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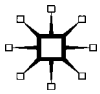

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1 The making of global sociology

In this chapter we shall look first at some of the key starting points for sociologists and some milestones in the discipline's development. The founders of the discipline made ambitious and universal claims, positioning the discipline as a general science of humankind. However, for a long time the primary concern was to construct sociologies that made sense of particular nations and their societies. To an extent this inhibited or delayed the move towards a more transnational outlook. Accordingly, we also examine the more recent theoretical and substantive changes that have prompted some sociologists to develop concepts, theories and approaches that make sense of the more complex and interconnected world we now see around us – a global sociology. Although seeing the discipline through a global perspective is becoming more and more common, not all sociologists would agree that this should henceforth be the sole preoccupation of the profession. Nonetheless, we hope to convince you that further developing a global sociology is, indeed, a vital and necessary goal that gives crucial insights into our evolving world.

KEY STARTING POINTS IN SOCIOLOGY

Sociology developed in nineteenth-century Europe by positioning itself against prior bodies of knowledge, notably philosophy, history and theology. All three were seen as unable to capture the import and drama of industrialization, urbanization and revolution, processes that were rapidly transforming the modern world.

SOCIOLOGY AS SCIENCE

Like economists and political scientists, sociologists aligned themselves to an emerging body of secular scientific thought known as the Enlightenment (see Chapter 3). Auguste Comte (1798–1857), who coined the term 'sociology', argued that the gradual understanding of scientific laws would make sociology the governing science that glued all other forms of science together. For this to happen, observation, experiment, comparison and history would be utilized to enhance the scientific claims of the discipline (Kreis 2000).

Comte's influence eventually gave rise to an approach called 'positivism'. This can briefly

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be defined as the attempt to discover, measure and analyse regularities and patterns in social behaviour in an attempt to minimize the influence of the sociologist's own (value-laden) interpretations. Of course, unlike the natural sciences, sociologists cannot ethically conduct controlled experiments on people in the same way that laboratory scientists can manipulate or dissect living, non-human creatures to conduct and test their research, although the latter are also subject to growing ethical scrutiny and regulation. Nonetheless, using large data sets, for example from censuses and aggregate data on income and expenditure, through complicated statistical calculations (such as multivariate analyses), and by comparisons across space and time, sociologists have been able to offset, although not completely obviate, some of their initial scientific disadvantages.

SOCIOLOGY AS THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SOCIAL LIFE AND SOCIETY

Perhaps the most obvious and crucial characteristic of humankind is that practically everybody lives collectively in what is generally termed 'society'. Hermits throughout history constitute an interesting exception, although even they often re-enter social life after undergoing a period of spiritual renewal (France 1996: Ch. 1). In any case, we need to make the obvious point that if we all dispersed to live by ourselves, humankind would disappear.

Thus, we are social creatures, so share certain attributes and behave in certain common ways that do not rely on our individual beliefs, nationalities, ages, gender, statuses or wealth, important as these and other factors are in describing how we differ. At the same time, we do not have to experience biological modification (understood in the Darwinian sense of evolution) to adjust to large-scale changes, for example in the move from preindustrial to industrial society, or in the phenomenon that interests us, the move towards a more global society. We can record our actions, recall our history, reflect backwards and project forwards. We can stick to old ways or adopt new ideas. This makes the tasks of sociologists different from and more complicated than those of biologists, who can assume that inherited characteristics largely control animal behaviour (Elias 1978: 108). To investigate our more complex subject matter, we therefore have to look at how particular societies have evolved, compare them with others, and consider which social changes and behavioural patterns seem to be universal or, by contrast, which seem to be particular to one society or cluster of societies.

SOCIOLOGY AS IMAGINATIVE UNDERSTANDING

Any consideration of variations in social conduct between societies raises the question of whether scientific sociologists can really understand all the fine grains of human behaviour and social interaction through formal methods and statistical techniques. We must recognize that positivist sociologists have achieved much in accumulating reliable information, developing testable concepts (called 'hypotheses'), refining research techniques to ensure greater reliability, and producing a body of social policy. In the case of the latter, their work has informed governments on everything from the causes of crime and football hooliganism to social mobility (how people move up and down the class and occupational structure) and the value of educational attainment. Nevertheless, other approaches have emerged and flourish alongside positivism, complementing its insights.

Especially important here is the interest in the 'the self' or the 'subjective' in social life, a crucial dimension that is largely missing in statistically led sociology. This takes us into the meaning of a particular act – the meaning, that is, to the social actor, to other social actors or to an outside observer, who may or may not be a sociologist. To address this issue, the great German sociologist Max Weber (in Coser and Rosenberg 1976: 213–14, 219) called for *Verstehen* – loosely translated as 'understanding', but in one sense better thought of as 'insight' or even 'empathy'. *Aktuelles Verstehen* is a form of superficial, immediate understanding, while

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erklärendes Verstehen probes motivations, intentions and context to give a deeper meaning or possible interpretation.

Subjective or interpretative sociology gained its most powerful expression in what is known as 'symbolic interactionism', a label applied to a group of sociologists working in Chicago who followed Weber's emphasis on *Verstehen*. As Rock (1996a: 859) explains, symbolic interactionists argue that knowledge is not a simple mirror of an object. Rather, 'people actively create, shape and select their response to what is around them. Knowledge is then presented as an active process in which people, their understanding and [external] phenomena are bound together.' Sociologists working in this tradition seek to get inside people's skins, as it were, to see how social actors (as well as others around them) understand situations symbolically and literally. This is particularly important when the subjects are not respectable or conventional citizens and are the objects of all manner of prejudices and stereotypes. Sociologists working in this tradition often explore the social worlds of criminals, prostitutes, drug users, HIV sufferers, sexual deviants and gang members.

SOCIOLOGY AND THE SEARCH FOR KNOWLEDGE

Honesty and integrity are at the heart of any genuine search for knowledge. This means that sociologists, like other scientists (*scientia* is the Latin word for 'knowledge', so there is no reason to be diffident about using the expression), cannot start by assuming the answer. We have to let the facts speak for themselves, honestly report the answers our respondents give, faithfully record our observations and not twist arguments to suit our private purposes or political positions. For positivist sociologists this is so self-evident it is barely worth mentioning. Those working on comparative and historical sociology and those in the interpretative tradition also seek to follow scientific procedures and methodologies.

A PAUSE TO REFLECT

Some sociologists suggest that, despite showing honesty and integrity in conducting their research, it is difficult to exclude the values and beliefs they hold. Precisely because we are human and engaged in research on the human condition, we may find ourselves 'taking sides'. Is there bound to be bias in sociological research? Can this be minimized by insisting that sociologists openly declare their values before they report their findings?

The search for sociological knowledge may, however, mean that the inadequacies of public policy become all too evident. Sociologists often uncover policies that are ineffective, destructive, produce unintended consequences, or are ethically indefensible. The subjects of their research often may challenge official characterizations, but may also throw the sociologist off guard. In revealing findings that contradict their own assumptions and beliefs, sociologists are expected to be even more meticulous in their research reports. Taking two examples may make the argument clearer. Let us suppose you are a researcher with strong feminist views and most of the people you question say they love to look glamorous and depend greatly on the attentions of enraptured males to make them feel good about themselves. Suppose again you are a sociologist with Marxist views and your working-class respondents say that they have no sympathy with their fellow workers. In fact, many cannot wait to make enough money to send their children to posh schools so they can escape their class background. You may not like these answers, but you have faithfully to report them. Nor should you at any point prompt or suggest an answer. To do so may mean receiving the answer you want to hear (many people will effect a friendly consensus with interviewers or perhaps just want to get rid of them), but you would thereby be engaged in an ideological, not a socio-

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logical, exercise. Because we are human and dealing with human behaviour (not something like carbon dioxide emissions, atomic matter or molecules), it is even more important that we do not cheat.

SOCIOLOGY AS CRITIQUE AND ITS PUBLIC RESPONSIBILITY

Being careful to ensure that our evidence and research methods reach a standard above reproach does not prevent us from commenting on the great moral issues of our time, such as war, poverty, financial crises or inequality. In addressing these issues, sociologists are divided. Some centre their work on professional recognition and remain within academia, while others work with policy-makers. Others again feel the need to engage with the public and see that as a legitimate extension of their roles as sociologists. Burawoy (2005) avers that although there are some overlaps between these categories and some of us move between them, we now, in effect, practise four kinds of sociology – professional, critical, policy and public (Table 1.1).

TABLE 1.1 Burawoy's four types of sociology

Type of sociology	Common cognitive practices	Target audience
Professional sociology	Advanced theoretical and empirical work, using explicit scientific norms	Peers, those who read professional journals
Critical sociology	Foundational and normative, driven by moral vision	Critical intellectuals, those who engage in internal debates about sociology
Policy sociology	Empirical, concrete, applied and pragmatic	Policy-makers in government, business and the media
Public sociology	More accessible/relevant theoretical and empirical work, lectures and media appearances	Designated publics including students, the local community and religious groups

Source: Adapted from Burawoy (2005).

SOME MILESTONES IN THE HISTORY OF SOCIOLOGY

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

A series of social upheavals that began in 1789 with peasant revolt, monarchical collapse and moderate middle-class leadership. From 1793 to 1795, the urban poor of Paris and other cities, led by radicals such as Robespierre, pushed the revolution in a more violent and nationalist direction. An increasing involvement in European wars also led to the successful mass mobilization of citizen armies and the centralization of power.

As we have mentioned, the discipline of sociology is much older than many of its students believe. It has its roots in the period after the French Revolution when political conflict, rapid urbanization and social turmoil convulsed European societies.

Intellectuals sought to explain both the bewildering chaos and the new possibilities around them. Karl Marx, for example, saw the French Revolution and the European revolutions of 1830 and 1848 as harbingers of a new revolutionary order that a class-conscious and politically motivated working class (he called workers the 'proletariat' after the dispossessed class of ancient Rome) would usher in. Box 1.1 is a summary of some of the most important developments in sociological thought from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day. It indicates how involvement in the discipline spread beyond the first industrial societies.

BOX 1.1 Timeline in sociology

1842 The publication of *Positive Philosophy* (1853) by **Auguste Comte** (1798–1857). Comte wanted to find regularities, even laws, in social life that resembled Newtonian physics. He allied sociology to the scientific models of the Enlightenment. His ideas were linked to those of scholars in the other two major social sciences – economics and political science. They dismissed philosophy as too speculative, theology as the rationalization of superstition, and history as too subjective and superficial. These

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writers saw themselves as champions of a new way of understanding reality. They wanted to establish general laws of human behaviour, to formulate hypotheses that could be tested, and to develop strict scientific methods (Wallerstein 1996: 31).

1848 The publication of *The Communist Manifesto* by **Karl Marx** and **Friedrich Engels** ([1848]1967), who argued in this influential pamphlet that: 'The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.' They saw an increasing impoverishment of the workers, whom, they thought, would become class-conscious and throw off the yoke of capitalism. Karl Marx (1818–83), who worked in Germany, France and Britain, saw the waves of rebellion in 1830 and 1848 as ushering in a new era of social revolution. He was consequently interested in class conflict and the dynamics of large-scale social change. He sought to be international in his outlook. Marx wrote on India and the USA and, as his socialist ideas caught hold, he found himself in dialogue with revolutionaries from Russia to Cuba. **Eleanor Marx**, his daughter, became a pioneer feminist thinker and agitator.

1874 The publication of **Herbert Spencer**'s (1820–1903) *Principles of Sociology* (1902). He proposed an organic theory of society (likening it to a living organism) and was preoccupied with slow, long-term evolutionary change. His work paralleled Charles Darwin's writings on the animal and plant worlds. Incidentally, it was he, not Darwin, who coined the expression 'the survival of the fittest', a notion that resonated well with the unregulated capitalism of the period.

1892 The foundation of the first department of sociology in the USA. Three years later, the *American Journal of Sociology*, still the leading journal in the field, was established. The discipline was often concerned with the adaptation of new immigrants to their new settings, urban settlement patterns (the 'Chicago School' produced celebrated studies in this field), industrial relations and community studies.

1898 In France, the renowned French sociologist **Emile Durkheim** (1858–1917) founded *L'Année sociologique*. This journal contained material on law, customs, religion and social statistics. Durkheim concentrated on the elements that bind societies together, an issue close to the heart of a society that had experienced the disintegrating effects of revolution and an invasion (in 1871) by Prussia. Durkheim understood that his discussion of how social order and consensus were to be reached necessarily involved comparison with other groups. He tried to understand the religious practices of the Australian Aborigines and systematically collected statistics from a number of European countries to undertake his famous study of suicide.

1905 The publication in German of **Max Weber**'s (1864–1920) most famous book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1977). In addition to work on his native Germany, Weber wrote on Spain, Italy and ancient Rome and was fascinated by the different ways in which religious belief facilitated or inhibited the development of capitalism. He was the first sociologist of comparative religion, having examined Hinduism, Confucianism, Buddhism and Judaism, in addition to his well-known studies of Protestantism. He also sketched out an ambitious study of Islam. In his engagement with Marxism, he sought to develop a holistic sociology that added to the issue of class identities, questions of status, political power and values, which together would define the opportunity structure available to people.

1907 Britain's first chair in sociology was endowed by Martin White, a Scottish businessman. It was held jointly at the London School of Economics by **Edvard Westermarck** (1862–1939) and **Leonard Trelawny Hobhouse** (1864–1929). They made pioneering contributions to methodology, the study of social justice and family life.

1959 **Mysore Narasimhachar Srinivas** (1916–99) was invited to Delhi University to establish and head the Department of Sociology at the Delhi School of Economics, founded in emulation of the London School of Economics (see Figure 1.1). In his *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India* (1952), Srinivas showed that the caste system was much more porous than Western scholars had assumed. Lower castes facilitated social mobility by adopting the language and social habits of higher castes – a process Srinivas described as 'Sanskritization'. Srinivas made an important start in establishing and promoting the discipline in the world's second most populated country.

1979 The foundation of the Chinese Sociological Association in the largest country in the world after years when the Communist Party of China was suspicious of the discipline. Professor **Fei Xiaotong** (1910–2005) was elected as its first and second chairperson. According to its website (http://219.141.235.75/

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english/Associations/CSA/t20050105_4298.htm), the association aims to 'undertake sociological research in light of China's practices with a view to develop the academic cause of sociology and serve the socialism-building of a prosperous, democratic and modernized China'.

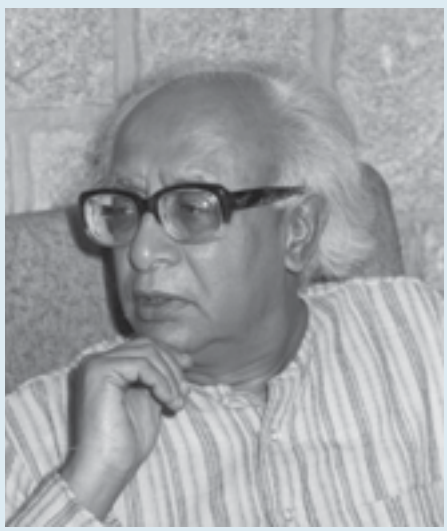
1994 Sociologist **Fernando Henrique Cardoso** (1931–) was elected in a landslide victory to the presidency of Brazil (see Figure 1.2). (Cardoso was previously the president of the International Sociological Association.) Although re-elected to a historical second term, he lost to Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (the left-wing candidate) in 2004.

1999 **Anthony Giddens** (1938–), well-known British sociologist, then director of the London School of Economics, took 'The Runaway World' (what is commonly called globalization) as the theme of his Reith lectures, the BBC's prestigious annual series of lectures.

2001 The number of current serving UK university vice-chancellors (equivalent to presidents of US universities) included seven established sociologists.

2006 The International Sociological Association held its periodic conference on the continent of Africa for the first time ever. The theme of the ISA World Congress of Sociology was 'The Quality of Social Existence in a Globalising World'.

2011 The death of the Harvard sociologist Daniel Bell (1919–2011), whose book *The End of Ideology* (1960) was chosen by the *Times Literary Supplement* in 1995 as one of the 100 most influential books since the Second World War. He argued that meta-ideologies, such as communism, liberalism or socialism, were no longer credible and that social change was better effected by small technical fixes and social policy adjustments.



COURTESY OF TULASI SRINIVAS, PHD

FIGURE 1.1 Mysore Narasimhachar Srinivas (1916–99)
One of India's most distinguished sociologists, his work on how lower castes emulated higher castes and on village life in India has helped to explain this complex society to non-Indians and Indians alike.

COURTESY OF MAGDALENA GUTIERREZ/ACERVO PR.FHC

FIGURE 1.2 Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1931–)
Former president of Brazil and earlier of the International Sociological Association. He undertook major research on Brazil's poorer regions and on dependency theory. He speaks English, French, Portuguese and Spanish fluently.

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THE GLOBAL TURN IN SOCIOLOGICAL THINKING

Two main processes mark sociology's move towards developing a global perspective. First, many scholars associated with the sociology of advanced Western countries have looked outwards towards societies very different from their own. Simultaneously, scholars from an ever widening range of societies have been adding their insights to the discipline. An emerging concern has been that a changing world of growing interconnectivities requires a different, much broader kind of sociological analysis (explored in detail in Chapter 2). Here we examine how these broadening processes gradually took shape through the work of various sociologists. Second, the reality of a more dangerous world in which crises, dilemmas and puzzling opportunities – some new – press in on us in multiple ways also drives the need for a global sociology. Thus, like other disciplines, sociology must expand its geographical and intellectual horizons – recognizing that profound changes at the global level are challenging the nature of local communities and national societies. We outline some of these transformations later in the chapter.

TRYING TO BREAK AWAY FROM NATIONAL ORIENTATIONS

An important limitation of sociology is that, despite the universalizing ambitions of a number of its founding figures, it has taken a long while to expand beyond its heartland in Western industrial societies. This was partly because the study of non-Western societies was, at first, left to anthropologists who, in describing the unusual and exotic, failed to develop general laws applicable to all humanity. Their preoccupations more or less propelled them to find difference rather than commonality.

Looking back at the period of colonialism, one can see that anthropologists were often constrained by their professional preoccupations and close links to colonial governments (Asad 1974; Lewis 1973). However, social and cultural anthropologists also defended the integrity of the people among whom they worked against what they considered the corrupting influences of colonial administrators, traders and missionaries. Canadian fur traders bribing Hurons with whisky or the spreading of fatal venereal disease to the Polynesians were hardly edifying moments in the history of encounters between European and non-European people. It is too late, however, to wrap people in cellophane and freeze them in a time warp. Our increasing interconnectivities make it impossible to preserve tribal iceboxes or human zoos. In the wake of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we live in an interdependent, globalizing world. We cannot explain differences between peoples simply by giving each of them a different voice. We need to find ways of comprehending and comparing societies and peoples that apply from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe, from the Aborigine to the Zulu. In short, a sociology that specifically sets out to encompass a global dimension has become both urgent and necessary.

Another factor explaining sociologists' relatively late interest in understanding societies outside Europe, North America and Australasia was the strong national loyalties many sociologists felt, especially in the first half of the twentieth century. Interestingly, as we have seen, some of the trailblazers of sociology – particularly Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, Karl Marx, Max Weber and Emile Durkheim – were interested in countries outside their own. But, despite this promising beginning, from about the beginning of the First World War (1914) to the end of the Second World War (1945), comparative and holistic sociology went into decline in Europe and North America. This probably had something to do with the growth of intense nationalist feelings and the attempt to fabricate exclusive, powerful, modern nation-states.

As the First World War approached and inter-European rivalry raged remorselessly, imperialist and nationalist sentiments were easily inflamed. The big events and large-scale forces at play in the early decades of the twentieth century can often be tellingly illustrated by small examples, such as the stoning of humble dachshunds, the German 'sausage dog', in London's streets despite the famed British love of animals. In this frantic atmosphere, those

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XENOPHOBIA
The hatred and fear of foreigners.

espousing international causes were derided. Even the international labour movement found itself at the mercy of xenophobic passions. Instead of accepting the Marxist message that 'workers have no country', young men lined up to fight for their emperors, tsars, kings and kaisers and many perished for their deference.

Sociologists were inevitably caught up or caught out by this nationalist fervour. In Russia, for example, sociologists (like many other academics) became little more than servants of the state. Others, the dissenters or members of victimized minority groups, left their countries of birth. Prominent Italian, Austrian and German scholars had to flee from fascism and Nazism to other European countries or to the USA. After the Second World War, these scholars made major contributions to the intellectual life of their adopted countries.

A PAUSE TO REFLECT

The social construction of who is 'in' and 'out' (or who is included or excluded) is a primary concern for sociologists. Is there a biological or instinctual basis for such behaviour? Why are some groups particularly targeted and excluded?

THE GREAT DEPRESSION (1929–39)
The most severe capitalist downturn ever known, although some have compared the global economic crisis beginning in 2007/8 with it. By late 1932, in the USA alone, around 15 million workers were unemployed. The crisis began in October 1929 when company share values on New York's Wall Street stock exchange crashed. A number of stockbrokers and investors jumped to their deaths from their skyscraper offices. A series of escalating bank and currency collapses soon turned the crisis into a global one. German Nazism and Japanese fascism were partly caused by the world economic collapse.

In the period up to 1945, sociologists in the USA and the UK remained intelligent observers and critics of their own societies, but they rarely lifted their heads above the concerns immediately around them. In front of their eyes were the mass unemployment caused by the Great Depression, the mobilization of men for the front, and the deployment of women on the 'home front'. Discussions of social problems and social realities were focused almost entirely on local community, urban or national contexts.

POST-1945: WIDENING WINDOWS ON A MORE COMPLEX WORLD

The end of the Second World War heralded a new balance of international forces. Japan was one of the defeated countries. Yet, as a late industrializing and non-Western country it had proved a formidable enemy. It had brought the USA into the war. The Second World War also shifted the locus of political and economic power from Europe to the USA. For its part, the Soviet Union made enormous strides in technological development, including sending the first cosmonaut to space in 1961, but such achievements concealed underlying weaknesses in the economy. The French, British, Dutch and Portuguese empires rapidly began to unravel under the impact of nationalist pressures. This shifting balance of power prompted four sets of concerns for sociologists and other social scientists:

1. Sociologists asked what explained Japan's sudden emergence as a leading industrial power. Were there certain elements in Japanese culture that generated appropriate forms of work and military discipline? Was there some connection between the revival of Shintoism and Japan's interest in European science, akin perhaps to the Enlightenment or even to Max Weber's idea that particular kinds of religion were linked to the development of capitalism? Was the restoration of the emperor the crucial historical event (1867/68), or the end of feudalism in 1869? The basic dynamic of the Japanese spurt to industrial, political and military prominence was inexplicable to all but a few non-Japanese social scientists, the sociologist Ronald Dore (Box 1.2) being one honourable exception.

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2. Was the USA able to stabilize the world through a mutual threat of annihilation with the Soviet Union? The very acronym MAD (mutually assured destruction) suggested a sort of crazy logic of threat and counterthreat depicted brilliantly in the classic 1964 film *Dr Strangelove Or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*. The 'iron curtain' separated East from West, but there were intense and often dangerous rivalries in the space race and even in sporting contests. Passionate debates arose over the virtues and drawbacks of planning or the market, an assured basic standard of living or individual freedom. These debates were played out in the countries in what was then called 'the Third World', whose allegiance the rival superpowers eagerly sought.
3. The old empires were clearly on the way out. Reluctantly, the British left India, which became independent in 1947. This was the prelude to the decolonization of the rest of Asia, Africa, the Middle East and the Caribbean. The Dutch evacuated Indonesia in 1949 and later the French and Portuguese were also forced to abandon their colonial possessions in Asia and Africa, often retreating in the face of armed rebellion. Amid much conflict, the French yielded to the force of Algerian nationalism in 1962, while former Portuguese Mozambique became independent in 1975.
4. There were new actors on the world stage. People of all colours and backgrounds, not just white people, were 'making history'. It had been arrogant and even absurd for dominant ethnic groups to believe that they were the only ones who counted. All convictions of racial and cultural superiority were shaken to the roots after 1945.

Of course, some people continued to live in the past. Nonetheless, far-sighted thinkers and politicians realized that the post-1945 period required a change in public consciousness. One example of the new openness was the foundation in Paris of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1946. Three decades later, Article 1 of UNESCO's General Conference of 1978 reinforced the universalizing spirit, proclaiming that: 'All human beings belong to a single species and are descended from a common stock. They are born equal in dignity and rights and all form part of humanity' (Banton 1994: 336–7).

Not only was there a shift in mood towards universalism but there was also a legion of societies 'out there' whose conditions of life were largely unknown to Western scholars. Led by the USA, but soon followed by Japan and the European countries, 'area studies' programmes at universities were announced or augmented. Scholars were encouraged to find out anything they could about the former colonies as well as about the communist countries behind 'the iron curtain'. Moreover, significant bodies of writers and academics, sociologists included, from outside Europe and North America began to make their mark.

Latin America was decolonized in the nineteenth century so it was not surprising that Chilean, Brazilian and Mexican sociologists had time to develop sophisticated theories to explain why their societies remained economically and culturally dependent on 'the centre' (the rich, industrialized North), despite decades of political autonomy. One important Latin American sociologist addressing this issue was Fernando Henrique Cardoso (see Cardoso and Faletto 1969), later the president of Brazil (Figure 1.2). Other influential contributions to the understanding of the developing world came from political economist Samir Amin (1974) from Egypt, the Martinique-born psychiatrist and political activist Franz Fanon (1967), or sociologists such as Hamza Alavi (1972) from Pakistan and Jamaican-born Orlando Patterson (1982), who wrote key works on the peasantry and on the evolution of slavery and freedom.

Gradually, sociologists working in Europe and North America began to appreciate that they needed to widen their comparative perspectives. In so doing, they found themselves returning to some of the concerns of the pioneer sociologists, finding fresh possibilities of understanding other societies and helping to illuminate their own cultures and contexts. Their theories were many and diverse but Box 2.1 outlines a few of these new ideas.

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BOX 1.2 Post-1945 Western sociologists and the non-Western world

- **Barrington Moore** (1967, 1972) thought that a comparative historical sociology was needed to understand why some societies prospered while others languished, and why some turned into democracies and others dictatorships. In his ambitious comparative study of Britain, America, Japan, India and China, he considered how the cultural foundations, historical trajectories and socioeconomic origins – through different kinds of peasantry and aristocratic systems of land ownership and farming – had interacted in constraining and/or shaping the direction, speed and character of their transitions to industrial societies.
- Other US sociologists like **Talcott Parsons** (1971) tended to talk in terms of a wider notion of 'modernization', which involved the 'non-Western' world 'catching up' with the achievements of the 'Western' world and Japan.
- German scholar **André Gunder Frank** (1967, 1969), who worked in Chile for a number of years, was influenced by the theories of 'dependency' and 'underdevelopment' current in Latin American circles. He popularized their work by writing in English and extended it in new directions.
- Although the term 'Third World' originated with a French journalist, English sociologist **Peter Worsley** (1967) also drew from writings by Latin Americans, Asians and Africans to define the distinctive characteristics of the Third World, one that was relatively poor, neither capitalist nor communist, neither Western nor non-Western.
- **Ronald Dore** learned his Japanese during the Second World War and he is one of the few Western sociologists who have been acclaimed in Japan for his understanding of Japanese society. His major books were *City Life in Japan* (1958), *Land Reform in Japan* (1959) and *Education in Tokugawa Japan* (1965), when he was largely concerned with describing and analysing the remarkable process of Japanese industrialization and modernization. He has worked on Japan for about 60 years and was elected to the Japan Academy in 1986 as an honorary foreign member.
- **Ulrich Beck** updated his *The Risk Society* (1992) with *World Risk Society* (1999a), now arguing that we are increasingly intermeshed with other societies by virtue of 'manufactured risks' that cross boundaries. Unlike the earthquakes and floods of old, our main risks now arise from human action and operate on a global level – including nuclear energy, carbon consumption, genetic engineering and deforestation.

GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT

A common measurement economists use to assess a country's wealth. In recent years, this has been challenged as a poor instrument because it conceals vast discrepancies of wealth inside a country and fails to measure welfare or contentment. The government of Bhutan has pioneered an alternative key to measure these rather important aspects of life, which it calls the 'index of gross national happiness'.

What emerged from the disparate contributions of Western sociologists was the realization that the paths of development or underdevelopment of individual countries could not easily be predicted. Within what was formerly called the 'Third World', some countries 'took off' and succeeded in economic terms, while others bumped along at the bottom. We can contrast, for example, the case of Ghana (by no means the poorest country in West Africa) with South Korea. Crow (1997: 130) cites data showing that whereas the two countries shared a similar gross national product (GNP) per capita in the 1960s (about US$230), three decades later South Korea was 10–12 times more prosperous.

Again, there were strong social and cultural contrasts between countries. Some, like Singapore and Japan, appeared seamlessly to develop a creative synthesis between local and imported Western cultures. Others, including some societies in the Middle East, found that the religious convictions of their populations jarred with the largely secular, consumerist culture of the West. Many societies historically characterized by large rural populations and agrarian pursuits now suddenly had bloated urban concentrations with massive levels of unemployment.

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KEY CONCEPT

The term **THIRD WORLD** was used mainly during the Cold War period to distinguish the nonaligned poor countries from the First World (the rich capitalist democracies of the West) and from the Second World (the communist-led countries of the Soviet bloc). Increased differentiation between the rich and poor countries of Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East, together with the political collapse of nearly all the communist countries, has meant that the term is of less and less value. Although countries are still highly unequal in their wealth and power, they do not fit neatly into three groups.

If we take into account the diversity of the societies previously classified under the rubric **THIRD WORLD**, it becomes apparent that classifying countries into different subsections of the globe is a perilous and inexact business. Moreover, as we argue later in Chapters 12 and 14, there is a high level of interpenetration between countries, through travel, migration, financial flows and cultural borrowings, to name a few factors. It is increasingly difficult to isolate a country and to declare that all people living there comprise a single society. In effect, we cannot always be sure of the difference between the 'internal' and the 'external'.

Immanuel Wallerstein made perhaps the most daring and important response to this problem (see Global Thinkers 1). In the opening book of a series of works, he advanced the notion of 'the modern world system'. Having considered the difficulties of arranging the world into neat hierarchies and isolating the nation-state as the primary unit of sociological analysis, Wallerstein (1974: 51) decided he would

> abandon the idea altogether of taking either the sovereign state or that vaguer concept, the national society, as the unit of analysis. I decided that neither one was a social system and that one could only speak of social change in social systems. The only social system in this scheme was the world system.

This declaration symbolizes what an increasing number of sociologists have come to realize. We have to try to think globally, recognizing that while social changes may vary considerably in each setting, there are overarching processes and transformations that operate at a global level and impact to one degree or another on everybody.

GLOBAL THINKERS 1 IMMANUEL M. WALLERSTEIN (1930–)

Immanuel Wallerstein pioneered 'world system theory', one of the most important accounts of large-scale social change since the 1970s. At the beginning of *The Modern World-System* (1974: 15), Wallerstein boldly announced that

> in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, there came into existence what we may call a European trade economy … it was different, and new. It was a kind of social system the world has not really known before and which is the distinctive feature of the modern world-system.

What was hidden behind Wallerstein's apparently simple declaration was a challenge to conventional understandings of the world:

- For Wallerstein, political structures (like empires and states) were given undue importance. Instead, he laid emphasis on interpenetrating trade networks that crossed state boundaries. Transnational competition for labour, market share and raw materials drove the world system forward and linked it together. This emphasis on trade led many scholars to accuse Wallerstein of being 'an economic determinist', that is, someone who overemphasizes the causal role of economic factors. Despite writing extensively on culture, social movements and politics, he has never entirely shaken off this charge.
- In line with his demotion of formal political ideologies, he rejected the division of the world into 'First' (rich capitalist), 'Second' (communist state-planned) and 'Third' (poor Southern) worlds. Instead, he proposed an alternative trichotomy – core, semi-peripheral and peripheral. There is a resemblance to the theory of three worlds, but Wallerstein injected an important causal relationship. The core societies draw profit from the peripheral societies, while the peripheral societies are underdeveloped because they are locked in a subordinate relationship to the core. However, ascending peripheral and declining core societies can move to the semi-periphery. The great virtue of this model was to insist that all societies were locked into one

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world system and that there could be movement within the system. (Clearly, the rise of China and India is better explained by world system theory than by three worlds theory.)

Wallerstein's commanding synthesis was nevertheless attacked. For example, Abu-Lughod (1989) suggested that Wallerstein had totally missed prior non-European world systems. Others argued that world systems alone could not explain the collapse of state communism in 1989. Again, a number of commentators have maintained that Wallerstein does not allow a sufficient place for politics and cultural analysis in his arguments, a charge he denied (Wallerstein 1989, 1991). His theory remains an influential and powerful current in global sociology.

Sources: Abu-Lughod (1989); Hall (1996); Wallerstein (1974, 1989, 1991).

THEORIES OF UNEVEN DEVELOPMENT

Through the construction of his influential world system theory, Wallerstein (1974, 1979) argued that capitalism and not nation-states created the world order. This is because, in its drive to spill outwards in search of profits, capital has always disregarded national borders. A set of stable structured relationships between three types of country – the dominant core, the semi-periphery and the dependent periphery – eventually resulted. The semi-periphery, characteristically neither as technically advanced nor as rich as the core countries, nor as lacking in autonomy and condemned to dependence as the periphery, serves as a buffer between the other two, in that it divides the potential opposition to the continuing domination of core capital.

Because the designation of a particular country to a position in this hierarchy is not fixed, some movement between them is possible – as in the case of Japan's remarkable rise from the periphery before the 1870s to second position in the core bloc by the 1970s. Movement from the periphery to the core is, however, normally difficult because, having once assured their hold over other countries, the dominant players use their control to perpetuate various unequal exchanges. Put simply, the core countries, which are in a position to manipulate their control over technology and markets, underpay other countries and producers for their goods and services and overcharge them for their purchases. We discuss specific examples of this in Chapters 4 and 5, for example the imposition of international trade regimes that allow rich countries to subsidize their own agriculture but constrain poor countries from protecting their weak manufacturing sectors. Or, in another example, compelling poor countries to open their economies and markets to incoming Western investment flows.

Gradually, and working on a global scale, capitalism has created an increasingly integrated world economy dominated by the logic of profit and the market. Conversely, it has generated excluded, marginal, dispossessed and poor people. This outcome was consequent on an often complex and ever shifting world division of labour based on two closely related processes:

1. Progressively tying more and more countries into the global market through their status as the buyers and sellers of various commodities, for example minerals, tropical raw produce, manufactured goods or advanced technology.
2. The tendency of capital to maximize whatever kinds of economic advantage a given country can provide through its prevailing organization of labour and class relations. For example, capitalism is able to adapt to or perpetuate numerous forms of social exploitation whether of slaves, serfs, sharecroppers, tenant farmers, landless labourers or semi-free migrants (see Cohen 1987).

Accordingly, the logic of accumulation dominates the world capitalist system. At all times, it works to safeguard and expand the capitalist nature of the overall system and, in particular, to protect the interests of its leading players. At the economic level, it forms one unified system. At the political level it is pluralistic, while at a social level it generates extremes of poverty and prosperity, along with a wide range of intermediate positions.

Many criticisms have been levelled at world system theory, but one of the most persistent

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focuses on Wallerstein's relative lack of interest in the political dimensions of power. Bergesen (1990: 70–5), for example, argues that the role of political power was crucial in explaining the origins and spread of capitalism. In Chapter 3, we explore this idea in the European context, suggesting that the possibility and actuality of interstate conflicts inclined rulers to introduce top-down reforms that intentionally or unwittingly fostered technological and commercial development. Bergesen argues that conquest and the introduction of state structures were what enabled colonial countries to impose various forms of forced labour and unequal trading terms on their dependencies, and not their ability to slot already established local market relations into a world division of labour.

KEY CONCEPT

The **NEW INTERNATIONAL DIVISION OF LABOUR** divides production into different skills and tasks spread across regions and countries rather than within a single company. From the 1970s onwards, as key production functions shifted away from the old industrial zones, hitherto agricultural countries, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region, rapidly joined the ranks of the new international division of labour.

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL DIVISION OF LABOUR

Partly in response to the perceived deficiencies of world system theory, a team of German researchers (Fröbel et al. 1980) propounded the idea that a **NEW INTERNATIONAL DIVISION OF LABOUR** (NIDL) had emerged. They were reacting particularly to the rapid industrialization of East Asian and other newly industrializing countries (NICs) and to the partial deindustrialization of the old heartlands of capitalist production. As we observe in Chapters 4 and 7, from the 1960s and 70s there was a growing tendency for some transnational corporations (TNCs) to locate the more labour-intensive parts of their overall operations in developing countries, so creating 'world market factories'.

Advocates of the NIDL idea argued that locating some manufacturing processes in cheap labour havens did little to improve the living standards and development prospects in the poor countries in question. By contrast, the export of capital increased the growing ranks of unemployed people in the West. The only winners, they argue, are the TNCs. While these theorists suggest that the NIDL has not fundamentally altered the core countries' ability to dominate the world capitalist system, they are alert to the existence of 'global losers' in all countries. Like world system theorists, they are sceptical about the periphery being able to overcome its relative economic backwardness despite its recent, partial shift from dependence on raw material exports to the export of cheap manufactured goods.

One can also direct some of the criticisms levelled against world system theory at the NIDL (Cohen 1987: Ch. 7). Certainly, it seems to undervalue the capacity of some states in developing countries to use political power to create conditions for a successful transition to at least semi-peripheral status, and sometimes core status, in the world order. The leaders of some successful NICs, such as Singapore and Malaysia, are acutely aware of the danger of being trapped in a cheap labour, low-tech, industrial future. To counter this, Malaysia, for example, founded 11 universities and developed a ten-mile deep 'Cybercity'. For its part, Singapore has turned itself into a major educational hub. By 2002 it had recruited 50,000 international students to its highly ranked universities, a number that is projected to grow to 150,000 by 2015. The theory also seriously undervalued the likelihood of large countries such as India and China using exported manufactures as a means of supercharging their own economies, lifting considerable numbers of their own people out of poverty and even racking up numerous trade credits with the USA. It is doubtful that the theorists of the NIDL would have predicted that the changes they noticed would have resulted in the USA running a large trade deficit with China from 2005 onwards.

AN AGE OF UNCERTAINTIES BUT ALSO OPPORTUNITIES

The development of some sectors and countries and the continuing underdevelopment of other activities and areas trigger competition for labour, resources, technology and capital. This phenomenon is sometimes described as 'uneven development' and can be seen as the

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KEY CONCEPT

POSTMODERNISM According to postmodernists, in contrast to the previous era of modernity, family, class, community and national loyalties are becoming increasingly less important in determining our lives, as are social expectations linked to things such as gender or race. Instead, these structures, along with the moral and political certainties about the nature of truth and destiny with which they are associated, have largely disintegrated. Simultaneously, our increasing exposure to huge amounts of information through the mass media and information technology and their association with a battery of swirling signs and images have caused a communications overload. We no longer know what 'realities' signs represent, so everything becomes a simulation. Like truth and morality, reality and authenticity become less believable. We are left free to forge our own identities out of an increasingly diverse cultural repertoire, but this may cause us some anxiety.

underlying cause of the financial crisis, which began in 2007. In this sense, the immediate economic crisis revealed a more deep-rooted malaise, as the instabilities and uncertainties arising from uneven development have led to what looks likely to become an unprecedented and prolonged condition of chronic uncertainty and insecurity permeating virtually all geographical regions and dimensions of human life. The practices, relationships, rules and values we once took for granted no longer seem reliable or valid. Similarly, boundaries between inside and outside, between 'us' and 'them', truth and lies, or reality and fantasy break down to be replaced with complexities we cannot easily comprehend. Indeed, since the late 1980s, the social sciences, and not just sociology, have been grappling with the theme of uncertainty and the disintegration of social as well as philosophical boundaries through the discourse of **POSTMODERNISM**, a concept that is now going out of fashion but that held sway for 30 years.

Globalization has intensified the impact of postmodernism by increasing the fragments of meaning and cultural references that flow through our lives. Hall (1992: 302) aptly referred to this marriage of the postmodern and global when he talked about the maelstrom of the 'global post-modern'. We expand this theme in Chapter 2. Globalization has not only broken down every kind of boundary in the economic sphere, but for many people it has also reduced access to stable employment and jeopardized any prospect of a lifetime career – once the basis on which people planned and built their future lives (certainly in the industrialized West). In a global economy characterized by relentless competition for employment, most people encounter the casualization of work, the likely prospect of stagnant or falling real incomes, and jobs that lack meaning or provide little or no chances of comradeship.

UNCERTAINTY AS A SPACE TO SHAPE THE FUTURE

On a more positive note, pervasive insecurity and boundless complexity, coupled with a stream of constant, interconnected dangers, also create possibilities – a potential for ordinary people to exercise a little or even a great deal of influence in shaping the future lives of humanity (Hardt and Negri 2000). There are several reasons why this seems likely and we discuss some of them (especially the rise of a global consciousness and its implications) in Chapter 2. However, here we point to several additional elements at work that are perhaps entirely new and may take us in the same direction:

1. The uncertainties already outlined suggest that it is more difficult than ever before to predict future events. Expressed in a metaphorical sense, we are experiencing a situation in which – as two pioneer sociologists of global change, Robertson (1992) and Albrow (1996) suggested – all the balls of human existence are currently in the air and we cannot be certain where, when and how they might fall. This, in turn, leads to a condition of openness, a new prospect in human affairs in which everyone might demand their say.
2. The breadth of problems accompanying globalization creates an urgent need for people and governments to shape the direction of global forces in ways that are safe for everyone. Since governments acting alone cannot realistically resolve most of these problems and risks, there are opportunities for more cooperation and mutual understanding. Because the alternative may be disastrous for all, we must dare to hope for constructive action in the pursuit of human betterment.
3. Unlike earlier times, the rich and powerful will find it more difficult to escape the impact of the crises associated with uncontrolled globalization. Although economic power can

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buy considerable immunity, the elites will still partly share with the poor and powerless some common problems, such as:

- collapsing market values and uncertain property prices linked to financial crises
- destabilizing social unrest created by growing inequalities when hundreds of millions, perhaps billions, of people cannot afford the rising price of food, water, urban space and healthcare
- demands for political representation and freedom, which, at least for some periods, cause deleterious and disturbing breakdowns in law and order
- mutating viruses rippling across the world
- the risk of skin cancer from ozone depletion
- the effects of increased hurricanes and floods
- food shortages, crime waves and spreading violence aggravated by genocidal wars or environmental devastation.

A PAUSE TO REFLECT

In February 2011, a devastating tsunami and earthquake hit Japan, damaging a number of nuclear reactors at the Fukushima plant. In trying to cool down the impaired nuclear reactors, firefighters from the region allowed themselves to be radiated. Why are some people prepared to take serious risks for their friends, family, community or nation?

To cope with the gravity and complexity of global problems, politicians and bureaucrats will need to co-opt and win the support of a wider public. They must provide a space in which an active citizenry can shape the future, in which democratic movements can work together across national and cultural boundaries. Attempts by old autocracies to resist this change are likely to fail, as indicated by the uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa in 2011.

The impact of the recent global recession appeared for a while to generate openness to change. Its severity threw into stark relief the dangers and self-defeating consequences of allowing unregulated financial institutions and markets to dominate economic policy. Under pressure from their disgruntled, insecure citizens and failing businesses, some governments have devised policies to regulate destructive banking practices and promote market reforms. The continuing power of the banks to resist reform suggests that these changes have not gone far enough.

REVIEW

That sociology drew on Enlightenment thought was a crucial factor in endowing the discipline with its strong positivist tradition. Sociology also evolved as a diverse and plural discipline with several important streams. One of these consists of interpretive sociology, which explores how subjective elements shape people's actions and meanings. Because we are dealing with human nature and social conduct, we need to identify commonalities and differences. Sociology therefore requires a historical and comparative perspective. It also needs and has developed methodologies that are designed to gather knowledge, including highly intimate data, but in ways that minimize the influence of the researcher's ideological inclinations. Nevertheless, stringent attempts to expose our work both to self-criticism and to the critiques of others do not preclude suggesting alternative policies or arguing for a different political, social, economic and moral order.

In this book, we are particularly concerned to show how the guiding principles of the discipline can be used to develop a global sociology. Sociology must also adapt to the chang-

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ing world even as it seeks to explain it. Global changes, problems and even current and likely future crises demand that we extend our state-centric theories, define new research agendas and develop an agreed comparative method. In short, the interdependence of the local, national and international demands a global outlook. In this book we try to mark this shift in the moorings of the discipline, although of course sociology will be transformed by the work of hundreds of theorists and thousands of those engaged in more factually based studies. Following in the footsteps of innovative sociologists before us, we try to show how some aspects of global social change impact on and are influenced by changes at local, national or regional levels.

Visit the companion website at www.palgrave.com/sociology/cohen3e for extra materials to check and expand your learning, including interactive self-test questions, mind maps making links between key themes, annotated web links to sociological research, data and key sociological thinkers, a searchable glossary and much more.

FURTHER READING

If you would like to explore the theory and concepts that inform the discipline (on which we have little space to expand), a reliable account is J. Scott's *Social Theory: Central Issues in Sociology* (2004), in which there are 'focus boxes' to aid comprehension.

G. Crow's *Comparative Sociology and Social Theory* (1997) gives a good account of how sociologists of development came to understand societies other than their own. Chapters 6 and 7 are particularly helpful.

L. Sklair's *Globalization: Capitalism and its Alternatives* (2002) is a substantial revision of an earlier pioneering introductory text. Although it particularly stresses the economic aspects of globalization, it provides a wide-ranging and thoughtful analysis of global life.

Another good text, with a global orientation, is J. J. Macionis and K. Plummer's *Sociology: A Global Introduction* (2008).

QUESTIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS

1. Is Burawoy's distinction between professional, critical, policy and public sociology an adequate characterization of the discipline?
2. Why did sociology take a 'national turn' in the period 1914–45 and is the discipline still marked by national preoccupations?
3. Provide a sociological account of why Japan has been so successful in the post-1945 period.
4. Using a web search or following up on the names provided in this chapter, find the principal work of an African, Asian, Latin American or Caribbean sociologist. Summarize their main work, with the particular task of finding out what you did not know before and what helps you understand the human condition.

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