to Gramsci opened the way to emphasize the indeterminacy of this level, that is, its relative independence from socio-economic structures, unlike in earlier critique of ideology. In historiography, the *histoire des mentalités* claimed the existence and persistence of collective representations, to use Durkheim's term, similarly without any necessary link to other social structures. Once the possibility of both the independent existence of such a 'third level' and its impact on the other two levels had been more broadly accepted, the time-honoured field of intellectual history, or history of ideas, moved more into the centre of the discipline of history. The emergence of cultural history as a new sub-field and the rise in prominence of cultural sociology, or more broadly and ambitiously cultural studies (or *Kulturwissenschaften*, a comprehensive term already used by Max Weber), is also related to the revived interest in ideas. Disregarding for the moment the variety of approaches within these fields, their common denominator is the insistence that social life cannot be studied comprehensively if the ways in which human beings express their lives and condition through language and ideas is not taken into account beyond the apparently 'harder' socio-economic and politico-institutional structures of the social world.

Put like this, though, the concern for language and ideas would have but little impact on the ways in which historical sociology proceeds. A 'third level' could merely be added to the other two, without any other change in the epistemology or philosophy of the social sciences. The picture changes, however, once one asserts that all relations between human beings and the world are constituted by language. Such a claim, secondly, asserts some epistemic superiority of the so-called 'third' level over the other two. Philosophically, it goes back to the Romanticist reaction to the Enlightenment, or, more appropriately, to the Romanticist enlargement of the Enlightenment philosophical revolution. Once the Enlightenment claim has been made that human beings

gain knowledge about the world by distancing themselves from the world, the question of what stands between, or mediates between, those distanced human beings and the world became inescapable. The answer to this question is: language. The relation of human beings to one another and to other aspects of the world is one of interpretation.

From Romanticism onwards, this insight stands in the background of the hermeneutic approach to the social sciences, an approach that has been as persistent as it has been marginal in the history of the social sciences. At the time of the linguistic turn, it has been revived in the works of Hans-Georg Gadamer, Paul Ricoeur and, somewhat differently, Jacques Derrida.<sup>2</sup> Gadamer, for instance, has insisted on 'the comprehensive pre-interpretedness of the world' when encountered by the human being (1971: 139). The experience of the world is thus linked to the interpretation of the world: 'language as experience of the world' (1979 [1960]: 397). Or, to anticipate bluntly the argument below about the transfer of this approach into historical sociology: there is no 'class' without a concept of class.

Thirdly, the linguistic turn can also be seen as relating to writing about history. In this sense, for instance, and quite in line with Gadamer's perspective, Karl Marx's writing about class can be regarded no longer as directly presenting social reality but rather as interpreting that reality. Any textual 'evidence' about historical occurrences is not evidence in a positivist sense, but a contemporary interpretation of occurrences. The question about the relation of those interpretations to any 'reality' that remains unknown 'as such' is thus inevitably posed, and much of the meta-historical debate after the linguistic turn has been devoted to identifying means to close that 'gap' between text and reality (for an overview, see Ankersmit, 1994, drawing on Roland Barthes's notion of 'reality effect', among others). At the same time, any present writing about history necessarily stands in a similarly interpretative relation to that which it is about, to its object. Thus, the raising of this issue could not but lead into a discussion about relativism, dramatized not least by focusing on recent 'revisionisms' in historical interpretation, from the French Revolution to Nazism.

All three implications of the concern for language are each of their own of considerable significance for historical sociology. In their combination, they amount to a forceful questioning of most established practices within

that area of research. In what follows, however, I will concentrate on the second aspect, the emphasis on the interpretedness of the world for human experience, and will include into the account only the most immediate linkages of this aspect to the other two. In other words, I will not discuss the mere adding of a third, ideational level of reality to what otherwise remains a structural analysis of history. Read purely this way, the linguistic turn could relatively easily be handled within historical sociology, but wherever this issue was opened it has indeed tended to broaden quickly to include at least the second, sometimes also the third aspect.<sup>3</sup> And neither will I discuss the more strictly epistemological issues of the third aspect. That discussion has tended to move quickly into a rather barren, dogmatic controversy over the very representability, or intelligibility, of the past social world. My choice of focus is not meant to suggest that the excluded aspects are of little relevance. Rather, it is motivated by a double concern. On the one hand, and as I hope will become clear at the end of my reasoning, I take the linguistic turn to entail the need for a quite radical rethinking of the practices of historical sociology. A look at the first aspect alone would not lead very far in addressing that need. On the other hand, though, this need would not be well responded to if the empirical-historical investigation at expressions of the human condition were to be replaced, in the face of its undeniable difficulties, by philosophers' claims to reach deeper insight without any empirical-historical look at all.

**DISCOURSE FORMATIONS, SPEECH ACTS,  
CONCEPTUAL HISTORY: THE REVOLUTION  
IN INTELLECTUAL HISTORY**

At this point, the focus of the remainder of my argument may be relatively well defined. It is the space where intellectual history, broadly understood, has begun to meet historical sociology in recent years. Such a *rapprochement* has taken place from three different angles in roughly parallel movements.

Across his early works, such as *Surveiller et punir* and *L'histoire de la folie* up to the archaeology of the human sciences as presented in *Les mots et les choses*, Michel Foucault (1975, 1976, 1974) developed an approach to the analysis of discursive formations as well as to the linkage between discourses and practices that has emphasized the

weight of such linguistic structures upon human beings, indeed structuring their relation to the world, in contrast to human beings actively structuring their relation to the world via linguistic practices. Even though Foucault and Quentin Skinner's works developed largely in benign mutual neglect, the latter (Skinner, 1988 [1969]) may be seen as taking the opposite stand in his emphasis on speech acts in the history of political thought, regarding authors of texts as intending a meaningful change in political thought via the performative capacity of language. Like Foucault, though, Skinner insists on the significance of the linguistic context, in which the speech act takes primary place, in contrast to an extralinguistic, social and economic context that was given direct relevance in much of earlier intellectual history, but also in contrast to any view that sees the variety of linguistic expressions in political thought as merely variations around 'perennial problems' that never change. Reinhart Koselleck (1985), thirdly, proposed a historiography of concepts somehow in-between Foucault's and Skinner's approaches. Without constructing all-powerful discursive formations, he insists on the embedding of individual concepts in broader linguistic structures and aims at identifying major periods of conceptual change.

All three scholars, thus, share an emphasis on language in historical analysis and they underline this feature of their work as distinct in comparison to the approaches to which they critically relate. For Foucault, these are the subject-centred human sciences as well as a structuralism that is incapable of theorizing its own linguistic practice. For Skinner, it is the conventional history of political ideas as well as its *marxisant* counterpart. And for Koselleck, it is a 'social history' that takes for immediately granted the existence of the social phenomena that concepts refer to. Despite all differences, there is therefore a clearly recognizable common methodological and conceptual concern.<sup>4</sup> The commonalities, however, reach even further, namely into the area of the substantive reinterpretation of European history over the past quarter of a millennium.

Foucault (1974) identifies the closing years of the eighteenth century as the period during which the classical *episteme* is superseded by the discursive formation formed by the disciplines of biology, economics and philology. For Skinner (1998), similarly, the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century emerges ever

more clearly as a period of a major intellectual transformation in the course of his studies. Focusing explicitly on political thought, he describes this transformation as the decline of republican (or, more recently, neo-Roman) thinking, which experiences its last era of dominance during the American Revolution, and the rise of individualist liberalism, which becomes the pivotal political theory over the course of the nineteenth century. And for Koselleck, the period between 1770 and 1830 forms a transitional period (*Sattelzeit*) as well, a period after which the use of concepts is unproblematically recognizable to us. Defined more precisely as an opening of the horizon of time so that expectations can far exceed experiences, this conceptual revolution thus spells the transition to the contemporary period, the period in which we still live, and which already on those grounds can be referred to as modernity.

All three authors thus identify a similar historical period as a period of discursive transformation during which emerge the discourses that dominate current intellectual and political life.<sup>5</sup> The relation of the present to the era before that transformation is conceptualized differently, however. Foucault rather neutrally observes grand tectonic shifts beyond any human capacity or will. Skinner's account underlies a vague notion of decline, of a loss of something that was important and should be regained, at least as an intellectual resource, if not a political practice. Koselleck, although he writes in the distanced voice of the professional historian, is the only one among the three who may be seen to embrace the modernity the linguistic advent of which he describes.

In all three cases, however, the nature of the modernity consequent upon the discursive transformation is under-specified and/or widely open to dispute. Can one really argue, as Foucault implicitly does, that classical sociology, for instance, placed the human subject indubitably at its centre? Does the accusation of having provided an over-socialized conception of the human being not lead towards emphasizing a quite different feature of the sociological tradition (Wrong, 1961)? Is it really the case, as Skinner maintains, that individualist liberalism has governed the self-understanding of political modernity increasingly since the so-called 'democratic revolutions'? What is the relation of republicanism and individualism to nationalism and socialism/communism in the European

nineteenth and twentieth centuries? And, to continue on that train of thought, was it not the ambition of social and political philosophy during that period, contra the implication of Koselleck's reasoning, to close, or at least stabilize, the horizon of time again, to channel expectations into well-governable directions?

At this point of the argument, one could move to a detailed consideration of the approaches and findings with a view to identifying the reasons for the emergence of such problematic assertions. Rather than doing so, however, I will claim that the basic problem of an intellectual history, broadly understood, that takes language seriously has hitherto been the unwillingness of its promoters to relate it back to a comprehensive study of societal transformations. Intellectual history has effectively challenged a language-unconscious historical sociology, but it has not yet demonstrated what a language-conscious historical sociology could or should look like. Such demonstration cannot be substituted for by a mere insistence on taking linguistic change into account (that would be a broadening in the sense of the first aspect mentioned above). Rather, it is likely to entail a recasting of historical sociology's basic *problématiques*.

By pointing, in what follows, to some examples of studies that have ventured in such a direction (even though their reach is quite limited in terms of the individual studies), I try to sketch what such a demonstration is likely to entail. This discussion cannot be exhaustive, not only for reasons of space, but also because a comprehensive rethinking of historical sociology's basic *problématiques* has not yet fully taken place. Instead, I will proceed by making use of exemplary works and trying to show what their findings contribute to such a rethinking. Doing so, I will be working chronologically backwards, from the middle of the twentieth century to the end of the eighteenth.

**POLITICAL MODERNITY AND ITS  
PROBLÉMATIQUES: FOUR EPISODES  
IN RETHINKING THE HISTORY OF  
EUROPEAN SOCIETIES**

*Keynesianism and Economic Discourse*

The adoption of Keynesian macro-economic policies in a number of Western societies between the 1930s and the 1960s has been

explored in a comparative research project on 'the power of economic ideas', directed by Peter Hall (1989). The context in which this question could be posed had, of course, drastically changed between the early 1970s and the mid-1980s, the period of the research. By 1970, it was widely held that Keynesianism provided for the problem of the stabilization of production and exchange a solution that was functionally superior to any others that had been proposed or tried before. It was widely seen as effectively smoothing the development of the capitalist economy and at the same time providing leeway for redistribution and, thus, greater equality without, however, renouncing the benefits of capitalism, that is, an enhancement of 'the wealth of nations', to use a time-honoured formula. The question about the reception of Keynesianism was accordingly only one about the social conditions of the acceptance of a superior idea. After the mid-1970s, in contrast, it was increasingly observed that the Keynesian treatment, if applied over long periods, produced considerable side-effects. Some analysts argued that these side-effects were worse than the problems caused by the disease; and the voices of those analysts were increasingly widely heard. This change, about which nothing else will be said here, had at least the advantage of opening a broader, so to say, post-Kuhnian, perspective on the social conditions of intellectual change. Peter Hall's research project was set in this intellectual context, and I will discuss just two contributions from it that pose the question of the *relation between an intellectual transformation and a politico-institutional transformation* in quite different terms.

Margaret Weir's (1989) comparison of the American and the British debates over Keynesianism is mainly interested in identifying how politico-institutional structures determine the fate of political ideas. Thus, she stays close to the structural sociology developed by Theda Skocpol, only adding the reception of ideas as an area of interest to it.<sup>6</sup> There is no doubt that interesting findings emerge from her analysis: the closed and hierarchical character of a centralized government structure, as in the UK, entails a longer resistance to novel ideas, but also leads to its rapid and consistent adoption once the old orthodoxy is overcome. In contrast, the comparatively open and multi-layered US economic-policy-making apparatus provides easy access for new ideas;

however, in turn, it also tends to slow down their adoption and to dilute their basic messages.

Yet the limits of this approach reside already in its basic design, which assumes that there just are politico-institutional structures to which ideas are brought from the outside, and the objective of the analysis is then to find out what happens in this encounter.<sup>7</sup> In contrast, Pierre Rosanvallon's (1989) analysis of Keynesianism in France opens up broader questions. Rosanvallon's first problem in this collaborative project was that there was hardly any reception of Keynesianism in France until after the end of the Second World War.<sup>8</sup> It is, thus, not least the absence of a phenomenon that imposes the broadening of the research question – this is, incidentally, one of the heuristic benefits from comparative research. In this case, Rosanvallon opted for a broader contextualization with a view towards identifying the register of available languages for economic policy in France during the 1930s. Importantly, he identified a tradition of government measures to alleviate unemployment that went back to at least 1848, and that at that point became closely related to the self-understanding of the republican political order in general. In such a politico-historical context, there was then no apparent need for Keynesian ideas during the 1930s; solutions to the problem had already been found much earlier, and the only dispute was over if and how to apply them. Thus, it becomes possible to pose anew the question about the specific nature of the Keynesian innovation.

Rather than providing the ideal solution for stabilizing an inherently unstable market economy, Keynes's intellectual step meant a *minor* transformation of the economic orthodoxy of the time, compared to the solutions offered by fascism, socialism or, as the French and Belgians would say, *planisme* that were well under debate at the time. All these proposals diagnosed a profound crisis of liberalism, a view that was indeed widely shared at least since the First World War. The specificity of Keynes's view was the limited nature of the crisis, being namely confined to questions of economic adjustment. All other proposals linked the problems of economic liberalism to those of political liberalism and saw a more profound transformation of society as necessary. Rosanvallon's analysis restores this broader context of linguistic-discursive formations, which, at that point, had indeed been shaped over a considerable period of time.

### **Early Social Policies And Sociological Discourse**

Let us thus move a step backwards in time and look at the debates about what are now known as early social policies, or the origins of the welfare state. For a long time, to say this all too briefly, research on the development of the welfare state was shaped by one of two perspectives. First, social policies were seen as a functional response to problems generated by the workings of a market economy. The similarity of the problems as well as the functionality of the solutions were then derived from the apparent fact that social policies were introduced in all capitalist-industrial societies with only relatively minor differences in timing (overlooking the minor exception of the US). However, it is precisely the considerable differences between policies adopted that was neglected in this view, indeed was even systematically left out of focus owing to the guiding assumption of functionality. Second, in contrast and partly in response to such functionalism, culturalist approaches emphasized the difference across states and societies. Those approaches, however, were often at a loss to explain those national political cosmologies that they needed to evoke as determining factors for policy developments.

Post-linguistic-turn historical sociology tries to deal with these issues by again linking the major political transformation that the introduction of early social policies obviously entailed to an intellectual transformation, in this case to a rethinking of the social bond, or of 'society'.<sup>9</sup> The background here is the observation of new forms of poverty and other social evils, such as crime, a declining medical state of parts of the population, and prostitution. From the middle of the nineteenth century onwards, roughly speaking, the conviction gained ground that these phenomena were related to the processes of industrialization and urbanization, and thus that they would not disappear with the consolidation of the new industrial order, but would rather get entrenched in it. Once they could no longer be seen as transitory, as side-effects of the move to a new and better society, these phenomena could be addressed as a problem, in many societies indeed called 'the social question'. The formulation of this question and the attempt to find an answer to it spelt an intellectual transformation in social and political thought, most briefly to be characterized as a

redefinition of responsibility in the framework of a new moral and political philosophy.

Such redefinition included two major steps. The liberal political philosophy of the nineteenth century, in so far as it prevailed,<sup>10</sup> had increasingly put the individual at centre-stage of political life. Individuals were responsible for their actions – in the case of work accidents, for instance, the basic assumption would be that they were caused by workers who would then also be responsible for the consequences. The decisive step towards the establishment of compulsory work accident insurance was taken when it could be argued that industrialization had transformed the standard work situation into a constitutively collective one in which it was industrial life itself, not the action of any individual, that was responsible for new risks (see, in particular, Rabinbach, 1996). This was the first step, a move from the individual to the collectivity. Once this step was taken, however, for any practical, or policy, consequences that collectivity needed to be defined in such a way as to be able to accept the responsibility. The second step, by and large, was the identification of the nation as the responsible collectivity (alternatives that were discussed, varying across policies, were the residence community, the employer and the company, the union or workers' corporation; see, in particular, Zimmermann, 2001). On this basis, national social policy arrangements could be introduced.

As proposed here, this intellectual transformation can be discussed in terms of moral and political philosophy. In actual practice, however, it was empirical social research, such as on accident statistics, and social theory, such as Durkheim's *Division du travail social* with the idea of organic solidarity, that immediately underlay this change. Thus, a new form of social knowledge, in the German context sometimes indeed called an empirical philosophy of right, permitted the reconceptualization of the social bond. As a consequence of that reconceptualization, policy change became possible.

### **Class Society and Post-revolutionary Liberalism**

At the time of the introduction of so-called 'early social policies', an active and more or less self-conscious working class existed in all somewhat industrialized European societies. The political connection between the demands of this class and those social policies

has been an important issue for the historical sociology of the welfare state. Not pursuing this particular question further here, I will again move a step historically backwards and look at the formation of the working class. The traditional perspective, in this case largely shared by both Marxists and modernization theorists, held that it is the commonality of their situation, *la condition ouvrière*, that created the class-consciousness of the working class, which, in turn, endowed this particular social group with both social visibility and potential agentiality (Katznelson, 1986). If one takes a closer look at the 1830s and 1840s, when the term 'working class' became rapidly adopted in roughly its later sense, such a reasoning is, however, not very plausible in light of the relatively small number of people concerned and the wide heterogeneity of their actual social and working situations.

For France, it has been shown in some detail that a reinterpretation of a key political philosophy, namely the discourse of the French Revolution, with a view to creating a collective actor had an important role in bringing the working class into being (Sewell, 1980). Again to sketch the process all too briefly: the revolutionary discourse was available as a resource for workers to place themselves and their demands in the political context of the time. It enabled them to point to the one-sidedness of the prevailing interpretation, namely with an emphasis on individual liberty at the expense of equality and fraternity. Empirically, then, they could show that such application of the discourse led to greater inequality, and that people in certain situations were particularly likely to suffer from that bias. As a consequence, they reinterpreted fraternity in terms of the right to form associations to defend themselves against the bias – *contra* the French republican ideology that did not want any mediators between the individual and the polity. Those who were to associate were from then on 'the workers', whose foremost commonality was to suffer from the prevailing reading of the revolutionary discourse, and fraternity became solidarity.<sup>11</sup>

### *Inventing the french revolution*

After having said all this, the final step of this historical review certainly needs to be the French Revolution itself.<sup>12</sup> Similar to the historical moments of rupture and innovation

already discussed, the French Revolution had hitherto been analysed in socio-economic or in politico-institutional terms. In the former view, it is seen as the seizure of power of the bourgeoisie as the rising class under increasingly capitalist conditions. In the latter, the emphasis is on the centralization and rigidity of a central state that was unable to understand, much less adapt to, societal changes. More recently, however, historical sociologists and intellectual historians – the boundaries are here entirely blurred – such as William Sewell and Keith Michael Baker have critically followed up on François Furet's (1983) attempt at 'thinking the French Revolution' with its central focus upon political ideas. In his controversy with Theda Skocpol, Sewell (1994) insisted that conceptual revolutions occurred in French political language during the closing decades of the eighteenth century without which numerous events in the course of the Revolution could not be understood. He summarized these changes as a transformation of metaphysical presuppositions of social and political life. While the Revolution was certainly also a peasant revolt, as Skocpol emphasized, it was at the same time a major 'conceptual transformation' (Sewell, 1994: 181). Keith Michael Baker (1990) similarly concluded methodologically for his own work that the ideas of the Revolution cannot be regarded as a 'third level' of social life, next to socio-economic and politico-institutional factors, but that they were indeed constitutive for the social order.

### LANGUAGE AND INTERPRETATION BETWEEN HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

What conclusions can we draw from the brief review of these studies for a historical sociology that is conscious of the use of language in history? One set of conclusions responds to the theoretical *problématique* inherent to the challenge of the linguistic turn: what does it mean to bring concern for language into historical analysis in general? But another set of conclusions should also address the substantive outcome: what will a historical sociology of capitalism and democracy look like if it takes language seriously?

As to the first set of issues, we may note, responding to Skocpol, that, while there may be long-term 'fundamental processes of

change', these are not adequately analysed as the determinate result of any constellations (or articulations) of 'large-scale structures'. This is so for two main reasons. First, rather than large-scale structures extending over grand spaces and long stretches of time (and this is what 'large-scale' is supposed to mean in structural historical sociology), it is precisely the work of concepts, that is, of phenomena of language, that stabilizes social phenomena across space and time. This is what I take to be one of the most important insights of Koselleck's work, and in a modified way it can be found in Foucault as well.<sup>13</sup> Concepts homogenize situations – and social transformations are then reinterpretations of situations by means of conceptual change. Such reinterpretation, though, secondly, is the 'conceptual work' of actors that leads from one historical situation to the one that succeeds it.<sup>14</sup> This, *contra* Foucault, and at least pointing to a relative neglect in Koselleck's approach, is what we can take from Skinner's perspective.

The second set of issues needs to identify the substantive specificities of the last quarter of a millennium of the history of social configurations. Most broadly, we can possibly say that in a context of 'modernity', that is, for the purposes here, a context in which autonomy, self-determination, is a political value, institutions are in need of justification, of a justificatory discourse that underpins their rules and their ways of distributing resources. Political action, at least when it has to be public action, thus supports itself by recourse to such discourses of justification. In the examples on which I drew we have seen that, on the one hand, the broad post-Enlightenment discourse around the French Revolution provided one major such resource. On the other hand, though, for reasons not discussed here (but see Wagner, 1994; 2001b), that discourse tended to be reduced to a mere emphasis on individual liberty as one, but only one, expression of the idea of autonomy. Later discursive struggles could then be read as situation-specific contestations of the hegemony of such discourse of individual liberty.

In those struggles, indeed in all examples selected, discursive action turned out to be transforming a political constellation. It did so by providing new justifications in – 'empirical' – contexts of situations that were analysed as problematic. Or in other words, a conceptual-linguistic transformation is created and proposed with a view to handling a new and problematic situation.

In the social and human sciences today – that means, over the past twenty years or so – a historical sociology that does not succeed in escaping from the determinist heritage of mainstream sociology (see Manent, 1993) exists alongside a political philosophy that does not succeed in moving away from its tradition of abstract theorizing, of theorizing at a distance from any specific situation (the early Rawls, 1971, being the most central – and influential – example). The linguistic turn on its own – that is, within the tradition of philosophy, be it analytical, hermeneutic or post-structuralist – has never come close to addressing the questions raised in the older tradition of a historical sociology that wanted itself to be political theorizing at the same time. However, there is a slim chance of a post-linguistic-turn historical sociology that could alter this intellectual constellation. Such historical sociology would analyse the use of language as an interpretative intervention in the restructuring of problematic situations. As such, it would acquire the potential to link historical sociology again to political philosophy and to develop a novel social and political science that to me seems to be urgently needed – for general intellectual reasons, but also because currently, and problematically, we may be experiencing a historical transformation that we have not yet succeeded in interpreting appropriately.

#### NOTES

1. Although her objective in this particular writing was not least a defence in terms of theory and methodology, she also added broadly and appropriately that methodology in this context cannot be understood 'as a set of techniques, but as the interrelation of substantive problems, sources of evidence, and larger assumptions about society, history and the purposes of scholarship' (Skocpol, 1984b: x).

2. The relation between hermeneutics and deconstruction merits a detailed exploration, but neither is this the adequate place nor am I the most competent person to pursue this topic further.

3. See, for instance, the evolution of the debate between Theda Skocpol and William Sewell: Skocpol (1979), Sewell (1994), Skocpol (1994), Sewell (1999).

4. This includes the insight in the need to reflect upon the very demarcation between philosophy and history. Despite all differences, it is again striking to see how explorations at the margins of established intellectual modes of operation lead to neighbouring innovative insights.

5. In Foucault and Skinner there are also hints that this period may be approaching its end, although they are not fully developed into the assertion of a new period. Similar hints are almost, though not quite, absent in Koselleck.

6. Such a step was still resolutely rejected by Theda Skocpol in the first exchange she had with William Sewall about her *States and Social Revolutions* (see Skocpol, 1994: 202–3).

7. Although the concept of 'policy legacies' is introduced, those are treated just as a structural element like other features of the government apparatus.

8. The *General Theory* was only published in French translation after the war, and very few economists had read it in the original version.

9. My reference volumes here are Rueschemeyer and Skocpol (1996) and Zimmermann et al. (1999). But obviously works on this topic always derive some of their inspiration from the Foucauldian analyses offered by Donzelot (1984) and by Ewald (1986).

10. Important comparative and historical qualifications would need to be made here, but I will stay with this general remark for the sake of brevity.

11. Marx basically was not much more than a perceptive observer of these developments who elevated the neologism 'working class' to a key role in his social theory and philosophy of history.

12. The reference here is obviously the key works in the revisionism of the historiography of the Revolution, such as Furet (1983) and Baker (1990).

13. And it may be worthwhile to add that such stabilization by means of concepts is the work of both the political actors and the historian and historical sociologist.

14. 'Conceptual work' is coined after 'historical work' or 'social work', as in Luc Boltanski's analyses of the formation of classes and categories (see Boltanski, 1982, 1990).

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# *Prologue for a Genealogy of War and Peace:*

## *Genealogical Approaches*

MITCHELL DEAN

By sacrificing human life to serve their radical visions, by abandoning every value except the will to power, they follow in the path of fascism, of Nazism, and totalitarianism. And they follow that path all the way to where it ends: in history's unmarked grave of discarded lies.

George W. Bush<sup>1</sup>

Genealogy is an approach to historical materials that perhaps is neither history proper nor historical sociology. It uses historical materials not to reconstruct the past, or to discern the comparative or universal development of society, but methodically to call into question what is given to us, and what we take for granted. Genealogy is interesting not in itself, or in general, but in its analysis of singularities, in the manner it forges critical concepts in relation to historical materials. The approach taken here is to activate genealogy in relation to a current concern: that of the international order, the securing of habitable social space, the role of international law and the regulation of war and peace.

Genealogy thus starts from our singular experiences in the present. It addresses the forms of truth and knowledge that are the condition of these experiences. Its approach to truth can be distinguished from others. It is not

a totalizing knowledge of the past premised upon broad-scale historical processes, for example of modernization, of urbanization or of globalization. It is not an attempt to capture the intention behind ideas or their movement towards their current form. Nor is it an attempt to legislate the conditions of emergence of true knowledge. It is thus not general historical sociology, the history of ideas or epistemology. It is concerned, purely and simply, with the conditions and effects of truth.

This grounding in the present, in current experiences, and in relation to current social and political struggle and strife, does not manifest an anachronistic relation to the past. Somewhat like Weber's understanding of the value relevance of the social sciences (Weber, 1949), we might say that genealogy is 'present-relevant' (Dean, 1994). By making explicit its relation to the present, it seeks to limit the tendency to read the past through the present. This is done not by the impossible claim to be able to read historical documents *in* their own terms, but by a willingness to read such documents *by means of* their own terms, to seek an intelligibility which is near to them, intrinsic to the materiality and singularity of statements, and is not imported into them from afar. Genealogy tries thus to limit the constitutive presentism of all historical interpretation, by

bracketing our tendency to read the past in terms of present truths or values.

Genealogy, in this sense, is written against truth rather than for it. It is written against the narratives that constitute our present, and that assure us of its necessity and naturalness. It tries to denaturalize our experiences, to place them within multiple trajectories, to lift them above the horizon of the taken for granted, to put them in context, to break them up. It forces us to examine them anew. Against stories of continuity, for example of the development of the *longue durée*, it denies us of the comfort of feeling at home in the foreign land which is the past, and which might even be our most recent past. Here we suggest a lineage that contests the continuity of the moralization of war. Against narratives of discontinuity, which decipher in our present a fulcrum between past and present, a moment of epoch-making change, it develops little lines of continuity which reveal the hubris and apocalyptic tendencies of such theorists. Again, here we find a trajectory that connects current humanitarian justifications of intervention and Christian theological ones of the Middle Ages. Its attitude to the present is that it regards it as 'a time like any other, or rather, a time which is never quite like any other' (Foucault, 1994: 126). It is not concerned with what is post or 'pre', with a first or second age of modernity (Beck, 2000a), with the lateness or newness of the age, with the emergence of a new type of society (risk society, information society, and so on). It is neither a triumphalist story of the inevitable better-ness of the present nor its nihilist counterpart of tragic decline into gloom and perdition. Its purposes are diagnostic (Deleuze, 1991), to sort out what is necessary and what is contingent, and thus open to change, in how we think and how we act. It is thus an attempt to renew acquaintance with the strangeness of the present against all attempts to erase it under the dialectic of reason in history or to mark it as a moment of millenarian rupture, final denouement or irreversible loss.

There are many types of genealogy and it can be written from different perspectives (Gordon, 1986: 77–80). The types range across the political spectrum. Their moods are vastly different. For Colin Gordon, it is possible to identify the 'permanent pragmatics of survival' in Max Weber or Joseph Schumpeter, a concern for the limits of what might be hoped for given the dynamics of a system. He also discerns a 'semiology of catastrophe' that addresses the past to decipher the signs of an

impending catastrophe, such as found in the generation of Austrian and German *émigrés* of the 1930s. We can add that it might be written as a 'problematization of what is emergent' bearing in mind the lessons of the immediate past as in the case of the postwar writings on the international order by Carl Schmitt, which we take up here. Or, again, it might be concerned to diagnose the limits and potentialities of the present, in the sense of Michel Foucault and his colleagues. In one way or another genealogy refers us back to Nietzsche's meditations on the monumental, antiquarian and critical uses of history and his project for a genealogical revaluation of all values.<sup>2</sup>

Genealogy is thus a crooked rather than straight method. It starts from a problematization of present truths to assemble different multiple and incomplete paths: lines of descent, lineages, trajectories of discourses, practices, events without determinative beginning or necessary end. It 'eventualizes' (Foucault, 1991b: 76–8): it discovers and names singular events – the birth of the prison, the figure of the pauper, the emergence of international law – and decomposes them into their constitutive elements formed through multiple processes.

One, however, cannot say very much more about the character of genealogy than I have said here. The discussion I choose – with a certain untimely timeliness – is the question of how the world is governed and divided into social spaces. For it seems to me that we have been presented with a narrative here of the decline of sovereignty and the rise of heterogeneous and polycentric networks of governance, of governance without government, of a world without hegemony or sovereignty (Beck, 2000b: 36–7). The territorialization and spatialization of power that places individuals and populations within nation-states is held to have given way to multiple allegiances and identifications favoured by a self-governing and individualized cosmopolitan subject.<sup>3</sup> We also assume that the justification for certain kinds of military, diplomatic and philanthropic interventions is fairly unproblematic, even if we might argue about how we apply the principles in any specific case. Aid should be humanitarian. Military and diplomatic measures should be used to ensure human rights, to prevent and to punish 'crimes against humanity'. This logic of humanitarianism underlines our actions to ensure this polycentric order of networks.

What follows starts from the problem of international government, from the practical form in which this problem presents itself, the

theoretical questions it raises and the concepts it forces us to examine. In this process, we indicate some of the lineages that might be explored. They converge, however, on the relation between the ordering of the earth, its *nomos*, and a major line of genealogical investigation: that of war and peace.

#### PROBLEMATIZATIONS AND CONCEPTS

Genealogy starts from the interrogation of that which is given to us as truth. The problem of international government and the division of the world into differential social spaces is above all a practical question. It concerns the nature of 'the political constitution of the present' (Hardt and Negri, 2000), that is, the relations of power that constitute the spatial and territorial divisions of the world at a global level. Are we living in a time of the hegemony of the military, political and economic powers that constitute the United States? Or is it one of multi-polar regionalism of groupings in the Americas, Europe and Asia? Or, again, are we living at a time when speaking of a single world order no longer makes any sense? A world in which we have 'governance without government' (Rosenau, 2000: 183)? How do we account for the role of supranational and subnational associations, organizations and movements, whether of a political character, such as the United Nations, of a juridical character, such as the International Court of Justice, of an economic character, such as the World Trade Organization and multinational corporations, or of a philanthropic and as we would say humanitarian character, such as Amnesty International or the United Nations High Commission for Refugees? What do we make of the diagnosis of our present as one of economic globalizations and cultural cosmopolitanism (Beck, 2000a)? How are we to think about the advent of mass protests against globalization in recent years from Seattle to Genoa? How are to understand the universalism of notions of human rights that guides many of our supranational political and legal organizations and which has become the normative basis for the engagement in war and other military interventions from the Persian Gulf to Kosovo, and recently to Afghanistan and beyond in a self-styled 'war against terrorism'? What sort of spaces are created in which individuals, populations and groups can live? Among them, will there continue to be the space of the territory defined by the sovereign national state? In what form and in what relations to other

bodies? These are some of the immediate questions that constitute our present.

The question of international government and the division of the world into social space is also a theoretical one. Let us begin with the division of the world into social spaces. I take social spaces to refer to the locales and territories in which some kind of social existence can proceed. This social existence consists of what is taken to be a normal and regular form of life. Such social spaces might themselves be divided, or related to other social spaces, as our language of inclusion and exclusion suggests. A normal everyday form of life presupposes divisions among populations, and transformations and movements across categories of populations, which occur within definite geographies of inclusion and exclusion (Sibley, 1995). Social spaces thus understood are forms of territorialization. While we might want to talk of the virtual spaces and communities of the Internet and other information and communication technologies, social spaces would seem to imply some reference to a specific geographical place or locale. We might be in contact with a group of colleagues through the Internet, but we still have to access the Internet from a specific geographically delimited social space.

To talk about 'governance' or 'government', on the other hand, is to raise the issue of the ordering of the world, its territories, its materialities and human populations in such a way for it to be composed of such spaces. Further, to talk about 'international' government is to discuss the political features of this ordering, which is a condition of such a division of the world into habitable social spaces and which regulates the relations between social spaces and the consequences of activities within and across the various social spaces.

The early modern notion of 'government' favoured by Michel Foucault captures this ordering of things and people, and their relations and movement – the 'right disposition of things as are committed to the charge of any man, to bring them to a meet end' (De la Perrière, 1599 [1567]: 23). But government in this sense already presupposes a space, a territory or a geography in which people and things exist as something to be governed and in which governors and governed are brought into relationship. Both government and social spaces thus already depend upon the existence of an agency, a site or a position, which ensures public order and security, decides when such a condition obtains, and '[successfully] claims the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical*

force within a given territory', as Max Weber put it (1948 [1918]: 77–8, original emphasis). Government, whether national or international, and the social spaces it seeks to govern, thus depends on a prior set of processes that political thinkers have conventionally called 'sovereignty'. As Carl Schmitt put it in 1922, 'sovereignty (and thus the state itself) resides in ... determining definitively what constitutes public order and security, in determining when they are disturbed, and so on' (1985: 9). The absence of this site of determination is probably the major problem with the notion of governance in its managerialist, globalist and even poststructuralist versions. One primary genealogical task is a problematization of the claim that we live in a world beyond or of diminished sovereignty, state and hegemonic power in the new international order.<sup>4</sup>

The usual agency of the exercise and concentration of such sovereign powers for the last several centuries has been the nation-state. There is today a widespread view that sovereignty is in decline because the nation-state is in decline. One instance of this is James Rosenau's argument that rather than discuss 'command' it would be better to talk of 'governance' to describe the disaggregated 'steering mechanisms' of social and political systems today (see Rosenau, 2000: 181–2). Such a view has its theoretical correlate in the need to move away from a 'sovereigntist' conception of power in political analysis, a move led by Foucault (1980) a quarter of a century ago. But perhaps such intellectual moves – not to mention recent military actions after the events of 11 September 2001 – are occasions to rethink both the idea of government or governance and the notion of sovereignty supposedly in theoretical and actual decline.

Without going into its details, genealogies of government and rule have shown that there have been significant extensions of new powers and techniques of power since the eighteenth century, including those of discipline, biopolitics and government. However, these have at most led to a line of modification of sovereignty rather than its supersession. Sovereignty is aggregated in new diplomatic, military and economic associations and delegated to multiple agencies, including certain kinds of officers, specialists and sovereign individuals. Given that pluralization of sovereignty is a condition of its existence (that is, there are always multiple sovereign agencies, for example, in the classical image of the European state system), then there is no reason to

conclude that contemporary plurality means that sovereignty is thereby limited. We thus need to think about the relation between sovereignty and these new powers, and the transformation of sovereignty, in order to consider the problem of international government outside the story of the diminishing of this modality of power.

On this question of power, Foucault has been the obvious guide for some time. If I were to sum up his contribution to this area, it is to entertain the notion that the question of power is not helped by the easy division of social formations into economic base and political and cultural superstructure. The manner in which individuals, their bodies and populations are governed is a condition for the formation of class-divided liberal and capitalist societies (for example, Foucault, 1977a, 1979). But Foucault's work is ultimately rooted in a kind of critical history of human sciences, concerned principally with the conditions of existence and consequences of particular forms of knowledge (Gutting, 1989). It only ever claims to be partial and perspectival. It does not move from an analysis of disciplinary and biopolitical power-knowledge relations to an account of, say, the systems of production and consumption of the global trade in bio-materials. Foucault does not seek to move us from institutional practice and knowledge to general processes, to system, and to the agency and resistance to that system. Perhaps it is time that genealogical analyses follow Foucault beyond his own limits.

The other theoretical problem I want to dwell on is the question implicitly raised above of 'world order'. Is 'international government' a term which is the equivalent of 'world order'? Or is something different – a replacement or displacement of the problem of the governance of the planet; its division into national entities; their interaction with one another, with the diverse agencies addressed above, with the people, animals, plant and mechanical life of the earth, the seas and the air? The question I would like to raise is *not* 'what is the current world order?' There are several possible answers to this and I claim no special expertise in international relations and jurisprudence which would be a condition of answering it. My question is: *how is it possible not to have a world order?* Even if we were to agree there was no single intentional agent directing a global political-economic-military system, we might want to reflect upon the consequences of the view that the planet has simply become benignly or malignly anarchic,

as the decentred governance thesis seems to suggest. A possible genealogy here would be of the very concept of America. Its working hypothesis would be that the world must have an order, at least since 1492 and the Age of Discovery of the New World. From that date, it might be argued, it has become impossible to have a social order in one part of the globe disconnected from what is happening in every other space. America – its Discovery, its Revolution, the Monroe Doctrine, the Atlantic Charter – put paid to that. Such a genealogy would need to take into account Locke's audacious claim that 'in the beginning all the World was America' (1988 [1698]: 301).

Carl Schmitt was a man of dubious character and is still, perhaps, a controversial reference. His association with National Socialism and his opportunist or self-preserving anti-Semitic statements in the 1930s are enough to make him a breathtakingly problematic authority.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps it is better to think with him than to acknowledge him. Here, we do otherwise. This is not because of his reputation as 'the Hobbes of the twentieth century' (Schwab, 1985: xiv). Rather he is the one modern thinker who helps us consider the question of world order and government.

A key to understanding Schmitt's contribution to international government is his concept of '*nomos*', which could, but maybe should not, be translated as law or order. Thus one of his postwar works is entitled *Der Nomos der Erde* (1950). It could be translated as the 'Law of the Earth' or even 'World Order', but given that so much rests on the word *nomos*, it is perhaps best to leave it in the Greek, to retain its status as a concept. Another term might be 'governance', or, as Foucault would have it, 'government'. Reading Schmitt from a post-Foucauldian theoretical perspective presents us with strange similarities and overlaps. Both are concerned with the fundamental manifestations of power, with the how of power, as we know Foucault (1982) put it. But Schmitt, perhaps more than Foucault, focuses on the where of power. 'Prior to every legal, economic and social order, prior to every legal, economic or social theory, there is this simple question: *Where and how was it appropriated? Where and how was it divided? Where and how was it produced?*' (Schmitt, 1993 [1953]: 56, original emphasis).

*Nomos* thus means three things: to take or appropriate; to divide and to distribute; and to pasture, to run a household, to use, to produce. To take, to distribute, to produce. Foucault's

notion of government seems only to encompass something like the middle term here. On the one hand, it is opposed to sovereignty as its contrastive term. The story of the art of government is the story of its gradual detachment from the figure of sovereignty as told in Foucault's governmentality lecture (1991a; see also Dean, 1999: 102–12). On the other hand, we glimpse a sense of the third part of *nomos* in the transition from a familial or householding conception of economy to the one found in liberal political economy. But, for the latter, the economy is a kind of external limit to the art of government. So while Foucault's account of the art of government requires both sovereignty and its appropriation and discusses the ways in which agents might be governed (but not 'too much' in the liberal case [Foucault, 1997: 74]) so that they have the capacity to enter into production, at least at some levels it severs government/governance from law and sovereignty, on the one hand, and production and economy, on the other.

International government cannot be separated from the histories of conquest and appropriation. For Schmitt, there is no social and political order that is not somehow based on land. The history of social spaces is the history of land appropriations.

The history of peoples with their migrations, colonizations, and conquests is the history of land appropriation. Either this is an appropriation of free land, with no claim to ownership, or the conquest of alien land which has been appropriated under the legal title of foreign-political warfare or by domestic political means such as the proscription, deprivation and forfeiture of newly divided land. (1993 [1953]: 56)

The discovery and appropriation of the Americas is certainly an epoch-making event at the dawn of modernity. Today, appropriation and conquest includes the seas, the skies, the airwaves, the totality of the means of industrial production, communication and information systems, and space itself.

That which is appropriated can be mapped, divided and subdivided, weighed up, measured and distributed. We might say that this is the 'social' question. If the social and political existence of human collectives remains rooted on the land, then the parcellization and distribution of land is a condition of that existence. This is what Hobbes understood by *nomos*: that act of the sovereign power that introduces and then distributes property. 'And this they well knew of old, who called that *Nomos* (that is to say, *Distribution*.) which we call Law; and

defined Justice, by *distributing* to every man *his own*' (Hobbes, 1996 [1651]: 171, Ch. 24, original emphasis). The social question is a distributional question, and thus a question of justice. It presupposes a community that has formed itself into a sovereign entity that has appropriated land and other resources to itself and now seeks to resolve the question of justice within that community. To those who might have been excluded from appropriation, this question of justice does not apply.

Schmitt's provocation is that most liberals and socialists have focused on distribution and production at the expense of appropriation (1993 [1953]: 58–63). Technician and progressive socialists, such as Charles Fourier, and liberal political economists focus on the capacity of modern society to increase production to solve the distributional question. Moral socialists, such as Proudhon, and some social liberals focus on the distribution of the social product. Marx, above all, stands out from this as grounding socialism in a dialectical philosophy of history which accepts the progressive augmentation of production under liberalism but which emphasizes the question of appropriation in his notion of 'the expropriation of the expropriators'. One feels that Schmitt agrees with much of what Marx has to say about the processes of the 'primitive accumulation' of capital, which includes the enclosures of commons, privateering and piracy, plunder, land grabs, dispossession of indigenous peoples and peasants, slavery, and so on (Marx, 1974 [1867]: 686–93). However, Schmitt feels, in making appropriation the solution to the social question, Marx adopts a similar position to those such as Joseph Chamberlain who, at the end of the nineteenth century, argued that a programme of colonial expansion would solve domestic social questions. 'If the essence of imperialism lies in the precedence of the appropriation over distribution and production, then a doctrine such as the expropriation of the expropriators is obviously the strongest imperialism because it is the most modern' (Schmitt, 1997 [1953]: 63).

While *nomos* is a concept, it appears differently to human beings at different points in their history. Here Foucault's lecture on governmentality (1991a) can be understood as offering us an account of the manner in which *nomos* has been understood since early modern times in Europe. The art of government he traces focuses on the arts of distribution and production and is contrasted with an approach to government, most clearly exemplified by Machiavelli, which is concerned

with the acquisition and holding on to the state – that is, its appropriation. The early modern arts of government – mercantilism, cameralist police science, reason of state – are fundamentally concerned with distributions. All of these forms of thought are concerned with the proper distribution of people and things, with their order and movement, within the territorial boundaries of the state. They refer back to the notion of economy as *oikos*, as the management of the household. Mercantilism can thus be read as a doctrine of distribution among the industrious households and the circulation of goods between them and between different states, themselves conceived as royal or national households (Dean, 1991: 28–34; Furniss, 1957). One is tempted to place even Adam Smith in this category and regard the market as a distributional mechanism that is superior to the action of the sovereign (Tribe, 1978: 100–45). Liberalism, with its reliance on classical political economy, presents itself as a rupture in these forms. Classical political economy – Malthus, then Ricardo – places the processes of production, driven by a population at permanent peril from natural scarcity, at the root of economic or market activity and thus inaugurates the modern economic and political *episteme*. However, none of the governmentalities analysed by Foucault concerns itself with appropriation.

Foucault is concerned with transformations in how humans become conscious of *nomos*, of how they order, divide, distribute, measure, map, weigh up, calculate, and so on. However, with Schmitt, none of this can occur without a prior or at least simultaneous process of appropriation which forms the primary dimension of *nomos*. Every act of governing, every ordering on the face of the planet has as its condition an act of appropriation and hence a power that reserves to itself the right to distribute the fruits of that appropriation. Perhaps we could read Foucault as tracing a forgetting of this appropriation within European consciousness in the form of the detachment of government/governance/governmentality from sovereignty.

#### WAR AND PEACE

Yet if there is no governance without appropriation, conquest, the taking of land and the drawing of territorial boundaries, then war is a part of governance and particularly an

instrument of international government. Foucault seems to suggest this when he places the development of the art of government in the classical period between two acts of European public law, the Treaty of Westphalia of 1649 and the Congress of Vienna of 1815, and when he mentions that governmentality was partially born out of the 'diplomatic-military technique' that led to the former (1991a: 104). At least amongst his published lectures, however, there is very little commentary on this matter.

By contrast, Schmitt follows the trajectory of the *nomos* of the earth in such a way that the changing rules of war, the development of European international law, the emergence and formation of sovereign statehood, and the processes of discovery and colonization of the New World are all a part of a single picture.

At the centre of this picture is the system of international public law which arises in Europe from the early seventeenth century and reaches its apogee in the nineteenth century, which he calls the *jus publicum Europaeum*. Such a system was founded on a renunciation of the traditional theme of the just war, the *bellum ex justa causa*. (Kervégan, 1999: 59–61). For Schmitt, this system enters into decline after the Great War and the Versailles Treaty with its subsequent 'criminalization of the enemy' – in this case Germany.

According to Schmitt, European public law emerged as a transformation of medieval notions of just war, derived from St Augustine and Thomas Aquinas and embodied in the twelfth-century Gratian Decree, and of notions of the *respublica Christiana* under the Pope's authority (Schmitt, 1996 [1950]: 47–50; Kervégan, 1999: 59). Even as late as the discovery of the New World, this Christian international law required Christian princes and peoples to fulfil the Pope's missionary mandate as their duty. Thus secular rulers were subject to a higher spiritual authority which required them to ensure the safety of 'free missions'. The Dominican theologian Vitoria (1991 [1531]) would thus offer a justification of the legal title gained by conquest of America as fulfilling this missionary mandate, while rejecting its basis in discovery, occupation or the inferiority of the barbarians. As Schmitt puts it:

*If barbarians opposed the right of free passage and free missions, of liberum commercium and free propaganda, then they would violate the existing rights of the Spanish according to the ius gentium; if the*

*peaceful entreaties of the Spanish were of no avail, then they had grounds for a just war. (1996 [1950]: 51, original emphasis)*

In any case the relationship between Spain, or rather the Crown of Castile and Leon, and the Vatican is such that it is unthinkable in a system of secular sovereign states, each with its own territory, and where religion is an internal matter.

The freedom of missions, as well as of passage, and of commerce, provided a basis for regarding the conquest as a 'just war' of the *respublica Christiana*. It is interesting to note that one of the subsidiary grounds for the Spanish dominion over the Americas provided by Vitoria was

*on account of the personal tyranny of the barbarians' masters towards their subjects, or because of their tyrannical and oppressive laws against the innocent, such as human sacrifice practised on innocent men or the killing of condemned criminals for cannibalism. I assert that in lawful defence of the innocent from unjust death, even without the Pope's authority, the Spaniards may prohibit the barbarians from practising any nefarious custom or rite. (1991 [1539]: 287–8, original emphasis)*

This, part of a sixteenth-century lecture, suggests a rationale not dissimilar to what we would call 'humanitarian intervention'.

Over the next several centuries, this notion of just war would be substantially altered with the development of a Law of Nations. In the first systematic work on this discipline, *De jure belli ac pacis* of 1625, Grotius maintains the idea of a 'just war', but identifies it with 'solemn public law' or war 'declared formally' by one state on another (Kervégan, 1999: 59–60; Schmitt, 1996 [1950]: 76–8). By the eighteenth century Vattel argues that each state is ultimately the judge of the justice of its own causes and thus effectively displaces the material justification of war with the idea of formal regularity. According to his *Le droit des gens* of 1758, both sides in war can be thought of as equally legitimate if they conduct war formally. To put it briefly, there is a shift in European thought beginning in the sixteenth century from the notion of a just war to that of a 'just enemy' which parallels the decline of notions of a unified Christian empire under a unified authority of the Pope (Ulmen, 1996).

It is to the formation of the *jus publicum Europaeum* that we must look for an explanation of the changes of outlook. Post-medieval

international law displaces the idea of a just war grounded in ecclesiastical law and replaces it with the notion of a just enemy defined by inter-state law (Ulmen, 1996: 103). The intention here is to limit war by bracketing moral evaluations of those who make war. It is, according to Schmitt (1996 [1950]: 68), a law between European states or sovereigns which eliminates notions of the holy empire or of the Pope's sovereignty as a spiritual power. It is thus a 'de-theologized' law that effects a definitive separation of theological and juridical arguments. Linked to this is 'a non-discriminatory concept of the enemy' as a formal equal to be treated according to rules of war rather than as a perpetual foe (*hostis perpetui*), as medieval Christianity had treated Jews and Saracens.

Schmitt thus views statehood not as universal but as an effect of the development of these political and legal arrangements (1996 [1950]: 69–70). These arrangements, which led to 'a secularization of European life as a whole', had three facets: the centralization of the earlier forms of parcellized and divided authority under a single administration, judiciary and ruler; the neutralization of confessional conflict and the putting an end to European civil war; and, on the basis of this internal political unity, the ability of the state with a fixed territory to enter into foreign relations with other such states.

The establishment of a European system of states and international public law has implications for the *nomos* of the rest of the earth and gave rise to what Schmitt calls 'global linear thinking' (1996 [1950]: 33). The establishment of this European legal order had among its conditions the discovery of the New World and the beginning of the European land appropriations of the Americas. Schmitt demonstrates how the cartography of the Earth had specific political conditions. This is most notable in the secretly concluded 'amity lines' between European states such as England and France which ran along certain lines of the Earth, for example, the Equator or Tropic of Cancer (Schmitt, 1996 [1950]: 35–42). The most important was the meridian in the mid-Atlantic that marked the spaces at which European inter-state law was active and the spaces for which it became inactive. A condition for these land appropriations and the later colonial empires was the idea of 'free spaces' in which the rules of engagement of European states ceased to exist.

The general concept was then necessarily that everything which occurred 'beyond the line' remained outside the legal, moral and political values recognized on this side of the line. This was a tremendous *exoneration* of the internal European problematic. The significance of the famous and notorious expression 'beyond the line' in terms of international law lies precisely in this exoneration' (Schmitt, 1996 [1950]: 37).

It is to the Versailles Treaty and the formation of the League of Nations that Schmitt looks to find the beginning of the end of the *jus publicum Europaeum*. Rather than the just enemy, there is the criminalization of the enemy in the form of a state or its agents who commit crimes against peace and crimes against humanity (Ulmen, 1996). War undergoes a new moralization with such notions and ideas of 'humanitarian intervention'.

The difference in the modern case and that of Vitoria cited previously is that it is now a question not of finding causes from which it is possible to fight just wars, but of the criminalization of aggression itself. In a legal opinion written for the lawyer of an arrested German industrialist in 1945, Schmitt distinguishes 'crimes against peace' and 'crimes against humanity'. The former makes aggressive war between sovereign states into a crime (after the Geneva Protocol of 1924 and Kellogg–Briand Pact of 1928). The latter are *scelus infandum*, the abominable or intolerable high crimes and atrocities committed by a regime or its agents before or during war. 'The brutality and bestiality of these monstrous crimes exceed the normal human power of comprehension. The order of a superior authority cannot justify or excuse such monstrous crimes' (quoted in Ulmen, 1996: 108). By criminalizing acts of war, war ceases to be a public contest between recognized political entities. Instead of a legally governed undertaking with specific rules of engagement, it becomes international civil war. The just enemy becomes the *perfidus hostis*, sponsors and perpetrators of international terrorism, the Evil Empire, rogue states and criminal regimes – or, from another point of view, the Great Satan.

In the current era, is a rational, *de-theologized*, government of war possible? Given the emergence of new collectivities and the transformation of the sovereignty of national states, how are we to regulate the political relationships (the friend/enemy relations) among the new *Grossräume*, that is, the term for regions or large spaces developed by

Schmitt in the 1930s and which he used later to discuss the Cold War?

The problem with turning war into a criminal act, and annexing international law to the penal code, is that it offers no limitation on war against the enemy so defined. Schmitt claims that war becomes a kind of international civil war, a kind of combat that is no longer able to be regulated by any legal framework. I find this view extremely interesting and it suggests some similarities between the present and early modern Europe.

My suggestion, however, would be somewhat different. On the one hand, then, we have a situation which has the character of international civil war. We are witnessing a kind of globalization of war in which there is a proliferation of small wars affecting large parts of the Earth's surface. In one notable example, a coalition of states, under the hegemony of the United States, conducts war by proxy, with local agents, against a state, in the name of an international war against terrorist networks. We are also witnessing protests and riots and the use of instruments of the security state to protect a regime of international government – from Seattle to Genoa. On the other hand, various powers and agencies, the USA, the UN, NATO and the OSCE, in their various relations, undertake, under the standing mandate of humanitarian intervention, to 'police' in something similar to the old sense. This military 'police' parallels the standing mandate provided to the WTO, the World Bank, and so on, and the economic and political elites of national states, to regulate economic and civil life in the name of the imperatives of economic globalization. Given that both the economic interventions and the military ones are justified by discourses of globalization/universalism and in the name of governing through, or protecting, certain kinds of rights and freedoms, I shall call this new *dispositif* 'global liberal police'.

The new global liberal police, like Turquet's police (Foucault, 2000: 318), is but one branch of government, but it also covers everything – 'justice, finance, the army', as Turquet says – including the movements of people, goods, weapons, bio-materials, finance and capital, the economic and social policies of national governments, the preservation and restoration of peace, the problems of world poverty, and the punishment and executive confinement of international aggressors.

International government cannot thus be divorced from international politics and

international politics from international law. If the primary object of international law is the regulation and limitation of war between states, as Schmitt suggests, then this law has become an arm of a global liberal police. This police is different from the international law that regulated the rational, calculable conflicts of the nineteenth-century system of European states. It is precisely because

the consciousness of the enormous turning point and dynamic character of the present, precisely because of the consciousness of the incalculability of war, a new type of political realism has arisen which assumes this consciousness and does not fear to meet the opponent face to face because it knows that it has the right weapons. (Schmitt, quoted in Ulmen, 1996: 103)

This is the consciousness that can turn to its enemies and say thou shalt not engage in military aggression. It is a consciousness which talks of the emergence of a cosmopolitan democracy, of a world in which sovereignty is dispersed and diminished, in which polycentric governance has displaced government at the same time that it visits carnage upon regimes, networks and their luckless neighbours in defence of such principles.

Schmitt's account of war and peace is genealogical in at least three senses. It disrupts accounts of the smooth trajectory of international law by identifying an event, the formation of the *jus publicum Europaeum* from the sixteenth to early twentieth centuries, which regulates the relations between sovereign states including the conduct of war. It 'eventualizes'. While there were certainly wars of colonization and expansion during this time which were bloody and brutal, this event marks a moment of the civilizing of war by displacing the just cause with the just enemy, by putting an end to theological war and de-criminalizing aggression. At its best, war would be conducted according to formal rules, recognized by states, and limited in its impact upon non-combatant populations. The international regulation of the external relations of states in military and diplomatic matters is as much a part of the civilizing process as the domestic pacification of the internal territory of states, to add to Elias (1982 [1939]).

By identifying an event, such a genealogy is able to locate an unnoticed rupture or break with the defeat of Germany in the Great War. This break is a condition of possibility of the re-moralization of war in the twentieth, and now the twenty-first, century, and thus marks

a kind of de-civilizing of war. War is no longer conducted formally between states but by states against a new criminal enemy whose identity remains nebulous, sometimes identified with regimes (the Taliban, for example) and at others with shadowy organizations (the al-Qaeda network). It is the paradox of the discourse of the decline of sovereign states and the emergence of polycentric networks of governance that it will find its enemy in such polycentric terrorist networks and use the forces of sovereign states to vanquish it. Schmitt's genealogy thus locates a rupture within modern international law and reinstates the tacit continuities of the present with medieval conceptions of the just war.

The third sense in which this account acts as a genealogy is to return us to the present. The events of 11 September 2001 and their aftermath reveal that the *nomos* of the earth, the world order, is less one in which sovereign violence has become displaced by networks of governance and more one in which violence underlies the making of international law and the preservation of the order of governance. The terrorist acts of that date were acts of what Benjamin called 'divine violence' (1978: 297–300), that violence which is truly law-destroying in that it is not alloyed with law and seeks to purify the guilty of law. 'Divine violence,' he claims (Benjamin, 1978: 300), 'which is the sign and seal but never the means of sacred execution, may be called sovereign violence.' These acts were sovereign acts of violence that aimed to reveal the violence at the heart of our systems of international law, a law-making and law-preserving violence which the US and its allies duly acknowledged – against the writings of its theorists – by its 'war on terrorism'.

But the grandiose media spectacles created by these acts have obscured a much smaller but no less significant event of our present or of what now rather constitutes our recent past. The implantation of this global liberal police had already been shown to have rested on sovereign power and the exercise of violence. This event occurred almost two months before 11 September.

On 20 July 2001 Carlo Giuliani, aged twenty-three, was shot dead in Genoa by a conscript member of the Carabinieri, three years his junior, and then run over by a reversing police Land Rover. He was among the 'anti-globalization' protesters at the G8 summit, and had attacked the Land Rover with a fire extinguisher. Nevertheless, if consciousness

of the *nomos* of the Earth order takes the form of the spurious and empty discourse of globalization, then that date showed that this *nomos* cannot be detached from its defence by lethal force.

It was on this date, I think, that the value given the question of the international order would require a genealogy of war and peace.

#### NOTES

1. Speech to Congress, 21 September 2001. *The Australian*, 22 September 2001, p. 2.

2. See Nietzsche (1969, 1983), Foucault (1977) and, for a commentary on both, Dean (1994: 17–20).

3. For example, Beck argues that '[c]hoosing, deciding, shaping individuals who aspire to be the authors of their lives, the creators of their identities, are the central characters of our time' (1998: 28).

4. See David Held for the view that sovereignty has to be 'conceived as divided among a number of agencies ... and limited by the very nature of its plurality' (1995: 135). For a somewhat less subtle version, Beck is again useful: 'Globalization, then, also means *no* world state – or, to be more precise, world society *without a world state and without a world government*. A globally *disorganized* capitalism is continually spreading out. For there is no hegemonic power and no international regime, either economic or political' (2000b: 13, original emphasis).

5. On this see the letters to the *New York Review of Books* by Paul Piccone, Gary Ulmen and Paul Gottfried (1996). See also Cristi (1998) for a useful interpretation and account of aspects of Schmitt's relation to National Socialism.

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## *Subaltern Studies and Postcolonial Historiography*

DIPESH CHAKRABARTY

What constitutes the writing of postcolonial history may best be illustrated by the series *Subaltern Studies: Writings on Indian History and Society*, published and edited since 1982 by a group of historians working on India. In the last two decades, this series has radically challenged our views not only of the histories of formerly colonial societies but of European histories as well. In the early part of its career, *Subaltern Studies* began as a series of interventions in some debates specific to the writing of modern Indian history.<sup>1</sup> Ranajit Guha (b. 1923), a historian of India then teaching at the University of Sussex, was the inspiration behind it. Guha and eight younger scholars based in India, the United Kingdom and Australia constituted the editorial collective of *Subaltern Studies* until 1988, when Guha retired from the team.<sup>2</sup> The series now has a global presence that goes well beyond India or South Asia as an area of academic specialization. The intellectual reach of *Subaltern Studies* now also exceeds that of the discipline of history. Postcolonial theorists of diverse disciplinary backgrounds have taken interest in the series. Much discussed, for instance, are the ways in which contributors to *Subaltern Studies* have participated in contemporary critiques of history and nationalism, and of orientalism and Eurocentrism in the construction of social science knowledge. At the same time, there have also been discussions of *Subaltern Studies* in many history and social science journals.<sup>3</sup> Selections from the series

have been published in English, Spanish, Bengali and Hindi and are in the process of being brought out in Tamil and Japanese (see Amin and Pandey, 1996; Chatterjee and Bhadra, 1997; Cuisanqui and Barragán, 1998). A Latin American Subaltern Studies Association was established in North America in 1992.<sup>4</sup> It would not be unfair to say that the expression 'subaltern studies', once the name of a series of publications in Indian history, now stands as a general designation for a field of studies often seen as a close relative of postcolonialism.

How did a project which began as a specific and focused intervention in the academic discipline of (Indian) history come to be associated with postcolonialism, an area of studies whose principal home has been in literature departments? I attempt to answer this question by discussing how, and in what sense, *Subaltern Studies* could be seen as a postcolonial project of writing history. It should be clarified, however, that my concentration here on the relationship between postcolonialism and historiography overlooks the contributions that other disciplines – political science, legal studies, anthropology, literature, cultural studies and economics – have made to the field of subaltern studies. This essay is motivated by a question that has the discipline of history in focus: in what ways can one read the original historiographic agenda of *Subaltern Studies* as not simply yet another version of Marxist/radical history but as

possessing a *necessarily* postcolonial outlook? I concentrate on the discipline of history for two reasons: (a) the relationship between the new field of postcolonial writing and historiography has not yet received the attention it deserves, and (b) to answer critics who say that *Subaltern Studies* was once 'good' Marxist history in the same way that the English tradition of 'history from below' was, but that it lost its way when it came into contact with Said's orientalism, Spivak's deconstructionism or Bhabha's analysis of colonial discourse.<sup>5</sup> In a wide-ranging critique of postcolonial thinkers, Arif Dirlik once suggested that the historiographic innovations of *Subaltern Studies*, while welcome, were mere applications of methods pioneered by British Marxist historians, albeit modified by 'Third World sensibilities'. He wrote:

Most of the generalizations that appear in the discourse of postcolonial intellectuals from India may appear novel in the historiography of India but are not discoveries from broader perspectives. ... [T]he historical writing[s] of *Subaltern Studies* historians ... represent the application in Indian historiography of trends in historical writings that were quite widespread by the 1970s under the impact of social historians such as E.P. Thompson, Eric Hobsbawm, and a host of others.

Without wishing either to eliminate the claims of *Subaltern Studies* scholars or to deny what they may have indeed learned from the British Marxist historians, I seek to show that this reading of *Subaltern Studies* – as an instance of Indian or Third World historians merely catching up with or simply applying the methodological insights of Anglo social history – seriously misjudges what the series has been all about. From its very inception, I argue, *Subaltern Studies* raised questions about history writing that made inescapable a radical departure from English Marxist historiographic traditions. I shall develop my argument by concentrating mainly on the work of the historian Ranajit Guha in the period when he acted as the founding editor of *Subaltern Studies*. The particular writings of Guha I discuss are those which could be considered the founding texts of the project.

#### **SUBALTERN STUDIES AND DEBATES IN MODERN INDIAN HISTORY**

I begin by sketching out some of the principal debates in modern Indian history in which

early *Subaltern Studies* intervened. The academic subject called 'modern Indian history' is a relatively recent development, a result of research and discussion in various universities in India, the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia and elsewhere after the end of British imperial rule in August 1947. In its early phase, this area of scholarship bore all the signs of an ongoing struggle between tendencies affiliated with imperialist biases in Indian history and a nationalist desire on the part of historians in India to decolonize the past. Marxism was understandably mobilized in aid of the nationalist project of intellectual decolonization.<sup>6</sup> Bipan Chandra's book *The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India* (1969), Anil Seal's *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism* (1968), A.R. Desai's *Social Background of Indian Nationalism* (1966), D.A. Low's edited volume *Soundings in Modern South Asian History* (1968), the many seminal articles published by Bernard Cohn (now collected in his *An Anthropologist among the Historians*, 1988), debates around Morris David Morris's assessment of the results of British rule in India, and the work of other scholars in the 1960s raised new and controversial questions regarding the nature and results of colonial rule in India. Did the imperialist British deserve credit after all for making India a developing, modern and united country? Were the Hindu-Muslim conflicts that resulted in the formation of the two states of Pakistan and India consequences of the divide-and-rule policies of the British, or were they rejections of divisions internal to South Asian society? Official documents of the British government of India – and traditions of imperial history writing – always portrayed colonial rule as being beneficial to India and its people. They applauded the British for bringing to the subcontinent political unity, modern educational institutions, modern industries, modern nationalism, a rule of law, and so forth. Indian historians in the 1960s – many of whom had English degrees and most of whom belonged to a generation that grew up in the final years of British rule – challenged that view. They argued instead that colonialism had had deleterious effects on economic and cultural developments. Modernity and the nationalist desire for political unity, they claimed, were not so much British gifts to India as fruits of struggles undertaken by the Indians themselves. Nationalism and colonialism thus emerged, unsurprisingly, as the two major areas of research and debate defining the

field of modern Indian history in the 1960s and 1970s.

At one extreme of this debate was the Cambridge historian Anil Seal, whose 1968 book *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism* pictured 'nationalism' as the work of a tiny elite reared in the educational institutions the British set up in India. This elite, as Seal put it, both 'competed and collaborated' with the British in their search for power and privilege. A few years later, this idea was pushed to an extreme in a book entitled *Locality, Province, and Nation* (Gallagher and Seal, 1973) to which Seal, his colleague John Gallagher and a posse of their doctoral students contributed. Their writings discounted the role of ideas and idealism in history and foregrounded an extremely narrow view of what constituted political and economic 'interest' for historical actors. They argued that it was the penetration of the colonial state into the local structures of power in India – a move prompted by the financial self-interest of the raj rather than by any altruistic motives – that eventually, and by degrees, drew Indian elites into the colonial governmental process. According to this argument, the involvement of Indians in colonial institutions set off a scramble among the indigenous elites, who combined – opportunistically and around factions formed along 'vertical' lines of patronage (in contradistinction to the so-called 'horizontal' affiliations of class, that is) – to jockey for power and privilege within the limited opportunities for self-rule provided by the British. Such, the Cambridge historians claimed, was the real dynamic of that which outside observers or naive historians may have mistaken for an idealistic struggle for freedom. Nationalism and colonialism both came out in this history as straw and foil characters. The history of Indian nationalism, said Seal, 'was the rivalry between Indian and Indian, its relationship with imperialism that of the mutual clinging of two unsteady men of straw' (1973: 2).

At the other extreme of this debate was the Indian historian Bipan Chandra, a professor in the 1970s at the prestigious Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi. Chandra and his colleagues saw Indian history of the colonial period as an epic battle between the forces of nationalism and colonialism. Drawing on both Marx's writings and Latin American theories of dependency and underdevelopment, Chandra (1979) argued that colonialism was a regressive force that distorted all developments in India's society and polity. Social,

political and economic ills of post-independence India – including those of mass poverty and religious and caste conflict – could be blamed on the political economy of colonialism. However, Chandra saw nationalism in a different, contrasting light. He saw it as a regenerative force, as the antithesis of colonialism, something that united and produced an 'Indian people' by mobilizing them for struggle against the British. Nationalist leaders such as Gandhi and Nehru were the authors of such an anti-imperial movement for unity of the nation. Chandra claimed that the conflict of interest and ideology between the colonizers and the 'Indian people' was the most important conflict of British India. All other conflicts of class or caste were secondary to this principal contradiction and were to be treated as such in histories of nationalism.

As research progressed in the seventies, however, there emerged an increasing series of difficulties with both of these narratives. It was clear that the Cambridge version of 'nationalist politics without ideas or idealism' would never ring true to scholars in the subcontinent who had themselves experienced the desire for freedom from colonial rule.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, the nationalist historian's story of there having been a 'moral war' between colonialism and nationalism wore increasingly thin as research by younger scholars in India and elsewhere brought new material to light. New information on the mobilization of the poor (peasants, tribals and workers) by elite nationalist leaders in the course of the Gandhian mass movements in the 1920s and 1930s, for example, suggested a strongly reactionary side to the principal nationalist party, the Indian National Congress. Gyanendra Pandey at Oxford, David Hardiman and David Arnold at Sussex (all of them later to become members of the *Subaltern Studies* collective), Majid Siddiqi and Kapil Kumar in Delhi, Histesranjan Sanyal in Calcutta, Brian Stoddart, Stephen Henningham and Max Harcourt in Australia and others elsewhere documented the way nationalist leaders would suppress with a heavy hand peasants' or workers' tendency to exceed the self-imposed limits of the nationalist political agenda by protesting the oppression meted out to them not only by the British but by the indigenous ruling groups as well (see Arnold, 1977; Hardiman, 1981; Kumar, 1984; Pandey, 1978; Sanyal, 1994; Siddiqi, 1978; see also the essays of Low, 1977). From the point of view of a younger generation of historians whom Guha, following Salman Rushdie, has called the

'midnight's children', neither the Cambridge thesis propounding a sceptical view of Indian nationalism nor the nationalist-Marxist thesis glossing over real conflicts of ideas and interests between the elite nationalists and their socially subordinate followers – or assimilating to a nationalist historiographic agenda – was an adequate response to the problems of postcolonial history writing in India.<sup>8</sup> The persistence of religious and caste conflict in post-independence India; the war between India and China in 1962, which made official nationalism sound hollow and eventually gave rise to a fascination with Maoism among the urban educated youth in India; the outbreak of a violent Maoist political movement in India (known as the Naxalite movement), which drew many members of the urban youth into the countryside in the late 1960s and early 1970s – all these and many other factors combined to alienate younger historians from the shibboleths of nationalist historiography. All this historiographic discontent, however, was still floundering in the old liberal and positivist paradigms inherited from English traditions of history writing even as it was searching for a path towards decolonizing the field of Indian history.

#### **SUBALTERN STUDIES AS PARADIGM SHIFT, 1982–7**

*Subaltern Studies* intervened in this situation. Intellectually, it began on the very terrain it was to contest: historiography that had its roots in the colonial education system. It started as a critique of two contending schools of history: the Cambridge school and that of the nationalist historians. Both of these approaches, declared Guha in a statement that inaugurated the series *Subaltern Studies*, were elitist. They wrote up the history of nationalism as the story of an achievement by the elite classes, whether Indian or British. For all their merits, they could not explain 'the contributions made by people on their own, that is, independent of the elite to the making and development of this nationalism' (1982: 3, Guha's emphasis). It will be clear from this statement of Guha's that *Subaltern Studies* was part of an attempt to align historical reasoning with larger movements for democracy in India. It looked for an anti-elitist approach to history writing, and in this it had much in common with the 'history from below' approaches pioneered in English historiography by Christopher Hill, E.P. Thompson,

E.J. Hobsbawm and others. Both *Subaltern Studies* and the 'history from below' school were Marxist in inspiration; both owed a certain intellectual debt to the Italian communist Antonio Gramsci in trying to move away from deterministic, Stalinist readings of Marx. The word 'subaltern' itself – and, of course, the well-known concept of 'hegemony' so critical to the theoretical project of subaltern studies – goes back to the writings of Gramsci (1973). As in the histories written by Thompson, Hobsbawm, Hill and others, *Subaltern Studies* was also concerned about 'rescuing from the condescension of posterity' the pasts of the socially subordinate groups in India.

The declared aim of *Subaltern Studies* was to produce historical analyses in which the subaltern groups were viewed as the subjects of history. As Guha put it once in the course of introducing a volume of *Subaltern Studies*: 'We are indeed opposed to much of the prevailing academic practice in historiography ... for its failure to acknowledge the subaltern as the maker of his own destiny. This critique lies at the very heart of our project' (1984: vii). But at the same time Guha's theorization of the project signalled certain key differences that would increasingly distinguish the project of *Subaltern Studies* from that of English Marxist historiography. With hindsight, it could be said that there were broadly three areas in which *Subaltern Studies* differed from the 'history from below' approach of Hobsbawm or Thompson (allowing for differences between these two eminent historians of England and Europe). Subaltern historiography necessarily entailed (a) a relative separation of the history of power from any universalist histories of capital, (b) a critique of the nation-form, and (c) an interrogation of the relationship between power and knowledge (hence of the archive itself and of history as a form of knowledge). In these differences, I would argue, lay the beginnings of a new way of theorizing the intellectual agenda for postcolonial histories.

The critical theoretical break came with the way Guha sought to redefine the category of 'the political' with reference to colonial India. He argued that both the Cambridge and the nationalist historians conflated the political domain with the formal side of governmental and institutional processes. As he put it:

In all writings of this kind [that is, elitist historiography] the parameters of Indian politics are assumed to be or enunciated as those of the institutions introduced by the British for the government of the country. ... [Elitist historians] can do no more than

equate politics with the aggregation of activities and ideas of those who were directly involved in operating these institutions, that is, the colonial rulers and their *élèves* – the dominant groups in native society. (1984: 3–4)

Using 'people' and 'subaltern classes' synonymously and defining them as the 'demographic difference between the total Indian population' and the dominant indigenous and foreign elite, Guha claimed that there was, in colonial India, an 'autonomous' domain of the 'politics of the people' that was organized differently than the domain of the politics of the elite (1984: 4–5). Elite politics involved 'vertical mobilization', 'a greater reliance on Indian adaptations of British parliamentary institutions', and 'tended to be relatively more legalistic and constitutional in orientation'. In the domain of subaltern politics, on the other hand, mobilization for political intervention depended on horizontal affiliations such as 'the traditional organization of kinship and territoriality or on class consciousness depending on the level of the consciousness of the people involved'. They tended to be more violent than elite politics. Central to subaltern mobilizations was 'a notion of resistance to elite domination'. 'The experience of exploitation and labour endowed this politics with many idioms, norms and values which put it in a category apart from elite politics', wrote Guha. Peasant uprisings in colonial India, he argued, reflected this separate and autonomous grammar of mobilization 'in its most comprehensive form'. Even in the case of resistance and protest by urban workers, the 'figure of mobilization' was one that was 'derived directly from peasant insurgency' (Guha, 1984: 4–5).

Guha's separation of elite and subaltern domains of the political had some radical implications for social theory and historiography. The standard tendency in global Marxist historiography until the seventies was to look on peasant revolts organized along the axes of kinship, religion, caste, and so on, as movements exhibiting a 'backward' consciousness, the kind that Hobsbawm in his work on social banditry and 'primitive rebellion' had called 'pre-political' (1978: 2, cited in Guha, 1983: 5–6). This was seen as a consciousness that had not quite come to terms with the institutional logic of modernity or capitalism. As Hobsbawm put it with reference to his own material: 'They are pre-political people who have not yet found, or only begun to find, specific language in which to express their aspirations about the world' (1978: 2). By explicitly

rejecting the characterization of peasant consciousness as 'pre-political' and by avoiding evolutionary models of 'consciousness', Guha was prepared to suggest that the nature of collective action against exploitation in colonial India was such that it effectively stretched the imaginary boundaries of the category 'political' far beyond the territories assigned to it in European political thought. To ignore the problems that peasants' participation in the modern political sphere could cause for a Eurocentric Marxism would lead, according to Guha, only to elitist histories. For one would then not know how to analyse the consciousness of the peasant – the discourses of kinship, caste, religion and ethnicity through which they expressed themselves in protest – except as a 'backward' consciousness trying to grapple with a changing world whose logic it could never fully comprehend.

Guha insisted that, instead of being an anachronism in a modernizing colonial world, the peasant was a real contemporary of colonialism and a fundamental part of the modernity that colonial rule gave rise to in India. The peasant's was not a 'backward' consciousness, a mentality left over from the past, baffled by modern political and economic institutions and yet resistant to them. Guha suggested that the (insurgent) peasant in colonial India did in fact read his contemporary world correctly. Examining, for instance, over a hundred known cases of peasant rebellions in British India between 1783 and 1900, Guha showed that these revolts always involved the deployment by the peasants of codes of dress, speech and behaviour which tended to invert the codes through which their social superiors dominated them in everyday life (1983: Ch. 1–2). Inversion of the symbols of authority was almost inevitably the first act of rebellion by insurgent peasants. Elitist histories of peasant uprisings missed the signification of this gesture by seeing it as 'pre-political'. Anil Seal, for example, dismissed all nineteenth-century peasant revolts in colonial India as having no 'specific political content', being 'uprisings of the traditional kind, the reaching for sticks and stones as the only way of protesting against distress' (1968: 1). Marxists, on the other hand, explained these gestures as expressing a false consciousness and/or performing a 'safety-valve' function in the overall social system.<sup>9</sup> What both of these explanatory strategies missed, Guha contended, was the fact that at the beginning of every peasant uprising there was inevitably a struggle on the

part of rebels to destroy all symbols of the social prestige and power of the ruling classes. He wrote: 'It was this fight for prestige which was at the heart of insurgency. Inversion was its principal modality. It was a *political* struggle in which the rebel appropriated and/or destroyed the insignia of his enemy's power and hoped thus to abolish the marks of his own subalternity' (1983: 75, emphasis mine). I have emphasized the word 'political' in this quote to underline a creative tension between the Marxist lineage of *Subaltern Studies* and the more challenging questions it raised from the very beginning about the nature of power in non-Western colonial modernities. Guha's point was that the arrangements of power in which the peasant and other subaltern classes found themselves in colonial India contained two very different logics of hierarchy and oppression. One was the logic of the quasi-liberal legal and institutional framework that the British introduced into the country. Imbricated with this was another set of relationships in which hierarchy was based on direct and explicit domination and subordination of the less powerful through both ideological-symbolic means and physical force. The semiotics of domination and subordination were what the subaltern classes sought to destroy every time they rose up in rebellion. This semiotics could not be separated in the Indian case from what in English we inaccurately refer to either as 'the religious' or 'the supernatural'. The tension between a familiar narrative of capital and a more radical understanding of it can be seen in *Elementary Aspects* itself.

There are times when Guha tends to read 'domination and subordination' in terms of an opposition between feudal and capitalist modes of production. There is a respectable tendency in Marxist or liberal scholarship to read undemocratic relationships – or personalized systems of authority and practices of deification – as survivals of a pre-capitalist era, as not quite modern. They are seen as indicative of the problems of transition to capitalism, the assumption being that a full-blown capitalism would or should be logically incompatible with 'feudal-type' relationships. *Elementary Aspects* sometimes does speak within this tradition of analysis. Direct domination, Guha tells us, in some places is a feature of lingering feudalism:

Taking the subcontinent as a whole capitalist development in agriculture remained merely incipient ...

until 1900. Rents constituted the most substantial part of income yielded by property in land. ... The element that was constant in this [landlord-peasant] relationship in all its variety was the extraction of the peasant's surplus by means determined rather less by the free play of the forces of a market economy than by the extraeconomic force of the landlord's standing in local society and in the colonial polity. In other words, it was a relationship of domination and subordination – a political relationship of the feudal type, or as it has been appropriately described, a semifeudal relationship which derived its material sustenance from pre-capitalist conditions of production and its legitimacy from a traditional culture still paramount in the superstructure (1983: 6).

This particular Marxist narrative, however, underrepresents the force and larger significance of Guha's critique of the category 'pre-political'. For if one were to accept the Marxism of this quotation, one could indeed come back at Guha and argue that the sphere of the political hardly ever abstracted itself out from other spheres (of religion, kinship, culture) in feudal relations of domination and subordination, and that in that sense feudal relations of power could not properly be called political. The lingering existence of 'feudal-type' relationships in the Indian scene could then be read – as indeed does Guha at the beginning of this quote – as a mark of the incompleteness of the transition to capitalism. By this logic, the so-called 'semi-feudal' relations and the peasant's mentality could indeed be seen as leftovers from an earlier period, still active, no doubt, but under world-historical notice of extinction. All India needed was to create more capitalist institutions, and the process of the conversion of the peasant into the citizen – the properly political figure of personhood – would begin. This indeed was Hobsbawm's logic. That is why his 'pre-political' characters – even when they are 'broken into' capitalism and even when he acknowledges that the 'acquisition of political consciousness' by these 'primitive rebels' is what makes 'our century the most revolutionary in history' – always remain in the position of being classic 'outsiders' to the logic of capitalism: 'It comes to them from outside, insidiously by the operation of economic forces which they do not understand and over which they have no control' (1978: 3).

In rejecting the category 'pre-political', however, Guha insists on the specific differences in the histories of power in colonial India and in Europe. This gesture is radical in

that it fundamentally pluralizes the history of power in global modernity and separates it from any universal history of capital. 'Hobsbawm's material', Guha writes, 'is of course derived almost entirely from the European experience and his generalizations are perhaps in accord with it. ... Whatever its validity for other countries the notion of pre-political peasant insurgency helps little in understanding the experience of colonial India' (1983: 6). If we see the colonial formation in India as a case of modernity in which, as Guha argues in introducing *Subaltern Studies*, the domain of the political is irreducibly split into two distinct logics which get braided together all the time – the logic of formal-legal and secular frameworks of governance and that of relationships of direct domination and subordination that derive their legitimation from a different set of institutions and practices, including those of *dharma* (often translated as 'religion') – then Guha's writings help to open up a very interesting problem in the global history of modernity. Ultimately, this is the problem of how to think about the history of power in an age when capital and the governing institutions of modernity increasingly develop a global reach. Marx's discussion of capitalist discipline assumed that the rule of capital entailed the transition to capitalist relations of power. Michel Foucault's work shows that if we want to understand the key institutions of modernity that originated in the West, the juridical model of sovereignty celebrated in modern European political thought has to be supplemented by the notions of discipline, biopower and governmentality. Guha claims that in the colonial modernity of India, this supplementation has to include an extra pair of terms: domination and subordination. And this is not because India is anything like a semi-modern or semi-capitalist or semi-feudal country or that capital in India rules merely by 'formal subsumption'. Guha goes beyond the argument that reduces questions of democracy and power in the subcontinent to propositions about incomplete transition to capitalism. He does not deny the connections of colonial India to the global forces of capitalism, but his point is that the global history of capitalism does not have to reproduce everywhere the same history of power. In the calculus of modernity, power is not a dependent variable, with capital playing the role of an independent one. Capital and power could be treated as analytically separable

categories. Traditional European-Marxist political thought, which fused the two, would therefore always be relevant but inadequate for theorizing power in colonial-modern histories. The history of colonial modernity in India created a domain of the political that was heteroglossic in its idioms, irreducibly plural in its structure, interlocking within itself strands of different types of relations that did not make up a logical whole. One such strand critical to the functioning of authority in Indian institutions was that of direct domination and subordination of the subaltern by the elite. As Guha said in his first contribution to *Subaltern Studies*, this strand of domination and subordination ubiquitous in relationships of power in India 'was traditional only in so far as its roots could be traced back to pre-colonial times, but it was by no means archaic in the sense of being outmoded' (1982: 4).

Social domination and subordination of the subaltern by the elite was thus an everyday feature of Indian capitalism itself. This was a capitalism of the colonial type. Reading critically some key texts of Marx, Guha argued that modern colonialism was quintessentially the historical condition in which an expansive and increasingly global capital came to dominate non-Western societies without effecting or requiring any thoroughgoing democratic transformation in social relationships of power and authority. The colonial state – the ultimate expression of the domain of the political in colonial India – was both a result and a condition of possibility of such domination. As Guha put it, 'Colonialism could continue as a relation of power in the subcontinent only on the condition that the colonizing bourgeoisie should fail to live up to its own universalizing project. The nature of the state it had created by the sword made this historically necessary'. The result was a society that no doubt changed under the impact of colonial capitalism but in which 'vast areas in the life and consciousness of the people' escaped any kind of '[bourgeois] hegemony' (1982, 5–6). The cultural history of power in Indian modernity could not, therefore, be produced by a simple application of the analytics of nationalism available to Western Marxism. Contrary to the intellectual tradition that bound the nationalist-Marxist historian Bipan Chandra to the views of left-nationalists such as Jawaharlal Nehru, Guha's argument implied that one could not pit against the story of a regressive colonialism an account of a robust nationalist movement seeking to establish a bourgeois

outlook throughout society,<sup>10</sup> for there was no class here comparable to the European bourgeoisie of the Marxist narrative, a class able to fabricate a hegemonic ideology that made its own interests look and feel like the interests of all. The history of the way the elite nationalists in India sought to mobilize the subaltern classes shows a political domain in which the secular languages of law and constitutional frameworks coexisted and interacted with no commensurable strategies of domination and subordination. The 'Indian culture of the colonial era', Guha argued in 'Colonialism in South Asia: Dominance without Hegemony and Its Historiography', defied understanding 'either as a replication of the liberal bourgeois culture of nineteenth-century Britain or as the mere survival of an antecedent pre-capitalist culture' (1997: 97–8). This was capitalism but without capitalist hierarchies, a capitalist dominance without a hegemonic capitalist culture – or, in Guha's famous term, 'dominance without hegemony'.

#### **SUBALTERN STUDIES AND REORIENTATION OF HISTORY**

Guha's two formulations – that both nationalism and colonialism were involved in instituting in India a rule of capital in which bourgeois ideologies exercised 'dominance without hegemony', and that the resulting forms of power in India could not be termed 'pre-political' – had several implications for historiography. Some of these were worked out in Guha's own writings and some in what his colleagues wrote. It is important, however, that we clarify these implications, for they are what made *Subaltern Studies* an experiment in postcolonial historiography. First of all, Guha's critique of the category 'pre-political' challenged historicism by rejecting all stagist theories of history. If the term 'pre-political', as I have discussed, took its validity from categorizing certain kinds of power relationships as 'pre-modern', 'feudal', and so on, Guha's discussion of power in colonial India resists such a clear distinction between the modern and the pre-modern. Relations in India that looked 'feudal' when seen through a stagist view of history were contemporaneous with all that looked 'modern' to the same point of view. From Guha's point of view, the former could not be looked on through geological or evolutionist metaphors of 'survival' or 'remnant'

without such historicism becoming elitist in its interpretation of the past. *Subaltern Studies*, then, was in principle opposed to nationalist histories that portrayed nationalist leaders as ushering India and its people out of some kind of 'pre-capitalist' stage into a world-historical phase of 'bourgeois modernity', properly fitted out with the artefacts of democracy, citizenly rights, market economy and the rule of law. There is no doubt that the Indian political elite internalized and used this language of political modernity, but this democratic tendency existed alongside and was interlarded with undemocratic relations of domination and subordination. This coexistence of two domains of politics, said Guha, 'was the index of an important historical truth, that is, the *failure of the bourgeoisie to speak for the nation*' (1982: 5–6, Guha's emphasis). There was, in fact, no unitary 'nation' to speak for. Rather, the more important question was how and through what practices an official nationalism emerged that claimed to represent such a unitary nation.

A critical stance towards official or statist nationalism and its attendant historiography marked *Subaltern Studies* from the beginning. Postcolonial history was thus also a post-nationalist form of historiography.<sup>11</sup>

Guha's quest for a history in which the subaltern was 'the maker of his own destiny' brought into focus the question of the relationship between texts and power. Historical archives are usually collections of documents, texts of various kinds. Historians of peasants and other subaltern social groups have long emphasized the fact that peasants do not leave their own documents. Historians concerned with recuperating peasant 'experience' in history have often turned to the resources of other disciplines for help: anthropology, demography, sociology, archaeology, human geography, and so on. In his well-known study of nineteenth-century rural France, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, Eugen Weber provides a succinct formulation of this approach: 'The illiterate are not in fact inarticulate; they can and do express themselves in several ways. Sociologists, ethnologists, geographers, and most recently demographic historians have shown us new and different means of interpreting evidence' (1976: xvi). In the sixties and seventies, E.P. Thompson, Keith Thomas and others turned to anthropology in search of ways of getting at the 'experiences' of the subaltern classes.<sup>12</sup>

Guha's (1983) approach is interestingly different from that of these historians. His

*Elementary Aspects* starts by recognizing the same problem as do Weber, Thomas, Thompson and others: that peasants do not speak directly in archival documents, which are usually produced by the ruling classes. Like them, Guha also uses a diversity of disciplines in tracking the logic of peasant consciousness at the moment of rebellion. But he thinks of the category 'consciousness' differently. In insisting on the autonomy of the consciousness of the insurgent peasant, Guha does not aim to produce generalizations that attempt to sum up what every empirical peasant participating in rebellions in colonial India must have thought, felt or experienced inside his or her head. For such attempts, however well intentioned, ended up making peasants into relatively exotic objects of anthropology. Guha's critique of the term 'pre-political' legitimately barred this path of thinking. Guha thought of consciousness – and therefore of peasant subjecthood – as something immanent in the very practices of peasant insurgency. *Elementary Aspects* is a study of the *practices* of insurgent peasants in colonial India, and not of a reified category called 'consciousness'. The aim of the book was to bring out the collective imagination inherent in the practices of peasant rebellion. Guha makes no claim that the 'insurgent consciousness' he discusses is indeed 'conscious', that it existed inside the heads of peasants. He does not equate consciousness with 'the subject's view of himself'. He examines rebel practices to decipher the particular relationships – between elites and subalterns and among subalterns themselves – that are acted out in these practices, and then attempts to derive from these relationships the elementary structure, as it were, of the 'consciousness' inherent in those relationships.

In keeping with the structuralist tradition to which he affiliates his book by the very use of the word 'elementary' in its title, Guha describes his hermeneutic strategy through the metaphor of reading. The available archives on peasant insurgencies are produced by the counter-insurgency measures of the ruling classes and their armies and police forces. Guha, therefore, emphasizes the need for the historian to develop a conscious strategy for reading the archives, not simply for the biases of the elite but for the textual properties of these documents, in order to get at the various ways in which elite modes of thought represented the refractory figure of the subaltern and their practices. Without such a

scanning device, Guha argued, historians tended to reproduce the same logic of representation as that used by the elite classes in dominating the subaltern.<sup>13</sup> The interventionist metaphor of reading resonates as the opposite of E.P. Thompson's use, in the course of his polemic with Althusser, of the passive metaphor of listening in describing the hermeneutic activity of the historian (1979: 210, 222).<sup>14</sup> This emphasis on reading also left *Subaltern Studies* historiography open to the influences of literary and narrative theory.<sup>15</sup> In thus critiquing historicism and Eurocentrism and using that critique to interrogate the idea of the nation, in emphasizing the textual properties of archival documents, in considering representation as an aspect of power relations between the elite and the subaltern, Guha and his colleagues moved away from the guiding assumptions of the 'history from below' approach of English Marxist historiography. With Guha's work, Indian history took, as it were, the proverbial linguistic turn. From its very beginning, *Subaltern Studies* positioned itself on an unorthodox territory of the left. What it inherited from Marxism was already in conversation with other and more recent currents of European thought, particularly those of structuralism. And there was a discernible sympathy with early Foucault in the way that Guha's writings posed the knowledge-power question by asking, 'what are the archives and how are they produced?'

#### **SUBALTERN STUDIES SINCE 1988: MULTIPLE CIRCUITS**

Guha retired from the editorial team of *Subaltern Studies* in 1988.<sup>16</sup> In the same year, an anthology entitled *Selected Subaltern Studies* published in New York launched the global career of the project. Edward Said wrote a foreword to the volume describing Guha's statement regarding the aims of *Subaltern Studies* as 'intellectually insurrectionary' (1988: v). Gayatri Spivak's essay 'Deconstructing Historiography' (1988), published earlier in the sixth volume under Guha's editorship in 1986, served as the introduction to this selection. This essay of Spivak's and a review essay by Rosalind O'Hanlon (1988), published about the same time, made two important criticisms of *Subaltern Studies* that had a serious impact on the later intellectual trajectory of the project. Both Spivak and

O'Hanlon pointed to the absence of gender questions in *Subaltern Studies*. They also made a more fundamental criticism of the theoretical orientation of the project. They pointed out, in effect, that *Subaltern Studies* historiography operated with an idea of the subject – 'to make the subaltern the maker of his own destiny' – that had not wrestled at all with the critique of the very idea of the subject itself that had been mounted by poststructuralist thinkers. Spivak's famous essay 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' (1994), a critical and challenging reading of a conversation between Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, forcefully raised these and related questions by mounting deconstructive and philosophical objections to any straightforward programme of 'letting the subaltern speak'.

*Subaltern Studies* scholars have since tried to take these criticisms on board. The charges about the absence of gender issues and the lack of engagement with feminist scholarship in *Subaltern Studies* have been met to some degree in seminal essays by Ranajit Guha and Partha Chatterjee, and by contributions made by Susie Tharu and others on contemporary feminist theory in India.<sup>17</sup> Partha Chatterjee's 1986 book *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World* creatively applied Saidian and postcolonial perspectives to the study of non-Western nationalisms, using India as an example. This book extended Guha's criticisms of nationalist historiography into a full-blown, brilliant critique of nationalist thought itself. With this work of Chatterjee's and with Gyanendra Pandey's forthcoming book on the history of the partition of India in 1947, post-colonial critique may be truly said to have become post-nationalist critique as well. The influence of deconstructionist and post-modern thought in *Subaltern Studies* may be traced in the way the work of Gyanendra Pandey, Partha Chatterjee and Shahid Amin in the 1990s has come to privilege the idea of the fragment over that of the whole or totality. Pandey's book *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India* (1991) and his 1992 essay 'In Defense of the Fragment'; Chatterjee's 1994 book, *The Nation and Its Fragments*; Amin's experimental and widely acclaimed book *Events, Memory, Metaphor* (1995) – all question, on both archival and epistemological grounds, even the very possibility of constructing a totalizing national history in narrating the politics of subaltern lives. This move has also understandably given rise to a series of

writings from *Subaltern Studies* scholars in which history itself as a European form of knowledge has come under critical investigation. Prakash, Guha, Chatterjee, Amin, Ajay Skaria, Shail Mayaram and others have made significant contributions on the question of analysing 'colonial discourse'.<sup>18</sup> Gyan Prakash's recently completed study of the discourse of science in Indian nationalist writings shows a deep engagement with the thoughts of Homi Bhabha.<sup>19</sup>

Where does *Subaltern Studies*, both the series and the project, stand today? At the crossing of many different pathways, it seems. The original project – understood here as one that effects a relative separation between the history of capital and that of power – has been developed and furthered in the work of the group. David Arnold's study of British colonialism in India in terms of histories of contested bodily practices, *Colonizing the Body* (1993); David Hardiman's studies of the political and economic culture of subaltern lives caught in emergent forms of capitalism in the Indian state of Gujarat, *The Coming of the Devi* (1987) and *Feeding the Baniya* (1996); and Gautam Bhadra's study of a number of texts to do with peasant society in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Bengal, *Iman o nishan* (1994) are all examples in which the possibilities of the original theoretic historiographic project are worked out and illustrated through concrete, historical examples.

At the same time, it has to be acknowledged that *Subaltern Studies* has exceeded the original historiographic agenda that it set for itself in the early 1980s. The series, as I said at the outset, now has both global and even regional locations in the circuits of scholarship that it traverses. This expansion beyond the realms of Indian history has earned for the series both praise and criticism. Much of the controversy follows roughly the contours of the global and ongoing debate between Marxists, on the one hand, and postmodernists, on the other. Like Marxists elsewhere, Indian Marxists charge that the postmodernist valorization of the fragment in subaltern historiography hurts the cause of the unity of the oppressed. Many of the Marxist opponents of *Subaltern Studies* believe that such unity is aided by social analyses that help bring the different 'publics' of the oppressed together by lending global and totalizing causes behind their oppressions. The debate is complicated further in India by the rise to political power of Hindu fundamentalist parties and organizations. Critics of

*Subaltern Studies* often claim that the critique of Eurocentrism and post-Enlightenment rationality inaugurated by the series, in combination with the criticisms of 'secularism' and 'modernity' launched by Indian writers such as Ashis Nandy, end up providing intellectual ammunition to the right-wing Muslim-baiting Hindu political parties. Defenders of *Subaltern Studies* point out in reply that the public sphere – in India and elsewhere – has fragmented under the pressure of democracy anyway; it cannot be united artificially by a Marxism that insists on reducing the many diverse experiences of oppression and marginalization to the single axis of class. Getting a critical perspective on European forms of knowledge, they would add, is part of the critical interrogation of their colonial inheritance that postcolonial intellectuals must carry out. Their critique of nationalism, they would insist, has nothing in common with the nationalist chauvinism of the Hindu parties.

I cannot do justice here to evaluating this debate, which will take us beyond the scope of the present discussion. Besides, it is also my feeling that the polemical aspects of this debate overstate the differences between the two sides. The point of this exercise has been to rebut the charge that *Subaltern Studies* lost its original way by falling into the bad company of postcolonial theory. I have sought to demonstrate through a discussion of what Guha wrote in the 1980s some necessary connections between the original aims of *Subaltern Studies* and current discussions of postcoloniality. *Subaltern Studies* was not a case of application to Indian material of methods of historical research already worked out in the metropolitan Marxist traditions of 'history from below'. It was in part a product of this lineage, but what made it different was the very history of modern politics in India. 'History from below', in the European case, made peasants into an extinct category, always anachronistic in the modern world. In European-Marxist histories of modernization, the history of modern politics entailed the transformation of the peasantry into a working class that was integral to the emergence of the subaltern-citizen or the subaltern-revolutionary subject. There was thus a deep-seated historicism that informed this narrative: peasants → factory-workers → Luddism/'primitive' protests → organization/consciousness → citizenly/revolutionary action. This is the same historicism as the one we have previously encountered in Hobsbawm's description of

subaltern actors caught in the vortex of modern institutions in many parts of the third world as 'pre-political'. Subaltern participation in modern politics in India has been a practical – if unconscious – repudiation of this stagist view of history. Peasants, tribals and other subaltern groups have been active participants in modern politics since the twentieth century, first as activists in the nationalist movement in the colonial era and then as makers of Indian democracy in the post-colonial period. As our discussion of Guha showed, to characterize the actions of subaltern classes in colonial India as 'pre-political' would have been to repeat an elitist historicism. It would have reproduced a Eurocentric view not only of Indian history but also of the conception of the political as well. Engaging the very nature of political modernity among the subaltern groups and classes in colonial India meant that *Subaltern Studies* had to both embrace and fight the intellectual legacy of leftist European historiography. The negative side of this legacy was represented by a stagist view of history that pictured the Indian subaltern political actor as either eventually reproducing, or falling short of, the ideal and Eurocentric figure of the citizen or the revolutionary subject. But challenging Eurocentrism in history is no easy task for the historian, since the modern discipline of history often carries with itself the birthmarks of its origins in eighteenth-century Europe. Eurocentrism may be dyed into the very methods of the discipline. It is not surprising therefore that subaltern history, while faithful to the methodological protocols of history writing, should also turn towards being an engaged critique of the academic discipline of history itself.<sup>20</sup>

#### NOTES

My grateful thanks to Ranajit Guha, Anne Hardgrove, Sanjay Seth and colleagues in *Subaltern Studies* for discussions that have helped me write this essay. An earlier version of this essay will appear in a reader on postcolonial studies to be published by Blackwell, UK.

1. I italicize *Subaltern Studies* when it refers to the actual volumes in the series by that name or to the series itself. When left unitalicized, the expression refers to an intellectual project, a field of studies or to the editorial collective of the series.

2. As it exists now, the collective has the following members: Shahid Amin, David Arnold, Gautam

Bhadra, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Partha Chatterjee, David Hardiman, Sudipta Kaviraj, Shail Mayaram, Gyan Pandey, M.S.S. Pandian, Gyan Prakash, Ajay Skaria, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Susie Tharu. Sumit Sarkar was a member of the collective for a specific period in the 1980s.

3. See, for instance, the symposium on *Subaltern Studies* in the December 1994 issue of the *American Historical Review* in which three historians of South Asia (Gyan Prakash), Africa (Frederick Cooper) and Latin America (Florenca Mallon) participated.

4. See their 'Founding Statement' in Beverley et al. (1993).

5. This is the insistent burden of much of what Sumit Sarkar (1997) has written in criticism of subaltern studies.

6. See my discussion of the relationship between nationalism and Marxism in Indian historiography (Chakrabarty, 1992: 79–84). Sanjay Seth (1995) provides a good analysis of the historical connections between Marxist thought and nationalist ideologies in British India.

7. As one respected Indian historian wrote responding to the work of the Cambridge scholars: '[O]nce, not so very long ago, to countless Indians nationalism was a fire in the blood'. See Tapan Raychaudhuri's review essay 'Indian Nationalism as Animal Politics' (1979).

8. See the introduction to Guha (1998).

9. Guha examines and critiques such Marxist positions in his essay 'The Prose of Counter-Insurgency' in Guha and Spivak (1988).

10. Both Nehru's writings of the 1930s and Bipan Chandra's of the 1970s assumed without question that the nationalist movement was 'essentially a bourgeois movement' (Nehru, 1962 [1936]: 66) and that its function was to establish 'bourgeois ideological, political and organizational hegemony ... over the vast mass of peasants, workers and the lower middle classes' (Chandra, 1979: 135).

11. This aspect of the project later came to be developed by Partha Chatterjee, Gyanendra Pandey and Shahid Amin. See below.

12 Cf. E.P. Thompson on 'experience': 'A category which, however imperfect it may be, is indispensable to the historian, since it comprises mental and emotional response, whether of an individual or of a social group, to many inter-related events' (1979: 199; see also Thomas, 1963).

13 Guha's own reading strategies are spelled out in his essay in Guha and Spivak (1988) and are implicit throughout *Elementary Aspects*.

14 To be fair, Thompson does not write only about 'voices clamour[ing] from the past' – 'not the historian's voice, please observe; *their own voices*' – he also has much to say about how historians interrogate their sources in order to listen to the lost voices of history.

15 This is best exemplified in Guha's essay in Guha and Spivak (1988). See also Chakravorty Spivak's introduction to that volume.

16 See Guha's (1988) statement in his introduction to *Subaltern Studies VI*.

17 Cf. Guha, 'Chandra's Death', originally published in *Subaltern Studies V* and reprinted in Guha (1998) Partha Chatterjee, 'The Nationalist Resolution of the Woman Question', reprinted as 'The Nation and Its Women' in Chatterjee (1994); and Susie Tharu and Tejaswini Niranjana, 'Problems for a Contemporary Theory of Gender' (1996).

18 Prakash has led the debate on non-foundational histories with his well-known essays 'Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of the Third World: Perspectives from Indian Historiography' (1990) and 'Postcolonial Criticism and Indian Historiography' (1992). Guha's essay 'An Indian Historiography of India: Hegemonic Implications of a Nineteenth-Century Agenda' in Guha (1997); Chatterjee's chapter entitled 'The Nation and Its Pasts' in Chatterjee (1994); Pandey's essay '*Subaltern Studies: From a Critique of Nationalism to a Critique of History*' (unpublished); and Amin's 'Alternative Histories: A View from India' (unpublished) are contributions to debates on historiography and the status of historical knowledge that *Subaltern Studies* has given rise to. In this connection, see also Shail Mayaram's treatment of memory and history in her 'Speech, Silence, and the Making of Partition Violence in Mewat' (1996); and Ajay Skaria's book, *Hybrid Histories* (1999).

19 Prakash's forthcoming book analyses the discourses of science and modernity in colonial India; see also his 'Science between the Lines', (1996).

20 For a more detailed exposition of this point, see my *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Chakrabarty, 2001).

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# PART III

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## *Themes*

The chapters in Part III draw attention to some major issues in contemporary historical sociology by focusing on classical themes in fundamentally new ways or elaborating new substantive themes as objects of analysis.

Peter Toohey in Chapter 14 examines the cultural logic of historical periodization, demonstrating that this is never a neutral process but reflects a particular standpoint and can be deceptive. Periodization is a means of making narrative sense of history, affording scholarship a necessary kind of heuristic device, but always at the risk of producing a comforting illusion. Periodization can be nostalgic or it can be a source of critical appraisal; it can also be, as in privileging the Enlightenment, a means of expressing Western conceptions of history; and it can be a means of excluding other histories. Periodization, Toohey argues, very often is a rhetorical style that reveals prejudices, or perspectives, that shape historical interpretations and as such, it should itself be an object of analysis in historical sociology.

In Chapter 15 Johann Arnason takes up the civilizational theme discussed in Chapter 5. Like periodizations, East and West are categories that seemingly we cannot do without but which require critical reflection. Modern historical sociology has inherited these value-laden, and largely Western, concepts. Arnason argues for their deconstruction, in, for example, recognizing the internal differentiation of East and West, which are far from dichotomous, as well as moving beyond the

'rise of the West' argument. Locating himself more in the Weberian tradition than in the Marxian, Arnason argues 'with Weber against Weber' in order to take up in a new way some of his path-breaking insights in order to move towards a notion of inter-civilizational encounters, which was always underplayed in Weber's work. But Arnason's interest is ultimately post-Weberian without endorsing the radical critique of 'orientalism' and its vague and undifferentiated categories. In his estimation East and West have multiple meanings not all of which can be reduced to 'orientalist' constructions, much of the comparative scholarship, despite its weakness, offers rich insights into the entire Afro-Eurasian complex and its many mappings.

The next set of chapters deal with particular problems in the general domain of the formation of the polity. Robert Fine and Daniel Chernilo discuss class and nation as the key categories in historical sociology, arguing for their co-emergence. In their view neither nations nor classes can be understood except in relation to one another. In this respect they complement the often missing dimension of class in studies on nation and state formation. In Chapter 17, taking up the Weberian theme, Gianfranco Poggi looks at the formation of the modern state in terms of the institutionalization of rule systems. For him the historical sociology of the state must concern itself with institutionalization of rule, which cannot be reduced to 'statualization', as is the tendency in much of the literature. Following on from

an overview of the rise of the modern state and its rule systems, Poggi looks at four analytical perspectives on the state: open and more inclusive structures versus more dispersed structures; war versus societal management as critical concerns in state-building; power enhancement versus power taming; and continuity versus change. Poggi's contribution might be summed up as his reminder that the state is a resilient and enduring institution and its analysis should continue to be significant for historical sociology.

Burns and Kamali shift the focus from the state as such to the much neglected question of assemblies and parliaments in Chapter 18 and offer some important perspectives of a comparative nature on the different kinds of assemblies that have prevailed in both East and West. They demonstrate that whether in England or Iran or Turkey, states and empires all had assemblies of various kinds which played a role in the evolution of modern democracy. Their theoretical framework is consistent with a notion of multiple modernities in stressing the heterogeneity of parliaments as public assemblies. It is also consistent with efforts to overcome Eurocentric categories of Occident and Orient in accounting for the origins of institutions without abandoning keen analyses of different trajectories of such institutions in different places.

Klaus Eder in Chapter 19 takes up this theme of democratization by looking at social movements. He argues that democratization is linked to social protest and that mobilization and democratization are doubly articulated moments in the formation of modernity. He sees social movements as collective actors embedded in time and space which become decisive for societal change, which can only be determined with historical hindsight. His chapter surveys the rise of the 'old social movements' of the modernization process in Europe to the point of their institutionalization, when a whole range of 'new' social movements arise on the crest of a new wave of modernization and democratization.

The following two chapters shift the focus back to the state, this time around the question of nationhood and nationalism. In Chapter 20 Gerard Delanty argues that nationalism is an expression of some of the major formative moments in modernity. Theorizing nationalism in terms of responses to integration and differentiation, on the one side, and as based on an ethic of radical freedom, on the other, he argues that nationalism

has survived as a persistent force in modernity because it has always succeeded in finding solutions to problems generated by modernity. Highlighting in particular four of these – state formation, capitalism, the intellectualization of culture and democratization – he demonstrates how nationalism has been a recalcitrant, and frequently a violent, force.

In Chapter 21 Paul Jones raises the question of architecture as a discourse of nationhood. His argument is that architecture, despite its universalism, has served as a means of cultural representation for the modern nation-state and its state-led projects. Architecture gave abstract ideas a tangible form, which was very important for imagining the nation, especially in the nineteenth century. In fact, he argues, historical sociology has never taken the concept of nation-building seriously in as much as 'building' meant not just the formation of institutions but also literally building the nation with monuments, bridges, symbols, passages, pathways and avenues. Without these projects, *modern* nation-building would have been inconceivable as an imposing and credible project.

In Chapter 22 Engin Isin looks at the historical sociology of the city, which he says must not be conflated with urban history. This chapter reminds historical sociologists of the importance of the city as a topic in classical sociology, thus shifting the emphasis away from the theme of the state, which dominated much mid- to late-twentieth-century historical sociology. However, the classical tradition must be critically appraised, he argues, as much of it – for example, the work of Fustel, Weber and Mumford – was dominated by the 'orientalist' assumption of the uniqueness of the Western city. Thus, the question historical sociology of the city now faces is how to interpret the essence of the city without orientalism. It is precisely because its *present* objective is not (or perhaps ought not to be) the uniqueness of the Occident as the birthplace of capitalism that the essence of the city awaits new interpretations.

In their discussion of historical memory in Chapter 23, Bernhard Giesen and Kay Junge argue that this is distinct from the collective memory of a generation in being one of the basic reference points for the public construction of collective identity. The chapter draws attention to an important dimension of cultural history that is now of central interest to historical sociology, namely the processes by which the past is constructed. The chapter

discusses places, relics and monuments as carriers of collective memories, as well as other memorial rituals, and also considers the social carriers of memory, such as experts and the educated elites. But many memories are inseparable from traumas, a fact which is discussed in conclusion. Emphasizing two fundamental conceptions of historical memory – intentional reproduction and non-intentional recurrence – Giesen and Junge argue that, either way, memory should not be considered simply as a true and accurate description of the past. It is selective and maybe erroneous. What passed unnoticed when it happened can appear as a major event in retrospection, and what once received the attention of contemporaries may, later on, be passed to oblivion. It is this aspect that makes it a significant object for historical sociology.

Pavla Miller in Chapter 24 discusses issues of gender and patriarchy in historical sociology and presents the argument that engendering processes are not confined to women's history. After sketching the field of gender for sociology, she identifies patriarchy as a key issue for historical sociology. While Miller recognizes the inherent ambiguities and difficulties of such a broad concept, she argues that its historical sociology is essential for understanding gender orders, family, welfare regimes and state formation. Taking three topics, namely family forms, welfarist state regimes and state formation, she discusses engendering processes.

The next chapter concerns religion. Bryan Turner, as with many contributors to this

volume, takes Weber as a point of departure and argues that religion has been a crucial part of modernity and can be examined from its impact on economics, politics and cultural formation more generally. One of his central arguments is that the Church itself provided an early model for secular citizenship and justice by virtue of the deep division between religion and politics.

The final chapter, by Alan Hunt, examines the growing field of the regulation of morals, with reference to issues of class, gender and social control. Especially since Foucault and the rise of the genealogical approach, there has been widespread attention paid to the regulation of morals in historical sociology (see also Mitchell Dean's analysis in Chapter 12). Although this has been immensely useful, Hunt argues that it belongs to a much older tradition, going back to Durkheim and the moral philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment. In more recent times the theme of the regulation of morals has reemerged with Foucault's history of everyday life, on the one side, and developments in social history, on the other. One of the central claims made in this chapter is the blurring of social theory and historical sociology.

Similarly, the themes included in Part III are neither exhaustive, nor comprehensive, nor indeed representative. None the less, these chapters illustrate not only the range of issues being investigated in contemporary historical sociology but also the remarkable convergence of concerns that animate practising historical sociologists today.



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## *The Cultural Logic of Historical Periodization*

PETER TOOHEY

Periodization is seductive. At its simplest it comforts. Regularizing, packaging and calibrating the apparent disorder of historical record, positing chronological or intellectual blocks, it creates a type of order.<sup>1</sup> In doing so it simplifies memorization, assists instruction and cheers the schoolmaster. It renders the annalistic record both manageable and communicable. Through scholarly control comes intellectual comfort.

Periodization is also romantic. At its more complex,<sup>2</sup> it imagines – by linear division and subdivision, and ultimately by exclusion – cultures (as superficially familiar as the Greeks and the Romans) that can become completely ‘other’. In doing so it renders these cultures mysterious, and more startlingly attractive. They become *terrae incognitae*, the object of a type of anthropological travel literature, and they beckon, as it were, the attentions of the intrepid intellectual fieldworker.

Such a form of periodization can reflect on our own culture. It can render our own apparent predictability, our own seeming normality and our own undoubtedly quotidian tediousness surprisingly, but gratifyingly, unique. Who would not wish that epithet to be applicable to themselves and to the cultures in which they have been, without choice, nurtured? That can provide a cause for self-flattery and self-congratulation. Or – and this has become common in the humanities and social sciences since the 1960s – it can provide grounds for self-reproach and self-castigation.

The merest hint of uniqueness within a culture is again and again seen as grounds for an accusation of being an aberration from the norm of a more generous-minded and, of course, unverifiable previous history.

Periodization, alas, can also be profoundly deceptive. The great British psychiatrist Henry Maudsley (1835–1928) offered a warning to fellow practitioners and their schematizing of the various types of insanity. His warning could be applied as readily to the periodizations of historians and sociologists. Maudsley spoke out as follows:

[There is in the human mind] a sufficiently strong propensity not only to make divisions in knowledge where there are none in nature, and then to impose the divisions upon nature, making the reality thus conformable to the idea, but to go further, and to convert the generalizations made from observation into positive entities, permitting for the future of these artificial creations to tyrannize over understanding. (1867: 323–4, quoted in Radden, 2000: 27)

### PERIODS AS RELATIVE

To make any sense of this phenomenon requires usually that one speak not of the process in its entirety (who could have such encyclopaedic prowess?), but of that small area in which one has competence. That small area, then, can be allowed to speak for this

process as a whole. Such, for example, was Foucault's technique in his *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972). His theorizing on periodization in that book rested on the field studies that he had carried out in the medicine, biology and economics of the eighteenth century. He had already published these researches as *Madness and Civilization* (1967) and *The Order of Things* (1970). This process of generalizing from limited evidence, though both practical and completely understandable, is none the less to be regarded with suspicion. It is based of necessity on a relativism (individual as much as cultural) in the establishment of periodizations. The chronological segments and stratigraphies are as valid as is the breadth and inclusiveness of the researcher's knowledge and geographic sympathy.<sup>3</sup> That, of course, is limited by gender, by birth, by race, by training, by income, by social standing, by self-confidence and by brain power. Academic and social insiders as well as outsiders will form, so it follows, radically different periodizations.

I can best illustrate such difficulties with personal recollection. For those of us who were raised outside the northern hemisphere, the concept of the Enlightenment – to take just one example, but a crucially important one, of a periodization – can be a very hard thing to comprehend. Australians were taught in high school that the secularizing strands of the Enlightenment prefigured a series of popular revolutions: the French, the American and even, in contributory fashion, the Industrial. All of these, but especially the Enlightenment, so it was taught, did much to dethrone the aristocratic and religious stranglehold that had existed, since the Middle Ages, over free thought, expression and the liberated social flow of capital. The Enlightenment, so goes the cliché, opened up in some manner the route to democracy.

These popular revolutions may have in this manner benefited many Europeans and North Americans. But they coincide, accidentally for all I know, with the white settlement of Australia. This settlement is generally agreed to have involved two misfortunes. The first, of course, relates to the savage dispossession of the continent's native people (see Atkinson, 1997). The second, as famously, relates to the settlement of the country as a dumping ground for the criminal dispossessed of the British Isles (see Hughes, 1987). Those many white Australians whose roots go back to early forced immigration<sup>4</sup> see very little to admire

in Europe or indeed the northern hemisphere of 1788.

The Enlightenment and its subsequent popular revolutions may not have caused the inception of convict transportation, but they do eventually coincide with it. My point here is not, in the manner of a Foucault, to attempt to highlight and at the same time to vilify the Enlightenment. Rather, it is to stress that for many, the Enlightenment is something to which they react with no feeling, affection, admiration or empathetic comprehension.<sup>5</sup> For Australians,<sup>6</sup> it is only the school books that insist on the importance of this northern periodization. So it is that there exists an Australian bewilderment in the face of this mysterious periodization represented by the Enlightenment.<sup>7</sup>

Periodization is a procedure that is rooted within specific cultures. It is not easily universalized. The profound relevance and liberating effect of the Enlightenment for particular Frenchmen or, especially, a particular American is matched historically by incarceration for Australians.<sup>8</sup> To insist that the Enlightenment speaks to and for all of us is as procrustean as it is ultimately offensive. But the important point here is not in fact the colonial nature of the act of periodization.<sup>9</sup> Rather it is the sheer variety of the manners by which periodizations can be established and coloured. Each nation, each region, even each individual, can have its own. Their periodizations, utterly relative constructs, reflect their own sense of the 'style' of their historical past.<sup>10</sup>

#### THE PROBLEM OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT

I have deliberately stressed the Enlightenment. My interest is not merely anecdotal nor is it merely personal. The Enlightenment remains the bugbear of the contemporary periodization of historical process, whether we are dealing with the chronological or with the style-driven forms of periodization. I could, and ought to, illustrate in detail. This illustration, however, requires a catalogue of sorts, and concomitant readerly patience.

Svetlana Boym (2001), in what is a fascinating book on the history of the concept of nostalgia, dismisses the antiquity of the emotion. It was invented after the Age of Revolution, she insists, no doubt aided by societal dislocation and its increased 'medicalization'. There is no sense of nostalgia in the literature of

antiquity nor, presumably, of the medieval period, she argues. Nostalgia, a banal emotion for most people, is a late-comer to the affective realm. It has a periodization that begins, approximately, with the Enlightenment. Or does it? I could counter with unambiguous ancient Greek red figure representations of a nostalgic Odysseus, or with passages from Homer's *Odyssey* that describe the emotion. Boym is a specialist in Russian literature. It is perfectly understandable that her familiarity with classical literary and material culture is limited. It is all the more predictable, therefore, that her periodization is vitiated by its being based on too limited a sample. Her guess, however, is in line with those of many other researchers, as we shall see.

The nature of that guess can be seen again with Patricia Meyer Spacks (1995), in a literary study of boredom as it is depicted in the English novel of the nineteenth century. Spacks allows that dogs can become bored (basing this on the observations of Elizabeth Marshall Thomas, 1993), but not humans. Not, at any rate, before the Enlightenment provided a conceptual basis for such passive and intellectualized emotions. This is because, I imagine, she can find no term for the spiritualized condition before then. If that is the case, then what can the Roman poet Horace (65–8 BCE), have meant by his term for boredom, *veternus*? Or what can the imperial Roman writer Seneca (5/4–65 CE) have meant by *taedium vitae*?

The difficulty apparent in both of these perfectly reasonable, but incorrect, assumptions on the periodization of affectivities is apparent. The Enlightenment, as a starting point for passive, 'spiritualized' emotions, is over-privileged. Henry Maudsley's warning could be brought back into play: observation establishes generalizations that, having become positive entities, come to tyrannize subsequent observation and understanding.

This propensity for periodization can be seen again and again in relation to the Enlightenment. A full list would be tedious. But a few more illustrations will be helpful. There is Peter Burke (1995). He believes that the modern origins of our passive concept of leisure go back only as far as the Enlightenment. A change in the availability of free time, its compartmentalization due to the nascent needs of industrialization (to map out, control and allocate the use of free time), lead to its instrumentalization. A once amorphous agrarian time became split into personal time (free or leisure time) and the employer's time

(work time). Clocks come to dominate time. Free time (leisure time as it becomes) is measured against the irrevocable temporal flight. Leisure becomes a means for assuaging the asperities of work time and the fear of its flight. It comes as little surprise that such modern theorizing displays scant acquaintance with the writings of classical antiquity, in particular with those of Seneca and Petronius (d. 65 CE), where a comparable conceptualizing of the course of time, and thus of leisure, is evident.

Even the 'self' can be drawn into this periodized web. A greater familiarity with the writings of St Augustine (354–430 CE) (see Stock, 1994, 2000; Westra, 2001) or with those of Seneca would give pause to those who see the concept of the self (not the persona, but genuine self-reflexivity) as in some way or another a peculiarly post-Enlightenment phenomenon (see Porter, 1997).

This privileging of the Enlightenment is particularly to be observed in the work of Michel Foucault.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, this popular, as we have seen, periodization may result from his work. Foucault has argued powerfully that, beginning in this revolutionary period, the modern concepts of madness (Foucault, 1973), eros (Foucault, 1978) and time (Foucault, 1977: 149ff.) first emerged. (Burke's take on leisure seems dependent on this view of time.) Of madness he has argued that, because of the development of a more sophisticated form of mercantile economy, there emerged for the first time concepts of mental illness matched by institutions to incarcerate the mentally ill, and medical systems to legitimize such 'clinics'. Foucault believes that these forces were designed to guarantee popular adherence to the productive goals of capitalism (Foucault, 1987: 68; 1973; but Porter, 1987: 6–10). Time too was reconceptualized by a money-making class bent on extracting the maximum financial gain not just from the physical commodities of trade, but also from their workers.<sup>12</sup> Time was linked to money.<sup>13</sup> Everything is organized by the clock (Foucault, 1977: 174). Producers, like products, required quantification. The regulation of time into easily recognizable periods apportionable to one's workers became one means of regulating production and controlling its producers (Foucault, 1977: 160). Thus time, requiring monitoring and instrumentalization, assumed the linear, evolutive, serial, cumulative, progressive and compartmentalized shape it has today.<sup>14</sup>

Eros and sexuality are influenced in comparable fashion (Foucault, 1978; Laqueur,

1990). There emerged a new way of speaking of the body. (Compare Halperin's challenging formulation of the emergence of the genus 'homosexual', discussed below.) The body was understood (to paraphrase Foucault's argument), up until the Enlightenment, from the effects 'of a system of production in which labour power, and therefore the human body, has neither the utility nor the commercial value that are conferred on them in an economy of an industrial type'. Thus there existed a contempt for the body which was reinforced by the demographical and biographical situation of the day: people died younger and more often through the 'ravages of disease and hunger, the periodic massacres of the epidemic, the formidable child mortality rates' (Foucault, 1973: 54–5). Capitalism, industrialism, the inchoate medical control of disease, introduce a new regime of bodily treatment and hygiene. For the new industrial state to prosper, the body must be controlled and husbanded: medicine, sex, sexuality, are all aimed towards the industrially productive practice of reproduction, an eros that is controlled and channelled accordingly, a use and application of time that encourages such profitable 'health'. All of these factors encourage a new vision which manifests itself in the segregation and removal of those qualities or folk deemed unsuitable to the new commercial worlds. Eros and sexuality, according to Foucault, are channelled along with madness and time into more efficacious modes.

Not everyone follows this Foucauldian approach. For some the philosophical basis inherent in the theorizing to be associated with the Enlightenment is unappealing. *Plus ça change ...* They move forward in time for the establishment of periodic caesurae and for a vindication of a claim to originality. So, a sociologist such as Pierre Bourdieu moves his periodical focus, emulously we might guess, away from the Enlightenment and on into the period of bourgeois consolidation following the era of revolution.<sup>15</sup> In a book such as *The Rules of Art* (1995), Bourdieu links the development of the concept of the French writer and the type of art that he or she produced (above all he is thinking of Flaubert and his withdrawal from social realism into an art for art's sake)<sup>16</sup> in the nineteenth century to the forces of genre and its constituents ('the whole structure and history of the field of production', as he puts it) as well as the historical, social and economic forces shaping and defining the artist's choices ('in the whole structure and history of the

social world under consideration').<sup>17</sup> At any rate Bourdieu sees the beginning of the modern concept of the artist/writer (that of the apparently self-contained solitary genius, the independent rebel against societal, especially bourgeois, values – a Baudelaire or Mallarmé or Rimbaud as much as a Flaubert) as stemming from this period and as driven by 'the social and the collective' as were the more generically and socially substantiated writers (Balzac, for example, or Zola). His point is well taken. I suppose, however, that how important it is that you view the role of this type of a (French) conception of literature and of the writer (as a Romantic transferred to the metropolis) will define how important it is that you see his theorizing as being.

#### PERIODIZATION AS SELF-REPROACH

Periodization can, by highlighting the differences between different eras, be used to emphasize the alleged aberrations of present practices and institutions (it is rarely the other way around). The ancients, for example, may be seen to have got it right, while we have got it completely wrong. Periodization as a means for contemporary self-reproach and castigation has been particularly to the fore in the matter of gender and sexuality. Once again, Michel Foucault provides the impetus.

In 1976, Foucault published the first of six projected volumes of his history of sexuality (Foucault 1976; English edition 1978).<sup>18</sup> Here he argued that sexuality, as we have just seen, is not a historical constant but an invention of the eighteenth century. Sexuality, again as we have just seen, imposes itself on bodies, as a means to force individuals into predetermined categories in order to control them. The body parts, sensory phenomena and moral issues which make up sexuality for us today belong, in different places and times, to other, often quite different, discourses, which may combine sex with apparently unconnected areas of life. For the Greeks and Romans, for example, sex posed problems like those linked to hunger, thirst and a desire to sleep. Foucault argued (basing himself on the work of the great classical scholar Kenneth Dover) that homosexual and heterosexual desire were identical in kind (so that the use of this modern terminology can only mislead), and that excess (lack of self-control) and passivity (falling under another's control) were the

main forms of sexual immorality for men (Foucault, 1988). For their part, the Romans of the Empire were troubled by romantic attachment with citizen boys, and so elevated the reciprocal relationship of the married couple (Foucault, 1988). (Here, Foucault is often said to have owed much to his colleague at the Collège de France, Paul Veyne – 1978, 1982).

Foucault's periodizations of sexuality and gender were in turn taken over and transmitted by remarkably gifted classical scholars such as David Halperin (1990) and Jack Winkler (1990). Dominance and submission were now the marks of gender; and behaviours, real or imagined, in what was once regarded as private life were seen to mirror or establish public position. Sexual intercourse, then, took on a new significance as a guide to gender definition in antiquity. Men and women were no longer self-evidently distinct; they were created and confirmed through intimate interactions. A boy or even an adult male could be feminized by penetration; and too much virility – Heracles', Mark Antony's – could pass over into its opposite, service to women's strength (Loroux, 1990; Russell, 1998). Behaviour might traduce biology. But above all biology might be the determinant of sexuality. Antiquity, for Halperin and Winkler, seemed to provide a more capacious and even tolerant conceptualization of sexuality.

David Halperin (1990) has provided the most clear and compelling articulation of Foucault's periodization of sexuality and how it is that this provides a basis for the castigation for apparent contemporary prejudice. Halperin has argued that homosexuality was 'invented' a mere century ago. Current-day prejudice was therefore not as marked over one hundred years ago. It was especially less marked in classical antiquity. Halperin is above all concerned to demonstrate that the genus 'homosexual' is not an immutable fact of history and that it is a recent invention.

Two things are needed for this genus to be established, he argues. First, there is required a homosexual 'morphology': an exterior mode or dress of behaviour that is identifiably non-heterosexual (perhaps feminine). Second, there is required a homosexual subjectivity: a conscious recognition that one has a sexuality and that this is directed in a same-sex mode. (In antiquity, sexuality, such as it was, displayed and conceptualized itself in terms of dominance and submission, excess and lack of it.) When these two are combined (and, he believes, this does not happen until the

eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries) the genus 'homosexual' comes into being. Halperin believes that because sexuality was, according to Foucault, based on power, a true homosexual subjectivity was impossible in the classical era and later. Hence the apparent absence of descriptions of the genus in ancient and medieval literature. The invention of homosexuality one hundred years ago, however, has provided a means for the marking out and persecution of gay people. The ancient world harboured, Halperin believed, no such prejudice. They looked down not on the queer, but on the dominated, the feminized, the slavish.

Are these periodized arguments of Foucault, Winkler and Halperin correct? They have come under considerable criticism during the last decade. Foucault ignored women, Rome and was selective in his use of evidence.<sup>19</sup> Halperin, some scholars argue, may have exaggerated the absence of the genus 'homosexual' within ancient life, and certainly of a homosexual subjectivity. And, like Foucault, he may have overestimated the role of domination and submission in ancient sexual relations. Above all many have suspected that this periodization of sexuality was driven more by political affiliation and by a completely justifiable sense of personal outrage (Halperin admirably makes no bones about his sexual orientation) than by archival evidence. The jury remains out on this matter.

#### PERIODIZATION AS NOSTALGIA

The various periodizations that have been associated with the concept of literacy betray a remarkable attachment to an era that is not our own. If the periodization of sexuality championed by Foucault and others spilled over into a politics of reproach,<sup>20</sup> then the periodizations to which the idea of literacy has been subject spill over into a romantic nostalgia. Classical antiquity is the usual beneficiary of such nostalgia. The unease displayed by many classicists with this attention, however, is seldom noted. It should be. The unease is precisely that which we have seen directed towards those who place an affective caesura within the Enlightenment.

The revaluation of the importance of illiteracy for 'literature' was inaugurated by a young American- and French-educated Hellenist, Milman Parry (1902–35). Parry noted the 'formulaic' nature of Homeric verse and, from this, was able to formulate a variety of rules for oral,

that is to say, illiterate, poetic composition. Some of the compositional characteristics that Parry isolated in Homer's poetry were, he and his colleague Albert Lord discovered, applicable also in the oral, illiterate poetry of Yugoslavia (Lord, 1960; Parry, 1971).

That Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, for many readers the high-points of Western literature, could have been composed without the assistance of pen and paper seemed to be a revelation. This revelation came, what is more, in the very period when so much (probably loose) linguistic discussion was being made of the purported disjunction, of the gap, between words and things, between signifiers and the signified (something of which the ancients, with their interest in puns and mixed metaphors, were quite conscious). It was almost as if Homer, the blind and illiterate genius, represented an era before the *lapsus*, before signifiers had irrevocably slipped away from the signified, and before words had slipped the moorings of real things, as it were, to float off on the sea of meaning and difference. This was before we had been expelled from childhood and Eden and the possibility of the internalized signifier. Greek scholars, such as Havelock (1963), developed these insights and demonstrated how much of the literature of the 'Greek miracle' was composed within a mindset that was as illiterate as literate, if such a paradox is possible.

It is remarkable that Parry's work coincides with the romantic and transcendental interpretations of early Greek culture proposed by the German philosopher Heidegger. For him the writing (or illiterate compositions) of a figure such as the pre-Socratic philosopher Parmenides (*fl.* c.450 BCE) reflects an era when words embodied the essence of things. The being of the Greek man in the world, his *Dasein*, was in touch with Being itself, thanks to the primal virtues of the Greek language, in which, uniquely before German, words revealed the primordial nature of Being. It is as if humans were etymologically related to a higher reality. For such lucky Greeks the word was the thing: it unfolded the thing it denoted. Signifier and signified, word and concept, were intimately related to the world of objects and the experience of being here. As is well known, Jacques Derrida (composing at approximately the same time as Havelock) built on the work of Heidegger and attacked the 'logocentric' tradition embodied in and beginning with Plato, a tradition on which words, the medium (the signifier), corrupted, as it were, the

message (the signified). The task of the deconstructionist, thus, should be to unmask the mendaciousness of signifiers and to restore to us the prelapsarian wholeness of the signified and signifier. Put rather crudely, this is to say that literacy, embodied in the writings of the logocentric Plato, seems to have destroyed the purity of perception and communication, of the transcendental signified. The nostalgia evident in these romantic periodizations is striking. It would be a very credulous individual who believed there ever existed a time when the relationship between words and things was ever anything but random.

This romantic mode of interpretation is evident, though more simplified, or at least less elaborated, in the writings of Walter Ong (1982), Jack Goody (1977, 1987) and, unexpectedly, Claude Lévi-Strauss (1961). Here we register a positive preference for the culture of illiteracy. Ong (1982) and Goody (1977, 1987), writing at the same time as Derrida, and at the same time as Heidegger was being translated first into English, both set a series of judgemental and schematic contacts between the cultures of the illiterate and the literate. From this they aim to characterize and periodize these realms. Their contrasts are between, respectively, timelessness, the cyclical, the non-urban, between myth, verse and permanence, between the public and the 'outer', in contrast with the timed (hence clocks and calendars), the linear, the urban, between history and science (contrasting with myth), prose, the provisional, the private and the 'inner'. This list could be continued at considerable length, but the idea, I think, ought to be apparent. The Greece of Homer and Hesiod (c.750 BCE) embodies these preferred illiterate qualities.<sup>21</sup> These are the characteristics, Ong and Goody imply, of the pre-modern world. This was a world for which they clearly feel considerable attachment: the Jesuit Ong's Garden of Eden, the anthropologist Goody's never-ending field research location. Their broad periodization – between the pre-modern and the industrial no less – does reflect badly on the contemporary world. Its over-schematicization, however, omits the process of evolution of nearly three thousand years from Homer to the twenty-first century, during which millennia such schematic contrasts must surely blend.<sup>22</sup>

Occasionally these periodizations of nostalgia and reproach come together to form a most depressing and predictable casserole. This has been markedly so in the last decade.

I will limit myself to only one recent and very popular example. This is Florence Dupont's *The Invention of Literature: From Greek Intoxication to the Latin Book* (1999).<sup>23</sup> The title gives the game away. The illiterate Greeks are good for embodying in their early poetry all of the qualities mentioned on the 'left' above. The Romans are bad for embodying the right-hand qualities. The surprise (and here comes the reproach) is that we, like the Romans, have been trapped into the literate world. Dupont sees in the semi-literate Third World a return to the Heideggerian state of unity between signifier and signified (read 'intoxication'): '[T]he future belongs to the recycling of written texts within a framework of festivity. ... Our own postmodern culture might ... take over all the "masterpieces of literature", as is being done today in Francophone Africa, and reinvent them in music, dance, rap ....' (1999). The predictability of ideational substructure of this material shows just how troubling the act of periodization really can be.

#### PERIODIZATION AS GENRE

It is very difficult to be persuaded by most of the stylistic models and methodologies of periodization that we have encountered so far. The most broad are perhaps the most persuasive. So when Aldo Schiavone in *The End of the Past* (2000) distinguishes ancient Roman society from contemporary society by the presence or absence of slavery and industrialization, he is probably telling us both a truth and a truism. When Ernest Gellner in *Plough, Sword, and Book* (1988: 1–100) sees the big periodization as that between modern (above all self-reflexive) and pre-modern-agricultural (thick, polyvalent logics of the 'primitive' mind) and places the 'caesura' with Descartes and his *cogito*, we are getting more of the same. The difficulty is that such periodizations are so obvious as to represent truisms. And, unfortunately, in their broad brushstrokes, they do miss the nuance.

It is the intermediary phases, between modern and pre-modern, between literate and pre-literate, that so test and so often overturn these broad periodizations. To do justice to these intermediary phases is to provide the nuance. I could illustrate from antiquity. It has been argued, with considerable justification, that ancient understandings of manic depression

emerge first in the texts of the Greek medical writer Aretaeus of Cappadocia (*fl.* 150 CE). These coincide with a marked change particularly in Roman but also in Greek literature. In the literature contemporary with Aretaeus, there is an inward turn, a greater interest in the 'self', and in psychological states. There is a tendency to privilege passive (depressive states), where hitherto privilege had been granted to active ones (manic states, we would say). Aretaeus' formulation reflects a 'discourse' or '*habitus*' or '*episteme*' or mentality. It is even part of a *Zeitgeist*, we could say.

Such a conclusion, however, becomes much more difficult to sustain if you look outside the literary tradition. I have noticed, for example, an otherwise very well known depiction of Orestes being assailed by the Furies after he had murdered his mother, Clytaemnestra. Orestes' representation is remarkable. He seems sunk into a deep and melancholy reverie, deep enough in fact that it resembles what we would term depression. His mood seems to suffuse the picture. Its other main actors, the Furies, Apollo and Artemis, have the same doleful expression. The depression, however, is explosive. We know from the tradition that it was interspersed with wild fits of mania. This painting of Orestes, now housed in the Louvre, dates to the fourth century before our era. Aretaeus' description of the illness dates to the second century of our era. The visual tradition seems to register Aretaeus' bipolar insight several hundred years in advance.<sup>24</sup> Perhaps it is easier to *see* these sorts of problems than it is to *say* them. But that is beside the point. It appears that the traditions of the visual are well out of synchronization with those of the written tradition, which is apparently much more conservative. Where does this leave us with periodization? Completely at sea? Periodization, it appears, may be genre-specific. Does one generalize, therefore, at one's own risk?

#### CONCLUSION

To render a comprehensive survey of the variety of periodizations that have been and are popular would be a vast and ultimately unrewarding task. Not unlike the periodizers themselves, I have attempted to adjudicate from a mere sampling. It is my hope that this limited survey has offered, however, some conclusions of general validity. My survey has

concentrated on three aspects of periodization that, at present, seem to me to be of considerable importance: that relating to the Enlightenment and, following more or less from this, those relating to sexuality and the body, and those relating to the constraints of language. The style-driven periodical schemas associated with these, I have suggested, are of limited (if unavoidable) use. They are based, in the main, on limited or selective surveys of the evidence and sometimes on self-serving ideas and prejudices. This matter of evidence, I have also attempted to demonstrate, is of especial importance. Many periodical schemas are vitiated by a poor sense of history, above all as this relates to what used to be called classical antiquity.

When looking back to the intellectual history of the second half of the twentieth century, some future historian may well characterize it as the Age of Conceptual Rupture. That it was one in which the nineteenth-century model of temporal continuities was replaced with a preference not only for 'periodization', but even for 'dramatic periodization'. That it was a period in which a theory of periodization represented an arrow in the conceptual quiver belonging to every respectable historian. Were such a historian pressed to offer an explanation for the emergence of this Age of Conceptual Rupture and its eschewing of the continuities of *'la longue durée'*, he or she might point to rapid change, personal migration and the changing identities that so characterized the half-century. He or she might stress that, while the alleged condition of 'postmodernity' imposed itself on how history was read, real-life history was in all probability more sluggish, less 'periodized' than was claimed. Such a future historian might stress that a half-century producing its 68ers, its X-Generations, its existentialists, structuralists, poststructuralists and deconstructionists (who were all tumbling frantically over each other in a desperate bid to 'make it new, and different') could not have conceived of history in any other way.

Is there, after saying all of this, anything that can be said in favour of the practice of periodization? The answer to this is a simple, if agnostic, one. Periodizations of the stylistic sorts that I have been looking at are at best heuristic tools. While they are of the greatest use in helping us to organize and reorganize information, they are most frequently mendacious and misleading. They can be driven by fads (witness the popularity of the

Enlightenment as a cure-all for any chronological confusion), by the preachy and moralistic (Dupont or the Jesuits), by the political activist (Foucault), by the urban academic longing for the sites of his or her youth (Lévi-Strauss), and by the career academic bent on novelty (Bourdieu). So it is that we invent new periodizations to cast into relief issues otherwise obscured by the discourse on a subject that has hitherto held centre-stage. Reconceptualizations, such as those brought on by feminism, for example, or by the social historians with their 'bottom-up' narratives and their sensitivity to the abuse of power, expand for a time our comprehensive perspectives. They break down the apparent narrowness of the preceding periodic clichés. But once their work of refocusing has been done, they in turn must be readjusted. They must take a lesser position. They must make room for newly helpful, but equally inadequate paradigms to take over. For their brief period.<sup>25</sup>

#### NOTES

This essay builds on the concerns of Golden and Toohey (1997), especially those set forth by the authors in their joint introduction. My gratitude to Mark Golden for looking through this essay and for allowing me to use his formulation of sexuality from our forthcoming collection (Golden and Toohey, 2003). I have also had considerable help from Engin Isin and Don Lateiner. Peter Dale formulated for me the final two paragraphs of this essay. I dedicate this essay to John Huntly Bishop.

1. Such as the Bronze Age, the Renaissance or the Enlightenment. This intellectual form is based, we could say, on *style* – the style, as we now perceive it, of someone from the fifth century BCE in Athens, or of someone from Paris in the eighteenth century.

2. I mean this in the non-judgemental sense. By 'complex' I mean that based more on stylistic than strictly chronological or material considerations. I am thinking particularly of the intellectual stratigraphies posited by 'archaeologists' such as Foucault.

3. I am speaking here of individual relativism, to which Foucault is as much subject as are you or I. The poststructuralists, of course, are speaking of cultural relativism, which, as Engin Isin helpfully stresses to me, represents the difference between racialization and race, or ethnicization or ethnicity.

4. Not just through convict transportation. On the Irish potato famines and the resulting migration see Patrick O'Farrell (2000).

5. Brad Inwood, from the University of Toronto, makes the rhetorical point to me that the American War of Independence could be termed the First

American Civil War. The losers, the British sympathizers, and there were many of them, moved to Canada, in particular to southern Ontario. He argues that the war was directed as much against these groups as it was against the British, perhaps even more so. Canada stands, therefore, as evidence of internal American disension. Professor Inwood's periodization undermines, therefore, that normal mode of reading the American Revolution as a beacon on the route to democracy. His periodization makes of this event, if you like, a tawdry in-fight, one whose outcome was the 'voluntary transportation' of Americans to Canada. Canada becomes for the US its 'fatal shore'. Events in Australia, therefore, have their reflection in Canada. Yet another new 'stylistic' periodization is established.

6. I will not even attempt to speculate on the insignificance of this event for non-Western cultures – our Muslim and Hindu neighbours from the East Indies, for example. The Enlightenment contributes in no way to their sense of the ebb and flow – the periodization – of history.

7. Add an Indonesian if you wish.

8. And dispossession for the inhabitants of the Dutch East Indies. And, as Brad Inwood argues, for Canada.

9. Something illustrated most strikingly, if ahistorically, for example, in Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978).

10. This discussion, of course, is as culturally limited as any periodization itself. My interest is classical antiquity. I have therefore examined those Western periodizations that ignore antiquity. It would be very interesting to expand the discussion to incorporate a comparison of how various periodizations ignore spatial implications and so, for example, privilege the East over the West (see Bernal [1987] or Said [1978] or Amin [1989]).

11. The next two paragraphs are closely modelled on my comments in Toohey (1997: 50–1).

12. It is curious that the financial zealotry diagnosed by Foucault and others coincides with the removal of women from work in the fields, and their placement within the house. Were they insane, or was this a means for controlling their reproductive capacities?

13. Peter Dale points out to me the antiquity of concepts such as 'time is money'. He notes 'poluteles analòma einai ton khronon' ('time is great expense') in Diogenes Laertius V.2.10.40. He also notes that the concept is implicit in Machiavelli's contemporary Guicciardini's (1483–1540) 'We know for certain that, because the life of man is short, even for one who knows how to make profit (*capitale*) from time and not to squander (*consumare*) if in vain, time makes its claim (*avanza tempo assai*)'.

14. Little need to stress the Eurocentric substrate of this mode of speculation: what happened in Japan, China or India, for example, in their contemporary constructions of insanity, health, time and production?

15. This is, too, the era of the 'invention' of the nation-state. It is, one often hears argued, the period during which nationalism and its concomitant problems emerge. I say concomitant with some feeling, for

it is in this century that racism, as an intellectual concept as well as a social occurrence, is first recorded – according to those with a blind side at any rate. For parallels in the Greek and Roman world compare Juvenal, *Satire* 15 and the views on Egyptians.

16. Flaubert is not without classical parallels if he is understood thus. Some of the ancient lives of Euripides saw him in this way (cf. Lefkowitz, 1981).

17. This combination of internal (generic) and external (societal) constraints, which Bourdieu terms '*habitus*', conditions the form a work of art will take and adopt. Each era or periodization will be characterized by a specific *habitus* (see Bourdieu, 1977: 72ff.). Bourdieu's notion could be contrasted with Foucault's characterization of the style of a period as an 'episteme'; that is, based on the dominant discursive or textual trends of a period. Foucault, that is to say, removes the sociological forces. The notion of *mentalité*, popularized by the *Annales* school, and used so successfully by Philippe Ariès in his books on the periodization of the ideas of childhood and of death, should be compared. Hegel's notion of the *Zeitgeist* is to be linked, though this is far less concrete. The *Annales* historians established *mentalité* by the close examination over time of concrete historical features. (Hegel intuited.) Of the *Annales* approach, Quentin Skinner (1985: 181) notes:

[F]rom the philosopher Lévy-Bruhl, he [Febvre] and Bloch developed the notion that beyond individual thinkers and their particular expressions of value and belief lay patterned systems of thought – 'mentalités' – which differed radically from age to age. Above all, following Durkheim, both historians accepted the primacy of the social and the collective in the lives of historical agents. (1985: 181)

18. The formulation of Foucault's, Winker's and Halperin's work on the following pages belongs to Mark Golden. It will appear, in more detail, in his introduction to Golden and Toohey (2003). I am very grateful to Mark Golden for allowing me to use this material here.

19. Poststructuralist history sometimes is guilty of affording selectivity in the use of evidence the status of virtue. It does this by setting up the straw man of 'absolute objectivity', polymathy (somehow chided as another instance of uncritical positivism) and even 'mastery of sources', as if this were something to be avoided. Whatever else the poststructuralist Foucault is remarkable for, it is the astounding range of subject areas in which he displayed historical mastery.

20. It is a pity that a literature of compassion could not replace this (often Said-inspired) literature of reproach.

21. Lévi-Strauss, in his autobiographical *A World on the Wane* (1961), is open about his preference for a literate society. He also associated writing not surprisingly with the establishment of law and the exercise – to the disadvantage of most – of power.

22. It is when these two extremes of literacy and illiteracy interact, as is most commonly the case in

Greece, Rome and medieval society, that one gains the most typical and realistic of societal portraits. See Rosalind Thomas (1992) or the enviably positivist W.V. Harris (1989).

23. There is a very instructive (and amusing) review of this book by Elaine Fantham (2000).

24. I have addressed this in detail in the opening chapter of Toohey (2003).

25. The practice of periodization is, I admit, inevitable. Its inevitability, however, must be countenanced. The inevitability should be offset by treating periodizations primarily as heuristic devices and, as Engin Isin suggests to me, by remaining 'reflexive' about them.

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*East and West:*  
*From Invidious Dichotomy*  
*to Incomplete Deconstruction*

JOHANN P. ARNASON

**HISTORICAL PATTERNS  
AND POLARIZING VISIONS**

Critical reflection on the concepts of East and West must begin with the historical background to their imputed meta-historical meanings (the latter term seems more suitable than the vastly overstretched and abused notion of 'essentialism'). When a vaguely defined geographical division is transfigured into an invariant contrast of socio-cultural identities, the underlying criteria must be derived from experiences and interpretations of a particularly formative nature. The visions (primarily Western ones) of East and West as enduring opposites, encompassing a variety of cultures and a series of epochs on each side, draw on successive patterns of polarization and on the accompanying self-images. The Greek encounter with the Near East – a combination of borrowing and demarcation through distinctive inventions, followed by conflict and counter-offensive – has commonly figured as the inaugural episode of a much longer story and as the original source of dichotomizing views. Both classical Greek affirmations of a political contrast to the East and Hellenistic speculations about an Eastern ancestry of philosophy could be seen

as prototypes of later trends. Subsequent landmarks include the Near Eastern entanglements of the Roman Empire, whose expansion into that region collided with a particularly refractory religious tradition (Judaism) as well as an unbeatable imperial adversary (the Iranian realm under Parthian and Sassanian rule); an offshoot of the former, combined with less clear-cut inputs from the latter, was to play a key role in the last attempt to reconsolidate the imperial order. After the fragmentation of the Roman world, a long and complex process of interaction between the Western Christian and the Islamic successor civilizations left a legacy of polarizing perceptions which could serve to underpin further developments in a broader context, although the importance of this prehistory to modern visions of East and West remains a matter of debate.

European expansion gave a new and decisive twist to the division of the old world ecumene (and ultimately the global arena) into Eastern and Western parts. But it would be misleading to draw a straight line from early modern beginnings to present after-effects of Eurocentrism. The global network built during the first stage of overseas conquest and empire-building gave the European powers a new kind of strategic advantage, but did not bring about a conclusive

shift in the balance between them and the major Asian civilizational complexes. Closer contacts during the eighteenth century led to growing interest in the diversity of non-European cultures, reconsideration of European self-images from a more comparative perspective, and an incipient grasp of the plurality of civilizations. It was the visibly increasing global strength of the West around and after 1800 that changed the terms of debate and reinforced Eurocentric attitudes at the expense of more critical insights. In this context, the main dividing line was drawn between the ascendant Western European region (together with its transatlantic extension) and the major Near Eastern and Asian civilizational complexes. A meta-historical contrast was, in other words, used to set a triumphant periphery apart from the rest of the Eurasian continent. Since North African developments and connections were subsumed under the notion of the East (and the rest of the African continent largely disregarded), the question of a broader Afro-Eurasian region did not arise. Another source of ambiguity was, however, more important for later elaborations of the distinction between East and West. Alongside the Western European turn to overseas empire-building, the Russian empire emerged as another major spearhead of expansion and a contender for power within the European state system. From the viewpoint of more self-assuredly Western observers, this new arrival from Europe's periphery was an unsettled mixture of Eastern and Western elements; variations on that theme, ranging from the projects of Westernizing reformers or revolutionaries to the counter-arguments of 'Eurasianists' who stressed Eastern sources and prospects, became an enduring concern of Russian self-interpretations. The ambiguous identity of Russia lent support to similar views of its Byzantine background, more easily 'easternized' in retrospect than at a time when Byzantium coexisted and interacted with Western Christendom. More conspicuously, the image of Russia as at least partly Eastern could be transferred – with much more overtly strategic aims – to the Soviet incarnation of the empire: the ultimate version of the dichotomy discussed above was an ideological model of the bipolar world that took shape after the Second World War. In that context, the utopian vision transmitted from the West to its most dangerous adversary could be seen as a case of genuine cultural borrowing for alien purposes, or as a way to exploit the internal divisions of a superior but vulnerable civilization.

The interpretative sediments of successive historical experiences cannot serve to define the tasks of critical inquiry; in that sense, the inherited notions of East and West should be ranked with the problems rather than the premises of historical sociology. For several reasons, however, it seems appropriate to set the following discussion of theoretical issues against the background of traditional views. To begin with the most obvious point, attempts to theorize the dichotomy of East and West in uncompromisingly general terms are still being debated, and as we shall see, their ideological connections are not unequivocal. A more critical approach, grounded in classical insights and exemplified by contemporary trends, problematizes the distinction between East and West in multiple ways: work in this vein reflects a growing interest in differentiations on each side, as well as in changing patterns of interaction across the presumed divide. Such ideas can only be articulated and tested with critical reference to the pre-existing notions of polar contrasts. In a loose sense, the ongoing differentiation of regional, historical and civilizational perspectives may be described as an effort to deconstruct the duality of East and West. This task is far from completed, and there are good reasons to assume that deconstruction must remain more incomplete in some regards than others; as the following discussion will show, a critical review can allow for a suitably redefined and downsized concept of the West which has no equivalent on the other side. Even the most dedicated destroyers of Eurocentric myths have to admit that we can speak of the 'rise of the West' as a historical process, however derivative, destructive and transitory they consider it to be.

The demarcation of a historical (and by the same token context-dependent) West from the aggrandizing and idealizing meta-historical constructs is as controversial as it is important; notwithstanding the basic defects of dichotomizing theories, they can therefore serve to illustrate a deep-rooted and recurrent challenge to an alternative model that is still in the making.

#### THEORIZING THE GRAND DIVIDE

Early nineteenth-century interpretations – exemplified by Hegel's philosophy of history – pictured the West as a privileged domain of reason and freedom in progress towards

universal rule. By contrast, permanent stagnation, failure to develop beyond early beginnings or at least a loss of civilizing capacity was the apparent hallmark of the East. This view was shared by otherwise divergent theories of history and society; to mention only the most striking example, it had a strong influence on Marx's work. The well-known formulations of the *Communist Manifesto*, where the triumph of the bourgeoisie over feudal adversaries is equated with the victory of civilization over barbarism and the West over the East, reflect an uncompromisingly Eurocentric position which was never revised in any fundamental way. But Marx's attempts – after 1850 – to explain Eastern backwardness on more specific grounds gave rise to ideas which proved adaptable to other perspectives in twentieth-century contexts. The concept of the 'Asiatic mode of production', based on self-contained village communities controlled and exploited by a despotic state, was a badly flawed guide to the historical dynamics of Asian civilizations; but it was at least a step towards institutional analysis of obstacles to change, as distinct from the references to a quasi-natural state of stagnation, and the subsequent rejection of this approach by mainstream Marxism had more to do with a perceived political threat than with any theoretical issues. It was the very notion of basic historical divergences between East and West, rather than a particular emphasis on structural backwardness, that seemed incompatible with a unilinear model of past and future progress.

The most interesting reinterpretations of Marx's ideas on the East were developed outside the orbit of Marxist orthodoxy, and the most provocative one took a militantly anti-Marxist turn. Karl Wittfogel's new analysis of Oriental despotism (1957) was a uniquely ambitious attempt to reaffirm and theorize a permanent contrast between East and West, stretching from classical antiquity to the Cold War. The common denominator of Eastern social formations (as well as those of the western hemisphere before European conquest) was to be found in a 'hydraulic' power structure that had – at least in the heartlands of the civilizations in question – grown out of the technical imperatives of irrigation farming, but expanded far beyond its formative context and had often been adopted as a ready-made power device by states bordering on the hydraulic world. Most importantly, this monocentric pattern of social power had been re-established on a new technical basis by the post-revolutionary

regimes in China and Russia. A dynamic of 'despotic power – total and not benevolent' (Wittfogel, 1957: 101) was invariably central to societies organized in this way. By contrast, the liberal West was heir to a tradition of multi-centred society that began with the Greek rejection of Oriental despotism. Although this vision of history differs sharply from Marxian views in its emphasis on power as a driving force and differentiating factor, Wittfogel's argument draws on distinctively Marxist assumptions: the original constitution of hydraulic society reflects the primacy of productive forces, and the adaptability of the hydraulic model to varying environments and changing infrastructures is reminiscent of capitalist expansion as described by Marx. The result is a curious mixture of simplifying models from opposite ends of the ideological spectrum, untenable as a framework for comparative history (the core concept of a hydraulic managerial regime, essential to the whole argument, has been demolished by critics), but interesting as an extreme case of theory grafted onto meta-historical images of East and West.

Another revision of Marx's underdeveloped theory leads to very different conclusions. It hinges on the concept of a 'tributary mode of production', characterized by state appropriation of the surplus product but otherwise compatible with widely varying forms of organization as well as property, and independent of any original economic rationale for state control. Here the central role of coercive power and its political framework becomes more important than it had been for Marx, but not in the same sense as for Wittfogel. Although the idea of a tributary mode can be traced back to Japanese discussions about the Asiatic mode of production in the 1930s, attempts to develop it into an alternative to both older Marxist and anti-Marxist views are of more recent origin. Samir Amin (1976, 1989) seems to have pioneered this line of argument in the context of Western debates. His definition of the tributary mode, designed to avoid all connotations of backwardness or stagnation, stresses the direct involvement of political power in the relations of production and the compatibility of this invariant trait with varying degrees of commercial growth. In Amin's writings, the tributary mode is presented as the main pattern of pre-capitalist development, whereas the atypical social formations of the European periphery – before its colonizing and capitalist turn – do not add up to more than a deviant episode. This

reinterpretation of the Asiatic mode of production is no less radical than Wittfogel's, but its result is the exact opposite: a model originally meant to highlight the distinctive dynamism of the West has been adapted to a critique of Eurocentrism.

The concept of the tributary mode also lends itself to less ideological uses. When the social regime in question is seen as 'an unusually *developed* economic and political system' (Wickham, 1988: 88, original emphasis), capable of maintaining and even rebuilding itself despite the permanent threat from disintegrative trends, comparative history is by the same token set on a more balanced course. The historicity of tributary societies is evident in the complex interplay of centrifugal and centripetal dynamics, and the ability to reinvent mechanisms of control in new contexts can no longer be mistaken for mere inertia. On the other hand, the distinctive features of Asian societies have now – in order to avoid the stereotype of the 'unchanging East' – been redefined so broadly that regional boundaries tend to vanish. If feudal structures are – as Wickham argues – a recurrent outcome of decomposing processes within the tributary ones, it is difficult to insist on a dividing line between the two types: since the feudal patterns always involve some fragmentation of political power, it seems more appropriate to treat them as variously attenuated or self-limiting versions of the tributary nexus between economic and political structures. The most comprehensive analysis of the tributary mode (Haldon, 1993) draws this conclusion and includes the pre-capitalist phases of Western history in the range of tributary formations. From this point of view, the tributary mode appears as a universal framework of social development from the beginnings of civilization to the breakthrough of industrial capitalism; the 'East in the West' (Goody, [1996] uses that expression in another context) becomes more important than any clear-cut distinction between East and West; and a radical Western deviation from the common pattern only became possible when the Industrial Revolution changed the whole character of economic life. In regard to the last point, the theory of the tributary mode thus converges with unorthodox readings of Marx's theory of capitalist development, that is, those which interpret modern capitalism as a revolutionary break with previously dominant world-historical patterns, rather than a culmination of evolutionary trends. On the other hand, the

problematic of pre-capitalist change and diversity is now very tenuously linked to Marxist categories. If the deep structures of Eastern and Western societies before the great transformation are marked by a permanent intertwining of economic and political power, it is not clear why they should be conceptualized as modes of production (it would make more sense to see capitalism as the first formation that makes a mode of production central to social life); moreover, the shared core is open to variations which cannot be analysed in conventional Marxist terms. In view of all this, the idea of the tributary mode is perhaps better described as an exit from Marxism than as an innovation within the Marxist framework.

Another exit leads to more openly multi-dimensional conceptions of social development in East and West. All attempts to generalize across the spectrum of Asian societies are rejected as Orientalist stereotypes in disguise; in this field, the foremost task of further historical inquiry is to categorize different types and trajectories without any prior definition of limits to their variety. On the Western side, a more integrated model of historical change can be defended, but only if it gives due weight to changing configurations of multiple factors, instead of focusing on economic structures and their supposedly self-contained dynamics. The most representative example of this approach calls for unprejudiced exploration of the 'historical field outside feudal Europe' and a 'concrete and accurate typology of social formations and State systems in their own right' (Anderson, 1974: 549). An outline of structural and developmental contrasts between Islamic and Chinese institutions serves to illustrate the diversity of the formations in question. Anderson (1974) insists on the unique dynamism and universal significance of Western transformations, but also on the complexity of their driving forces. As he argues, the European passage to capitalism – with all its implications and ramifications – was only possible because of inputs from extra-economic sources at successive critical junctures. The Church as a bridge from antiquity to the Middle Ages, the emergence of self-governing urban communities, the reactivation of Roman law and the Renaissance, are all mentioned as crucial components of the process. At this point, the nominally intact notion of the mode of production has ceased to be an operative concept on either side of

the divide. It implies no assumptions about the level of autonomy of economic structures, sets no limits to the involvement of political and cultural forces in the making of economic institutions, and posits no privileged terms of reference for explanations of long-term patterns or sequences.

#### THE WEBERIAN TURN AND ITS AMBIGUITIES

The two interpretative strategies summarized above have at least one thing in common: they reflect a shift from Marxian to Weberian perspectives. This is most obvious in the second case, where the specific aspects singled out to explain Western breakthroughs are unmistakably in line with Weber's analyses of the same problematic. But the first alternative is at least implicitly Weberian in its emphasis on political components of economic structures, and open to further realignment inasmuch as subtypes of the very broadly defined tributary mode would have to be related to non-economic contexts. The next section of our survey should therefore deal with Weber's views on East and West and the significance of his unfinished project for continuing debates. Despite recent progress towards a balanced understanding of Weber's work, he is more frequently cited as a classic example of Eurocentrism than as a guide to critical reflection on its sources and consequences. But as I will try to show, his position is ambiguous in fundamental respects, and his formulations often more tentative than later commentators have wanted to admit; there is considerable scope for arguing 'with Weber against Weber', and some of the latent or underdeveloped themes relevant to that purpose run counter to Eurocentric assumptions. The points to be noted in the present context range from revisions of the distinction between East and West to new angles on their respective dynamics and interactions. In each specific case, Weber's potentially path-breaking insights are obscured by over-simplifications or restrictive premises which tend to perpetuate the traditional dichotomy in a more refined form. The latter aspect has, on the whole, figured more prominently in later interpretations.

(1) In his most seminal studies, Weber redraws the *boundaries between East and West* (or Orient and Occident, as he often calls them), divides the Eastern world into two

radically different regions, and suggests divisions of another kind within the long-term trajectory of the West. For the comparative analysis of civilizations, the Near East is in crucial ways closer to its European neighbours than to the 'Asiatic cultural world' (Weber, 1958: 329) further east. The importance of this redefined demarcation line is evident in Weber's sociology of ancient civilizations, which moves from Mesopotamia to the Roman Empire, and most strikingly at the end of his study of India, where 'the Near East' (*Vorderasien*) is explicitly described as a part of the Occident and singled out as the homeland of 'missionary prophecy' (Weber, 1958: 343); the latter is a component of the monotheistic traditions which set the enlarged West apart from the outer East. On the Eastern side, the Chinese and Indian civilizational complexes are based on mutually alien cultural premises, characterized by different institutional frameworks, and distinguished by specific patterns of contrasts with the West. Notwithstanding these basic distinctions, the Near Eastern world may in certain respects or at certain moments seem more external than internal to the West. For example, Weber speaks of 'Oriental feudalism' when he compares the socio-political structures of the Islamic world with the Western ones. As for the location and identity of the West, Weber's analyses focus – in unequal measure – on a series of centres with shifting regional contours and changing socio-cultural characteristics. Near Eastern beginnings are followed by Greek and Roman phases of Mediterranean development; medieval Western Christendom, uniquely enriched and energized by the culture of self-governing cities, then mutates into the modern world of capitalist, bureaucratic and scientific rationality. It is easy to extrapolate from this sequence and distinguish segments of the ascendant modern West. The divergent dynamics of Reformation and Counter-Reformation were reflected in even sharper contrasts between new societies across the Atlantic, and within the European heartland, Central European patterns deviated from those of the Atlantic seaboard.

This revised model was, however, never formulated in systematic terms. On the level of concrete analyses, Weber was sensitive to regional differentiations, but he tended to fall back on dichotomizing constructs when it came to general statements. The concluding section of his work on Hinduism and Buddhism, quoted above, begins with

comparative reflections on the Chinese and Indian worlds, but relies on loose analogies with the West, rather than direct descriptions: the comparison of India's role in Asia with that of Greece in Europe is of limited value, and the parallel between China and France seems more than far-fetched. The following argument tends to amalgamate Chinese and Indian features in an ideal-type opposed to the West, and in the end (as in various other contexts), the bipolar view of Occidental and Asiatic patterns serves only to contrast Western Europe with cultures east of Islam.

(2) Weber takes some significant steps in the direction of *intercultural hermeneutics*, that is, the grounding of comparative studies in a mutual fusion of horizons. The problem of cross-cultural understanding looms larger when a plurality of civilizations and regions is involved, whereas the simple distinction between East and West is more compatible with the use of binary constructs biased towards the side which sets the agenda of inquiry. Weber's understanding of cultures as distinctive ways of lending meaning and significance to the world, adumbrated in an early text (1949: 80–1) but never theorized beyond basic outlines, was a promising starting point, and it is to some extent echoed in his later interpretations of non-Western religious traditions. His insistence on the limitations due to use of secondary sources, and therefore on the 'definitely provisional character' (1968a: 28) of all his analyses of Asian civilizations, shows how aware he was of the need for more interpretative work (more so than most of his critics have noted). On the other hand, his comparative studies contain no explicit reference to the earlier reflections on culture; there is no analysis of cultural frameworks as comprehensive ways of interpreting the world, or of specific cultural images of power (which could have added a whole new dimension to his sociology of domination); and the efforts to understand other traditions do not lead to questions about the translatability of basic meanings, implicit or articulated. When Weber thematizes central cultural orientations of Indian or Chinese civilizations, he tends to rely on ideal-types constructed from within the Western tradition and in systematic contrast to its dominant trends. His critics have noted misconstructions due to this approach: Indian visions of liberation are subsumed under the Western idea of salvation, and the Chinese notion of socio-cosmic order is interpreted in such a restrictive way that its

potential for tensions between culture and politics, as well as between individual and society, is vastly underestimated. In short, a retreat from intercultural hermeneutics leaves seminal ideas undeveloped.

(3) When Weber compares developments in East and West, with a view to explaining the decisive lead gained by the West, he places a particular emphasis on *rationalizing processes*. That term is not used in all relevant contexts, but it recurs often enough to make it clear that this was Weber's preferred way of theorizing contrasts and parallels. Rationalizing trends are, on this view, at work in economic and political life, as well as within the frameworks of different world-views – including those which the modern Western consensus dismisses as essentially irrational. But no clear account is given of the relationship between unity and diversity; Weber's reflections on this issue point in two starkly divergent directions, and both of them came to the fore at an advanced stage of his work. On the one hand, a late addition to the *Protestant Ethic* (1968a: 77–8) warns against over-generalized notions of rationality and stresses the contextual meanings and dynamics of all rationalizing processes. If we link these considerations to the main substantive themes of Weber's sociology, it seems clear that rationalizing processes should be analysed in relation to interconnected cultural, political and economic settings. In light of the above remarks on culture and its constitutive role, cultural interpretations of the political and economic fields can be seen as integral parts of the overall context. Although Weber does not define the basic concept of rationality that would fit this perspective, his line of reasoning suggests a view akin to Charles Taylor's conception: rationality and rationalization have to do with the articulation of implicit, underlying or inchoate patterns. This definition can be extended to cover modes of articulation across contextual boundaries (culminating in Weber's 'formal rationality') as well as the capacity to 'stand back and look beyond' (Schwartz, 1975: 3), that is, to question existing forms of articulation in the name of new standards.

On the other hand, Weber's most condensed summary of contrasts between Eastern and Western rationality – the introduction to his collected essays on the sociology of religion – reflects a strong tendency to credit the West with the discovery or invention of definitive models (1968a: 13–31). Although Weber underlines the significant achievements of

Eastern civilizations, the Western breakthroughs and the paradigms resulting from them seem to be in a class apart: this applies to rational proof and experiment as well as to systematic political theory and the capitalist organization of labour. Weber takes a further step towards the canonization of Western models when he sums up their combined impact in the notion of *Entzauberung* as a long-term process which links the internal mutations of the monotheistic tradition to the post-religious belief that we can master all things by calculation. This shift to a one-sided summing-up, on the basis of incomplete and admittedly provisional evidence, did more than anything else to put a Eurocentric stamp on Weber's work.

(4) The ambiguous connotations of rationality and rationalization are closely linked to another issue. At the very beginning of the introduction quoted above, Weber ascribes the triumphs of rationality in the West to a 'combination of circumstances'. Some salient examples of such a combination are mentioned elsewhere in his work. The mutually transformative interaction of Judaic and Hellenic traditions is an obvious case in point, and so is – by implication – the broader cultural synthesis brought about by the Roman Empire. Many factors combined to sustain the specific dynamism of the medieval West; as noted above, the innovative culture of self-governing cities had a decisive impact on their broader social environment and on the subsequent course of history. But Weber's analysis of the city also raises a further question: to what extent can the 'combination of circumstances' involve a *configuration of multiple rationalities*? Urban self-rule exemplifies the practical rationality of autonomy. This common characteristic of ancient and medieval cities is overshadowed by Weber's detailed analysis of the socio-economic contrasts between them, but the theme was later taken up and explored from other angles, most notably in the work of Cornelius Castoriadis (1997). The medieval and Renaissance cities were also – as Weber most succinctly noted in passing when discussing Chinese institutions – seedbeds of early capitalist rationalization and development, prior to the emergence of modern capitalism in the strict sense (Weber, 1968a: 85). From this point of view, the Western trajectory might be analysed as a changing constellation of different and sometimes rival rationalities. Weber did not pursue this line beyond brief hints; he was more

inclined to emphasize a main current which unfolds through transformations of Western religious traditions. Whether his interpretation of this process can be reconstructed as a theory of religious evolution is a matter of debate, but the stress on a dominant developmental trend is unmistakable. In that context, the role of historical constellations can only be a retarding or accelerating one; the direction is in principle independent of the circumstances.

(5) The emphasis on enduring trends might seem conducive to better understanding of a field which lends itself particularly well to comparative studies: the problematic of *long-term processes*. In very general terms, Weber's frequent references to rationalization (taking implicit precedence over rationality) may be read as acknowledgements of the need to re-centre social and historical inquiry on transformative processes, their internal dynamics and their interactions. The most emphatic mention of the Western path to radical rationalization (Weber, 1968a: 105) highlights a long-term process of religious development, from Greek and Jewish origins to Puritan conclusions. A more circumscribed but still multi-secular sequence of structural changes is summed up in the brief genealogy of the modern Western state at the beginning of 'Politics as a Vocation' (Weber, 1991: 77–128). There is, however, no attempt to move towards a more systematic application of this idea. Weber's concrete analyses do not focus on the emergent patterns of long-term processes, and could not have done so without a major reworking of basic concepts. When it comes to non-Western cases, some key features are seen as results of long-drawn-out developments (for example, Weber notes several historical stages – including Muslim domination – on the road to uncontested Brahmin domination within the Indian caste order); but although such insights show that his approach to the Oriental world was not as ahistorical as critics have often claimed, processual points of view are even less developed than on the Western side. More importantly, Weber's framework for comparing Eastern and Western civilizations thus fails to account for crucial aspects. Neither the question of different macro-historical dynamics in the economic, political and cultural domains nor that of contrasting patterns of interconnection between these three spheres can be put in adequate perspective. The lack of conceptual keys to long-term processes led Weber to exaggerate the impact of abrupt breakthroughs. This is not to deny that he often had good

reasons for singling out historical turning points (such as the early Christian break with the particularistic rituals of Judaism, or the Protestant secession from Western Christendom), but their links to trajectories of more gradual change are left unclear. On the most general level of analysis, Weber's emphasis on charisma as the revolutionary force *par excellence* would seem to reflect a dismissive view of other forms of social creativity, such as transformative processes; and since charismatic breakthroughs are – in his vision of history – particularly prominent in the Western context, this translates into heightened asymmetry between East and West. A brief but suggestive passage in Weber's study of China, obviously written in anticipation of further work, contrasts the Western record of revolutions with the absence of any comparable upheavals in Chinese history (Weber, 1968b: 62). No mention is made of underlying long-term processes which might suggest a more balanced comparison.

(6) Weber's comparative studies were not based on any strong assumptions about civilizational closure, and his particular interest in a global divergence between East and West did not prevent him from acknowledging important contacts. He noted the importance of 'Near Eastern cultural elements' for the rise of the Greek *polis* (1976: 154); he cited the most familiar examples of Chinese inventions spreading to the West (1968b: 287, n. 9); and he was at least willing to allow for the possibility that the world-rejecting mode of religious life might be an exclusively Indian invention, transmitted to the West in the wake of growing cultural exchanges with the Greco-Roman world (1991: 323). But these observations did not lead to any significant interpretative efforts. No theory or typology of *inter-civilizational encounters* can be extracted from Weber's work. Examples of such encounters are not absent from his analyses of the major non-Western traditions, but the tendency to minimize their meaning is unmistakable. The discussion of Buddhism in China is disproportionately brief and more concerned with the impact of an alien environment on Buddhist thought and practice than with Buddhist contributions to Chinese civilization; the Muslim conquest of India is very marginal to Weber's argument; in the Japanese case, the decisive impact of cultural imports from China could not be doubted, but Weber saw the whole process in question as a unilateral transmission of civilizing models, rather than an encounter. Within the

framework of his comparative analyses, he paid no attention to the early modern phase of European interaction with non-European civilizations; but developments during this period included cultural encounters of major importance for the self-understanding of the West, as well as the creation of new networks of interaction (such as the silver trade which linked Asia to European possessions in America), and it should therefore be central to any systematic study of inter-civilizational contacts. As for the final triumph of capitalism on global scale, Weber admits that civilizations may not be equally receptive to capitalist institutions. He notes the exceptional success of Westernizing elites in Japan after 1868, and speculates that Chinese culture might – given favourable conditions – prove even more adaptive. But his conception of capitalism is too uniform and unilinear to permit anything that could be described as a reinvention of principles or institutions. The inter-civilizational aspect of the modern economic order is thus reduced to a minimum.

(7) Finally, there is some reason to believe that Weber was less than absolutely convinced of *Western superiority over the East*. This was not merely a matter of sensitivity to the dark sides of distinctively Western achievements; the vision of the iron cage was a lasting reminder of the dangers inherent in unbridled rationalization. More importantly, the possibility that the rational paradigms attributed to the West might be questioned at a more basic level was not wholly alien to Weber's views. At the beginning of his most synoptic programmatic statement, he qualifies the Western claims to universal validity 'as we at least like to think' (1968a: 13, translation amended). It is impossible to dismiss this remark – made in the context of reflections on the very core of Weber's work – as a rhetorical gesture. The only plausible interpretation is that Weber was in principle willing to admit ultimate uncertainty on this issue, and the only way to articulate that attitude beyond cryptic hints would have been a move towards 'lateral universality', as Merleau-Ponty was later to call it: a redefinition of universal meanings as claims to be tested through intercultural elucidation. If the comparative study of civilizations is an essential corrective to the self-understanding and self-affirmation of the West, the argument returns to the above-mentioned question of intercultural hermeneutics. Indirect but suggestive signs of a shift in that direction can be found in some

of Weber's last writings, where the breakdown of unifying cultural frameworks and the rivalry of divergent rationalities appear as increasingly dominant features of advanced modernity. A radical cultural pluralization of modernity could open up new perspectives on the plurality of civilizations. But the main civilizational analyses fail to deliver on this implicit promise; the comments on Eastern and Western world-views at the end of Weber's work on India did more to block further discussion than to clarify the problem.

#### POST-WEBERIAN PERSPECTIVES

As I have tried to show, Weber's work can – in retrospect – be interpreted on two levels: his concrete analyses and theoretical arguments broke new ground in the comparative history of East and West, but he also adumbrated a set of ideas and approaches which found no adequate expression in the completed part of his project. Attempts to develop the latter part of the Weberian legacy might thus be described as post-Weberian. There has, however, been no systematic effort to combine the perspectives outlined above within an upgraded framework for civilizational analysis. Selective pursuit of post-Weberian themes has resulted in significant contributions to the ongoing reinterpretation of East and West, but the main trends are markedly heterogeneous. Some noteworthy studies have thrown new light on the more structural aspects of the problematic (long-term processes, historical constellations and inter-civilizational dynamics); others have gone beyond Weber in stressing the plurality of traditions and the formative role of their cultural premises, but mostly done so in ways unresponsive to the questions of intercultural hermeneutics and without any sustained reflection on multiple rationalities. The latter fields have to some extent been tackled by comparative philosophy; here I can only suggest in passing that historical sociology might benefit from closer contact with work in that vein (for an impressive example, see Scharfstein, 1998).

The two most important explicit revisions of Weber's civilizational theory converge in a strong emphasis on the core meanings of cultural traditions, but differ sharply in regard to their conceptions of East and West. Benjamin Nelson (1976, 1981) reformulated the dichotomy – he preferred the terms 'Orient' and

'Occident' – with a view to better understanding of Weber's more specific contrasts. Developmental blockages in non-Western traditions were still central to his argument, but he questioned both Weber's over-generalized concept of rationalization and the particular focus on capitalism. According to Nelson, the Chinese civilizational pattern – seen as a complex of cultural models and institutional structures – obstructed radical universalization rather than rationalization in general, and this was most strikingly evident in the history of Chinese science: its early lead in the fields of empirical knowledge and technical application did not translate into a breakthrough to the mathematical and experimental mode of inquiry. As for India, the main problem had less to do with rationality than with 'failed fraternization', that is, enduring particularistic barriers to interaction; this argument centres on the caste order and its long-term enfeebling impact on both state and society (through fragmentation of the former and segmentation of the latter), rather than on obstacles to capitalist development. On the Western side, Nelson shifted the main focus of comparative analysis from modernity to the High Middle Ages. In his view, the socio-cultural transformation of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was the most formative episode in the history of Western Christendom as a distinctive civilization. But the medieval turning point was important for another reason as well: it exemplified the decisive role of inter-civilizational encounters, in this case the interaction of the emerging West with the Byzantine, Jewish and Islamic worlds.

Nelson's ideas never crystallized into a firm conceptual framework. S.N. Eisenstadt's civilizational theory is based on much more structured premises and problematizes the distinction between East and West in a more radical way. For Eisenstadt (1986), the central theme of comparative studies is the cluster of 'Axial' civilizations, that is, the traditions which grew out of far-reaching cultural transformations in China, India, ancient Greece and ancient Israel during several centuries before and after the middle of the last millennium BC. On the one hand, affinities between these historical formations – owing to cultural ontologies which link the construction of social order to visions of ultimate reality – are more fundamental than any contrasts between Eastern and Western variants of the Axial type. In all cases, expanded cultural horizons give rise to transformative dynamics and

interpretative as well as social conflicts. On the other hand, more detailed comparative analyses will highlight the patterns and trajectories of each particular Axial civilization, rather than any generic Eastern or Western configurations. In this context, however, there is still room for strong claims as to the originality of European civilization in comparison with the other Axial ones (Eisenstadt, 1987). The European historical experience – with particular emphasis on medieval Western Christendom – can be seen as an exceptionally pronounced case of cultural, social and political pluralism; multiple centres competed with each other and faced challenges from equally diverse peripheries; last but not least, the conflicts between orthodoxy and heterodoxy took a more revolutionary turn than elsewhere.

Civilizational themes are less important to the post-Weberian approaches of John A. Hall (1985) and Michael Mann (1986). Notwithstanding major differences between the two authors, their works can for present purposes be treated as variants of a common problematic: their analyses of the European (more precisely Western European) trajectory stress the dynamics of interrelated power structures and locate the question of capitalist development within that context. Clear signs of such a shift are evident in Weber's account of the Occidental city. For Weber, the urban communities of the High Middle Ages were hothouses of cultural innovation, but also power structures of a new and unprecedentedly contested kind. But for Hall and Mann, the growth of cities – and of the commercial networks based on them – is only one aspect of a much longer and more complex process which set medieval Western Christendom on a path different from all other civilizations. The long-term outcome, increasingly central to the modern phase of the dynamic, was a mutually reinforcing relationship between states and societal networks of power. As Hall puts it with reference to the European state, 'a limit to arbitrariness combined with, indeed in part caused, considerable and ever-increasing infrastructural penetration' (1985: 137). In Mann's terms, 'capitalism and the national state formed a loose but coordinated and concentrated alliance, which was shortly to intensify and to conquer both heaven and earth' (1986: 446). Comparison with states in other settings shows that what matters is not state strength or weakness in any general sense, but specific combinations of strengths and weaknesses. Hall argues that Chinese, Indian and

Islamic patterns of state power were – in different but equally durable ways – adverse to the growth of civil society in general and market economy in particular. The imperial Chinese 'capstone' government achieved a stalemate between state and society, not to be mistaken for stagnation but conducive to long-term containment; the chronically unstable Indian states developed a predatory attitude to the economy; and in the Islamic world, an ultimate discord between religious and political power, together with frequent ethnic cleavages between states and societies, led to similar if somewhat less straightforward results.

Neither Hall nor Mann attempts any comparative analysis of processes of state formation in East and West. Both emphasize the crucial role of Christendom as a unifying network of ideological power and normative regulation in the early stages of the European dynamic; the distinctively European multi-state system grew out of this prior constellation. Mann goes on to point out that the genealogy of Christianity leads back to Mediterranean and Near Eastern sources. The very beginnings of the European path to global power thus exemplify the role of inter-civilizational encounters. Mann does not discuss the external background to European exceptionalism in such terms, but he concludes that 'the origins of the European miracle were a gigantic series of coincidences' and involved 'causal paths ... emanating from all over the European, Near Eastern, and even central Asian civilizations' (1986: 505).

Interpretative histories of particular regions or traditions can pose new problems and open up new horizons for comparative analysis. An eminent case in point is Marshall Hodgson's work on Islam (Hodgson, 1974, 1993), perhaps the most ambitious one-man project of that kind in twentieth-century scholarship. Here it is of particular interest because it deals with the civilizational complex least clearly categorized within Weber's frame of reference and interprets it in a way which enriches the Weberian problematic in various respects. To begin with, Hodgson replaced the dichotomy of East and West with a very different model of regional divisions. Within the Afro-Eurasian complex (important as a geographical background, a context of interregional relations and in later phases an increasingly unified historical configuration), four nuclear regions emerged: Europe (defined as the northern shore and hinterland of the Mediterranean, including Anatolia), the Middle East, India

and the Far East. The three more outlying regions derived their respective identities from civilizational traditions which had taken shape during the Axial Age (Hodgson used this concept in a sense which stressed the different directions taken by a new reflexivity and the enduring cultural patterns created in the wake of this breakthrough), whereas the Middle East – or the Nile-to-Oxus region, to use the term Hodgson came to prefer – had a more complex history. It was most central to the early history of civilizations, but its entrenched archaic traditions did not fuse or mutate into a new identity during the Axial Age. Iranian and Jewish prophecy could be seen as Axial innovations in marginal areas, but it was only the much later rise of Islam and Islamicate civilization (Hodgson used the latter term to avoid a conflation of religious traditions and civilizational patterns) that gave the whole region a new identity.

Apart from the core regions, the Afro-Eurasian complex contained crossroads areas (Central Asia and Southeast Asia) and frontier zones dependent on older cultural centres, such as Western Europe, Japan or the Sudan. But the dynamics of cultural traditions expanding beyond their respective core areas are best understood in relation to the Afro-Eurasian complex as a whole. For Hodgson, literary traditions were most closely identified with civilizational cores, whereas religious, philosophical and scientific ones were – in varying degrees – more capable of cross-civilizational diffusion. In some cases, such developments were massive enough to be seen as wholesale enlargements of particular cultures (by analogy with the familiar case of Hellenism, Hodgson coined the term ‘Indicism’ to describe the spread of Indian classical culture to various parts of Asia). However, the most momentous trans-regional – and ultimately global – dynamic was the result of late developments in a frontier zone long relatively isolated from the rest of the Afro-Eurasian complex. The ‘Great Western Transmutation’, as Hodgson called it (this was for him the only legitimate reference to the West in regional or civilizational terms), gathered pace between 1600 and 1800, became irreversible with the Industrial Revolution, and went on to change the most basic premises of social life worldwide. But in singling out this late and displaced sequel to an earlier emergence of Greco-Roman Europe as a core region, Hodgson was implicitly conceding the case for a stronger version of the ‘rise

of the West’. The ‘transmutation’ occurred within a culture whose relationship to classical sources had no parallel in any other region, and this connection – as well as the ability to reactivate and reinterpret it in response to new contexts – was in turn bound up with the emergence of medieval Western Christendom as a separate civilization, more autonomous than those of other peripheral areas.

As a part of the Afro-Eurasian complex, Islamic civilization was not simply one among several others: it had – for the first time – unified the original heartland of urban civilization, and gone on to become the premodern interregional civilization *par excellence*. For Hodgson, its trajectory was therefore central to comparative history. Notwithstanding new perspectives opened up by later debates, his comprehensive interpretation of Islamic history still helps to locate the main issues within a broader context. Five aspects of his argument seem especially relevant to such concerns. First, the formation of Islam was a more complex and long-drawn-out process than its traditional self-image suggested: the ‘incipient Islam’ of Arab conquerors combined with traditions and innovations of the conquered Middle Eastern heartland. Second, the religious core of the resultant synthesis was a more distinctive and self-contained version of monotheism than Western analysts – directly or indirectly linked to a Christian background – had tended to assume. As Hodgson saw it, the most central religious imperative of the Christian tradition was ‘the demand for *personal responsibility to redemptive love in a corrupted world*’, whereas the corresponding Muslim one was ‘the demand for *personal responsibility for the ordering of the natural world*’ (1974: Vol. 2, 337, original emphasis). Third, the synthesis took shape in several divergent contexts, and more particularly on the interconnected but never identical levels of political power and religious doctrine; the outcome was a state of multiple tensions between various components of Islamicate civilization: state and society, religion and politics, entrenched aristocracies and shifts towards a more mobile and egalitarian society. Fourth, this led not to a stalemate or a structural failure of the whole civilizational pattern, but to long-term processes which ‘developed simultaneously in many parallel and interconnected spheres’ (1974: Vol. 1, 239). This applies to cultural as well as political development; the fragmentation, de-legitimation and ethnic alienation of state power structures left

their mark on Islamic civilization, but so did significant counter-trends, including attempts to re-unify the religious and political dimensions of Islam. Finally, Hodgson saw late Islamic history as a more significant phase than most Western historians had done, and it exemplified the role of contingent encounters and external factors. The Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal 'gunpowder empires' had drawn on Mongol statecraft and new military technologies; but the new phase of state formation reproduced old problems on a larger scale, and at the same time, the Islamic world was outflanked by the Western transmutation.

As for the civilizational formations central to Weber's project, the most ambitious and controversial post-Weberian interpretation of India is Louis Dumont's work on the caste system (Dumont, 1980). Here the comparative perspective is based on a stark contrast between societal paradigms: the traditional order embodies a hierarchical vision of the human condition, diametrically opposed to the modern Western combination of economic, egalitarian and individualistic values. As Dumont's critics have argued, his portrayal of India as the archetypal traditional society conflates different levels of analysis. The search for a relational logic of the caste system narrows down to a vision of rigid and coherent structural order, and the structural principles are in turn identified with an ideological model. The result is an ahistorical projection of Brahmin perceptions of the caste regime. Among the alternatives, two approaches – taken together – seem most conducive to a historical understanding of Indian civilization. On the one hand, J.C. Heesterman (1985) argues that the Brahmin component of the Indian tradition centres on an insoluble and ever-renewed conflict between the vision of liberation through transcendence and the imperatives of social order; on the other hand, this problematic and unstable character of the Brahmin self-image (and therefore of Brahmin authority) enables other social actors in pursuit of power – especially the rulers of permanently brittle polities – to compensate for structural weaknesses by claims to sacred status or shared sovereignty (Quigley, 1993).

No single work on China has been as central to debates as Dumont's analysis of India. But new perspectives on the Chinese world have given rise to more diverse comparative projects than any research on India. Joseph Needham's monumental survey of Chinese achievements in science and technology

(1954–), assisted and continued by numerous collaborators, was at first widely regarded as a major breakthrough in civilizational studies (for Benjamin Nelson it represented the most significant step beyond Weber), but recent criticism (Finlay, 2000) has convincingly shown that Needham's view of Chinese thought and culture was *a priori* adapted to the eclectic construct of an 'organic materialism' derived from Western sources but projected onto Far Eastern traditions. Much more promising approaches have emerged in the field of social and economic history. Growing insight into the dynamics at work during the imperial phase of Chinese history (including, in particular, the technological, economic and cultural innovations of the eleventh and twelfth centuries) suggested new ways of comparing China and Europe. This debate is still unfolding, but a distinction can at least be drawn between two schools of thought. One side stresses the self-limiting factors that kept social and economic developments in imperial China within the framework of a flexible but cohesive order (Deng, 1999; Elvin, 1973); on this view, the forces and mechanisms of containment operated throughout the institutional setting, not only at the level of imperial control. The other approach gives more weight to long-term similarities of pre-industrial development in the most dynamic regions of China and Europe, but this makes the industrial breakthrough in Europe seem all the more unique; preconditions for the late Western European (and primarily British) divergence from a common pattern have to do with geographical contingencies as well as gains from expansion across the Atlantic (Pomeranz, 2000). These contrasting perspectives are most clearly defined in terms of economic history. As for attempts to broaden the focus, R. Bin Wong's work (1997) on long-term transformations in China and Europe merits a special mention: it is a landmark contribution to comparative history, particularly noteworthy for the analysis of state formation in the two regions.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, the question of the West and its historical identity can now be reformulated in more concrete terms. It relates to the specific features of European trajectories in general and Western European ones (including transoceanic offshoots) in particular, seen in the context of the emerging pluralistic vision of civilizational complexes. Four main themes of current and prospective work in this field may be singled out for comment. First, the

importance of Greco-Roman preconditions for the European historical experience can be acknowledged without any short-circuiting of civilizational shifts (for interesting reflections on this matter, see Meier, 2001). Second, the consolidation of Western Christendom as a civilizational unit at the beginning of the second millennium AD, followed by the social, intellectual, religious and political transformations of the High Middle Ages (Wittrock, 2001: 36–7), was of crucial importance for all subsequent developments. Third, the regional divisions of Europe, both inside the boundaries of Western Christendom and within the larger domain which it shared with its Byzantine counterpart, are a significant but highly controversial part of the picture. (One of the most seminal texts on this topic was written by the Hungarian historian Jenő Szűcs [1985]). Fourth, the early modern rise of the Far West – the empire-building states of the Atlantic seaboard – represents the culminating outcome of multi-secular inter-civilizational dynamics which involved other parts of the Afro-Eurasian complex. This view is adumbrated in William McNeill's well-known account, but becomes much more explicit in a preface to a later edition (McNeill, 1991), as well as in recent essays. The balancing of internal and external factors contributing to the Far Western ascendancy will remain on the agenda of comparative history for the foreseeable future.

In short, historical and theoretical reflection on inherited notions of East and West has led to differentiations on both sides, as well as to alternative mappings of the Afro-Eurasian world. This ongoing deconstruction of a traditional problematic seems more fruitful than attempts to discard it *en bloc*, in the name of indiscriminate emphasis on cultural diversity and connectivity at the same time. The critique of 'Orientalism' is the most widespread current version of the latter approach. Apart from the vague connotation of power-conditioned and power-oriented Western preconceptions about the East, the label is applied to a bewildering variety of intellectual offences. Those who posit – or seem to imply – a global or essential inferiority of Eastern cultures are accused of Orientalism, but so are those who see the East as a realm of mystery or superior wisdom; in the same way, the 'essentializing' of identities on either side is amalgamated with the denial of identity to Eastern victims of Western oppression; a radical separation of East and West is as symptomatic of Orientalism as is the

projection of Western self-images onto the East. As a result, the critics of Orientalism lay themselves open to the very objection which they raise against traditional views of Western scholars. If concepts like Buddhism or Hinduism are to be discarded because they impose spurious identities on heterogeneous phenomena, the same would apply to the concept of Orientalism.

The critique of Orientalism has obviously found receptive audiences in many quarters and expanded far beyond its first targets, but the over-extension of the key concept was pre-figured in the text which did most to launch the debate. Edward Said's definitions of Orientalism are characterized by a studied ambiguity which affects the historical contours as well as the imputed content of the tradition in question. The main points of criticism are explicitly aimed at French and British conceptions of the Orient, with less emphasis on American ideas (there is no reference to Hodgson) and only marginal allusions to German scholarship (Weber is mentioned in passing, but in a way which suggests – without any analysis of his work – that he aligned himself with pre-existing orientalist stereotypes). Although the geographical focus is, in the first instance, on 'India and the Levant' (Said, 1995: 4), extension to the Far East is suggested clearly enough for others to take that line further. A puzzling reference to 'Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies' (1995: 1) suggests another shift: the Levant, more important than India to Said's argument, can only be counted among the 'oldest colonies' if Europe goes back to Hellenistic and Roman times, and that view might seem vulnerable to anti-essentialist criticism. Said stresses the 'determining imprint' of individual writers (1995: 23), and thus by implication acknowledges the need for case-by-case interpretation, but he also refers to Orientalism as a system and a 'corporate institution', constructed for the purpose of 'dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient' (1995: 3). Finally, he insists on the 'variability and unpredictability' of Orientalism, but this does not prevent him from sweeping generalizations, such as the claim that 'Orientalism expresses antipathy to Islam' (1995: 340, 343).

To sum up, 'Orientalism' seems to have darkened into the proverbial night where all cows are black. It is not being suggested that its critics have done no useful work; but the inflation of the concept has now reached such extremes that informed discussion of the

multiple meanings of East and West would be easier without it.

#### NOTES

1. As Osterhammel shows (1998: 394–403), a selective systematization of ideas on progress and civilization, derived from the Enlightenment but disconnected from its relativizing tendencies, prefigured the later claims of modernization theory.

2. Although Japan is less relevant to our problematic than the continental Eurasian regions discussed above, a brief note on changing interpretations of the Japanese experience may be useful. For obvious reasons, Japan played no role in the formation of traditional European visions of the East. When it came into contact with expanding Western powers, it was at first perceived as a unique cross between East and West: in some ways more quintessentially Eastern than the civilizations of the Asian continent, but at the same time capable of Westernizing efforts which could only be explained in light of pre-existing structural similarities (for a longer discussion, see Arnason, 1997: 3–19). Weber's interpretation of Japan (quite marginal to his main concerns) can be read as a variation on this theme. In his view, the exceptionally sustained Westernization of Japan after 1868 had been based on the legacy of a feudal regime. An ingrained sensitivity to the demands of interstate competition and a traditional ability to rationalize the pursuit of power gave the Japanese elite an advantage over other aspirants to equality with the West. As for the other side of the established image, Weber stressed the peculiarly unstructured character of Japanese traditions, rather than any generically Eastern features: the lack of any clear-cut religious identity made it easier to implement radical reforms on the cultural as well as the institutional level. More recent work on Japan has changed the terms of debate. Both the distinctive characteristics of Japanese traditions (irreducible to any common Eastern pattern) and the dynamics of Japan's interaction with China are central to comparative historical research in the field. On the level of civilizational analysis, two different lines of argument have been developed. If Japan is seen as a separate civilization, enriched and energized but not radically transformed by its encounters with China and the West, the indigenous core can be set apart from the whole complex of Axial civilizations (Eisenstadt, 1996). But if Japan's relationship with the Chinese centre and its position within the Chinese world are fundamental to the historical definitions of its identity, it makes more sense to speak of a bipolar civilizational constellation: borrowed models are combined and recombined with reconstructed versions of indigenous traditions. This perspective leads to a more complex analysis of the relationship between Westernization and modernization (Arnason, 1997).

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## *Classes and Nations in Recent Historical Sociology*

ROBERT FINE AND DANIEL CHERNILO

One of the key areas of investigation in historical sociology concerns the ties that bind the economic forms of modern social life to its political forms, and especially the relation of capital to the formation of the nation-state. One aspect of this more general question is the link between two cornerstones of the self-understanding of modern societies, classes and nations, and this is the focus of our investigation. The social sciences have made an extensive use of these categories to comprehend the development of modern societies, grasp the hidden meaning of different world-views and provide points of critical intervention. The co-originality of their formation may be traced back to Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (1976), where the three great classes of modern bourgeois society – labour, capital and the landed interests – are characterized in relation to the interests of the nation as a whole, and where focus is placed on the progressive inclusion of all classes into the national arena.

Historical sociology has drawn from this way of thinking in its recognition of the pivotal role played by both classes and nations in the actual *shaping* of the modern world and in the imaginary communities modern social actors construct for themselves. An important argument we find in historical sociology is that neither nations nor classes can be understood except in relation to one another; or, to put this proposition more affirmatively, that nations

and classes are conjoined both as forms of *social organization* of modern societies and as *imaginary communities* that arose together in the same historical processes and period.

The contribution of historical sociology to understanding these linkages should be measured against the more usual ignoring or downplaying of class relations within theories of nationalism and the parallel ignoring or downplaying of national questions within theories of class struggle. For example, even when Ernest Gellner (1973, 1997) put forward his deservedly well-known thesis that the rise of nationalism was a result of social processes of industrialization, he paid little attention to the class relations of industrial society, put his emphasis on questions of atomization and anomie rather than class, and did not address how the different classes used national rhetoric to frame their social experience.<sup>1</sup> Conversely, when the Marxist historian E.P. Thompson (1995) criticized orthodox Marxism for having forcibly isolated politics as part of the 'superstructure' from the categories of political economy that are supposed to make up the 'base', and advocated in its place a more dynamic and unitary approach to the connections between legal, political, cultural, and economic forms of modern society, his own focus on legal and cultural aspects of the class struggle was rarely extended to national questions. The Englishness of the English working class remained relatively

unexplored. Against both these exclusions, that of class from theories of nationalism and of nation from theories of class, it has been a strength of historical sociology to bring together what arguably should never have been separated out in the first place.

In this chapter we shall be engaging with a range of positions to be found in recent historical sociology. We shall both be criticizing and building upon them with the objective of drawing out an emergent position. We begin with a discussion of modernism and primordialism as they relate to conceptualizing both class and nation. This will frame the discussion for the three following sections: the first on Marxism, class and nation; the second on bringing the state back in; and the third on subject nations and class formation. We conclude with a discussion of five caveats concerning the limitations of the positions we have found within historical sociology.

#### MODERNISM AND PRIMORDIALISM

Within the study of nations and nationalism there has been considerable debate over the historicity of nations, or, more concretely, over the relation of nations to the rise of modern societies. In the dispute between 'modernist' and 'primordialist' theories of the nation, the former argue that nations came into being in relation to other major social transformations that shaped the modern world. Nations, they say, were moulded by state bureaucracies, mass political movements, the growth of cities, improvements in communication and literacy, and not least by the integrative requirements of industrial capitalism. The nation appears from this perspective as a radically new social form which, if it did not exist, would have to be invented to provide feelings of attachment and unity for individuals in a world that has become increasingly meaningless, disenchanting and class-divided. For the primordialists, by contrast, nations seem to be much older or even as old as history itself. They argue that the crucial role that nations have played in the formation of modern societies is a *corroboration* of how deeply rooted they are as a form of community, and that the sense of belonging they provide is not something new that arose with modernity.<sup>2</sup>

We find certain parallels between the debates on the historicity of nations and analogous debates on the modernity of classes. In

Marxist and Weberian traditions of sociology one can talk about classes throughout history, even though it must be recognized that the form of class relations changes from one period to another and that the determinate relations of labour and capital are radically different from earlier historical forms of class exploitation, such as feudalism and slavery. Such differences of form are related both to material conditions that constitute the organizing principles of classes in capitalism and to the rising consciousness of what it means to be a member of a class. What happens in modernity is that class makes a difference in terms of the *experiences* of becoming a member (Gellner, 1997: 14–24; Hall and Jarvie, 1992: 4–5), in the sense that experience is no longer lived as natural but rather as shaped by thought and reflexive reasoning. It is, however, but a short step to say that consciousness of class emerges with the rise of the phenomenon itself; that is, that we may speak of the *modernity* of classes in the sense that both the phenomenon and reflexive awareness of it came into being in the modern period. Prior to modernity, there were many other forms of social hierarchy, division and exploitation, but not classes as such.

We would want to argue that there is a certain mythic quality to both primordialist and modernist narratives of class and nation. If primordialists presume a line of transhistorical continuity and expound the myth of class struggles and national identities throughout history, the modernists presume an equally mythic break from tradition and define modernity in opposition to its origins.<sup>3</sup> Historical sociology tends to cut through the whole issue by saying that at least part of the disagreement is related to the possibility that we are facing two different discussions: one on whether there were nations and classes before the rise of modern societies; the other on what is specifically modern about modern nations and modern classes. The theoretical labels 'modernist' and 'primordialist' are not easily imported into historical sociology, none of the authors we shall look at can be considered naïve representatives of either side, and in fact there have arisen all manner of middle positions.

For example, Joseph Llobera puts forward a 'third way' between extreme positions when he locates the nation as neither radically modern nor transhistorical. He points out that it is a 'mere truism' to say that 'nations and nationalism as we understand them today, did

not exist in the middle ages' (1994: 3), but he also argues that modern nations have a medieval heritage that crystallizes through different historical combinations into what they are today. His thesis is that the clearer the identity of an independent polity during the Middle Ages, the bigger the chances of constituting a modern independent nation. To support his case, Llobera describes how *Britannia*, *Gallia*, *Germania*, *Italia* and *Hispania* became the modern nations we know today (Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Spain) and claims to understand the formation of national identities as the result of a Braudelian *longue durée* process.<sup>4</sup> However, there is a strong counterfactual operating in Llobera's argument in so far as he tries to prove his case only by showing how some successful modern nations had a history of political autonomy. There is no mention here of politically autonomous groups that did not form modern nations, nor of subject peoples who overcame their subjection to form modern nations.<sup>5</sup> From this analytical blind spot, an empirical weakness arises: there is sufficient research to show that lack of a history of political independence does not pre-judge failure in the formation of modern nation-states.<sup>6</sup> Even if Llobera is not able to produce generally valid claims about the transition from traditional forms of political community (including empires, city-states and other non-nation-states) to the modern nation, he does reveal a shortcoming in the modernist literature: that one cannot understand nations as completely new because there would be no place for including historical arguments about their development.

The position of historical sociology is closer to that of the modernists in that it has to recognize that the relation of nations and classes in which it is interested emerges only in modern societies. Its straightforward claim is that the mutual engagement of classes and nations is constitutive of modern societies and that neither historically nor sociologically does it make much sense to extend the idea of nation beyond modern class societies or the idea of class beyond modern nations. Thus most historical sociologists accept that something new happened with the beginning of the modern nation, but what is far from consensual is the content of this change. Where there does seem to be some convergence is around the claim that one thing that is modern about the modern nation is the class character of national identification, and vice versa. We find

in historical sociology many arguments which acknowledge that every class in society, and not just the ruling class, produces its own discourse about what it is to be a member of the nation – about what national identity means – and that class movements have used the idea of the nation as the form in which they have sought to put forward their own notions of collective political identity, shape the political community in the making, and fight *materially* as well as *symbolically* for their participation in processes of democratic legitimation.

Such an understanding of the link between classes and nations is related to another issue implicit within the literature: namely that national and class politics are both mass politics in the sense that demands for civil rights, political democracy, social security and redistribution are issues that have linked national and class movements and involved them both in mass political mobilization. Historical sociology builds on a Marxist understanding of the relationship between classes and nations, but has tried to avoid the trap of falling into an ideology-critique that presents the nation merely as illusion or deceit. It holds that the nation became a suitable medium for *all classes* precisely because the experiences and symbols related to it allowed for the differentiated claims of different bearers. Different classes have made use of the rising national imagination to frame their specific demands *as classes*, and in many cases it is difficult to say that any one class definitively wins the struggle for hegemony over what is the nation (Hroch, 1996: 67–8). One of the strengths of the national idea lies precisely in its ambiguity – in the fact that one can give it a plurality of meanings that only minimally converge.<sup>7</sup>

#### MARXISM, CLASSES, NATIONS

The Marxist sociologist Nicos Poulantzas (1978, 1980) is a writer who had the merit of going beyond an 'orthodox' Marxism in which the link between classes and nations is seen only in terms of an ideological mask. He addressed the links connecting capitalist economic relations and the national form of political states by identifying the *modern state* as a capitalist state but the *nation* as a more timeless repository of differentiated meanings for the different classes (Poulantzas, 1978: 78). His analysis of the nation was primordial in the sense that he saw the nation as a

transhistorical category that comes into being once humankind emerges from its primitive pre-history. If *under capitalism* the idea of the nation is constitutively bound up with the formation of modern states – Poulantzas writes of the historical tendency of the modern state to ‘encompass a single, constant nation’ and of modern nations to ‘form their own states’ (1980: 95) – it long preceded this particular coupling:

The nation is not identical with the modern nation and the national State. ... The term designates ‘something else’ – a specific unit of the overall production of social relations that existed long before capitalism ... the constitution of the nation may be said to coincide with the passage from classless (lineage) to class society. (1980: 93)

Poulantzas presented the nation as a complex unity that is at the same time ‘economic, territorial, linguistic, and one of ideology and symbolism tied to tradition’ (1978: 79), and in the modern context places it alongside a mix of social and natural factors like knowledge, power, individualization and law as elements of the ‘institutional materiality of the State’ (1980: 49). He described the nation as a contested prize for the conflicting classes: ‘The modern nation is not ... the creation of the bourgeoisie, but the outcome of a relationship of forces between the ‘modern’ social classes – one in which the nation is a *stake* for the various classes’ (1980: 115, original emphasis). He argued that the nation does not have the same meaning for the bourgeoisie as it does for the working class and ‘popular masses’, and that as far as the bourgeoisie is concerned, its history is one of ‘continual oscillation between identification with and betrayal of the nation’ (1980: 117). In short, Poulantzas naturalized the idea of the nation. Just as for sociology there is all too often a congruity between the universal category of ‘society’ and the nation, so too for Poulantzas there was a tendency to construct a parallel congruity between the category of ‘social formation’ and the nation (1978: 22). For example, when he writes that modes of production only exist and reproduce themselves within historically determinate social formations, he cites the nation-states of France, Germany, Britain, as his examples (1978: 22), and in the name of the Marxist classics he argues that the idea of the nation as such will not disappear even in the classless or stateless society to come (1980: 93–4).

By way of contrast, the Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm locates the idea of the nation

firmly in the context of modern politics: [N]ations, we now know ... are not as old as history’ (1994: 3). In spite of repeated claims that this way of classifying groups of human beings is in some way primary or fundamental for the social existence of its members, Hobsbawm regards the nation as a ‘very recent newcomer in human history’ (1994: 5) and even today as competing with many other forms of social identification. He cites Gellner: ‘Nations as a natural, God-given way of classifying men ... are a myth; nationalism which sometimes takes pre-existing cultures and turns them into nations, sometimes invents them and often obliterates pre-existing cultures: *that* is a reality’ (1994: 10, original emphasis). For Hobsbawm, the nation is the product, on the one hand, of modern nationalisms which seek to make national identity supreme, and, on the other, of the development of modern territorial states which asserted their own political unity and independence by organizing the people who inhabited their territories as a singular nation. Once the idea of the nation came into being, its reference was the thoroughly modernist unification of otherwise heterogeneous collectivities across traditional divisions based on ethnicity, language, religion, culture, history, destiny, and so on. In this regard the idea of the nation was anything but conservative or traditional. Only later was it used in a more derivative and archaic sense to convey the primordial unity of the nation itself.

Hobsbawm also points out that during a good part of the nineteenth century political appeals to the masses were made by combining national and class rhetoric, and he goes so far as to say that at some points one can hardly build a distinction between them. He argues that scholars on the subject have generally been unable to notice ‘the vast overlap between the appeals of national and social discontent’.<sup>8</sup>

The well-known international Marxist debates on ‘the national question’ are not merely about the appeal of nationalist slogans to workers who ought to listen only to the call of internationalism and class. They were also, and perhaps more immediately, about how to treat working-class parties which simultaneously supported nationalist and socialist demands. What is more – though this did not then figure much in the debates – it is now evident that there were initially socialist parties which were or became the main vehicles of their people’s national movement. ... One might go further. The combination of social and national demands, on the whole, proved very much more effective as a mobilizer of

independence that the pure appeal of nationalism, whose appeal was limited to the discontented lower middle classes, for whom alone it replaced – or appeared to replace – both a social and a political programme. (1994: 124–5)

Hobsbawm frames as strongly as possible the ‘non-contradiction’ upon which class and national consciousness operated together during a long period of the nineteenth century, and he maintains that we cannot understand the political processes at the core of modern social formation as long as we oppose class to nation. Thus if we take into account that the number of candidate nations for building a nation-state was far greater than those that eventually arrived at this stage, and that the process of nation-building was therefore far from automatic, Hobsbawm relates the achievement of this goal to the twofold character of a class *and* national platform.<sup>9</sup> He demonstrates that proto-nationalist movements had to broaden their base of support along class lines if they wanted to be successful in building fully formed national movements, let alone a modern nation-state (1994: 77–8). Hobsbawm faces up to the frequent fusion of class and national politics in mass protests, not to endorse it but to see it for what it is. He writes, for instance:

The very act of democratizing politics, i.e. of turning subjects into citizens, tends to produce a populist consciousness which, seen in some lights, is hard to distinguish from a national, even a chauvinist, patriotism. ... E.P. Thompson’s ‘free-born Englishman’, the eighteenth-century Britons who never shall be slaves, readily contrasted themselves with the French. ... The class-consciousness which working classes in numerous countries were acquiring in the last decade before 1914 implied, nay asserted, a claim to the Rights of Man and Citizen, and thus a potential patriotism. Mass political consciousness implied a concept the ‘*patrie*’ or ‘fatherland’, as the history both of Jacobinism and of movements like Chartism demonstrates. For most Chartists were both against the rich and the French. (1994: 88–9)

In his discussion of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Hobsbawm writes that ‘nationality appears most often as an aspect of the conflict between rich and poor, especially where the two belong to different nationalities’, and that even where we find the strongest national tones – as among Czech, Serbian and Italian nationalists – we also find ‘an overwhelming wish for social transformation’ (1994: 128). Further, he writes that the fact that ‘the new mass political movements, nationalist, socialist, confessional or whatever, were often in competition

for the same masses, suggests that their potential constituency was prepared to entertain all their various appeals’ (1994: 124).

One of the many strengths of Hobsbawm’s work is to recognize that the links between nations and classes are far from historically static. He argues that up to the end of the first half of the nineteenth century, nationalists and socialists tended to share both the same mass constituency, the peasantry and urban proletariat, and the same political issues, including the widening of the franchise and the redistribution of taxation burdens. He grants that in this period ideas of French and British nationhood were shaped by feelings against other nations, but their respective nationalisms were relatively ‘civic’, albeit in a superior ‘civilizing’ mode. In an echo of E.P. Thompson’s contention that social life should not be split into isolated compartments, Hobsbawm argues that ‘the acquisition of national consciousness cannot be separated from the acquisition of other forms of social and political consciousness’ (1994: 130) and during this period at least they went together.

Hobsbawm identifies a major change in the nature of European nationalism in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and in the period leading up to the First World War. He characterizes this change in terms of a movement from ‘state’ (civic) nationalism to ‘cultural (racial) nationalism’. His contention is that state/civic nationalism prevailed for the fifty years following the French Revolution, but that with the defeat of the popular movements of 1848–9 cultural/racial ideas of the nation began to achieve supremacy. Henceforth an exclusive nationalism emerged which substituted itself for all other forms of political and social identification and explicitly rejected socialism for its internationalism. Concurrently, a new wave of socialist movements arose that had little understanding of the meaning of national ideals. Even so, Hobsbawm argues that one thing that did not change is that nationalists and socialists were still aiming at and proclaiming the interests of the same groups of rural and urban poor, and that a conglomerate national–social consciousness still formed the soil in which all political sentiments grew; indeed, ‘the radicalization of the working class in the first post-war Europe may have reinforced their potential national consciousness’ (1994: 145). Hobsbawm observed in Europe a nexus between class militancy and ethnic nationalism that other

studies have confirmed in other contexts.<sup>10</sup> Even in this context nation and class are not readily separable.

#### HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY: BRINGING THE STATE BACK IN

One of the key questions addressed by Reinhard Bendix in *Nation-building and Citizenship* concerns the links which exist between the 'formation and transformation of political communities which today we call nation-states' and the development of modern class relations (1964: 18–19).<sup>11</sup> These issues were directly intertwined for Bendix, since he held that there could not be social classes in the modern sense of the term without the political changes that made a new legal framework possible. It was on this basis that he explained the absence of classes in the Middle Ages:

Classes in the modern sense do not exist, for the coalescence of interests among the individuals in an estate is based on a collective liability. That is, joint actions result from the rights and duties shared by virtue of the laws or edicts pertaining to a group, rather than only from a shared experience of similar economic pressures and social demands. (1964: 38)

Bendix maintained that the crucial factor for the existence of modern classes is not just the fact of sharing some kind of social experience, but the legal framework in which it becomes possible to make sense of these experiences. Historically, he suggests, West European societies experienced two major political transitions: 'from the estate societies of the Middle Ages to the absolutist regimes of the eighteenth century, and hence to the class societies of plebiscitarian democracy in the nation-states of the twentieth century' (1964: 2). For Bendix, the emergence of modern classes cannot be separated from the extension of national citizenship to all classes that occurred as a reflection of changing authority relations, as a response to protests from below, and as a result of the bureaucratization of state structures (1964: 3). There emerged new forms of political authority (the state), new forms of production (capitalism) and new forms of social relations (civil society), in all three of which the nation provided the framework in which social reconstruction could take place: as nation-state, as national political economy (which the Germans tended to call *Nationaloekonomie* or *Volkswirtschaft*), and as national public sphere.

Bendix argues that a striking characteristic of the newly created structures is that they comprised a relatively high degree of consensus from within despite the proliferation of conflicting class interests; certain functions of the nation-state, for example, were rarely contested – including taxation, law enforcement, public works and the direction of foreign affairs (1964: 137). The other side of this process, Bendix adds, is that the wider the consensus, the thinner it turns out to be. In other words, there is a decline of social solidarity with the rise of modern political relations and there is no other form or solidarity that achieves as high acceptance as the national government. In this class framework the nation appears as the symbolic form in which a sense of political community has to be reinvented (1964: 138). Seeing class relations as subordinate to the achievement of social integration, which is fulfilled in national terms alone, Bendix seems to end up normatively in a liberal account that opposes class *conflict* to national *integration*.

The more radical claim of Barrington Moore in his classic *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (1967) has to do with the revolutionary and violent quality of the processes in which modern nation-states were formed.<sup>12</sup> He shows that nowhere was the transition to the modern nation-state achieved peacefully; on the contrary, violence was the characteristic path towards the constitution of all modern nation-states. Moore sees this transition in class terms. It is clear that in absolutist states the landed classes played the key political role while the peasantry was the class from which the economic surplus was largely taken; in modern nation-states there is an increment in the importance of the relative positions of the bourgeoisie and working class. More concretely, he argues that the shape of class relations in the constitution of modern nation-states is the main factor that elucidates their subsequent political forms. Thus his three routes to modernity (democratic, communist and fascist) are expressions of the trajectory of particular class struggles, and while democracy and fascism may both be forms of bourgeois rule, the relation of the ruling class to the other classes in society are of course quite distinct. At stake in Moore's analysis is the way in which national bourgeoisies were able in the course of bourgeois revolutions to build class alliances upward as well as downward.<sup>13</sup> Upwardly, they faced the problem of how to limit the power of the landed classes

and place themselves as the decisive actors in the introduction of *new* political arrangements. Downwardly, the core issues they faced were how to limit demands from below and integrate both the peasantry and the working classes into capitalist social relations; the ability of some sections of the bourgeoisie to build class alliances downward played a major role in containing radical social and political demands. As Theda Skocpol has pointed out (1984b: 379), Moore's comparative analysis tends to operate through a method of agreement: the occurrence of one factor seems enough to explain the development of a general pattern regardless of previous differences. When bourgeois revolutions were successful, a democratic nation-state was built (England/Britain 1688, France 1789 and the USA 1861–5); when they were defeated either by strong landed classes (as in Japan and Germany) or by a strong peasantry (as in Russia and China), the nation-state assumed quite different and more authoritarian political forms. While Moore's primary interest was in explaining the *different* national patterns that resulted from class struggles, he did not question why nations as such became a generalized form of political community.

Michael Mann takes this argument one step further when he proposes that classes and nations are co-original and coeval because they both call for an abstract sense of community in analogously universalistic ways: '[I]f the nation was an imagined community, its main ideological competitor, class consciousness, might seem to have been even more metaphorical, an "imaginary community". ... [W]e shall see that the two imagined or imaginary communities arose together, conjoined, in the same process of modernisation' (Mann, 1992: 141; see also B. Anderson, 1991). According to Mann, the first phase of this process of modernization had to do with the expansion of literacy that accompanied the spread of commercial capitalism and the development of political states: 'Both routes encouraged the diffusion of broader, more universalistic ideologies. One centred on class consciousness and/or class collaboration through political reform; the other centred on state modernisation' (1986: 530). Through the eighteenth century, classes and nations were affected by a second phase of modernization, triggered by the intensification of geopolitical rivalry between the Great Powers:

Nationalism – like class ideology, the other great ideology of modern times – was capable of spreading

across large social and geographic spaces only from the 18th century to the present day. ... As states vastly increased their rates of extraction of taxes and military manpower, they politicised emerging ideologies. Over matters of political representation and state reform, class and national consciousness developed and fused. (1992: 138, 142)

Historically, Mann gives to the state a major role in shaping class–nation relations, which in the British case he calls the 'class-nation'. He argues that in Britain the installation of Parliament in Westminster by the end of the seventeenth century produced a class – composed of the gentlemen of the counties, lords, bishops and merchants – that saw itself as the nation and identified the interests of the nation with its own class ideology. From that moment on, the social background of the membership of the nation started a process of social differentiation and expansion that was eventually to culminate in membership of the nation being extended to all classes in society. According to Mann (1986: 482), the driving force behind this process related to the changing functions of the state: in early modern times the state was marked by an 'infrastructural inability to penetrate civil society', and even though armies were used internally against the poor, the *raison d'être* for strong armies was principally to do with external relations with other states. Indeed, until the beginning of the nineteenth century the state's main function was warfare and most state expenditure (as much as 90 per cent) was related to the costs of war. The rise of modern nation-states saw major changes in the state's functions that enabled it for the first time to penetrate all areas of civil society. The result of this development, according to Mann, was the diffusion of national images along class lines and the corresponding tendency for all classes to build a *national* identity alongside their own *class* identity.

In his second volume of *The Sources of Social Power*, Mann further develops this explanation of the relation between states, classes and nations, by presenting it in the context of his overall theoretical framework (1993: 17–20, 214–26, 722–8). He now links the rise of classes and nations to changes that occurred in what are for him the four sources of social power: *economic* (expansion of capitalism), *military* (state-militarism), *ideological* (secularism and literacy) and *political* (fiscal crises and the call for democracy). Classes and nations arose as a combined result

of the transformations experienced in all four forms of social organization. As a result, the question to be explained turns now to the rise of *classes* and *nation-states* as the two major containers in which modern social life crystallized. Mann argues that nations were formed, that is, they surpassed the proto-national threshold, only when a cross-class self-consciousness was achieved, and that classes, as emergent social actors, therefore arose before nations (1993: 225). The latter were only created with the processes of naturalization pursued by states: 'As states transformed first into national states, then into nation-states, classes became caged, unintentionally "naturalized" and politicized' (1993: 20).

Charles Tilly's work on *Coercion, Capital and European States* (1992) takes up the discussion of national state formation that he himself initiated in his own pioneer work on the subject in the mid-1970s (Tilly, 1975a, 1975b). He criticizes his early work for proposing a developmental orthodoxy in which processes of national state formation all respond to the same cycle of 'extraction, repression, state formation' (1992: 12). In his later work, he argues that we have to be open to the variability of patterns of national state formation which eventually impose themselves on previous forms of political community, and that convergence towards the form of the national state was produced both out of an original divergence, including empires and city-states, and out of differential class structures that made a difference to state formation: 'The class structure of the population that fell under the jurisdiction of a particular state significantly affected the organization of that state, and variations in class structure from one part of Europe to another produced systematic geographic differences in the character of states' (1992: 27).

Tilly emphasizes that the 'war-making advantage' fell to those states that could field great standing armies because they had 'a combination of large rural populations, capitalists and relatively commercialized economies' (1992: 58). He writes of *national* states rather than *nation-states* to highlight the myth that states are composed of just one nation (1992: 3). He uses the idea of nationalization to demonstrate that the modern national state was the result of a combination of originally different 'nationalities', and to refer to those actions by means of which states sought to homogenize their subject populations. He focuses on the functions of homogenization for the rulers:

In one of their more self-conscious attempts to engineer state power, rulers frequently sought to homogenize their populations in the course of installing direct rule. From a ruler's point of view, a linguistically, religiously and ideologically homogeneous population presented the risk of a common front against royal demands; homogenization made a policy of divide and rule more costly. But homogeneity had many compensating advantages: within a homogeneous population, ordinary people were more likely to identify with their rulers, communication could run more effectively, and an administrative innovation that worked in one segment was likely to work elsewhere as well. People who sensed a common origin, furthermore, were more likely to unite against external threats. (Tilly, 1992: 106-7)

Tilly goes on to explain the rise of national states mainly in terms of their military advantages for rulers:

Why national states? National states won out in the world as a whole because they first won out in Europe, whose states then acted to reproduce themselves. They won out in Europe because the most powerful states – France and Spain before all others – adopted forms of warfare that temporarily crushed their neighbors. ... Those states took that step in the late fifteenth century both because they had recently completed the expulsion of rival powers from their territories and because they had access to capitalists who could help them finance wars. ... [E]ventually only those countries that combined significant sources of capital with substantial populations yielding large domestic military forces did well in the new European style of warfare. Those countries were, or became, national states. (1992: 183)

Tilly dates the emergence of the national state not only before the revolutions of the late eighteenth century but even before the Peace of Westphalia of 1648 or the Thirty Years War to which the Peace of Westphalia put an end. He writes that a European system of national states was already in the making by 1490: its participants, he writes, were 'increasingly not city-states, leagues or empires, but national states: relatively autonomous, centralized, and differentiated organizations exerting close control over population within several sharply-bounded contiguous regions' (1992: 164). Tilly does not directly address the heterogeneity of nationalities that preceded state-homogenization (1992: 28-30, 103, 185-6), nor does he explain why or how homogenization took a specifically *national* form. His account thus fuses primordialism and modernism. On the one hand, his conceptualization of the nation is on the primordialist end of the spectrum in that 'nationalities'

are seen as long pre-existing modernity. On the other hand, his conceptualization of the national state is on the modernist end of the spectrum, in that it presupposes a major rupture between traditional forms of political community and the emergence of the modern national state, and thence a fundamental continuity in modern times centred on the development and extension of the national state. Once the national state is established as the primary political form of modern society, it is as if the old adage *le plus ça change, le plus c'est la même chose* holds sway and nothing really or radically changes.<sup>14</sup>

#### SUBJECT NATIONS AND MODERN CLASS FORMATION

The relevance of studying nation-state formation in the core Western countries relies on the obvious fact of their influence on world history, but what marks them apart is that, with certain exceptions like that of the USA, they tend not to have a history of external domination. By contrast, one of the main issues in the work of Miroslav Hroch (1986) is on understanding how peoples or nationalities which have traditionally lived under political domination became fully formed nations and/or independent nation-states. His focus is on how 'small European nations' made use of their oppression to reinforce the importance of national claims, but if we were to generalize his argument, we would say that the success of the nation-state as a political form throughout the world indicates that a past history of independence is not the rule and that many, if not most, nation-states we know nowadays did not have such a privileged history. Subjection seems to have been just as much the norm as independence, and the principle of national self-determination has been the platform upon which previously dominated nations have created 'their own' states.

Many modern nations were once parts of empires: some emerged in Latin America out of the collapse of Portuguese and Spanish empires in the early nineteenth century; some emerged in Europe out of the collapse of the German, Austro-Hungarian, Turkish and Russian empires in central and eastern Europe at the end of the First World War (the focus of Hroch's work); some emerged out of the collapse of the European empires in Africa, the Middle East and Asia after the Second World

War. The condition of prior domination is far from being a historical exception, and the expansion of nation-states throughout the world has as its central feature that it has been carried on by peoples struggling to get rid of foreign oppressors (Hroch, 1996: 61). From the point of view of the actors involved in these processes, nation-building takes place in the struggles for liberation. While in the core countries the processes of nation-building coincided with nation-state formation, this was generally not the case for small countries where people started to look at themselves as nations in the absence of independent political institutions.<sup>15</sup>

What distinguishes Hroch's work is not only his focus on small nations but also his understanding of class structures at the national level. He argues that small nations were generally characterized by an 'incomplete' class structure in the sense that they lacked 'their own' ruling classes. While in the core nations the struggle against the ruling classes was located internally within the boundaries of the nation, and hence was not different from the constitution of modern class relations, in the small nations the struggle against the ruling classes was focused on the *creation* of a fully developed *national* class structure, that is, on the constitution of the subject nation's own ruling class in its struggle against foreign domination. In this case the constitution of a complete class structure within the subject nation may be separated in time and is analytically distinct from the formation of mass national movements. In the author's own words:

The fundamental yardstick of the completeness of a nation's formation is the development of the class structure of the national community. Small nations were formed with an incomplete class structure. We can therefore say that small nations were fully formed when they displayed a class structure typical of capitalist society and their national movement had taken on a mass character. The achievement of political independence is not necessarily an indication that the small nation is completely formed; and conversely the struggle to achieve independence may continue even after the nation has completed its formation. (Hroch, 1986: 26)

It would appear that for Hroch what is crucial for the development of national movements is the entry of the peasantry and urban proletariat, both of which make claims for their own participation in political life and for the constitution of the national arena as the place in which claims for political participation and the defence of interests have to be made

(1986: 154). The 'completeness of a nation's formation', however, is *intrinsically* related to the development of capitalist social relations and the class institutions that accompany it (1986: 179). In these studies Hroch illuminates what it means to say that the constitution of a nation is based on the development of class rule (1996: 63–4). He invites us to consider not only the huge differences that exist within and between bourgeoisies, but also the ways in which other classes in society make their own use of the idea of the nation. The implication of these writings seems to be that neither nations nor classes can be established as stable entities independently of one another, and that the institutional framework of a nation-state as constructed through national revolutions – which includes national sovereignty within the international system of states, an internal division of powers, rule of law and representative political institutions – is the form in which the structures of class and nation are consolidated. When such a framework breaks down, under the weight not only of political crises of legitimacy but also of economic depression, social decline and popular distress, forces may be set in motion that are disintegrative of both class and nation.<sup>16</sup>

### CONCLUSION

We are perhaps more in need of theories of nations than we are of theories of classes. The ideas of class to be found in Marx and Weber are relatively consensual within sociology compared with Ernest Gellner's or Anthony Smith's explanations of the rise of nations. So, while looking at the link between nation and class, our primary object of inquiry in this chapter has been the nation and our primary contention has been that modern nations are formed together with or as a result of the formation of capitalist class relations. More importantly, however, we have sought to demonstrate that historical sociology has opened the relation of classes to nations in ways that are invisible to those who simply take a stand on behalf of one or the other. It shows, successfully to our mind, that nation and class belong to one another in the sense that they are mutually entwined forms in which the self-consciousness of modern society is expressed; they are two cornerstones of the representation of modern societies; we cannot capture their meanings unless

we study them relationally. We might add that under totalitarianism they fell together in the sense that totalitarian movements were hostile to both national and class parochialism and envisaged in their own way a nationless as well as classless society.

The idea that the one can be evaporated by an act of will or by the clarification of one's perception, and that the other alone is ontologically grounded, is not a view that is easily sustained in the light of the contributions of historical sociology. If both nation and class are imagined communities, they are also as real as one another and as grounded in the material conditions of modern life. Just as we cannot conceive of capitalist productive relations without a conception of class, so too we cannot conceive of modern political relations without a conception of nation. To the extent that nationalists and Marxists have both tried to make the other vanish into thin air, it would seem that they are tilting at windmills. One cannot transform the world by the deconstruction of a category. In short, the perception of a homology between nation and class challenges approaches that claim there is an *a priori* ground for privileging one over the other. One of the strengths of historical sociology is to dispel the myths that surround these competing forms of solidarity: not only by relating them to one another, but also by relating their conceptual existence to the empirical ways in which these concepts are actualized. Historical sociology has an eye not only for the formal flourishes of national and class identification but also for the violence and destructiveness that lurk not far beneath. To quote from C. Wright Mills (1959), there is little room in historical sociology either for 'general theories' or for 'abstracted empiricism'; in other words, as a subdiscipline historical sociology is neither theoretically nor historically naïve in its determination to take into account both concepts and their factual existence.

We wish to end on a more critical note – with five brief caveats on the limitations of historical sociology. They are in turn political, theoretical, methodological, comparative, and historical. Politically, nation and class have been key categories of modern *mass* politics and have both been extensively used as ideological resources, means of legitimation or alternatively as objects of critique or denunciation. By identifying the interests of a nation or a class with the universal interests of humanity as a whole, nationalists and

socialists, respectively, have claimed to actualize universal principles through a particular group of people. However, the insight historical sociology has developed into this class–nation relation should not be used to confound political distinctions, and it would certainly turn historical sociology into a doctrinal determinism if it were used as a block on political criticism of either nationalist or class politics. For example, Hobsbawm criticizes Marxists in the post-war period who used the names of anti-imperialism and internationalism to subordinate ideas of class solidarity to the great-power chauvinism of Russia or to the interests of particular national liberation movements. His historical sociology supports his contention that in the post-war period Marxists put themselves ‘at the mercy of nationalism ... swallowing some nationalist assumptions whole’ (1989: 140, cited in Fine 1994: 435–6). Benedict Anderson may well have been right when he wrote that the ‘end of the era of nationalism, so long prophesied, is not remotely in sight’, and that ‘nation-ness is the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time’ (1991: 12); but the relation between facts and norms can no more be resolved simply by reference to ‘what is’ than it can by translating normative beliefs into the pale ghost of reality.

This political dimension also raises questions concerning the relationship between the domestic formation of class relations within national states and the international formation of class relations across nation-states. A focus on the impact of the *world system* of nation-states on the constitution of individual nation-states is certainly one of the strengths of historical sociology, but what is relatively neglected in the ensuing discussions of national mobilization of classes is the extent to which notions and experiences of transnational class solidarity (among aristocracies and bourgeoisies as well as working classes) also take place. This treatment is perhaps a reaction to rhetorical invocations of working-class internationalism, which either pay too little heed to national differences or alternatively reduce working-class internationalism to support for anti-imperial struggles. Nonetheless, in its focus on notions and experiences of competing national and class formations, historical sociology remains rather one-sided and unconnected with discussions of transnational and cosmopolitan solidarity that have developed in recent social theory and international relations.

Theoretically, historical sociology has not been especially interested in the exposition of the logical links through which the *concepts* of class and nation relate to one other. Not much attention has been paid to the fact that classes and nations are not only historically real, but also conceptual tools. The depiction of the historical co-emergence of classes and nations seems to be only one part of the task of historical sociology; the *concepts* of class and nation have also to be scrutinized in their own right. The clarification of the theoretical strategies underlying historical narratives is an important dimension to historical sociology’s interest in the demythologization of the formation of modern societies. The attempts by historical sociology to explain in theoretical terms how and why nations and classes were simultaneously formed in modern societies, and have been mutually formative of modern societies, are not impressive. Historical sociology seems to have left these questions in an analytical void, isolated from the history of political thought, or has reduced them to historical contingency.<sup>17</sup> So, whilst historical sociology finds its strength in ‘bringing history back in’, thus giving an account of the *external* connections between classes and nations, it has not been equally successful in tracing their *internal* connections. It might also be the case that this situation is related to the self-image some colleagues have about historical sociology. For example, when Edgar Kiser and Michael Hechter analyse the different theoretical options historical sociologists use, they argue for the necessity of ‘general theory’, but disappointingly equate it to ‘rational choice theory’. Their argument is that by not taking rational choice theory seriously, ‘explanations [in historical sociology] are too underdeveloped and vague to have determinate empirical implications’ (1991: 24). While these authors push in the direction of a more conscious use of theoretical frameworks, their narrow conception of what a theory is (rational choice) and what a theoretical explanation shall produce (empirical generalizations) makes them aim for the wrong target.

Linked to this last point, we also find in historical sociology a permanent quarrel about methodological assumptions and procedures. Too often, it takes a defensive position on what it does or does not achieve in terms of ‘scientific standards’; notably, on the value of undertaking historically oriented research without first-hand archival work. In a well-known formulation, Skocpol argues that for historical sociology

a dogmatic insistence on redoing primary research for every investigation would be disastrous; it would rule out most comparative-historical research. If a topic is too big for purely primary research – and if excellent studies by specialists are already available in some profusion – secondary sources are appropriate as the basic source of evidence for a given study. (1984b: 382, original emphasis)

She invites historical sociologists to ‘develop consensual rules and procedures for the valid use of secondary sources as evidence’, and reflecting upon her own research experience (a study of three major social revolutions in France, China and Russia), she says that she could rely on specialist works (1984a: 1–5). The difficulty of this formulation, however, is in part one of empiricist bias: there are good reasons for *not* undertaking ‘proper’ first-hand research: *if* the topic is too big, or *if* we can rely on good enough specialist work. But these conditional clauses claim a sort of second-class legitimacy: let’s do secondary research if ‘proper’ research is not possible. This pragmatic defence may appear as an unconvincing apology for historical sociology, whose methods should rather be justified in relation to the nature of the research problem addressed and theoretical argument deployed.<sup>18</sup> More importantly it fails to recognize that lack of primary research may be a deficit if it gives to history a false sense of givenness or predetermination. Historical sociology may well need primary research to denature what actually happens, to explain why one outcome emerged and not another, to make us aware of what concrete alternatives might have transpired.<sup>19</sup> If the strength of historical sociology in this area lies in its unravelling of the naïveties of voluntarism, its weakness may lie in presenting history in an objective, deterministic form that downplays subjective agency and decision-making.

There is a strong comparative element in historical sociology and this is indeed one of its great strengths. A limitation of this comparative framework, however, may be found in the prevalence of certain specialized ‘area studies’ that cut off comparison of class and nation formation in Africa and Latin America from the mainstream of comparative historical research. To take the Latin American case, it does not fit well into the common hypothesis used within historical sociology to understand these processes. First, it can be sustained that language was never a major issue either in the wars of independence from Spain and Portugal or in the later wars between Latin American countries. The use of Spanish and Portuguese,

though problematic for indigenous communities, was not central to these conflicts. The same holds true, second, in the case of religion. There were indigenous religions and there are ongoing re-interpretations of Catholicism, but again religion was not a major problem in either class or national struggles. Third, the timing of Latin American independence, that is, of nation-state formation in Latin America, is problematic for the mainstream in as much as by the 1830s most countries were already politically independent nation-states (Cuba was a late exception achieving independence in 1898), so they can be considered as neither early nor belated cases in a world-wide context. These, perhaps risky, generalizations are thought not to make the point of historical sociology’s impossibility for dealing with these issues, but rather to point out that the marginal presence of such issues is a shortcoming historical sociology must overcome.<sup>20</sup>

Lastly, we find disappointing historical sociology’s lack of a systematic periodization in dealing with the formation of nation-states. The claims we have visited in this chapter look unconvincing to the extent that they fail to assess what has changed and what has remained the same in these processes. We might speak, for example, of a movement from the early formation of the political state in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, to the formation of the *sovereign* state after the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, to the formation of the *nation*-state in the revolutions of the late eighteenth century, to the *inversion* of the idea of the nation-state in the age of imperialism, to the creation of mass democratic state after the break-up of empires, and now to the diffusion of sovereignty and nationhood and rise of cosmopolitan institutions in more recent times. Whatever may be the strengths and weaknesses of this very rough and brief outline, one of the reasons behind the deficiency of historical sociology is that it still needs to relate historical trends to the normative presuppositions that are related to these trends. The normative principles which existed at the beginning of the modern system of nation-states (diplomacy is taken as a common example) can hardly be the same as those of nation-states today.

#### NOTES

We should like to thank Octavio Avendaño, Simon Clarke, Gerard Delanty, Tony Elger, Jorge Larraín,

David Seymour and Marcus Taylor for their critical and helpful comments.

1. The common charge against Gellner is that industrialization came too late to explain nationalism. However, Gellner points out that the link between industrialism and nationalism is not meant to be chronological (1973: 13–14).

2. See Ernest Gellner (1999) and Anthony Smith (1999). Smith (1996) has put forward an approach called 'ethnic continualism', which is a moderated version of a primordialist approach. On the modernist side, Miroslav Hroch can say that any explanation about the rising of the nations must begin 'in the late medieval and early modern period' (1996: 65). A good summary of this debate is to be found in Eley and Suny (1996: 4–7).

3. The myth of a radical or absolute break is discussed by Kosellek (1985) and Blumenberg (1983). Blumenberg writes:

It is not self-evident that an epoch poses itself the problem of its historical legitimacy; just as little is it self-evident that it understands itself as an epoch at all. For modernity, the problem is latent in the claim of accomplishing and of being able to accomplish a radical break, and in the incongruity of this claim with the reality of history, which is never capable of starting anew from the ground up. (quoted in Habermas, 1990: 7)

4. Historical sociology is perhaps well suited to take seriously the idea of the *longue durée*, which, according to Braudel, entails 'becoming used to a slower tempo, which sometimes almost borders on the motionless' (1980: 33).

5. For a discussion of the role of counterfactuals in social science, see Geoffrey Hawthorn (1991: Ch. 1). He argues that the problem does not consist in using counterfactuals as such, since counterfactuals are internal to the structure of explanations in the social sciences. The issue he raises concerns their unreflective uses.

6. See, for example, the discussion of Hroch below.

7. In an excellent formulation Margaret Canovan writes:

Nations are extraordinarily complex political phenomena, highly resistant to theoretical analysis. The features that make them politically effective also render them intellectually opaque, repelling philosophers who come to them in search of clear and distinct ideas. But those same obscurities not only enable nationhood to generate powerful political communities; even more momentarily, they make those communities seem natural, so that the task of generating collective power is made to look deceptively easy. (1996: 2)

8. Hobsbawm maintains that Lenin was the first to make the combined national-class platform the core issue of the agenda of communist parties (1994: 124–5).

9. 'The Europe of 1500 included some five hundred more or less independent political units, the Europe of 1900 about twenty-five' (Tilly, 1975a: 15).

10. Fine similarly discusses the close relations that sometimes held between a racialized 'Africanist' or 'Black' nationalism among African workers in South Africa and class militancy (1990: 68–78).

11. A critical account of Bendix's theoretical orientation is to be found in Rueschemeyer (1984).

12. We do not agree with Theda Skocpol's claim that Moore's work belongs to the Marxist tradition (1994: 25–7, 36–45), neither does Denis Smith (1984: 329, 336, 349). Skocpol's claim is based on elusive statements such as Moore's interest in the role of economic factors rather than 'ideas or culture' (1994: 25); his concern being 'moral' more than 'theoretical' (1994: 26); or his supposed inability to deal with ruling-class contradictions within the state (1994: 41). Even more problematic is the following statement: 'I wish to emphasise that the application to Professor Moore of the label "Marxist" will have absolutely no political connotations in this essay' (1994: 49). A characteristic of Marxism that distinguishes it from other approaches in social theory is that one cannot thus oppose analytical and political claims.

13. An interesting appraisal of the concept of 'bourgeois revolution' is to be found in Perry Anderson (1992).

14. Within political theory and international relations this time consciousness – of absolute rupture followed by essential continuity – informs both 'realist' and 'cosmopolitan' perspectives. The former sees modernity as fatality in opposition to tradition; the latter looks forward to a second rupture – from the nationalism of modernity to the post-nationalism of postmodernity (see Bartelson, 2001).

15. Within these small nations, Hroch distinguishes between

(a) a group of so-called 'nations without history', nations which had at no time in their pre-capitalist past been the repositories of an independent political formation; (b) a group of nations which did indeed constitute political entities in the Middle Ages, had their own sovereign feudal class, but lost their political independence or its essential attributes before they developed into modern nations (1985: 9).

Hroch illuminates one dimension often neglected by critics of Engels's use of the idea 'peoples without history': that there were peoples that lacked a history of their own since they were ruled for a very long time by foreigners. The best account of this issue is found in Rosdolsky (1986–7).

16. Hroch's recent reflections about the similarities between the national movements of the nineteenth century and the new wave of national movements in Central and Eastern Europe emphasize how much 'the new nationalisms recapitulate the old' in the sense that they develop the same kind of national aspirations, the

same calls for 'their own' states, the same claims for ethnic independence and the same attempts 'to complete the social structure of the nation by creating a capitalist class corresponding to that of Western states' (1996: 70).

17. See Peter Wagner's chapter in this volume.

18. From an empiricist groundwork, John Goldthorpe (1991) has argued precisely as to the insufficiencies of claims such as Skocpol's. A polemic on this issue was carried out in the *British Journal of Sociology*, from which especially interesting are the papers by Michael Mann (1994), Nicos Mouzelis (1994) and the reply by Goldthorpe (1994).

19. Fine (1990) attempts to denature the success of African nationalism in South Africa, not only in relation to other forms of nationalism but also in relation to the class-based movements that repeatedly offered quite distinct forms of leadership in the struggles against apartheid. The success of one and failure of the other has to be explained – in terms of factors like the social weight of the working class, the role of liberalism and the character of political leadership – rather than be treated as a rational or natural outcome.

20. For an exception to this trend, see the works by Miguel Centeno (1997, 2002).

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## *The Formation of the Modern State and the Institutionalization of Rule*

GIANFRANCO POGGI

For some time now, within the broad field of historical sociology, a significant body of writing has dealt with the genesis and development of the state, and often treated such topics as an aspect of a larger theme – the nature and significance of modernity.<sup>1</sup> Thus many of the most significant scholarly contributions have dealt chiefly with what we may call the ‘statalization’ of rule, and considered it as the most significant political aspect of European modernization.

This chapter, too, reflects that thematic preference, which requires in the first instance a brief definition of the somewhat unusual expression *statalization*. As used here, it refers to a set of processes in the course of which rule over a number of territories in the European subcontinent becomes highly institutionalized. Since the notion of institutionalization of rule, in turn, cannot be taken for granted, I treat it briefly below, drawing upon and extending a statement of it by Heinrich Popitz (1986). I suggest that rule becomes institutionalized to the extent that *in principle* it becomes:

- (a) *depersonalized*; that is, rule comes to be vested in offices rather than in physical individuals as such;
- (b) *formalized*; that is, the practice of rule refers increasingly to rules, to standardized, sanctioned expectations, which expressly authorize it, mandate it and control it;

(c) *integrated*; that is, rule increasingly takes into account other aspects of the social process, recognizes their significance and makes some contribution to their persistence, while being at the same time *both*

- (i) *differentiated* – that is, the practice of rule addresses distinctive concerns and employs special resources (material and symbolic) – *and*
- (ii) *organized*. This expression suggests two related and at the same time contrasting phenomena: on the one hand, rule is exercised by and through a plurality of subjects (individual and collective); on the other, these subjects constitute together a single unit, which overrides their plurality.

However, the institutionalization of rule is not always conceptually equivalent to its statalization. It can be said to have occurred also in non-state polities, such as empires. Characteristic of the state, as I understand this concept, are:

- (a) the fact that the above aspects of institutionalization are implemented to a particularly great extent;
- (b) the manner in which they are implemented: for instance, the rules whose

observance serves to formalize the practice of rule in the modern Western state are chiefly juridical rules, whereas in the case, say, of the Chinese empire they are ritual in nature;

- (c) the fact that, as Weber suggested long ago, the state makes particularly and exclusively its own a specific, critical resource – legitimate violence.

Against this summarily stated conceptual background, this essay develops two main arguments. The first and shorter one amounts to an abbreviated narrative of the emergence and development of the state in modern Europe. The second, longer one makes explicit certain themes suggested by that first argument.

#### THE EMERGENCE OF THE STATE: A NARRATIVE OVERVIEW

One can distinguish three broad phases in the historical career of the modern state, respectively: the consolidation of rule; the rationalization of rule; and the expansion of rule.

##### *The Consolidation of Rule*

With different timings and rhythms in different European locales, this phase lasts from the twelfth to the sixteenth century. The key aspect of the phase is that, as it runs its course, fewer and fewer political centres each extend their control over a larger and larger portion of Europe. The map of that (sub)continent becomes simpler and simpler, for each centre can now exercise jurisdiction in an increasingly uniform manner over bigger territories. These, furthermore, tend to become geographically more continuous and historically more stable with the decline in the patrimonial practices of dividing, bartering, lending, pledging, mortgaging, inheriting, enfeoffing and giving in dowry separate possessions, leaving room for more expressly political processes of conquest, annexation, forcible imposition of the superiority of territorial over feudal powers, and so on.

The institutional makings of this protracted transition are most diverse. They range from feudal faculties such as so-called 'suzerainty', to ancient notions of kingship, to the establishment of ever broader and more lasting 'peaces' – that is, sworn agreements among powerful elements to abstain from feuds and

depredations – to the avocation of the most significant legal cases from local courts applying vernacular law to those established by the central ruler and applying Roman or common law. Unavoidably, the key material component of the entire process is a given centre's ability to threaten or exercise overwhelming military violence to such an effect that other centres submit to it and surrender their autonomy. The accumulation of might, beginning with military might, is both the target and the key instrumentality of the whole process.

##### *The Rationalization of Rule*

Those centres that succeed in the ruthless process of 'weeding out of the unfit' to which the consolidation of rule amounts can undertake a conceptually different (though often historically overlapping) process, which takes place chiefly in the seventeenth and the eighteenth century. They arrange to exercise rule in a more purposeful, continuous, self-conscious manner, vesting various aspects of it in differentiated offices, manned by expressly trained, appointed personnel, operating according to stated rules, and controlled in those operations by superior offices.

Increasingly, each state is configured as a pyramid of offices, culminating in that held by the sovereign, and carrying out his or her decisions, oriented in turn by the criterion of 'reason of state'. This criterion continues to attach priority to the accumulation of might and to the question of security, but is understood also to refer, in a more or less explicit manner, to concerns that are not directly and exclusively of a military nature, such as the construction and management of a system of regular extraction of economic resources – for instance, via mercantilistic practices – or the provision of conditions favouring the accumulation of private capital and its deployment in trades and other economic pursuits (North and Thomas, 1973).

The essence of the rationalization process is that the exercise of rule consists more and more in the application of certain bodies of knowledge (*savoirs*). Let us consider some of its most significant aspects.

First, rule itself is seen as a more and more distinctive social activity, which the state claims entirely for itself. By the same token, however, it renounces other concerns, while recognizing their significance and protecting and regulating their exercise. In particular, the

state, through a complex of changes often referred to as secularization, progressively gets out of the religious business. Also, it increasingly recognizes that productive activities should be chiefly undertaken by private individuals and oriented to private interests. (See the distinction, in the absolutist era, between the *imperium*, which the sovereign claims as his/her own prerogative, and the *dominium* – meaning, here, private property – which he/she leaves to the *particuliers*).

Second, the ‘positivization’ of law – that is, the fact that modern law is not just guaranteed but created by the state itself – progressively filters out of juridical discourse questions of justice and natural right, for the key condition for the law-ness of law, so to speak, is that it should be produced and promulgated by the appropriate state organs according to their own procedural rules. Note, however, that state law applies more and more to the state itself, its structure and operation.

Third, generalized social status (still resting chiefly on birth) ceases to be the main criterion for the holding and exercising of political and administrative offices. It is replaced in this respect by appointment from above, and later by election from below. The key criterion for appointment, in turn, becomes the possession of specific *savoirs*, beginning (but not ending) with juridical *savoir*. Such possession is presumptively indicated by the holding of degrees and/or the passing of recruitment tests, but the presumption must be subsequently confirmed by an individual’s performance in junior offices, critical for the attainment of senior ones. In other terms, what to the outsider appears as a pyramid of offices appears to the insider also as a career ladder.

Finally, the motivation for the proper execution of the tasks of office is no longer either the immediate pursuit of the holder’s private interest (which is now supposedly filtered off by rules about conflict of interest) or the sense that *noblesse oblige*. What matters, instead, is the office-holder’s awareness of and commitment to the objective requirements of tasks themselves, plus his or her expectation that such commitment will be recognized by superiors and rewarded by advancement. What is critical, in any case, is that the molecular institutional arrangement for the exercise of rule, in its increasingly diverse and significant everyday aspects, is no longer the exercise of the rights of privileged individuals but the cognitively oriented performance of the duties of properly appointed individuals. This makes it

much easier to programme and to co-ordinate rule at large, by means both of the reference to general rules and of the subordination of inferior to superior officials.

The metaphor of ‘the state as a machine’, in its several variants (from the clock to the locomotive), conveys the significance of this transition, and its affinity with other aspects of the modernization process. Max Weber’s discussion of bureaucracy (1968: 656–8), complemented (for instance) by Eisenstadt (1958) on bureaucratization, still constitutes the best sociological rendering of the same transition. The essence of it is that, on the one hand, it makes the exercise of rule more changeable and contingent (as is best seen by considering positive law) whereas, on the other, it makes it more uniform, predictable and efficient.

### *The Expansion of Rule*

This characterization applies chiefly to the state in the second half of the nineteenth and in the twentieth century. It seeks to capture the fact that, once geared up and coupled with positive law, the machine of the state tends to involve itself in a greater and greater number and variety of social tasks, ranging from those typically associated with the notion of the welfare state to those required by the internationalization of the national economies.

But this way of viewing the process is somewhat partial, for it imputes its dynamic chiefly to the state itself, and particularly to its executive and administrative components. These are, indeed, responsible for some aspects of the expansion process, but a more acceptable rendering of the process requires a number of additional considerations.

For example, the imagery of a state which ruthlessly puts itself in charge of ever new tasks is potentially misleading if it suggests that the range of potential tasks was constant. In fact the whole process of social, economic, cultural (and not only political) modernization creates unprecedented opportunities, problems, strains and conflicts, some of which only the state can adequately deal with, in view of their urgency, and of the advantages to be drawn from confronting them in a self-conscious and purposive manner.

In addition, the democratization process and the ‘entry of the masses into politics’ are associated with the emergence of party systems and thus with the development of adversary politics. The willingness of one party or

coalition to expand the reach of state action, and the reluctance of the other party or coalition to do so, are a recurrent component of their relations. On balance, the option to expand has prevailed more often than the contrary one, among other reasons because it was pushed by the enfranchisement of ever new groups, as well as by the interest of both parties in creating occasions for patronage. But it should be noted that also strongly entrenched interests, not only those of the relatively disadvantaged strata of the population, have often pushed the option to expand, for instance by committing the state to 'research and development' expenditures which the firms benefiting from them were not capable of bearing or unwilling to do so. (One must never forget that there has been a welfare state for the rich as least as much as one for the poor).

The expansion of rule was the dominant trend in state/society relations for at least two centuries, and was most visible, and most explicitly thematized and controverted, through most of the twentieth century, especially after the Second World War. There are some reasons for thinking that the last decades of that century saw at least a slowdown in and possibly an interruption to that trend. But from the perspective of this volume one might suspect that it is too early to tell! In any case, this chapter now moves on to its third task: a series of analytical reflections on the brief narrative of the last few pages, addressing four themes which lend themselves to contrasting interpretations (and evaluations), and which, taken together, go some way towards locating the main issues raised by the 'discourse on the state'.

#### FOUR ANALYTICAL PERSPECTIVES

##### *Reunion Versus Dispersal*

This theme focuses on one question, relating to a well-known sociological distinction, that between inclusive and exclusive groupings: broadly speaking, that is, those open in principle to those who seek admission to them unless they are disqualified by special circumstances (for instance, a market) as against those which in principle do not admit members unless specially qualified (for instance, an aristocratic body). Another implicit reference is to the question of whether given social phenomena induce solidarities among participants or, on the contrary, have a tendency to divide them.

Up to a point, the process of statalization of rule is accompanied chiefly by the phenomena of reunion, by the emergence of broader and more inclusive solidarities. This is best seen in geographical terms; to quote a well-known statement of Charles Tilly's: 'The Europe of 1500 included some five hundred more or less independent political units, the Europe of 1900 about twenty-five' (1975: 15). As this statement suggests, the political modernization of Europe generally entailed the subsumption of multiple, previously self-standing jurisdictions (most of them rooted in discrete localities and bounded by them) under a much smaller number of jurisdictions, in a movement which can only be seen as one towards reunion (or union, at any rate). Later evidence of this was provided by the fact that often monarchs, after their own kingly titles, would cite a veritable slew of lesser ones, from duke to margrave or baron, each referring to a locality previously ruled by his dynasty on some account or other, but subsequently comprised within a broader territory, rule over which was exercised by the king *qua* king.

Apart from its geographical aspects, the theme of reunion is significant ideologically as a recurrent justification for the state-making enterprise itself, as a way of accounting morally for the deprivations and risks it entailed for both rulers and subjects. Oneness, unity, wholeness, are central *topoi* in the rhetoric of conquest and war-making, but also in discourses relating to the building up of administrative systems, legal codifications, the subordination of local to trans-local courts, the suppression of vernacular languages, customs, weights and measures, festivities.

Risking blasphemy, one might say that Jesus' prayer *Ut unum sint* (let them be as one), expresses the driving motif of state-makers, their concern to pool together, incorporate, include and enclose. But perhaps the reference to a religious text is not so out of place, considering that, according to Harold Berman (1983), the Gregorian reform of the ecclesiastical polity, a key aspect of which was indeed the drive for oneness, played an exemplary role in the subsequent construction of secular polities. Carl Schmitt (1999) simply restates polemically that motif when he argues that there is no place for pluralism *within* states, but only *between* states.

However visible and compelling the 'reunion moment' may have been in the statalization of rule, it is not implausible to consider

that process as also involving 'dispersal'. This is true, I would suggest, in two senses.

First of all, one should not forget that in its early phases the process partly presupposed and partly entailed the breaking up of an earlier, larger political entity, the Carolingian empire (and, for that matter, of the Church in its self-conscious representation as a universal polity). The dictum *Rex est imperator in regno suo* (the King is emperor in his Kingdom) expresses this aspect of that process: the drive of local rulers to 'go it alone', to reject the previously accepted subordination to a broader, more comprehensive centre of rule, which sought to encompass all of Christendom.

In the second place, the protracted process of consolidation envisaged by Tilly over the span between 1500 and 1900 was by the latter date about to be arrested and indeed inverted. Immediately after the First World War, the Wilsonian principle of national self-determination legitimizes a phase of 'dispersal'. At the end of the Second World War, one might see in the formation of the Soviet and the Yugoslav empires, and, to a different extent, in the formation of the European Community, a resumption of the 'reunion' trend. But by the end of the century those two empires have dissolved, giving place to an accelerated and chaotic 'dispersal' drive, and the European Community is still very far from representing anything like a state – even a federal one. The kind of pluralism endorsed by Schmitt has received a new push, and it is not particularly likely that, in the short to medium run, it will be arrested by a renewed process of political unification.

In any case, seen in a broad comparative-historical perspective, what characterizes the political environment of the late- and post-medieval West as against, say, the empires of the Near East and the East (Breuer, 1987) is its lack of unity, the fact that it contains a plurality of states which acknowledge one another and whose interactions, oriented by each state's exclusive concern with the pursuit of its interests, engender only a loose, highly contingent, 'open-at-the-top', tendentially anarchical system. 'Dispersal' is a continuing, constitutive feature of such a system, for all attempts to rationalize it by means of international regimes and organizations.

John Hall (1986) has pointed out (with others) that this 'dispersed' arrangement has made it possible for such values as individual liberty and the rule of law to emerge and establish themselves in the Western political

environment. Much earlier, Hintze (1975) had suggested that, in this, the modern states system resembles the market system: both reflect a distinctive cultural preference for locating self-conscious rational action at the level of individual units; a higher-level rationality emerges only as the unplanned outcome of the units' self-regarding strategies.

Hintze also points up what one may consider an interaction between 'dispersal' and 'reunion' aspects of the state's development in his construction of an early phase of that development – Western feudalism. We tend to associate this chiefly with dispersal, with the fragmenting and multiplication of structures of rule; yet, according to Hintze, the formation of Western feudalism presupposes the memory – however dim and distant – of the Roman empire, and represents an attempt – however feeble and contradictory – to reconstitute a comprehensive political order, a unitary *res publica*.

Finally, let us note that the establishment of precisely located boundaries between territories – a modern innovation widely recognized as critical for the emergence of the territorial, sovereign states – reasserts, at the conceptual level, the interaction of those two moments, dispersal and reunion. For a boundary functions as the 'horizon' does: on the one hand, it delimits a given unit; on the other, unavoidably it points beyond itself, to what lies on the other side of it.

### ***War Versus Societal Management as Critical Concerns in State-building***

The literature on the emergence and development of the state shows a fairly sharp contrast between two lines of discourse concerning whether war-making, preparation for war, adaptation to the circumstance of war, played a central role in that story. Perhaps because this theme had been relatively neglected in previous discussion, recent literature has prevalently emphasized it, and persuasively conveyed a 'bloody-minded' view of military concerns as a critical aspect of the story (for example, Downing, 1992; Porter, 1994; Tilly, 1990). Tilly, once more, has given lapidary expression to this view: '[W]ar makes states, and vice versa'. Somewhat earlier (in an important volume edited, as it happens, by Tilly himself), Samuel Finer (1975) had powerfully argued the same point, focusing on the interaction between the military, the fiscal

and the properly political components of state-building. More recently, Thomas Ertman (1997) has shown in a particularly compelling manner not just *that* but *how* arrangements for war shaped the constitutional development of a whole set of European states.

The basic idea is simple, and powerful. As argued above, the statalization of rule is systematically accompanied by a selection process whereby fewer and fewer centres of rule establish their sway over larger and larger territories. To a very large extent – one should not forget other mechanisms, in particular that suggested by the dictum *alii bella gerant, tu felix Austria nube* (let others wage wars, you, happy Austria, arrange marriages) – this process takes the form of a given centre defeating other ones in war, and gobbling up their territories. Thus, in order to stay in the business of rule, political actors are compelled to equip themselves to mount, and to withstand, military challenges against, and from, each another.

Coping with such necessity engenders and shapes many aspects of rule – both aspects giving rulers a greater control over societal resources, and aspects moderating that control (because sometimes, in order to get access to resources, rulers are compelled to negotiate with powerful societal actors which accumulate and guard those resources). Recently this view, first elaborated by students of European state-making (with Hintze again playing a leading role), has been applied in sophisticated fashion to the American polity by Richard Bensel, whose *Yankee Leviathan* (1990) details the institutional impact of the Civil War both on the United States and on the Confederacy.

In his *Politics and War: European Conflict from Philip II to Hitler* (1990), David Kaiser has developed a related though somewhat different argument, according to which much (one might say *too* much) of modern European political history was driven by a particular dynamic: aristocratic dynasties active within a number of states, rather than their rulers, had a nasty penchant for war-making, expressing their persistent hankering after possessions, advancement and glory. Only on this account did wars continue being fought in spite of the fact that, as rulers often learned to their dismay, they were unconscionably expensive, destructive and inconclusive affairs, and as such they constituted a very risky and clumsy instrument of policy.

Notice, however, that, according to a minority view, represented within the literature of

the last few decades by a book of Joseph Strayer's, *On the Medieval Origins of the Modern State* (1973), one (or perhaps *the*) determinant component of the state-building process was represented by the effort of large landlords to rationalize the exploitation of their domains, rather than their attempts to encroach upon those of others. In other terms, state-building constituted chiefly an extension of ordinary, peaceful, domestic and patrimonial concerns, and the substance of it was in principle the improvement and intensification of the management of the ruler's possessions. In developing this view, Strayer implicitly complements the frequent observation to the effect that the personnel assisting rulers in state-building were chiefly composed of aristocrats and clergymen; he points instead to the role played by administrators and managers, some of whom, as in the case of the German *Ministeriales*, were of lowly, sometimes unfree, status. It is as if the biblical Joseph, whose skills and competences were exclusively those of a shrewd administrator (albeit one uncommonly gifted when it came to interpreting dreams), embodied the key dynamic presiding over the statalization of rule.

The contrast between these two views of the central mission of the state is already evident in early theoretical visions. As Gerhard Ritter has argued in *The Corrupting Influence of Power* (1979), Machiavelli and Thomas More had already articulated that contrast, the former with his emphasis on the fortunes of war and the necessity of 'good arms', the latter with his vision of the Commonwealth – the expression itself indicating a central concern with the production and distribution of goods rather than with deadly quarrels. Ritter suggests that these two conceptions of the business of politics reflect in turn the contrast between the European continent, where states survive only by aggressing against or defending themselves from one another, and insular Britain, protected by the sea from military threats.

As is often the case, each of these two views overstates its own case, which ought to be complemented by some consideration accorded the other one. The emphases, on the one hand, on inter-unit relations (and war) and, on the other, on domestic, intra-unit relations are each prevalently justified in different circumstances, phases, aspects of the state-building enterprise; but they also interact in individual situations.

A case in point is Prussia, where the military component of state-building is on many counts

prevalent, and imparts its cast to all others, but also where the overwhelming presence of the army is complemented by an exemplary effort to build up (relatively) extensive structures of internal administration. These, too, have a military cast; but they are also very sophisticated, and the intellectual resources of financial management and of public law are joined to a previously unknown degree in their construction and operation. The development of *Kameralistik* – a minor but not insignificant component of the development of modern economic science – accompanies this development. Its original intent is to rationalize the management of state possessions, but from a certain point on it merges into the new discipline of *Polizewissenschaft*, which assigns to administrative authorities much wider responsibilities of societal management.

But this is not the only example of overlap between the apparently contrasting aspects of state-building emphasized respectively by the majority and the minority view. It has been pointed out long ago that the development of citizenship has been powerfully assisted, in some cases at least, by the massification of military obligation, and that the establishment of popular conscription has often been matched by the establishment or enlargement of suffrage – put otherwise, no conscription without representation! More widely, according to some accounts, the British polity was led to assume increasing responsibilities for medical assistance to the population by the realization that many of the young men targeted for service by British regiments in the Boer War and subsequently in the First World War were physically unfit for military duty. In the Second World War, as a defence against Vitamin C deficits, British children were given free orange juice; but the positive impact of this practice on their health became so obvious that it was continued after the war.

We may ask ourselves what is the contemporary significance of the contrast between the conceptions of what politics and the state are all about. This is a controversial question. Before 1989 some observers argued that, having become impossible for the states that mattered – the superpowers – to wage the war that mattered – nuclear war – the century-old centrality of war itself had been so to speak suspended, or displaced. War had become obsolete, and the confrontation between the superpowers had taken various forms, as closely related to war itself as the arms race, or competition in space, or as remote from it as the attempt of each to

project through propaganda the superiority of its own ‘way of life’.

The year 1989 itself has had a complex impact: at first many saluted the end of the Cold War as ushering in a new era of peace, but the expected ‘peace dividend’ failed to materialize and local conflicts became more frequent and more bloody. Furthermore, according to many, the experience of the former Yugoslavia, and the failure of the European Union to make a serious difference to it, indicates the persistent necessity for a polity to have a security policy and a military capacity. Meanwhile, paradoxically, the call for a thoroughgoing ‘marketization’ of the social process at large, and the increasing internationalization of the economy, pose a threat also to the *other* conception of the state’s main mission, focused on the management of the economy.

### **Power Enhancement Versus Power Taming**

There is a conservative view (articulated, for instance, by Bertrand de Jouvenel, 1962) according to which the story of state-building entails first and foremost a ruthless, restless search for power after power. The state itself is characterized as a form of ‘permanent revolution’, as a totally self-seeking entity intrinsically at war with its own domestic society, which greedily preys upon the resources it produces, frustrating and defeating individuals’ search for their own happiness, suspicious of the relations they spontaneously enact.

This is best seen by considering the developing relationship between the political centre and the periphery in a unitary, non-federal country. The state limits if not suppresses local autonomies; replaces home-grown leadership figures (the notables) with officials and with party leaders; levels out traditional differences in the management of public affairs; creates new burdens for the populace (conscription, imposts, fees for administrative and judicial acts, the compilation of statistical information); sometime imposes on local populations linguistic, religious, cultural practices foreign to its traditions. In *Peasants into Frenchmen* Eugene Weber (1977) has persuasively narrated these various strategies of homogenization and the emergence of a relatively unified, national public. The imagery of the ‘predatory state’ which can be evinced, for instance, from de Jasay’s (1983) writings, construes in a

similar way the relationship between the state and the domestic economic system – though less bloody-minded accounts of the same phenomena are more willing to acknowledge to what extent they have been functional, at any rate in some countries, to the modernization of their economy and to the amelioration of the resultant social dislocations.

Although such views, I have suggested, are generally put forward from the right of the politico-ideological spectrum (Nisbet [1965] in particular self-consciously re-articulates the horrified response to the French revolution of what Comte called ‘the reactionary school’, that is, the counter-revolutionary thinkers), some such motifs have been echoed from the left. In particular, Foucault (1977) has emphasized the pervasiveness of power-seeking associated with such practices of the modern state as increased surveillance, or the building up of the penitentiary system; while Giddens (1985) has stressed the increasing significance of the former phenomenon.

In sum, in this perspective, state-building, and successively the expansion of state activities, constitute a massive exercise in power-seeking and power enhancement. One might say that all states tend to behave, *vis-à-vis* the countries where they erect themselves and function, somewhat like a conquering and occupying foreign power; or simply suggest that the hold of the state on civil society tends to become, over time, more and more heavy, pervasive, imperious and damaging.

However, one can counterpose to this view an alternative one emphasizing other aspects of the story. Let us mention a few.

In the first place the state, by confiscating from the multiple jurisdictions in which they were previously vested the faculties and facilities for the exercise of coercive power, and replacing them with its own monopoly of legitimate force, has pacified society, making it less and less likely that contending interests will (literally) make war on one another – as they previously did in exercising *auto-tutela*, *Selbst-hilfe*, that is, in seeing themselves to the redress of wrongs putatively done to them.

A related effect has been to increase the rationality of productive processes. In particular, the negotiating of conditions of employment between *formally* equal contractual partners replaced the forcible imposition of working duties upon subaltern and subordinate individuals; the social organization of labour untied itself from traditional monopolies over certain trades, and its technical division

from corporate regulation of productive and distributive practices.

Second, and more broadly: the expansion of the state’s power was accompanied by a process of autonomization of civil society, as a realm where different forms of not expressly political power remained or became established, new forms of relations between individuals and between groups were discovered and institutionalized, and Western culture experienced a spectacular, multi-sided growth. In principle, state-building meant not just that the ruling centre claimed for itself *all* political business, but also that it claimed *only* political business, forsaking, as we have seen, a direct involvement in religious concerns and in those pertaining to the production and distribution of wealth.

Finally, this self-limitation of the state has a further dimension, amounting not just to the state’s recognition of the autonomy of other ‘businesses’ of civil society, but also to a disciplining of its own activities. New forms of law develop which are intended not just to extend the state’s operations, but also to rationalize and moderate them. The state’s power becomes lodged within a new set of purposefully designed, expressly co-ordinated offices, with distinct tasks, faculties and facilities of rule, manned by personnel selected (in principle) for their ability to perform the related activities competently, efficiently and responsibly. As I have said, in this rationalization of rule, *savoirs*, beginning with juridical *savoir*, play a critical role. Now, Foucault has made us aware of the profound, manifold connection between power on the one hand, and different *savoirs* and the related forms of discourse, on the other. Yet, *from the standpoint of Western values*, that connection significantly differentiates power based on such discourses from power based on brute force and/or justified through sheer myth, relatively unamenable to discursive articulation and to rational argumentation.

The contrast between these two perspectives on what statalization has meant for political power, and thus on its bearing upon society, is stark. At bottom, one perspective tends to deprecate the processes in question, the other to celebrate it. But some lines of political thinking try to moderate that contrast, by envisaging regimes that acknowledge the rationality gains involved in statalization but at the same time remain aware of its dangers, of its tendency to run amok. I am thinking, for instance, of Tocqueville’s vision, in the second part of *Democracy in America* (1991), of the two paths open to democratic

systems, one leading to tyranny, the other to moderate government. A characteristic of Tocqueville's approach is the emphasis he lays not just on constitutional machinery, but also on the underlying cultural preferences and social practices of the people in question. This emphasis has pessimistic implications – for what of a people not gifted by history with the appropriate beliefs, values and capacities? In any case, his argument points up the contingent nature of the relationship to be established between (to re-employ the expression above) the enhancement and the moderation of the state's power.

From the institutional standpoint, the attempt to reconcile the contrast between those two perspectives, to accept and sustain the empowerment represented by statalization while limiting the damage it can do to society, takes two main forms, often variously combined with one another. Schematically, there is a *liberal* approach, represented for instance by Humboldt, where various constitutional arrangements, sometimes culminating in the judicial review of legislative acts, secure public and private rights of individuals; and a *democratic* approach, where a greater and greater portion of the population, through representative institutions, selects the political leadership and mandates its main initiatives. The respective formulas are *let law be the framework of policy* and *let politics be the matrix of policy*.

Finally, the contrast between the two perspectives has numerous echoes in the themes of contemporary political debate. The conservative perspective, today, finds expression, in particular, in the renewed concern over the size of the fiscal take, a concern which in turn has led students seriously to entertain the imagery of the 'predatory state'. Other sectors of public opinion, on the other hand, insist that the state should remain able and willing to monitor and to an extent steer the social process, instead of abandoning it to the market (as their opponents claim that it should in order not to interfere, among other things, with the dynamic of globalization).

One may relate to our theme also the growing public and scholarly concern with the 'principal/agent problem'. By this I mean a set of questions such as the following: to what extent does the governmental machinery established to elaborate and execute policy according to a political mandate act instead in order to maximize its own access to resources, its own autonomy and discretionality? To what

extent do, in particular, those parts of the state instituted in order to provide security and assistance to certain social strata or to the population at large operate chiefly, in fact, to maintain and extend the privilege and the leverage of various professional groups which utilize (and monopolize) the respective *savoirs*? Has the public sphere, colonized by the media and by related business interests, lost its ability to mandate, monitor, sanction public policy?

### *Continuity Versus Change*

In the last few lines we have considered some themes relating to the nature and development of the state which have a public, political dimension, and are not just a matter for scholarly controversy. The last problem we pose, however, is again chiefly one for scholars, and arises when one attempts to consider 'the state story' as a whole, looking for continuities and discontinuities both within that story, and between that and the longer story of large-scale political systems.

As we have seen, it is plausible to see the advent of the state as constituting a major change, and possibly a revolutionary one, in the broader story of Western political arrangements. The two perspectives discussed above, from this standpoint, differ only in how they evaluate that change. It is possible, however, to argue for continuity within that story; and also this argument can be carried out from opposing politico-ideological positions: to simplify matters, both from the right and from the left.

From the left (and I mean here chiefly the Marxian tradition), the historical novelty of statalization of rule can be sharply discounted by viewing the state as no more (though also no less) than an ideologically more sophisticated, materially more effective way of securing politically class domination, adapted to the specific demands of the capitalist mode of production. The state projects itself as a community – but it is an imaginary one; it posits the equality of citizens before the law – but conceals behind it the persistence of class division and exploitation. What – in this critical, debunking vision – statalization does nothing to alter is the functional link between political arrangements and the phenomena of material production and reproduction. This link in turn is a persistent historical datum which only the socialist revolution – and thus,

at long last, the real beginning of human history – can remove.

The historical novelty of statalization has been sharply discounted also from the right. Somewhere in the *Trattato* Pareto ironically apologizes to his reader for never discussing '*lo stato di diritto*' (rule of law) – an attractive conceit, he says, which he has never encountered in his researches. More broadly, writers in the Machiavellian tradition (Mosca and Michels, in particular), have argued that the dualism leaders/led, elite/masses is *the* central political phenomenon, with respect to which also the institutional and ideological changes associated with the state (or with the development of expressly *democratic* parties) constitute only a relatively insignificant variation. Somewhat more sophisticated arguments to this effect can be found also in Weber.

The historical novelty of statalization can be discounted (without of course denying it entirely) also by appealing to more specifically sociological arguments, to the effect that the institutional principles of the state are, themselves, historically quite novel, *but* are very difficult to implement. The social processes at work in the everyday reality of modern and contemporary political arrangements reveal the resilience, the obdurate persistence, of premodern practices which those principles have never been able to eliminate.

Consider a few, overlapping examples:

1. Clientelism is alive and well in states (and parties): informal ties of mutual or asymmetrical obligation, and/or networks of personal associates, are regularly detected by close empirical observation of collective units purportedly constructed according to bureaucratic principles. Such ties and networks constitute the actual carrying structures of all significant processes of information-sharing, resource allocation, task assignment, career progression; all manner of state activities are initiated and conducted only by means of those structures, hidden behind the official ones, and often at cross-purposes with them.
2. As to the operative culture of state organizations, again the official *savoirs*, both legal and technical, inform decisions, and preside over the implementation of public directives, to a lesser extent than do particularistic criteria, *ad-hoc* considerations, 'muddling through', sheer routine, the rendering and claiming of favours,

opportunistic conduct, adaptive responses to illegal pressures.

3. As Roth (1987) has emphasized, in many states some decision sites are almost expressly constituted according to patrimonial rather than bureaucratic criteria, and some of these sites are of the utmost significance – in the US government, nothing less than the White House itself!

Another version of the 'argument for continuity' takes for granted that state-building represented a highly innovative historical enterprise, but suggests that, once built, states develop a great inertia, and become incapable of further change. Much of the current literature on 'reinventing government' (see, for example, Osborne and Gaebler, 1992) revolves around this theme, as does the charge that, since the Second World War, Western political systems have been massively overtaken, in the promotion of change, by other societal realms: science; technology; industry; the complex of practices relating to sex and reproduction; culture – both high and mass culture; the values and beliefs inspiring and expressing the sense of self; the management of the body and of interpersonal relations. Although it had expressly constituted itself, in the societal division of labour, as that organ through which society could self-consciously act upon itself, steer itself towards and through change, the state – according to this argument – has become torpid, top-heavy, insensitive, incapable of perceiving and reacting to the multiple changes occurring in the societal environment, let alone of initiating change itself.

Alternatively, changes originating expressly in the political real are successively subverted by others with a different origin: what good did it do the United Kingdom that it won the Second World War? Did Japan and Germany really *lose out* by losing it? How much better off is the Russian population now that the Soviet system is gone?

Clearly, those who hold that the modern state has not changed things *that much*, or that it has lost its original capacity to change the political realm and through it other parts of society, can score some easy points. Whether this wins them the debating match is for the reader to decide.

#### NOTES

1. For a review of the scholarly literature, see Deloye (1996)

2. Tocqueville uses the technical expression 'tutelle administrative' for a sophisticated form of such strategy (1904: 50); his English translator, not quite *au fait* with legal language, has rendered such expression as 'paternal government' (see Tocqueville, 1986: 57).

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# *The Evolution of Parliaments:*

## *A Comparative-historical Perspective on Assemblies and Political Decision-making*

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This chapter discusses a major component of the modernity complex, namely representative assemblies and parliaments as part of the modern state. It focuses on the emergence and institutionalization of parliament as an arrangement for collective representation, reflexivity and production of collective knowledge and decision-making. Our analyses are grounded in three key tenets.

First, in contrast to the abstract generalities of the 'reflexive modernists' (Beck [1992, 1997], Beck et al. [1994], Giddens [1990, 1991] and Lash [1999], among others), we stress the importance of specifying and examining in their historical, political and cultural contexts institutions such as forms of representative assemblies, bureaucracies, markets and market governance structures, among others. Thus, we focus, as in this chapter, on a particular institution or institutional arrangement and follow its historical emergence and development in particular contexts. This allows for a greater degree of specificity than available from much of those theorizing about 'modernity'. While we agree with the significance of, for instance, 'reflexive processes' in modern societies, our approach identifies and analyses particular institutional arrangements that play a role in societal reflexivity and deliberation, namely representative assemblies and parliaments.

Second, our approach identifies a complex of factors – power conditions, functionality or usefulness of such assemblies to rulers and powerful groups in society, and cultural-institutional factors – that contribute to explaining the logic of institutional development in different socio-political and cultural contexts (Burns, 1999, 2001; Burns and Dietz, 1992; Burns and Flam, 1987); in this chapter, representative assemblies or parliaments.

Third, we reject the prevalent, dualistic analysis of modernity – and in particular, of its institutions – that contrasts 'Occident' and 'Oriental' developments. The legacy of 'Orientalism' was established in part not only through the theories of Max Weber and Karl Marx, but also through those of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, John Locke and others (Kamali, 2001). Among contemporary theorists, Ernest Gellner, Jeffrey Alexander and Samuel Huntington explain the failure of democratic development in Islamic countries as compared to those in the West by the lack of 'civil society and individualism' in the 'Islamic world'. Our approach rejects the simple formula of searching for and identifying selected differences between the 'West' and non-Western societies, for example 'differences in democratic development'. Such a formula serves to characterize the West as all-too unique.

We bring into the discussion, to the limited extent possible in a short chapter, the developments of early representative assemblies in a few 'non-Western' societies, for instance the empires of Persia and Ottoman. In this way, the evolution of representative assemblies in contemporary Iran and Turkey as well as other Islamic countries can be better understood as a continuing struggle, each with its own dialectics, much like many of the struggles that have taken place, and continue to do so, in Europe and elsewhere (Kamali, 1998, 2001). The increasing role and authority of parliaments in Europe and elsewhere have been highly uneven and subject to substantial setbacks and reversals in different socio-political and -cultural contexts.

Our study suggests not only the diversity of developments in the European context, but also the similarities between some developments in European societies and those in non-European countries. The chapter aims to contribute to the concept of multiple modernities, by focusing on the development logic of a particular institution in diverse socio-political and -cultural contexts.

#### **THE CROOKED ROAD TO PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY**

Parliament is a type of assembly. Assemblies are a universal construction based on human linguistic, conceptual and organizational capacities: (1) the gathering of elders in villages and 'tribes' (Mair, 1962; Maquet, 1971);<sup>1</sup> (2) assemblies in classical Greek cities (*demos*); (3) the councils and synods of Christianity;<sup>2</sup> (4) councils of Italian city-states; (5) the *moots* of the Saxons and the *tings* of the Scandinavians; (6) councils and consultation arrangements (for instance, *shoura*, and *mashverat*, in Islamic societies<sup>3</sup>), courts and, in some cases, 'parliaments' linked to monarchs and emperors; (7) modern parliaments as a core part of contemporary democracy. In general, deliberative assemblies are a major social institution in every society, for conducting collective reflectivity, deliberation and decision-making.

The formation and development of states and empires provided a context for the utilization and evolution of assemblies in one form or another. The Prince – for example, medieval European monarchs, the monarchs of Persia and Ottoman, the emperors of China – sought advice from persons chosen – typically at the discretion of the Prince – for their knowledge, competence and trustworthiness.<sup>4</sup>

Often, there was an interest in having them report from the entire realm and then to convey the Prince's directives and tax demands back to their communities, 'tribes' and regions. The pattern of selection of such advisers tended to follow actual or established social structures – for instance, the nobility and clergy, possibly city merchants; the elites from diverse 'tribes'. In some cases, as in Sweden, commoners were represented in the parliament. A number of assemblies that evolved into democratic parliaments had their origin in the council to the Prince – in Europe, the *curia regis*: the great council of Britain, the Cortes of the Spanish kingdoms, the Diet of the Holy Roman Empire, the Diets of Bohemia, Hungary and Poland, and the parliaments of the Scandinavian countries. All represented to varying degrees the principal estates of the realm. Their purpose was to give counsel to the Prince and provide unity to the realm. But they became important in some cases in supplementing the Prince's normal feudal income through agreement to special taxes. Also, the Prince could use the assembly to find out about special problems, opposition or unintended consequences of specific policies and institutions. Such assemblies evolved very differentially in various countries.

#### *The Differential Development of Parliaments*

States and empires all had assemblies of various sorts, to provide advice, to react to proposals for new laws and policies, and to report on the implementation of policies and laws passed by the Prince. The challenge in an analysis of the evolution of representative assemblies is to explain how consultative and advisory assemblies transformed themselves – or were transformed – into institutions that could countervail political authority and eventually become a major basis of authority and legitimacy for political decisions.

At the outset, it must be emphasized that there has been no linear progression in the evolution of parliamentary systems. Assemblies as human organizations or constructions adapt, and are adapted to, their environment. Many assemblies, including historically time-honoured parliaments, have been the tools of monarchs (as pointed up in the case of many European parliaments before 1900), autocrats (the Ottoman sultans, the shahs of Iran), oligarchs (the Republic of Venice<sup>5</sup>), political parties (the Communist

Party of the Soviet Union). But parliamentary assemblies have also been a means of opposition, a symbol of the struggle against tyranny or the violation of the rights of citizens. In general, historical studies point up the role that many parliamentary bodies have played in struggling against executive power and autocracy. And while numerous parliaments have been stripped of their powers, silenced and even abolished, there has been a relentless pressure in the modern period – resulting time and time again in the revival of parliamentary bodies in relation to political decision-making and law-making (see later).

Several patterns of development of parliamentary democracy can be identified. Our treatment is highly selective and is intended to serve illustrative purposes in this short chapter.

**Relatively long and continuous development.** A number of countries in Europe, such as England, Denmark, Iceland, the Netherlands and Sweden, showed a gradual growth of the power of parliament in relation to the monarchy. Still, the development was never linear. Europe's oldest parliament, the Althing of Iceland, dating from 930, was abolished in 1800 under Danish sovereignty over Iceland. It was re-established in 1843 in the context of Icelandic national revival. There are discontinuities in the English case as well. For instance, the struggles between the crown and major groups, including many closely associated with Parliament, led to the English Civil War (1642–8), which resulted in the deposition of the king, and declaration of a Commonwealth (1649) with Parliament governing. Cromwell set up the Protectorate (1653–9), acting as virtual dictator, and manipulated and even dissolved Parliament. Monarchy and Parliament were ultimately restored in 1660, but the former was subject in an institutionalized manner to an assertive and largely unified Parliament.

**Discontinuous development** Several countries have had important assemblies with a long but substantially discontinuous history, for instance the French Estates-General and the Spanish Cortes. Each was composed of three estates, the clergy, nobility and burghers. One can say generally that the Cortes (local cortes of the various Spanish regions), from the twelfth to the thirteenth century, and the Estates-General in France,

established in the fourteenth century, had considerable influence *vis-à-vis* their monarchs over substantial periods.<sup>6</sup> However, as royal power was consolidated – the emergence of absolutism – these assemblies were increasingly ignored, their powers curtailed, and they were seldom convoked. But as in England, struggles went on. For instance, in France, at the same time as the captivity of King John II in England (1355–7), the Estates-General forced the dauphin (later King Charles V) to promulgate the *Grande Ordonnance*, which was to expand its financial and administrative powers and make it the legislature of France. The dauphin, however, revoked his concessions almost as soon as he had made them and called a rival assembly. While later Estates-General often opposed the king and even won temporary concessions, the continuous consolidation of royal power blocked the emergence of a powerful parliamentary body. The Estates-General was not convoked during the period 1614–1789, and when it assembled on 5 May 1789 at Versailles, the stage was set for the French Revolution. This was, in fact, a continuation of an age-old struggle, but in an entirely new political, economic and social context. The French Revolution did not, however, settle the matter once and for all. There were reversals – for instance, the dictatorship of Napoleon. And during the 1800s, struggle between the government and parliament for sovereign power dovetailed with struggles between monarchists and republicans. These struggles resulted in a string of different regimes and substantial political instability. A somewhat similar history of struggle occurred in the Spanish case, but spanning both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Spain was characterized by the struggle between monarchists and republicans and the rise and fall of different types of regime. Parliamentary democracy appeared to triumph in Spain in 1931 with republicans victorious, but governments were unstable and culminated in the 1936–9 civil war. Under the dictatorship of Francisco Franco (1939–75), the Cortes was stripped of effective powers. It was restored in 1978 as a genuine parliament in a democratic state.

Poland provides another example of a long history of parliamentary development broken by substantial periods of a non-existent or non-sovereign parliament. The Polish precursor to a modern democratic parliament, the Sejm, was a powerful agent in relation to the monarch for more than two centuries

(sixteenth to eighteenth centuries) – the gentry and noble classes had developed a high degree of egalitarianism and integration among themselves and forced the king to recognize the Sejm's legislative powers, thereby weakening the Polish state in the geopolitical context of powerful, autocratic states surrounding it: Russia, Prussia, Austria and Sweden.<sup>7</sup> Ultimately (1795), Poland was totally partitioned among Russia, Austria and Prussia and ceased to exist as an independent state. After the First World War, the state was restored. The Polish Sejm functioned from 1921 until 1926, when a military dictatorship was established, which was ended with the German occupation (1939–45). After the Second World War, the Sejm was re-established but subject to forty-three years (1946–89) of a communist straitjacket. It re-emerged in 1989 as a modern democratic parliament.

**Late adoption of parliamentary forms** During the 1800s and early 1900s, some of the principles and rules of parliamentary democracy spread, via diffusion (Burns, 2001; Burns and Dietz, 1992), to new states such as Germany and Italy<sup>8</sup> as well as to established states such as Persia, Ottoman, and Russia with previously autocratic regimes. All of these countries have had very difficult and uneven political developments in connection with parliamentarism. For instance, in 1906 Russia established a parliamentary body as a result of the Revolution of the previous year. It consisted of an upper house, the State Council, and a lower house, the Duma. No law was to be passed without the consent of the Duma. However, there were almost immediate conflicts between the Duma and the tsar over concrete policies as well as power-sharing, which resulted in several Dumas being dissolved between 1906 and 1917; the tsar also imposed electoral changes favouring the government. At the time of the Russian Revolution (1917), the Duma was supplanted by the Soviet assembly. Between 1917 and 1993, the Soviet was the supreme parliamentary body, but failed to function as a democratic institution or as a counterweight to the government. Since 1993 there has again been a Duma, which has been in a position to question and challenge the executive to a greater or lesser extent.

With the formation of a unified Germany, a Reichstag was established and functioned in the period 1871–1918 but with little power.

Rather, there was substantial scepticism and disloyalty toward the parliamentary order. The Weimar Republic (1919–33) gave the Reichstag real power, but deep cleavages and intense conflicts in German politics immobilized it. Its powers were suspended for considerable periods of time prior to Hitler coming to power in 1933. Under the Nazi dictatorship, the Reichstag was disabled. However, it was maintained to be summoned from time to time to approve important government measures. Following defeat, Germany was given a new constitution and parliamentary government and, since 1949, has had a well-functioning democratic parliament.

Although consultative assemblies were used in the Persian and Ottoman empires, these were typically of a type employed by European monarchs as their immediate council of advisers. For example, the Ottoman sultan had a Chancellery of the State (or the Imperial Chancellery), the *Divan*.<sup>9</sup> This was made up of, for instance, the grand vizier, viziers (ministers) and senior officials. This circle came to be extended by a consultative assembly of religious leaders, judges, military chiefs, diplomats and other dignitaries. More encompassing assemblies were not institutionalized, that is, grounded in established rules and procedures. The sultans and shahs would take into consideration and consult on matters of policy with important agents and groups, in particular the *ulama*, the Islamic clergy (Kamali, 1998). For example, even the most authoritarian rulers, such as Abdulhamit I (1774–89) of the Ottoman empire, would refer, for instance, the proposals for diplomatic missions to Sheykh ul-Islam and other high *ulama* before deciding anything, including matters of foreign policy of the empire (Neumann, 1993). Also important were the *bazaris*, who typically were in close association with the *ulama*. They were the most important economic group in major Islamic cities; government programmes and military campaigns often depended on them. The *bazaris'* close connection and mutual interdependency with the *ulama* provided them a central role in the life of Islamic states and empires. However, typically *bazaris* had no direct political role in negotiations and consultations with the government. It was their 'natural allies', namely the *ulama*, who represented them in consultations with government.<sup>10</sup>

Important innovations in consultative bodies were introduced in both the Ottoman and Persian empires during the nineteenth

century. The Ottomans' close connections to European states and their engagements in power struggles with European powers made them especially alert to political innovations and other developments in Western countries. For example, the High Council of Just Decrees (*Majlis-i valay-yi ahkam-i aldiye*), a type of legislative assembly, was established in 1831. It was responsible for legislation, discussions and decisions on state expenditures and budget as well as tax collection. It became a model for later parliamentary development. As internal and international crises intensified in the mid-1870s, a group of state officials influenced by the 'Young Turks' and led by a former grand vizier, Midhat Pasha, called for the establishment of a constitutional regime. They succeeded in convincing the new Sultan Abdulhamid to approve in 1876 a constitution establishing an authoritative Council of State (*Shura-yi devlet*). This was expected to control state officials and military. The constitution also had provisions covering basic rights and privileges, the independence of courts and the security of judges, among other things. This was the first constitution of the Ottoman empire. The first parliament, which convened in March 1877, was not the product of popular elections. Its representation was determined by previously elected provincial administrative councils instead of through popular suffrage (Kayali, 1997).

This arrangement was a compromise between the Islamic conception of the principle of consulting (*mashverat*) and the European type of representation and legislative function. Unfortunately, the newly established parliament did not endure more than two years. The war with Russia and ultimate defeat provided Sultan Abdulhamid with an excuse to suspend the assembly in 1878. Notwithstanding the short life of the constitutional experiment of 1876–8, it was an important event in Ottoman political development. Elites and intellectuals from the urban upper middle classes as well as representatives from diverse parts of the empire came together for the first time to discuss issues ranging from the official language to freedom of press, tax collection, provincial reorganization, and 'Westernization'. Blocs not tied to religious and ethnic lines emerged. Government policy was subject to deliberation and criticism. The parliament succeeded in part in integrating Arab provinces through their representatives in the political body of the empire (32 of the 232 incumbencies belonged to Arabs [Kayali, 1997]).

In 1908 the 'Young Turks' revolution forced Sultan Abdulhamid to restore the constitution, and their proclamation for the future Ottoman state had a direct impact on the new constitutional government. This was the beginning of the process that established a Turkish republic (1923) and the emergence of limited parliamentary democracy.

In the Persian empire, Ottoman, Egyptian and European developments influenced the form of government. In particular, Ottoman models inspired the establishment of new consultative bodies in Persia. In 1856 the shah, Naser al-din shah, issued a decree to establish a consultative assembly, *maslahat khaneh*. In 1880 the shah established *Dar-al shura-ye kobra* (the Supreme Consultative Council) in which vazirs (ministers), military leaders, chiefs of provincial governments, the Persian ambassadors in London and Paris, and four representatives of the royal family participated.

These reforms were important initial efforts. However, the shah's other economic and political initiatives – as part of modernization efforts – generated political opposition and reform movements, driving institutional innovation and development. A strong civil society in Iran provided the basis for political mobilization and a challenge to the central authority (Kamali, 1998). The *ulama* along with *bazaris* and tribal leaders played a decisive role in the Revolution of 1905–9, which established a modern constitution and parliament. The latter was intended not only to limit the power of the shah but also to constitute a democratic government in which the ultimate source of power would come from the people. This innovation was, however, also a threat to traditional society in that parliament could pass new laws challenging or contradicting Islamic law, the Shari'a. Out of the disorder and struggles (1908–21) following the constitutional revolution – which the new parliament and its government were unable to resolve – emerged a new powerful dynasty, the Pahlavi shahs. (English and Russian interests in Iran also played a role, particularly in the context of a relatively weak state *vis-à-vis* foreign interests and the involvement of the military in politics.) This set the stage for a long period in which the role and influence of parliament was substantially constrained. Seventy years later, another revolutionary movement – also grounded in traditional as well as modern civil societies – brought about the downfall of the ancient monarchy of

Persia and established a republic with a democratically elected parliament and president as well as a council of religious leaders to ensure the compatibility of legislative acts of parliament with religious law. This Islamic Republic, while sharing a number of elements of mainstream European parliamentary democracy, has several features unique to Islamic conceptions and practices, for instance the key role of religious authority in the legislative process (Kamali, 1998).

What is important to bear in mind is that European conceptions of parliament, parliamentary representation and democracy diffused to the Iranian and Ottoman states and resulted in the establishment of innovative arrangements that typically were a hybrid of more indigenous forms and new European ones. For instance, in the case of consultative assemblies established in these countries during the nineteenth century, the members were not elected, but chosen by the sultan or the shah. Representatives from the *ulama*, civil servants, governmental agents and the army were selected. However, such consultative assemblies were the springboard for the development of more democratic assemblies appearing later, for instance in the context of the 1908 and 1923 'revolutions' that led to the establishment of the Turkish Republic (1923) and the (1979) revolution in Iran that led to the establishment of the Islamic Republic.

In the aftermath of the First World War, there emerged in Europe many new states (resulting in large part from the collapse of the Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires). Typically, these adopted at the outset parliamentary forms of government. Before the World War there were three republics in Europe; afterwards there were thirteen (among others, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Finland, Hungary, Poland, Turkey and Yugoslavia). However, in the face of substantial instability following the First World War – in part, economic crisis, in part the reaction to the Russian Revolution and the growing strength of labour movements – parliamentary democracy did not fare well: country after country were transformed into authoritarian regimes by the 1930s: Italy, Poland, Germany, Spain, Hungary, Austria, among others. In the 1940s a number of democratic countries were occupied, and Nazi dictatorship imposed, as in Belgium, Denmark, France, the Netherlands and Norway.

After the Second World War, parliamentary democracy was substantially revived in

Europe and has flourished to a large extent since then, even in former authoritarian or autocratic countries: Austria, Germany, Spain (the Franco regime ended in 1975 and a new parliamentary democracy was established in 1978), Portugal (dictatorship ended in 1974), Greece (after a relapse of military dictatorship, 1967–74) and the countries of Eastern Europe (1989–90) after communist dictatorship. But, in general, the movement towards parliamentary democracy has been far from smooth or even; it has been punctuated by civil wars, internal conquests and external impositions (Meny, 1993: 374–5). It continues to face challenges and threats (see later discussion). None the less, it has offered an ideal to which many peoples struggling with and emerging from dictatorships have turned.

### ***Explaining the Emergence and Institutional Power of Parliaments***

Modern parliaments are elected assemblies with the role of representing citizens, groups, regions and classes of society, deliberating on laws and policies, monitoring the actions of the executive, and approving or vetoing laws and regulations (that is, the legislative function in the sense of scrutinizing the details of laws and authorizing their passage). The general principle of parliamentary government is that the executive shall not exercise power arbitrarily but should be subject to the parliament representing 'the sovereign people'.

The emergence and development of parliaments as public assemblies can be explained to a large extent by the interplay between three factors: functionality or usefulness of such assemblies to rulers and influential groups in society; power conditions; and cultural-institutional factors. The Prince establishes and utilizes an assembly to obtain information, advice and judgement, legitimacy, resource mobilization, and so on. But this social technology is a double-edged sword: the assembly, once called into existence, may take on a life of its own, developing a collective consciousness and agency, becoming a countervailing power *vis-à-vis* the Prince. In a parallel fashion, a movement or group in opposition to the Prince may create or activate an assembly to represent the movement or group *vis-à-vis* the Prince. In this process, the assembly may gain recognition and power *vis-à-vis* the Prince. It also becomes an important collective symbol and

contributor to the development of the culture of law and due process.

The three key factors that explain the emergence and institutionalization of powerful parliaments are briefly spelled out below.

**Functionality** Assemblies are universal and perform (and have performed historically) a number of different functions in relation to public or collective decision-making. Here we focus on representative assemblies such as parliaments. These assemblies provide a context – a social technology – for producing collective knowledge, making or legitimizing public decisions, and enabling collective reflectivity (Burns and Engdahl, 1998; Burns and Ueberhorst, 1988).<sup>11</sup> Decision-making may refer to the election of political leadership, for instance, a king or president, or passing legislation, approving a tax or budget, or addressing a threat to the collectivity such as invasion or other dangerous situation. In general, in these processes major conflicts may be addressed and possibly resolved, solidarity increased, and the peoples or parts of a realm or country ‘integrated’.

Whether the value of an assembly is articulated by the central authority and/or by the assembly itself or a supporting movement, the point is that assemblies are institutional constructions that human agents and societies utilize for certain purposes such as collective reflectivity on critical problems and issues, mobilization of collective resources and collective decision-making and knowledge production. For instance, in the latter case it is a means of assembling or aggregating dispersed or diverse information; in any community there is a particular need to assemble and aggregate information in considering policy measures or laws and their likely consequences, including unintended consequences.

**The power factor** Many historically important assemblies have been created and reconstructed by powerful rulers, oligarchs and aristocrats. Typically, they considered such arrangements useful for certain of their purposes. But often, the assembly became a power of its own as it brought together knowledgeable and, in some cases, powerful agents of the realm. The actual role and influence of the assembly depended to a considerable degree on the distribution of power – and the concrete power processes – between rulers and those engaged or represented in the

assembly.<sup>12</sup> Such factors, together with functionality, go a long way toward explaining the development of parliamentary influence.

If the Prince, as a powerful agent, finds it useful or essential to establish and utilize an assembly – and there is no countervailing force to this – it is likely to happen, as we have seen in our brief sketch of several parliamentary bodies. Such a development will also happen if important agents or groups in society – on which the government is dependent (or which the government cannot or will not eliminate or replace) – mobilize and assert themselves as a public assembly, that is, a collective agent, designed to discuss and negotiate with the executive. Thus, a group or movement claiming to represent important concerns or interests may assemble and counterpoise itself to the Prince, calling for discussions and negotiations (as did Solidarity in Poland or Charter 77 – leading to Civic Forum – in Czechoslovakia in their respective challenges to communist regimes).

Of course, the power conditions may be such that a prince, political leadership or party is in a position to manipulate parliament to such a degree that it ceases to be an autonomous agent, or simply to abolish it (recall the cases of tsarist Russian, Ottoman sultans and Persian shahs, the Cromwell ‘Protectorate’ or the dictatorships of Mussolini and Hitler). Autocratic regimes typically have sufficient power to ignore major groups in the society, because they own or control independent sources of material and human resources (and/or they have a monopoly on force and the costs of utilizing it are low). In general, power resources are distributed or organized in such ways that the prince is capable of mobilizing vast economic, political or other resources without the consent of civil society agents and groups. His dependency is minimal.

The emergence of powerful assemblies is a function of (1) the autonomy of key groups in civil society from the prince and (2) the sustained dependence of the Prince on them for human or material resources as well as legitimation – whether religious, political or legal (Kamali, 1998, 2001). A central authority may establish or call up an assembly for purposes of seeking advice, support or approval for a decision, or assistance in implementing or assessing a policy or programme. For instance, the prince is unable to finance his foreign affairs, military initiatives or public works based on the proceeds of his own

estates and tax revenues, and he must obtain such resources through the goodwill and agency of others. Or, he must rely on a group or class to administer the realm or to lead armed forces. The assembly *provides access to resources* controlled by agents represented in or by the assembly who have sufficient autonomy and power that they can make, or refuse to make, available the resources to the prince (or make any coercive action on the part of the Prince highly costly). Thus, they may agree (or refuse to agree) to pay taxes or provide men and equipment for purposes of public projects or war. The negotiations may concern not only specific policies but ultimately the role and power of the assembly in relation to the Prince.

Such groups or agents on which the Prince depends may then set constraints on him, and influence his policies and laws as the English Parliament was able to do increasingly between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries; or as the *ulama* and the *bazaris* have done historically in Iran, and particularly in the past hundred years (Kamali, 1998). These dependencies transform the relationship from one of information exchange to a material condition, one where the central power is countervailed by other powers. There is a shift from 'advising' to 'negotiating' and, under some conditions, to 'approving' and even 'legislating'. This explains why the fiscal and military demands connected with foreign policy and wars have had an impact on internal power relations – parliaments were often strengthened by the requirement of public consent for increasing levels of tax revenue or the mobilization of soldiers.

In sum, such power conditions have been advantageous to the establishment and empowerment of an influential general public assembly such as parliament, but its durability depends also on an effective government. The Prince and his centrally controlled bureaucracy might be strong enough to provide coherence and effective administration as well as military defence (in contrast to the situation of the Polish monarch), but not so strong as to wield absolute power. The case of medieval England illustrates this (Moore, 1966; Tumin, 1982). Societal groups and classes in society were independent and powerful enough to exercise a number of important rights, regardless of the desires or manoeuvres of the central authority. To a greater or lesser extent there was an *autonomous civil society* whose agents the monarch sought counsel

from and depended on; they were therefore in a position to negotiate with and influence its authority. Coalitions were formed between and among groups and classes as well as with the central authority in such ways as to maintain a certain balance of power. Conflicts occurred without eliminating groups and with alternating victories and defeats. Kamali (1997, 1998) has argued similarly that the agency of an autonomous civil society explains the Iranian socio-political revolutions of 1905 (1905–9) and 1977 (1977–9) and the evolution of parliamentary democracy in Iran. The revolutions were instances of civil society actors mobilizing and asserting themselves in relation to the Prince and laying some of the foundations of parliamentary democracy.

The evolution of parliaments in Europe, in particular, must be seen in the context of the competition among states. European kings – some more than others – needed intelligence about the situation of the realm, indications of the impact of their policies (with implications for agricultural production, commerce, strategic conditions, and so on), and legitimation for their undertakings. They could not rely only on their administrators and police for such purposes. They required parliaments to support and legitimate the vast mobilization of money and armies to be used in international competition. Competition was a driving factor in the evolution not only of military force, administration, jurisprudence and economy, but also of European parliaments, their relationship to the executive and their role in modern state-building and nation formation.<sup>13</sup>

**Cultural-institutional factors: collective symbols, the law and institutional procedures** The notion that the parliament represents the whole people or nation – and that such a people or nation is believed really to exist – is, of course, a socio-political construction. A sense of shared national or other identity, which an assembly or part of an assembly represents, is a key factor in the establishment of the unique authority and legitimacy of parliament. Such identification arises in some cases in the context of military, political or economic competition or conflict in regional or international arenas. For example, in England, Denmark and Sweden, the aristocracies as well as other major groups developed a commitment to national unity and survival (Burns and Flam, 1987; Tumin, 1982 – this was also the basis of the Athenian

democratic achievement [Eder, 1997]). These groups did not cease to struggle for power and privilege, but they did so within established 'rules and procedures of the political game'. Widespread national identification, and the commitment it engenders, depends, at least in part, on the institutionalization not only of principles of solidarity and justice within the collectivity, but also of concrete procedures and rules of the game for resolving conflicts, making collective decisions and distributing resources. Parliament became an instrument as well as symbol for this. On this basis it could claim that it represents 'the nation' and contributes to its integration.

The importance of a culture of laws and due process – 'the rule of law' – cannot be overstressed. Modern democracy – and, in particular, democratic organizations such as parliament – emerged in contexts differing radically from those of antiquity. Still, one commonality between ancient Greek democracy and those of modernity has been the significance of law and legal or formalized procedures (this relates to the idea of a necessary and strong connection between law and liberty [Eder, 1997]). Weber referred to the 'spirit of the jurist', which spread over all of Europe. Currently it guides the development of the European Union. Since the French Revolution, modern legalism and modern democracy developed together. For all of continental Europe (and to some extent England), a major factor in the evolution of government was the university-trained jurists in secular law. Everywhere the revolution of political management in the direction of the evolving rational state was borne by trained jurists (Weber, 1991: 93). Lawyers, as an independent profession and status group with secular education and societal roles, flowered in Europe. This flowering fed upon and contributed to the development of 'procedural rationality', and it was connected with the use of rhetoric and argument in consultation, negotiation and public decision-making.

Whenever the Prince must seek support on a more or less *regular basis* from, or is materially or otherwise dependent on, important societal groups which are assembled, or assemble themselves, then the assembly becomes an identifiable – to a greater or lesser extent autonomous – agent counterpoised to the sovereign. Thus, there is a qualitative shift when an assembly of people takes on a name and relatively well-defined rules concerning its functions and operations, the number of

representatives, how it is to be composed, when and where it is to meet, the rules of procedures, and so on. It may compete with the prince and come to define itself and to be perceived as – the *natural representative of society or of the (significant) people of the realm*. The institutionalization of its role in relation to the sovereign and to civil society may take place gradually, as in the evolution of the English Parliament, or more radically, as in constituting parliaments following the revolutions in France (1789), Iran (1905, 1979), the Ottoman state (1908) and Eastern European countries (1989–90). Eventually, these as well as other assemblies (or movements backing such assemblies) succeeded in negotiating the ground rules of their relationship, their respective roles and their rights and obligations, which came to be more and more recognized and institutionalized, even in the eyes of the executive (and future executives) as well as significant groups of society who turned to it to represent and to advance their interests or concerns *vis-à-vis* the Prince.

If common ground rules are not spelled out or agreed upon, there is persistent uncertainty about the relationship and the distribution of powers, rights and obligations. This situation makes for high transaction costs, risks of frequent conflicts and substantial unpredictability and instability. There are strong selective pressures toward institutionalizing the relationship and the role of the representative assembly in the political system, since this is an effective way to regulate conflict and to increase predictability and social order. As suggested earlier, rules and operating procedures are established to enable or facilitate its functioning and decision-making. Other rules specify how representation is to be organized, how representatives are to be selected, and how the internal social order is to be organized.

One of the historically important contributions to the development of parliamentary democracy was the sustained discovery and elaboration of appropriate or fitting *institutional means* to constitute deliberative, legislative assemblies for large complex societies; that is, to solve such problems as those of *scale* and *representativity*. The size of the community (village, clan, city, region, country, empire) for which an assembly functions is a critical factor since it determines the need for a system of representation. The Greek democratic assemblies differ entirely from modern democratic assemblies (ignoring that Greek democracy accepted slavery and the exclusion

of women). When the *demos* gathered, it was more like a large 'town meeting' in which thousands of citizens participated, could express their opinion and vote. Modern democratic assemblies for large-scale societies are based on formalized principles of representation, by which the power of citizens or communities is delegated to their representatives rather than being exercised through direct participation. Historically, the composition of any assembly reflected the larger social structure – or the conception of social structure – in the polity. For instance, in general, historical parliaments were constituted on the basis of divisions into different estates or classes, status groups or other collectivities; thus, medieval assemblies consisted of representatives of the major estates or status groups. In Islamic societies with tribal peoples, representation in state councils included tribal representation. Modern parliaments derive their authority and legitimacy from their claim that they represent territorial constituencies (not necessarily fixed groups or classes) and the people or society as a whole.<sup>14</sup>

The complex interplay between functionality, power and cultural-institutional factors in the evolution of parliamentary assemblies cannot be elaborated in the limited space of this chapter. One can say in brief the following:

1. Power may trump functionality. A powerful prince may block or undermine the functioning of parliament to the detriment of effective policy-making and regulation.
2. But functionality over the long run is crucial to the maintenance and effectiveness of power. The power of the Prince depends on institutional arrangements such as public assemblies that contribute to collective reflectivity and problem-solving and to the production of collective knowledge and legitimation.
3. Powerful agents may select and reinforce emerging forms that – although not properly legitimate – prove functional for new types of policy issues and policy contexts. Thus, contemporary economic interests and agents of civil society are undermining or marginalizing contemporary parliamentary democracy in supporting and elaborating 'organic' forms of governance.
4. Non-democratic symbolic expressions of the community or nation may trump parliament, as for instance when the latter is judged by many as less 'representative'

of the collective than a monarch or a charismatic dictator, because of parliament's divisiveness or ineffectiveness, or the character of some of its membership. Thus, the dictator manages to combine coercive and symbolic powers.

5. The potentiality of a contemporary parliament to function effectively as a representative body and collective symbol of a nation is reduced as *non-territorial* forms of representation increase in importance and power – as we have suggested with respect to the emerging organic forms of governance.

#### CONTEMPORARY DEVELOPMENTS

In the late twentieth century, after a history with many setbacks and failures, parliamentary democracy appeared to have triumphed. Indeed, democracy has come to be identified primarily with parliamentary democracy – of course, it also encompasses additional concepts such as the rule of law, civil rights and general enfranchisement.

There are many different ways of institutionalizing the principles of 'government of the people, by the people, and for the people' (Meny, 1993): the number of chambers in parliament (bicameral or unicameral); who is entitled to run as a representative; who is entitled to vote; whether voting is obligatory or optional; how votes are converted into a number of elected representatives; rules which affect the number of political parties or independent representatives; the frequency of elections; the division of functions and relationship between parliament and the government; among other things. The general organizing principles and formal characteristics are copied as new nations are formed, or as tyranny is overthrown and replaced with one or another form of parliamentary democracy. The evolution of parliament can be related not only to the general process of modern state-building but also to nation formation, since national parliaments became a major factor in the development of collective consciousness and the articulation of the collective identity of a 'nation'.

#### Further Crooked Developments

The heady years from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s witnessed the vigorous

advancement of parliamentary democracy: Greece (1974), Portugal (1974), Spain (1978), Argentina (1985), Brazil (1985), Eastern Europe (1989) and South Africa (1992), among others. But the 'reverse waves' in the 1990s should not have been surprising – the emergence of autocratic regimes in a number of countries (for instance, Peru, Ecuador, Serbia, Croatia, Slovakia, Ukraine, Yugoslavia, and so on) have been followed most recently by some democratic advancement in several of these countries. The advances and reverses can be understood or interpreted as indications of conflicting forces. Parliamentary democracy means different things. An abstract, decontextualized form (such as a unitary state with majority rule) may not be realizable or stable in a highly heterogeneous social environment, or one in which there is a dominant, authoritarian group without commitment to democratic values and principles. The emergence of the new democracies in some cases has been confronted with the problems of deep ethnic or other social divisions and conflicts, inexperience in 'managing' parliamentary democracy in an effective way, and lack of commitment to the rule of law and procedural rationality. In general, it is essential to keep in mind the uneven and crooked development of parliamentary systems historically, as outlined in this chapter. Thus, we might better understand the problems of establishing and maintaining parliamentary democracy across the globe.

Paradoxically, even in Europe and North America, with a substantial history of parliamentary democracy, the conventional model increasingly faces major challenges and institutional difficulties at the beginning of the twenty-first Century (Burns, 1999; Burns et al., 2000; Held, 1995). In particular, the position of parliament in contemporary societies has become increasingly marginalized in a world with globalization, the appearance of many new, diverse policy-making areas, radical specialization and an explosion of new vigorous political agents, namely NGOs. New forms of governance and regulation, referred to as *organic governance* (Burns, 1999; Burns et al., 2000), have emerged in which the role or status for parliaments is ambiguous or increasingly peripheral. Such governance has developed parallel to and in interaction with – at times in co-operation with, at times in competition with – parliamentary government. On the sectoral level, one finds various stable policy networks or communities, 'sub-governments'

and 'private governments' involving interest groups (for instance, single-issue NGOs) engaged in particular policy issues and problems (Burns, 1999). For instance, international and national financial networks and groups wield substantial power, fully capable of shaping economic policy-making of governments: a Ministry of Finance, the OECD and IMF, along with international and national financial interests, may support restrictive monetary and fiscal policies (or react negatively to deviation from such policies) frequently in opposition to parliamentary will as well as major constituencies such as labour unions. Or environmental and animal rights interest organizations engage and exercise influence successfully in a variety of policy sectors without engaging in electoral politics: organizations such as Greenpeace as well as many other environmental organizations, including local ones, ignore electoral politics and parliamentary representatives to a large extent. A variety of public interest organizations concern themselves with the policies, production and quality of public services. This type of 'organized citizenry' is widespread and particularly visible in areas of environment, gender, health care, treatment of animals, many high-tech developments and ethically defined issues such as abortion, the rights of minorities and immigrants, and so on.

A common denominator in the contemporary development of non-parliamentary systems of governance is the introduction and engagement of private and semi-private actors in 'public' policy-making, that is, the 'reconquest of political authority by societal actors', agents grounded in or emerging from civil society. Today, the national democracy of individual citizens and their parliamentary representatives tends to be bypassed and surpassed by a *de facto* direct democracy of organized interests, citizen groups and lobbyists that engage themselves *directly* in policy issues that particularly concern them. *Direct participation* in problem-solving and rule-making has never been so widespread and so far-reaching as today. This system of 'governance' is largely one of organizations, by organizations and for organizations – not so much that of autonomous, individual citizens. The development of a complex of such governance processes entails transformations of key components of political order: sovereignty, representation, responsibility and accountability, in the very character of laws and regulation (Burns, 1999; Burns et al., 2000). Major

rule- and policy-making activities are substantially displaced from the arenas of parliamentary government to other settings: global, regional and local levels as well as those in numerous specialized public issue and policy sectors of modern society. The emerging political order is multi-polar. In such a characterization, one can distinguish between government based on parliamentary democracy, on the one hand, and governance based on a complex of diverse regulative, representational and authority processes, on the other hand (Burns, 1999, Burns et al., 2000; Hirst and Thompson, 1995).

A territorial, parliamentary system with centralized, formalized law-making is, under contemporary conditions, *organizationally, technically and resource-wise inferior* to organic forms of governance and is being displaced or replaced in policy area after policy area through selection on the part of powerful actors and interests (Burns and Dietz, 1992). The superiority of the new forms is explained on the basis of the factors identified earlier to explain the emergence and development of powerful parliaments in many modern states:

**Relative non-functionality** Parliament (and its government) lacks flexibility and effectiveness in mobilizing and articulating specialized forms of collective knowledge, in integrating policy-making and implementation and assessment, and in representing new powerful agents such as special economic interests as well as public-interest NGOs who insist on representing themselves in policy-making. The new forms of governance enable the bringing together of many of the key actors most directly interested and influential with respect to a given area or issue. They also allow for the direct mobilization and participation of a variety of specialized experts (scientific, technical, legal, managerial) as well as some of those most affected by and engaged in the issue. Both of these groups are essential to the processes of identifying sectoral problems, producing essential knowledge and formulating policies and laws to solve the problems. The organic forms are more flexible than the formalized modes in that the latter are constrained by having to take into account and satisfy legally defined concepts such as 'representation', 'due process', 'authority', 'legitimacy', 'law', 'compliance', 'accountability'. Also, the organic forms are much less subject to territorial or regional constraints than is parliament or to a

great extent its government. 'Policies' and 'laws' agreed to in the organic policy networks and sub-governments are interpreted and implemented in large part through these same arrangements. This increases the likelihood of 'forward integration', linking policy-making effectively to implementation, whereas in the usual parliamentary/administrative arrangement, law and policy-making are separated from implementation and assessment.

**Loss of relative power** Parliament can no longer uniquely represent many of the powerful interests and groups of society, in part because economic, civil society and other interests insist on representing themselves, engaging directly in relevant policy areas, and selecting and constituting many of the major forums for discussing and deliberating on policy – substantially outside of parliamentary as well as purely government arenas. Some of these agents – private, semi-private and public – command substantial resources far beyond most citizens, political parties and parliaments. The arenas where they gather becomes attractive to other agents, powerful as well as weak ones, because it is 'where the action takes place' relevant to the issue or policy question at stake. Some members of parliament join or create NGOs in order to gain a say or influence over actual policy-making.

**Competing 'democratic' forms and legitimacy** The organic forms also realize and derive legitimacy from the general cultural notions of democracy (as distinct from the legal parliamentary forms), namely the right to form groups or organizations in order to advance or protect interests, the right to be informed or to know and the right to voice an opinion and to influence policies or laws that affect one's interests or values. But there are tensions and dilemmas. Parliament remains a major basis for legitimizing political authority and regulation in most modern societies and cannot be simply ignored (Burns et al., 2000).

## CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has stressed the causal heterogeneity in the development of parliaments as particular types of representative assemblies. Some emerged through a process of struggle and reform between a state (or its elite) and parts of civil society. In other cases, assemblies

were introduced by the political elite, in many cases simply adopting forms already established elsewhere. In a few cases, a parliamentary order was imposed from the outside, in some cases by victors in war, in many cases by a colonial power. Many non-Western countries have been influenced by, or forced to follow, Western models of democracy.

Our theoretical approach is, in general, consistent with the notion of multiple modernities (Featherstone et al., 1995; Therborn and Wallenius, 1999, among others), in particular diverse paths to, among other things, representative assemblies and parliamentary democracy. It entails rejecting the conception of the 'West versus the rest' and, instead, stressing the diversity of 'modern development' and the parallels of (as well as differences between) Western and non-Western developments. Assemblies, of which parliaments are a special case, are universal and antedate modernity. They are not simply a creation of Europe. Modern parliaments are a special type of assembly and a source of societal power – they represent a major institutional innovation and a key part of modern state-building. Already today, however, one can discern the emergence of new formations of governance, conceptions of representation and patterns of sovereignty not only in Europe but also in other parts of the world.

#### NOTES

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1. Elders and councils of elders (exclusively male groups) would meet to resolve disputes, redress wrongs and take decisions on ways to deal with disasters such as disease, drought, invasion of locusts or competition with or threat of outside groups (Mair, 1962). In many societies, elders were believed to have special knowledge not only about rituals but also about accumulated wisdom. Also, they were often seen as being in close contact with ancestor spirits, whom they could be expected to join in the not distant future.

2. Examples of the councils of the Church are those of Nicaea (325) and Constantinople I (381). The purpose of early ones was to determine whether specific theological innovations were orthodox or heretical. Two of them, the second Council of Lyons (1274) and the Council of Ferrara–Florence (1438–45), were

concerned with attempts at reconciliation between Eastern and Western Christianity (both of which failed).

3. *Shoura* (council) and *mashverat* (the principle of consultation with others) were both established in Islam, in part based on the Qur'an and the Sunnat (the Deed of the Prophet). Forms of *shoura* and *mashverat* also appear in the Ottoman and Persian empires and relate to the emergence of modern parliaments (see later). The traditional assemblies during the Arab empire were based on *shoura*. The councillors were representatives of different 'tribes' and important families who had converted to Islam providing the military power of the empire. The elders of different 'tribes' were accustomed to gathering to discuss matters of government and to choose a leader. Following the break-up of the Ottoman empire, the establishment of many Arab countries was achieved through tribal co-operation making use of collective *shoura*.

4. Max Weber (1991) stressed the importance of expertise in the political struggles relating to centralization of political power.

5. Election of the doges in Venice involved earlier the participation of the general citizenry. But membership in the general council became restricted (1297) to an oligarchy of only a few patrician merchant families. The iron grip of oligarchy was tightened with the establishment of the Council of Ten (1310) to punish crimes against the state, using a formidable secret police and eliminating one democratic practice after another. The Republic of Florence had an elected assembly but the Medici family ruled from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century, maintaining, however, the appearance of republican forms.

6. The domination of Parliament by the Tudors (1485–1603) corresponded to the consolidation of monarchical power in France and Spain, but the English Reformation reinforced the powers of Parliament. The domination of the Commons, the lower house of Parliament, by Protestants, the gentry and merchant classes provided a basis for the decisive parliamentary challenge to the monarchy in the seventeenth century.

7. A key institutionalized rule that expressed not only the power of the Polish parliament over the crown but also the power of each member among equals was the *liberum veto*, which allowed any representative to dissolve the Sejm and even to annul previous decisions and legislative acts! This power, used recklessly during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was exploited by Poland's powerful neighbours.

8. In the development of Italian parliamentary democracy, there were substantial reversals similar to developments in a number of other countries in Europe as well as in the Iranian and Ottoman states. For instance, during the period of fascist dictatorship (1922–43), Mussolini manipulated elections, election lists and parliament itself.

9. Divan-i Hümayun, the Ottoman imperial council or, more generally, government bureau. Also spelled *diwan*, or *dewan*, Arabic *diwanin*.

10. The roles of the *ulama* among the people gave them a traditional position of leadership in Muslim civil societies. As a result, *ulama* support was crucial for the rulers in many Muslim countries to gain double legitimacy: namely they could gain both popular and religious legitimacy. The legitimacy was reproduced weekly through the high *ulama*'s declaration of their support for the ruler in their *khutbas* (the traditional socio-political preachings at Friday prayers).

11. Assemblies have historically played a key role in addressing ambiguities, undefined situations or new situations or threats.

12. Also, international factors play a role in selectively reinforcing or negating a significant parliamentary role. Victors in war and colonial powers established forms of parliamentary democracy, as pointed out in our examples. And powerful international actors have severely constrained or destroyed the functioning of parliamentary democracy in their spheres of influence, as the Nazi dictatorship and later Soviet dictatorship did in a number of European democracies.

13. Weber (1951) emphasized the importance of 'competitive processes' in social change under conditions where there is no clear-cut domination or simple power structure. Thus, Europe as a system of interconnected states in competition with one another operated in his view to drive the transformative process of rationalization (Burns, 2001; Weber, 1951: 61).

14. Thus, although there are a number of historical connections between medieval assemblies and modern parliaments, their character, concept of representation and authority are fundamentally different. In the evolution of modern parliamentary democracy, among other developments, there is a shift from selection of representatives by the prince to selection or nomination based on independent agents, political parties and citizen groups. This indicates shifting conditions of power and legitimacy.

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## *Social Movements and Democratization*

KLAUS EDER

The process of democratization is linked to protest within a highly particular historical development, which is the rise of the nation-state. It is part of the overall process of modernization, which is characterized by capitalist development, the destruction of the agrarian world through urbanization and proletarianization, and the formation of a people through alphabetization and schooling.<sup>1</sup> The ambivalence of this process, the growth of social inequality and the rise of egalitarian ideologies, the increasing rationalization of life and the rise of ideas of self-determination and autonomy generate a particular and contradictory opportunity structure for collective action and collective mobilization since the inception of the modernization process.

This opportunity structure has given rise to social movements with diverging aims. First of all there are popular reactions which defend a traditional world and a traditional concept of justice. These are accompanied by the rise of the labour movement, which started off from different premises: the fight against exploitation in the name of a notion of equality (the strongest version of it being the socialist concept of capitalist exploitation). This is finally accompanied by bourgeois movements, their struggles of emancipation from authoritarian rule as well as their struggle against the increasing

rationality of modern life. Modernization has thus produced a series of collective action for and against it.

Democratization is a by-product which emerged as a project of the bourgeois classes, was taken over by popular movements, and was halted for a while in the anti-democratic mass mobilizations of European fascism. Mobilization and democratization were bound together in an ambivalent relationship. The democratic process was fostered by some and attacked by other social movements. This cleavage structure shaped the evolution of the democratic nation-state in Europe until the late twentieth century.

Combined with the logic of capitalist accumulation, feelings against capitalism could be exploited to work against democracy, thus creating the mix that marks the end of the old social movements. The modernization of democratic forms of government in the postwar period is due to a second wave of social movements, the 'new social movements'. Their possible outcome is still debated – it is part of the discourse itself which has fuelled this new type of collective mobilization. This process has not yet become history. It can be subjected to analysis only in the methodological perspective of a discourse analysis – the reconstruction of the debates in which history is made or happens.

## DEFINING SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

### *What are Social Movements?*

Definitional work is futile as long as the embeddedness of the phenomena of collective action is not taken into account.<sup>2</sup> Social movements are collective actions embedded in time and space. Collective action turns into a social movement when it refers to a social space of contention filled with partners and adversaries, with friends and foes (Tilly, 2000), and when it situates itself in a historical time, in a collective memory of a people.

A minimal condition of a social movement is a network structure that exists over a certain period of time in a defined social space. However, not every collective action in time and space becomes a social movement. A social movement requires a collective project which transcends the individual interests of those involved. It has to become a historical project, as Alain Touraine (1977, 1981) has put it. To know whether a collective action is (or becomes) a social movement can be inferred *a posteriori* – from the distant position of the historical observer. To know beforehand is prophetic discourse. To know in the course of action is what social scientists try to get at.<sup>3</sup> A position between historical distance and scientific involvement is the methodologically impure, but best, practice of social movement research.<sup>4</sup>

### *Times and Spaces of Contentious Action*

Collective action is the medium through which claims are formulated and addressed at institutions or other actors. To differentiate such forms, we have to specify action in time and space and treat them as historical events which emerge in specific spaces at a certain moment in time.

A first strategy is to distinguish collective action in terms of the type of society from which social movements emerge. They sometimes emerge, as social anthropological research shows, in small segmentary societies when these societies are confronted with social change. Pierre Clastres (1970) described such movements which emerged when the formation of institutionalized political power was becoming a real threat for the system of reciprocal exchanges through which

these societies reproduced their social order. He saw them as movements against the state. What these movements have in common is to be 'reactive', aiming at an ideal which is associated with the given 'natural' order. Another important type of collective action in the context of segmentary social forms within hierarchically organized societies is peasant unrest, often combined with heterodox rebellions. They also belong to the class of reactive collective action. The good life is found by going back to the past (such as traditional justice) or to the roots (such as the Bible).

Early modern collective action is, as Charles Tilly (1978) has argued, reactive collective action. It is explained as a reaction of communal groups against centralizing authorities, which are perceived by those mobilized as institutions that destroy their communal bonds, such as peasant villages, towns or religious groups.<sup>5</sup> What they share is a life-world that they defend against a centralizing authority, the emerging national state of early modern Europe.<sup>6</sup>

Moving into nineteenth-century Europe, this pattern of collective action changes. The national state, which has broken the power of local authorities, has taken over from the old traditional regime the function of social welfare. The national state becomes proactive, to which collective action responds in terms of proactive claims. This is the mechanism identified by Tilly (1978, 1984, 1986) as fostering the emergence of proactive social movements. In the middle of the eighteenth century the transition from reactive riots to proactive social movements takes place. Tilly goes even so far as to claim that the term 'social movements' should only be applied to those types of collective action which have produced 'proactive' claims.

A class of collective mobilization which is not accounted for in Tilly's analytical model is universalistic religious movements in traditional empires (Eisenstadt, 1966, 1984). These forms of collective action emerged in societies with centralized political power and they developed projects that were geared no longer to a past but to salvation, a state in the future. They were supported by intellectuals who rationalized the idea of salvation in a future life. This type of collective action comes close to what Tilly defines as a social movement: to be a proactive form of collective action. Such movements of salvation even precede the proactive movements tied to the emergence of the modern nation-state.<sup>7</sup>

Such proactive collective action is also found in the postcolonial situation. Religious movements in traditional societies are a mechanism by which to adapt to the postcolonial situation (Lanternari, 1960, 1976). Maria Isaura de Queiroz (1968) generalizes this point by pointing out the function of messianic movements as giving meaning to the experience of injustice equally in colonial ('primitive') and in colonializing ('civilized') societies.

Although it is debatable whether the end of the twentieth century marks the beginning of a movement society (Touraine, 1992), modern societies certainly create a new link between social movements and the process of democratization. Movements are substituted by economically defined classes as the focus of power in the modern nation-state, thus reshaping the state-society relationship.

### *Movement Outcomes*

Movements outcomes vary in time and space. The first outcome is that they reproduce themselves; they create groups with collective identities which survive the instability of collective action. Such group definitions can refer to status groups, classes, age groups, gender or ethnic categories. They can be decoupled from such references and reduced to 'issue networks'. Then we have group identities created around issues (such as the environment or racism) rather than categories of people.

Movements, furthermore, create communicative spaces among those mobilized. They force those against whom they mobilize to enter into a communicative relationship with social actors beyond the confines of institutions.<sup>8</sup> In this sense social movements become the main carrier of the formation of public spheres which provide the arena of democratic will formation (Habermas, 1989 [1962], 1992).<sup>9</sup> Separating people from their traditional bonds in a community and their embeddedness in paternalistic networks is only part of the story. Social movements depend upon disembedded people whom they bind together through collective action. The 'construction' of 'associational ties' (as distinct from 'communal ties'<sup>10</sup>) is the distinctive characteristic of social movements. Acting together is no longer contingent upon communal bonds but on bonds created through unbounded communication between people. Collective action in social movements is a

special and consequential form of communication which has fostered the formation and amplification of a public sphere. They have become the core of what was to become the space of democratic will formation of the people within the nation-state.<sup>11</sup>

## **THE OLD SOCIAL MOVEMENTS**

### *The Emergence of Old Social Movements*

Old social movements are defined by their historical position in the modernization process. This context is defined in a double way: being part of a first wave of modernization (as many European cases are) and being part of a first stage of modernization when issues centre on questions of national identity and social inequality. Old social movements, then, are movements which fight against being subject to traditional domination and defend a form of domination based on the will (and consent) of the people, and fight against social inequality and defend the idea of equality of all members of a society. These new principles also mobilize new forms of resistance based on a new claim for a democratic form of collective will formation and a claim for social justice in a society of equals. Thus the ambit of the old social movements is defined by the emergence of two types of movements (which will also be mixed in time and space): those fighting against authoritarian rule and those fighting against injustice.

Wuthnow (1990) has given a sociological account of the social structures and cultural forms within which these movements emerged. He reconstructed them as communities of discourse which emerged subsequently in the Reformation, the Enlightenment and under socialism. This perspective comes close to the classic Habermasian interpretation of rational debate emerging out of public debate, which constitutes a social context successfully demarcating a boundary to the realm of political domination. Already Alexis de Tocqueville argued that a plurality of associations is the condition for democratic life, these approaches point to the 'emancipatory' function of social movements emerging in Europe since the seventeenth century. These 'old' social movements which appear often as a mere by-product of the structural changes provoked by the Reformation and the Enlightenment are more

than that: there is a systematic link between associational structures and the capacity for collective action against traditional authority.

Old social movements in terms of full-blown collective mobilization began in Europe in the eighteenth century and continued into the nineteenth century, the 'rebellious century' (Tilly et al., 1975) in which popular unrest all over the continent increased. What changes in 1848, the year chosen by Tilly as a convenient time marker, are the claims and the action repertoire. Claims become proactive; new rights are claimed, rather than old rights defended. The action repertoire is no longer the tax rebellion or the food riot; it is substituted by rationally calculated and organized collective action such as strikes, the electoral rally and the demonstration (Tilly, 1984: 309). Popular protest against the destruction of real and imagined traditional forms of life, which formerly had spread over the European continent and Britain in the course of the formation of centralized forms of political power in Europe,<sup>12</sup> was replaced by a form of protest which contemporaries named 'the social movement'. This social movement was identified with the dominant new social group emerging in the nineteenth century: the industrial working class. Thus the social movement and the labour movement became synonymous in Europe.

A classic interpretation of this transformation is the reconstruction of 'the making of the working class' (Thompson, 1968).<sup>13</sup> Contrary to Marxist theorizing about working-class formation, Thompson describes the emergence of solidarities out of the decline of the traditional moral economy, which forces workers to redefine what they have in common. This making of a collective identity is determined by a reinterpretation of broken social relationships rather than a mystical translation of a structural relationship experienced in the workplace as the power of capital. Working-class movements emerge where such new bonds can be developed, not where the capitalist relations of production are the most repressive.<sup>14</sup>

Popular non-working-class cultures of resistance, however, continue to be important. They are mainly tied to the agrarian classes, which exert an important indirect effect on the formation of centralized power in the emerging nation-state. Barrington Moore (1966) has argued that the outcome of the conflict between peasant and lord shaped the

role of the landed classes in the process of democratization. The highly debated result of this study (Skocpol, 1973) is that the stronger such landed classes emerge from this relationship and the weaker the mobilization of agrarian classes, the more probable the road to fascism becomes. The specifically modern transformation of popular unrest has taken place in nationalist movements. Absorbing elements of working-class movements as well as middle-class anti-modernist movements, they have become the carriers of national unification projects and the affirmative defenders of the nation-state.

The ambivalence of collective action in the workers' movement has been further analysed by Barrington Moore (1978) in his investigation of why workers sometimes obey and sometimes revolt. This perspective reinstates the role of a sense of injustice as a major variable for explaining protest. Ideal-typically, the reaction to social injustice can vary from moral anger and moral protest to accepting suffering and oppression as morally justified (what Moore calls the stifling of the sense of injustice). Such stifling is the more probable the more capitalist development advances. The analysis of the reaction of German workers to their experience of injustice from 1848 to 1920 shows that the expropriation of moral outrage is part of the capitalist experience. Starting with strikes against apparent injustice, the rationalization process also led to the rationalization of movement action, culminating in the appropriation of moral outrage by socialism, where 'people's organizations, loud-speakers, newspapers, the secret police, and the court all swing into action' (Moore, 1978: 503). A sense of injustice can no longer develop when moral indignation becomes a political game among the 'Wisest Man' and a Committee of the next 'Wisest Men' (Moore, 1978: 504) which is inaccessible cognitively and emotionally by the people. Not only socialism, but also liberal capitalism has produced such effects. The operation of mass media used by opinion leaders to turn on (and off) moral currents for influence and profit expropriates the sense of injustice of people, which in the worst case leads to the fascist mobilization of workers. In this sense modernity as such weakens the capacity of people to use their sense of injustice as a mode of expressing moral outrage and becomes a mechanism for generating a stifled sense of injustice.

### *The Institutionalization of The Old Social Movements*

Social movements continue beyond the precarious stage of collective mobilization. Institutionalizing a social movement means to guarantee the existence of a social movement without permanent or at least intermittent collective mobilizations. Movements turn into 'social movement organizations'.<sup>15</sup> The first such example occurs through trade unionization and the integration of workers' movements within corporatist welfare state arrangements, thus mobilizing resources for workers' protest and securing its long-run feasibility.

An analogous process can be identified in the romantic counter-movements of the nineteenth century, carried by bourgeois and petty-bourgeois social groups. The movement organizations which emerged from these counter-movements are rationally organized food companies or health companies praising healthy food and life in the countryside (Gusfield, 1992). The movement for the protection of nature is a good example of the transformation of a cultural protest movement into a social movement organization.<sup>16</sup>

The final case is the institutionalization of the national movement in the nation-state. The nation-state turns into a 'new' community for citizens. It canalizes popular sentiments of injustice into defences of national unity. This institutionalization – based on increasing communication within the nation-state – has been a double-edged phenomenon. Whether these nationalist movements take the democratic or the undemocratic, the fascist, road is an option which is equally possible in the mobilization of national sentiments.<sup>17</sup> This ambivalence has weakened the initial link between social movements and democracy and led to the interim period of a modern world without movements which characterizes the first two decades of the postwar period.

### *The Old Social Movements and Their Counter-movements*

The institutionalization of class cleavages and national cleavages in Europe created a stable conflictual structure within which counter-movements could grow. Fascism reacted against the ideas of universal human equality and democratic government in the name of natural differences between groups of human

beings and authoritarian leadership. The values of modernity were turned upside-down and provided the ground for mass mobilization. Theories of mass behaviour tried to grasp this phenomenon, be it in an affirmative or in a critical perspective.<sup>18</sup> It took two decades after the end of the fascist period to make the topic of social movements again a legitimate subject matter of social theory and a legitimate political practice.

The outcome of mobilization and counter-mobilization has been the transformation of the public space into an ideological battleground for social movements. The national state with its monopoly of power was transformed into a social movement which occupied the public space for its own staging. It created the conditions of a civil war in the modern national state. The state and its members, the citizens, were fighting against those citizens who were not part of the movement represented by the state. Those excluded organized themselves as resistance movements (*résistance*, *resistenza*, *Widerstand*), joining diverse old social movements, from national movements to socialist and communist movements.

Western Europe needed two world wars to get rid of this dynamic of counter-movements, a process supported by the emergence of supranational institutions such as the institutions of the European Community. These institutions, like other transnational institutions, have become the object of social movements only in recent times. The integration of the nation-state into transnational European institutions increasingly reduced the space for the dynamics of movements against counter-movements. This is, however, a particularity of Europe and North America. The rest of the world is still full of these dynamics, more or less contained by institutional arrangements and procedures.<sup>19</sup>

### **THE NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS**

#### *The Emergence of New Social Movements*

The new social movements have been considered to be the carriers of a new wave of modernization and democratization, albeit in a different form.<sup>20</sup> They appeared when modernization was seen no longer as a unilinear process towards modernity, but as a contradictory

process in which a *telos*-driven first modernity is followed by a second modernity which has to tackle its consequences (Beck, 1992, 1995). The 'second modernity' is regarded as a period in which the unintended consequences of modernity, the collective risks it has generated, have become the mechanism for further modernization. Thus the second modernity offers to social movements new opportunities for collective action, which explains the rise of the new social movements.

The new social movements have often been described as single-issue movements. They are mobilizations against the negative consequences of modernity, for the environment against its destruction through modernization, for peace against the destructive forces of the first wave of modernization. The new phenomenon to be dealt with in the public and political life of advanced modern society is the increasing public sensitivity to issues which centre on the risks of destroying common goods. Such issues mobilize citizens, thus empowering them to shape the course of the development of modern societies.

Alain Touraine (1977, 1981), an important theorist of social movements, has proposed to define social movements as historical actors capable of orienting social change in modern societies. This theoretical proposition has to make a strong assumption regarding the historical role of social movements. A less demanding explanation links the new social movements with the particular problem that common goods invite for free-riding (Olson, 1965). To counter-act free-riding, such goods have to be made a common cause for people. The alternative to authoritative institutional solution (which is the use of normative force by the state) is to mobilize people into social movements. The concern for common goods (as manifest, for example, in environmentalist and ecological movements) creates a normative obligation through collective action. They generate the common cause in the course of collective action to tackle the consequences of (the first) modernity.

Social movements in general, new social movements in particular, are thus a solution to the problem of collective goods. They provide a solution to common goods beyond the market and the state, a solution based on associational ties. New social movements fit into this third type: they create collective action through the identification with a collective concern. Thus free-riding is overcome by creating a social object for identification: the

association of those concerned with a common good. This holds equally for the issue of the environment as for the gender issue or the issue of collective identity that is pushed and defended by 'new' social movements.

These developments point to a shift of the mode of political self-regulation of modern societies. Politics shifts towards a field that it is no longer restricted to the field of action defined by state institutions. Social movements develop new institutional forms of politics in modern societies.<sup>21</sup> They also force these institutions to be conceived in democratic terms. Finally, they tend to occupy (or at least beleaguer) the field of symbolic politics by intensifying public communication, which changes the mode of functioning of the public space. New social movements increase symbolic politics and thus extend the options of democratic will formation.<sup>22</sup>

New social movements thus produce two effects: (1) the increasing participation of consequential collective actors in diverse issue fields or policy domains and (2) the intensification of public communication over these issues.

### *The Institutionalization of the New Social Movements*

The institutionalization of social movements concerns not only the internal organization of social movements (the organizational form), but also the interorganizational field of which social movement organizations are a part. This emerging interorganizational field develops some peculiarities which transform the modes of political institutionalization developed in the first wave of modernization by the old social movements. It gives rise to a new type of interconnection between civil society as represented by social movement organizations and the state and the economy.

The rise of social movement organizations dealing with collective goods creates a strain on the monopoly of the state to provide such goods. The provision of such goods becomes a contested issue in policy-making. Thus movement actors bring the state back in, not as the key and powerful actor, but as a co-operator or adversary in a controversial policy domain. Social movement organizations also put under pressure economic collective actors' corporations, which are defined as those destroying collective goods. This emerging interorganizational field develops new modes of conflict-settling and dispute resolution. The model of

settling class conflicts through distributive measures which dominated the movement-state-economy interaction in the 'first' modernity is extended by introducing models of conflict-settling where non-distributive issues are at stake.<sup>23</sup>

The changes of the institutional order due to the integration of social movement organizations into institutional politics go even further. The emerging institutional politics is accompanied by a rise in the moral self-presentation of collective actors, for which the 'public responsibility' discourse of movement actors is an indicator. They create a 'market' in which symbols of trust and reliability and in which images of oneself and of others shape political processes. The logic of such identity markets forces policy-makers to accept the rules of the game of identity markets. This explains the centrality of the symbolic dimension in the emerging interorganizational field.<sup>24</sup>

Taken together, these developments favour the development of an institutional system which is characterized by the following two elements: (1) a new resonance with concerns for collective goods; and (2) an interorganizational field of associational ties ('networks') beyond the state and market. These developments vary according to national traditions and the position of a society in the international system of nation-states, that is, with the outcome of the initial modernization processes.

### ***The New Social Movements and the Marketization of Collective Action***

Social movements are the cause of increasing public communication. They contribute to the expansion of a public space which provides rituals of debate in which more collective actors than ever before can take part and monitor each other. This transformation is evident in the public discourse on the environment. In the 1980s environmental movements put this issue on the public agenda and had the monopoly of representing environmental concerns. This 'monopoly' situation was destroyed by competitors in the market of producing and communicating 'green' images, by business and policy actors. Environmental movements had to start to defend their agenda-setting image. The public communication of environmental issues has finally caught the environmental movement in a competition with media agenda-setting. This has contributed to the transformation of

environmental movements into cultural pressure groups. In order to survive, they had to engage in PR activities (Hansen, 1993).

This raises the problem of whether the new social movements survive the marketplace of public discourse. They do not survive as movements of continuous forms of mass mobilization. The action repertoire changes since their survival depends on their capacity to keep control of their stakes in public discourse, on the successful communication of symbolic packages that resonate with the respective constituencies. The relationship between movements and their constituencies also changes. They survive as a public interest group which speaks in the name and as an advocate of a constituency.

The main outcome of the new social movements is the repositioning of collective actors in the expanding public space in modern societies. The first outcome is the competitive occupying of the public space by making any issue a contested policy domain. The public space expands by creating issue-specific public spaces in which different coalitions of collective actors arise.<sup>25</sup> A network develops of issue-specific public spaces with issue-specific discourses. A second outcome is that these public spaces become the medium of communications strategies and communication campaigns of collective actors that have a stake in an issue. Movements have to engage in symbolic action to raise public attention. The more these actors participate in the institutional game, the more they have to communicate their views; the more they communicate their views, the more they have to use ritualistic forms of argumentation, dramatizations that solicit the attention of the public; the more they have to dramatize, the more the media become important.

### **ARE SOCIAL MOVEMENTS GOOD FOR DEMOCRATIZING SOCIETIES?**

The social movements seem to survive the marketplace of public discourse. Whether the public sphere survives its own marketization raises the question of the effects of the movementization of society on their democratic performance. Habermas (1989 [1961]) in his classic (not in his later) work would have argued for negative effects. There are, however, aspects to this marketization which make the answer less straightforward.

The logic of the democratization of modern societies is linked to an extension of public rituals of movement–state–business interactions and to the dramatization of public debates where public resonance counts. This has created public arenas in which public debates take the form of advertisements, symbolic actions and media dramatizations. All these phenomena provide a new social reality for mobilizing democratic claims. Ritual participation and communication become the medium for democratic will formation.

The first theoretical reason to create a positive link between the action repertoire of symbolic politics which characterizes new social movements and democratic will formation is an anthropological one: humans are narrative animals. We live in and through stories about realities; arguments are always embedded in stories that give meaning to them. These stories are histories, collective memories, individual memories, and so on. The second theoretical reason is sociological. Social interaction is symbolically mediated and therefore dependent upon symbolic forms which allow the decoding of communications. Research in symbolic interactionism has shown that arguments, the constitutive element of communication, are embedded in a meaning-giving frame which has to be invoked and stabilized in each communication. There is no argument outside a story. This is not to deny that social actors are capable of being rational. It is to claim that the reference to a shared knowledge of the world is the condition for rational arguments to enter into discourse. But this does not transform discourse into a collective process of argumentation. Ideally, discourse is a collective argumentation. In social reality collective argumentation is culturally embedded. It belongs to the historical experience of modern societies that democracy has always been connected to shared cultural beliefs. Democracy was coupled with beliefs and knowledge that could provide a sense of collective identity which secures the communicability of arguments.

Democratic discourse is therefore contingent on its cultural embedding. Public communication is embedded and institutionally regulated through rituals and ceremonies, without which democracy is impossible. They provide the social world within which to communicate. The public space is a theatre, and democratic principles allow us all to act and stage ourselves in this space, to talk, even to

talk nonsense. The world created by social movements in advanced modern societies has fostered the creation of such public spaces: the media tell stories, good and bad ones, social actors enter the media public from advertisements through talk shows to public ceremonies. Thus everybody can observe everybody.

Such a theoretical notion of public communication gives to social movements a particular social role. Their primary function becomes 'claims-making'. Claims-making does not stop before democratic principles; rather, they are made explicit in the course of claims-making. A final effect of social movements, then, is that the ideals of universal participation and of public debate become themselves stories that are invoked in public communication by social movements. The democratic story is told to give legitimacy to institutions (or withdraw it from them). Thus democracy is a myth staged by collective actors retelling the myth of democratic participation. Democratic claims-making becomes part of the taken-for-granted everyday culture of modern political institutions.

The history of social movements brings forth the narrative property of democracy, which provides the basis for political communication in thousands of fora and arenas of (often boring, sometimes insulting, sometimes factually wrong) public discourse and in everyday media dramatizations of persons and issues, be it through talk shows, news reports or caricatures. We have to conceive democracy as a set of ritual forms and ceremonial events that organize everyday public life.

The opposite of democracy is authoritarianism and totalitarianism. Both fear nothing more than to be exposed to everyday public communication. No authoritarian ruler, even less a totalitarian ruler, can survive the mass-media rituals of dealing with bad news and the symbolic politics of social movements looking for bad news. We as the spectators of the theatre know that we live in a world of dramatization and ritual staging. Even empirical research shows that people are making their own sense of the public theatre. Democracy is – to conclude – the staging of a public theatre – with, it is hoped, a critical mass of spectators possessing nothing more than common sense. Only a public space without social movements raising their voices will provide the space for the authoritarian disempowerment of people.

## NOTES

1. The debate on modernization moves between two extremes: the comparative analysis of historical case studies (such as Bendix, 1978) and the comparative analysis of nationally defined variables of social development (such as Lipset, 1994). This does not exclude that they coexist well even within the work of one author.

2. An exception to the rule is Diani (1992, 1997). See also della Porta and Diani (1999) and McAdam et al. (1988). The alternative 'American' theoretical statement to the 'European' theory of new social movements (Touraine, 1977) is McCarthy and Zald (1977).

3. The ambitious project of Touraine to decipher the historical meaning of a collective action through provoking the collective consciousness of those involved by a strategy of sociological intervention into the discourse of collective actors ultimately failed.

4. This might also explain the impact and importance of Charles Tilly in this area, which survived much of the work of other, less historically oriented social scientists.

5. Peasant protest is an important case of this type of collective action. For a good summary of the comparative evidence see the introduction to Schulze (1982). Extending the range of rural protest beyond Europe, Landsberger (1973) points to the variability of rural protest depending upon the time of their emergence in the course of modernizing developments.

6. Such riots presuppose a form of collective mobilization which is well grasped in the concept of the popular crowd. See, as a classic, Rudé (1952).

7. Whether there is a particular modernity to these phenomena can be left open in this context. This points to the question of 'multiple modernities'.

8. This has been emphasized by diverse authors such as Deutsch (1966) and Anderson (1983). Both point to the intensification of communication which is supported not only by technological innovation but also by print capitalism fostering such technologies.

9. The social composition of the carriers of public spaces has been a controversial topic among social historians and political theorists. The role of elite bourgeois groups has been reconsidered, taking into account plebeian groups, women (Landes, 1992) and the diversity of national and local traditions of occupational groups. See the contributions to this debate in Calhoun (1992).

10. This had already been noticed by contemporary observers such as Lorenz von Stein in Prussia, who made the *Assoziationen*, in contrast to the *Korporationen*, the defining principle of modern societies (Eder, 1985).

11. For the historical logic of the formation of public spaces in England, see Somers (1993, 1995).

12. Reference is made to Thompson (1971) and then to the work of Tilly (1979, 1985, 1996) and Tilly et al. (1975).

13. This argument is directed against determinist approaches in Thompson (1978).

14. A different argument is presented by Calhoun (1982), who sees popular protest as reactionary class struggle because of its orientation towards traditional communitarian values. To call this protest populist is, however, problematic since such a conception presupposes proactive, non-traditional collective action, from which populism departs and deviates.

15. For these analytic terms see McCarthy and Zald (1977).

16. This is the prehistory of the environmental movement that formed in the second half of the twentieth century.

17. This is a central point in an analysis which has not received the deserved reception by Moore (1978).

18. An excellent discussion of these theories and their object is found in Moscovici (1985).

19. In the United States the Civil War had already resolved some of these dynamics at an early stage. However, McCarthyism showed that it was still at work after the Second World War. Other countries in Latin America, Africa, Asia or Eastern Europe are still characterized by this old mechanism of state-led counter-movements fighting movements, thus coming close to modern forms of civil war.

20. For a good comparative analysis of differences among new social movements, see Kriesi et al. (1995) and McAdam et al. (1996). For an account of the difference between old and new, see Eder (1993) and Tilly (1988).

21. The counter-theory would be that social movements are challenging the boundaries of institutional politics (Offe, 1985).

22. The most obvious indicator of this change is the media dependence of new social movements. The first to point this out was Gitlin (1980). An interesting attempt to grasp this relationship empirically is Gamson (1992). Further research is reported in Gamson et al. (1992), Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993) and Hansen (1993).

23. There is extensive comparative evidence on the link between the state and the new social movements (Jenkins and Klandermans, 1995). For the related research agenda, see Jenkins (1995). An important aspect of this link, the mode of policing mass demonstrations, is discussed comparatively in della Porta and Reiter (1988).

24. The implications for democratic dispute-settling are discussed in Eder (1999). This also points to the vast literature on the role of new social movements for the construction of a civil society in advanced modern societies (see especially Shrader-Frechette, 1991). Comparative evidence of such consequences is found in Giugni et al. (1999).

25. This idea of discourse coalitions emerging in this new public space has been studied empirically by Hajer (1995) in an analysis of the acid rain controversy.

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## *The Persistence of Nationalism: Modernity and Discourses of the Nation*

GERARD DELANTY

In this chapter I argue that nationalism is an expression of some of the major formative moments in modernity, and in particular can be seen as a response to processes of integration and differentiation. Nationalism can be understood in terms of models of integration which at the same time reflect wider societal structures of differentiation. These doubly articulated processes of inclusion and exclusion can be related to the three main political forms of modern nationalism: the civic nation, the state nation and the cultural nation. Most expressions of nationalism involve a mixture of the three main political forms, although generally one kind has been in ascendancy in any one particular context. But underlying these, I argue, is an ethic of radical freedom, which has its origins in Jacobinism. While this violent force has generally been tamed in the main political forms of nationalism, it has always been a recalcitrant force in all forms of modern nationalism.

Nationalism has endured for many reasons, not least of which is because it has been able to provide workable solutions to three problems, which can roughly be related to the three major political forms of nationalism: the problem of membership of the polity, the problem of demarcating the boundaries of the polity and the problem of establishing the

identity of the polity. The different forms nationalism has taken in history are a reflection of the ways societies, or more specifically different groups, have found solutions to the problems of the polity under the conditions of modernity. However, many of the solutions that nationalism has found have been at a cost. The result has been to varying degrees exclusion of minorities, symbolic violence and xenophobia.

One of the main claims made in this chapter is that the historical sociology of nationalism must go beyond a theory of the political forms of nationalism. I argue that the contribution of a globally oriented historical sociology to the study of nationalism consists in linking these essentially political discourses of nationalism to a sociological account of the rise and transformation of modern society. What needs to be explained is how at various places and at different points in history certain political forms of nationalism came to be selected or given predominance over others. This chapter is an attempt to spell out some of the issues that need to be considered in such an analysis.

To this end I argue that the three main political forms of nationalism can be theorized in terms of four main institutional dynamics: state formation, democratization, capitalism

and the intellectualization of culture. I discuss these dynamics in terms of the developmental logics of differentiation and integration. The advantage of this approach is that it avoids an exclusive emphasis on the purely political and ideological aspects of nationalism and will integrate structural approaches with ones that stress agency and culture. It will also provide a basis for a more dynamic conception of nationalism as produced in particular discourses and social practices.

In sum, then, the aim of the chapter is to offer a sociological account of the persistence of nationalism in the modern age by looking at how its various political forms have been articulated in the major dynamics of modernity and sustained by the underlying logics of integration and differentiation.

The chapter is accordingly organized as follows. First, I discuss the main theoretical approaches to nationalism, namely structural accounts, mobilization theories and cultural accounts. Second, I look at the three main political forms of nationalism mentioned above. In this section it is argued that underlying these forms of nationalism is an ethic of radical freedom, which has never been fully domesticated and consequently has given nationalism a violent edge. Third, the formation of nationalism is discussed around the dynamics of state formation, democratization, capitalism and the intellectualization of culture. Placing these dynamics in the context of the developmental logics of integration and differentiation, a framework for theorizing nationalism can be outlined that goes some way to explaining the diversity and persistence of nationalism.

#### **THEORETICAL APPROACHES:**

##### **A GENERAL OVERVIEW**

Classical sociology gave relatively little attention to nationalism. Neither Weber nor Durkheim incorporated nationalism into his work. Perhaps because of their themes of differentiation and rationalism, they were not disposed towards movements suggestive of counter-tendencies to modernity. Durkheim, of course, was intrigued by the possibility of modernity generating collective representations akin to those that followed in the wake of French Revolution, and Weber, too, was fascinated by the survival of certain kinds of enchantment in modernity. But their legacy was a

view of modernity that afforded little room for nationalism. Parsons also gave little attention to nationalism and took for granted the existence of the United States as a nation-state based on an over-arching integrative 'societal community' and the wider civilization of modernity. In these approaches, which formed the basis of mainstream modernization theory (see Wolfgang Knöbl's chapter in this volume), there was a general assumption that the nation-state was a 'normal' unit and that the social and political order of the state coincided. Nationalism as a counter-movement was generally seen as marginal to modernity. It is indeed peculiar that modernization theory's main rival, Western Marxism, arrived at much the same conclusions, although from a different set of assumptions. This tradition inherited the idea of the 'withering away of the state' from classical Marxism. For Marx, nationalism was the natural ally of socialism, and even though history was to prove that the social question was to be overshadowed by the national question, nationalism was a marginal phenomenon for virtually all of twentieth-century Marxism.

It thus came about that nationalism tended to be marginal for modern sociology, which itself developed as a discipline based on the nation-state. This is not to neglect the significant contribution made to nationalism by several scholars, working largely in sociology and political science. However, what is striking is that even in the seminal work of Ernst Gellner, the theory of nationalism was at best part of a broader theory of liberal modernity that did not call into question some of the central assumptions of modernization theory.<sup>1</sup> The exception in this regard is undoubtedly Norbert Elias, but his work did not become influential until after the demise of modernization theory. With the collapse of modernization theory along with academic Marxism, the concerns of sociology did not immediately predispose it towards taking nationalism seriously. A major exception might be the work of Anthony Giddens, who was instrumental in reorienting sociology away from an exclusive concern with class power towards other kinds of power (Giddens, 1985). But in general the concerns of sociology in the 1980s were far from nationalism. Even Giddens's own work was more about the nation-state than nationalism as such. The preference for the 'new social movements' tended to result in the neglect of other kinds of anti-systemic movements, for instance.

Owing in no small part to the great changes that have occurred since 1989 – European integration, globalization, postmodernization and the emergence of a great many new nationalisms – nationalism was put on the agenda. However, this time the debate about nationalism is also part of a wider debate about the future of the nation-state and about national frames of collective identity (Arnason, 1990; Eisenstadt, 1999). There are also questions about the relationship between nationality and citizenship, the role of war and violence in modernity, the nature of the social and its relation to the political.

Despite the growing interest in nationalism in social theory and in sociology, the existing scholarship on nationalism is very fragmented. This is due to the fact that the study of nationalism has not been dominated by any one discipline, but has involved contributions from several, such as modern history, anthropology, sociology and political science. Literary theorists have also made a major contribution to nationalism. More recently contributions from social psychology, geography, feminism and cultural studies have added to the field. While this has generated a rich body of writing on nationalism, it has also led to very diffuse theoretical approaches. For the purpose of illustration, these can be divided into three broad categories: first, approaches that look at the structural properties of nationalism; second, mobilization approaches, which look at the role of social agency in the codification of national identity and in the mobilization of the masses; and, third, approaches that stress the role of cultural factors in the making of nationalism. It is to be stressed that in many cases these approaches overlap and many works on nationalism cannot be so neatly placed into these categories. The purpose of the typology is to provide a basis for discussing the very large literature on nationalism rather than to create distinctions necessitated by the typology. The following is a brief outline of these approaches.

### *Structural Theories*

Structural approaches to the study of nationalism typically look at nationalism as a product of modernization, seeing it as a particular kind of response to the problems generated by modern society. In general, the emphasis in these explanations is on nationalism as a form of state-building as opposed to other

dynamics, for example cultural ones or those that are more specific to particular kinds of mobilization, such as what might be entailed by democratization. The work of Rokkan (1999) might be cited as an example of a comparative and evolutionary structural approach that stressed the wider context of nation-state-building within the context of an international order based on sovereign nation-states.

Nobert Elias is also a significant figure in this tradition, but in his approach there is a greater concern with the cultural structures of nationalism. He saw nationalism both as an integrative force within states and as a means of establishing boundaries with other nation-states (Elias, 1978, 1982, 1995). However, such structural accounts generally see processes of nation-building as intertwined with nationalism as a system of communication. Karl Deutsch (1953) thus stressed the role nationalism played in providing social communication in modern society. Ernest Gellner developed this functionalist approach to nationalism into a social theory of modernity (Gellner, 1964, 1983, 1987, 1994, 1998; see also Hall, 1998). While his overall aim was to link structural explanations of nationalism with cultural explanations, he tended to give most weight to the former. Thus he famously explained nationalism as a response to the need of industrial society for a uniform 'high culture'. Developments in material life – capitalism, industrialism, technological culture – bring into play new kinds of communication in which the state and its elites communicate messages to the masses, who need to be brought into the state's project. According to Gellner, nationalism is a homogenizing kind of high culture that subdues and transforms the low culture. As such it is an integrative mechanism, but one that is also a response to the differentiated nature of modernization. In this regard what is significant is uneven modernization. Industrialization and the general development of capitalism are uneven, an expression, too, of wider processes of differentiation in modernity. Nationalism, Gellner argued, is a kind of integrative culture that provides modern societies with cultural cohesion.

In general, the dominant contribution of sociology to the study of nationalism has come from what can be very broadly described as structural explanations. Such accounts of nationalism have been influenced by modernization theory and, with some exceptions, have looked at nationalism in terms of processes of nation-building (Bendix, 1964).

Typically, these classical sociological theories have not given much attention to nationalism as a form of mobilization, thus downplaying the role of agency, or to nationalism as a politico-cultural form. There is little concern with questions of identity, and the pervasiveness of nationalism as a cultural model is unexplored, beyond certain claims as to its fabricated nature. Structural explanations also do not address the question of how groups mobilize, instead seeing nationalism as a response to processes of state formation and capitalism.

### *Mobilization Theories*

Mobilization accounts of nationalism, in contrast to structural approaches, stress the artificial nature of nationalism, and thus are constructivist in nature. Rejecting realist epistemologies and essentialist conceptions of the subject, social constructivists see social reality as constructed by social agency. With respect to nationalism, such approaches emphasize the 'invented' nature of national identities, as in the work of Hobsbawm (1983a, 1983b). In such accounts, what is salient is the codification of identities by particular groups, and very often there are underlying assumptions of the masses as led by elites. This assumption was also present in Gellner, for whom nationalists fabricated historical narratives and collective memories. However, in his case, while oscillating between cultural and structural explanations, a structural functionalist perspective rooted in a realist philosophy has dominated his work.

Mobilization-oriented explanations of nationalism are reflected in Barth (1969), Hroch (1985, 1993) and Tilly (1984, 1986; Tilly et al., 1975), who, in different ways, see nationalism in terms of processes of mobilization. In Barth's anthropological approach, which is perhaps a less explicitly developed mobilization approach, the crucial issue is boundary maintenance. Hroch, meanwhile looks at the interaction of different kinds of nationalist groups in terms of their social location, whereas Tilly, adopting resource mobilization theory, examines nationalism in terms of the capacity of different groups to mobilize significant sections of the population. In the latter two cases, the meso-dimension is crucial, as is the identification of specific social and political opportunity structures. This approach, which challenges the conventional

view that a nationalist movement is the product of deeply entrained historical identities which derive from grievances or an idea, allows us to see identity as something that is always open to strategic change and symbolic reinterpretation according as circumstances change.<sup>2</sup> Nationalism has proven decisive in offering a common discourse that can unite several key actors in society, ranging from various organized interests such as agrarian protesters, professional associations, entrepreneurs, to political elites and radical groups. The result is a 'discourse coalition' where a variety of social movements unite behind a common programme leading to the building of a consensus movement and a master frame of identity. It may be argued that the key to the successes of nationalism is precisely the construction of such a consensus movement. In this context mention might be made of institutionalist theories, such as the approach adopted by Brubaker (1996) and Kitschelt (1995). Institutional approaches differ in one respect from constructivist approaches, in that they stress the role of institutional structures in facilitating mobilization.

The advantage of mobilization approaches is that they avoid purely functional explanations of nationalism. Nationalism cannot entirely be explained in terms of structures such as nation-building processes, which are perhaps better seen as preconditions for the emergence of movements of different kinds. An emphasis on mobilization is also better able to explain the conflicts and different phases in the genesis of a nationalist movement. Without some sense of the role of different kinds of agency, no account of nationalism is complete. Such approaches avoid dualisms of agency and structure, allowing agency to be conceived in terms of transformative practices. Constructivist accounts, on the other side, are limited in their exclusive emphasis on mobilization. Cultural processes of meaning, symbolic creation and cognitive structures cannot be entirely explained by the mobilizations of specific groups. Not everything is invented by agency. It is in this context that cultural approaches can be mentioned.

### *Cultural Theories*

Cultural approaches stress the cultural amplification of discourses of meaning that emerge out of the projects of social groups. In interdisciplinary studies on nationalism, such a

perspective is expressed in the work of Anderson (1983), Billig (1995), Eisenstadt and Giesen (1995), Greenfeld (1992) and Hedetoft (1995). In their theories of nationalism the central point concerns neither structures nor particular kinds of agency, but the existence of what might be called discourses, cultural models, or cognitive frameworks. Although this is never made explicit, the assumption is that nationalism owes its existence to its ability to provide models of meaning, the essential tool-kits for the construction of collective identity. Nationalism, in the view of Benedict Anderson, is essentially a cognitive model allowing individuals in modernity to interpret their society. Eisenstadt and Giesen emphasize the composition of nationalism in codes which give symbolic meaning.

These cultural approaches differ from constructivist approaches in their focus, which is less on groups than on the resources groups draw from. In this a cultural approach has distinct advantages, particularly when what is at issue is less an analysis of nationalism as a movement than nationalism as collective identity. Moreover, conceiving of the nation as discursively constructed allows us to avoid some of the theoretical pitfalls in the literature on nationalism, for instance the view that nationalism is a product of 'essential' or real identities or that it is a 'constructed' identity. This is also a question of whether nationalism should be viewed in positive terms, and even with emancipatory possibilities. In these terms, the literature on nationalism can roughly be divided into, on the one side, those who are favourably disposed to nationalism, which is seen as a primary collective identity – for instance, Anderson (1983) Calhoun (1997), Canovan (1996), Greenfeld, Smith (1981) – and, on the other side, internationalists such as Deutsch (1983) Gellner (1983) Hobsbawm (1990) Kedourie (1994) for whom nationalism is on the whole a reactionary anti-modern ideology. The debate has often been cast in epistemological terms: according to Gellner, the truth content of nationalism is false, since nationalism is based on fabricated versions of the past. On the other side, Anderson sees nationalism in purely cognitive terms to be a mode of social knowledge, a way in which individuals 'know' their society.

A cultural approach offers a clear advantage over many of these controversies, for what is at stake in nationalist discourse is not truth or

falsity in, but of the frameworks of meaning. As a discursive construction, nationalism is real by virtue of being constructed. As the Thomas theorem states: 'If people define situations as real, they are real in their consequences' (Merton, 1996).

These three perspectives all bring important insights to bear on nationalism. Structural accounts, though less popular today since the cultural turn in the social sciences, cannot be dismissed. Such accounts are crucial in macro-analysis, as, for example, in studies on nation-building, while mobilization approaches are primarily relevant to meso-level analysis, for instance the study of processes of nationalist mobilization. By drawing attention to the mediating role of cultural communication, cultural approaches offer useful perspectives on collective identity, which is less the concern of structural and mobilization approaches. But in general these different concerns – nation-building, mobilization and collective identity formation – have led to quite different approaches in the study of nationalism.

It is not the aim of this chapter to offer an alternative to these approaches, given their quite different concerns, and, of course, as already pointed out, many of these approaches overlap. However, one critical point can be made. What needs to be more fully developed in the study of nationalism is an understanding of the mechanisms by which the world of the state and the projects of elites are articulated in everyday life. A relatively neglected aspect in the study of nationalism is its ability to bring the political world of the state into the everyday level. This perspective is undoubtedly close to the concerns of many mobilization and cultural approaches, but has never been fully developed. As a category that cuts across the world of state to the world of the individual, nationalism is an important part of everyday life in the modern world. It is not just a political discourse but a social practice. In the terms of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of the *habitus*, nationalism can be understood as a set of dispositions that embed history, politics and cultural symbols of the life-world (Bourdieu, 1990). Nationalism as a discourse is thus a set of social practices that make *real* objective categories in society. The politico-cultural history of nationalism can be written in terms of the progressive extension of the nation into the lives of people. Thus what matters is neither *who* constructs nationalism – as in social constructivism – nor the content of nationalist

discourse – as in cultural or cognitive approaches – nor even the functions of nationalism – as in structural analyses – but the mapping of cultural constructs into the *habitus* in the shaping of particular social practices. This is also argued by Stuart Hall (1992), for whom nationalism is a form of narration which is reproduced in discourses. Feminist writing on nationalism also points in this direction of the ‘nationalization’ of the social.

Looking at nationalism from this angle allows us to appreciate its persuasive appeal and institutional persistence. Nationalism is a kind of semantic space that expresses through its major discourses a variety of projects, identities, interests and ideologies, in other words forms of social practice. Its persistence in modernity is not due to some underlying cultural logic, for instance the inherent primordiality of national identity or its ideological appeal or its functional necessity. What has made it a recalcitrant force in modernity is the persistence of key problems in modernity, for instance the questions of defining the membership of the polity, its boundaries and identity. As a political discourse, nationalism is also a particular kind of social practice. In the following sections it will be demonstrated how the political forms of nationalism become effective through actor-driven processes of integration and differentiation as these are articulated in the major dynamics of modernity.

#### THE MAJOR POLITICAL FORMS OF NATIONALISM

I have already intimated that many of the problems with conceptualizing nationalism can be avoided if we see it in terms of three political forms: civic nation, state nation and cultural nation. In one way or another, all modern expressions of nationalism involve the basic codes of these political discourses.

This conceptualization goes beyond the conventional division of nationalism into two groups, civic and ethnic, which is often associated with the work of Hans Kohn (1944). According to this view, civic forms of nationalism are typically Western European, where the state tradition has been more stable and the focus of national loyalty, while ethnic forms of nationalism have been more common in Eastern Europe, where there has been a weaker tradition of statehood. While having some basis in reality, such forms of dualism must also be rejected. Nationalism always has

both ethnic/cultural as well as civic forms; it cannot be reduced to either (Schöpflin, 2001). In its formative period, civic forms of nationalism were always articulated in cultural forms, as in the case of British national identity (Corrigan and Sayer, 1985), and, in the case of Irish nationalism, strongly cultural expressions of nationalism also included civic dimensions (O’Mahony and Delanty, 1998). Yet it makes sense to distinguish between the main political forms of nationalism. Avoiding reductionist and essentialistic approaches, the main political forms of nationalism can be said to be either civic, state-centric or cultural. These forms overlap and are not specific to particular national traditions, although one or more of these forms will be likely to be dominant at any one particular time.

The civic nation was born with the republican tradition, which laid the foundation of modern nationalism in terms of the idea of self-determination. The American and French Revolutions promoted a view of the nation as an inclusive polity based on citizenship. The ideals of modern constitutional law and democracy, which stressed the formal equality of all individuals and their right to personal autonomy, provided the foundation for the idea of the civic nation. Modern republicanism was the first nationalist movement in this universalistic sense of term, which is indistinguishable from the older notion of patriotism. The doctrine of self-determination to which it led was to become greatly influential in the second half of the nineteenth century, leading to a widespread acceptance of ‘liberal nationalism’. Republican self-determination, originally an expression of civil society, eventually became the dominant ideology of modern nationalism and provided a widely accepted argument for the creation of new states, in particular in the period from the Congress of Berlin in 1878 to the Versailles Treaty in 1919.

The state nation can be associated with the politics of legitimacy that came with the post-revolutionary period and characterized the major expression of nationalism in the nineteenth century. Rather than nationhood, this is best seen in terms of territoriality and statehood. The nation is equated with the territorial jurisdiction of state rather than with civil society or the *demos*. This is the official nationalism or state patriotism of the existing state. By its nature it has tended to more of a legitimating ideology than the other forms.

The third form of modern nationalism is the cultural nation. With its origins in the

historicist tradition, the *ethnos* is central to the definition of the nation and the basis of the *demos*. The historicist conception of the nation derives from early nineteenth-century romanticism and the philosophy of Herder, especially his *Treatise on the Origin of Language* (see Herder, 1969 [1772]). The republican conception of the nation was framed in the image of society as an open system; the historicist conception, in contrast, spoke in the name of a more closed cultural community based on language. Where the other traditions were universalistic, embodying cosmopolitan liberalism and an inclusive conception of the polity, historicism stressed the particular, the world of feelings and exclusiveness. In its early Herderian form, this romantic side to nationalism was perfectly compatible with liberal nationalism – and much of nineteenth-century nationalism was a combination of romanticism and republicanism – the tension between them was to become more and more pronounced, as in Fichte's vision of the German nation (Fichte, 1922 [1807–8]). By the twentieth century the historicist tradition had triumphed in many parts of Europe, not just as a distinctive kind of nationalism but as a major component of all kinds of nationalism. From 1919 onwards it became more acceptable to see the nation in ethnic, cultural terms. Inevitably this strand in nationalism shifted the focus away from the concern with self-determination in an inclusive polity to one animated by the desire to exclude the other.

Distinguishing between these three kinds of nationalism has clear advantages over the more conventional picture of ethnic versus civic kinds of nationalism. The ethnic component arose out of the communitarian resistance to modernity and is as much a part of modernity as are its other expressions. The concern with roots, belonging, the presence of the past, has given nationalism an enduring cultural focus. Civic nationalism is too general and disguises the two major forces within it, which I have characterized as the civic nation and the state nation. On the one side, nationalism is closely related to democratization and emancipation, and hence to a social conception of the nation, and, on the other side, nationalism has been linked to a state-centric conception of the nation.

Yet there is more to the political forms of nationalism than these three, which have been in different ways as much legitimizing ideologies as forms of resistance. But this additional

dimension is less a distinct political form than an underlying current in all of these three kinds of nationalism. This concerns the radical discourse of nationalism as a form of resistance.

Standing at the critical juncture of modernity was the Jacobin ideology, which encapsulated the spirit of modernity in its pursuit of radical freedom.<sup>3</sup> Jacobinism reflected some of the central elements in modernity by establishing the absolute superiority of political leadership and political goals as shaped by a political elite who could represent the popular will. The Jacobin tradition can be seen in terms of an ideology of radical freedom as interpreted by elites. According to S.N. Eisenstadt (1999), Jacobinism has been the source of many political movements in modernity, ranging from communism, nationalism, fascism to fundamentalism. This dimension to nationalism has been in tension with the civic and state traditions. The ability of nationalism to be able to claim the mantle of the *demos*, and with it the ideal of equality, has been crucial to its appeal, but because of the Jacobin thrust within it, that in the name of radical freedom society can be eternally reconstructed by political action, nationalism remained a deeply subversive force in the post-Versailles order.

This has all had the consequence that nationalism has entailed a strong resistance to institutionalization. The nation could never entirely be institutionalized by the modern state. When it was institutionalized in the dominant forms of state patriotism, it always remained a recalcitrant force, volatile and open to new interpretations. This recalcitrance has expressed itself in an unending tension between the nation form and statehood. Nation and state have never fully coincided in modernity, as is borne out by the history of the nation-state. Among the most enduring of the problems has been the conflict between the state and the nation. On the one side, the nation gave expression to ideas of self-determination, and, on the other, this conception of the nation conflicted with discourses of the nation as statehood. As a modern form of dual or multi-identity, nationalism has had continued mobilizing appeal.

The Jacobin notion of radical freedom that lies at the root of all of modernity's major cultural narratives cannot be separated from symbolic violence. Thus, for instance, the concern with a founding event has always been deeply implicated in violence, both direct and

symbolic. Such quests for a clean slate have been closely related to purges or forcible assimilation. The very notion of the people as an undifferentiated *Volk* can be a legitimization of violence. Because of the obvious fact that the people can never be embodied in a single political form, the question of the necessity for their rebirth is insistent. Indeed the very meaning of the term 'nation' is 'natio' or birth and nationalist movements have often been self-conscious attempts to seek the re-birth of the nation, as in the Italian Risorgimento or the Irish cultural revival movement.

The idea of birth, or rebirth, has been a major motif of modernity – as is reflected in the Renaissance, the French Revolution, modern nationalism, fascism – and has given a cultural legitimation to violence, justified in the name of historical meaning or a transcendental principle that asserts the subordination of the social to a non-social principle. This principle has generally been held to be nature. That society springs from nature is an old idea, going back to the liberal myth of the state of nature in the early modern thinkers. Although modern thought has abandoned some of the cruder notions of natural man and, since Kant, the idea of natural law has gone into decline, the conviction that society is constrained by a non-social principle has remained. The German Idealists and much of Enlightenment romanticist thought believed nature was the domain of radical freedom.<sup>4</sup> Rousseau, for instance, believed that modern man longed to escape from oppressive social institutions into a natural condition. The suggestion, then, is that modernity has been haunted by the belief that the social derives from a non-social principle that might be constitutive of a greater kind of freedom. This fundamental discord between the social and natural has given animus to modernity's ethic of radical freedom, which has been driven by the belief that nature is a domain of freedom.

This tendency for modernity to revert to primordial violence is illustrated in the purges of the Reformation and in the terror that followed in the wake of the French Revolution and most of the major revolutions of the twentieth century: the October Revolution, the Islamic Revolution in 1979 and Mao's Cultural Revolution. To achieve a new beginning, a clean slate from which the past would be wiped away, has been central to these movements. Nationalism, too, inherited the desire to create a founding event which would be the recovery of a primordial past. Thus the

French Revolution and the Jacobin Terror sought to emulate the Roman Republic. As with the European Reformation and the Wars of Religion in the seventeenth century, a new beginning necessarily requires the destruction of the present in order to recover the primordial past. Cultural memory and historical amnesia elucidate each other, for every memory is in part a forgetting of that which distorts the dream, as Renan (1990) argued in a famous essay published in 1882. The other side of amnesia is animosity, for the collective self is very often shaped in relations of adversity. As Karl Deutsch wrote: 'A nation is a group of persons united by a common error about their ancestry and a common dislike of the neighbors' (1969: 3).

Most, if not all, modern nations came into existence as a result of violent struggles, which were as likely to be purges of minorities as of external groups. The memory of these struggles is not easily forgotten, despite a great many discursive techniques, such as the construction of a scapegoat whose function is to externalize otherness and to bear responsibility for primordial violence. The foundation of the Irish state in the 1920s was marked by a bloody civil war which has continued to shape the major political cleavages until the present day. In other cases the foundation act required genocide, such as that of Armenians by Turkish nationalism, or partition, as in the cases of Ireland, Korea and Cyprus. Nationalism in these cases has been able to provide a model of integration only by separation. One of the paradoxes of nationalism is its combination of the new and the old. On the one side, it is obsessed with the new, but, on the other, the birth of the new must be based on the old. This tension within nationalism has been the source of many violent conflicts.

#### THE INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONALISM

Moving from the previous discussion about the political forms of nationalism, I now turn to the question of the dynamics of modernity which have sustained nationalism. Identifying four of these – state formation, democratization, capitalism and the intellectualization of culture – I argue that what was decisive in shaping modern nationalism was actor-driven processes that emerged out of the different combinations and interactions of these

dynamics. Central to this are logics of differentiation and integration. Which of the main political forms of nationalism emerged depends not on their inherent ideological appeal, but on societal dynamics and their characteristic kinds of social practices.

One of the major assumptions of sociological theory is that modernity can be conceived in terms of the developmental logics of integration and differentiation. From the moral philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment to Comte through Spencer and Durkheim to Parsons and Luhmann, differentiation was seen as the key developmental logic in modernity. Thus one of the main insights of classical sociological theory is that modern society is not integrated by just one institution or sphere, but entails a differentiation of structures – chiefly, cultural, social, political and economic structures – and within these structures, a further differentiation of functions. The classical tradition emphasized the second of these. It was the main contribution of Luhmann's work, especially his earlier writing, to develop a separate theorization of the differentiation of modern subsystems. We can thus distinguish between two kinds of differentiation: functional differentiation (for example, specialization of functions) and structural differentiation (the separation of subsystems from each other, as in the autonomous development of political, social, cultural, economic structures). This thesis of differentiation gave rise to the problem of how integration is possible, and more generally how social order is possible (see Alexander and Colony, 1982; Delanty, 1999; Haferkamp and Smelser, 1992). If modern society is highly differentiated, integration becomes the key problem, according to Comte, Durkheim and Parsons. However, for these figures, modernity generates specific forms of integration appropriate to societal differentiation. Modern society, though highly differentiated, is also integrated. To follow a well-known distinction, social and system integration are two responses to the problem of integration in modernity (see Habermas, 1987). In the former, integration is achieved by means of social and cultural structures of the life-world, and in the latter, by 'system' economic and political structures.

For present purposes, this will have to suffice, since my aim is to locate nationalism in the context of the developmental logics of integration and differentiation. The argument is that nationalism has been one of the most

important mechanisms by which both social and system integration have been achieved in modern society. However, and this is crucial, developmental logics of integration – such as those related to nationalism – are mediated by logics of differentiation. The nation form has served to provide forms of integration that emerged as a result of logics of differentiation. While today the nation is losing this integrative function, in the formative period of modernity it was an important means of reconciling the dual logics of modernity. Nationalism was able to accommodate processes of differentiation by imposing a logic of closure on what is an open logic. The dynamics of modernity as they unfolded in the area of state formation, democratization, capitalism and in cultural formation were easily adapted by nationalism and transformed into integrative mechanisms. In this sense, then, nationalism brought about a certain de-differentiation in modernity.

Taking state formation as one of the major dynamics of modernity, we can see how the nation form provided a framework of integration. On the one side, modernity was characterized by the division of the world into separate geopolitical units and, on the other, it brought about a high degree of homogeneity within these units. The main form by which the modern state developed was the nation-state, with the nation form finally dominating even in the case of federal states. After 1648 in Europe, the sovereign state became the primary actor in international geopolitics, and from 1918 nation-states flourished among the remains of the slowly crumbling European territorial empires. Indeed the past two hundred years, and especially the twentieth century, has in the whole been the history of the nation state.

The principal means by which the nation form institutionalized structures of integration was through national citizenship. By making citizenship coeval with nationality, one of the most important institutions of integration was created. Virtually every model of statehood has been based on some kind of national citizenship. The modern state in one of its key projects has sought to make of its members full citizens with the rights and duties that this condition involves. In this respect the state project has been articulated through strategies of social regulation, for the control of population was one of the key functions of the state. Other functions were the expansion of territory, crucial for access to markets, and, related

to this, permanent preparation for war. However, in the modern period the state has become more and more occupied with the control of populations. As described by Foucault by means of his famous concept of governmentality, the state project is more than mere government and is also about the regulation of populations through the control of a whole range of areas concerning the social body, such as health, crime, education, poverty. But governmentality is more than social regulation; it is also about the actual constitution of the subject as an individual and a member of the national polity. In order to achieve this objective, the state project must set about creating citizens. One of the primary functions of citizenship is to distinguish between members of the polity and non-members (Hindess, 1998). As described by several authors, the modern central state unleashed a project that integrated diverse populations into the state (Watkins, 1990; Weber, 1976).

It has already been noted that democratization was the basis of the republican strand in modern nationalism. With regard to the previous remarks on state formation, the discourse of the nation was never entirely dominated by the state project, but was also an expression of the dynamic of democratization. With its origins in the popular revolts of the early modern period, in colonial liberation movements, in social movements of all kinds throughout history, democracy has been a potent force driving a wedge between society and state. The birth of modernity coincided with the emergence of a wide spectrum of social actors, ranging from the early radical scientists and Protestant sects to Jacobin and socialist movements. On the one hand, these movements expressed the differentiation of modern society into different kind of agency and, on the other hand, democratization entails a principle of integration, albeit one that is highly fragile and volatile. It has been a basic tenet of modern thought that democratic legitimacy and the rule of law provide the final point of integration in an otherwise differentiated world.

Capitalism – and more generally the dynamic of industrialism – has also been pivotal in shaping the face of modern nationalism. As Ernst Gellner (1983) recognized, the emergence of a modern market society organized around capitalism and industrialism has played an important role in creating the social and economic preconditions for the

emergence of nationalism. While there is no inherent structural reason why capitalism produces nationalism – which has been present in pre-capitalist societies as well as in non-capitalist societies, capitalism, by its nature, has been crucial in generating social inequalities and conflicting interests in society that have nurtured nationalism. Since the rise of the social question in the late nineteenth century, nationalism has been able to draw a great deal of ideological drive from popular struggles, and while its categories can never fully be translated into social issues, there has been a remarkable coincidence of purpose in many instances of popular struggles and nationalist mobilization.

On the level of the state project, economic nationalism has been practised by many countries since the early twentieth century. Friedrich List's *National System of Political Economy* (1931 [1909]) was an important work in laying the foundations for protective economic nationalism. His ideas were adopted in Bismarkian Germany and were influential in many countries. Whether in the form of *Grossraum* expansion, economic protectionism or trade wars, many countries have adapted their national ideologies to protect capitalism. There is also the fact that national markets tend to homogenize society. In the recent past, but going back to the late nineteenth century, world exhibitions and other occasions where the great technological innovations of capitalism were displayed played a major role in codifying national identity (Roche, 2000).

The intellectualization of modern culture has also been a central dynamic for the creation of nationalism. With regard to the developmental logics of integration and differentiation, modern culture occupies an ambivalent position. On the one hand, it is clearly differentiated both functionally and, more importantly, as Weber argued, structurally, in that modern cultural spheres are relatively autonomous of each other. Yet, on the other hand, as noted by Mathew Arnold (1960 [1869]), culture could also be a reliable antidote to anarchy; or, to put it in the terms of sociological theory, culture could be a form of integration. In order for culture to have this role it had to be intellectualized and coded for popular consumption. In all of this intellectuals played a leading role.

Intellectualization and rationalization have accompanied cultural differentiation to produce secularization. Without secularization,

nationalism would not have attained the significance it has. Nationalism is a product of secularization, in that it emerged in the space created by the withdrawal of religion from the public domain. The secularization of modern culture has lent it a discursive nature. Although nationalist ideas are often dogmatic and strive to be hegemonic, they are nevertheless discursively articulated and seek to convince. A related dimension to the intellectualization of nationalism is the role of popular education, for the existence of a reading public is a precondition for the reception of national ideas. While nationalism cannot be reduced to a set of ideas that is compelling because of their ideological force, it requires a discursive medium. Finally, the abstract nature of nationalism lends itself to intellectualization: the idea of the nation must be imagined for it does not exist in a concrete form that can be immediately experienced.

Intellectuals have been pivotal in codifying the cognitive structures for imagining the nation (Giesen, 1992). In many countries the university has helped to define national identity by promoting national languages, collecting folklore and codifying national literatures. University academics helped in the codification of national identity by collecting and defining ethnographic, geographical and cultural material without which national cultural narratives, consciousness and national memories would not have been possible.<sup>6</sup> Historians played a central role in writing the history of nation. Archaeology has also played a significant role in codifying the national identity of many countries by furnishing the basic artifacts out of which historical narratives can be constructed.<sup>7</sup> In many countries major controversies occurred over the preservation of archaeological sites that did not affirm the official or dominant national identity.<sup>8</sup> Academics, in particular in Germany, emerged as the representatives of the nation and in this way made themselves indispensable to the state, for whom they were the 'interpreters' of the nation. In Germany the university helped to shape German national identity.<sup>9</sup> It served the cognitive function not just of providing the state with functionally useful knowledge but also of an important transmitter of national heritage. The autonomy of knowledge and the autonomy of the state were seen as inextricably connected. In many countries the universities were supported by the state in order to secure training for the professions. The result was that academic

research became more and more drawn into the state project, defining its goals but more importantly shaping its cognitive structures. Thus the disciplines of geography, history and statistics were important in laying the foundations of what may be called national cognitive structures.

#### CONCLUSION:

#### THE PERSISTENCE OF NATIONALISM

It has been hotly debated whether nationalism is a product of modernity or the outcome of long-term historical processes that are not specific to modernity. Much of this debate has revolved around the claim that there were pre-modern nationalisms and that many of the characteristics of modern nationalism can be found in these movements, for instance the notion of a distinctive people with a common origin and a shared destiny.<sup>10</sup> According to writers such as Greenfeld (1992), Gorski (2000) and Smith (1981), many of these ideas can be found in the early modern period, especially in England and the Netherlands. Others, such as Kameneka (1976) and Kedourie (1994), see the French Revolution as the defining moment of modernity and of nationalism, when the ideas of self-determination and equality entered many political discourses. The argument in this chapter suggests that while there may have been pre-modern nationalisms, the main political forms of nationalism are largely products of modernity. But the argument goes further: while nationalism may be a creation of modernity in terms of its ideological nature and political form, its persistence must be explained by its key role in expressing some of the major transformations in modernity. For this reason a political theory of nationalism must be complemented by a historical sociology of nationalism. More broadly, the suggestion that is made in this chapter is that the persistence of nationalism is because it allowed forms of social and system integration to develop within the differentiated structures of modernity. In this sense, nationalism can be seen in terms of processes of re-enchantment and de-differentiation. It provided a resistance to the tendency within modernity towards disenchantment – the loss of unified systems of meaning – and differentiation, in the sense of more and more pluralization, rationalization and intellectualization. But, as I have argued, the presence of symbolic

violence in nationalism cannot be neglected. The price for the penchant for integration – whether social or systemic – has been a high degree of violence in modern societies, much of it related to nationalism.

The nation form served as a discourse of integration for some two hundred years. Today there are clear signs that this discourse is finally showing signs of weakening in this function, although it is far from disappearing as a pervasive force in the world. Globalization has opened up different logics of integration and differentiation, unleashing in the process many kinds of identity politics, to which we can add nationalism, in particular of the violent Jacobin kind. The political forms nationalism is taking in the contemporary global world are very different from the kinds of nationalism that existed in the modern era. What is different about the current situation is that nationalism must live in a very fragmented and plural world of many discourses. It has lost its capacity for integration, except as something defensive and possibly temporary.

#### NOTES

I am grateful to Engin Isin and Elke Winter for comments on an earlier draft of this chapter.

1. In his last work (Gellner, 1998) there is some suggestion of a rethinking of modernity.

2. Rogers Brubaker argues that nationalism is not engendered by nations but is produced by political fields of particular kinds (1996: 17). His approach, which is influenced by the sociology of Bourdieu, sees the dynamics of nationalism being governed by the properties of political fields, not by the properties of collectivities.

3. The term originally refers to the revolutionary movement led by Robespierre in 1793–4 and which established the Reign of Terror on France following the French Revolution.

4. This was clearly expressed by Schelling, who was also a pivotal figure in communicating Idealist thought to the romantic movement. He argued, largely against Fichte, that nature was not a domain of necessity or an inanimate object but one of creativity and process. While Fichte had radicalized Kant's principle of freedom, he had not extended it into the domain of nature. With Schelling and Hegel, Idealist philosophy reconciled freedom and nature.

5. Oleg Kharkhordin (2001) has noted the connection between natality and the idea of the nation.

6. The role of the university and modernity is discussed in more detail in Delanty (2001).

7. Diaz-Andreu and Champion (1996) offer a good overview of the impact of archaeology on national identity in Europe. See also Kohl and Fawcett (1995).

8. For example, the debate over the preservation of the very significant Viking site in Wood Quay in Dublin in the 1970s. The implication of the discovery challenged the view that the Celts were the founders of the national capital. Nationalist-inclined archaeologists and prominent public figures thus opposed demands for the preservation of the site.

9. German national culture was spread through the creation of German language universities in Central Europe. In Sweden, Lund University was founded in 1688 as a step in the 'Swedification' of a region that formerly had belonged to Denmark. Trinity College was founded in the reign of Elizabeth I to secure the survival of English culture and power in Ireland.

10. On pre-modern nationalisms see Armstrong (1982), Coulton (1933), Dann (1986), Forde et al. (1995), Gorski (2000), Marcu (1976) and Ranum (1975).

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# *Architecturing Modern Nations:*

## *Architecture and the State*

PAUL JONES

Since their origins in the nineteenth century, nation-states have had a strong desire for representation, and this has led to attempts to express idiosyncratic national identities against the many universalizing tendencies inherent in modernity. Culture has proved a very effective space in which to impose national identities, and architecture in particular has been the site of many state-led projects. This has resulted in the creation of many socially significant buildings which have come to embody the nation code. This chapter assesses how and why nation-states have often attempted to impose national codes using architecture to construct or reflect a national identity.

Increasingly it is acknowledged that architecture is a carrier of social meaning (Frampton, 1990; Heynen, 1999), and a way that societies come to understand themselves culturally. This understanding is possible because architecture is a way of representing materially (often literally 'in concrete') the central ideas, aims and sentiments of a particular epoch of history. It is in this way that architecture gives abstract historical trends and aspirations a tangible reality – indeed the British artist and architectural critic John Ruskin (1819–1900) went so far as to suggest that we cannot remember without architecture.

Designing buildings is a way to represent the social symbolically, and as such provides a

way of 'reading' the past, but sociology is yet to produce a coherent theory of architecture. Although there have been some key works on architecture in the sociological tradition,<sup>1</sup> sociologists have been slow to develop a framework to understand this important reflection of cultural identity. There have been some noteworthy sociological accounts of architecture, but a 'sociology of architecture' framework does not currently exist. Significant contemporary contributors in the sociological tradition include King (1990), who addresses the relationship between architecture and global capital, Manuel Castells (1996), who briefly addresses some interesting points concerning architecture and globalization, and Ulrich Beck, (1998) who has written a short essay on architecture and the city. Postmodern thinkers such as Derrida (1994), Jameson (1985) and Lyotard (1994) have also addressed architecture to varying degrees as part of their broader writings, and Jürgen Habermas (1989b) has discussed postmodern architecture from the vantage point of his theory of modernity, as has another critic of postmodernism, Harvey (1990). In a more philosophical tradition, writers such as Foucault (1985), Heidegger (1971) and Scruton (1977) have all written fragments on architecture. Interestingly it would appear that architectural theorists engage with sociological frameworks more readily – notable

examples being Bonta's *Architecture and Its Interpretation* (1979), Tafuri's *Architecture and Utopia* (1999 [1976]) and, more recently, Bernard Tschumi's seminal *Architecture and Disjunction* (1994) and Vale's *Architecture, Power, and National Identity* (1992). There is also interest within architectural theory in critical theory and the Frankfurt School, as is particularly apparent in the work of Heynen (1999) and Wellmer (1998). Aside from these relatively recent works in social theory, some notable works on architecture within historical sociology are by Braunfels (1988), Gloag (1975), Kostof (1985) and Watkin (1986).

One of the main contentions of this chapter is that historical studies of architecture and the social theory of architecture can be brought together in a historical sociology of architecture, for it is evident that architecture has historically been an important cultural expression of collective identity. This chapter, focusing primarily on the British example but also drawing on other European cases, gives an overview from the vantage point of historical sociology of how state-led, monumental architectural<sup>2</sup> projects in particular have shaped our understandings of the nation.

#### MODERNITY AND THE NATION-STATE

To offer a thorough definition of modernity is far beyond the scope of this chapter.<sup>3</sup> However, for present purposes, I would like to follow Delanty (2000), Habermas (1987, 1989b), Strydom (2000) and Toulmin (1990) by suggesting that modernity is perhaps best characterized as a 'spirit', an 'ethos' or a 'project'. By considering modernity in such a way, it is possible to identify some of the key themes inherent in the modern age. For Habermas, (1989b) one of the central aspects of the 'project of modernity' is the end of tradition as a form of legitimation. This progressive dynamic within modernity was based, amongst other things, on faith in the emancipatory potential of knowledge or science. Indeed the idea of a technology-driven utopia has concerned sociology since its inception, with Auguste Comte (who coined the term 'sociology') suggesting that the modernizing force of science could be utilized for the benefit of society.

The progressive role of knowledge generally, and science specifically, was central to modernity as an intellectual project. The innovative nature of knowledge and science was something

that states wanted to colonize – nation-states that successfully aligned themselves with discourses of science and industry were perceived as modernizers, as dynamic institutions. Although in many respects a 'product' of modernity, the developmental nature of the nation-state became a vital dynamic for modernity. States were central to the project of modernity and shaping the world in which we live – indeed the twentieth century was characterized by state expansion (see Poggi in this volume).

Another central tension within modernity is the relationship between universalism and particularism. Put simply, states must resist culturally universal tendencies at some level if they are to develop an identity that is sufficiently distinct. Nation-states had a strong desire for representation under conditions of modernity – in other words, they wanted to be culturally distinct from other nation-states – and it was this tendency that encouraged cultural particularism. Architecture has been a built expression of such tensions, as states have self-consciously raided and modified historical styles of architecture to reflect specific aims and sentiments. The influential nineteenth-century critic John Ruskin argues that there are two 'duties' to be carried out by national architecture: 'the first, to render the architecture of the day, historical; and the second, to preserve, as the most precious of inheritances, that of past ages' (Ruskin, 1992 [1849]: 215).

A defining characteristic of modernity is the centrality of the nation-state, and the development of the nation-state is an institutional reflection of many of the broader progressive tendencies inherent in the modern age. Gerard Delanty (in this volume) defines two distinct entities: the nation (a cultural community) and the state (a political administration). He suggests that nationalism is often a result of states attempting to define nations. Although the discourse of the nation has never been the sole preserve of the state, it is clear that the state was often able to impose an authoritative definition of the nation – to define the cultural identity of 'their' community. Most often, high culture was the site where such definitions took place, and architecture was just one way the state attempted to codify the nation under conditions of modernity. In the modern age, citizenship was acted out at, and subsequently reflected on, the level of the nation, and this gave the state the potential authoritatively to define the nation. Important state codifications of the

nation emerged via art, flags, national anthems and within the discourse of history generally, but even more than this, such cultural manifestations of the nation played an important role not only in codifying the nation but also in *creating* a nation in the historical memory. State-led landmark architecture has proved a very important way of expressing and developing the national code, and many of the discourses identified above as important trends of modernity find their substantive reflection in state-led, landmark buildings.

#### THE NATION-STATE AND HISTORICISM IN ARCHITECTURE

Benedict Anderson (1983) suggests that without print culture (namely the novel and the newspaper) the nation would be unimaginable, and it is clear that via culture nation-states find ways to codify abstract discourses and aims. In this context it is also perhaps worth stating Billig's central argument with regard to national identities: that 'in the established nations, there is a continual "flagging" or reminding of nationhood ... a continual background for political discourses, for cultural products. ... [D]aily, its [the nation's] symbols and assumptions are flagged' (Billig, 1995: 8–9). Historically architecture has been an important and effective way not only of 'creating', but also of 'flagging' the nation. Architecture has had, and continues to have, a vital role in shaping the social imagination, in helping us recognize the society in which we live.

Architecture has been an important site of nation-building projects, thus expressing particularism in a much more specific sense. As suggested above, the development of the nation-state was often accompanied by a strong desire for state representations of the nation. State-led projects that attempted to codify an existing (or create a new) national identity often used architecture to embody the nation code,<sup>4</sup> and this usually meant modifying universal architectural styles to specific, or particular, national contexts. Culture generally, and architecture specifically, had a central role in defining the nation code in the modern age, as the development of nation-states necessitated the state giving a tangible form to an abstract 'cultural community' or nation. As a result of this, architecture became one of the most important ways that nations came to know and recognize themselves.

In many ways architecture is a discourse that is particularly open to national codifications through the modification of universals. The role of architects in designing such monumental, national buildings is to impose, through particularistic cultural references, for example, a 'national style'. Architecture has often represented universalistic expressions of civilization and has frequently transcended the particularism of national cultures. Clearly, without modification (or particularization), universal architectural aesthetic styles such as Baroque, Classicism, Gothic or Modern do not distinguish one nation code sufficiently from any other. In the era of nation-state building it is clear that states encouraged the development of distinctive architectural styles to codify the nation.

As a result of these tensions, the history of architecture as a built expression of national identity is a long and compelling one. Although obviously not 'national' *per se*, both the Greeks and Romans built systematically on a huge scale, and oppressive, exclusive structures such as Hadrian's Wall (built *circa* AD 122–8) sent out a message of colonial might to would-be invaders and the colonialized alike. From the beginning of the Victorian Age to the start of the Great War (1837–1914), Britain witnessed the building of a huge amount of buildings that *consciously* attempted to reflect state (read 'national') sentiments and aspirations. Many public buildings, such as universities and museums, emerged as monuments to the progressive and civilizational aspects of Victorian society. It can be suggested that such architecture has reflected a self-assured, culturally secure, colonial nation that considered its own society as the clearest expression of 'civilization'. As this was perhaps the most conscious attempt to use architecture in developing and reflecting a national identity, Victorian Britain is a good place to illustrate substantively some of these broader theoretical debates.

Interestingly, although not unsurprisingly, there was an ongoing debate in architecture in the nineteenth century about what constituted a 'suitable' style for landmark British buildings. Architectural styles such as Roman, Gothic, Greek and Baroque (which had all originated as vernacular constructions) had taken on stylized qualities and had come to be read as cultural codes loaded with meaning – this gave the 'battle of the styles' an almost moral dimension. It is perhaps worth clarifying that these meanings were not derived from

anything inherent in the aesthetic of the style; symbolic associations had developed often over periods of many hundreds of years. The question for the nineteenth-century state-builders thus became one of finding a style to suit the aims and aspirations of the state, and high-profile Victorian architectural theorists and critics were at the time 'torn between various doctrines which they could not reconcile' as '[t]he authority of historical precedent, the correct use of a national or local style in materials ... conflicted with the belief that history was a storehouse to be raided at random' (Kidson et al., 1965: 272).<sup>5</sup> Historicism within architecture basically amounts to giving historical styles precedent over contemporary ones. It was only really in the nineteenth century that reasonably accurate knowledge of geographically or historically distant societies had been available, and it was arguably the dissemination of this information about architectural styles that meant Victorian designers could choose in which style to build.

Initially the Victorians considered certain styles suitable for certain types of buildings (although this distinction appears to have broken down towards the end of the nineteenth century). As a general rule, Gothic designs were favoured for religious buildings and a neo-classical style was favoured for public buildings (Wilkinson, 2000). However, when Gothic *was* used on public (or any secular) buildings, the moral dimension to the style was 'carried over', as it were, and the resultant association to the architects and the nation-builders was a desirable one. Gothic came to be considered (at least by the British) as a quintessentially British style, and the famous architect Pugin (1812–52) regarded Gothic to be morally uplifting (again, perhaps in no small part due to Gothic's historical origins in twelfth- and thirteenth-century cathedral design). For Pugin and many others like him, Gothic architecture had come to reflect a civilizing process, the aesthetic expression of the epoch when barbarism and paganism had been 'defeated'. As such it was a built testament to the age when the 'other' could be Westernized (or Christianized) and assimilated; it is clear that it fitted well with the Imperial Age and Victorian aims and objectives. This is an example of how modern nation-states attempted to reconcile the pursuit or development of a distinct national culture with the cosmopolitan ideal of the universality of European 'civilization'. The Eurocentrism in

this conception of civilization reflects the universalistic self-understanding of Victorian society.

The English nation-builders seemed to have felt a particular affiliation with Gothic, and this was evident in the design competition for the Houses of Parliament in 1834.<sup>6</sup> After a fire had destroyed the medieval palace of Westminster, the competition to rebuild the damaged section of Parliament specified a medieval (that is, Gothic) style. The competition was won by Barry (up until that point working in a neo-classical style) and Pugin (a particularly vocal supporter of Gothic architecture and an expert in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century church design). They decided on the 'inherently' English style of Gothic to rebuild Parliament, and this was an early development of what we now know as Perpendicular or High Victorian Gothic. This style of architecture is the first that can be called 'English'<sup>7</sup> – High Victorian Gothic was a more creative style of Gothic that finally emerged around about 1845–50, and it was roughly in this period that Italian, French and German Gothic influences merged to create this 'correct' English Gothic (Kidson et al., 1965: 273).

This is a clear example of how modern nation-states attempted to reconcile the pursuit or development of a distinct national culture with the ideal of the universality of European 'civilization'. There is an almost dialectical relationship between universal styles which are particularized to reflect a specific, non-universal identity. When universalized aesthetics do not allow for much individual expression, problems of distinction abound, and it is clear that Gothic was a relatively 'universalized' architectural style until the development of Perpendicular Gothic. As suggested above, Gothic carried with it allusion to an epoch of European history when paganism had been defeated; building in Gothic meant that traditions of prior classical civilizations were being developed and modified. So, 'Gothic' had become somewhat of a catch-all category within architecture (suggesting as it did a universal style which had played a key role in reflecting the achievements of the 'civilized' European nations), but what *did* vary from country to country were the associations Gothic had as a style. Sutton (1999) suggests that in Britain Gothic revivalism was a liturgical mission, whereas in Germany, for example, the style was equated with Catholicism. Indeed August Reichensperger, a leading advocate of the style, saw Gothic as a

symbol of hostility to Prussian Protestantism (Sutton, 1999: 279). French architects who claimed Gothic as an originally French national style ironically emphasized its 'rationality' and 'functionality'.

John Ruskin viewed Gothic as a 'celebration', and implored designers to render the architecture of the day historical, and to fill their buildings with historical reference and meaning. He was adamant that history was *the* most important legitimating value, as it was the site of social learning and a 'civilizing' process, and he even believed that no new architectural styles should be developed, as existing (historical) styles were already sufficiently expressive. Ruskin thus emphasized the relationship between history, the state and the nation, and believed architecture should be a reflection of this. He argued that the state should create (and subsequently find) its reflection in certain types of architecture – especially in public buildings. This meant that 'successful' or 'good' architecture must be strongly rooted in collective memory and in tradition. Therefore, for Ruskin, architecture is a central way in which tensions between the past, the present and the future are played out, and it is this that makes architecture *the* national symbol. Bernhard Giesen and Kay Junge in this volume look at the way historical meanings are articulated, and for Ruskin architecture was the clearest representation of such collective understandings.

Indeed Ruskin suggests that within Gothic architecture is the potential to reflect 'all that need be known of national feeling or achievement' (Ruskin, 1992 [1849]: 272). Writing on Ruskin's interpretation of architecture, Hatton (1992) suggests that he viewed buildings and styles in a 'textual' way. In this respect, postmodern/deconstructive theories of interpretation can be traced back to Ruskin, whose contention was that meaning does not necessarily exist in external form, but rather in the reading and historical allusions made by the building (or 'text'). This, Ruskin claimed, is how people come to appreciate architecture, when each subsequent generation can 'read' it; this would seem to imply a nostalgic, sentimental populism – and indeed much national architecture was characterized by such populist historical references. The aforementioned tension between universalism and particularism is also alluded to by Ruskin, who saw significant architecture as that which carries universal messages in culturally specific ways, so that Gothic as a style has universal

'messages' but vastly differing national interpretations. Ernest Gellner (1983) also suggests that such recycling of the past is vital to nationalism, as it allows the masses to re-experience past glories and to relive former triumphs, and it is in this 'recycling' that we can see expressions of the tension between universalism and particularism.

#### ARCHITECTURE AND THE MODERNIZING STATE

From the example of Gothic architecture we can see that the past has proved to be a powerful legitimating force for the aims and aspirations of state definitions of the nation. However, as Habermas (1989a) suggests, a key element of modernity is to break with tradition as a source of legitimation for future activity. This, for Habermas, is another key tension inherent in the modern project, as modernity *creates* traditions as well as destroys the past as a sole category of legitimation. For its part, architecture has been very significant in inventing traditions as modern and building national histories as continuous and unbroken unities (even when in 'reality' they are far from it). So, in this respect, historical references are inherently conservative and anti-modern. In modernity a far clearer source of legitimation is to be found in the future; utopian aspiration was a central dynamic within the modern project. The next group of state-led projects used a potentially Brave New World and a progressive future as their justification – this future was to be ushered in by technological and industrial advance under the auspices of the expanding, modernizing nation-state. The rupture between the High Victorian Gothic and modern architecture could hardly have been more pronounced – modern architecture renounced ornamentation of any description (especially historical or culturally specific) and saw a new drive towards functional buildings with a universal aesthetic. Resultantly, aesthetic modernism was not an architectural discourse that could easily be used to codify a national identity.<sup>8</sup>

Coexistent with attempts to use historical references and past 'triumphs' as definitive of British identity was a state-led project with modernization and industrialization as its themes, which was ultimately to prove more significant than debates around the battle of

the styles. The Great Exhibition of 1851 was undoubtedly one of the defining points of the nineteenth century. Far removed from the historicism of Gothic architecture, the central architectural motif of the Exhibition, the Crystal Palace, came not only to be regarded as its definitive symbol, but also more broadly to represent (and hopefully help to create) a dynamic, progressive and forward-looking nation. With the Exhibition, the Victorian state attempted to place itself as a powerful, advanced institution that was driving a rapidly industrializing society. However, as is pointed out by Roche (2000) amongst others, the international dimension of the Exhibition must not be overlooked. Indeed, the official title was 'The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations'. This was arguably so that the industrial achievements of other nations could be compared against the British, who at the time were the world's strongest industrial power.

World Fairs and Expositions generally introduced utopian visions of the future, and frequently this progress was to be driven by science and industry. Habermas (1989b) suggests that the emergence of a public sphere is one of the characteristic developments in modernity, and one reading of such exhibitions is that they allow a public culture to form, and even allow people to participate in civil society. As with participation in the political public sphere, involvement in such exhibitions and fairs was not equal across society, but the populist nature of the events did guarantee mass participation. Roche argues that this mobilization was primarily because states and elites 'need to win the "hearts and minds" of the newly enfranchised working-class citizens for projects of economic growth and nation-building' (2000: 34). He suggests that what he calls 'megaevents' – such as the Olympics and World's Fairs – reflect a 'performance complex' inherent in modernity in which national and international events aimed at involving participation by mass publics. Gellner (1983, 1994) has also shown how national identity aimed at (and indeed was dependent on) the incorporation of mass publics into the state via 'discourses of belonging'.

Considered within these frameworks, the Crystal Palace is an example of monumental, state-led architecture, and it is significant that the building has come to be remembered more than the contents of the Exhibition. The winning competition entry was by Joseph Paxton, who provided a quick and ultimately

revolutionary structure in which to house the exhibition of science, industry and art. Modernization was a key idea for the Exhibition, and Paxton's was the perfect structure to symbolize these broader state aims, utilizing, as it did, the most modern building materials and construction techniques. Paxton (not originally an architect *per se* but a greenhouse designer) was at the forefront of designing functional buildings of glass and iron in the nineteenth century – other comparable projects are most notably London's railway sheds, such as King's Cross (1851), Paddington (1852) and St Pancras (1868). Indeed, from the point of view of architectural history, it is perhaps significant that Paxton merged engineering and architecture, as previously these two professions had been fragmented due to processes associated with industrialization – architecture was associated with art and craft, and engineering was the foremost expression of the machine age. It is also perhaps worth remembering that the use of iron and glass on public buildings of this sort was relatively new in the mid-nineteenth century; it was advances in machine technology that allowed the panels of glass to be cut so accurately as to allow repetition of a pattern. Perhaps never before has a building made such a virtue from its 'newness'.<sup>9</sup> Architecturally, the Crystal Palace was highly significant. For the first time in a building of this size, the volume of the building was significantly greater than its mass. The airy effect was accentuated as the iron on the building was painted light-blue, making it almost indistinguishable from the sky (and the glass), and this light, glassy 'modernism' was to characterize much of the Bauhaus's aesthetically modern architecture in the twentieth century.

Prince Albert, Victoria's consort, was a staunch supporter of the project, which he suggested should have 'exhibition, competition and encouragement' as its central aims, and the Crystal Palace housed exhibits that celebrated industry and scientific advance. However, Stern also suggests that the building is significant not only as a vast shelter for such educational and industrial objects, but also as 'an internalization of public life on an unprecedented scale' as 'it was the first building realized on the scale of mass democracy' (1994: 52). William Morris (1834–96), an influential reformer and a staunch supporter of historical reference in architecture, saw the exhibition and the Crystal Palace as a celebration of bad design ethos – namely the triumph

of machine production over craft. Predictably Ruskin was also very critical of this modern, industrial architecture and also suggested it represented all that was negative about mass production in society.

The Exhibition and the Crystal Palace did have strong state backing, however. The cultural reformer Henry Cole and Prince Albert<sup>10</sup> were two high-profile patrons, as was the future Prime Minister William Gladstone, who was another member of the commission. However, there were also dissenters, and a suitably cynical Disraeli remarked that 'this Exhibition will be a boon to the Government, for it will make the public forget its misdeeds'; although he also acknowledged that 'in a progressive country change is constant' (cited in Pearce and Stewart, 1992: 11). For present purposes, it is the modernizing aspect of the Exhibition and the role the Crystal Palace played in symbolizing this dynamic that we are concerned with, although it would be a mistake to overlook the continuity with traditional values altogether (Stern, 1994). Other related focuses could well be on the Exhibition as an imperialist project, or as a legitimization of capitalist ideology, or as a celebration of secular bourgeois values. For this chapter the important aspect is how far modernism, industrialism and science, key aspects of the modern age, were reflected in the state's landmark buildings.

Another example of such a state-sponsored iron structure was the Palais des Machines, which was built to house the World's Fair in Paris in 1889 to celebrate the centennial of the Revolution. As with the Crystal Palace, the transparent glass shell accentuated the already huge, cavernous interior, and both buildings were made possible by technological advances in the production of steel and glass and by the application of new scientific/mathematical knowledge to design and construction – a combination of these dynamics ushered in the 'machine age' of modern architecture over the following hundred years. The other, more famous, architectural symbol of the Paris World's Fair of 1889 was the Eiffel Tower (designed by Gustav Eiffel), which was another example of highly modernized girder construction, albeit on a less functional building. The tower has a huge symbolic value for Parisian and French identity,<sup>11</sup> and is another example of modernized processes of design and construction that, when applied to state-led architecture, reflects certain progressive aims of the nation-state. The Eiffel Tower, in

common with Paxton's girder construction, is a showcase for the functional construction techniques at the centre of the dynamic nature of architectural modernism. Sigfried Gideon, one of the most influential modernist architects, was captivated by the new spatial experiences which he believed to be at the heart of these new types of buildings. He wrote of 'delimited space' associated with such buildings, a concept that was to be a central tenet of architectural modernism (Heynen, 1999).

#### MODERNISM AND THE NATION-STATE

The Festival of Britain in 1951 can also be seen as a continuation of the trend of state-led definitions, or productions, of the nation via the medium of architecture. As with other state-led British celebrations of the nation, this was held in London,<sup>12</sup> on the South Bank of the River Thames. The then Deputy Prime Minister, Herbert Morrison, believed that the purpose of the Festival should be to highlight Britain's contribution to arts, science and industry. From this perspective it would appear that the aims and objectives of the 1951 Festival were broadly the same as they were in 1851 – namely a pride in national achievement and a celebration of free trade and industrial strength.

However, as Frampton (1990) points out, postwar Britain had little financial power (the budget for the Festival was £12 million), nor did it really have the cultural assurance legitimately to claim any sort of monumentalist expression. Many things had changed since 1851 – an empire was in decline, industrial supremacy had been challenged, and even food rationing had continued after the war – leading Frampton to assert that 'Britain was in the final stages of relinquishing its imperial identity' (1990: 262). This less self-assured Britain post- Second World War is perhaps reflected in the lack of what could be considered monumental architecture at 1951's Festival. Another factor perhaps guiding the ethos of the postwar Festival was that the general public were more cynical about the ability of free trade, industrialization and science to provide social justice and progression. The cultural content of the Festival also reflected changing patterns of leisure – there was undeniably a less educational tone to the Festival, which was oriented more toward consumption,

than in the Great Exhibition a hundred years earlier.

It could be argued that growing insecurity about cultural expression is reflected even in the origins of the project, as well as in the architecture the Festival produced. The 'Festival of Britain' was initially suggested by the Royal Society of Arts in 1943, and the spirit of renewal and optimism it was intended to engender was clearly articulated in a 1946 exhibition called 'Britain Can Make It' (appropriately held at the Victoria & Albert Museum). Indeed, a phrase the media frequently used to describe the Festival of Britain was a 'tonic to the nation'. It is an interesting point of comparison that the architecture built for the Festival, and indeed the Festival itself, was seen as part of the regeneration process. It is clear that for the Victorians architecture and such mass public events served a different function – they were a *reflection of*, rather than a *catalyst for*, progress.

A group of new buildings demonstrating avant-garde principles to design were erected as a celebration of (read an encouragement to) Britain's culture. The Dome of Discovery and the Skylon were temporary buildings which can also be seen to celebrate the potential of technology, but the central, permanent architectural symbol of the Festival of 1951 was the Royal Festival Hall (designed by London City Council architects). As suggested earlier, modern architecture had ushered in an era in which historical ornament or decoration was outlawed – the central modernist dictum is that form should follow function, and this led to a renouncing of historical reference and a universalized aesthetic (supposedly) driven solely by function. Aesthetic modernism, with a lack of historical ornament or decoration or reference points, is not really a discourse that lends itself to being codified around any particularistic collective identity. Modernism is ultimately an architectural universalism, with strong tendencies towards deterritorialized, culturally unspecific buildings. The modern movement also signalled a move away from monumentality in architecture, and, consequently, large-scale state projects were far less likely to attempt to express, or develop, a sense of the nation via an elaborate or grand building. As a result of these factors, the discourse of modern architecture was not one which could be easily codified around a nation code, and in this sense any 'national' architecture is in the strictest sense of the term 'anti-modern'.

However, it is clear that by making such modifications state-sponsored architects were still attempting to develop a distinct British style for landmark buildings such as the Festival Hall. In some respects this quest for distinction was successful.<sup>13</sup> The concrete on the building, shaped in wooden moulds, weathered in such a way to give the exposed, roughened material a drab, grey appearance. This geometrically inspired, visually harsh style quickly became labelled 'Brutalism', and was a 'uniquely British style that received widespread condemnation' (Wilkinson, 2000: 178).

Ironically, the modernist architects working on such building as the Royal Festival Hall and the public buildings in Chandigarh, Brasilia and Finland were designing what they considered 'morally correct' buildings – in an echo of the debates around style a century earlier. Generally, for the architect working in the modern style, a 'morally correct' building or style is one in which, among many other things, form follows function (there is an emphasis on geometrical form), and there are rationalized and standardized design and building methods. Primarily, though, modern architecture is characterized by the use of advanced design, and, against Ruskin, a forward-looking modernist avant-garde comes to represent the aims and sentiments of the state project and the only acceptable source of meaning is in the future. However, certainly in the British case at least, there is continuity, a thread which runs through the Great Exhibition, the Festival of Britain and the Millennium Dome project. Progressive ideals, modernism, free trade and the potential of a new social order have all been dominant discourses within the tradition of state-led architecture. It is many of these tendencies that gave the project of modernity its inherently dynamic nature, and these events and the architecture they engendered will serve as a reminder of these aims. The architecture of these exhibitions, as in other state-led projects, has become central to symbolizing and reflecting these aims on a monumental, built scale.

## CONCLUSION

There is an extent to which collective identities *need* a symbol to become a reality, and throughout history landmark buildings would seem to offer an effective way of doing just this. The significance of the buildings

discussed in this chapter is that they simultaneously attempt to reflect *and* to create (or to modernize) images of the nation. I have suggested that this is often achieved by attempting to harness the central ideals and dynamics of modernity itself. Iron buildings such as the Crystal Palace and the Eiffel Tower came to be perceived as symbols of a radically new social age – in this sense, these structures reflected Enlightenment beliefs in the progressive nature of science, knowledge and technology. This new industrial age in Europe was to be ushered in by nation-states and driven by advances in industrial production; this is a further reflection of the cultural self-confidence and belief in progress, and it was these tensions that provided much of the dynamic nature of modernity. World's Fairs gave states the chance to situate themselves self-consciously with regards both to the past and (more pertinently in terms of modernist construction) to the future.

Architecture has been a vital way to shape the social imagination as it goes some way to symbolizing the society in which we live, and as such should be a concern for contemporary, as well as historical, sociology. Architecture has also framed our historical consciousness and our collective memories; it is a vital way in which a society comes to know, or to recognize, itself. Glog goes so far as to suggest that '[a]s buildings are candid statements they have a moral superiority as records over many of those made by historians' (1975: 1) – although it is perhaps important to emphasize that reading architecture in a textual way raises problems of interpretation common to any 'text'.<sup>14</sup> Regardless of whether or not there can ever be an authoritative 'reading' of a building or a style, it is clear that architecture has an important symbolic role in representing the society in which it exists. If sociology is to attempt to understand architecture as such a carrier of meaning, then we must look beyond merely buildings and their histories, and question how and why architecture and architectural styles come to reflect, and construct, social meanings.

As cultural communities become increasingly fragmented and contested, so the very idea of the nation becomes more and more colonized by a variety of groups and in vastly differing ways. Clearly, architects working on landmark national buildings in the past saw themselves as representing and celebrating a clearly defined nation. Today, owing to the increasingly contested nature of nations, such

projects are more difficult to conceptualize, execute and, perhaps most interestingly from a sociological perspective, legitimate than they were in the mid-nineteenth century. As the ability of the European state to adequately represent the diversity inherent in the nation is called into question, so state-led architectural projects which claim to be representative are increasingly challenged.

Architecture is now a more 'open' discourse in the sense that it is controlled less by the state than it was in the past. Resultantly, architecture is less likely to be a national project with distinct national styles. Although the contemporary relationship between architecture and the state differs in a number of key aspects from the same relationship in the past, architecture is an increasingly important sphere for the expression of collective identities. As European nation-states pursued different routes to (and through) modernity, so different cultural expressions of these paths emerge. Architecture articulates not only desires and aspirations of a particular age, but also the tensions manifest in it – and it is because of this that sociology has much to contribute to (as well as to learn from) the study of architecture.

#### NOTES

1. Although sociologists have not developed a coherent theory of architecture, many have taken up the related (but distinct) debate on space. Key works in this area include Hillier (1996), Lefebvre (1991) and Soja (1989, 1996).

2. Defining 'architecture' is problematic. 'The art of building' is a well-used description, and although lacking in rigour and precision, this basic definition characterizes architecture as more than 'building' – architects add style or form to the functional building. Hillier offers a useful working definition that suggests architecture is both a 'thing' and an 'activity' (1996: 16–27), in other words a property of buildings (or groups of buildings) as well as the creative process of design.

3. For a more thorough discussion of the project of modernity, see Delanty (2000), Habermas (1987, 1989a, 1989b) and Wagner (1994).

4. There are many examples of non state-led buildings defining a sense of the nation. One of the most famous examples is Antoni Gaudí's church of the Sagrada Família in Barcelona, which was started in 1883 but was incomplete when he died in 1926 and remains unfinished today. The project is now being completed as the church has become a famous symbol of Catalan identity – as such the building has come to

reflect a nation *against* a state (as in Gaudí's lifetime), with Catalonia asserting its cultural identity.

5. This eclectic approach to materials and the appropriation of 'suitable' historical styles was to be a defining characteristic of postmodern architecture almost 200 years later.

6. There are many comparable examples of state-led Gothic architecture, of course. The one most similar to the Houses of Parliament is perhaps Thomas Fuller's Parliament Buildings in Ottawa, Canada (1859).

7. It is revealing of a colonial mindset that 'English' identity becomes equated with 'British' identity.

8. Examples of planned post-Second World War cities that attempt to use architectural modernism as a nation code are Chandigarh and Brasilia. For more on the symbolic role of architecture in these cities, see Vale (1992).

9. Robert Stern suggests that although the Crystal Palace was a radically modernizing statement, it also represents the inherited historical ideals updated, and as such can be considered as a 'grand Roman public building of the imperial era translated into glass, metal, and wood' (1994: 51–2).

10. Prince Albert's support for the project was a hugely populist statement from a monarch at the time, and won him a vast amount of support from the general public. In fact the Albert Memorial (designed by George Gilbert Scott) contains numerous references to the Great Exhibition. It is perhaps somewhat ironic that such a staunch supporter of a modernizing project should be remembered with a Gothic monument. However, that the monument was of Gothic design illustrates the earlier points on national association, for if this was 'the style of English patriotism', as Wilkinson affirms, then the Monument was its most intense expression' (2000:144). This memorial can be contrasted with other European monuments such as Chalgrin's classical Arc de Triomphe in Paris (1806) or the neo-classical Victor Emmanuel Monument in Rome (started 1885, completed 1911) by Sacconi .

11. Braunfels suggests that, historically, 'France more than any other country regarded its capital as a monument to its greatness, to the state, and to the level of its culture' (1988: 309). Understood in this way, President Mitterrand's *Grand Projets*, which gave Paris the Pompidou Centre (Rogers and Piano, 1977), the Pyramid at the Louvre (I.M. Pei, 1989) and La Grande Arche (Otto von Spreckelsen, 1990), can be seen as an attempt not only to situate Paris as a postindustrial city, but also to create a similar identity for France. This raises interesting questions about how far some capital cities can be viewed as reflections of the nation – for a historical perspective on European architectural reflections of this, see Braunfels (1998), while Vale (1992) offers some interesting postcolonial examples.

12. Again, this raises interesting questions, which are perhaps more pertinent today than in 1951, about tensions between the nation-state and the city. London-centric conceptions of the British nation still abound today, and it could be suggested that this is one of the

central reasons why the nation is such a contested category, as this doesn't adequately represent the diversity of England, let alone Britain. Such tensions could be seen to emerge around a more contemporary architectural project with similar aims, the Millennium Dome in Greenwich. For more on this see Jones (2002).

13. Paradoxically, many other national styles also emerged through particularization of the inherently universalizing modernist discourse. The Finnish architect Alvar Aalto (1898–1976) was at the forefront of developing a Scandinavian interpretation of modernism that featured timber, a traditional building material there (this style is particularly evident in Aalto's Finnish Pavilion at the 1937 Paris Exhibition).

14. Gloag perhaps underestimates the heavily negotiated process involved in the cultural and historical construction of meanings around architecture when suggesting that '[b]uildings cannot lie; they tell the truth directly or by implication about those who made and used them and provide veracious records of the character and quality of past and present civilisations' (1975: 1). It is highly problematic to assume architects work autonomously, with total creative control free from pragmatic constraints such as policy networks, intervention from communities or the economy.

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## Historical Sociology of the City

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Historical sociology of the city is a paradoxical field. On the one hand, it has illustrious names to its credit: Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges, Max Weber, Henri Pirenne and Lewis Mumford, to name a few. What these names signify is a practice of writing histories of the city that is concerned with *longue durée* and comparisons rather than static and insular analyses. On the other hand, while these illustrious names are often invoked, historical sociology in the way these scholars have written has been very little practised in the past century. In other words, while we have witnessed a growth of urban history in the twentieth century, historical sociology of the city has been neglected. Of course, if one conflates historical sociology of the city with urban history, this is a confusing claim to make. To be sure, there are numerous contributions by urban historians that include elements of historical sociology of the city (for example, Benevolo, 1993; Bridenbaugh, 1938, 1955; Dyos and Wolff, 1973; Ethington, 1994; Hohenberg and Lees, 1985; Ryan, 1997; Schlesinger, 1944; Teaford, 1975). However, I wish to argue in this chapter that historical sociology in its origins and practice is significantly different than urban history, and it is in this distinction that its unique contribution lies. While this contribution is amply displayed in recent historical sociologies of the city such as by Susan Reynolds (1997), Richard Sennett (1994), Aidan W. Southall

(1998), Hendrik Spruyt (1994) and Charles Tilly (1996), it is not widely recognized.

This chapter maintains a distinction between historical sociology of the city and urban history as analytical categories rather than a description of craft. It aims to illustrate that tacitly or explicitly accepted conceptions of the city with which urbanists work owe much to historical sociology of the city and its typologies. I shall first make this distinction in more detail. Then I shall focus on the three key historical sociologists of the city and illustrate how their typologies have been influential as well as being flawed. Amongst the most significant flaws is orientalism. I shall then argue that, despite their flaws, these typologies help us provide tools to undertake new analyses of the historical sociology of the city after orientalism.

### THE TERRAIN OF HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY OF THE CITY

What is the distinction between historical sociology of the city and urban history? To simplify, we can begin by suggesting that urban history is about cities and historical sociology of the city is about the city as such. At first this may be a confusing statement because how can we develop an idea of the city without knowledge about specific cities?

Does this distinction create a division of labour between urban historians who investigate specific cities and historical sociologists who use their investigations to arrive at the idea of the city? Does the idea of the city as such is a sum of its parts, gleaned from specific cities? These are some of the questions that we need to address before we proceed. It is perhaps useful to use an argument Charles Tilly made to illustrate this distinction. In a provocative essay entitled 'What Good is Urban History?' (1996), he argues that urban historians have ignored the challenge of becoming the most prominent interpreters of the ways that macro-processes articulate with everyday life in cities. Writing as a social historian, he claims that social history is about connecting everyday experience to the large structures of historical analysis. Such social history should illuminate the complex interplay between large structural changes and changes in the character of the dynamics of populations, hierarchies and routines of everyday social life. Writing as an urban historian, when defined this way, Tilly argues that quintessential social history is nothing other than urban history. To treat urban history as quintessential social history gives us the means of addressing central historical questions such as how ordinary people cope with everyday life when national and international policies impinge on their routines; how rising technological and organizational complexity robs life of its spontaneity and wonder; how and why capitalism became the dominant form of economic organization in Western countries; and how and why relatively large, centralized and unified national states displaced the city-states, city-empires, dynastic empires and federations that dominated the world.

For Tilly as an urban historian, cities are privileged sites for study of the interaction between large social processes and routines of urban life. Urban historians have superior access to these sites, but they also know more than other historians about the bases of variation in these regards from one time and place to another. Tilly considers Mumford as an urban historian who practised craft as quintessential social history. First, Mumford insisted on the close connection between internal lives of cities and particular configurations of power and production within which they lay. Second, he fashioned a theory in which the relative concentrations of state power and of commercial activity stamped the character of urban

life. Mumford's typological characterizations, such as Baroque City and Coketown, are, for Tilly, precisely the kinds of characterizations that modern urban history refrains from generating. Instead, urban history treats each city as a sample case from a national frame that blinds historians to relations between processes generating or sustaining specific patterns. By doing so, urban historians oscillate between local history and grand timeless, spaceless processes, causes, and effects. 'Either they take cities as undifferentiated points within interurban processes, such as urbanization and migration, or they take city limits as boundaries for the analysis of ostensibly self-contained urban processes' (Tilly, 1996: 710).

While I am sympathetic to Tilly's critique of urban history, his distinction between macro and micro processes is ultimately a flawed one. He is simplistic in that he assumes that there are ontologically identifiable processes that can be called 'macro' versus 'micro' or 'general' versus 'specific', and that the latter set are manifest in cities, and presumably the former set in nations, states and empires, though this is not clear from his argument. But such an assumption and the distinction on which it depends are questionable (Calhoun, 1998). It is also, as I shall argue, not an assumption made either by Mumford, whom Tilly discusses with admiration, or by Fustel and Weber, whom Tilly does not even discuss. Rather, what Fustel, Weber and Mumford seem to differentiate clearly is between *civitas*, the city as association, and *urbs*, the city as place. While they all admit that there is much that can be gained by investigating *urbs* (which is the object of urban history), their focus is on the city as association. Such a focus is neither *stagist*, for developing evolutionist schemes, nor *comparativist*, for developing analogies and parallels between vastly different cities. As Weber argued

A genuinely analytic study comparing the stages of development of the ancient polis with those of the medieval city would be welcome and productive. ... Of course I say this on the assumption that such a comparative study would not aim at finding 'analogies' and 'parallels', as is done by those engrossed in the currently fashionable enterprise of constructing general schemes of development. The aim should, rather, be precisely the opposite: to identify and define the individuality of each development, the characteristics which made the one conclude in a manner so different from that of the other. This

done, one can then determine the causes which led to these differences. (1976 [1909]: 385)

The distinction he makes here does not concern scale, however conceptualized, but is an analytical concern that is focused on uniqueness of a type of city that differentiates it from another. The uniqueness of the city is understood not as a particular city (*urbs*) or the facts collected from various cities, but as a particular type of city (*civitas*). It is this distinction that requires our attention, as does the way in which prominent historical sociologists have deployed it for their substantive analyses.

#### ORIENTALIZING THE CITY: FUSTEL, WEBER, MUMFORD

Fustel de Coulanges, Max Weber and Lewis Mumford were quintessential historical sociologists of the city. What makes them so, in my view, is the specific ways in which they attempted (not always successfully, as we shall see later) to focus on the essence of the city in different historical moments and the elements that constituted these differences rather than either specific cities by themselves or developing stagist or evolutionist schemes. This has been recognized by some of the most prominent historians of the twentieth century, such as Moses Finley, Arnaldo Momigliano and Capgrossi Colognesi. I will briefly discuss their views on Fustel, Weber and Mumford before I discuss them in more detail.

Finley maintained that the lasting contribution of both Fustel and Weber was their insistence on the category 'ancient city' (1981: 7). Finley, not unlike Tilly, was critical of the way ancient historians practised urban history by focusing on specific cities. He found the literature too weak on the essence of the ancient city and he considered Fustel as the pioneer. But, he argued, Fustel, despite his later work on the Roman colonate and medieval Europe, had over emphasized religion too much. Besides, the 'history of the city (whether town or city-state, ancient or medieval or modern) cannot be sufficiently analysed in terms of the cult of ancestors, worship of fire and the conflict within the developed state between the kinship group and the individual' (1981: 10). Thus, while acknowledging the significant contribution made by Fustel by his insistence on focusing on the essence of the ancient city as the object of historical

investigation, Finley was critical of the results of these investigations for their emphasis on religion.

For this reason Finley considered Bücher and Sombart rather than Fustel to be precursors to Weber's analysis of the city (1981: 12–13). For Finley, some of the pivotal concepts of Weber's *oeuvre* on the city, which is scattered through *The Agrarian Sociology of Ancient Civilizations* and the 'City' in *Economy and Society*, have obviously close kinship with those of Bücher and Sombart (1981: 15). Finley thought that while Weber began with an economic conception of the city, like Bücher and Sombart, by the time of *Economy and Society*, he had moved toward a broader and more comprehensive conception of the city embodying political and constitutional aspects. What Finley found significant in Weber was his focus on the essence of the city in specific moments, a focus on *civitas* rather than *urbs*. While Finley admitted that Weber can and should be critiqued for his particular statements of fact or interpretations, '[i]t still remains true, and needing an explanation, that the peasant was an integral element in the ancient city, but not in the medieval; that the guild was an integral element in the medieval city, but not in the ancient' (1981: 17). For Finley, an attempt at explaining these might lean towards Marx, but, despite parallels in their works, Marx was no more systematic or comprehensive about the ancient city than was Weber.

Momigliano, too, thought that Fustel was a pioneer historical sociologist of the city. He illustrated the influence of Fustel on a generation of French, German and Italian historians, but especially on the sociology of Durkheim. He emphasized how Fustel put a distance between himself and Aristotle in describing the ancient city while basing his interpretations on the material Aristotle provided.

The internal struggles of the Greek cities, which provoked or facilitated foreign intervention, are therefore for Fustel a mysterious means by which it became possible for the peoples to come together. ... [For him, t]he Roman cosmopolis was later to become the Christian cosmopolis. ... [Thus, f]earful of the revolutionary intoxication which had identified the ancient heroes with the protagonists of the Terror, Fustel deepened the gulf which separates our conflicts from the ancient ones and made it virtually unbridgeable. (Momigliano, 1977 [1970]: 332–3).

Momigliano emphasized four theses that the *Ancient City* put forward: (i) the development

of the organization of the state from gens to city through curia and tribe; (ii) the parallelism of Indian, Greek and Roman institutions; (iii) the evolution of religion from the worship of ancestors to the gods of nature; and (iv) the prehistoric origin of private property safeguarded throughout the whole evolution of the ancient world by religion, and more precisely by ancestor worship. At the margins of the ancient city, Christianity appeared, and brought an end to the security of private property founded on religion. A new epoch in which labour became the justification for private property (Momigliano, 1977 [1970]: 338). In all these theses what struck Momigliano as original was both method and substance: Fustel found both the origins and antithesis of modernity in the ancient city by an analysis of the essence of the latter on the basis of an understanding of the former.

More recently, Colognesi (1995) credited both Finley and Momigliano for having drawn attention to the work of Weber on the city. It is not that Weber's historical sociology of the city was unknown, but its depth in method and substantive argument remained under-appreciated. Following Finley, Colognesi specifically highlighted that there is a fundamental shift of emphasis between Weber's 1909 treatment of the differences between ancient and medieval cities and that of 1920. Colognesi emphasized that Weber considered ancient and medieval cities more closely to each other in 1920 than in 1909 and placed more emphasis on structural similarities between them than on their differences.

While Finley, Momigliano and Colognesi have done significant work in emphasizing the strength of Fustel and Weber in taking *civitas* rather than *urbs* as the object of historical analysis, they also remain silent about sociological orientalism that underlined their work as well as that of Mumford. I wish to argue that while recovering Fustel, Weber and Mumford for historical sociology of the city must retain the ontological difference between *civitas* and *urbs*, their orientalist perspective will have to be challenged. My focus in what follows, therefore, will be on the sociological orientalism that mobilized many of their interpretations of the essence of the occidental city, taking Greek, Roman and medieval cities as prototypes.

#### FUSTEL AND THE ANCIENT OCCIDENTAL CITY

The most significant distinction Fustel made was between *civitas* and *urbs*. He defined *civitas* as the religious and political association of families and tribes (Fustel de Coulanges, 1978 [1864]: 126ff.). By contrast, *urbs* was the place of assembly, the dwelling place and, above all, the sanctuary of this association. Fustel believed that the ancients were deliberate and consistent in making this distinction and being aware that they were not synonymous. What did this distinction signify for the ancients and for Fustel himself? Fustel argued that considering the city as association and the city as place as synonymous or overlapping is a modern way of thinking about cities, whereas the ancients maintained their belief in the existence of the city as an association even if it did not have a corresponding spatial form to it. Because of this fundamental difference, Fustel believed that we could not infer the essence of the city from its spatial characteristics such as concentration, arrangements and elements of its buildings, bridges and walls. Rather, the essence of the city would be revealed by investigating the city as association. That is why Fustel considered the city above all as a religious foundation. For him, as soon as various tribes agreed to 'unite' and have the same worship, they founded the city as a sanctuary for this common worship. The foundation of the city was thus always a religious act (Fustel de Coulanges, 1978 [1864]: 126).

It is on the basis of this distinction between *civitas* and *urbs* and the religious foundations of *civitas* that Fustel developed a typology of the ancient Graeco-Roman city. At the foundations of this typology was the model of the oriental city compared with the occidental city. Fustel argued that both the Greek and the Roman city went through the same stages, which he called revolutions. Since he was concerned with interpreting the essence of *civitas* rather than *urbs*, for each stage he identified the constituent social groups that were locked into a struggle for the domination of the city. The origins of the city were closely related to oriental kingship and, in fact, *civitas* was originally founded and dominated by kingship. For Fustel, this was the common origin of *civitas* in both oriental and occidental cities. The authority of the king and his role as the supreme worship as priest-king lay at the foundation

of both cities. But, as Fustel argued, the Graeco-Roman city experienced three revolutions that distinguished the occidental city from that of the oriental city.

The first revolution was the dethroning of the kings from power by the aristocracy. Taking Sparta, Athens and Rome as paradigmatic cases of the Graeco-Roman city, Fustel argued that in each the first revolution was a world-historical event where central authority represented by priest-kings were toppled by the patricians, a landowning class unique to the occidental city. For Fustel, the consequences of this revolution were significant but were still followed by another revolution, where the institutions of family and clientship (an ancient form of slavery) were radically altered. For him, the revolution that had overturned the kings had modified the exterior form of the government rather than changed the constitution of the city. 'The aristocracy had brought about a political revolution only to prevent a social one' (Fustel de Coulanges, 1978 [1864]: 243). The second revolution, which was enacted by a faction of the aristocracy and the patricians, brought about radical changes in the familial and kinship ties that lay at the foundations of the city. This new regime was still aristocratic, though the dominant families had less influence. However, a third revolution brought about the most radical change in the city by entering the plebs into both the political and social domains of the city as genuinely constituted citizens.

For Fustel, taken together, these three revolutions were the foundations of the ancient city and also the foundation of the Christian city that were to emerge. Admittedly, I have provided only a glimpse of Fustel's otherwise fascinating and magnificent account of the ancient city. What I would like to highlight, however, is fairly straightforward. First, Fustel practised (or perhaps invented) a kind of history that was clearly founded on a distinction between *civitas* and *urbs*, which he believed he was inheriting from the ancients themselves. This ontological distinction is absolutely essential in understanding the kind of history he practised, which, I would argue, is a historical sociology of the city rather than urban history. Its focus is not on *urbs* interpreted as place but on *civitas* interpreted as a space configured by its constituent social groups. Second, Fustel was an 'orientalist' whose interpretation of the ancient city was founded upon a fundamental distinction between occidental and oriental cities. This

interpretation of the fundamental difference between the orient and the occident and the 'superiority' of the latter over the former was already beginning to mobilize the Enlightenment conception of Europe as it becomes crystallized in Hegel's lectures on history (Hegel, 1956 [1830]: 111–15). The account produced by Fustel of the three revolutions that Sparta, Athens and Rome went through was designed to illustrate how the occidental city was different from the oriental city. It was also the most influential account that hinged the occidental uniqueness and superiority thesis on the city (Springborg, 1986, 1987). It is this thesis that was inherited by Weber and Mumford.

#### WEBER AND ORIENTALISM

In various studies between *The Agrarian Sociology of Ancient Civilizations* (1976 [1909]) and *Economy and Society* (1978 [1921]), Weber's argument that the city as a locus of citizenship was the characteristic that made the occident unique and his reliance on synoecism (a way of seeing the city as embodying spatial and political unification) and orientalism (a way of dividing the world into essentially two 'civilizational' blocs, one having rationalized and secularized and hence modernized, the other having remained 'irrational', religious and traditional), appeared more consistently and with an increasing urgency than his emphasis on rationalization (Käsler, 1979).

For Weber, at first glance, the occidental city presented striking similarities to its Near and Far Eastern counterparts (1978 [1921]: 1236). Like the oriental city, it was a marketplace, a centre of trade and commerce and a fortified stronghold. Merchant and artisan guilds could also be found in both cities (Weber, 1958 [1917]: 33–5). Even the creation of autonomous legal authority could be found in both cities, though to varying degrees. Moreover, all ancient and medieval cities, like their oriental counterparts, contained some agricultural land belonging to the city. Throughout the ancient world the law applicable in cities differed from rural areas. However, particularly in the occidental medieval city, such difference was essential, whereas it was insignificant and irregular in the ancient oriental city. The ancient city almost always arose from a confluence and

settling together of strangers and outsiders. While Weber used this as evidence of why the city always manifested a social and cultural differentiation, he often underlined its unity over diversity (1978 [1921]: 1237). While he recognized that the urban population consisted of very diverse social groups, what was revolutionary in the occidental city was the free status of this distinct population. The fact that the city was a centre of trade and commerce led rulers to free bondsmen and slaves to pursue opportunities for earning money in return for tribute (1978 [1921]: 1238). The ancient occidental city arose as 'a place where *the ascent from bondage to freedom* by means of monetary acquisition was possible' (1978 [1921]: 1238). The principle that 'city air makes man free', which emerged in central and north European cities, was an expression of the unique aspect of the occidental city. 'The urban citizenry therefore usurped the right to dissolve the bonds of seigniorial domination; this was the great – in fact, the *revolutionary* – innovation which differentiated the medieval occidental cities from all others' (1978 [1921]: 1239). Through time, however, in many of the European cities patrician families became differentiated from the rest of the citizens and coalesced into a powerful class of knightly nobility. The feudal nobility settled in rural areas and did not acknowledge the knightly nobility based in cities. Nevertheless, the internal differentiation of the medieval city continued with more intensity and fierceness than the differentiation between urban and rural nobility. Hence,

[a]t the close of the middle ages and at the beginning of modern times, nearly all Italian, English, French and German cities – insofar as they had not become monarchical city states as in Italy – were ruled by a council-patriciate or a citizen corporation which was exclusive towards the outside and a regime of notables internally. (1978 [1921]: 1240)

The essence of the ancient *polis* and the medieval commune was therefore an association of citizens subject to a special law exclusively applicable to them. By contrast, Weber claimed, in ancient Asia, Africa or America similar formations of *polis* or commune constitutions or corporate citizenship rights were unknown.

Despite his emphasis on the internal differentiation of the occidental city, however, when Weber made comparisons with the oriental city, he overlooked its differentiation in favour of a unity signified by its corporate status: 'The

fully developed ancient and medieval city was above all constituted, or at least interpreted, as a fraternal association, as a rule equipped with a corresponding religious symbol for the associational cult of the citizens: a city-god or city-saint to whom only the citizens had access' (1978 [1921]: 1241). A significant difference between the occidental city and the ancient oriental city was that in the former there was no trace of magical and animistic castes. It was the belief of ancient citizens that their cities originated as free associations and confederations of tribes (1978 [1921]: 1242). But Weber never explained why the beliefs of the ancient Greek citizens should be taken as given. That the *polis* was a settling together of tribes was *their* narrative. Weber incorporated this narrative with a twofold move: first, he considered synoecism as the origins of cities; and, second, he interpreted the rise of the plebs as the origins of citizenship. So while the *polis* was a confederation of noble families and was religiously exclusive in its origins, it was later to dissolve clan ties and invent citizenship. Weber saw an identical trajectory in the occidental medieval city too, especially in the south, which was originally, for Weber, a federation of noble families. The entry of the plebs into citizenship, however, lessened the significance of membership in clans or tribes; rather, membership was defined along spatial and occupational lines. Yet the ancient *polis* never became a fraternized association. Weber maintained that in fact it was on its way to becoming an association but that it was incorporated into the Hellenistic and Roman kingdoms. 'The medieval city, by contrast, was a commune from the very beginning, even though the legal concept of the "corporation" as such was only gradually formulated' (Weber, 1978 [1921]: 1243).

Weber thus believed that in the ancient oriental city the magical and clan ties persisted regularly, while in Greek *poleis* and medieval cities they were progressively dissolved and replaced by spatial and occupational relationships. In Greek *poleis* this becomes visible beginning with colonization, which required the settling together of strangers and outsiders to become citizens. In addition, the change in the martial organization of the *polis* from heroic warfare to hoplitic warfare intensified the dissolution of clan ties. Although many Greek *poleis* maintained such ties for a long time, they became more ritualistic and less significant in the everyday life of politics. Similarly, the warrior associations of the

wandering Germanic tribes in Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire were organized around leadership and martial prowess rather than clan ties. The development of spatial units such as the 'hundreds' as a method of distributing obligations impeded a clan's development.

When Christianity became the religion of these peoples who had been so profoundly shaken in all their traditions, it finally destroyed whatever religious significance these clan ties retained; perhaps, indeed, it was precisely the weakness or absence of such magical and taboo barriers which made the conversion possible. The often very significant role played by the parish community in the administrative organization of medieval cities is only one of many symptoms pointing to this quality of the Christian religion which, in dissolving clan ties, importantly shaped the medieval city (1978 [1921]: 1244).

By contrast, the oriental city never really dissolved tribal and clan ties.

For Weber, all cities in world history were founded by the settling together of strangers and outsiders previously alien to that space. Chinese, Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Mycenaean and Minoan kings founded cities, relocated them, and in them settled immigrants and recruited people. In such cities the king who controlled the warfare apparatus retained absolute power. An association failed to develop and the urban residents maintained their tribal identities (1978 [1921]: 1244). 'Under such circumstances no legal status of urban citizenship arose, but only an association for sharing the burdens and privileges of those who happened to inhabit the city at any given time' (1978 [1921]: 1245). In the ancient *polis*, membership in one of the tribal associations remained a distinguishing mark of the citizen with full rights, entitled to participate in the religious cult and qualified for all offices which required communication with the gods. The ancient tribe remained an association in so far as it was artificially created rather than being an expression of descent or lineage. The north European medieval cities were different. The resident joined the citizenry as an individual, and as an individual swore the oath of citizenship (1978 [1921]: 1246). His membership was not in a tribe or clan but a city association. All the same, both ancient and medieval cities were able to extend citizenship to outsiders. 'In all Asian cities, including the Near Eastern ones, the phenomenon of a "commune" was either absent altogether or, at best, present only in

rudiments which, moreover, always took the form of kin-group associations that extended also beyond the city' (1978 [1921]: 1248).

The majority of Weber's interpretations on Islam, India, Judea, China and Near East rely on separate studies he undertook on these cultures, and thus each requires more detailed discussion. Although Weber did not undertake a special study on Islam comparable to those of Judaism, China and India, which we shall discuss below, he made several scattered but significant comments on Islamic cities. Bryan Turner (1974) has undertaken the most penetrating analysis of these scattered comments. For Weber, it was the urban piety of certain status groups – artisans and merchants – in autonomous cities that was characteristic of the rise of European capitalism (Turner, 1974: 94). While Christianity played a fundamental part in the development of the associational character of the occidental city, Islam impeded the development of such a character with its emphasis on clan and kinship (1974: 97). So, in oriental cities one finds a collection of distinct and separate clan and tribal groups which do not join common action, a tribalism which Christianity helped break in Europe. 'The internal development of a rich and autonomous guild and associational life within the city was closely connected with the legal and political freedom of the city from the interference of the patrimonial, or feudal officials. Not only were cities legal persons, they were also independent political agents' (1974: 97). They fought wars, concluded treaties and made alliances. Their autonomy was fundamentally connected with their martial independence.

It was in the city that urban piety, legal autonomy, occupational associations and political involvement developed; hence, the autonomous city had very important connections with the rise of European capitalism. In Islam, Weber argued, it was the combination of a warrior religiosity with patrimonialism which limited the growth of autonomous cities and which in consequence precluded the growth of urban piety within the lower middle classes. (1974: 98)

For Turner, although Weber mistakenly overstated the importance of the warrior nobles in shaping the Islamic ethos, contemporary historical research gives ample evidence for Weber's thesis that Islamic cities were internally fissiparous and externally controlled by patrimonial rulers. 'The result was that Islamic cities did not produce a rich life of independent burgher associations' (1974: 98).

But was the ostensible fissiparousness of the Islamic city any more divisive than the factionalism of the *polis* or the medieval city? Turner agrees with Weber that it was and argues that the fact that Islamic cities were aggregates of sub-communities rather than socially unified communities is illustrated by the very geography of cities of the great cities of Islam: Cairo, Damascus, Aleppo and Baghdad. These cities were divided into quarters or districts, and each district had its homogeneous community and markets. The social solidarity of these districts or 'villages' within cities sometimes reflected the religious identity of its inhabitants (1974: 99–100). 'As Weber rightly observed, the continuity of clan and tribal organization within the city context imported rural feuding arrangements into urban life' (1974: 100). The city was the focal point of Islamic government, trade and religion; yet this focal point of Islamic culture lacked corporate institutions, a civic culture and a set of socially binding forces. Urban life was a precarious balance of social forces, a balance of contending quarters, sedentarized tribes, sects and legal schools (1974: 103). 'Islamic guilds were not, therefore, organizations created by workmen to protect themselves and their craft; they were organizations created by the state to supervise the craft and workmen and above all to protect the state from autonomous institutions' (1974: 103). The guilds were a facet of patrimonial control. The Islamic city lacked 'group feeling' and also failed to provide corporate institutions which would protect individuals (1974: 104). But, as Southall emphasizes, this sharp distinction overlooks some structural similarities between Islamic guilds and their occidental counterparts (1998: 228–9). While guilds as self-governing and self-regulating bodies controlling standards of production, conditions of work and criteria of entry did not exist in Islamic cities, local authorities on behalf and by appointment of the ruler were required to control occupations by enlisting the help of guild leaders and notables (Southall, 1998: 228). In many cities this led to craft and merchant guilds in which local notables, just like their occidental counterparts, exercised power and exerted control.

Similarly, Weber recognized that craft and merchant guilds existed in India during the period in which the great salvation religions originated. The position of the guilds was quite comparable to that occupied by guilds in the cities of the medieval occident. But the

uniqueness of the development of India lay in the fact that these beginnings of guild organization in the cities led neither to the city autonomy of the occidental type nor, after the development of the great patrimonial states, to a social and economic organization of the territories corresponding to the 'territorial economy' of the Occident. (Weber, 1958 [1917]: 33)

Instead, a caste system developed that was totally different from that of the merchant and craft guilds in at least three respects. First, it regulated the social distance between members of different castes and membership was essentially hereditary (1958 [1917]: 34–5). Second, that apprentices socialized in the guilds of the occident under a master enabled the transition of the children to occupations other than those of their parents. Third, despite violent struggles among themselves, the guilds in the occident displayed a tendency toward fraternization (1958 [1917]: 35). Castes, however, made fraternization impossible because of inviolable barriers against commensalism (1958 [1917]: 36).

For Weber, this last difference – fraternization – between the caste and guild was decisive and led him to make perhaps his clearest statement about the origins of occidental citizenship. Weber mentions a letter by Paul to the Galatians in which Paul reproaches Peter for having eaten in Antioch with the gentiles and for having withdrawn and separated himself afterwards. For Weber, this emphasis on shattering the ritual barriers and refusing to regard any people as pariah means the origins of commensalism are specifically Christian, and cut across nations and groups.

The elimination of all ritual barriers of birth for the community of the eucharists, as realized in Antioch, was, in connection with the religious pre-conditions, the hour of conception for the occidental 'citizenry'. This is the case even though its birth occurred more than a thousand years later in the revolutionary *conjuraciones* of the medieval cities. For without commensalism – in Christian terms, without the Lord's Supper – no oathbound fraternity and no medieval urban citizenry would have been possible. (1958 [1917]: 37–8)

As regards the Chinese civilization, for Weber, cities were a major impediment to the development of capitalism, despite the fact that many other conditions were already there for its development. But ancient and medieval cities and emerging states in the occident were vehicles of financial rationalization, of a money economy, and of politically oriented capitalism.

'In China, there were no cities like Florence which could have created a standard coin and guided that state in monetary policies' (Weber, 1951 [1916]: 13). For Weber,

[i]n contrast to the Occident, the cities in China and throughout the Orient lacked political autonomy. The oriental city was not a 'polis' in the sense of Antiquity, and it knew nothing of the 'city law' of the Middle Ages, for it was not a 'commune' with political privileges of its own. (1951 [1916]: 13)

The cities in the orient never aimed at gaining a charter which might, at least in a negative way, guarantee the freedom of the city. 'This was hardly possible along occidental lines because the fetters of the sib were never shattered. The new citizen, above all the newly rich one, retained his relations to the native place of his sib, its ancestral land and temple' (1951 [1916]: 14). While craft and merchant guilds developed in Chinese cities, they never coalesced into an oath-bound political association formed by an armed citizenry. The city could not function as a corporate body.

Weber explained this in terms of the different origins of the occidental and oriental city. The ancient *polis* originated as an overseas trading city, however strong its base in land-lordism. But China was predominantly an inland area. The prosperity of the Chinese city depended not upon the enterprising spirit of its citizens in economic and political ventures but rather upon the imperial administration, especially the administration of rivers. On this point, Weber remarked that just as in Egypt the sign of government is the Pharaoh holding the lash in his hand, so the Chinese character identifies governing with the handling of a stick (1951 [1916]: 16). But the essential point is that '[o]ur occidental bureaucracy is of recent origin and its past has been learned from the experiences of the autonomous city states. The imperial bureaucracy of China is very ancient' (1951 [1916]: 16).

Ultimately, the legal foundations beneficial to the development of capitalism were absent in China because the cities and guilds had no politico-martial capital of their own. Chinese authorities repeatedly reverted to liturgical controls, but they failed to create a system of guild privileges comparable to that of the West during the Middle Ages. The lack of political associational character of the city in turn was explained by the early development of a bureaucratic organization in the army and civil administration (Weber, 1951 [1916]: 20).

To conclude, the occidental city was foremost a sworn confraternity, and for Weber this *was* the decisive basis for the development of capitalism. Everywhere it became a territorial corporation and officials became officials of this institution. The occidental city was an institutionalized association in which the citizen was an active creator of law to which he was subject. For the development of the medieval city into a sworn association, two circumstances were of central importance. First, at a time when the economic interests of citizens urged them towards an association, this was not frustrated by magic or religious barriers. Second, a broader power enforcing the interests of a larger association was absent (Weber, 1978 [1921]: 1249). While Weber saw essential affinities between the ancient Graeco-Roman *polis* and the medieval corporation, he believed that the latter diverged from the former by being a confraternity exclusively devoted to peaceful means of acquisition rather than warfare. Ultimately, that is why economic capitalism would emerge rather than being stifled by the political capitalism of the ancient *polis* (Love, 1991). There is not enough space to develop a critique of Weber's orientalism here (see Isin, 2002). But so far I hope to have illustrated how orientalism and synoecism were the mobilizing perspectives from which followed his analysis of the essence of the occidental city. Notwithstanding differing emphases, in both respects Weber owed much to Fustel. Weber can even be read as an update and revision of Fustel by broadening both the scope (the oriental city appears in Weber with fine analyses rather than a block) and the focus (Weber includes Christian and medieval 'polis') of historical sociology of the city.

#### MUMFORD AND ORIENTAL DESPOTISM

Although French geographer Jean Gottman (1957; Gottman and Harper, 1990) is credited for introducing the term 'megalopolis' to describe the coalescence of several metropolitan areas into a contiguous agglomeration of people and activity in the north-eastern seaboard of the United States, it was Lewis Mumford (1938) who first elaborated the concept. His description was based on a revised version of an idea his mentor Patrick Geddes had advanced in his *Cities in Evolution* (1950 [1915]). Geddes had outlined six

stages of city development, from *polis* to necropolis. In *Culture of Cities* Mumford modified this outline by including an earlier stage represented by *eopolis*, the village community, and combining two of Geddes's later stages, *parasitopolis* and *patholopolis*, into *tyrannopolis*. So in this new scheme, city development originated with the rise of the village (*eopolis*), it evolved into the *polis* as an association of villages and kinships, and resulted in *metropolis*, an association of *poleis*. The later three stages of city development, *megalopolis*, *tyrannopolis* and *necropolis*, represented the decline of the city. The significant issue here is that neither Geddes nor Mumford considered these stages as corresponding to the outlines of history of the city. Rather, these were ideal-types or typologies that represented different moments in the 'civilizing process'. The ancient Greek, Roman and medieval cities were such moments. For example, Platonic Athens, Dantean Florence, Shakespearean London and Emersonian London represented the *metropolis*. Alexandria in the third century BC, Rome in the second century AD, Paris in the eighteenth century and New York in the early twentieth century represented *megalopolis*.

For later Mumford, interpreting the city in history in terms of these moments as stages of development became too narrow. In *The City in History* (1961), he abandoned this outline in favour of a specific and detailed account of the city since its ancient origins without an effort to create a model or theory. Nevertheless, his discussions of *metropolis* and *megalopolis* in *The City in History* maintained his basic typology in *The Culture of Cities*. Remarkably, owing to his insistence on the essence of the city as *civitas* rather than a focus on *urbs*, Mumford was already able to discern the emerging outlines of *megalopolis* in 1938; by 1961 these had become much more clear.

In *The Culture of Cities* Mumford regarded *megalopolis* as the beginning of decline: at this stage of its 'development', 'the city under the influence of a capitalistic mythos concentrates upon bigness and power. The owners of the instruments of production and distribution subordinate every other fact of life to the achievement of riches and the display of wealth' (1938: 289). For Mumford, the aimless expansion of the *metropolis* into *megalopolis* was an expression of a drive for capital accumulation: everything must become rational, big, methodical, quantitative and ruthless.

*Megalopolis* facilitated the repression and exploitation of the working classes by regimenting them and by making life increasingly insecure and volatile. This gives rise to a new class conflict in which the frightened bourgeoisie occasionally resorts to savage repressive violence against the working classes. As the conflict intensifies in *megalopolis*, an alliance of landowning aristocracy, speculators, financiers, enterprises and industrialists increase their interest in controlling the urban space. The urban design professions such as planning, municipal engineering and architecture increasingly serve the interests of this class alliance by turning their attention to behaviour and manners of the working classes in their habitats and *habitus*.

Although Mumford observed the transformation of the *metropolis* into the 'shapeless giantism' of the *megalopolis* in *The Culture of Cities*, the automobile suburb had not yet crystallized by 1938. Much of his critique concentrates upon the congestion of the *metropolis*. By 1961, however, for Mumford, understanding *megalopolis* required understanding the origins of the mass suburb. His critique in *The City in History* is equally ferocious and unrelenting against both the giant *metropolis* and senseless suburbia. In that work the revised chapter on *megalopolis* is now preceded by a new chapter on suburbia.

None the less, Mumford regarded *urbs* not merely as giving expression to values and culture embodied in *civitas* but also as shaping and forming it. While he always vigilantly insisted that urban space embodied dominant values of contemporary economy, society and culture, he argued that urban space was strategically used and controlled by dominant groups to enforce and impose their own ideals.

The organizers of the ancient city had something to learn from the new rulers of our society. The former massed their subjects within a walled enclosure, under the surveillance of armed guardians within the smaller citadel, the better to keep them under control. That method is now obsolete. With the present means of long-distance mass communication, sprawling isolation has proved an even more effective method of keeping a population under control. (Mumford, 1961: 512)

Mumford was quite explicit about his stance regarding the political content of the urban container and fought against those who interpreted the *megalopolis* as the final or the inevitable form of urban development by arguing that they overlooked historical outcomes of

such concentration of power. He argued that the myth of megalopolis gives legitimacy to modern accretion of power. The persistence of over-grown containers such as Berlin, Warsaw, New York and Tokyo is a concrete manifestation of the dominant forces in occidental civilization. The fact that the same signs of overgrowth and overconcentration persist in both communist and capitalist societies shows that these forces are deeper than prevailing ideologies. Mumford criticized academics for their vacuous predictions of urban growth concentrating on statistics, accusing them of the 'slavery of large numbers'. Ultimately, '[w]hether they extrapolate 1960 or anticipate 2060 their goal is actually '1984' (1961: 527).

Mumford traced the rise of the giant metropolis directly to the rise of new dominant groups in the industrial city with their insatiable appetite for expansion. In the industrial city of the nineteenth century the creed of the bourgeoisie was laissez-faire and free enterprise, but with the growth of an immense productive economy and a consumption economy, the bourgeoisie abandoned its belief in the free market and appropriated state institutions for protection and subsidies. The rise of the metropolis was a symptom of this tendency towards monopoly and concentration of great numbers. By the twentieth century, the metropolis 'brought into one vast complex the industrial town, the commercial town, and the royal and aristocratic town, each stimulating and extending its influence over the other' (1961: 531). The metropolis was an embodiment and expression of a new stage in capitalism in which industrial capital and class was among other equally powerful classes and forms of capital.

Mumford argued that massive accretion of power and concentration of numbers necessitated the rise of bureaucratic administration and management in both the ancient despotic metropolis and the modern metropolis. In both, governmental and capitalistic 'enterprises' resulted in the growth of professional and managerial bureaucracies and classes. The metropolis became a form dominated by a new trinity: finance, insurance, advertising. 'By means of these agents, the metropolis extended its rule over subordinate regions, both within its own political territory and in outlying domains' (1961: 535). The metropolis became an arena for accumulation of different forms of capital: the banks, brokerage offices and stock exchanges essentially serve a

collecting point for the savings in the entire country, centralizing and monopolizing the use of money. Similarly, the values of real estate in the metropolis were secured by the continued growth of the metropolis, thereby benefiting financial institutions. In order to protect their investment and continued profitability, banks, insurance companies and mortgage brokers encouraged further concentration and the rise of land values in the metropolis.

For Mumford, the monopoly of cultural capital was the essence of the metropolis. The effective monopoly of news media, advertising, literature and the new channels of mass communication, television and radio gave authenticity and value to the style of life that emanated from the metropolis. 'The final goal of this process would be a unified, homogeneous, completely standardized population, cut to the metropolitan pattern and conditioned to consume only those goods that are offered by the controllers and conditioners, in the interests of continuously expanding economy' (Mumford, 1961: 538). This constituted a control without kingship. The metropolis became a consumption machine. The princely ritual of conspicuous consumption became a mass phenomenon. Mumford continually emphasized that the efforts to promote agglomeration and concentration were not spontaneous; they were deliberate. It was through public subsidies and policies that the concentration of people in the metropolis was ensured.

To call the overgrown metropolis, aimlessly expanding, megalopolis is to give legitimacy to a sprawling giant. 'These vast urban masses are comparable to a routed and disorganized army, which has lost its leaders, scattered its battalions and companies, torn off its insignia, and is fleeing in every direction' (1961: 541). For Mumford this formlessness unleashed new desires for control and regulation. 'In short the monopoly of power and knowledge that was first established in the citadel has come back, in a highly magnified form, in the final stages of metropolitan culture. In the end every aspect of life must be brought under control: controlled weather, controlled movement, controlled association, controlled production, controlled prices, controlled fantasy, controlled ideas. But the only purpose of control, apart from the profit, power, and prestige of the controllers, is to *accelerate the process of mechanical control itself.*' (1961: 542). The priests of the new regime are those who command and control knowledge, who represent the Cybernetic Deity.

Like Weber, Mumford saw in the modern metropolis the elements of 'oriental despotism' represented by the citadel and king-priest. From this perspective, Mumford could not bring himself to believe that megalopolis was a legitimate form of city. Megalopolis was for him the death of the city, a stage leading to necropolis.

As one moves away from the centre, the urban growth becomes more aimless and discontinuous, more diffuse and unfocused, except where some surviving town has left the original imprint of a more orderly life ... [In megalopolis, the] 'original container has completely disappeared: the sharp division between city and country no longer exists' The form of the metropolis, then, is its formlessness, even as its aim is its own aimless expansion. (1961: 543-4).

In 1938 Mumford had argued that the trend toward megalopolis had to be stopped. It would be nothing less than a revaluation of values of modern culture: mastery of nature, the myth of the machine and ceaseless expansion of capitalism. A regional framework of civilization that would correspond to this revaluation would be necessary, nurturing the vitality, density, vigour and diversity of the city while maintaining access to the countryside in symbiotic relationship with it. By creating the regional city, the historical balance between the city and the countryside would be restored. In the intervening years, Mumford observed in despair that the 'urban question' was considered by urban policy-makers, many academics and planners as an engineering question of efficient government, administration and co-ordination. He argued that addressing the urban question as a spatial question amounted to a 'spatial fetishism' incapable of seeing the relationship between spatial order and social order. For him, as for Fustel and Weber, the ontological distinction between *civitas* and *urbs* was crucial.

It is hopeless to think that this problem is one that can be solved by local authorities, even by one as colossal and competent as the London County Council. Nor is it a problem that can be successfully attacked by a mere extension of the scope of political action, through creating metropolitan governments ... [Rather, the] internal problems of the metropolis and its subsidiary areas are reflections of a whole civilization geared to expansion by strictly rational and scientific means for purposes that have become progressively more empty and trivial, more infantile and primitive, more

barbarous and massively irrational. ... This is a matter that must be attacked at the source ... (1961: 553-4).

Mumford believed that to master ourselves and our drives we must treat the city as a living organism. The disciple of Geddes thought that every organism contains creative and destructive tensions and processes through which it grows. Life and growth depend not upon the absence of negative conditions, but on a balance and a sufficient surplus of energy to maintain this balance. The city embodied both creative and destructive forces from its first foundation five thousand years ago. While it embodied energies that set humans free from hereditary and oppressive obligations and allowed them a degree of democratic participation and co-operation, it also owed its existence to concentrated attempts at mastering other humans and dominating the environment. Release and enslavement, freedom and compulsion, have been present from the beginning of the urban culture. Ultimately, our ability to master our dark instincts will determine whether we can renew life in the city. By 1961, the prospects did not look good:

Our present civilization is a gigantic motor car moving along a one-way road at an ever-accelerating speed. Unfortunately as now constructed the car lacks both steering wheel and brakes, and the only form of control the driver exercises consists in making the car go faster, though in his fascination with the machine itself and his commitment to achieving the highest speed possible, he has quite forgotten the purpose of the journey. This state of helpless submission to the economic and technological mechanisms modern man has created is curiously disguised as progress, freedom, and the mastery of man over nature. (1961: 558-9).

As I suggested earlier, Weber can be read as an update and revision of Fustel. Similarly, I would like now to suggest that Mumford can be read as an update and revision of both Fustel and Weber. While maintaining a distinction between *civitas* and *urbs*, which both Fustel and Weber drew, Mumford further broadened the scope (he included the origins of cities) and focus (he included the baroque or early modern city and the modern city, which Weber mysteriously ignored) of historical sociology of the city. In fact, Mumford returned to some themes in Fustel such as religion that Weber had emphasized differently.

### HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY OF THE CITY AFTER ORIENTALISM

By focusing on Fustel, Weber and Mumford as the quintessential historical sociologists of the city, I hope to have illustrated that their practice consisted in three interrelated but distinct assumptions: (i) a fundamental ontological distinction between *civitas* and *urbs*; (ii) a focus on the essence of *civitas* as forces or groups that constitute it at any given historical moment; and (iii) a concern with the present. Whether it is Fustel's 'client city' or Weber's 'plebeian city' or Mumford's 'baroque city', what makes these ideal-types objects of analysis is not their construction from various empirical realities such as everyday routines that related them to 'large-scale' processes, as Tilly argued, but something altogether different. What these ideal-types represent is the essence of the city at any given historical moment by virtue of its constitutive forces and groups that create the city as an association, a *civitas* rather than an *urbs*, that sheds light on the present as a question. While the essence of *civitas* can only be revealed or unconcealed through investigation of various cities, their characteristics and constitutive groups and forces, it is not reducible to them. To put it another way, the essence of the city at any given moment is not a totality of its facts but stands beyond it. There is, then, no reason to critique urban historians on the basis of their neglect of 'macro'-analyses or 'large-scale' processes. But there is a need to ask why investigating the essence of the city at present has not led to a rethink of the essence of the city in the past.

Be that as it may, and powerful though historical sociology of the city was as practised by Fustel, Weber and Mumford, the essence of *their* occidental *civitas* depended on orientalism. Each juxtaposed an occidental city against an oriental one, defining the essence of the occidental city as having transcended the limits of the oriental city, and warning about contemporary developments that ostensibly signalled a return or revival of oriental despotic tendencies in occidental cities. Each also defined the essence of the oriental city as a series of 'absences'. In a magnificent account of the birth of the city in medieval Europe, Henri Pirenne made scattered remarks on the 'orientalizing' of the occidental city but quickly reverted to an orientalist position where he described the essential difference

between the two as the occidental bourgeoisie as the mobilizing force dominant in occidental cities but 'lacking' in oriental cities (1925: 5, 23ff., 79ff., 231–4). What mobilized this orientalism, as Abrams obliquely pointed out (Abrams, 1982; Abrams and Wrigley, 1978), was their objective to explain the distinctiveness and uniqueness of the occident as the space of the birth of capitalism. The city was at the centre of this as a space either of religion (Fustel) or of citizenship (Weber) or of technology (Mumford) or of the bourgeoisie (Pirenne).

The question historical sociology of the city now faces is how to interpret the essence of the city without orientalism. It is precisely because its *present* objective is not (or perhaps ought not to be) the uniqueness of the occident as the birthplace of capitalism. While quintessential historical sociologists of the city, Fustel, Weber and Mumford, provide some significant tools to address this question, their underlying orientalism will have to be critiqued and deconstructed from a perspective that concerns the present. But what should be the objective? Perhaps it is because that question has not yet been articulated that historical sociology of the city has not gathered momentum in the past few decades.

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## *Historical Memory*

BERNHARD GIESEN AND KAY JUNGE

Memory can appear in various forms. In its broadest sense the concept covers embodied habits as well as information or semantic patterns that have been acquired in the past. In contrast to these forms of memory that do not contain an explicit reference to the past (Tulving, 1983), historical memory refers to some past episode that can be recounted in a narrative format. Narrative accounts frame the social constitution and continuity of its main characters, and it is only within such a narrative frame that individual and collective identities can take form and be communicated (Somers, 1994).

Memory can be attributed to different carriers. While individual memories do not have to be communicated and shared with others, historical memory exists only in a collective mode – it has to be communicated, mediated and represented in social relations (Assmann, 1992; Connerton, 1989; Le Goff, 1992). Historical memory is, therefore, not based on personal experience and it is not inscribed into the body of its individual carriers like a specific skill or a trauma that can even resist all attempts to express it out or to forget it. Instead, historical memory constructs a common past of a social community that extends beyond the life-span of its individual members. In this respect it also differs from the collective memory of a generation. Generational memory refers to the common experiences of contemporaries, to a life-world that is regarded as largely inaccessible for those who were born later on (Mannheim, 1970). It exists only during the life-span of its

carrier group and vanishes with their death. In contrast to memory as based on specific individual or generational experience, historical memory imagines a past that reflects the present culture of a social community instead of relating to direct experience. Therefore, it differs from other institutional modes of reconstructing the past, such as, for example, religious confessions of sin and psychotherapy (Hahn, 1998) or jurisdiction in court. Institutional memory refers to social community and can range from relatively small units – a family or a town – to very large ones – a nation, a religious confession or even the community of humankind.

Extending beyond direct personal experience and recalling a common past, historical memory is one of the most basic references for the public construction of collective identity and history. Two different modes of historical memory have to be distinguished. First, historical memory can be conceived of as the intentional attempt to store and to reproduce knowledge about the past. This conception of memory is at the core of the classical *ars memoriae*, that is, the mnemotechniques which were to enable the precise reproduction of texts. Memory as reproduction tries to counteract oblivion. Media for the storage of historical knowledge and social institutions – like monuments or rituals – are related to this conception of memory as intentional reproduction. In distinction to this, historical memory can also be considered as a non-intentional recurrence of past phenomena, which may be triggered off

by certain situations or encounters. Here, memory is not a technique or an art but a *vis*, that is, a force that intrudes upon our mind and can hardly be suppressed. In this case, too, memory is opposed to oblivion, but in a different way. Even if we would want to forget, the power of the past is stronger. Memory as recurrence is at the core of a traumatic reference to the past. We will return to this in the final section.

Both conceptions of historical memory, intentional reproduction as well as non-intentional recurrence, take into account that memory is not necessarily a true and accurate description of the past. It is selective and maybe erroneous. What passed unnoticed when it happened can appear as a major event in retrospection, and what once received the attention of contemporaries may, later on, pass into oblivion.

#### HISTORY OF THE CONCEPT

Organicist notions of collective memory, which have been around at least since the end of the eighteenth century, became quite common in the romantic period and still had a wide currency among nineteenth-century historians. Theoretical accounts of how the conceptual twins of collective identity and historical memory work were still rare. In the second quarter of the twentieth century several authors laid the path for research on collective memory. Most important among them is Maurice Halbwachs, a pupil of Durkheim (who in turn was inspired by Fustel de Coulanges), who studied the legendary topography of the Gospels in the Holy Land. He first focused on the distinction between individual and collective memory, insisted on the dependence of the former on the latter, and pointed to the social constructedness of memory in the present (Halbwachs, 1980; Hutton, 1993). Around the same time the German art historian Aby Warburg was working on his *Bilderatlas Mnemosyne* (2000), edited posthumously. Warburg tried to explore to what extent certain pictorial images became part of collective memory and thereby influenced later artists and artisans in their work. From quite a different background the psychologist Frederick Bartlett showed experimentally that cultural conventions control individual perception and recall (Bartlett, 1932; Douglas, 1986). In 1928 Milman Parry

related all distinctive features of Homeric poetry to the constraints enforced by oral methods of composition and transmission (Ong, 1982; Parry, 1971). This question of how specific modes and media of communication and storage influence or even determine what can be said and remembered became a main area of research in the last quarter of the twentieth century (Goody and Watt, 1975). Today the topic of historical memory has gradually evolved to a specific academic discipline with its own research agenda. Encompassing research programmes on the construction of national memory have been launched in France (Nora, 1996–7) and Germany (François and Schulz, 2001). The tradition of Halbwachs was continued by Connerton (1989) and others. The Egyptologist Assmann (1992) attempted to integrate different strands of research into a general model of history of memory. His most famous studies centred on transformations of Moses, his roots in Egyptian cults and his latter-day reception, that is, on the cultural invention of monotheism and its long-term consequences for Western culture (see Assmann, 1997).

#### MEDIA OF MEMORY

Information about the past has either to be stored in order to be retrieved, recalled and represented at a particular moment later on or it has to be kept in continuous circulation. While personal memories can be stored privately, that is, just in the mind and body of an individual, collective memories are articulated within the public sphere and, therefore, require external material carriers and symbolic media of communication – from oral language to printed texts. The constraints of these media impinge on the form of historical memory and can induce very particular social dynamics of memorization (Goody and Watt, 1975; Innis, 1964). The most basic media of collective memory consist of vernacular language and oral transmission from person to person by songs and sagas, tales and plays. Oral memories are often reproduced in a concerted mode when members of the audience or a chorus respond to a storyteller and thus complete and detail the presentation (Ong, 1982). Ancient Greek and Latin rhetoric contained special mnemotechniques for the accurate oral reproduction of the past by referring to *imagines et loci* (Yates, 1966). Orality

allows for the easy transmission of complex stories, but it is also elusive and particularly susceptible to distortion, interruption and oblivion and it can result in conflicts and debates (Goody and Watt, 1975). Indeed, oral modes of commemoration have been characterized by a floating gap or blind-spot with reference to the time-span between the recent past of the community in question and its mythical origins (Vansina, 1965). Therefore, since ancient civilizations collective memory was stored by enduring material carriers that could persist beyond the life-span of individuals and resist decay and destruction (Shils, 1981). Sculptures and wooden engravings in the early days of humankind (Leroi-Gourhan, 1993) and later on stone constructions like pyramids, palaces, temples or churches carried information about the past, about the glory of kings and the grace of gods, about the sequence of dynasties and the size of empires (Assmann, 1992; Innis, 1964). The past could be represented by the sheer age of the building, by spatial relations within the construction, and by depictions of kings and gods, demons and battles. Such depictions, however, can represent a person or an event of the past but they cannot show sequential change, motion and the continuous unidirectional flow of time as texts can (Lessing, 1788). They embody and present the past in a direct way – it does not have to be re-enacted or renarrated; it has never ceased to exist. Understanding these depictions does not require the knowledge of reading. Its basic meaning can often be disclosed even when, centuries later, the chain of oral transmission has long been discontinued.

Three inventions of symbolic media opened up new spaces of storing and encoding collective memories: pictorial or phonetic writing (Leroi-Gourhan, 1993; Ong, 1982), lists and tables for book-keeping (Goody, 1977), and systems of numbers to mark sequential orders and construe calendars that gave rise to the projection of historical events onto a linear and continuous timeframe – a framework which allowed for the easy identification of events by abstracting from their particular historical horizon in equating time and tense (Koselleck, 1985; Motzkin, 1996).

Because pictorial writing systems required long learning and because the act of writing in stone was physically demanding, the amount of stored information remained very limited – it had to be condensed to the most important messages accessible only to those few who

were able to read. The written *historiae* about the remote past were mostly an exclusive knowledge of virtuosi that conveyed power and the aura of the sacred. This situation did not change much after stone and chisel had been replaced by paper and ink. Handwritten books and document remained precious and rare and their reproduction was the task of specially trained individuals. Whoever wanted to know about the past had to travel to the libraries and ask for the privilege of reading the classical writings. Even if errors and distortions could hardly be avoided, the art of reproducing texts by handwriting engendered a strong sense of continuity between the texts and a sacralization of the most ancient texts – historical memory was turned into a written tradition.

#### PLACES, RELICS AND MONUMENTS

The past as imagined by a social community is not evenly represented in material objects and places. Particular places are supposed to recall the history of a community and connect us to its past, in contrast to their further geographical surroundings, which are considered as a historical and mundane and therefore free from the obligation to remember the past. The earliest and most elementary site of commemoration is the place where the remainders of the dead ancestors or the founding heroes of a community are buried. These places or relics are regarded as sacred, and any attempt to use them for mundane purposes is met by collective outrage. The sacredness of a place can hardly be negotiated.

Lacking any external storage, the memories of oral cultures, for example, hunters and gatherers, rarely reached back beyond two or three generations. The invention and continuous maintenance of burial sites changed the range of memories. If the dead ancestors were not to be forgotten, they had to be represented in the midst of the community. In ancient Egypt and Rome families united annually with their dead ancestors in festive meals on the burial site. But the cult of the dead extended beyond the limits of families and clans and could also integrate larger social communities (Fustel de Coulanges, 1980). Remembering the dynastic sequence of kings not only revived and represented the dead, but also linked the present rule to the authority of the immovable past. The remainders of

the dead founding hero marked the core of early political communities, and a change of this core is reflected by a corresponding displacement of relics. Thus, the transfer of the relics of early Christian martyrs from cities in the eastern to the western Mediterranean area substantiated the famous *translatio imperii* from ancient Rome to the medieval Frankish empire on religious grounds. The possession of famous relics attracted pilgrims and visitors and symbolized the spiritual power of a city or a ruler.

In the high Middle Ages a hierarchy of universal saints and their relics, most important among them the Eucharist, emerged – reflecting the increasing power of the pope in Rome. With the rise of super-local saints and the spread of relics brought by the crusaders to northern Europe, the movement of pilgrimage to the places of famous relics gained additional salience. Crusades and pilgrimages set the Christian community of the high Middle Ages in motion (Geary, 1978; Webb, 1999). Collecting relics became a passion for kings as did the collection of representative art five centuries later. In collecting the relics of saints, the prince could expand and extend his power, deprive the local communities of their spiritual centre, and justify his position as a representative of the sacred. After the twelfth century the cult of saint's relics lost importance as the structural backbone of Christian society and was increasingly regarded as a laic mode of religious devotion, but it never faded away.

The veneration of relics is not limited to religious communities. It can also be found in the early modern princely state. The monumental tombs of the rulers in the crypt of churches they had sponsored connect the two bodies of the king – his hidden dead corpse and the artful image of the immortal hero – thus guaranteeing the continuation of the political unit in time (Kantorowicz, 1957).

Later on, with the rise of the modern nation-state, the rulers and their dynasty are succeeded by the great men of a nation, by their founding fathers, political leaders and cultural heroes. Their relics, too, are sacred places frequently located in churches, temples or mosques like Westminster Cathedral in London, Santa Croce in Florence or the Dôme des Invalides in Paris. This concentration of memory in particular places and its embodiment in particular objects can result in debates and doubts, in contested claims and bloody conflict. Whoever owns the places of

memory has the key to collective identity, and, if it is not his own, but the collective identity of others, can humiliate them by preventing access to the sacred places or even by abusing the sacred places for mundane purposes. Reconquering the land of the ancestors and bringing the founding heroes' bones back to their homeland is, therefore, the ultimate ritual of remembering the embodied past.

Debates and feuds about the possession of the bones of saints between medieval monasteries or cities were, therefore, not insane aberrations, but desperate cultural wars about collective identity and the access to the sacred past. Of course, there were economic interests at stake. The Venetian theft of the relics of Saint Marc from Alexandria in 827 or the transfer of the relics of Saint Nicholas from Myra to Bari in 1087 are stories of armed robbery and paid treason, of faked documents and distorted justifications (Geary, 1978).

Relics are, by their very nature, rare. Their power is local and fades away if distance increases. The members of the community have to travel to approach the sacred. With the rise of larger territorial orders and citizenship, new forms of collective representations of the past were required (Giesen, 1998). Finally, at the end of the nineteenth century, the invention of traditions reached the scale of mass production and allowed for the nationalization of the masses (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983). The representation of the founding hero had to be decoupled from material relics that are considered as a part of him or her and brought to the centres of public life. This was achieved by images and monuments erected by the living in memory of the dead. In contrast to relics, they are less demanding on piety and not particularly sensitive to the presence of outsiders. Like their predecessor, the heraldic sign, they are constructed by the members of the community, but presented also to outsiders; they can penetrate everyday life, but they can also represent the sacred core of the community.

Some of the monuments that have been constructed by rulers themselves during their lifetimes in order to represent their fame to subsequent generations mark the transition between remainders and true monuments (McLuhan, 1996). They hint at remnants and relics but these are hidden or entirely subsumed underneath the monumental architecture.

Pure monuments can no longer claim a special connection between their symbolic

content and the particular place where they are erected. This turn towards explicit and therefore reflexive representation engenders new risks: the tie between the sacred and the monument may be questioned. In order to counteract this evanescence of the sacred, the monument has to present an unmistakable mark of identity: the representation of the founding hero's face is, therefore, at the core of the monument.

Most important in the Western transition from relics to monuments is certainly the advent of sculptures in the central place of the city showing the prince on horseback, thus representing how princely power integrated the early modern territorial state despite the physical distance of the prince and his court from the population. The relics of the rulers were still special places but usually removed from the large cathedrals and located in private chapels. Monuments representing the victorious liberator of the nation imagine the nation rising against the ancient regime. Monuments of cultural heroes relate to the rising bourgeoisie, which defined itself by reference to culture instead of capital, acquired education instead of inherited titles. In all these cases an embracing invisible social order, the territorial state or the nation, has to be rendered visible and represented. Because of the very invisibility of this order, it has to be imagined as a face and a name – as the hero who mediates between the invisible sacred order and the visible mundane locality and thus creates the supra-local community.

This type of representation was challenged to a certain degree by the impersonal identity of the modern democratic nation. The democratic nation, by its very constitution, no longer has a personal centre. The nation is embodied in all its citizens and the commonality of all its citizens is the nation. The founding hero has – in a literal sense – thousands of faces (Campbell, 1971). This crisis of representation started at the end of the nineteenth century, was fully developed after the First World War, and finally led to the monuments for the anonymous fallen soldiers (Koselleck, 1997).

A different, even opposite, reaction to this crisis of representation can be found in monuments where the symbolic connection to historical persons is abandoned completely – monuments of Germania and Britannia, for example, symbolize the triumphant and victorious nation as an ahistorical goddess. Because every citizen knows that this figure is fictitious, it is no longer considered as truly sacred. Therefore the awe inspired by the

presence of sacred relics or the vivid memory of the hero's life has to be replaced by the awe provoked by the sheer size of the monument – the figures of the heroes are blown up to gigantic proportions.

Monuments can be erected at any place where the community of memory wants to mark its centre. Because this is usually also the centre of urban everyday life, awe and piety with respect to the sacred past are difficult to sustain. Even if they are of gigantic size, monuments are easier to blend into ordinary life than are relics. Below the monument mundane life can continue to flourish. This blending of the monument into citizens' everyday life goes even further when streets and places are named after the founding heroes or founding events of the community. Here the name has entirely replaced the image and citizens' everyday lives can continue without remembering the sacred core of the community's past. Thus monumentalization also discharges individuals from the obligation to remember the past constantly. Monuments risk becoming the depositories of collective memory.

Monuments may be difficult to construct but they are easy to destroy. Changes of political regimes and religious authorities result frequently in the destruction of monuments, in a *damnatio memoriae*: the Egyptian Pharaoh Akenaten ordered the statues of the old Gods to be destroyed; Christian missionaries engaged in a destructive war against the pagan statues of devotion; radical Protestantism banned the statues of saints from the churches; the French revolutionaries converted churches into stores for grains and guns; the monuments of Hitler were crushed and blown up in the German cities after 1945, as were the Lenin monuments after 1990; more recently, the Taliban destroyed massive Buddhist statues in Afghanistan. Because these monuments represented the charismatic core of the past community, the new community could not just reduce them to mere aesthetic objects or pieces of tourist interest. If the triumphant hero is turned into a haunting demon, his symbolic representation is destroyed in a collective act of purification.

#### TIMES OF REMEMBRANCE AND MEMORIAL RITES

In principle, historical memory is publicly accessible for every member of the community.

Elaborated rituals that re-enact and represent the past have, however, to be limited to special occasions; they must not overwhelm and suffocate the mundane affairs of everyday life. This holds particularly true for modern societies, which stress the rupture between past and future and challenge the idea of life as celebrated recurrence (Connerton, 1989). Therefore, differentiation takes over. The ritual remembrance of the past is concentrated on special times, when the extraordinary event of the birth of the community is celebrated, when the founding myth is re-enacted on stage in dances and plays, when the traditional masks and costumes are put on, when the community celebrates by consuming special food and beverages (Nora, 1996–7).

But it is not only the effort to open up spaces that are discharged from the burden of memory that fosters the separation between times of remembrance, on the one hand, and everyday life, on the other. A common date of remembrance also allows the construction of a supra-local community: all members – wherever they are – are united in a simultaneous celebration of memory, but return to their everyday businesses when the day of remembrance has passed. It even gives way to a complex integration of different locally separated communities of remembrance by one embracing principle. Thus the calendar of saints that emerged in the late Middle Ages connected different parishes and fraternities, monasteries and religious orders; each of them was devoted to a particular saint and celebrated his or her day in a special way, but all of them knew about the all-embracing calendar, the times of memory for the others (Cronin, 1963). This spread of a common calendar of saints and heroes indicates a new pattern of societal integration: the unconnected diversity of local calendars is replaced by an encompassing temporal order that travellers can account for if they move from one local community to the other.

Of course, these constructions of collective identity by common days of remembrance are not limited to premodern societies; they are part of the ritual backbone of many contemporary communities. Christmas and Easter customs in Orthodox, Protestant and Catholic communities, the annual celebration of the respective saints in Catholic fraternities and parishes, the celebration of feasts like Chanukah and Passover in Jewish communities, Ramadan in Muslim societies, and so on, are central for the construction of the respective

religious identities, as are the establishment and observance of national memorial days for national identities. Here, not only are the independence day of a nation or the birthday of the founder celebrated but also the heroes of minorities and movements: Martin Luther King Day in the United States is a case in point.

In modern democratic communities these rituals of remembering frequently shift the focus from individual founding heroes to the heroification of entire groups that, by rising against repressive rulers, gave birth to the national *demos*. In the myth of the revolutionary uprising that broke the continuity of an authoritarian rule, collective action marks the mythical and violent transition from a state of nature to history (Eisenstadt, 1978; Koselleck, 1985). At least it is remembered that way, for what was celebrated as a triumphant birth of the *demos* later on rarely attracted the attention of contemporaries when it happened.

If the ritual of remembering constructs the beginning of history, it can also be deconstructed by a *damnatio memoriae*, by a ban on its remembrance. A change in political regime usually also affects the calendar. The founding heroes of the old order vanish and new days of remembrance are institutionalized – sometimes turning the victims of the *ancien régime* into the heroes of the new one.

#### **SOCIAL CARRIERS OF MEMORY: EDUCATION AND PROFESSION**

Collective memory varies not only with respect to times and places, but also with respect to its social carriers and the social relations involved in its reproduction. Social carriers of memory are those, often self-acclaimed, groups or social positions that store, imagine and reproduce history in the name of their respective community. In its most elementary form these social carriers are old persons, who orally transmit the collective memory to the next generation, or gifted storytellers, singers or actors, who narrate the old tales and mythical events to a local audience. However, public access to personally memorized knowledge can also be highly restricted. Memory and secrecy often coalesce, mark social status and, as Frederik Barth (1987) has shown, can give rise to the dynamic development of primitive cosmologies.

In translocal societies the differences between local communities of memory are

superseded by the boundaries between classes and status groups. These boundaries are marked not only by differences in material power and access to resources, but also by cultural distinctions and lifestyles. Above all, this cultural distinction separates those who are able to read and have access to the written tradition as stored in libraries from those who are excluded from this classical education. Since cultural distinction is difficult to acquire and difficult to forget, it is closely associated with the identity of its carriers and therefore stabilizes the boundaries between classes. Cultural distinction is neither a matter of technological knowledge or business activities nor is it tied to a particular locality. Instead, its social arena is leisure and translocal communication among educated elites. Here the educated classes display their knowledge of the classical writings, read the histories of ancient heroes and write their own memories. This exclusive reconstruction of historical memory among educated people later on resulted even in special associations devoted to the cultivation of knowledge about the common past.

But in distinction to these non-professional modes of historical memory there were also individuals who offered their services as teachers, artists, poets or writers of chronicles to the educated elites. These intellectuals constructed dynastic lineages, praised the founding heroes, renarrated the mythical beginnings of a community, reinterpreted the old texts and stored the available historical memory in special archives. At the beginning these virtuosi of historical memory were devoted to the support of princely authority and to aesthetic ideals rather than to describing the past 'as it really was'. Truth, art and morality were still merged in a mythological fiction of the past. However, with the advent of writing and owing to the competition among the intellectuals themselves, textual coherence now became a new constraint on collective memory (Assmann, 1992).

The situation changed again with the advent of modernity. The past was now discovered as a field of objective truth, professional division of labour and functional differentiation: historiography became an autonomous scholarly discipline taught at universities. Museums, archives and libraries opened their doors to the general public, the historical heritage was administered by professional experts funded by public money. National history was standardized and became a mandatory subject at school. The charismatic position of myth-producers

did not disappear in modern societies, but it was increasingly separated from the professional routine of the experts, who are strictly obliged to rely on the facts and to pursue the objective of impersonal truth. The professional experts are subjected to a complex division of labour and mutual control. They therefore have to limit their attention to a special aspect and a narrow section of facts, but they can claim that the total of their combined research findings could be integrated into one encompassing universal history. Since historians as professionals are only loosely connected to a particular collective identity, they can also study the history of a community that is not their own and reach out to universal and global history. In short: collective memory and historiography increasingly diverge.

The rise of professional experts of the past also affects the relationship between experts and laymen. While the eighteenth century still praised the talented and broadly educated *gentilhomme* and despised the merely trained narrow-minded pedant, the nineteenth century reversed this relationship: laymen who interfered in the business of experts were now denounced as dilettantes.

This transition from the cleavage between the written memory of educated elites and local vernacular memories to the distinction between professional experts and laymen developed gradually in the nineteenth century. At first the public interest in historical issues was articulated by voluntary associations of educated citizens who collected the remainders of the past in their leisure time. Later on, officials were charged with caring for the historical heritage, qualifications for special professions were standardized, and experts like historians or conservationists united in special associations. Finally legal regulations for the training of these experts were established and the education of professionals was connected to universities. At the end the construction of historical memory was firmly established in the hands of professional experts who define the past and decide about its appropriate presentation for the laic people. These experts can achieve an almost monopolistic position if they can avoid internal dissent and rely on the support of political power and reputed scholarship.

The rise of historiography as an autonomous scholarly discipline and its institutionalization at the universities not only restrained the autonomy of the general public in constructing its historical memory but it also discharged

the other scientific disciplines from their historical reference. The *historia naturae* is replaced by the modern sciences, which claim to present timeless and ahistorical knowledge.

In the nineteenth century at the latest, history ascended to a powerful mode of legitimating collective identity and collective interests in the public sphere. It was not only the nation but also particular social groups who tried to stage themselves as endowed with a long and impressive history claiming respect and continuity, in particular when endangered by rapid modernization. Compensating the acceleration of technological progress, the fluidification of social relations and the large migrations from rural areas to the expanding urban centres, the attention shifted towards seemingly immutable roots, towards history and memory. The intimidating face of the new had to be covered by familiar forms and images. This modern turn towards memory engendered new conflicts and contestations about the past, about founding heroes and the beginnings of national history.

**PARADIGMS OF HISTORICAL MEMORY:  
RENAISSANCE, PROGRESS, DECADENCE  
AND CRISIS**

Historical memory is collective memory and as such it presupposes the continuity of a collectivity between past and present. This collectivity or plural subject (Gilbert, 2000) mostly reflects the elementary social bond and the basic idea of sovereignty in the present society. It can be provided by the calling of God to his chosen people, by the dynasty of the ruling prince, by the tradition of a cultural heritage, by the nation or by an ethnic community. These assumed collective identities allow the continuity and unity of history to be conceived as an inner bond connecting the diversity of events as presented in chronicles, but also transcending the life-span of a great individual as it is presented in biographies and *vitae*. Constructions of these continuities largely ignore civilizational ruptures and political breakdowns (Assmann, 1997). The idea of the Occident or of Europe, for example, assumed a continuity between civilizations as different as ancient Greece and Rome, on the one hand, and the last millennium of Christian principalities and nation-states, on the other. Although any historical memory has to presuppose some collective identity, there may be

various options with respect to this. Even if there is consensus about the centrality of one particular kind of identity like the nation, the particular representation and public imagination of this identity is subject to contests and conflicts.

The connection between past and present construed by historical memory differs in its relation to these two temporalities. For analytical reasons we will distinguish between four different paradigms or tropes of this connection, resulting from combining two dimensions. The first dimension refers to the past. Historical memory can assume the relation between present and past as a continuity that assures the dominant position of the past, or as discontinuity that devaluates the past in relation to the present. The second dimension centres the attitude on the present. Historical memory can affirm the present in a triumphant way or it can conceive of it in sceptically or critically. Combining the two dimensions we arrive at four paradigms of historical memory.

The first regards the present as the triumphant repetition of or return to a glorious past that is seen as the insuperable horizon of history. Models of revival and rebirth or of a classicism that rediscovers the ancient forms have patterned the occidental sense of history during several periods from the Hadrianic renaissance in late ancient Rome, via the Carolingian renaissance in the ninth and tenth century and the early modern renaissance in the fifteenth century, to the classicism of the late eighteenth century. Following the path of the great masters of the past set the frame for traditions in politics as well as in arts and religion. The question of whether or not the greatness of the ancient masters could be surpassed led to the famous *querelle des anciens et des modernes* in the seventeenth century. The model of revival and classicism was not limited to European civilization: China revived the Confucian tradition several times in its long history.

The second model of connecting the present to the past takes the opposite position. It considers the past as the inferior predecessor of the present and thrusts for the acceleration of history into the future. These models of enlightenment and progress, of development and growth, conceive of the present as a turning point of history between the dark and repressive past behind us and a bright and open future ahead of us. It is the cult of the new in the festive life of the French

Revolution that marks the beginning of the first national commemoration (Ozouf, 1988). The experiences of the past are devaluated, old wisdom is despised as superstition, new knowledge and the movement towards utopia are expected to overcome the toils and sufferings of the present. A missionary and inclusive drive to convince others of the new message of salvation is commonly engendered by these models of progress and enlightenment. Originally this optimistic vision of history was based on an eschatological expectation of the return of Christ at the end of times, but in the course of modernity it was translated into secular terms and applied to science and enlightenment, economics and politics.

The third model reverses this relationship between past and present. It assumes a decline and decadence between a superior and golden past and an inferior and decaying present. The good old ideals and virtues are abandoned, corruption, pollution, decay and crime take over – only a radical return to the natural roots or to the traditional virtues can prevent doom or even catastrophic breakdown. But chances for such a future recovery and revival in this world are mostly seen as small. Faced with apocalyptic horizons, the community of the elect has to abstain from indulging in the temptations of mundane life and lead an ascetic life in order to prepare for salvation. This model of ascetic abstention can be found in Western as well as in Eastern civilizations, namely in Buddhism and Hinduism. A variant of this model of decadence led to the romantic nostalgia for a mysterious past that is hidden behind a banal present, represented only by ruins and fragments, hinted at by patina, that is, by the natural traces of time on the surface of objects.

The fourth model of relating past and present conceives of the present as a moment of crisis, ambivalence and decision. Traditional institutions and belief systems have lost their credibility, but future relief and new certainties are out of sight. In contrast to the models of decadence and progress, however, the future is here considered as open and undecided – several outcomes are possible. There is a heightened awareness of the moment as critical and requiring decisive action, but the outcome of these actions are uncertain – little steps can generate far-reaching changes and powerful decisions can be deadlocked in complex webs of interacting forces. The response to the situation of crisis is ambivalent. It can consist of fatalistic apathy as well as of a

heightened sense of individual responsibility beyond the edge of certainty.

These ideal-types of relating past to present in historical memory are rarely realized in a pure and undiluted form; they alternate, change and blend with each other according to the situation of a social community, to its recent experiences and relations to the outside. But they are also not intentionally chosen or accepted for strategic reasons. Instead, they provide the basic cultural presuppositions of historical memory.

#### TRAUMA AND HISTORICAL MEMORY

Monuments and memorial days as well as historical records and archives are intentional references to an imagined past. However, while there are non-intentional memories that recur to the individual mind, there are also non-intentional recurrent collective memories that are ruminated in the *conscience collective* of a community, in the public sphere and in scholarly discourse. These memories hardly result from regular everyday experiences. Instead, they refer to extraordinary occurrences of the past that mark the violent mythical beginning of the community or that have profoundly disrupted the self-image and collective identity of a community. These ruptures in the cultural web of meaning of a community can be considered to be a collective trauma that, on the one hand, cannot be integrated into a meaningful narration of a history and that, on the other hand, also resists all attempts to let it pass into oblivion. The trauma of victims who survived torture, mass killing, deportation or enslavement will – for obvious reasons – not easily pass away. While regular memories usually lose their emotional significance with the passage of time, traumatic events are rendered publicly visible only with the passage of time – if at all. In most cases traumatic memories result in a delayed response – it takes a certain distance to express it out in public.

Collective traumatic memories are not limited to the group of victims. They can also be found in the collectivity of perpetrators. Indeed, it was this type of trauma that was central to classical Freudian analysis of group constitution (Freud, 1967, 2000). However, the perpetrators' memories take a traumatic turn only when, after their defeat, they are forced to face and to acknowledge that they

have treated other subjects as objects. The collective trauma of perpetrators, too, is expressed in public discourse only from a distance resulting from the passing of time or from the social distance of those who were not personally involved in the crimes. Only from a distance can the shaming personal memories that were likely to be evaded in public turned into collective national guilt and public repentance. Thus the trauma of victims as well as the trauma of perpetrators are not only ruminating in the memory of individuals but also mark the collective identity of the respective social communities.

This temporal and social distance from the traumatizing event is in accordance with the psychoanalytic model: only after a time of latency can the originally unspeakable reference of memory be expressed in public communication (Caruth, 1996). The transition from the phase of latency to the phase of working through can be found in the trauma of victims and in the trauma of perpetrators and is mostly related to new groups entering the public sphere. These groups have to be personally uninvolved in the traumatizing event but they have to be unquestionably members of the traumatized community. They can address the trauma and make it publicly visible for the first time because as heirs of the victims they no longer have haunting personal memories and as heirs of the collectivity of perpetrators they are beyond suspicion of masking personal guilt. Decoupled from its former psychological foundations, the trauma becomes an issue of the public agenda. This holds not only for the victims' collectivity, but also for its complement, the collectivity of former-generation perpetrators. They enact their collective identity by ceremonies of confessing collective guilt and culpability. Though using a language belonging to the Abrahamitic religious heritage (Derrida, 2001), these confessions of national guilt today are gradually turned into a new master narrative of historical memory in the West (Giesen, 2002). They are externalized in monuments and memorials, the absurd and violent events they refer to are explained by historians and renarrated by novelists, dealt with by movies and TV series, and treated as a mandatory issue at school. Even when memories of these events have entered the public discourse of a nation or a community, when their representations are debated, challenged and contested, the trauma remains the unconditional frame of reference to which all particular historical

narratives have to be related. The paradigm case here is the Holocaust of the European Jews (Giesen, 2002).

In the nineteenth century, historical memory was generally elaborated not least in order to support nationalist claims. While this still holds true in many cases, and while similar endeavours are pursued today on behalf of other social groups, which often had no voice before, the thematization of collective trauma has given a new twist to the discourse on historical memory. Fostering reconciliation and mutual respect (Derrida, 2001; Margalit, 2000; Ricoeur, 1998), the public debate about collective trauma extends beyond the confines of national communities and accounts for the increasingly global range of today's historical memories.

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## *Gender and Patriarchy in Historical Sociology*

PAVLA MILLER

My brief is to write about gender and patriarchy. There are two immediate problems. The first, how to compress a vast mountain of scholarship into a few pages, is compounded by a second: the closer you look, the more slippery the concepts become. The very strength of historical sociology helps undermine the apparent universality of its conceptual tools. Debates about the trans-historical nature of patriarchy began soon after the concept was taken up by the women's movements of the 1970s. But even gender, which avoids many of these problems and is often considered to have universal applicability, might well turn out to be a term circumscribed by the specific conditions of contemporary Western societies.

Gender is often taken to refer to the study of women. Certainly, such work provides a necessary supplement to ostensibly general histories which focus overwhelmingly on men. As with other 'forgotten people', adding women to the historical picture not only greatly improves the precision of the description, but almost invariably it also challenges and eventually alters the theoretical tool-bag we use in understanding the past. The concept of gender is one of these improved theoretical tools. But while it draws extensively on work dealing with women, its focus is different. Gender refers not to women or men, but to socially constructed notions of femininity and

masculinity. In English at least, it enables us to speak of gender relations, the gendering of concepts, institutions and social orders, and engendering new forms of association. Importantly, there is gender even where there are no women, as in the potency of different notions of manliness, and of intense homosocial (as opposed to homosexual) attachments between comrades in arms, members of monastic communities, guilds or bureaucracies. Almost invariably, theorizations of gender involve relations of power, not only between women and men but among more or less powerful females and males. In the long run, the gendering of history involves reordering the whole complex structure of historical explanation. Not only is the list of historical 'turning points' likely to look different as a result, but gender dynamics are likely to figure among the key driving forces of processes such as state formation, industrialization and wars.

Gender as a concept began to be employed in English with particular effect in the 1970s, when it was used by strengthening women's movements to restate the point that biological traits do not necessarily lead to any form of personal dispositions. Strategically, if men and women in different times and different cultures possessed a range of different attributes, it is possible to argue that sex does not translate into invariant masculinity and femininity, and social relations here and now can be improved.<sup>1</sup> Since

then, the pivotal role of the sex–gender distinction, and later even of the concept of gender itself, has been weakened, not least as a result of research first inspired by it. In the first instance, the distinction between biology and social characteristics, which at first appeared self-evident, proved much more complex than early theorists allowed for. It is now generally acknowledged that there is no such thing as socially unmediated ‘biology’ or ‘nature’ which can form the basis of everyday interpretations of masculinity and femininity. At the same time, the sex–gender distinction is implicitly based on the existence of two exclusive, lifelong sexes and genders; it does not lend itself easily to systematic attention to the social construction of gender categories themselves, or to examination of the different ways gender attributes are allocated, achieved and given importance in different societies. In this sense, the issue is not so much the history of gender relations, but rather the constitution and development of gender orders, including systems of more-or-less-exclusive and more-or-less-universal gender categories (see Clover, 1993; Moore, 1994). Finally, many non-English-speaking feminists point out that the concept does not translate well into a number of languages, French and Italian among them; to adopt gender as a foundation concept might well amount to cultural imperialism.

Some of the problems with the sex–gender distinction, and the usefulness of gender itself as a concept, first became apparent in the work of gay and lesbian theoreticians. Most immediately, unexamined sexual dualism left no space for minority and marginalized sexualities. In time, attempts to write histories of lesbians or homosexuals raised more profound issues: who exactly is the constituency one writes about? Were lesbians only those few women whose behaviour attracted public attention and who were designated (or self-identified) as such at the time? Or were they a much larger group of women whose behaviour (such as intense attachment to other women) would today be identified as lesbian, even though they themselves and those around them saw them as perfectly ‘normal’? Were homosexuals men who engaged in what seemed to be the relatively widespread sin of sodomy, regardless of what other sexual relations they had, or only a much smaller group of men who self-identified as a distinct subculture? Or is it necessary to ask different and more complex questions altogether (see Duberman et al., 1991)?

Some of the debates about ‘who is a woman’ were similarly inspired by feminist

political concerns (Riley, 1988). Most feminist activists and theoreticians in the early 1970s assumed that there was a unified category of ‘women’; that women had privileged access to the ‘real’ and to ‘truth’, and could elicit trust from other women purely on the basis of their being not-male; that a common programme of action aiming at improving ‘women’s’ position in society was possible and desirable, and that *the* women’s movement did, could and should speak for all women. Within a decade, all these assumptions were challenged. Women from ethnic minority groups and former colonies were particularly insistent that they did not recognize themselves in general portrayals of women’s oppression; that there was not one but many women’s movements. As the anthropologist Maila Stevens put it,

Women, in a sense, are feminism’s greatest problem. The assumption of a potential identity between women, rather than solving the problem, became a condition of increasing tensions. Of these tensions, not the least important is the intellectual tension generated by a crisis of the concept ‘woman’ within feminist thought. As a concept ‘woman’ is too fragile to bear the weight of all the contents and meanings ascribed to it. The end of much research by feminists has been to show the tremendous diversity of the meaning of womanhood across cultures and over time. ... The concept ‘woman’ cannot stand as an analytical category in anthropological enquiry, and consequently there can be no analytical meaning in such concepts as the position of women, the subordination of women, and male dominance when they are applied universally. (1994: 138)

While notions of gender and woman were challenged on a number of theoretical and political grounds, their intrinsic usefulness, coupled with a lack of sensible alternatives, means that they continue to be used (albeit often with more care). Conceptualizations of patriarchy proved much less resilient. In much of the early second-wave feminist writing, patriarchy was both a descriptive and an analytical concept which designated a comprehensive system of male dominance over women, children and nature. Knowledge was power, and to characterize a range of historical and contemporary social arrangements as patriarchal promised to expose and therefore weaken hitherto concealed layers of oppression. At the same time, patriarchy *did* (and in student essays, often still *does*): it oppressed women, provided a model for the exploitation of nature, denied women the vote and removed them from the paid workforce. Combined with capitalism, it shaped institutions such as the

family and the state; on its own, it provided a universal focus of women's struggles and activism.

Whatever the historical and theoretical shortcomings of such formulations, they played a key role in campaigns and research generated by a range of self-identified feminists of the 1970s and 1980s. In subsequent debates, perhaps the greatest distance was between those who argued that patriarchy was an ahistorical (later essentialist) concept with little analytical purchase<sup>2</sup> and those who maintained that cross-cultural and transhistorical continuities in male domination were so significant that they warranted the use of a common term. One influential attempt to arrive at a compromise formulation was developed in a series of contributions by the English sociologist Sylvia Walby. Different forms of patriarchy, she argues, arise from different combinations of more or less intense male domination of women through six key patriarchal structures: the patriarchal (domestic) mode of production; patriarchal relations in paid work; patriarchal relations in the state; male violence; patriarchal relations in sexuality; and patriarchal relations in cultural institutions, including religions, media and education. In recent Western history, Walby (1990) argues, these structures combine into two basic types of patriarchy. *Private patriarchy*, which peaked in Britain in the mid-nineteenth century, is based upon the household, with a patriarch controlling women individually and directly in the relatively private sphere of the home. More recently, *public patriarchy* became dominant. While the household may still be a significant patriarchal site, it is institutions conventionally regarded as part of the public domain which are central in the maintenance of public patriarchy. In order to distinguish between different industrialized countries, Walby further divides public patriarchy into two: one where the market and the other where the state plays the major role in bringing women into the public sphere.

Walby's solution inspired much useful work. When all is said and done, however, it compounds the problem it set out to solve by multiplying ahistorical categories. Walby classifies societies according to the way they allocate women to public or private spheres. Some of the most exciting work in historical sociology, in contrast, concerns the engendering and remaking of the distinction itself (Benn and Gaus, 1983; Calhoun, 1992;

Thornton, 1995). The household is seen as private – neglecting historical periods where it was conceptualized as an integral part of social governance, not least because it was a key unit of production. Even in the modern era, work for pay and work in the household are not as clearly distinguished as the model implies. Churches, which in historical Europe were at times the largest landowners and military powers, are categorized as cultural institutions. Using evidence on the middle class, *women* in nineteenth-century Britain are seen as under the firm familial control of individual patriarchs, in spite of extensive evidence of crisis of male authority in those labouring households where all had to work for pay – not least since few *men* earned enough to keep wives and children at home.

Does this mean that the concept of patriarchy cannot be used to enhance, rather than muddy, the explanatory rigour of historical sociology? Today, feminist analysis has become fragmented, debate between those who use contrasting characterizations of gendered social orders abated, and in any case grand theories have gone out of fashion. On the other hand, several decades of diverse and wide-ranging scholarship have produced a robust field of shared understandings and overlapping problematics. The significance of such work for historical sociology – and more precise theorizations of patriarchy – can be glimpsed if we juxtapose writings on family forms, welfare state regimes and state formation.

#### FAMILY FORMS

There is now a wealth of studies which identify a variety of family forms, cultures of contraception and maternities in different regions and historical periods, and among different social groups. In historicizing concepts such as family, childhood and motherhood, such work forms the bedrock of historical sociology. Since familial imagery is often used to *think through* alternative social arrangements, it also enables us to situate the discursive potency of such concepts within the dynamic of historically specific family forms. In English-language feminist theory, many of these issues were formulated with increasing clarity in the debates inspired by the publication of Barrett and McIntosh's *The Anti-social Family* (1982). This influential text argued that women are oppressed through the complex

structures of state-sponsored nuclear male breadwinner families. The self-identified black and ethnic women who criticized the book argued, in contrast, that domestic relations in their communities were structured along different lines (see Amos and Parmar, 1984; Bhavnanai and Coulson, 1986). For many immigrant women, family life was a luxury which had to be wrested from hostile authorities; for others, it represented a source of strength in a racist society. Far from being excluded from waged work, many of these women worked as servants in white households, or else as cleaners and carers in public institutions. Rather than men, their immediate superiors and oppressors were often white women.

Historical and anthropological work on families is usually motivated by different concerns, but often arrives at parallel conclusions. Levine (1987) and Seccombe (1992), for example, are among those who argue, in opposition to the Cambridge school of historical demography, that the same nominal composition of households in northwestern Europe between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries does not imply one unchanging family form. Thus peasant, proto-industrial, proletarian and male breadwinner households might contain identical numbers of adults and children, but revolve around markedly different gender and age relations. Peasant households approximated most closely the image of domestic patriarchy, with masters using property ownership and control and a lengthy process of inheritance transfer to discipline their dependants. In proto-industrial (cottage industry) regions, in contrast, fathers continued to control domestic production but depended more closely on their wives and the labour of their sons and daughters, who in turn could form independent households on the strength of their own skill. In fully proletarian households, all family members worked for wages; in male breadwinner families, wives and smaller children depended on the husband's income.

Using similar forms of evidence, Barbagli (1991) notes that there were three distinct patterns of family formation in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Italy. The first, found mainly in the rural regions of northern and central Italy, combined patrilocal residence with late marriage. Here, most of the population lived in multiple households. Those with the most land tended to have the largest and most complex households; among the poorer

peasants and share-croppers, many of the younger sons and daughters never married. The second model consisted of simple conjugal households and early marriage (for women at least, but often also for men), and this was typical in the south; in a number of localities, the proportion of complex households was among the lowest in Europe. The third model was characterized by single-family households and late marriage ages for both men and women, and this was common throughout the cities of northern and central Italy, as well as in Sardinia. In urban Italy, both neo-local residence after marriage and the simple conjugal household had been widespread since the fourteenth century, except among the elites, who lived in patrilocal households and spent the greater part of their lives in either extended or multiple households. By the end of the eighteenth century, they too began to adopt neo-local residence after marriage and simple conjugal household structures. In Sardinia, where the pattern of landholding resembled that of Sicily but the age at marriage for both women and men was among the highest in Italy, it is likely that distinct, more equitable customs of inheritance and marital property played a part.

In these diverse societies, some people achieved social maturity by becoming masters and mistresses of substantial households, others never attained full social manhood or womanhood and grew old as 'lads' and 'maids' in service. In some regions, young people could establish families without their parents' approval; at times, women's tangible contribution to household income gave them considerable power in courtship and domestic management. Family structure was affected not only by economies, ecologies and legal codes, but also by customary differences in the most intimate encounters between husbands and wives, mothers and babies. Conversely, these factors had a tangible effect on people's chances of death or survival at every stage of life (Skinner, 1997).

In writing on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe, for example, Kriedte et al. (1993) and Maynes and Taylor (1991) demonstrate that the same number of children could be produced by a 'regime of conservation' or a 'regime of wastefulness'. Thus in southern Germany, higher fertility and mortality rates and shorter birth intervals prevailed. Mothers were particularly exhausted, babies were rarely breast-fed (and this in turn shortened

intervals between births), and the indifferent nurture of infants and young children amounted to what could be described as a disguised form of infanticide. In northern Germany, in contrast, lower birth and death rates, longer intervals between births, and the breast-feeding of infants were more common. Both regimes produced roughly stable populations, but arguably had different sources in and implications for gender and age relations, not least with regard to the meaning and preservation of life, patterns of investment in childcare and the impacts on personality of early childhood experiences. Inspired by a similar awareness of regional and occupational differences in family dynamics, Szreter (1996a, 1996b) argues not only that there were many different 'demographic transitions' in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century England, but that the same (low) fertility rate can result from quite different regimes of sexuality and contraception (such as sexual sophistication in France and fumbling abstinence in England).

Anthropological work dealing with the recent past of non-Western societies reveals a similar diversity of embodied experiences of femininity. Using a wide range of ethnographic and historical research on Asia and the Pacific, contributors to a collection of studies on maternities and modernities, for example, show that the experience of birthing and mothering can vary dramatically in different parts of the world and over time (Ram and Jolly, 1998). Birth can be understood and experienced as a shameful and polluting event attended by outcast women, or else as an awesome and empowering ritual assisted by the most powerful women and men in the village. In different and often unanticipated ways, both the local discourses of maternity and the embodied experience of motherhood have been influenced by missionaries, by colonial policies and by the introduction of Western medicine and biomedical birthing methods. In part such patterns have been imposed on women and mothers; in part they have been forged through their own social creativity. While these studies do not pretend to have discovered the *determining* coordinates of individual experience, together they provide evidence of systematic differences in the meaning and experience of embodied gender relations, both between and within social groups. By extension, they can be used to theorize systematic differences in *forms of patriarchy*.

### ENGENDERING STATES

The family forms and gender regimes depicted in these studies do not follow national boundaries, even though they are systematically affected by the laws and edicts of local jurisdictions. Over time, overlaps between such jurisdictions have been reduced, and the geographical area they cover has been expanded. Today, it is state or national legislatures which pass laws regarding inheritance, marriage, employment, education, abortion and contraception; which extend and restrict the franchise, and allow some but not other people access to pensions or higher education. Here again, the original feminist assumption that modern Western states are uniformly patriarchal has given way to more sophisticated analyses. A particularly important approach revolves around comparative literature on welfare state regimes. Some countries, this work shows, have strong traditions of collective provision for mothers, the young, the old and the unemployed; elsewhere, the market or the family plays a more important role. People's social rights are defined in different ways in different nation-states. In turn, the structure of welfare states affects various dimensions of social stratification. When grouped along these axes, nations fall into one of several distinct categories. Recent feminist contributions to these debates have expanded and to some extent disorganized the categories originally established by writers such as Korpi and Esping-Andersen. The distribution of caring work between men and women, the family, state and private providers; the extent of mothers' or of married women's involvement in full- and part-time employment; the strength of the male breadwinner model in framing social policy; the related issue of whether women's welfare entitlements stem from their status as mothers, wives or workers; women's ability to form independent households – these are just some of the criteria used to show that there are more than three welfare state regimes (see O'Connor et al., 1999). Approaching similar issues from a slightly different perspective, some scholars have identified different forms of maternalism.<sup>3</sup>

National states did not spring, fully formed, out of the mists of the distant past. While some work on welfare state regimes includes consideration of the historical genesis of different sets of social policies and cultural norms, there is little which links this research to the extensive (and substantially gender-blind)

literature on the process on state formation. According to Charles Tilly's (1992) useful typology, three different viable paths of European state formation had markedly different consequences for local technologies of rule. In 'capital-intensive' regions (areas of many cities and commercial predominance, where markets, exchange and market-oriented production prevailed), such as Genoa or the Dutch Republic, rulers relied on compacts with capitalists to rent or purchase military force, and made war without building vast permanent state structures or conscript armies. The presence of capitalists, commercial exchange and substantial municipal organizations set serious limits on the state's direct exertion of control over individuals and households, but facilitated the use of relatively efficient and painless taxes on commerce as sources of state revenue. In 'coercion-intensive' regions (areas of few cities and agricultural predominance where direct coercion played a major part in production) such as Brandenburg, Russia, Poland and Hungary, customs and excise yielded small returns in relatively uncommercialized economies, and rulers typically created ponderous fiscal machines to extract the means of war out of local populations. In these conditions, extensive power accumulated in the hands of armed landlords, nobility, gentry, village heads and others who exercised intermediate control over essential resources. Not least because wage labour was scarce, peasants found it difficult to escape patriarchal authority. Finally, in regions of 'capitalized coercion', holders of coercion and capital – nobles and financiers – interacted on terms of relative equality. Rulers both built bureaucracies and depended on commercial taxes, but spent more effort on integrating capitalists and sources of capital directly into the structures of their states. Here, encroaching capitalism tended to undermine the patriarchal structures of peasant families from below; bureaucracy eroded them from the above. Tilly argues that it was this path, pursued by countries such as France, England and Spain, which produced national states earliest, and which eventually proved to be most successful in waging war. By about the eighteenth century, other previously viable territorial units were under increasing pressure to adopt a similar form of state governance or suffer military defeat.

As feminist scholars have done with initial work on welfare state regimes, Tilly's scheme can be interrogated regarding the gendered

dimensions of different paths of state formation. Most immediately, each of the three models suggests different state reliance on (patriarchal) households and estates. In a useful early overview which suggests the possible direction of more detailed work along these lines, Connell (1990) notes that contemporary state, gender and sexual politics are linked in five distinct ways. First, the state is constituted within gender relations as the central institutionalization of gendered power. Conversely, gender dynamics are a major force constructing the state, both in the historical creation of state structures and in contemporary politics. Second, as a result of this history, the state is the bearer of gender. Each definable state has a definable 'gender regime' that is the precipitate of social struggles and is linked to – though not a simple reflection of – the wider gender order of the society. A gender regime includes a gender division of labour, a structure of power and a structure of cathexis, the gendered patterning of emotional attachments. The way the state embodies gender, in turn, gives it cause and capacity to 'do' gender. As the central institutionalization of power, the state has a considerable, though not unlimited, capacity to regulate gender relations in the society as a whole. Fourth, the state's power to regulate reacts on the categories that make up the structure being regulated. Thus the state becomes involved in the historical process generating and transforming the basic components of the gender order. Finally, because of its power to regulate and its power to create, the state is a major stake in gender politics; and the exercise of that power is a constant incitement to claim the stake. Thus the state becomes the focus of interest-group formation and mobilization in sexual politics.

#### TRANSFORMATIONS OF PATRIARCHY

My own book, *Transformation of Patriarchy in the West, 1500–1900* (1998), is an example of an attempt to use these diverse literatures in order to historicize the concept of patriarchy and explore the gendered nature of the key categories of current historical and sociological thought. Critics of ahistorical notions of patriarchy tend to argue that the term is best confined to describing a particular form of early modern male-dominated social order which literally involved the rule of fathers.

Agreeing with much of their criticism (and without strong attachment to any particular words), I decided to use a technical term, 'patriarchalism',<sup>4</sup> to describe the social order(s) in question, to select other words to designate significantly different types of male-dominated societies, and to use 'patriarchy' (somewhat in the way the term 'class society' is employed), as a collective designation of male-dominated social orders. This provisional scheme allows for the existence of sexually egalitarian societies, and puts the onus of specifying the precise dimensions of gender relations on to the researcher. By drawing attention to its role as a motive source of power, I tried to give patriarchalism analytical as well as descriptive content. By highlighting the double-edged effects of this power, I attempted to account for historical change: the rise and demise of one patriarchal order and its eventual displacement by another.

A key argument of the book is that the dynamics of patriarchal governance provide a powerful conceptual link between two dominant perspectives guiding the study of early modern Western societies. One perspective centres on populations, agrarian cycles and economies, the other concentrates on war and the process of state formation. Both forms of explanation contain a persuasive depiction of the motive forces of historical change. The consolidation of patriarchalism in early modern Europe, particularly as played out in the religious conflicts associated with the Reformation, was arguably fuelled by both of these processes. On the one hand, it was perceived to constitute the most effective way of safeguarding economic resources in a precarious balance between land and population. On the other, it was inseparably linked with the efforts of territorial rulers to extend and to consolidate their power.

The complexities of early modern European history, with its regional diversity and uneven development, cannot be reduced to general patterns. Nevertheless, according to many historians, it is possible to discern, for a time at least, some common threads over the vast diversity of Western and Central Europe. In the sixteenth century, they joined regions which supported the Reformation and territories which maintained or reverted to an allegiance to Rome. They linked countryside and cities, large and powerful kingdoms and petty princedoms. Some of the most significant of these common threads concerned efforts to bolster the authority and social significance of

patriarchal family households and to tighten legislative and other controls over marriage, while simultaneously restricting the sway of older forms of patriarchal governance.<sup>5</sup>

Where these reforms were successful, they often became part of a patriarchalist combination of familial and political power, typically exercised by married men but occasionally delegated to women. In such regimes, economic, political and judicial power over wife, children, servants and apprentices living in households was held by the *paterfamilias*, who represented the family to the wider community. In the case of the master's extended absence, exile or death, this power was delegated to his surrogate, often his wife or widow. In many regions, political power in larger administrative units was said to be organized in an analogous way to the governance of households: the lord, the priest and the magistrate held paternal power over their subjects; much more controversially, the monarch exercised similar fatherly power over the nobility – and was himself answerable to God the father. By definition, each level of patriarchal authority was limited by the one above it. All this was usually strengthened but sometimes undermined by what could be termed *virarchy*: the categorical superiority of men over women, inscribed in scriptural and 'natural law' doctrines which posited man as the head of the woman. Even though some contemporary political thinkers attempted to theorize more impersonal forms of political authority, their royal patrons continued to practise and rely on patriarchalist powers.

In her work on early modern Germany, Roper (1987) illustrates the contradictory gendering of such social orders. She notes that one of the most powerful terms designating social belonging was *Gemeinde* – something between a church congregation, communal unit and group of subjects – which had a powerful mobilizing force in the Peasants' War. Like many other forms of collective identity, however, the term excluded women: *Gemeinde Mann*, the common man, was the embodiment of communal worth and pride; *Gemeinde Frau*, the common woman, was a prostitute. 'While the common woman stood for all that was papist and ungodly, the common man embodied what was decent, upright and populist in the early Reformation movement' (Roper, 1987: 20). For many key ceremonial purposes, community was an assembly of such men, with women required to stay indoors. Yet Roper goes on to say that there

was also current another vision of the common man as the head of a house, a social father figure under whose governorship servants, wife, children, apprentices and journeymen lived. He could thus be seen as the representative of his house in the wider household of the commune. Yet, in the early sixteenth-century town, this was an obviously contradictory political principle: widows, who headed households, were not politically common men; and sons, servants and apprentices, who swore the communal oath, were not governors of households (Roper, 1987: 20).

Another layer of complexity is revealed by historians of the various courts charged with maintaining the peace in local communities (Roper, 1989, 1994; Underdown, 1985). The endless stream of cases brought before them depicted patriarchs who shirked work, failed to catechize their dependants, drank, gambled, would not share their earnings and beat wives and servants; women scolding and brawling with their neighbours, single women refusing to enter service and wives insulting, dominating or even beating their husbands. As Roper noted, such courts' daily experience contradicted – and, worse, the punishments they meted out actually undermined – the vision of natural patriarchal authority and female subservience they held so dear (1994: 46).

By the mid-eighteenth century, such crisis tendencies came to a head. Peasant and craft households, which provided the bedrock of everyday patriarchalist governance, found their livelihoods undercut by commercial farming and new forms of industrial production. In the changed circumstances, a decreasing proportion of men could hope to become masters of a productive holding; the gap between maleness and mastery widened. More abundant resources resulted in significant expansion of bureaucratic and military capacity and lessened rulers' and states' reliance on households as bases of social order. In political theory, liberalism replaced patriarchalism as the dominant model of good governance. In armies, states and enterprises, bureaucracies began to replace masters' personal control over subordinates. The American and French revolutions inaugurated an era where notions of the 'brotherhood of man', rather than the God-ordained privileges and responsibilities of fathers, helped inspire far-reaching social struggles. In philosophy, law and the emerging social sciences, categorical differences between the sexes, races, those who were infant and adult, 'normal' and

sexually transgressive, were invented, reasserted and put on a new footing.

With the advantage of hindsight, each of these highly contested processes can be seen as contributing to the engendering of differently patriarchal (fraternalist?) social orders. In turn, the depiction of familiar 'turning points' of modern history from this perspective helps reconfigure hitherto gender-blind bases of social theory. More ambitiously, it enhances the analytical power of the conceptual tools used to describe gendered regimes. Two examples must suffice to illustrate these points. The first, more familiar one, concerns the defeat of patriarchalism by proponents of new doctrines of social contract in the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth century. Radical critics of these debates have long pointed out that most of the 'fathers of liberalism' saw the brotherhood of man in distinctly class terms. Influenced by contemporary laws and practices relating to masters and servants, seventeenth-century English Levellers saw the suffrage as the birthright of all English men (not women), but considered that servants (including wage labourers) and beggars, through their dependence on others, had forfeited their birthright to a voice in elections. Politically, servants, apprentices, women and children had no 'civil personality' and were simply 'included in their masters' (C. Hill, 1964: 478; Macpherson, 1962: 124). Similarly, Locke insisted on the contractual nature and limitations of the relation between master and servant, yet assumed that while in his employ, the servant would be placed 'into the Family of his Master and under the ordinary Discipline thereof' (1666 [1690]: 69–70). Indeed, Locke assumed that while the labouring class was a necessary part of the nation, its members were not in fact full members of the body politic and had no claims to be so, not least because, not having property, they could not live a fully rational life (Macpherson, 1962: 221–2). In turn, the man who had not shown the ability to accumulate property was not a full man, and could therefore hardly be expected to govern his family. Not all males, in other words, could assume mastery and become men and citizens.

For females, the debates between patriarchalist and social contract theorists were more significant still. The contract theorists rejected most – though not all – of the premises of their predecessors. Paternal and political rule, they claimed, were distinct; the family and the polity were fundamentally

different; sons were born free and equal and, as adults, were free as their fathers before them; political authority and obligation were conventional rather than natural; and political subjects were civil equals. While most later commentators omitted to mention this fact, proponents of patriarchalism themselves noted a fundamental flaw in the expositions of social contract. The logic of the argument seemed to apply to all people, yet theorists like Locke and Rousseau agreed with their opponents that women, as future wives, were born and remained naturally subject to men and husbands. Equality, liberty and fraternity, the feminist scholar Carole Pateman (1988) concluded, should be understood literally; in the realm of political theory at least, a contract between free and equal sons replaced the 'law of the father' with public rules which bound all men equally(?) as brothers. Women remain subject to men, but under a different set of rules – a different patriarchal order.

Similar insights have been used to recast related areas of social science. Not all fathers of social science went as far as the German philosopher Immanuel Kant, who confidently asserted that 'women in general ... have no civil personality, and their existence is, so to speak, purely inherent' (quoted in Pateman, 1988: 169), or the Frenchman Auguste Comte, who wrote that 'the study of anatomy and physiology demonstrates that radical differences, at once physical and moral, ... profoundly separate the one [sex] from the other' (quoted in Schiebinger, 1987: 69). Yet the systematic exclusion of women from public institutions by reference to their anatomical, even species, differences from men had profound social consequences. In the age of revolutions, the century when public sphere(s) of reasoned exchange were born, associations established, bureaucracies built, legislatures reformed and companies multiplied, women could not draw up contracts, vote, sue or be sued, join learned societies or attend universities; even for those with considerable wealth, it was considered unseemly to direct enterprises or even to engage in rational calculation of private interest or to speak in public (Calhoun, 1992; Davidoff and Hall, 1987). Commenting on similar issues, Barbara Taylor asked:

What does it mean when [feminists] engage with a theory of the subject in which the reasoning speaker – that is the person who displays possession of natural rights and a place in the civic sphere *through* ... speech – is actually constituted on the male side of

the sexual axis? And where does it take us with egalitarianism? (quoted in Scott, 1989: 6, original emphasis)

And if 'self-possession' is one of the 'natural' underpinnings of a citizen's rational intellect, what were the implications of married women's inability to refuse husbands access to their bodies, or of the chronic pain caused by hunger of the poor, and among mothers aggravated by the injuries and privations associated with childbirth?

The second, less familiar, example concerns remaking of the contested boundary between marriage and private enterprise, paid and unpaid work in Anglo-American jurisdictions. Under English common law, all of a woman's property was transferred to her husband on marriage. From the seventeenth century on, however, equity courts began allowing wealthy women to hold property separate from their husbands through the medium of trustees. A minority of these agreements gave married women property separate from that of their husbands, free from their debts, and subject to the women's control as if they were unmarried. From the late seventeenth to the late eighteenth century, such innovations were greeted with misgivings, but accepted as legal by the courts. In the decades following the French Revolution, judges began to overturn precedents and declare such contracts invalid. Fearful of social disorder and alarmed by what they saw as unwarranted expansion of commercial principles into the domestic sphere, the judges decreed that allowing wives and husbands to contract out of the responsibilities of marriage and giving married women excessive economic rights was against 'public policy' because it produced socially intolerable results. By the mid-nineteenth century, just as it became impolite for ladies to wield economic power, judicial prohibitions on contractual innovation within propertied marriages eased again; but only if they conformed to reinvented notions of wifely subordination (Davidoff and Hall, 1987: 315; Shamma, 1994; Staves, 1990).

During the same period, a series of laws relating to earnings and marital property gradually extended to all women some of the protection afforded by equity law to the rich: they gave wives a qualified right to their own wages, protected their separate property against the claims of husbands and their creditors, and enabled them to make wills. The feminist scholars who examined these acts agree that they fell far short of giving married

women the same rights as single women or their husbands had, particularly since men retained the right both to the *person* of their wife and to her domestic labour (Backhouse, 1988; Stanley, 1988). Nevertheless, they too helped inspire a piecemeal process of contractual innovation: small but increasing numbers of ordinary wives and husbands began to contract with each other for the performance of various forms of domestic work. When something went wrong and one of the parties sought legal remedy, the courts improvised again to declare all such contracts null and void. Their reasoning was based on two principles which were, strictly speaking, logically incompatible. In conformity with laws of contract, they held marital agreements for the performance of domestic work to be without consideration, or monetary value, and therefore invalid. Since husbands already owned their wives' labour (having exchanged it for the promise of support), they could not subsequently buy it. Simultaneously, courts held that the agreements were unenforceable precisely *because* they constituted a contract, and marriage was by definition deemed to be defiled by the imposition of contractual arrangements (Siegel, 1994a, 1984b: 2195, 2189).

Siegel (1984b) concludes that in construing the earning statutes to prohibit market relations in the family setting, and thus acting to differentiate the family and the market in law, courts acted to ensure that wives' work was to be performed subject to a different (altruistic as opposed to interested) mode of exchange than their husbands' and so created the legal infrastructure of the separate-spheres tradition – and, incidentally, of the expressive and instrumental roles described by structural-functionalist theorists such as Talcott Parsons. Such legally enforced 'altruism', she notes, contributed to the fiction that housework has no economic value.<sup>6</sup> At the same time,

the law of marital status bounded the development of the modern labor market and helped to define the social meaning of market in labor itself. ... The doctrine of marital service, as reformed by the earning statutes enacted during the nineteenth century, is thus properly understood as an integral part of an industrial capitalist economy, not an archaic remnant of ancient feudal society. (Siegel, 1994b: 2131, 2140)

In other words, public policy, as interpreted by the courts, helped to define and to fortify the boundary between the two forms of contemporary private spheres: the home and

private enterprise. Although couples now had greater scope to negotiate the distribution of capital within marriage, it was imperative that the home remain free of labour bargaining.

Important as the courts – and statisticians – were in drawing the line between home and wage labour, the crucial struggles which resulted in the ascendance of male breadwinner families took place elsewhere. As historians like Taylor (1984) demonstrated for many Western countries, competing strategies designed to deal with a perceived crisis of domestic relations formed an explosive core of nineteenth-century labour struggles. Utopian socialists and other minority radical groups attempted, unsuccessfully, to win the whole labour movement to a feminist solution: the unionization of women workers, the introduction of equal pay, the socialization of housework and universal franchise. Most craft unions, in contrast, excluded their remaining female members, and advocated the payment of a 'living wage' to male breadwinners and the exclusion of women and children from the paid workforce. Single and married women, skilled and unskilled workers and their families, large and small employers in different industries, members of different congregations and people in textile and mining regions tended to have different opinions regarding the proper roles of men, women and children. The struggles they engaged in, the complex alliances they formed, the sacrifices they made and the compromises they struck or were forced to live with eventually resulted in adoption of the male breadwinner family as one of the bases of a newly patriarchal social order. Today, many argue, these social relations are themselves in crisis.

## CONCLUSION

Women and men reconstruct the gendered social orders within which they live, but they do not do it just as they please. They are constrained by the historical, material and ecological circumstances of their lives; their discursive and institutional creativity constantly comes up against the innovations, cultural certainties and political interests of others. In some historical periods and for some social groups, such conflicts are attenuated; at other times, they flare up with spectacular violence. Perhaps more frequently, social orders are re-gendered at a glacial pace,

even though individuals might experience such changes, for good or ill, as profound upheavals. As the various examples in this chapter have shown, such engendering processes are not confined to 'women's history', but are part of careful historical analyses of employment relations; political movements, struggles and ideologies; wars and states, churches and economies. They form the historically changing referents of social theory. Whatever misgivings they might have about each other, historians and sociologists alike benefit from the shared understandings of historical sociology. For all, historically specific notions of gender and patriarchy provide relatively painless cures for gender blindness.

#### NOTES

1. The anthropologist Margaret Mead made the same point in her influential early work in the 1920s.

2. For a classic statement of this position, see Rowbotham (1981).

3. See, for example, the debates in recent issues of *Social Politics*.

4. According to Weber,

patriarchalism means the authority of the father, the husband, the senior of the house, the sib elder over the members of the household and sib; the rule of the master and patron over bondsmen, serfs, freed men; of the lord over the domestic servants and household officials; of the prince over house- and court-officials, nobles of office, clients, vassals; of the patrimonial lord and sovereign prince over the 'subjects'. (1970 [1923]: 296)

5. According to Robisheaux, for example, in the mid-sixteenth century, German princes, Lutheran pastors and villagers struggled, each in their own way and following their divergent interests, to bring order and stability to their society (1989: 95–6). In this process, no path proved more important than the effort to reform the family, to bolster patriarchal authority, to introduce a strict marital discipline.

6. Statisticians too were active in constructing this fiction. See, for example, Deacon (1985), Folbre (1991) and B. Hill (1993).

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# *Historical Sociology of Religion:*

## *Politics and Modernity*

BRYAN S. TURNER

Sociology has been specifically concerned to understand the origins and development of modernity, and it has seen religion as a crucial component of this social process of modernization. In fact we can break this interest down into three distinctive components. The sociological study of religion in the historical development of modern societies has been concerned to study: the impact of religion on economic norms and behaviour; the contribution of religions to the philosophy and development of political regimes such as democracy; and the consequences of religion for cultural development broadly conceived. These issues cover the whole of sociology; therefore in order to give this chapter some definite shape and horizon, these sociological themes are analysed within the framework of Max Weber's historical sociology (Turner, 1992). Weber's sociology has been said to involve the study of the economic ethics of the world religions, but this interpretation is too narrow (Tenbruck, 1980). To this notion, we must add that Weber's sociology also involved the study of the political ethics of the world religions. If we combine these two dimensions – economics and politics – we have an adequate framework within which to consider the historical sociology of religion. This chapter attempts specifically to examine the implications of Weber's historical sociology of religion for the study of politics.

Weber's sociology of religion was implicitly developed as an answer to two interconnected questions (Weber, 1966). The first asked whether Christianity, as a cultural precondition for rational economic behaviour, could ultimately survive capitalism. The second question considered whether the democratic ethos of secular institutions would eventually undermine the hierarchical notions of charismatic authority that are embedded in ecclesiastical organizations. With respect to these two questions, Weber was generally negative (Weber, 1930). His sociology was characterized by the theme of the fatefulness of Western institutions, an idea that he derived from Nietzsche (Turner, 1996). Religious asceticism was self-defeating in producing the spirit of capitalism, which came to negate Christian spirituality. Weber also thought the modern power politics would have relatively little connection with Christian brotherly love. In many respects, his pessimism of values has not been fully supported by the historical development of Western cultures. In particular, religious institutions and values have proved to be remarkably resilient against the corrosive impact of secularization in Western societies. While sociologists and historians might dispute the validity of Weber's historical sociology of religions, his sociological questions about religion, politics and economics have proved to be extraordinarily productive and imaginative.

Although Weber's sociology of religion is a productive framework for thinking about religion and politics, it does raise intractable problems about Orientalism (Turner, 1994). The first is the Orientalist problem of the specificity of the thesis that democracy, or more narrowly citizenship, as a Western mode of political life was the unintended consequence of Christian spirituality. This chapter is primarily about the relationship between Christian institutions in relation to capitalism and democracy, but we should note that this-worldly soteriologies are not peculiar to Christianity and that the sacred/profane division, as Émile Durkheim (1954) noted, appears to define religion as such. We might expect, therefore, that the division between the world and religion is present in a variety of traditions. For example, within the Abrahamic religions, politics and religion have remained in a dialectical tension, and this tension has played a creative role in the development of democracy as an urban form of participatory politics. Because religion had a universal and sacred notion of justice, it has functioned as a powerful criticism of the state. The essential point of this introductory comment is that, if we regard the tensions between religion and world as constitutive of the leverage towards rational economic behaviour, then we can regard the same tension as the leverage towards modern politics.

The doctrine of the Church as a community free from coercion provided a powerful contrast to the state, which Weber (1978) famously defined as that institution which has a monopoly of violence within a given territory. The Church as a parallel society provided a set of normative criteria by which bad government could, in principle, be evaluated. It provided a cultural space within which concepts of justice, equality ('brotherhood') and community evolved as components of a theology of political institutions. However, the association of the Church with this world exposed the religious community to corruption and co-optation. For example, the rise of the national church involved religious functionaries in power-sharing. Thus, the dialectic of sacred and profane force can be seen as a paradox that assisted the rise of the modern citizen. This dialectic is not peculiar to Western culture. Similar arguments can and have been made about the relationship between Buddhism and society, specifically between the monastic order and the secular state. In Western history, the Christian king is one who assists salvational history through the wise management of the

state, and who if necessary employs force to secure Church and state. In Buddhist legend, King Asoka was both conqueror and Buddhist monk (Ling, 1966).

It was this interweaving of religion and politics, brotherly love and violence, that constituted the tragic vision of Weber's sociology. Politics requires authoritative methods for the distribution of resources and must resort to coercive means to establish order. In the last analysis, politics is about the wise use of force in society to preserve order. Political institutions must exert violence and religious communities are based on brotherly love. Politics and religion must exist in a state of tension, but paradoxically they are both required for the creation of order. For Weber, religious institutions are channels of symbolic (charismatic) violence that coerce behaviour through sacred force, while political institutions require secular force.

#### RELIGION AS CHARISMATIC FORCE

This analytical insight into religion as a cultural lever for modernity in Weber's sociology was developed by Talcott Parsons (1962) and adopted as an explanation of the dynamic nature of American culture. The core feature of this theory is the explication of the historical role of charisma in human societies. Weber employed a theory of charismatic breakthrough to understand the secular dynamic of authority and leadership in social institutions. His main intention was to compare and contrast three types of authority: charismatic, traditional and legal-rational. In *Economy and Society*, the term 'charisma' is 'applied to a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities' (Weber, 1978: 241). Traditional authority involves the acceptance of an implicit rule that expresses a custom, namely an established pattern of belief or practice. Finally, legal-rational authority is typical of bureaucracies, in which formal and explicit rules of conduct are underpinned by procedural norms. These forms of authority are in turn modes of compliance. Tradition depends on compliance through empathy; legal-rational authority rests on rational argument; and charismatic authority and leadership require inspiration.

Charismatic authority is confronted by a generic problem of succession with the death of the leader and is consequently unstable. With the death of the charismatic leader, the disciples typically disband, but occasionally alternative solutions for continuity will be developed. In the case of the Christian Church, the charismatic authority of Christ was invested in the Church itself (as the body of Christ) and thus in the bishops, who, by their control over the 'keys of grace', enjoy a stable vicarious authority. This 'institutionalization of charisma' becomes over time increasingly formal, bureaucratic and impersonal. Weber defined the 'routinization of charisma' in terms of the transformation of the charismatic power of Christ into a set of formal procedures and bureaucratic rules. Charisma is institutionally important in the definition of different religious roles and patterns of organization. For example, Weber distinguished between the prophet, who, as a charismatic figure, has a personal call, and the priest, who has authority by virtue of his office in the Church and his service in a sacred tradition. The prophets, who may emerge from the ranks of the priesthood, are unremunerated, and therefore depend on gifts from followers.

Weber also distinguished two forms of prophecy as represented, on the one hand, by Buddha and, on the other, by Zoroaster and Muhammad. The latter represent 'ethical prophecy' and are conceived as mere instruments of God. These prophets receive a commission from God to preach a revelation and demand obedience from their disciples as an ethical duty. By contrast, exemplary prophets demonstrate to their followers a salvational path through the example provided by their own lives. Exemplary prophecy was, according to Weber, characteristic of Asia, and ethical prophecy, of the Abrahamic religions of the Middle East (Zeitlin, 1984).

The institutions through which people gain access to charismatic gifts have important implications for broader issues of social organization and political power. Where the Church was able to claim an exclusive monopoly of the means of grace, then there was a rigid and detailed hierarchy of authority between priests and laity, and the hierarchies of this world were a reflection of sacred hierarchies. As we will see, the Reformation challenged the medieval hierarchy of authority and sanctity through the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers (Weber, 1930). An

important sociological issue is therefore the historical development of a sacramental priesthood in Western culture, and the challenge of alternative forms of authority.

Within the dialectic of sacred and profane, the radical doctrine of equality in Islam provides an important case study of a religious system that has rejected priesthood and sacrament. Islamic doctrine is radically egalitarian, because its monotheistic fundamentalism precludes any ontological hierarchy in either human society or nature. Its first doctrinal premise is the affirmation in the Surah of Unity (Surah cxii): He is God alone, God the Eternal. This monotheistic vision rules out hierarchy. Although Muhammad is the Messenger of God, it is a fundamental misrepresentation to refer to Islam as a religion, namely as 'Muhammadanism'. All beings are subordinated to Allah, because Qur'anic orthodoxy precludes any divine associates. This theological notion of Unity lays the foundation for a belief in the radical equality of human beings. In sociological terms, however, actual Islamic societies have been profoundly hierarchical, and as a result, there is a permanent tension between the religious vision and the mundane realities of Muslim societies in history (Marlow, 1997).

In its historical inception, Islam was an egalitarian brotherhood that assumed the equality of free male believers, developing neither Church nor priesthood. This radical monotheism complemented Arabic tribalism, which also had an egalitarian ethic, but these doctrines were quickly compromised by the success of Islamic military expansion, which encouraged the growth of a more status-conscious and hierarchical social order. The prominent religious roles played by women in early Islamic communities were also eventually overshadowed by the patriarchal cultures of imperial powers. These tendencies were increasingly legitimized by the Islamic incorporation of Greek political thought, which conceptualized the city as a hierarchical political formation. In the *polis*, social order requires the harmony that is produced by a wise but despotic leader. In Iraq and Iran in the Sassanian period, social inequality became progressively hereditary, and the dominant class was a landed nobility.

The pre-Islamic Iranian priestly model of despotism was imitated by later Islamic regimes, whose aristocratic power was legitimized by the religious leadership (*ulama*). For example, the works of al-Mawardi

(974–1058) described a rigid social world composed of aristocratic horsemen, priests, peasants and merchants. The model was both functional and hierarchical. In response to these despotic institutions, political conflict in Islam has been subsequently organized around utopian criticism of urban hierarchy, a utopian opposition that often appeals nostalgically to the egalitarian *asabiyya* of the pristine community as celebrated in the Qur'an. For instance, in the Iranian Revolution of 1977–9, Ayatollah Khomeini mobilized the oppressed (*mazlum*) and the innocent (*bi gunah*) against the urban elite, who were the principal agents of the Shah's authoritarian programme of economic modernization, in the name of a radical Islamic state. The Revolution involved a successful alliance between the clergy behind Khomeini, sections of the urban working class and the dispossessed (*Mostaz'afin*), who were typically landless rural migrants. In radical Islam, the voice of the people became an expression of divine will against the inequalities of the secular state (Shar'ati, 1980). Contrary to Weber's Orientalist account of Islamic conservatism, Islam shares with Christianity a tradition of radical politics that is driven by a utopian vision of a community of love set against the greed and violence of this world.

The different ways in which societies manage the challenge of charismatic powers has an important relationship to the rise of citizenship, because the specific manner of institutionalization of charisma has established the division between the authority of ecclesiastical institutions and the secular power of kings. In this discussion, I shall be primarily concerned with the division between Church and state, but similar arguments also apply to Judaism and Islam, and to a lesser extent to so-called 'Asiatic religions' such as Buddhism. In Islam, the death of the Prophet in 661 CE created similar problems of succession, resulting eventually in the split between Shi'ism and Sunni Islam with respect to the source of authority and leadership within the Islamic community. The evolution of Shi'ism into a separate but suppressed religious movement produced the doctrine of the Hidden Imamate, in which the secular state had no ultimate authority over the community (Richard, 1995). This doctrine (the Occultation of the Hidden Imam) provided the radical seed of the Iranian Revolution, in which the modernizing government of the Pahlavi Shah was condemned as heretical. The

authority of Ayatollah Khomeini provided a charismatic challenge to the secular institutions of the modern state (Arjomand, 1984). By contrast, Sunnism accepted the caliphates of the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties as a legitimate form of government. Fundamentalist Islam in the twentieth century challenged this traditional compromise between the private sphere of religious devotion and the public arena of social institutions, and between the religious leadership of the community (*umma*) and the secular authority of the state.

Thus the routinization of charisma in religious movements compels religious authorities to develop a compromise with secular power. When a messianic religion becomes domesticated, there is a parallel evolution of religious citizenship within the religious community and political citizenship within the state. Because the religious community was an institution of consent, the participation of the laity within the Church often provided a primitive model of secular citizenship.

#### THE EVOLUTION OF CHURCH AND STATE

In the West, the division between secular and profane authority was a central feature of political institutions. Jesus was part of the lineage of radical Jewish prophets who condemned the evils of this world against the demands of a righteous God. Early Christianity emerged as a millenarian and chiliastic movement that eagerly anticipated the end of the world in the Second Coming of Christ. Building on Christ's prophetic utterances (such as 'My Kingdom is not of this earth'), the early Church regarded the affairs of this world as transient and ultimately irrelevant to the salvation of souls. Political life in this world was sharply separated from religious phenomena.

The Christian community had eventually to adjust to the absence of a Second Coming and was forced to develop institutions and doctrines that recognized the continuity and importance of secular institutions. In a post-chiliastic society, Christian theology was forced to begin the task of developing a view of citizenship, because it had to conceptualize how Christian souls would behave in secular institutions. It was necessary to have a normative understanding of how Christians ought to behave in this world, just as Christian thought

had an understanding of life in the next. Christians came to think of themselves as merely visitors or foreign residents in this world, because true citizenship was in another world. However, the very persistence of the Christian Church gave rise to the need for organizational structure and administration. The development of a state within a state involved an inevitable compromise with the world. In the works of Origen (185–254) and Tertullian (160–220), we see the emergence of an official view of the Church as a parallel society and of the Christian as a person with a double citizenship. In his reflections on martyrdom, Origen had argued that life in this world was merely an apprenticeship for the next. Although the Church is a superior society, Christians working and living in this world should be law-abiding, honest and trustworthy. Patristic theology thus created a bridge between the teachings of Jesus and the classical world, within which Plato's doctrine of the forms perfectly suited the needs of an emergent Church.

The persecution of the Christian community and the martyrdom of the faithful had the consequence of protecting the Church from compromise and from rapid assimilation into this world. However, this tradition of conflict and suppression came to an end with the conversion of the Western emperor Constantine to Christianity in 312. This conversion can be seen as a traditional Roman practice of accepting a range of gods into the empire under the broad authority of an abstract being. Constantine, who had been devoted to Sol Invictus, may have found an acceptance of the Christian God as the Light of the World unproblematic. The Church was now under the protection of the Roman state, and the emperor restored confiscated property and transferred great wealth to the Church. Constantine began to act as the head of the Church, and called the bishops to the Council of Nicaea in 325 to defend the unity of the faith behind the doctrine of the Trinity. Under Theodosius the union of Church and state was further consolidated, and the emperor came to regard Christianity and the Trinitarian faith as the social foundation of the imperial system. Paradoxically, acceptance of orthodox Christianity had become the principal condition of citizenship within the empire (Maddox, 1996: 80).

This reconciliation of Christianity as a millenarian religion of salvation and the imperial society of Rome produced a profound reaction

against the materialism of Roman society, namely Christian monasticism and mysticism. The most profound articulation of this spiritual crisis can be found in the work of St Augustine of Hippo (354–430), namely the *City of God*. This work was composed as a response to paganism on the occasion of the fall of Rome to Alaric the Goth in 410. Augustine's *City of God* was composed between 413 and 426, and has remained a central text of Western political philosophy. Augustine absorbed the idealism of Plato, for whom the world was transient but the forms or ideas of mind were permanent, and the republican philosophy of Cicero. Augustine starts by rejecting the view that the Roman Empire was a necessary step in the redemptive history of the Church on earth. He was critical of alleged virtues of the pre-Christian Empire, arguing that the military advances of the Empire were not motivated by true virtues. He rejected Cicero's view of the glorious foundations of Rome and championed Christian virtue as the foundation of a civilized society based on love of neighbours (Weithman, 2001). The Roman Empire was corrupt and Christians should focus their attention on the City of God, which alone is perfect. However, Augustine did not support any spiritual flight from the world. While the Christian remains alien in this world, Christians should co-operate with the state and its administration.

Because Augustine hated civil disturbance and war, he accepted the state as a necessary regulation of society. Christians could not wholly ignore their secular responsibilities and had duties to attend to in this world such as alms-giving and the education of children. While the Holy City was driven by *caritas*, the secular city was based on *cupiditas*, and hence the secular life of men involved a society of conflict and struggle. Thus 'the earthly city glories in itself, the Heavenly City glories in the Lord' (Augustine, 1972: 593). The earthly city was nevertheless important in providing for the Christian community in terms of an administrative order. It has often been said that the radical element of Augustine's teaching was a vision of history that was linear and teleological, thus breaking with the cyclical view of the classical world (Wolin, 1961). The Holy City was a city at the end of human history, and secular politics was important in so far as it served that historical purpose. The two cities existed in a dialectical relationship in which the secular city was part

of the same order as the Church itself. The secular city could be justified as a coercive order when it assisted the Church in its divine purpose.

The legacy of Augustinian theology was a conception of the state and human society as entirely secular and amoral institutions. In this respect, Augustine departed radically from Eusebius of Caesarea (264–340) in that religious membership was no longer the basis of political citizenship. For Eusebius, Christianity was completely identified with the Roman Empire, and Constantine was compared with Christ as a light sent to inspire humanity. By contrast, Augustine, in book xix of the *City of God*, defined a people as ‘the association of a multitude of rational beings united by a common agreement on the objects of their love’ (1972: 890). He did not regard Roman society as just, and with the collapse of the empire in the west, he came to the conclusion that the Church could not rely on any particular state.

Medieval political theory moved in a very different direction and was concerned to find some reconciliation between Church and state, and, in particular, ecclesiastical teaching returned to a view of the prince as a religious leader who ruled wisely and, where necessary, forcefully. The problem was specifically to develop a view of feudal kingship as, at least potentially, a religious institution. This theological trajectory was established by Charlemagne (742–814), who was crowned the Emperor of the Romans by Pope Leo III in St Peter’s basilica in 800. The resulting Carolingian theory of rulership combined theocracy with some degree of consent. We can see this amalgam in the writings of Charlemagne’s teacher Alcuin, who argued that the emperor had two swords, one to keep the Church internally free from heresy and the other to quell its pagan enemies. Like King David, Charlemagne combined the roles of ruler and priest.

With the development of European feudalism, theories and institutions of rulership continued to evolve. Medieval society was characterized by a permanent tension between a descending interpretation of power in which the king had no equals, and an ascending principle in which the king was a feudal lord surrounded by his lords (Ullmann, 1965). The growth of coronation rituals including anointment consolidated the theocratic legacy of the Carolingian period at the beginning of medieval feudalism. The

descending theory acquired over time a religious ideology of theocratic rule in which the absolute king was the representative of God. At the beginning of the modern period, the work of Robert Filmer produced a comprehensive theory of patriarchy in which the king represents the authority of God over his household just as the husband exercises patriarchal rule over an earthly family (Schochet, 1975). It was against this patriarchal theory of power that John Locke developed his political theory of limited government. The ascending principle laid the foundation for an element of participation in which kings had to justify their actions before a council of equals and eventually before a parliament of men. This democratic, or at least collective, element of restraint on royal powers created a political tradition, stretching from Magna Carta in 1215 to legal judgments of Sir Edward Coke in the seventeenth century against the arbitrary extension of royal privilege, that denounced the capricious exercise of power. Within feudalism, we see the emergence of principles of immunity, arguments about rights and institutions that attempted to restrain the absolute and arbitrary powers of kings. The ascending principle thus recognized that the political connection between king and vassal was a contract based on mutual consent, which implied that the king could not rule in a tyrannical and subjective manner.

Political life in the Middle Ages revolved around the conflicting roles and status of monarchical and papal authority. It is a mistake, however, to conclude that medieval political thought was constructed on a set of dichotomies between secular and sacred powers. The religious debates around papal powers were essentially political and laid much of the foundation of modern thought: the legitimacy and scope of the derived powers of the pope, the importance of moral leadership over Christian society, and the nature of obedience required by its subjects (Wolin, 1961: 137). The defence of papal authority challenged the idea that the state had a monopoly on governance, but the ironic consequence was that the language of theology had become deeply politicized. This debate raised important questions about the nature and scope of political authority, and hence the range and conditions of political obedience. Is there any obligation for a Christian subject to obey an unjust lord, or an unworthy cleric? The medieval debate in this respect paved the way for both Machiavelli and Luther.

**INDIVIDUALISM AND  
THE PROTESTANT CHALLENGE  
TO ECCLESIASTICAL HIERARCHY**

The creation of European nation-states from the seventeenth century necessarily involved the creation of nationalistic 'imaginary communities' (Benedict, 1983) which asserted and partly created homogenous populations which were held together, against the pressures of class, culture and ethnicity, by nationalistic ideologies. If we identify the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 as the juridical origin of the modern world-system of nation-states, then state formation involved the creation of nationalist identities on the basis of a double colonization, both internal and external. For example, anti-Semitism provided the pretext in many European states for earlier versions of ethnic cleansing in order to create a homogenous population, but in a less violent form one can find various political and social pressures to create civil societies on the basis of common languages, common religious rituals and beliefs, and a single ethnic identity. This process was the cultural basis for the creation of national forms of citizenship in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The rise of the system of nation-states was connected with the rise of national forms of competitive capitalism. The capitalist mode of production undermined historical patterns of rural communities based on traditional forms of agrarianism. Through urbanization and the demographic revolutions of the early nineteenth century, industrial capitalism produced a large urban proletariat that was a potential threat to the new order of nation-states. Nationalism was created by nation-states either as a substitute for or in combination with religion as the social cement of an urban society that was organized around conflicting social classes.

The political history of Europe was the history of Christendom, and the evolution of fundamental Western institutions such as the state and civil society cannot be understood without an analysis of ecclesiastical institutions. As we have seen, during the Roman Empire, the Christian community was originally a cult whose millenarian doctrine sharply separated the sacred and the profane. Eschatological expectations about the Second Coming meant that Christian leaders had little interest in shaping this world. The conversion of Constantine, the foundation of

Constantinople as a Christian city and the acceptance of Christianity as the official religion of the Empire brought about the end of Christian chiliasm. In the late fourth and fifth centuries, the papacy emerged as a governmental institution that exercised rulership.

The collapse of the Roman Empire and the advance of barbarian kingdoms in the fifth and sixth centuries created the foundations of feudalism. As Christianity came to adjust to the existence of the secular institutions of this world, it was forced to reconsider the relationship between the Church and the state. Medieval Christian theology provided basic models of power, kingship, corporation and immunity that have been and remain influential in Western political institutions. Throughout the medieval period, Christian theologians, as we have seen, struggled to reconcile two problematic principles: the state was an institution of violence, but it was necessary for social order; and the Church, whose foundation was a divine act, depended upon the state to secure its soteriological purpose. What was common to medieval belief and what came to shape the growth of constitutional theory was the assumption that power should exist within a normative framework.

While the medieval Church inherited the impulse of primitive Christianity to disengage from political life, this other-worldly impulse could not be comprehensively obeyed since the Church was ultimately dependent on state institutions. The political importance of the Protestant Reformation created a new vision of independent, self-governing communities in which the sanctified individual would be liberated from the tyranny of secular powers and the corruption of ecclesiastical institutions. Lutheranism embraced a nostalgic vision of the purity of the primitive Church with which to challenge Catholic institutions, but the sins of this world were the pretext for a theory of the state as a moral authority. Luther went further to recognize that the state was necessary to release Christian souls from the tyranny of the Church in the world. The fundamental instability of this relationship between the sovereignty of the state and the divine mission of the Church produced an endless cycle of reformation and counter-reformation that structured political life in Europe for centuries.

Luther followed Augustine in recognizing the existence of two kingdoms, but Luther's world was very different from the social and political context of Augustine's *City of God*.

Whereas Augustine had sought to defend Christianity in the context of imperial Rome, Luther sought to nourish individual piety in the context of the imperial power of the Roman Church. Luther's calling was essentially religious, namely to articulate the problem of individual salvation in relation to a God who could not be influenced by the human institutions of penance and ritual. Because human beings are deeply depraved, society requires a powerful state to subdue the sinfulness of human nature. Catholicism had developed a view of sin as a series of acts that were cumulative, and hence confession and penance meant that sin could be cancelled piecemeal. In Lutheranism, sinfulness was total and systematic, and hence it could not be resolved progressively through the use of the means of grace. The assault on evil required far more dramatic, profound and total methods.

One consequence of Lutheranism was to justify absolute political power. For example, Luther's condemnation of peasant resistance to the German aristocracy was ruthless and yet the unintended political consequences of Lutheranism were revolutionary, as Friedrich Engels (1956) clearly recognized in *The Peasant War in Germany*. First, Luther was deeply opposed to the earthly political powers of the Roman Catholic Church, which exercised a tyrannical control over the sacraments. Secondly, he insisted on the equality of all Christians in a priesthood of all believers, and thereby challenged the hierarchical organisation of the Roman Church. Following Augustine, he recognised that the Church was a fraternity or a union of souls (*communio sanctorum*) rather than a coercive hierarchy of power. Authority for the interpretation of divine laws rested in the last analysis with the congregation rather than an episcopate. Thirdly, Lutheran theology established a commitment to the principle of freedom through the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. Although Luther had in mind a spiritual freedom, it had powerful political implications by challenging the authority of the offices of the Church in matters of spiritual governance. We might argue that Lutheranism created the idea of a spiritual citizenship in which individualism was tempered by a clear notion of the Church as a congregational democracy.

Despite Luther's attempts to contain social unrest, Lutheranism unleashed an antinomian crisis in western Christendom, because it legitimated preaching against the corruption

of the Church and the state in the name of an individual interpretation of the purposes of a righteous God. The extreme Anabaptists sects illustrated the revolutionary potential of the idea of Christian equality. The followers of Thomas Munster wielded holy violence against a corrupt world that had turned its back on holy scriptures. It was Calvin who, in his *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, attempted to restore a Christian commitment to law, order and civility. In part, he modified Lutheranism by emphasizing a division between the invisible and the visible Church. The invisible Church was a society of saints, but the visible Church on earth contained sinners and required discipline, law and institutions. The unity of the visible Church required the beneficial effects of the sacraments and the teaching of scripture. The consequence of Calvin's sociology of ecclesiastical administration was an institutionalization of the Christian community without resort to a papal authority; it was an important step towards a democratization of the congregational structure of Protestantism without the antinomian consequences of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. The centralized authority of the Roman Church papacy had been successfully challenged by the Protestant Reforms, but the universalism of the Catholic Church was also compromised by the growth of nationalism and the nation-state. The Reformation unleashed powerful movements towards the creation of a system of national churches that were parallel to the creation of nation-states. The Treaty of Westphalia produced a political system of nation-states and forced the churches to operate within national boundaries.

The republican and revolutionary ideas of John Milton and the English Civil War were part of the legacy of the Puritan Reformation. For example, the *Areopagitica* would have been impossible without the radical politics of Luther and his followers (Kendrick, 1986). Milton wrote in a period of English history where radical millenarianism had captured the imagination of the political movement against the monarch. The radicals preached that the Pope was the Antichrist whose overthrow would bring about the new millennium, and that God's Englishmen were the main opponents of the Antichrist. Milton accepted this millenarian view of the special role of England in providence, and his acceptance of the religion of the heart, adult baptism and political

libertinism put him well within the ranks of the antinomian preachers (C. Hill, 1977). It was a religious vision of the transformation of power to godly rule that inspired a revolutionary tradition in Europe and North America.

#### RELIGION AND SECULARIZATION

The French Revolution and American War of Independence went further in creating a system of nation-states and national ideology as the cement of modern society. The emphasis on equality and individualism created the modern notion of national citizenship and a secular republican tradition that profoundly challenged European Catholicism. Modernization has been necessarily associated with secularism and the growth of scientific criticism of revelation as the foundation of Christian belief. Radicals like Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels regarded working-class socialism as a necessary condition for the effective criticism of religion as the ideology of a dominant class. These revolutionary traditions that embraced nationalism and secularism created the notion that a modern democracy could only emerge out of the ashes of religion.

It has been a basic assumption of the sociology of religion that the Christian churches in Europe have, from the nineteenth century, been subject to a profound and ineluctable process of secularization. In *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches* (1931), Troeltsch argued that the oscillation between Church and sect that had shaped much of European history had come to an end with the final erosion of the universal Church. Religious life would become a matter of private belief and practice. The growth of an urban industrial society had undermined the social, cultural and intellectual conditions that made religious attachment and belief possible (MacIntyre, 1969).

It is, however, important to differentiate between the history of Protestantism and Catholicism in European politics. Catholicism, prior to political liberalization in the late twentieth century, was central to the expression of nationalism in continental Europe. In Ireland, too, national identity and republicanism have, since the time of Edmund Burke, been thoroughly merged within a Catholic tradition, and the Protestant–Catholic divide in Northern

Ireland has remained an obstinate fact of political violence. Owing to the political alienation of the population from the pre-1922 British state, the majority equate being Catholic with being Irish. This pervasive social and cultural influence of Catholicism is closely associated with its influence over education. In Ireland, for example, while the state provides over 85 per cent of funding, Catholic boards of managers control most schools and remained a major counter-force to secularism. The dominance of the Catholic Church on the European right guaranteed that regional, party and class divisions were often drawn along religious lines. Indeed, since the nineteenth century, Catholicism has represented a major counter force to communism, and recognition of Catholicism for moral leadership of the working class produced a notion of 'hegemony' in the study of European politics (Gramsci, 1971).

After the Second World War, Catholicism also played an important cultural and political role in relation to atheist communism. The Polish Solidarity movement demonstrated decisively the capacity of Catholicism to survive communism and to act as a conduit of social protest and change, because it is embedded in national identity. With the end of the Cold War and the fall of communism, Catholicism may play a diminished role in the articulation of nationalism and national identity. In Spain, General Franco rose to power in 1936 following his attack on the socialist government. Franco's regime was decidedly Catholic and supported traditional values against godless atheism. The collapse of the Franco regime following his death in 1975 has resulted in the diminution of the public authority of the Catholic Church. While economic prosperity and growing multiculturalism have brought about a partial divorce between state and Church in Europe, the communal and cultural basis of national citizenship has typically flourished on religious soil. In short, the relationship between Catholicism and modern citizenship is complex. Catholicism has played a major role in the development of human rights, the formation of grass-roots radicalism in Latin America and European socialism through the worker-priest movement but it has also been criticized for its conservative view of women, contraception and family life. There is no satisfactory generalization about the relationship between Catholicism and citizenship.

This complex picture underlines some of the certainties of the 'secularization thesis',

which was one of the most influential aspects of the sociology of religion in the 1960s and 1970s. Sociologists largely accepted the idea that secularization was part and parcel of the modernization of society. Sociological perspectives on religion have changed to take into account such issues as the continuing importance of religion in American culture, the global development of fundamentalism, the impact of Islam on social development, and the effervescence of 'New Age' faiths. While there is clear evidence of secularization in the sense that membership of and participation in Christian churches have declined, religious identity continues to play a generic role in national identity and consciousness. This reassessment of the secularization thesis suggests that we need to be more sensitive to the ways in which the secular world was and is shaped by the sacred, including the diverse ways in which the political is constituted by the religious.

#### **RELIGION AND ASSOCIATIONAL DEMOCRACY**

Sociological inquiry has often neglected the religious roots of contemporary associational political theory. For example, modern associational philosophy can be derived from the history of English Methodism. John Wesley (1703–91), who created the Wesleyan circuit of chapels and preaching houses in the eighteenth century, attempted to take Anglicanism back to the faith and practice of the primitive church, but paradoxically created a movement that was critical of the religious and political establishment. The relationship between Methodism and working-class politics has been a controversial historical issue (Thompson, 1963). Historians (such as Halevy, 1961) have argued that England was spared the revolutionary fervour of France because Wesleyan Methodism functioned as a social ladder that encouraged social mobility out of the working and artisan class. Nevertheless while Methodism may have contributed to the absence of a violent political revolution in eighteenth-century England, the tradition of independent chapels and the social participation that they fostered did contribute to the civic culture that made the peaceful development of citizenship possible. Although Wesley was specifically opposed to radical politics and interpreted Methodism as

a spiritual revolution, the independent Methodist chapels were associated with working-class protest and eventually, with the development of Primitive Methodism, they came to shape the social development of the Labour Party. Methodism provided the working class with discipline, literacy, abstinence and leadership. It had the unintended consequence of transforming sections of the disorganized working class into an effective political movement. As a result, John Wesley's conservative sermons and Charles Wesley's emotional hymns were an important cultural component of the making of the English working class (Semmel, 1973).

Similar developments took place in the United States, with conservative consequences. There is the argument that the Protestant sects provided capitalism with a disciplined and restrained working class. The chapels worked closely with the owners of capital, because business were willing to support preachers who condemned alcoholism among the workers (Pope, 1942). In addition Protestants did not disrupt or challenge the racial structures of the southern states (Dollard, 1998). The general development of denominationalism in America became an essential part of American culture, providing a means for the acculturation of migrant communities into the American racial melting-pot (Niebuhr, 1957).

In Germany, neither Lutheranism nor Catholicism offered any challenge to the rule of the dominant classes. The role of the state in creating and maintaining order was a basic assumption of established religion, and the majority of clergy regarded working-class agitation as a dangerous anticipation of atheist socialism. The Russian revolutions confirmed the fears of German intellectuals that the possibility of a peaceful transition to bourgeois democracy in Russia was unlikely (Weber, 1995). The biography of Friedrich Naumann (1860–1919), a personal friend of Max Weber, provides a useful insight into the political culture of liberal Protestantism prior to the outbreak of the First World War. Naumann worked as an assistant to Johann Heinrich Wichern in the so-called 'Rough House' near Hamburg, which provided pastoral support for the industrial working class. It was evident that the German working class was alienated from the churches and that the religious leadership was completely out of touch with the realities of proletarian culture. Winchern and Naumann worked towards a

re-Christianization of German society through active evangelism and through Christian socialism, which, while accepting capitalism as an economic system, attempted to improve the material condition of the working class through social ethics (Theiner, 1987).

One might argue that Christian socialism was a cynical strategy to bridge the gap between the churches and German society with a view to preventing the growth of atheistic socialism in the industrial proletariat. In Germany, Christian socialism, under the influence of pastors like Adolf Stoecker, often assumed a powerful nationalist flavour and embraced anti-Semitic values. Naumann, working through the Protestant Workers' Association (Evangelische Arbeitvereine) and the Evangelical-Social Congress (Evangelisch-sozialer Kongress), attempted to distinguish the 'young Christian Socialists' from the conservative direction of Stoecker. By 1894 the attitude of the church authorities towards Naumann and the 'socialist' clergy became hostile, and eventually the clergy were forced to choose between retreating back into their clerical roles or working outside Protestantism. Christian socialism in the late nineteenth century failed to re-Christianize society by winning the working class back into Protestantism and the churches became increasingly nationalistic and supported the military build-up of Germany.

It was this crisis in Protestantism that contributed to the reconstruction of Christian thought through the radical work of Karl Barth (McCormack, 1995). Against the liberal compromise of the Protestant establishment, Barth emphasized the alienation of the Christian in the world, and returned to an orthodox eschatology that situated human hope on divine intervention in history. Without a radical division between politics and religion, capitalism and nationalism would compromise the German churches. Barth's christological criticism of state power was ultimately a defence against reactionary Christianity. Unfortunately, the history of the Second World War demonstrated that the churches followed the nationalistic and militaristic tendencies of nation-states. In the postwar period, both Catholic and Protestant churches in Europe sought to improve their relationship with the working class through such reforms as the worker-priest movement (Wickham, 1961). In Latin America, the Roman Catholic Church has, often reluctantly, become associated with radical political movements through

its articulation of liberation theology (Villa-Vicencio, 1992).

#### GLOBALIZATION AND NATIONAL RELIGIONS

The thesis of this chapter has been that religion made a contribution to the growth of democratic citizenship by sustaining a deep division between politics and religion, by developing an articulate criticism of state violence, and by creating a public space outside the state where informed debate could occur. However, the Church's role as an independent site of social criticism has been constantly compromised by the fact that religious institutions have frequently become an arm of the state. In Europe, the Church has often been a dominant element in the political establishment, and has acted, in terms of Marxist social theory, as an ideological apparatus of the state system (Althusser, 1971). In the post-Westphalian settlement, the churches were reorganized as national churches providing part of the ideological cement that held nation-states together. The clergy in Scandinavian societies were part of what we might call a spiritual civil service, and in England, the Anglican Church was the Conservative Party at prayer. In Germany, the pastors were, generally speaking, enthusiastic supporters of nationalist militarism. Radical churches and chapels became the conduit of class interest and, like Methodism, their base was eroded by the social mobility of their members.

In the era of Western colonialism, Christianity was inevitably the cultural vehicle of the civilizing mission of the European states. Decolonization and globalization have to some extent cut the cord that tied the churches to Western colonialism through missionary activity. The globalization of modern cultures presents religions with an interesting political challenge and an opportunity because, with the partial erosion of the sovereignty of the nation-state, religion might once more articulate a utopian vision of a global community. Religion can function as a utopian global social bond, as a form of cosmopolitan virtue to express a collective responsibility for the environment and for the diversity of human cultures (Turner, 2000a, 2000b). If globalism presents new opportunities for a religious articulation of the global condition, it also poses significant

problems of McDonaldisation and co-optation of religious movements. Religion often becomes a component of modern consumerism, offering a bland message of self-improvement and individual meaning.

The contemporary debate about globalization has, with some obvious exceptions (for example, Beyer, 1994), neglected the religious dimension of global processes. From the point of view of cultural politics, globalization theory has ignored the obvious fact that 'the world religions' have been global forces before the rise of international politics and have remained a basic condition of global processes in the modern period. The Roman Empire was obviously an early example of global change within which religion provided the social glue that held the Empire together. The republican version of a global world developed a cosmopolitan ideology in which hearth gods, local deities and the monotheistic god of Judaeo-Christianity were incorporated within a single pantheon (L. Hill, 2000). From the standpoint of religious evolution, Rome provided an interesting illustration of 'glocalization' (Robertson, 1992: 173–4). In the pre-modern period (before 1500), religion, especially those religious traditions with a significant evangelical dimension, was important in the development of inter-regional exchanges between Europe, the Americas and Asia. In the early modern period (1500–1850), there was a significant expansion of world religions through the growth of world trade that made possible the growth of missionary activity in Africa, Asia and Latin America. With modern globalization (1850–1945), new technologies (railways, shipping, telephone and radio) increased the intensity of global cultural exchange, consolidated the political power of the West and facilitated global military expansion. Religions were a constitutive part of Western colonialism where missions and trade developed simultaneously, and provided much of the ideological and spiritual inspiration for movements of decolonization (Venn, 2000). Contemporary globalization from the end of the Second World War has consolidated the power of American culture and Western secularism, but it has also created the conditions for fundamentalist revivals, promoted the articulation of native religions and underpinned the vitality of religious militancy. The importance of religion in world politics may point to yet a new social process, namely 'the desecularization of the world' (Berger, 1999).

The debate about globalization inevitably raises questions about the interrelationships between the world religions in a shrinking globe. Any discussion of a clash of civilizations (Huntington, 1997) leads into an analysis of Orientalism and Islam. As a result, there has been considerable interest in Islam in relation to globalism in recent social science. If there is the possibility of creating a form of global governance, then there are important questions about the coexistence of different world religions and different assumptions about citizenship within a global village. In the medieval period, Islam developed as a world religion, but, given the limitations of technology, transport and literacy, it could not exercise world hegemony. Islamdom was constituted as an ideal that could never be fully realized in practice. With the globalization of communication systems and with the collapse of communism, Islam can for the first time function as a genuinely global religion and the pilgrimage to Mecca has served as an important factor of cultural integration in modern Islam. These global processes have increased conflict between Western political systems and Islam, creating in turn conditions for the growth of militant Islamic movements (Tibi, 1998).

Perhaps the principal consequence of global modernization is the constitution of 'religion' as a separate, differentiated and specialized sector of modern society – a cultural sector that is often thought to refer to and assumed to manage the private world of values and meaning. Religion in the modern world has been transformed into that institution that refers to the issues that trouble individuals, namely what they think is of ultimate concern. Globalization and modernization convert religion into an activity within the private sphere. In order to achieve this privatization of religion, it also had to be converted into a denominational religion of separate but tolerant and equal communities within civil society.

Secularization and modernization make 'religion' in this sense a special 'problem of modernity', and thereby place it more explicitly in public discourse. The effect of globalization is to export this Western pattern of religiosity as a general cultural theme of the world order. As we have seen, the Westphalian creation of a world-system of nation-states was based on the notion that the Wars of Religion (1550–1630) were an inevitable outcome of the persistence of religion in public life. Intolerance and violence were to be

contained by confining religion to the private sphere (Thomas, 2000). The Peace of Augsburg and the Congress of Westphalia promulgated the principle of structural differentiation. Within a given political jurisdiction, the ruler was to decide which particular brand of Christianity could obtain as the official religion (*'cujus regio, ejus religio'*). This seventeenth-century settlement created religious pluralism among the states and confined religion to the private sphere. It also provided the modern political conditions for religious toleration, and determined that citizenship would acquire a specifically secular framework.

Of course, this specialization of 'religion' is not entirely unfamiliar to theological thinking about *religio* in the sense that it has been common to distinguish between 'religion' as a social system and 'faith' as an authentic and personal response to divinity. However, globalization has involved the export of this predominantly Western and modern model of private and individualistic religiosity, and as a result fundamentalist Judaism and Islam are definite responses to such a process of normalization. Fundamentalism attempts to ensure the dominance of religion in the public spheres of law, economy and government, and is thus a response to Weber's tragic vision of the separation of the value spheres. These forms of globalization challenge the western assumption that citizenship is a secular identity that is determined within a national framework. This process of exporting an individualistic version of Latin Christianity, and global reactions to it, has been described as 'globalatinization', namely the alliance between Christianity, technology and capitalism (Derrida, 1998: 13).

In the religious conflicts of the twentieth century, the Western model of denominational pluralism was increasingly adopted as the model of religious (and hence political) tolerance. The history of American migration and denominational pluralism provided the normative model for global peace-making. However, it is important to recognize that the historical model of denominational pluralism was also a model of standardization through the melting-pot of coexistence. The toleration of religious differences in colonial America was originally a toleration of Protestants. America produced a model of tolerance through sameness. Religious difference is incorporated through conformity to a Protestant model of religious organization and practice (Walzer, 1997: 67). Similar patterns of assimilation characterized American multicultural migration in the

twentieth century. The Herberg thesis (Herberg, 1955), in which the melting-pot was composed of Protestants, Catholics and Jews, now embraces Hinduism, Confucianism and Buddhism. Assimilation into American life has resulted in the denominationalization of different religious traditions to create a normative tolerance at the cost of doctrinal distinctiveness. Social participation and inclusion, and thus social citizenship, is made possible by a denominational melting-pot. The denominationalization of cultural differences through the creation of separate but equal zones of religious activity has become the norm of citizenship inclusion in multicultural societies following the American model, especially in Canada, Australia and New Zealand. While this model has not so far been effective in embracing indigenous religions and cultures, it does hold out a principle of acculturation as a route to political incorporation in societies where civil society is divided and fragmented by religious division.

Fundamentalism would appear to be a potential threat to this political and social compromise. The growth of fundamentalist movements in Islam, Christianity and Judaism is often interpreted as a response to the disruptions of traditional life and values that result from globalization. Fundamentalism is seen to be a movement that preserves tradition against the cultural melting-pot that follows global migration, tourism and mass consumerism. While Islamic fundamentalism has come to the attention of the Western media, fundamentalism has also been increasingly characteristic of the religions of Asia, especially Hinduism. Fundamentalism has become the target of Western criticism because it is seen to be incompatible with a liberal democracy that attempts to create an open and diverse public sphere (Touraine, 2000). Religious fundamentalism is treated by social scientists as the most potent antidote to modernity, because it celebrates 'tribalism' against the standardization of cultures that flows from the global marketplace (Barber, 2001). It is consequently now regarded as an essential ingredient in the modern 'clash of civilizations'.

## CONCLUSION

There are many ways in which one could write a 'historical sociology of religion and religions', but such an account would have to be selective.

In this chapter, I have accordingly provided a selective perspective on religion from the standpoint of Weber's sociology of religion with special reference to Christianity and Islam. Weberian sociology is typically ironic and tragic. Like Nietzsche, Weber was concerned to explore the crisis of values in modern society, particularly the crisis of religious values. An important theme of modern sociology, therefore, has been the paradoxical relationships between religion and politics, which I have examined through the notion of the routinization of charisma. Although religion and politics are assumed to be mutually exclusive, religion was nevertheless important in creating public spaces within which many aspects of political life, such as citizenship, evolved.

Although the question of religion in the shaping of the modern world had been an important issue for classical sociology from Marx to Parsons, religion was somewhat submerged in the intellectual agenda of postwar sociology. The secularization thesis suggested that religious phenomena would not be important in modern societies, and with the development of postmodern cultures it was assumed that sport and consumption would be substitutes for religious membership and could function as the principal means for entertaining the masses. The historical role of charisma as a sacred force would be replaced by entertainment, and the cult of celebrity (Rojek, 2001), that is made possible by the new media, would replace the cult of the saints. If religious cultures survived at all, religious practices would become merely elements within consumer lifestyles.

Growing awareness of the globalization of culture has challenged these narrow limitations of the secularization thesis. With the collapse of communism, it was evident that Islam was a religious system that could effectively mobilize opposition to Western capitalism and provide potent religious identities to inspire mass political movements. Islamization as a social process has been made possible by globalization. Political conflict has thus polarized Islam and the West, and rekindled the embers of traditional Orientalism as a paradigm for understanding Islam in particular and Asia in general (Turner, 2002). However, fundamentalist Islam shares many features in common with fundamentalist Protestantism and with Jewish fundamentalism. The political crisis that has followed 11 September has divided the world into friend and foe, thereby lending dramatic support to the political theology of Carl

Schmitt. In *The Concept of the Political*, (1996) Schmitt had condemned the legacy of parliamentary democracy, because liberalism had reduced the political to a set of procedures and could provide no decisive protection against the threat of communism. One might say of the contemporary situation that the state of emergency is one in which the political division between friend and enemy has been defined by religion, and the historical centrality of religion to the development of political institutions is once more tragically confirmed.

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## *From Moral Science to Moral Regulation:*

### *Social Theory's Encounter with the Moral Domain*

ALAN HUNT

In recent years, in both academic and popular venues, there has been considerable interest in a form of politics which has come to be styled 'moral regulation'. Moral regulation projects are an interesting and significant form of politics in which some agents act to problematize the conduct, values or culture of others and seek to act upon them through moralizing discourses, practices and regulation. Moralization involves imposing judgements on the rightness or wrongness of the conduct or values of others. Projects of moral regulation are generally ones which derive not from the instrumental interests of their proponents, but rather from commitments to what is right and what is wrong as an ethical judgement distinct from appeal to that which is right as tradition or as expediency.<sup>1</sup> It is typically the case that matters of sexual conduct and values are readily moralized; they are widely regarded as being organized around the dichotomy of right and wrong, even though the values espoused do not necessarily derive from any specific code of morality. However, a wide variety of other fields of human activity can become subject to moralization: consumption, pictorial and other forms of artistic representation, dress, the treatment

of children, the disabled and animals are persistent fields of moral politics.

The group of words 'moral', 'morals', 'morality', encompass unstable and shifting meanings and referents and thus exhibit many ambiguities. These terms cover a range of meanings from moral philosophy's quest for rational criteria of judgement, through to the sense of 'moral' as personal values barely distinguishable from the subjectivism of emotions. For some these slippages are grounds for avoiding talk of morals or of moral regulation. However, such difficulties confront many concepts that are active in both academic and everyday life. As Gallie (1955–6) long ago pointed out, concepts such as justice and democracy, and we may add morals, are 'contested concepts'. In this chapter 'moral' is a broader concept than 'morality', referring to all judgements of right and wrong, while morality refers to more or less coherent sets of moral values.

Mitchell Dean has objected that the concept 'moral regulation' 'delineates no clear domain' that can be distinguished from other forms of political regulation or intervention (1994: 155). This objection might be raised against any concept located at some level of

abstraction; 'politics' or 'economics' have no fixed or agreed meanings and can be fruitfully employed in a range of widely different contexts. In the sense adopted here, namely the invocation of right and wrong, moral regulation demarcates a distinctive form of politics, in particular one that can be distinguished from struggles over interests. This does not imply that moral regulation is self-contained; rather, such projects are often found in association with other forms and styles of politics. Dean is further mistaken in thinking that a focus on moral regulation does not permit attention to ethics viewed as involving projects of self-formation. His objection flows from his following Foucault in equating morals with moral codes. On the contrary, moral regulation characteristically invokes some complex mix of the incitement to self-regulation and the promotion of external governance; this distinction is evident in the difference between 'temperance', which, in both older and newer forms, promotes the self-governance of the drinker (abstention, 'signing the pledge'), and 'prohibition', which focuses on demands for the institutionalization of external governance (criminalizing the production, distribution or consumption of alcohol). In the practical politics of the moral regulation of alcohol, combinations of these elements form the specific projects pursued.

Mariana Valverde, one of the most productive researchers in the field of moral regulation studies, has subsequently abandoned the concept on the grounds that its use tends to homogenize the field and that it imports the assumption that we know where morality ends and other things (such as politics and economics) begin. All concepts construct fields or objects of inquiry and there is a consequent risk of their reification into taken-for-granted unities (as, for example, with a concept such as 'the economy'); but this is a problem about how each concept is used rather than with concepts as such. The concept 'moral regulation' does point to a significant shared feature of certain types of projects, namely those projects directed at governing others in the name of moral distinctions between good and bad, right and wrong. This should not be taken as implying that some projects are pure instances of moral governance; it is always likely that any particular instance will combine several different forms or styles of governance.

This chapter explores the reasons for this current interest in moral regulation by tracing

the different types of inquiry that have been pursued. In summary form, there are two linked reasons for engagement with moral regulation, one political and the other theoretical. Politically, in a period in which class conflict has been in recession, political struggles have tended to focus on the 'culture wars' around competing identities that have typically centred on contests over moralized symbolic values, what is right or wrong, what should be permitted and what prohibited (or at least discouraged). Alongside major contestations over the environment, trade practices and health politics, there have been ever more volatile contests over fields demarcated by moral and cultural symbols.

Theoretically, after the pitched battles at the end of the twentieth century between structuralism and poststructuralism, there have been attempts to avoid such sterile oppositions as those revolving around consensus versus conflict, objectivism versus subjectivism, and the like. One significant consequence has been the attempts to bring into the same frame inquiries that were previously segregated. The most concerted move in this direction found expression in Foucault's turn to governmentality with its central concern 'to show how the government of self is integrated with the government of others' (1989: 296). While expressed within a different conceptual framework, a similar project is present in Bourdieu's focus on struggles within specific social 'fields' over distinct forms of economic, cultural and symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1984, 1990). This chapter explores the contention that concern with moral regulation has been a significant component of the history of the social sciences, but that it is important to recognize that these lines of inquiry have been marked by significant shifts in the problematization of the moral dimensions of social governance.

#### **SOCIAL THEORY AND THE MORAL DOMAIN**

The concern with the study of the place of morals in social life is not new. Mary Douglas has gone as far as to speculate that 'in all places at all times the universe is moralized and politicized' (1992: 5). Morals have been regarded as both metaphor for and cause of the health of society. In pre-modern times dangers were moralized and politicized through the terminology of sin, with collective

sins unleashing divine retribution on individuals and communities. Indeed, in important respects, concern with the moral condition of society was present in the formation of the very beginnings of modern social thought.

Enlightenment thought brought with it the beginnings of the study of 'the social' as distinct from the political realm; it exhibited a dual focus on moral and social conditions. A central problematic of Enlightenment thought revolved around the relation between patterns of social development and individual character. Individual action was conceived as having a dual source, the passions/interests and reason. Progress was regarded as the unanticipated consequences of individual self-interested action; its classic manifestation was Adam Smith's 'hidden hand'. In this tradition 'the moral' was conceived as providing access to the intrinsic attributes of human actors, conceived as 'human nature'; the comparative study of these objective attributes ('*moeurs*', '*moralité*', etc.) provided the means of identifying the 'condition of mankind' (Smith, 1976 [1759]). But the moral condition was also used to provide an index of the well-being of the whole society and generally took the form of a comparative historical approach exemplified in Gibbon's study of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, with its explicit concern with the fate of other civilizations (Gibbon, 1910 [1776–88]).

A long-standing tradition explained the rise and fall of nations by reference to the prevailing moral climate. It should be noted that in this respect Enlightenment thought exhibited significant continuity with pre-Enlightenment thought, albeit in secular guise. It was no longer the 'wrath of God' that was to be feared; rather, it became a preoccupation – one which has shown remarkable endurance – with the idea that the decline in morals weakens social cohesion and hence threatens the very survival of society. This concern with morals provided a more or less systematic way of thinking about a core question in social theory, namely the relation between the individual and the community, between self and others; its traces reach out through many forms of social thought.

However, the nineteenth century witnessed currents which both carried forward and rejected this concern with the moral condition of society. The moralizing tradition left a very distinctive imprint upon sociology as it emerged from the broader traditions of social and political thought. Some of the earliest

quantitative studies, such as those conducted by Quetelet (1969 [1834]), explicitly sought to measure the health of society through 'moral statistics'. Quetelet sought to measure social morality by compiling statistics on such matters as drunkenness, illegitimate births, suicides and, most extensively, the propensity to commit crime. Similarly the German *Moralstatistik* movement studied ethical social life through the compilation of statistics on suicide, divorce, crime, illegitimacy, church attendance and alcohol consumption (Deflem, 1997). In England Harriet Martineau in *How To Observe Manners and Morals* advanced a more qualitative method of observing the morality of a people; one should start, she suggested, by examining the inscriptions on gravestones: '[T]he brief language of the dead will teach ... more than the longest discourses of the living.' Gravestones could establish attachment to kindred and birthplace, choice of idols and popular values. The age of death revealed the state of health of a community, which, in turn, was an 'almost unfailing' index of its morals (Martineau, 1838: 105, 161).

At the same time social thought retreated from concern with moral conditions. In a tradition that varied the mix of radicalism and positivism, the concern with 'social conditions' understood empirically in terms of housing and working conditions came to the fore. In the period after the French Revolution there was a shift away from 'morals', displaced by a concern to render the study of the social scientific that attested to the prestige of the natural sciences; its product was the triumph of positivism.

This process required a separation of science from religion; but it should not be forgotten that at the same time a powerful current in both religious and scientific thought sought to harmonize the new science, especially evolutionary thought, with a non-literal theology. Over a long period the concern to resist the intellectual divorce between science and morals was reflected in varied efforts to advance a 'moral science'; the term was widely used by the thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment, and was still attractive to John Stuart Mill in his *On the Logic of the Moral Sciences* (1965 [1843]).<sup>2</sup> A similar ethos surrounded the use of 'moral science' to describe the aspirations of a variety of bourgeois reformers who from the end of the eighteenth century engaged with the conditions of prisons and other institutions of incarceration. Moral science denoted a distinctive mix of

piety and rationalism that inspired the whole nineteenth-century philanthropic enterprise (Prochaska, 1988). However, the positivist camp triumphed, after long and protracted skirmishes and battles, with its insistence on the separation of social and moral questions. Its victory was marked by the inscription on the building blocks of the social and human sciences of the dictum that the radical separation between facts and values was the only secure path to knowledge.

While this epistemological positivism came to dominate the official self-conception of the social sciences, it inserted a profound ambiguity in modern thought. As the nineteenth century 'progressed', the belief in the human capacity to change the conditions of life required answers to ethical questions about how we should live. Yet such questions had been expelled from the sanctified grounds of 'the sciences'. Modernity both desperately needs morality, but makes it increasingly difficult to achieve because the grounds for moral certainty have been undermined. Morality can less readily be grounded in claims of rationality, but only subjective opinion; nevertheless the social and human sciences in the early twentieth century remained profoundly concerned to promote moral agendas. While the articulation of this dilemma has changed, we remain familiar with the difficulty of deciding whether there can be a principled manner in which disputes between rival moral and ethical claims can be resolved.

The tradition of reading the condition of society from its morals was never entirely abandoned. It was taken forward into the twentieth century by Durkheim in a form that was to play a major role in the constitution of the discipline of sociology; it should be noted that his sociology was firmly located in the tradition of moral science. His familiar distinction, developed in *The Division of Labor in Society* (1964 [1893]), between mechanical and organic solidarity served to introduce what was to become the core problematic of his subsequent writings. The cohesion of simple societies was provided by an intuitive but intensive shared morality articulated in unitary religions which commanded the assent of all. Durkheim's abiding question was: how was it possible that modern society, lacking such a cohesive religion, could sustain strong social bonds sufficient to hold at bay the fragmenting tendencies associated with the individualism of industrial societies? In his later writing he returned to an emphasis on

collective representations manifest in such institutions as marriage, family, money and property. He sought a secular morality to secure the vitality of commitment that had been associated with religion. He held out the promise of a scientific study of the moral order.

We must discover those moral forces that men, down to the present time, have conceived of only under the form of religious allegories. We must disengage them from their symbols, present them in their rational nakedness, so to speak, and to find a way to make the child feel their reality without recourse to any mythological intermediary'. (Durkheim, [1961]: 11)<sup>3</sup>

The gradual decline of sociological interest in morals in the early twentieth century was linked to the increasing rigidity of the division of labour between sociology and psychology. In the nineteenth century moral capacities were conceived as natural attributes of specific social categories, such as mothers, priests and teachers, who transmitted morals through instruction. For example, Elizabeth Blackwell's text *Counsel to Parents on the Moral Education of their Children* (1878) was enormously successful and exemplified this tradition of 'moral instruction'. Such instruction was rigorously gendered: males and females were deemed to have distinct moral capacities, and, as Susan Okin (1989) has shown, this moral dualism has its roots in the early Middle Ages in the association of females with 'hearth and home'. By the Victorian period this had come to take the form of a belief in the moral superiority of women and, consequently, with their acquisition of responsibility for the moral instruction of the young. Throughout the period moral instruction was viewed as consisting of the transmission of some specific, usually religious, moral code.

A significant change occurred as psychology came to focus on the stages of individual development. G. Stanley Hall's 'discovery' of adolescence was an important step and one which took the debate beyond that of moral instruction because Hall accepted a Lamarckian view that acquired characteristics, both physical and moral, were directly inheritable between generations (Hall, 1904); but it should be noted that in this model the vices were more readily inheritable than the virtues. This line of thought served to reinforce the distinctive Victorian anxiety about degeneration (Nordau, 1895). With the rise of psychology as a coherent discipline, the emphasis shifted in a more humanist direction

to a concern with childhood as a distinct developmental stage. Child development was approached as an individualized and individualizing process. One major strand focused on the moral development; its classic expression was in Jean Piaget's *The Moral Judgement of the Child* (1932), which focused on a periodization of stages of moral development treating moral reasoning as the acquisition of a cognitive capacity, and which had by now broken with the tradition of moral instruction in favour of a wider concern with parenting and education.

The central concern with morals that played such a key role in Durkheim's sociology was not systematically taken up as sociology constituted itself as an academic discipline. Instead the focus of attention shifted to the study of social relations and processes and, in particular, to the forms of authority and social control. But rather than disappearing completely, a sociological concern with morals re-emerged in a number of different guises.

In the first instance it was manifest in attempts to grapple with what were perceived as aberrant forms of social conduct. As the 'age of extremes' that was to characterize the twentieth century got underway, there was a marked shift away from a concern with morals as political, economic and military upheavals shook the world (Hobsbawm, 1994). Concern with morals seemed to have religious resonances that were out of place in a rapidly secularizing world. However, European politics in the twentieth century exhibited many forms of the politics of indignation that were to culminate in National Socialism in the 1930s and in 'ethnic cleansing' in the 1990s. Sociological attention to such phenomena was first articulated by Max Scheler (1961 [1912]) in his study of *ressentiment*. The concept derived from Nietzsche's notion of 'slave morality'; it connoted impotent hatred and envy. *Ressentiment* is the expression of the base 'bourgeois spirit' formed by the cumulative repression of hatred, envy and revenge which finds no expression in an alternative culture, but secretly craves the values that it denies and denounces. The lower middle classes, particularly in societies where natural hierarchy has broken down yet where inequality, envy and competitiveness are rife, were its characteristic exponents and it manifested itself in petty-bourgeois reactionary politics.<sup>4</sup>

This tradition was taken further by Svend Ranulf (1964 [1938]); he sought to add an empirical content to Scheler's *ressentiment*

thesis by means of an inquiry into what he termed 'disinterested moral indignation', where no immediate advantage or interest could accrue to its exponents. He highlighted the instance of the urge to punish criminals. The desire for punishment is pronounced where the lower middle class is large and politically significant. The moral indignation of the lower middle classes results from their situation as a class subjected to extraordinarily high degrees of self-restraint. Under these circumstances *ressentiment* is directed against those who violate their self-imposed norms.

What is significant about the *ressentiment* tradition is that it was less concerned with the processes whereby outbursts of moral indignation were amplified, which, as we will see shortly, came to dominate the concerns of deviancy theory. Rather, highlighting *ressentiment* concentrated attention upon the task of explaining its content and its targets. It offered the prospect of penetrating beneath the phenomenal level of accounts provided by participants and of the discourses within which they are articulated. The theory held out the possibility of uncovering underlying trends or tendencies which do not form part of the consciousnesses or discourses of the participants. The promise was to make sense of social issues that manifested themselves in persistent social tensions and anxieties and generated characteristic forms of social action. Its continuing attraction lies in the possibility of social explanation that combines with a hermeneutic dimension in that it takes account of the experiences, meanings and anxieties of actors, but at the same time offers the prospect of going beyond experience to some sense of what is 'really going on', of causal mechanisms that are at work behind the consciousness of participants.

#### **SOCIOLOGY, DEVIANCE AND MORAL PANICS**

With the institutionalization of sociology, a project that was accomplished most thoroughly in the USA, sociology came increasingly to be absorbed by two closely related themes, namely the study of 'social problems' and 'deviance'. These two strands were frequently to merge, overlap and then separate again.

The first strand was closely linked to the legitimization of sociology as a discipline through its aspiration to claim a privileged

status as science. The main result was the rapid depoliticization of sociology and the rupture of its relations with social reform movements. The sociologist became a self-declared 'expert', one whose techniques could be applied to 'problems' that were referred to them by a variety of social and political authorities; the sociologist studied the issue and then generated policy recommendations which were passed on to the appropriate level of governmental apparatuses. In the formative growth period of US sociology after the First World War it was 'the survey movement' which expressed this vision of the role of sociology (Bulmer et al., 1991). This style of sociological work reached its classic expression in the Lynds' study of 'Middletown' (Lynd and Lynd, 1929). Typical subjects were urban housing conditions, commercialized vice in the cities, rural depopulation and many other topics.<sup>5</sup>

After the Second World War the 'social problems' approach was carried forward but increasingly broke with the objectivism of the earlier phase. The subjectivist turn in American sociology expressed itself in ethnomethodology and symbolic interaction. The focus shifted from a view of 'social problems' as objective conditions in the external world, to one informed by a sceptical epistemology that viewed 'social problems' as existing in the interpretative practices and meanings conferred by social actors. This approach led to attention being concentrated on the way in which 'claims-makers' constructed social problems, the conditions that accounted for whether they were taken up by others, achieved attention from news media, and secured responsive activity from institutional apparatuses. Not surprisingly attention tended to stress the social activism grounded in outrage and moral indignation that articulated popular demands that 'something should be done'. While the issues taken up may engage with issues where there is wide agreement about the harm involved (for example, drunk driving, sexual assault, and so on), the primary stimulus of social problems research has been with the socially constructed nature of the issue (for example, satanic abuse, alien abduction, and so on). In the most general terms, Merton proposed that 'a social problem exists when there is a sizable discrepancy between what is and what people think ought to be' (1976: 7). Jack Douglas (1970) made early use of an explicitly social constructionist approach, a tradition that continued within the intellectual space of the debate between

'constructionism' and 'realism' and remains live and vigorous (Best, 1995).

A closely related set of concerns fuelled the emergence of the sociology of deviance, which was to become a flourishing subdiscipline. Continuity with social problems was guaranteed by the key role played by labelling theory. Deviance was not viewed as a natural product of difference or abnormality, which had motivated the late nineteenth-century preoccupation with degeneracy. The core argument advanced by Howard Becker (1963) was that deviance is a social construct imposed upon individuals as a result of their being labelled deviant; this in turn leads them into deviant careers (see also Matza, 1969). Becker deployed concepts of 'moral enterprise' and 'moral entrepreneurs' and drew attention to the fact that these roles are performed by both established authorities and crusading reformers. Much of the work within the problematic of deviance focused on labelling as an exercise of power; one of the most frequently pursued forms was the role of the media in the amplification of deviance.

One of the major trajectories that emerged out of the labelling tradition was the concern with social movements that pursued projects of moral regulation. A classic example of social movements which cannot readily be accounted for in terms of the instrumental interests of the participants is the great legislative adventure of American constitutional prohibition. Joseph Gusfield's *Symbolic Politics* (1963) advanced the social constructionist enterprise by focusing attention on the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) and their success in reinvigorating the flagging revivalist message of temperance that played a decisive role in launching the prohibition movement in the USA. But at the same time he linked this inquiry to the concerns that had fuelled the European concern with *ressentiment* by searching for an explanation of why the attack on alcohol ignited such passions, to elucidate 'what is really going on' behind the polemical discursive surface. His thesis, that the traditional rural interests of North European settlers with Protestant affiliations experiencing economic and cultural marginalization reacted with a politics of 'status defence' to reassert their social and moral ideals, has continued to elicit controversy (Wallis, 1979).

The persistence of this tradition is exemplified in Bourdieu's more recent argument that moral regulation campaigns emanate from

declining fractions of the petty bourgeoisie where 'resentment is clearly the basis of the reactionary or conservative-revolutionary stances of the declining petty bourgeois who are anxious to maintain order on all fronts, in domestic morality and in society, and who invest the revolt against the worsening of their social position in moral indignation against the worsening of morals' (1984: 435). In a similar vein Kai Erikson in *Wayward Puritans* (1966) explored the role of deviance in fixing group moral and social boundaries. In his study of the Salem witch trials he focused on responses to intense social anxieties and the associated cultural stress in which a community drew symbolic boundaries around specific forms of conduct and social statuses.

A major strand of work has been preoccupied with 'moral panics'. Stan Cohen's (1972) study of English teenage gangs ushered in the concept 'moral panic', understood as social action in which some social group becomes defined as a threat to societal values, a designation which is then amplified by mass media, and induces moralization from moral entrepreneurs and experts.<sup>6</sup> This lineage has tended to lay heavy stress on the role of the media as both amplifying and in some cases 'causing' panics (Cohen and Young, 1973). Thereafter 'moral panic' studies proliferated on both sides of the Atlantic and have continued to the present (Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 1994; Jenkins, 1992, 1998; K. Thompson, 1998). The significant feature of the deployment of the concept 'moral panic' is that it imports the normative evaluation that such campaigns are overreactions or disproportionate responses to social anxieties. The concept is not used with respect to movements with which authors are in sympathy; thus environmental, anti-nuclear and anti-globalization movements have not been deemed to be moral panics. Yet such movements undoubtedly use moral discourses to moralize the conduct of the social and economic projects which they oppose. As will be seen below, moral regulation studies seek to avoid imposing their own moralization on the movements and projects that are studied.

It should be noted that a significant shift occurred from the earlier concerns of deviancy theory. The primary focus on problematic and marginal social groups declined and the focus changed to problematize the practices of those whom Becker has termed 'moral entrepreneurs', the social agents who problematize the conduct of others. Expressed in the terms of labelling theory, the

focus shifted from the 'labelled' to the 'labellers'. While there is no clear-cut boundary which marks the emergence of 'moral regulation' as an organizing frame of reference, it was this shift within deviancy theory that provided the key step in stimulating the moral regulation inquiries.

#### MORAL REGULATION AND THE TURN TO GOVERNMENTALITY

The emergence of a distinct body of work that could be identified as constituting the field of moral regulation was not the product of any single theoretical trajectory. Rather, it arose as a number of intellectual positions engaged with the problematization of morals and morality. Its two primary strands have been Gramscian Marxism and Foucauldian governmentality.<sup>7</sup>

Gramsci provided an opening towards a non-reductionist account of the dynamic of Western capitalism. The reproduction of economic relations is not in itself sufficient to account for the persistence of capitalist social and political relations; Gramsci famously deployed the concept of hegemony to lay the basis for an account of how social, cultural and political leadership can be secured at the level of everyday or lived social relations. His approach is exemplified in his discussion of 'Americanism and Fordism', where he argues that Fordist production techniques required the 'making' of a 'new type of man' that was demanded by the rationalization of production and work, one that 'cannot be developed until the sexual instinct has been suitably regulated and until it has been rationalized' (Gramsci, 1971: 297). In a manner which has parallels with Elias, with an added attention on class conflict, he contended that the creation of the new Fordist man is an 'often painful and bloody process of subjugating natural (i.e. animal and primitive) instincts to new, more complex and rigid norms and habits of order, exactitude and precision' (1971: 298).<sup>8</sup>

Gramsci's project was extended by Corrigan and Sayer's account of state formation in England prior to the Industrial Revolution. They advanced the thesis that English state formation involved a 'cultural revolution', in which moral regulation was a normalizing process that rendered the extant social order natural and taken for granted. The

Corrigan–Sayer treatment differs from the subsequent trajectory of moral regulation studies by virtue of the centrality they attribute to the role of the state: ‘Moral regulation is always coextensive with state formation, and state forms are always animated and legitimated by a particular moral ethos. Centrally, state agencies attempt to give unitary and unifying expression to what are in reality multifaceted and differential historical experiences of groups within society, denying their particularity.’ (1985: 4)

Subsequently the focus on the state has largely been displaced by attention to moral regulation as emanating from a complex of social forces, discourses and practices dispersed throughout civil society. While the state is a key player in some moral regulation projects, for example in the current ‘war against drugs’, most projects emanate from ‘the middle’ or from ‘below’. However, Corrigan and Sayer did capture a significant thematic that has remained of enduring influence: ‘Moral order accordingly has a dual character, both externally regulative and internally constitutive’ (1985: 194).

A powerful and influential integration of Gramscian Marxism and deviancy theory was provided by Stuart Hall and his colleagues (1978). They were concerned to explain why it was that a series of prosecutions of some particularly violent assaults on elderly citizens in England in 1971 and 1972 resulted in such heavy media attention, exceptionally severe judicial sanctions and widespread public anger. They interpreted the resulting ‘mugging panic’ in terms of a set of anxieties current in British society at the time which articulated significant social dislocations. The analysis focused attention on what the authors describe as the mechanism of ‘convergence’ that ‘occurs when two or more activities are linked in the process of signification so as to implicitly or explicitly draw parallels between them’ (1978: 223). Where convergence occurs, the possibility is created for a process of amplification when a dispersed set of social anxieties become elided. Race figured in the political vernacular since the muggings were committed by black males. Race was linked with ‘youth’ since the offenders were in their early teens while their victims were elderly. ‘Race’ and ‘youth’ thus became articulated with a generalized discourse of ‘law-and-order’ focused on anxiety about the lack of safety in inner-city areas. Race, youth and law-and-order were welded together with a

pervasive sense of ‘anti-permissiveness’, that something had ‘gone wrong’ with British society in that things ‘weren’t like they used to be’. This focus on the linkage of otherwise unconnected elements within projects of moral regulation has become an influential line of inquiry.

The focus on the links between external and internal dimensions of moral regulation was to be most fully developed by Foucault. One of his major themes, as noted above, was the link between the government of self and the government of others. Foucault distinguished, on the one hand, the divergent moral practices in societies and the various formalized moral codes and, on the other, the forms of ethical subjectification or ‘the forming of the self as an ethical subject’ (1985: 26). It was these forms of subjectivization inscribed within practices of the self with which he increasingly engaged. Since he refused the reduction of social fields to one another (of truth to epistemology, or power to the state), it followed that a history of ethics can never be a history of moral codes or of moral practices.

Foucault was much concerned with moral regulation (although he does not use this specific concept) throughout his writings. The ‘great confinement’ incarcerated the poor and the insane in workhouses and madhouses; it was the moralization of idleness that created the workhouse as the ‘prisons of moral order’ (Foucault, 1965: 63). He went on to focus attention on the question: why have sex and sexuality been so persistently the target of moral problematization? For so long this question had been treated as self-evident, sex being the paradigmatic ‘moral question’. But for Foucault the opening up of the great medico-psychological domain of the ‘perversions’ was a decisive event; the medicalization and psychiatrization of perversions, along with the programs of eugenics, were ‘the two great innovations in the technology of sex on the second half of the nineteenth century’ (1978: 118). In subsequent volumes of *The History of Sexuality* he went on to argue that in the ancient world moral codes were of far less significance than the ethical concern over sexual conduct which were not tied to systems of prohibitions (1985: 10). In the same period he continued to emphasize the significance of the nineteenth-century project of the moralization of the working classes. For the bourgeoisie, it was ‘absolutely necessary to constitute the populace as a moral subject and to break its commerce with criminality, and

hence to segregate the delinquents and to show them to be dangerous not only to the rich but to the poor as well' (1980: 41).

Foucault's sketch of a new strategy of inquiry under the label of governmentality has provided the most significant orientation for studies of moral regulation. There are two reasons for this. First, moral regulation exemplifies the dispersed sites of social power such that movements arising from many different sources have come to play significant, if frequently only temporary, roles on the historical stage (Hunt, 1999a; Valverde, 1991). Thus, for example, eugenics reached mass audiences and considerable respectability towards the end of the nineteenth century, forming complex connections with first-wave feminism, only to fall into disfavour. Second, moral regulation projects tend to exhibit various combinations of governing others and governing selves. For example, anti-alcohol movements in the USA at the end of the nineteenth century turned away from the temperance concern with 'signing the pledge' to pursue coercive constitutional and criminal legislation, yet since the collapse of prohibition the temperance project has re-emerged – in some respects stronger than ever – in the form of Alcoholics Anonymous, focused on the self-governance of alcoholics with an unwavering avoidance of any suggestion of 'prohibition'. The current tobacco wars similarly exhibit a complex assemblage of restrictive regulation with health education techniques.

#### THE ENTRY OF EVERYDAY LIFE

The specific intellectual influence of Foucault resonates with one of the most general intellectual currents that has fuelled the expansion of moral regulation studies, namely the diffusion of historical sociology and the blurring of the differentiation between 'social history' and 'historical sociology'. It is beyond present concerns to account for this historical turn (see Abrams, 1980; Skocpol, 1984; Smith, 1991); however, it should be emphasized that the decisive feature was not just the 'turn to history' but rather was a return to the history of everyday life.

The trajectory of the new social history has been conducive for the growth of studies of moral regulation projects. There has been a shift away from a preoccupation with institutions and nation-states that has created a

space for engagements with the history of civilization, conceived no longer in terms of high culture, but as the lived experience of people in their daily lives, of everyday life (Ariès and Duby, 1987–91; de Certeau, 1984). One branch of this tradition is that associated with Norbert Elias's study of the civilizing process, in which not only bodily self-control but various forms of moral self-control become disseminated through gradually expanding social strata (Elias, 1978 [1939], 1982 [1939]). Within this interest in ordinary lives, the problematization of moral issues has long played a significant role. The new social history has facilitated a variety of studies of the wide variety of moral regulation projects.

It is not intended to provide an exhaustive account of this substantial body of work; it is only possible to indicate some of its most significant varieties. Many studies trace, over shorter or longer periods, the formation and changes in aspects of everyday life, from relations between parents and children, to relations to animals, from food practices to recreations, celebrations and forms of conviviality that involve patterns of moralization. From this wide canvas mention should be made of Peter Burke's (1978) concept of 'the reform of popular culture', which has not received from sociologists the attention it deserves. This concept focuses attention on the way in which social or class distancing occurs that involves the moralization and attempted regulation of the activities of subordinate classes; for example, significant turning points occurred when in the early modern period rural landowners withdrew their support from traditional recreations of the lower classes such as bear-baiting and dog-fighting.<sup>9</sup>

While the tradition of cultural history is less developed in North America than in Europe, it has produced a significant variety of studies on the link between popular culture and regulation. Early on, Jane Addams (1909) advanced a critique of industrialism for having successfully organized work, yet failed to make provision for leisure; this failure was seized upon by those seeking only profit from the commercialization of leisure. This sparked a major preoccupation with the moral dangers of commercialized leisure. This theme was also present in Thorstein Veblen's classic discussion of the 'leisure class' (1967 [1899]) and in Paul Cressey's (1932) now largely neglected study of 'a-dime-a-dance' commercial dance-halls. This type of work serves to remind us of the key part that the critiques of

the commercialization of leisure have played in projects of moral regulation epitomized by movie censorship and current attempts to regulate the Internet.<sup>10</sup>

One familiar field in which issues of moral regulation has come to the fore is with respect to attempts to regulate what was termed obscenity in the nineteenth century and became pornography in the twentieth. While much of the debate on these questions has been partisan advocacy, there has been important sociological work on the characteristics of movements advocating censorship. Nicola Beisel's (1997) study of Anthony Comstock's anti-obscenity campaign argues that the middle-class support which Comstock attracted can be understood as an expression of their concern to preserve the capacity to transmit cultural capital to their children; hence the need for their 'protection' from immorality. In contrast, Bill Thompson (1994) tackles a longer period and focuses on a comparison of anti-pornography crusades in England and the USA.

One significant by-product of these historical studies has been the realization that 'first-wave' feminism had been heavily engaged in a variety of moral regulation projects. This has led to two overlapping but distinguishable lines of inquiry. First, there has been a major internal debate within feminism between those who applaud the engagement of early feminist in projects such as temperance, anti-obscenity, sexual purity and sexual hygiene; those taking this stance have generally been supporters of the recent anti-pornography campaigns (Jackson, 1994; Jeffreys, 1985). In contrast, a second, and very different, position has expressed caution, if not outright criticism, with regard to the sexual conservatism of first-wave feminism, warning against the perils of contemporary feminism adopting such positions and joining cause with political conservatism (Dubois and Gordon, 1983; Stansell, 1986; Walkowitz, 1992).

These controversies have stimulated a wider interest in the distinctive moral politics of the late nineteenth century. The fascination with the phenomenon of Victorianism has continued to flourish into a veritable industry. It has been recognized that the purity movements exemplified an important form of politics. Lurking not far beneath the surface has been a question about the history of the present, namely whether since the late twentieth century we have been witnessing a return to a period of highly moralized politics. Mary

Douglas has provided a wider cross-cultural context for these reflections. She argues that the rituals of purity and impurity are projects to create or impose unity upon social experience. Pollution and purity categories reflect core beliefs about social order that become activated especially when current social values involve contradictory strains. She utilizes the example of beliefs about the 'sexual danger of women' and the taboos generated thereby, which tend to flourish when male dominance coexists with pressures to recognize female autonomy; in such contexts the quest for female purity is 'an attempt to force experience into logical categories of non-contradiction' (Douglas, 1966: 162).

This concern to understand why periodic eruptions of moral regulation occur that exhibit preoccupations with sexuality and sexual conduct has motivated a trajectory of studies on sexual purity – or, as it was often styled 'social purity' – movements. It was Foucault who asked the deceptively simple question: 'Why is sexual conduct, why are the activities and pleasures that attach to it, an object of moral solicitude? ... How, why, and in what forms was sexuality constituted as a moral domain?' (Foucault, 1985: 10).

Pivar's (1973) study of American purity movements views the controversies over prostitution as the site around which the contest between purity and pollution was fought out.<sup>11</sup> He traces a shift from an impassioned opposition to 'regulationism' to the rise of 'social purity'. The anti-regulationists opposed any perceived public toleration of prostitution as exemplified in tolerated 'red light' districts or imposed medical inspection of prostitutes. The opponents of regulation viewed such policies as condoning prostitution, to which they proposed the alternatives of projects to 'save' or 'rescue' prostitutes, even though such philanthropic efforts were generally unsuccessful.<sup>12</sup> Such anti-regulationism increasingly became expressions of a feminism committed to the goal of sexual purity within which the issue of prostitution became transformed into a wider agenda aimed at raising males to a higher moral standard. Beyond exhorting men to sexual purity, the politics of purity rapidly became one of legislative restriction and coercion, promoting the criminalization of a range of sex-related activities.<sup>13</sup> The destination of this lineage is detailed by Langum (1994) in his chronicle of the Mann Act of 1910, which criminalized the transportation of females across state lines for the purposes of

prostitution 'or other immoral purposes'.<sup>14</sup> In the hands of an expansionist FBI, this statute came to be enforced against consensual extra-marital relations and, in particular, against Afro-American entertainers and sportsmen.

The history of the purity movements in Britain is traced from the end of the seventeenth century down to the 1950s by Bristow (1977). He argues that purity campaigns manifested a deep anxiety about fears of national weakness and decline. What distinguished social purity movements in the 1880s from earlier more male establishment bodies was the alliance between militant Protestant revivalism and Christian feminism.<sup>15</sup> This movement linked the dual targets of the 'white slave trade' and juvenile prostitution. Bristow contends that the specific form of national crisis was the Edwardian concern with the 'degeneration of the race' in which 'purity' and 'national power' came to be equated. The crucial period at the turn of the century has been traced in much greater detail by Lucy Bland (1995), who succeeds in maintaining a warm sympathy for the courage and determination of the first-wave feminists while articulating strong reservations about the conservative anti-sexual politics that they pursued.<sup>16</sup> My own study of moral regulation movements (Hunt, 1999a) covers the long span of moral regulation projects from the seventeenth to the twentieth century, while offering a comparative perspective on British and American moral reform projects.

It is significant that studies employing the concept of moral regulation or related concepts have predominantly focused on a strongly social history context, with an overwhelming emphasis on the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. There has not as yet been a sustained attempt to apply the moral regulation perspective to the highly visible 'culture wars' that emerged in the late twentieth century. There has been much polemical writing advocating a range of normative positions, but little analytical or critical work. Forays that have been made have used styles of work from an earlier period. David Wagner's *The New Temperance* (1997) sets out to explain the re-emergence of moral politics, which he calls the 'new temperance', that emerged in the 1980s. He makes use of Gusfield's 'status anxiety' account, which he links to the 'moral panic' tradition, but is more concerned to track the chronology of the successive waves of current moralized politics than to provide critical or explanatory

accounts about why they have the content they do and why they appear at specific junctures (Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 1994; Thompson, 1998).

Wagner presents the culture wars as attempts to assert the respectability of a new liberal elite of professionals and academics and, at the same time, to deny it to other social constituencies. They are quests for a 'new respectability' that seeks to reinstate and shore up social boundaries that have become increasingly blurred. These concerns manifest themselves in an accumulation of middle-class anxieties; for example, about their consumption, their sexuality and about the safety and future of their own children. The concern about the use of recreational drugs by their sons and daughters comes up against the hedonism and lack of interest in careers exhibited by many young people; this, in turn, feeds into a generalized economic insecurity compounded by the feeling that education – the classic form of cultural capital transmitted by the middle classes – can no longer guarantee the jobs and futures that their offspring no longer seem particularly interested in.

Middle-class preoccupations with personal behaviour serve as a mechanism for confirming social distance from an amorphous mass that are perceived as culturally and ethnically different and a threat to the hegemony of the respectable classes. Classically, the work ethic of the respectable classes is counterposed to the idleness of the lower classes. Not only do such themes provide an affirmation of respectable social values, but they also advance an explanation of the disadvantages experienced by the lower orders, who 'have only themselves to blame'. These mechanisms involve what Foucault (1982) termed 'dividing practices', which are employed to impose distinctions between the deserving and the undeserving, the respectable and the unrespectable. For example, the successive phases of the 'war on drugs' have provided a master symbol that is mobilized in order to re-establish a separation between the disorder of middle-class youth and the culture of poverty in the ghettos.

The specific targets of the new respectability campaigns exhibit their own complex histories. For example, one of the primary current targets, the smoking of tobacco, has shown remarkable class mobility; smoking, once a privilege enjoyed by the upper classes, moved to the lower classes, only to become repudiated by the respectable classes just in

time for it to be taken up as a marker of sophistication by women, only then to be made the subject of tighter disciplinary regulation over the last two decades, when it has again become associated with the lower classes. In general, once the everyday vices percolated through the urban world of the poor and immigrants, they tend to be renounced by the middle and upper classes, as witnessed by the history of opium. Thus today's moral battles mark a return to the celebration of a new middle-class respectability rooted in the valorization of self-governance.

### MORAL REGULATION AS A CONSTRUCTIVE PROCESS

The most challenging issues that confront attempts to understand projects of moral regulation are as follows. How are we to explain the selection of specific forms of problematic behaviour that form their targets? Why has prostitution been a major concern in several periods only to fade into the margins? How are we to understand the shifting focus on different forms of recreational consumption? Why alcohol, why tobacco, why recreational drugs? Why do some of these targets return time and time again while others have their moment in the spotlight only to disappear? The targets engaged with are only ever – at best – symptoms. Rather, they should be approached for the light they throw on the problematizations that each period confronts; it follows that these problems may not themselves be directly visible in the discourses and practices deployed.

One important consequence is that we do not need to concern ourselves with such questions as whether access to 'dirty pictures' in the 1870s 'caused' the corruption of socially advantaged young men any more than whether in the 1970s pornography 'caused' violence against women. The strategy to be pursued is to explore how the underlying problematizations 'selected' the specific targets and to focus attention on the effects produced by the pursuit of such projects. Yet, in intentionally challenging claims of direct causality, it is necessary to avoid falling back on a 'moral panic' explanation which views such beliefs merely as irrational responses promoted by moral entrepreneurs and amplified by the media.

Nor should we be satisfied by the insertion of the qualifier 'symbolic' to account for the

link between those who take up such campaigns and the behavior that is stigmatized. There is a risk that in such accounts the 'symbol' is made to do too much causal work, as if the symbol itself were 'the missing link' between the agents and their target. This is not to imply the proscription of appeal to symbolic connections between agents, objects and targets, but only to insist that the linkages between agents and targets are never fully explained by their symbolic dimension.

The aim should be to advance accounts that are fully social, that neither accept the normative judgements of actors as in themselves providing an explanation of their action nor dismiss them as irrational, and does not limit explanation to the psychological dispositions of individuals. Against those who are content to advance the circular argument that people oppose obscenity because they believe obscenity to be immoral, it is both necessary and possible to inquire into how the targets selected were problematized, within what discursive formations they were problematized, and what tactics and strategies were employed in pursuing them. This strategy makes it possible to avoid the sterile opposition between 'objectivism' and 'subjectivism' which has dogged American 'social problems' theory.

In order to pursue this analysis it is necessary to elucidate the categories 'agents', 'objects' and 'targets'. A central task in exploring projects of moral regulation is to demonstrate how its agents become activated, why the specific object is selected, and how that becomes linked to some specific target group. The 'agents' are those who take up some cause and become its active or passive supporters; in many of the most interesting cases the agents are drawn from the 'middle', the middle class or some segment thereof. There is no general rule that moral regulation characteristically mobilizes middle-class sentiment, yet such responses are characteristic of many such projects and exhibit distinctive forms of moral indignation. Some projects are initiated 'from above' by political or economic elites, but more typically such campaigns emerge from 'the middle'; it is such projects that have received the fullest attention in the tradition of *ressentiment* theory discussed above.

Aside from paying attention to the primary social forces involved, consideration also needs to be given to the alliances formed between different categories of agents; for example, the recent concern about child pornography on the Internet has resulted in an

alliance between moral entrepreneurs, school boards, watchful parents and conservative politicians. Major political social forces generally become 'agents' only reluctantly, or only after a movement has already achieved political momentum; a classic example is the case of the prohibition constitutional amendment in the USA. One of the puzzling features of studies of recent moral regulation campaigns is that there has been relatively little interest shown in an attempt to achieve a detailed identification of the moral agents involved.

The 'object' of a moral reform offensive identifies the social behaviour that the campaign is directed against. Prostitution, obscenity, alcohol and tobacco are short-hand labels that designate the objects against which action is aimed. Or, to be more precise, it is the social conduct associated with these objects that is at stake. But it is interesting to note that over time it often becomes the substance itself, such as alcohol or tobacco, that is moralized. The questions that must be engaged with are: Why, from a range of possible objects, is some particular object selected? Why did Comstock first select obscene material as his object of attack and then switch his attack to gambling? Why did this issue represent itself in the 1970s under the label 'pornography'? Why have there been periods that exhibited intense preoccupation with prostitution, only for the issue to fade and then to re-emerge some decades later?

The concept 'target' designates the social category whose conduct is associated with the object of the campaign and who thus becomes moralized and made subject to some attempt at regulation. Why was it that immigrants bore the brunt of Comstock's moralizing rhetoric against obscenity in the 1870s? Why are young minority women the target of current attacks on 'welfare scroungers'?

A common feature of many accounts of moral regulation is the explanatory weight attached to 'anxiety'. While some approaches treat anxiety as a psychological phenomenon, the most important currents are concerned with social anxieties rather than with their individual manifestations. It is the identification of specific middle-class anxieties, whether about their own economic security or the future of their offspring, that is treated as the major component 'causing' them to support particular moral regulation projects. There are some important questions concerning the viability of 'anxiety' as an explanatory device.<sup>17</sup> Anxiety accounts partake of the

allure of structuralism by offering access to a hidden or depth reality underlying the surface of social life. But we have no directly available means by which to validate the explanatory claims that their invocation suggests. It is important to insist that it is necessary to avoid the assumption that to identify an anxiety can itself provide a causal explanation. Rather, unless we are to lapse into some version of essentialism, the identification of a social anxiety itself requires an adequate sociological explanation.

It is crucial to explore the linkages that characterize the distinctive feature of so many moral regulation projects where the overt object has no direct connection with moral agents. The moralization of the disadvantaged that is evident in many current moral campaigns always requires the tracing out of the specific linkages which develop into the more expansive antagonisms that such issues as drugs, alcohol and crime reveal. The distinctive feature of moral regulation projects is their tendency to select the weakest and most vulnerable targets – whether it be the poor, the single mother or the immigrant; familiar though this response is, it is not easy to explain its tenacity. It is not that it is surprising that weak targets are selected, but what is more problematic is that socially distant vulnerable targets are selected. I make no claim to solve this problem, but to pose it is important, not only because such attacks on the vulnerable are deeply etched in the pages of history, but also because the tragic nature of the consequences of such victimization often inhibits us from asking why campaigns directed at such targets gain momentum. The cutting edge of this line of inquiry is that, all too often, accounts rely on some essentialist idea of some inherent, engrained or pre-constituted hostility. It is not that antipathy to 'the other' does not persistently assert itself or that there are not systematic patterns to racial and class hatred; rather, the really difficult question is to explain the mechanisms whereby clashing cultural, political and class interests manifest themselves in the moral wars that arise from everyday concerns and social anxieties. At this juncture, it is necessary to move to a more concrete level; one component of such an analysis requires attention to the specific situation of different sections of the middle classes.

The contention that today's moral wars can be understood as efforts on the part of the middle class to differentiate itself from the poor

and disadvantaged requires major revision. By the late twentieth century a new petty bourgeoisie had formed around the knowledge industries, but it has probably not as yet formed itself into a self-conscious class. However, it is undoubtedly a segment concerned to advance its claims for social and economic recognition. Most sections of the middle classes have continued to prosper, particularly in relationship to blue-collar workers, who have been the main victims of the economic restructuring of the last two decades. It would be fruitful to explore the possibility that different fractions of the middle class play very different roles with respect to recent moral regulation movements. For example, it is likely that the economically weakest sections of the commercial middle class are important sources of support for social order projects such as the 'drug wars' and anti-crime crusades since they are less able to assert and protect their class distinction. In contrast it is likely that the professional and bureaucratic middle classes are the key players in battles over moralized consumption, such as pornography, tobacco and alcohol, as means of asserting their cultural distinction.

What is important is that to attend to the role in current moral politics played by the professional and bureaucratic middle classes serves to emphasize that moral regulation projects have no necessary conservative character. Many of today's projects exhibit unambiguously liberal features such as concern with safety, health and the environment, and, in particular, with issues of gender and race equality, and, most recently, with human rights. This suggests the thesis that rising or aspiring social groups tend to link participation in projects of moral regulation with distinctively liberal political positions, while more overtly conservative forms of moral regulation are likely to be associated with declining social strata. More work would be needed to explore this hypothesis. One thing, however, is abundantly clear. The social configuration of moral politics generally involves complex associations of diverse social forces. Nowhere was this more clear than the anti-pornography campaigns of the 1980s, which involved tacit alliances of radical feminist currents with traditional conservative and religious forces, and were often joined by radical and 'left' currents. The exploration of these complex networks needs to be an important focus of attempts to understand the dynamics of moral politics.

#### GENDERED MORAL REGULATION

It needs to be emphasized that the politics of moral regulation have, since the early nineteenth century, been strongly gendered. By the late nineteenth century, women had succeeded in carving out a significant sphere of active engagement in the public domain. The same distinctive role of women has also been an important feature of late twentieth-century moral politics. In the late nineteenth century women articulated an active maternal feminism which, although built from much of the same material as the patriarchal construction of womanhood, replaced the passive 'angel in the home' with the strong maternal moral guardian of the home (Dietz, 1998). Without suggesting that women thereby secured anything approximating equality, maternal feminism was a significant intervention that carved out arenas of the domestic field as domains of female authority and also secured some small but significant sectors of the public sphere as feminized terrain. Moral politics, philanthropy, family policy and, gradually, social work and wider fields of social welfare became significant arenas of female intervention.

How are we to understand the relationship between gender and moral politics in the late twentieth century? As in the nineteenth century, women today have played a pre-eminent role in the moral politics of the last two decades. While not all of these female activists make the claim to be feminists, the discourses deployed have their roots in the forms of feminist thought that came to the fore in the late 1970s. Thus, conservative 'real women' employ 'pro-woman' discourses with unmistakable roots in feminism. The parallels with the politics of the late nineteenth-century purity campaigns are striking.

Why has the dominant strand in contemporary feminism adopted a theoretical and political stance that so closely parallels that of the earlier purity movement? The first thing to do is to brush aside any temptation to flirt with cyclical accounts about *fin de siècle* or millennia. Instead, we should ask: what changes in gender relations in recent decades have prompted this 'new purity movement'? Only a sketch of these changes can be offered here. It is essential to recognize the changed structural position of women within the economic division of labour. Women have been significant beneficiaries of economic restructuring, which has broken the predominant role of heavy

manufacturing industries and displaced male manual and semi-skilled labour. In the new growth sectors of assembly manufacture and consumer and financial services the proportion of women has increased rapidly. In the administrative and professional fields there have been dramatic processes of feminization, including such traditional professions as the law and medicine.

These changes are not without their associated problems. There is a sharp distinction between two types of female employment. The earnings of younger women in full-time jobs are now very similar to those of men, while those of the larger group of women in part-time employment still lag behind male incomes. In the fields of administrative, managerial and related occupations there is frustration about the pace of change that is epitomized in concern about 'the glass ceiling'. Women with young children make complex choices balancing their career and economic interests with a pervasive preference for spending some years out of full-time work. These features are the key to understanding the structural basis of heightened tensions within contemporary gender relations. There is an increasing mismatch between the economic aspects of the sexual division of labour and culturally constructed gender relations. In its simplest form there is no longer a 'fit' between economic and gender regimes; neither women nor, for that matter, men can lead their lives and make their choices in a social world where they know 'how things are', even less 'how they should be'. These tensions are experienced particularly sharply by middle-class women in professional and administrative occupations because it is here that the contradictions between personal advancement and personal life are sharpest.

The tensions surrounding gender express themselves in the quest for a 'new respectability'. Its content is significantly different from the respectability pursued by the Victorian middle classes. 'New respectability' reflects the aspiring role of upwardly mobile women concerned to demonstrate their independence. The contours of this concern exhibit themselves in a perplexing variety that reaches from the '*Cosmopolitan* woman', who asserts her rights to sexual pleasure, to the austere anti-sexualism that rigidly confines sexuality to the private sphere. The valorization of autonomy and independence produces a renewed sense of sex as involving both danger and pleasure; the substantive positions adopted fall along the continuum of danger-pleasure (Vance, 1984). In its immediate sense the danger of sex is increasingly

epitomized not so much by sexual violence, but by concern with sexual harassment in the workplace. Harassment in Victorian discourses was about threats to respectability in the streets from male 'pests'. It is significant that today it is the workplace which is the central site of concerns around inappropriate sexual conduct. This reinforces the pressures towards a suppression of sexuality that manifests itself in the preoccupation of the new respectability with restrained dress and self-presentation, for it is in the workplace that the direct competition between men and women is at its sharpest.

### CONCLUSION

This chapter has sought to show that analysis of the dynamics of moral regulation facilitates our efforts to understand the specificity of the continuing vitality of projects of moral regulation. The purity campaigns of the late nineteenth century and the new movements from the late 1970s are of special significance because of the central role of female activists and feminist currents of thought. The merit that may be claimed for the approach suggested is that it seeks to integrate the interaction of class and gender relations in these processes.

While it is important to consider the links between these two major upwellings of moral regulation movements, there is a risk that it may lead us not to attend to the specificity of the current forms of moral reform projects. It is for this reason that this chapter ends by stressing a shift in the agenda of moral regulation studies towards a concern with the interaction of the dual processes of 'governing others' and the heightened significance of tactics that promote and incite subjects to engage in self-governance. It should not be implied that the presence of self-governance in moral regulation projects is new. The late nineteenth century was suffused with attempts to induce 'self-control' and 'self-restraint'. The difference is that these projects protected an externally approved standard to which individuals were exhorted to conform. Contemporary forms of self-governance are concerned less with such externally defined rules and more with the processes through which individuals are stimulated to take charge of their own identities, commitments and thus, generally, their ethical self-fashioning of a 'way of life'. This shift in the intellectual agenda marks a move away from direct regulatory projects to a wider integration of moral, or now perhaps ethical, self-regulation.

## NOTES

1. It should be noted that legitimations generated by appeal to moral discourses are frequently found in complex combinations with traditional or pragmatic legitimations.

2. Much later, George Herbert Mead (1923) linked scientific method and the moral sciences.

3. As early as his inaugural lecture at Bordeaux, Durkheim (1888) had proposed to pursue development of a 'science of morality' that would treat moral beliefs and maxims as natural phenomena whose causes and effects could be discovered.

4. In a somewhat different tradition Niebuhr (1932) drew a distinction between the moral capacity of individuals and of societies, 'moral man' versus 'immoral society'. Major social immorality (such as Nazism) erupts because of the absence of a social force capable of handling the natural, but irrational, impulses which arise in collective behaviour and can never be fully brought under the control of reason.

5. A parallel, but always minority, current sought out the more active participation of local communities, trade unions, urban governments and other local interests in identifying the problems to be addressed. This approach had its most developed expression in the Pittsburgh Survey of 1905–8 (Kellogg, 1909–14).

6. The first use of the concept 'moral panic' had been made by Jock Young (1971) in the context of a study of police amplification of deviance.

7. There has been a protracted debate about the relationship between Marxism and Foucault that is beyond the scope of this chapter. I will adopt the position that Foucault provides both a break with and a continuation of Gramscian Marxism.

8. Lest there be any suggestion that Gramsci ignores the impact of modern capitalism, he reveals the advanced nature of his thought by arguing that 'until women can attain not only a genuine independence in relation to men but also a new way of conceiving themselves and their role in sexual relations, the sexual question will remain full of unhealthy characteristics and caution must be exercised in proposals for new legislation' (1971: 296). It should, however, be noted that Gramsci was very cool with respect to proposals for easier divorce legislation. For an extended discussion, see Hunt (1997).

9. Henri Lefebvre (1991) draws attention to the way in which work and leisure become separated with the growth of capitalism, and increasingly the latter involves passive and regulated forms of entertainment.

10. These themes are developed in rich contextualization in Karen Halttunen's (1982) historical study of the moral and economic risks for new arrivals in the burgeoning cities of nineteenth-century America posed by confidence men and painted women.

11. Boyer (1978) focused on the fluctuating strategies and tactics of American moral reform movements; he drew attention to the switch of tactics between

coercive legislative and social environmental projects aimed at removing the conditions, such as urban overcrowding, that lead to vice.

12. The extensive literature on the history and politics of prostitution closely parallels the concerns of moral regulation studies.

13. And for the majority of purity activists it led to an engagement with eugenics in the pursuit of 'race regeneration'.

14. *White Slave Traffic Act*, US Statutes at Large, vol. 36, 825–7 (1910).

15. Valverde's (1991) study of moral regulation movements in Canada similarly attends to the relationship between Protestant revivalism and early feminist currents.

16. For example, the feminist project of taming the beast of male sexuality led them to a blanket insistence that sex be confined to marriage, where it should only be used for procreation and not for pleasure.

17. I have explored the use of 'anxiety theory' accounts across a wider range of sociological and social historical explanation (Hunt, 1999b); here I draw on that analysis to focus attention on the use of such accounts in explanations of moral regulation projects.

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# *Afterword*

## *Why Historical Sociology?*

CRAIG CALHOUN

There are many reasons to study historical sociology – or to study history sociologically. For some scholars, engagement grows from wondering about a specific set of events, from doubts about a generalization or conclusion offered by an earlier author, or from the seeming analogy – or contrast – between present circumstances and an earlier era. For some sociologists, the prestige of association with the older discipline of history is an attraction, just as for some historians the converse prestige of association with the scientifically reputable ideas of theory and quantitative methods offers motivation. None of these reasons need be seen as disreputable, yet none fully explains the importance of bringing history and sociology together.

The most compelling reason for the existence of historical sociology is embarrassingly obvious (embarrassingly because so often ignored). This is the importance of studying social change. If it is remarkable that much sociology focuses on some combination of an illusory present and an even more illusory set of universal laws, it is still more remarkable that much history focuses not on crucial patterns, processes, trajectories and cases of social change but on aspects of the past divorced from their location in the course or context of social change. Historians study what life was like in the fifteenth century, what firms were like in the nineteenth century, the biographies of prime ministers, the texts of Chinese sages and the relics of Mesopotamia. These concerns are of interest

for an understanding of what life was like in other contexts, but also for thinking about social change. Curiously, though, it has often been the case that the ‘discipline’ of professional, academic history has urged a disengagement from the study of social change as somehow too broad a subject. As one Oxford don told me when I embarked on my D.Phil. thesis, a study originally conceived as addressing popular protest between the 1790s and 1830s, ‘That’s a ridiculous time span; you must focus, say on 1811–12.’ As it happened, I did focus further, but my emphasis remained on social change during the Industrial Revolution and popular collective responses to it. This may seem a predictable ‘sociological’ choice. Yet very often sociologists doing historical research have manifested their own disengagement from history. They have brought contemporary sociological methods and theories to studies of past times, but approached these as simply further cases of phenomena they might see anywhere, or as ‘snapshots’ out of time. Though such studies can be interesting, they also invite criticisms like that of John Goldthorpe (1991), who suggests that in so far as sociologists seek to develop deeper knowledge of social processes, they would do better to conceptualize new studies of present phenomena about which they can gather more complete data.

Of course, not all historians have adopted an approach narrowed to brief time-spans or efforts simply to mine particular archives. The extent to which historians aim merely at the

discovery of new facts or at the reinterpretation of known ones, or even at the construction of causal models, is variable. There is oscillation and counterpoint between the intense study of specific moments and the study of how patterns of continuity and change are constituted – as, for example, in the recent French turn to *'microhistoire'* from *'histoire de la longue durée'*. Some subfields have been much more likely to take up the broader study of patterns in social change: economic history and intellectual history, for example, as in the magisterial and analytic studies of Joel Mokyr and Reinhart Koselleck. Art history has generally been more open to the long term and the study of social change, music history more heavily influenced by 'positivists' engaged in the recovery of scores or the preparation of authoritative texts of opera libretti. So too, national traditions vary, with the Anglo-American including perhaps the strongest current of 'positivism' (though German immigrants helped to bring this to America), and especially of positivism defined as a preference for factual discovery over theory or interpretation (Novick, 1988). And even within Britain and the United States, there are differences between historians of each of the 'home' countries and those focusing on European or non-Western histories.

A second compelling reason for historical sociology is closely related. It is a way of dispelling the illusions of false necessity. Along with comparison, attention to historical specificity is one of the crucial ways of demonstrating that what happens to be is not what must be. Sociology and history each have their own versions of empiricist false necessity. Sociologists too often try to build theory by generalizing from the results of empirical research, rather than organizing research to provide evidence or contradiction for propositions that might explain patterns in the distribution of empirical phenomena. They too often turn the relationships of causal implication in multivariate models into implications of necessity in the world – as though chance and human action and shifting contexts could not change the relationships among variables. This has the (often criticized) effect of exaggerating the extent to which present-day social arrangements are necessary (and thus beyond criticism) as distinct from being the results of power relations or failure to pursue alternatives. Seeing the present in relation to the past is an important way of recognizing its contingency, and pressing oneself to attend

not simply to surface phenomena but also to underlying causes and conditions that produce those phenomena. It is arguably his contribution to this analytic project that most legitimates treating Marx as the first great historical sociologist (see Duncan Kelly's chapter in this volume).

If sociologists get caught in illusions of the present as necessity, historians can be trapped by the limits of their own empirical data if not aided by theory, comparison and other means of transcending the mere record. This record can appear as one of a necessary succession of moments, an inexorable march towards the present (or for some Marxists, towards the future). If fears of Whig history lead many to avoid broad generalizations about the course of history, the opposite extreme is to extract specifics about the past from any concern for historical change. At the same time, the reality of life in another era can appear to be only those things which actually happened and chanced to be recorded, and not the aspirations that animated life and the struggles which might have gone otherwise. Historians are less likely to deny the centrality of interpretation to their work than sociologists are, but history has undergone its own transformations in pursuit of an ideal of empiricist science, from Ranke through more recent versions of professional specialization (see Novick, 1988).<sup>1</sup>

Still a third compelling reason for historical sociology is the need to grasp analytic categories in the historical contexts of their production and application. There is no access to past or present or reality in general save through categories of thought which are themselves historical products and results of conscious or unconscious choice, of social as well as individual selection, of struggles both to understand and to dominate, and never more than relatively adequate to the pursuit of knowledge. Do we speak of nations? Of classes? Of crises? East and West? Colonies and post-colonies? Subjectivities? Individuals? Gender distinct from sex? Religion, when religions differ from as well as resemble each other – not just in particulars but also in fundamental understandings of what they are? There is no escape from such categories of thought into an ideal realm of pure facticity (perhaps the last idealist dream of many materialists). Some are better than others for particular explanatory projects, all go in and out of fashion, yet none are simply right or wrong. Each may be used casually, with little

attention to what it conveys, how it shapes understanding, or what the significance of alternatives foregone might be. Each may also be the object of inquiry, with not merely its lineage but also its implications at issue, and each understood in terms not just of scholarly choice of concepts but also of the manifold social factors that contribute to the production and reproduction of ways of understanding (a point made by several authors in the present book, including, notably, Peter Wagner and Johann Arnason).

Such categories of thought are not merely more or less adequate and accurate, they are also constitutive of social reality. The idea of nation, therefore, and with it the idea that the world is more or less naturally organized into nations (even if some are historical victors and others losers), has been constitutive for the very organization of history as a scholarly discipline. This has not been altogether divorced from the role of history as a public project – indeed often a national project, an education into citizenship and particular forms of identity. And the category of nation is part of the historical and sociological constitution of the object ‘nations’ not only in the attention of scholars but also in the consciousness of ordinary people and the actions of armies and ambassadors (see relevant discussions in these pages by Chakrabarty and Delanty, among others). The categories with which we think the world are part of a social imaginary that in some degree also makes that world real and makes it what it is (see Calhoun, 2002; Taylor, 2002). To use categories of thought in an appropriately self-aware and critical fashion requires attention to both theory and history, and to a sociological, not merely an individually intellectual, understanding of both the past and the present dynamics shaping the use and implications of such categories.

In short, history and sociology both need historical sociology. It is, among other things, an indispensable help to each in counteracting the baneful effects of the *Methodenstreit*. This German argument over method, science and the nature of knowledge flourished over a hundred years ago, but left an enduringly problematic heritage.<sup>2</sup> If anything, its effects are more profound in America than in Germany, and I think more substantial in German- and English-language scholarship than in most Latinate and other scholarly traditions (though I cannot pretend to know them all, and though Durkheim and others were engaged in partially similar struggles over

disciplinary identity and the relationship between theory and history). The protagonists of the *Methodenstreit* propagated a misleading dichotomy between particularizing and generalizing sciences. Not only was the opposition of particularizing to generalizing itself overdrawn, the idea that whole sciences – or divisions of the faculties of universities – should be characterized simply by one approach or the other is both empirically wrong and epistemologically specious. It is certainly true that disciplines, or lines of work within disciplines, may be characterized by greater attention to detailed description or specification of particular phenomena or general explanation of recurrent phenomena. The differences are more stylistic than fundamental, though, and the middle ground between the extremes is vast. This is especially the case if ‘generalization’ is elevated to the positing of universal laws.<sup>3</sup>

Very few historians are really interested simply in the radically particular, though they may often be interested in variations among cases that never match each other exactly, or in sequences of events grasped well by narrative interpretation partly because they involve so many different influences and dimensions that it is impossible to isolate each for more general study. Rather than identifying history with the ‘idiographic’, it may make more sense to identify it with the ideals of specificity and context. There is, in E.P. Thompson’s (1971) words, a ‘discipline of historical context’ that encourages seeing the ways in which events and understanding and actions and even structures are embedded both in other simultaneous phenomena and in time. The former aspect encourages connecting history to ethnography, as Thompson noted, though the latter is a limit to traditional ethnography and a reason for historical anthropology as well as historical sociology.<sup>4</sup>

Likewise, universal and invariant phenomena or relationships among variables occupy a relatively small place in sociological knowledge. Relationships of ‘weak implication’ (to borrow Boudon’s [1975] phrase) are more common in statistical research than strict causality. Sociology is concerned mostly with patterns of similarity and difference and with partially general accounts of these. Much of it consists in putting more or less general explanations to work in accounting for particular cases. But the general explanations are usually partial. That is, they explain aspects and dimensions of phenomena, not the whole of

interesting cases. Producing an adequate account of the state of social inequality in the United States, or the pattern of migration in Africa, or the implications of population policies in China (let alone changes in any of these) is a matter of bringing together multiple different more or less general theories, as well as interpreting facts specific to individual cases or analogies and disanalogies across cases. On the one hand, this means breaking down cases into narrower phenomena the generalizable aspects of which are more readily specified.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, it means also reassembling the partial explanations into an account of the larger whole which occasioned sociological interest in the first place.<sup>6</sup> The partial explanations will usually vary greatly in their generality and robustness, and generalizability of the whole package will be rare. Indeed, part of the importance of historical and comparative sociology lies in overcoming faulty generalizations. It does this not by eschewing generalization, but by continually putting generalizations to the test in new contexts, not just to see whether they hold, but also to see whether the very terms in which they are framed continue to make sense. As Pavla Miller says in this volume, 'The very strength of historical sociology helps undermine the apparent universality of its conceptual tools.'

Historical sociology, then, stands between the idiographic and the nomothetic in both history and sociology. As it happens, the label is more commonly used among sociologists, though the practice clearly includes historians (as Peter Burke and others discuss in this volume). Indeed, one of the oddities of labelling is that ideas of 'social' and 'cultural' are often used to label opposing approaches in history, and social history is further divided between a 'social science' variant that is often quantitative and a more interpretative version. The label signals, moreover, a concern for distinguishing the realms of social relations and everyday life, especially of 'ordinary people', from high politics and elite culture. Witness the slogan of the *Journal of Social History*: 'history from the bottom up'. In the 1960s and early 1970s, this could join a quantitative approach to demography, urbanization, migration and other 'mass' phenomena – that is, phenomena involving large numbers of people considered in the aggregate rather than as individual actors – with recovery of working-class biographies, studies of family life and reconstruction of experiences like penal

transportation.<sup>7</sup> Historians working on the latter sort of projects, however, were apt to take 'cultural' and 'linguistic' turns in the course of the last quarter of the twentieth century that divided them from advocates of 'social science history'. At the same, the cultural and linguistic turns often involved a new centrality for intellectual history, and in some cases a consequent shift away from the centrality of 'ordinary people' to an increasing emphasis on major thinkers and shifts in text-based 'discourses'.

Historical sociology has also had a curious existence as a subfield of sociology. As Holton notes in this volume, 'historical sociology has been seen by many as a subset rather than a core feature of the discipline, on a par with *industrial*, *political* and other such specialisms'. He rightly shows this to be at odds with Max Weber's approach to sociology as inherently historical in its very questions and in the overall intellectual approach it requires. Many historical sociologists share Weber's sense of the importance of historical (and comparative) inquiry for the discipline as a whole (whether or not the substantive theory they adopt is specifically Weberian). But after a brief period in which historical sociology seemed more central and more radical, its institutionalization has indeed made it appear mostly as one specialization among others. Most often this is described as a methodological approach, as though historical inquiry was a method analogous to survey research or ethnography. It is thus curious that organizationally – as in departmental hiring decisions, assessment exercises and the division of the American Sociological Association into sections – it should appear as one in a list of mostly topical specialisms. This reflects, however, a historical trajectory (and, of course, one can hope that books like this one are part of a reversal in the trend).

Historical sociology is in fact as old as any other sort of sociology. When Comte coined the word 'sociology' in the 1840s, and certainly when Durkheim launched his discipline-forming project in the 1890s, sociology was already in part a project of historical analysis. Vico, Montesquieu, Ferguson and Tocqueville all figure even before Marx in this dimension of sociology's history – and its history as historical sociology. Formative problems for the new discipline mandated historical inquiry: How was industrialization transforming society? Did revolution offer human beings control over their history? Was

community vanishing? Could all human societies be ordered in evolutionary sequence? Was there a distinctly Western trajectory or civilization? Was inequality declining or growing? Did population growth inevitably result in the 'corrections' of famine, warfare and pestilence?

Behind many of these questions lay sociology's struggle to understand European modernity in various of its aspects ranging from capitalism to a growing popular voice in politics, from bureaucracy to the apparent decline of community in favour of a more impersonal urban society. This involved looking at earlier periods and at processes of social change as well as at non-European sites. Historical sociology was inescapably central. It was marginalized and turned into a subfield mainly after the Second World War.

Two lingering effects of the *Methodenstreit* were influential. One was the subsequent rise to dominance of other research approaches that focused more on the pursuit of universal laws. Often now grouped together as quantification, these involved considerable advances in the ability to produce knowledge of certain kinds. This was interpreted in the terms of the *Methodenstreit* as bringing a more secure and potentially universal form of knowledge. This interpretation was not necessarily entailed by quantification as such, and, moreover, there are important epistemic differences masked by that term (or others such as 'behavioural').<sup>8</sup> Second was a division of the faculties along the lines of the *Methodenstreit* opposition. This reflected a conflict not only over generality and particularity, but also over 'positive' knowledge and interpretation, and – importantly – over whether moral values were to be addressed directly or kept at arm's length (in ideally 'value-free' inquiry). No single international pattern of university organization resulted, though more or less similar distinctions were widespread. In the United States, where this organizational factor was perhaps most influential, the basic distinction was between the humanities and natural sciences, with the social sciences in between (but for the most part clearly opting for a self-understanding as science).<sup>9</sup> In Germany and most of Northern Europe the *Geisteswissenschaften* occupied a similar contested space. This led to an eventual distinction of a tradition of cultural and usually hermeneutically oriented scholarship from increasingly positivist approaches emulating natural science. Within the former, cultural sociology long survived as a

separate branch of sociology with chairs located in a different division of the university.

An equally important marginalization of historical sociology came from a different quarter. This was the canonization of 'classical social theory' accomplished by Talcott Parsons and others, which fixed the historical concerns of the founding sociologists as theory rather than as themes for continuing research. Sociologists began to absorb their views of history – and especially of the key dimensions of modernity – from reading Weber and Durkheim rather than studying history directly, either in primary source research or in study of the writings of historians. History became a backdrop to sociology, invoked as part of theory more than the object of research. For decades (and perhaps still) there was more exegesis of Weber's discussion of the Protestant Reformation than sociological engagement with new research on the Reformation. The version of theory for which this was most true was that which aimed most to be all-encompassing and systematic.<sup>10</sup> But it parsons betrayed Weber in sacrificing much of his historical side, the same could be said of the much less systematic tradition of symbolic interactionism with regard to its founder, George Herbert Mead. After the generation of Mead's own students, few symbolic interactionists read beyond his socio-psychological lectures (collected as *Mind, Self, and Society*, 1934) to his books on nineteenth-century thought or other themes. Mead's appropriation into a tradition centred on participant observation is itself curious, given his own interest in experiment, as well as historical scholarship. But the point is the way in which the theoretical canon both displaced historical inquiry for contemporary concept formation and systematization and substituted transmission of the historical analyses of the founders for new historical sociology.

One of the results of this was that historical sociology would re-emerge as a challenge to dominant orthodoxies in the discipline, commonly supported by Marxism or a rereading of Weber. It is worth recalling the extent to which the revitalization of historical sociology in the 1970s grew out of the politics of the 1960s, and the sense that grand theory as it then existed wasn't adequately answering the grand questions of the contemporary world. It was not that all historical inquiry had ceased. Weberians like Reinhard Bendix had kept a more historical version of that tradition alive. Some trained largely in the functionalist

tradition, like Neil Smelser, Philip Selznick, Robert Bellah and Seymour Martin Lipset, did important historical research. Robert Merton's functionalism did not simply replicate that of Parsons. Not least, Merton affirmed a greater space for historical inquiry (and more generally placed a greater emphasis on integrating theory and empirical research). Indeed at an early stage of his career, Merton (1938) did important historical research on early modern science that owed little to functionalism. From other sources, Barrington Moore wrote the enormously influential *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (1966), while George Homans pursued a double life as historian of medieval England and behaviourist sociologist. Homans's student, Charles Tilly, in turn began producing important historical sociology before the more widespread revival, after which he would go on to become one of the most influential of all late twentieth-century historical sociologists.<sup>11</sup>

In Europe too, important historical sociology was produced before the 'revival' of the field. Probably most influential was Norbert Elias, though the influence came three or four decades after his main work (1978 [1939], 1982 [1939]), which reflected really the intellectual orientations of the prewar period. Jürgen Habermas's early *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1989 [1962]) was a work of historical sociology, though most of his later work followed a less historical, more philosophically universalist path. Bryan Wilson's work on magic and religion (1973) was historical sociology without a formal declaration. Joseph and Olive Banks (1964) did distinguished work on themes like family planning. At the fringes of disciplinary identity, Lucien Goldmann produced a historical sociology of literature and culture.

From the history side of the interdisciplinary field, there was a substantial move to take up the mixtures of theory and research and conceptually if not always disciplinarily sociological agendas well before the 'revival' in sociology. This was especially strong where Marxist scholarship was influential. In Britain, E.P. Thompson, Christopher Hill, Eric Hobsbawm, George Rudé and others did work they (at least the first two) would cringe to hear called historical sociology but which none the less deserves the label in many ways. Keith Thomas (1971) acknowledged the disciplinary influence of anthropology rather than sociology, but joined this group. Also influential were the boundary-crossing

projects of the *Annales* school (see Peter Burke's chapter above). This influenced sociology directly through Immanuel Wallerstein, but also offered a counterpoint to the dominance of structuralism and inspired important studies (often anthropological rather than sociological) of the history of slavery, colonialism and peasant societies.

The founding of the Social Science History Association and of the journal *Comparative Studies in Society and History* both revealed stirrings of a sense of need to connect history and social science, specific research agendas and broader theoretical concerns. They were American-based, and the stirrings may have been strongest there partly because the earlier divisions also were. At the same time, though, a revitalization of evolutionary theory in the United States of the 1960s (which sometimes had connections to historical research) fell afoul of the rebellion against modernization theory and developmentalism but found greater reception in Europe.<sup>12</sup>

None the less, it is important to see not only the continuity of historical sociology but also the important sense in which it rose to prominence as a part of a sort of social movement in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>13</sup> Crucial aspects of this included rebellion against functionalist modernization theory and revitalization of Marxism. If the former was more of an issue in sociology, the latter was at least as important in history. Both were influenced by the political and social concerns of the 1960s. These figured biographically in attracting younger scholars interested in social change, but also observationally as they challenged the notions of a smooth and unilinear path of modernization and of a functionally integrated society in which power, domination and conflict were only aberrations. Some of the senior figures in historical sociology had long challenged the dominant approaches – perhaps most prominently Immanuel Wallerstein.<sup>14</sup> Less an insurgent, but also challenging the dominant paradigm was Charles Tilly<sup>15</sup> (who published Wallerstein's books on the modern world-system in his influential series with Academic Press).<sup>16</sup> But what made historical sociology come to the forefront was not simply the work of a few distinguished individuals in more senior generations but the widespread engagement of a younger generation. With different specific theoretical orientations and coming from different disciplinary trajectories, a variety of scholars still in their twenties as the 1970s started led the broader change: Theda Skocpol, William Sewell and Lynn Hunt were

among the most prominent (see Hunt, 1984; Sewell, 1980; Skocpol, 1978). Perry Anderson and Michael Mann were (slightly older) English counterparts (though this was a disproportionately American movement – see Anderson, 1974a, 1974b; Mann, 1986). They were followed by many more historical sociologists half a generation younger (including me).

What drew these historical sociologists of the 1970s and 1980s together was the challenge of addressing several ‘big issues’ in social theory. The issues were not all uniquely historical, but historical research on each seemed crucial not just to set the record straight but also for the three reasons I enumerated at the outset. First, grasping the historical pattern of social change was important to clarifying a trajectory that included the present and understanding the options open, the paths closed and the forces at work. Second, the political significance of the renewal lay most basically in challenging the false necessity implied by dominant paradigms, not in any specific course of action or analysis of obstacles. And, third, the categories of analysis themselves needed to be rethought, not just in the abstract, but also in relation to their histories and the ways in which they had constituted dominant versions of history (and social reality). This meant looking anew at class, bringing the state back in and understanding the centrality of gender to the patterns of social organization and chance. This set of motivations, and this conversation, oriented the renewal of historical sociology most importantly to questions about modernity (even when that category was among those challenged). Studies of earlier historical epochs were secondary within it (though eventually these would become more significant).<sup>17</sup>

Because this renewal was centred on several big questions, it was inherently theoretical, often a matter of pursuing theoretical issues through historical research. This meant that it could readily engage (shaping and being shaped by) theoretical debates that were not exclusively about history or conducted by means of historical research. Some of the most important of these were organized in terms of Marxism and feminism. This also meant that the renewal of historical sociology could be integrated with new work in comparative sociology, which might have greater or lesser historical depth in itself. World-systems theory arose out of studies of dependency and development (as well as out of the *Annales* school), and these continued to be important.

A project like ‘bringing the state back in’ joined, among many, Theda Skocpol (whose version of historical sociology was shaped heavily by both Marxism and Barrington Moore), Peter Evans (whose work centred on dependency in Latin America) and Dietrich Rueschemeyer (a broadly Weberian researcher).<sup>18</sup> Not least of all, this established a connection between, on the one hand, the resurgence of actual historical research among sociologists and attention to sociological theory among historians and, on the other hand, a redevelopment and reorientation of social theory itself.

During the 1960s and 1970s, a number of theorists successfully challenged the construction of the canon of classical social theory that Parsons had effected a generation or two earlier. Anthony Giddens was in this regard probably the most influential writer in English. The most obvious manifestation of this was recognition of Marx as one of the discipline’s key founding theorists (part of a new trinity with Durkheim and Weber). Interest in Marxism (and in problems of culture) brought new readers to the Frankfurt school, whose theoretical work had always involved an attention to history, to Georg Lukács, and to Antonio Gramsci (whose work, though less directly historical, was readily appropriated into historical sociology because of his interest in definitions of historically specific institutional regimes – like Fordism – and his concern for historical variations in forms of class struggle). In addition, a new set of international theoretical connections and influences, some mediated by Marxist conversations (as in the role of the *New Left Review* and *New Left Books* in publishing translations), brought a new generation of continental European theorists into the forefront of English-language scholarship. Jürgen Habermas continued, but transformed, the Frankfurt school. The ‘poststructuralist’ generation from France became famous in English slightly later, but had perhaps even more influence. Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu were most important for historical sociology. Even the earlier, more purely ‘structuralist’ work of Althusser had a significant influence, despite his own disinterest in history (and indeed, empirical research), because of its use by more comparatively and sometimes historically minded scholars, including Nicos Poulantzas, Samir Amin and others. Amin was also part of a larger, French-centred but also Latin American, Middle Eastern and South Asian rethinking of global economic

inequality, pre-capitalist economic formations and the articulation of modes of production (and, indeed, the role of the state). This overlapped and influenced the rise of subaltern studies, described by Dipesh Chakrabarty in this volume.

Like the rest of Anglo-American sociology, historical sociology was relatively slow to incorporate work from (and indeed work on) the rest of the world. This was never absent, of course, but the centring on the European historical experience has been strong. It is primarily as an adjunct to questions about modernity posed in terms of the European experience – including questions about its distinctiveness and about European domination – that Anglo-American historical sociology has taken up non-Western (and, indeed, non-modern, including ancient) history. Subaltern studies is among the most prominent of traditions to have flourished in neighbouring disciplines and regions without yet figuring as much as it might in historical sociology.

Michel Foucault has been the most important French influence on historical sociology after the core *Annales* school. His work is central to a variety of themes, including both substantive concerns about sexuality, medicine, knowledge, power and discipline and methodological-theoretical about continuity and discontinuity in historical change and the historical specificity and embeddedness of categories of knowledge (see Dean's chapter above for one dimension of this influence). While Foucault's most important work dates from the 1960s and 1970s, it was largely incorporated into English-language research in the 1980s and 1990s. It flourished more and earlier among historians than among sociologists; in both cases, it was central to a 'cultural turn'. Much other poststructuralist and postmodernist work also influenced this, of course, and I won't attempt to review it here. What is perhaps most important to grasp, though, is the extent to which the 'cultural turn' among historians drew many into new and different interdisciplinary relationships – with literature and anthropology, especially – and away from the older one with sociology (see Bonnell and Hunt, 1999). This reflected partly a clash of emphases: historians trying to grasp the cultural construction of sexuality or alternative knowledges while sociologists were bringing the state back in. While the political scientists leading the 'bringing the state back in' project were historically

sensitive, it is important to see the extent to which this could remind many historians of the older forms of political history (a history of elites, wars and institutions) against which the rise of the new social history had proposed 'history from the bottom up'. The new cultural history grew largely with the same 'bottom-up' concern, though this did not remain clearly dominant partly because of the large role of intellectual history, the importance of the critique of elite 'knowledges', and the very fact that sources on culture tended to come disproportionately from elites.

This disciplinary disjuncture was (like many) strongest in the United States (partly just because the scale of academia enables subfields more easily to achieve critical mass). Though there was overlap, comparative historical sociology and the sociology of culture grew largely as two distinct subfields within the American Sociological Association – to their detriment. The former enjoyed a major boom and discipline-wide prominence especially in the 1980s, but was slow to absorb the cultural turn (and by the same token did less to counterbalance it in interdisciplinary discourse than it might have). American sociology of culture flourished especially in the 1990s, but was (and remains) largely centred on the contemporary United States. Though British sociology is not free of ethnocentrism, work on culture has been significantly shaped by the problematics of both European integration and international migration and diaspora (both approached at least sometimes with historical depth and specificity). As central as migration has been to American sociology, and indeed to cultural studies in the US, it has not been a core concern for the American sociology of culture.

In both these regards, the situation in Britain is strikingly different. Historical sociology never took off equally as a subfield centred on new empirical research, but it flourished in much closer relationship to social theory and to cultural studies. The revitalization of interest in the work of Norbert Elias is an important example of this, but only one of many. Sociology was central to the birth of British cultural studies – for example, with the Birmingham school. Indeed, strong connections among literary, historical and sociological research were established early (for example, in the work of Raymond Williams, e.g., 1961) and maintained. These fields were more disjunct in the United States. In the US,

sociologists tended to stay on the margins of interdisciplinary cultural studies which developed with much more influence from literary scholars.

In Britain, historical sociology as written by sociologists appears largely in the form of theorization of large-scale historical phenomena: nationalism, wars, class relations, gender, power. If theory and research had to be opposed (which I hope they don't), much of the British writing would look like theory (or synthesis), not research, to Americans. It draws on historical sources, sometimes primary but largely secondary, to try to understand broad patterns of social life. These are approached in ways disciplined and systematized not by the logic of empirical inquiry or by the pursuit of detailed texture of description but rather by theoretical concepts and questions. In the United States, historical sociology appears more commonly as specific empirical studies intended (at least ideally) to bear on larger theoretical questions. The theoretical intentions were often stronger in earlier years, the questions often larger, and both more supported by directly theoretical work. The maturation of the subfield of the discipline has made it less of a challenge to the 'mainstream'. The divergences between British and American styles are unfortunate, not just for the sake of international understanding, but because a richer integration of theory and empirical research would produce stronger studies.

Given that English is a (more or less) common language, and, moreover, a language also in common use in other countries where the division between British and American styles of sociology may be less influential, one may hope for more work that bridges this gap. The same goes for more effective incorporation of attention to culture. And not least of all, the same goes for the integration of the work of historians and sociologists. Indeed, the recent revitalization of 'world history' and more generally of historical research that transcends conventional boundaries of place (usually nation-state) and period suggests that the time is ripe.

Certainly, the three compelling reasons for historical sociology have not been exhausted. Grasping social change continues to demand both empirical interpretation and theoretical explanation. Avoiding false necessity is still aided by both critical theory and comparative historical analysis. Understanding how basic concepts work not only in our theories and analyses but also in the social imaginary calls

for never-ending investigation into the histories of their production and transformation.

#### NOTES

1. The question of whether history is better understood as science or craft is an old one; see, for example, Carr (1967).

2. See my discussion, in relation to contemporary debates over historical sociology, in Calhoun (1998).

3. There was another approach to the contrast of universal and particular, exemplified by the neo-Kantian formalism of Georg Simmel's sociology. Simmel held that sociology was sharply distinct from history, as form was from content. History encompassed empirical phenomena in their specificity and multiplicity, while sociology developed purely formal concepts, devoid of empirical content and hence in principle universally applicable. But the actual production of knowledge, on this view, had to involve both content and form, empirical specifics and general concepts. This was a brief less for sociology as a separate science than for a clarification of the role of concept formation in knowledge.

4. Indeed, a good deal of interesting and important historical anthropology exists, and is too often ignored by historical sociologists.

5. The recent wave of enthusiasm for identifying and abstracting causal 'mechanisms' is an instance of this. See, for example, Bunge (1999), Elster (1989), Hedström and Swedberg (1998) and Tilly (2001). A key question is whether the emphasis on mechanisms is simply a restatement of Robert K. Merton's (1968) advice to stick to 'middle-range theories' between pure description and grand theoretical systems, or is itself part of a more dogmatic metatheory.

6. It is worth emphasizing, in this connection, that the distinctions universal/particular, whole/part, long duration/short duration and macro/micro are not entirely homologous. 'Macro' claims about large-scale phenomena – say, the French Revolution or European global dominance – may be relatively particular; this is the sense in which I speak of the explanatory 'whole' as a 'package' above. Very 'micro' phenomena may persist over long historical periods or obtain widely in the world.

7. An important question was whether, in the words of Eric Hobsbawm (1971), this sort of social history could be integrated into a 'history of society'. The latter would be not merely more theoretical, but also more attentive to the cumulative processes of social change and the capacities of social actors to shape this change – a theme Hobsbawm worried was being lost in the welter of studies of particulars of everyday life. Hobsbawm's discussion recalls not only Marx but also Adam Ferguson, who wrote on 'the history of civil society'. Both, however, also contributed to distinguishing society as a more or less self-contained system

of relationships from the kinds of political phenomena – wars and other acts of kings – that had previously been the staple of history..

8. For example, survey research is at the centre of much quantification in sociology, and yet often denigrated by advocates of experimental design.

9. See Julie Reuben's (1996) excellent account of the way struggle over the place of religion and morality in the university figured in this.

10. There were certainly extremely large-scale attempts to be nearly all-encompassing and systematic from more historically minded sociologists – notably Pitirim Sorokin, who is remarkably absent from most accounts of the field (see Sorokin, 1957 – a revised but condensed version of the four volume original). Parsons displaced Sorokin not only at Harvard but also more generally, challenging his approach to a synthesis of historical patterns with his own, mostly ahistorical, approach. It should be said, though, that Parsons was not 'antihistorical'. It was not that he derided the discipline nor suggested that sociologists should eschew historical inquiry. Neil Smelser, perhaps Parsons's favourite student, wrote a major work of historical sociology as his PhD thesis (see Smelser, 1958). It was, rather, that Parsons's theory specifically reduced the place of historical variation in favour of abstraction to putatively universal processes. Smelser's book echoed this in this presentation of an 'empty-box' theory of social change which he filled in with an account of the Industrial Revolution in Britain. There was, though, always a tension between this abstract dimension of Smelser's analysis and his more directly historical research.

11. Among the most important: Hill (1964), Hobsbawm and Rudé (1969), Rudé (1964 – a book considerably influenced by Neil Smelser's sociology) and Thompson (1963).

12. It is Parsons's late turn to evolutionary theory that underwrites Holmwood and O'Malley's otherwise surprising characterization of him in this volume as a historical sociologist. Much more historically engaged evolutionary analysis came from Gerhard Lenski (1966). In Europe, Niklas Luhman carried forward the development of evolutionary theory, dramatically extending Parsons's interest in cybernetic systems theory. Luhman did historical analysis himself (for example, Luhmann, 1982), and influenced that of many others. It remains a curiosity that his work should be so prominent in much of the world and of little influence in the United States.

13. See my discussion in Calhoun (1997).

14. When Wallerstein debated with Alex Inkeles at the 1975 meeting of the American Sociological Association, the audience's overwhelming support for Wallerstein marked the final collapse of the dominant paradigm that had been under challenge for several years. Neither world-systems theory nor any other new paradigm achieved comparable dominance to that previously enjoyed by modernization and functionalism.

15. An anthology (Tilly, 1997) presents several examples of his wide-ranging work (and a valuable review essay by Arthur Stinchcombe).

16. Starting with Wallerstein (1974).

17. Other epochs, other parts of the world and other ways of distinguishing locations in the world all come to the fore with the recent revitalization of 'civilizational' analysis (see Mandaliou and Arnason in this volume). This comes to prominence in sociology especially through the work of Eisenstadt, building on Jaspers, but it has roots in many European analytic traditions. To what extent this is the return of a (reformed) modernization theory is subject to debate, though as Knöbl says in this volume, modernization theory has hardly passed conclusively away.

18. See Evans et al. (1985). This book was the work of a Social Science Research Council committee. An earlier committee on comparative politics had wrapped up its work with the publication, exactly a decade earlier, of Charles Tilly's *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (1975). Though Tilly was a participant in the new project as well, looking at his work among others, one could wonder whether the state had been left quite so much out of the picture as the new project suggested. Part of the issue was, of course, the extent to which states had been left to political science and marginalized among sociologists. Another part was the shift in perspective reflected by the European (and often Marxian or Weberian) language of state by comparison to 'government' or 'politics' (cf. Poggi).

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