CLASSICAL SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

Classical Sociological Theory is a remarkable collection of theoretically sophisticated and accessible readings by influential thinkers like Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Mead, Simmel, Freud, Du Bois, Adorno, Marcuse, Parsons, and Merton. This updated anthology, now in its fourth edition, provides students with a solid understanding of classical theory's place in the history of sociology and contemporary sociological theory, impacting the field today with new contents and ideas for critical reflection. The selected works include several readings that highlight the impact of Enlightenment concepts and the work of Alexis de Tocqueville on the early and undisciplined beginnings of sociological inquiry.

This newly revised edition continues to contribute to the development of the discipline of sociology, making a thorough grasp of the thought-provoking and challenging material necessary to comprehend modern sociological research and theory. It also features accessible editorial introductions that places each reading in its intellectual, philosophical, and historical context.

With extensive references to further readings and resources, *Classical Sociological Theory, Fourth Edition* remains the leading resource for students of social and sociological theory, as well as those taking courses in human geography, anthropology, criminology, and urban studies.

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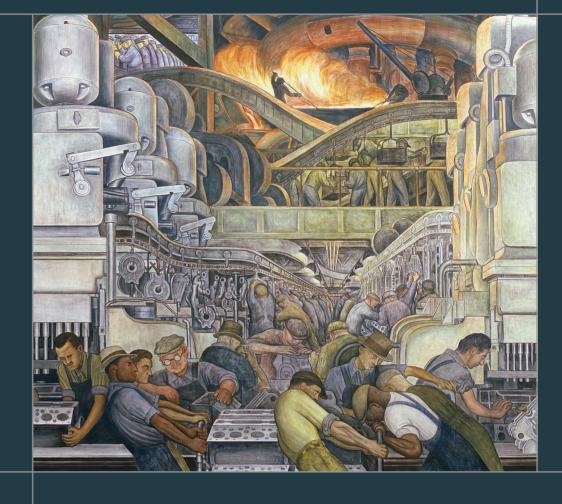## CLASSICAL SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

FOURTH EDITION

Edited by Craig Calhoun, Joseph Gerteis, James Moody, Steven Pfaff, and Indermohan Virk

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Introduction

Classical sociological theory shapes the discipline of sociology, but also all of modern social thought. It influences politics, economics, and legal decisions. Preachers refer to it in sermons, journalists in newspaper columns. It shapes how both experts and ordinary people think about race, gender, sexuality, family, community, nationalism, military service, business corporations, social movements, and response to emergencies. It enables us to see connections among different events, institutions, and trends. It helps us to see general patterns in social life. And it helps us relate personal life to society. This is important at all scales from interpersonal relations like love or friendship to large-scale patterns in economy, government, or culture.

Sociological theory helps us to see to what extent we can choose the conditions we live under. It helps us literally to judge what is possible and what is not, and what are the likely consequences of different courses of action. Sociological theory does not tell us what parties to vote for, what religion to profess – if any – or what moral values are right. But it does enable us to make systematic and informed judgments about what policies will promote our values and which will be likely to undermine them. It helps us to locate our personal experiences and shared projects in larger social and historical contexts. As C. Wright Mills put it: "Neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both."[1]

The Idea of 'Classical' Theory

Examining classical sociological theory is not the same as looking for the 'founders' of sociology.[2] August Comte gave the new discipline its name; Herbert Spencer introduced core ideas of structure, function, and social evolution; Lester Frank Ward helped introduced

the new field in the United States; and Robert Park and Albion Small create a disciplinary home at the University of Chicago. They shaped the field. But today their work is read mainly to see its historical importance, not its theoretical significance for current research. This is different for classical theorists like Karl Marx, Max Weber, and W.E.B. Du Bois. Their work not only helped to create sociology; it also informs and stimulates new sociology today.

The demarcation between "classical" and "contemporary" sociological theory continually shifts. In the 1930s, for example, the great American sociological theorist Talcott Parsons set out to synthesize what he regarded as crucial in the "classical" tradition. In his view, Max Weber and Emile Durkheim were the most important classics. Each wrote during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Parsons saw himself as continuing work they had started. Part of what made them classical was precisely the continuing importance their work had for such later analyses. At the time, Parsons saw himself as the new kid on the block, an innovator in his contemporary scene. He continued to produce influential original work until his death in 1979. Today, however, *his* work seems "classical".

Calling work "classical" means, first of all, that it has stood the test of time and is still significant. It is the opposite of "best forgotten". 'Classical' does not just mean old, therefore, but enduringly influential. In this sense, Parsons surely aspired to have his work become classical. As Jürgen Habermas sums up, "A tradition draws its binding force above all from the intellectual authority of works that claim classical standing against the maelstrom of criticism and forgetting; a classic is that from which later generations can still learn."[3]

Second, classics are models. Classical theories exemplify what it means to think deeply and creatively about society. There are no simple right or wrong answers to questions like whether society is more a matter of conflict or cooperation, a product of individual choices or a constraint on individuals, held together by power or markets or culture. Of course, they all matter. But how much each matters – and in what ways – must be considered over and over again in different contexts, with different facts, addressing different practical problems. Classical theories offer models for how to integrate empirical research, philosophy, and history in considering each. Classical theories also set intellectual standards.

Third, work we call classical tends to define broad orientations in the field of sociology. Reference to classical sociological theory is used to signal analytic approaches; it offers signposts to guide readers in seeing the intellectual heritage on which new theorists are drawing. Reference to Parsons signals, for example, a concern for "functionalist" approaches to questions of social integration, that is for understanding different social institutions and practices in terms of how they contribute to the successful workings of the whole society. Reference to Marx signals emphasis on class inequality and contradictions in society rather than smooth functioning.

Fourth, we term work "classical" when we acknowledge that there have been major new developments since it was written. This doesn't mean that the "classical" work has been superseded. What it means is that new perspectives and debates have been introduced to which the classical social theorist has not been able to respond. In Parsons' case, a variety of new ideas and arguments began to come to the fore in and after the 1960s. Some of these were directly criticisms of or challenges to Parsons' functionalism, often for exaggerating harmony at the expense of power. He did respond to many, defending his

perspective most of the time but also modifying it where he saw potential for improvement. Other parts of the new work, however, represented approaches that Parsons didn't consider – just as Parsons himself had integrated Weber and Durkheim into a new theory. Jürgen Habermas, for example, combined some of Parsons' concerns with Marxism, critical theory, and symbolic interactionism in a way that Parsons had never anticipated.[4] Jeffrey Alexander developed "neofunctionalism" that not only built on Parsons and Durkheim, but shifted the emphases in much more cultural directions, away from the sides of their work that emphasized economic organization and social institutions, and away from strong presumptions of value consensus.[5] Classical theory still matters, thus, but we see it in new ways based on new ideas and interests.

To understand classical social theory requires paying attention to its distinctive historical contexts (and also informs us about them). Harriet Martineau and Alexis de Tocqueville wrote about democracy in America when it was new. Weber wrote about political legitimacy before Germany had become democratic. Karl Mannheim wrote about ideology and utopia in the context of growing struggles between fascism and communism. In fact, all theory needs to be understood in historical context – we need to know the history of our own time – but part of what we mean when we identify certain theories as "contemporary" is that we share the same broad historical situation with their authors. This doesn't mean that there are no differences among us: today's historical context feels different in China, the former Soviet Union, Africa and the US.

Which classics seem important shifts as our contemporary interests change. This book is organized around a core set of ideas and issues that helped shape sociology and the understanding of modern society between the 18th Century and the 1960s. There were earlier precursors, and some theory from the 1960s and 70s seems more contemporary than classical. But the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries were crucial to forming 'modern society' and shaping sociology. Our companion volume, *Contemporary Sociological Theory*, shows how more recent thinkers have grappled with continuing issues from the earlier period and used both classical theory and new theory to engage a new wave of transformations shaping our contemporary world.

Classical sociological theory was overwhelmingly developed in Europe and North America, and mostly by white men of the middle and upper classes. These origins left marks. Like others in their societies, the white men sometimes failed to fully appreciate the contributions of female and Black theorists – and failed to do justice to the importance of gender, sexuality, sexism or heteronormativity, or of race and racism. The Europeans were sometimes blind to the implications of colonization. The Americans were often fascinated by the societies of the continents' First Peoples, but seldom did much to address their displacement or abuse.

There were classical sociological theorists who recognized and addressed many of these problems. Harriet Martineau analyzed the contradictions of slavery and exclusion of women in her *Society in America* at about the same time that Alexis de Tocqueville mostly passed over them in his better-known *Democracy in America*. While some of sociology's white men rightly praised her account, overall, she like many other women, was relatively neglected by the professors who shaped the discipline's self-understanding.[6] Even more remarkably, Jane Addams was a pioneer in American sociology, teaching in the University of Chicago and publishing in the *American Journal of Sociology* as the discipline was first

institutionalized in the US. She drew on sociology as well as her work with immigrants to help found the field of social work.[7] Perhaps most remarkably, the great Black sociologist W.E.B. Du Bois was not just neglected but actively excluded from sociology.[8] His work *should* have shaped 'mainstream' sociology more than it did. This has left 'unfinished business' on race above all, but also on cities and colonialism. Innovation in contemporary sociological theory is based partly on recovering neglected voices or themes or arguments from classical sociological theory.

It is not accidental that Martineau and Addams were women, and Du Bois was Black. Correction of biases and blind spots has been driven by inclusion of women and people of color (and indeed, sociology has been among the most inclusive of all academic disciplines). Likewise, sociological theory has been improved by perspectives rooted in the postcolonies of the global South, in the communist and then formerly communist countries, and writing from non-Western civilizational histories.

New research is still shaped by the questions classical theorists asked and their strategies for answering them are still helpful. Du Bois, offers a powerful example. He worked to integrate analysis of racial domination into a perspective also shaped by his fellow classical theorists Max Weber and Karl Marx. He argued, for example, that we should not think in terms of race vs class but of their deep relationship, that experiencing racial domination and nationality produced 'double-consciousness', and that basic social trends like urbanization could not be understood apart from the racial and ethnic organization of cities. He helped to create a perspective later sociologists called 'intersectionality' – thinking in terms of 'both/and' rather than 'either/or'.[9]

As the work of Du Bois demonstrates, improvement in sociological theory is not just a matter of representation or inclusion. It is innovation, which is constant not only because of faults discovered in older work, but also because society changes, research produces new or more precise empirical evidence, and because theorists develop powerful new ideas. Du Bois' work is relevant to sociological theory in general, not just theories of race. Likewise, Martineau's and Addams' work is relevant beyond questions of gender.

Continuing the work of theoretical innovation is important today. This is why there is a companion volume on 'contemporary' theory. New theory is not only guided by classical theory, but strengthened by engaging it, becoming part of the enduring intellectual project it initiated.

From Social Thought to Sociological Theory

Sociological theory is a relatively new project, developed as part of modern science. But it is closely connected to a long history of social thought, extending back to the ancient world and part of every civilization. In the West, Greek philosophers, Roman lawyers, and Jewish and Christian religious scholars all contributed significantly to the "prehistory" of sociological theory. They thought about what made society, how it changed, what rulers – or parents – should and shouldn't do, and what caused social order sometimes to collapse. The Jewish Torah and Talmud include social thought expressed in rules, narratives, and analytic reflections. The Christian Bible engages in social thought with accounts of marriage and family, communities based on love, and 'rendering unto Caesar that which is Caesar's".

Social thought is also prominent in the Koran and flourished in the Muslim empires that reached from what are now Spain, Syria and Persia through Northern Africa, Mughal India, and along the coasts of Asia. Likewise, social thought was highly developed in the China's Confucian tradition – which emphasized harmonious integration – and in its 'Legalist' adversary – which emphasized strategic use of power. Social thought is important to Buddhist traditions that spread from India across Asia and to Hinduism's Vedic narratives. Most of what we know about all this earlier social thought comes from surviving texts. But social thought was also embedded in thinking about kinship, clans, ancestors, and how to resolve disputes among peoples with little or no writing, whether in Africa, the Americas, or Europe.

In short, thinking about social relations, change, culture, or power is not unique to the modern Western experience that generated sociology. All the world's civilizations can – and do – contribute to sociology and to sociological theory. Indeed, there are important criticisms of Western sociological and significant alternative versions from postcolonial and other non-Western thinkers. Within every tradition there are efforts to think beyond the contexts of its origins.

But for all the diverse anticipations of sociological theory, and all its continued transformations, it was formed crucially between the 18th and mid-20th centuries as European and North American societies grappled with the challenges of the era they called modernity. The scientific revolution made it possible. But the project of specifically sociological theory seemed *needed* because of rapid and unsettling change in social organization, social psychology, culture, and the relation of politics and economics to each of these. We look first at how science shaped the distinction of sociological theory from social thought in general, and in the next section at the issues that became its enduring central themes.

Science: The rise of science transformed the ways in which people understood the conditions of their own lives and relationships as well as the ways they understood astronomy or gravity. At the most general level, and aside from any of its specific discoveries or theories, the scientific revolution centered in 17th-century Europe brought an emphasis on new learning. That is, researchers set out to gather as much knowledge as possible and especially as much empirical knowledge as possible, and to organize it as systematically as possible. Correspondingly, they relied less on tradition. Modern science not only added to knowledge, but also subjected it to questioning and tests.

When early scientists stressed the importance of logic and rational thought on the one hand and empirical evidence on the other, they meant specifically to challenge the notion that we should simply believe what we are taught. They meant that even the most respected authorities and the most venerated traditions could sometimes be wrong. From Galileo to Darwin, this brought controversy with the defenders of established views.

As Robert Merton showed in the 1930s, science depends on a normative order.[10] It is not perfectly free of values, but rather constituted by commitment to specifically scientific values – like the pursuit of truth. Scientists must not be driven primarily by personal gain, must not be subordinated to political power, and must demonstrate 'organized skepticism'. The starting points of science are to think for oneself, in the most rigorous way possible, and to trust the evidence of one's senses, especially when it is rooted in experiment or careful, systematic observation rather than casual everyday experience. In addition, science

seeks to discern logical order in enormously complex and always incomplete collections of facts.

This is something different from simply offering a summary of established facts. Sociological theories must integrate empirical observations into coherent logical structures explaining patterns of relationship. Think of the difference between stating the price of some object and saying prices are determined by supply and demand. Then add to the picture the way luxury goods gain higher prices by their connection to social status.

Facts always require interpretation – figuring out what they mean in relation to different questions or arguments. Making interpretation systematic is one of the main tasks of theory. Sociological theories must offer empirical claims that can be the basis of either tests (and thereby confirmation, correction, or improvement) or comparisons among theories (and thereby judgment as to which more accurately grasps social reality).

Science advances not just by an accumulation of facts, but through a process the philosopher of science Karl Popper called "conjecture and refutation."[11] That is, a scientist (or someone else) puts forward propositions about how the world works; these are initially conjectures, products of imagination as well as knowledge. They become the basis for hypotheses, and research and analysis confirm or reject them. Thinking about what might explain the facts we see always requires imagination (as C. Wright Mills famously pointed out). But refutation drives the development of knowledge forward as much as imagination. Refutation can be very specific and detailed or much more theoretically basic – like challenging the view that the world is flat or that short term self-interest explains all human behavior. Refutation of an important hypothesis demands rethinking of the whole pattern of knowledge that is organized by a theory. Accordingly, some theorists may resist, even when others think the evidence is clear.

Empirical research also depends on theory to specify the objects of its analysis: how do we know what constitutes a community, for example, or a religion? Appealing to common sense doesn't solve the problem. Common sense is generally formed on the basis of a particular religion or a particular experience of community – and this is a source of bias if one is seeking knowledge of religion or community in general, in all social contexts. More strikingly, an enormous amount of research has been done on 'citizens' and indeed 'human beings' by looking only at men – and often white men and European-American men. Theorists like Martineau and Du Bois showed how much this obscured, though it sometimes took white male sociological researchers a long time to pay enough attention.

In its blindness towards gender and race, empirical sociology often tacitly incorporated the assumptions of contemporary society. The founders of the US were not troubled by excluding women from voting because of a general sense that their roles were private not public. They tolerated slavery as a political compromise but also out of racial bias. In both cases, they accepted traditional, inherited ideas as true – just like those who doubted the existence of gravity before Galileo. It is a critical theoretical task to challenge received ideas. This is often pushed these tendencies just as it was a task of social movements to demand political recognition and rights.

Theoretical concepts are like lenses that enable us to see phenomena. Take the concept "self-fulfilling prophecy," developed by the American sociologist Robert Merton in the mid-20th century.[5] This calls our attention to a common aspect of human actions that may take place in many different contexts and which we wouldn't otherwise relate to each

other. Aided by the concept, we can easily see the commonality among teachers' predictions of students' future success or failure in school, the labeling of criminals (who then find it hard to get legitimate jobs), and the comments of famous securities analysts on TV about what stocks are likely to go up or down. In none of these cases is the outcome of the predictions independent of the predictions themselves.

In short, sociological theory integrated social thought into social science. It aimed not only to be logically clear but also empirically grounded. However, it remained a question how fully social science could match natural or physical science in testing empirical claims with experiments or formalizing logic in mathematical models. There was no question that *some* questions about human beings could be approached this way, but could all? First, classical sociological theorists like Max Weber argued that because human beings were creators of meanings, and based their actions on these meanings, not just objective facts, sociology needed to include a method of sympathetic interpretation (*verstehen*). Second, other classical sociological theorists, such as Karl Polanyi, Max Horkeimer, and Theodore Adorno, argued that attempts at perfectly objective accounts of social life usually disguised biases built into the perspectives of the theorists. Polanyi's example was classical liberal economists who claimed to study universal economic laws were doubly biased. Relations they thought universal – like owning property – were in fact historically produced and different in different settings. Moreover, their analyses were shaped by sympathy for capitalists with property not workers without.

Sociological theories may consider non-social causes for social patterns – like climate or physical geography. But sociological theories on social causes as well as social effects. For example, a biological theory of infection will stress the way viruses reproduce, mutate, and affect host organisms. A sociological theory will analyze the patterns that explain who gets exposed – such as social networks or differences in occupation – who is most vulnerable, and who gets treatment.

Theorists develop concepts with which to grasp social life, identifying patterns in social relations and social action, produce explanations for both specific features of life in society and changes in overall forms of society. They also debate the inconsistencies between different proposed explanations. Theory is thus an indispensable part of sociology, crucial to its standing as a science.

Modernity and the Great Transformation

Science was one factor that made modern society new and different. This meant first of all different from Europe's immediately preceding history, the 'middle ages' understood to have come between the fall of the Western Roman Empire (roughly during the 5th century) and the beginnings of modernity in the Renaissance (mostly 15th and 16th centuries). It meant different secondarily from Classical Greece, Rome, Egypt, and other ancient societies that had flourished around the Mediterranean Sea. And it meant different, third, from the other great civilizations of which Europeans became aware through explorations (and eventually trade and religious missions) launched during the Renaissance. Looking at these three contrasts helped theorists clarify not just what was modern, but what was social. We can see them at work in the development of core themes for classical sociological

theory, each of which also reflected how sociological theory was differentiated from work in other emerging social science disciplines.

States. Nested hierarchies of political power and religious authority were central to the Middle Ages. This meant not just that some were ranked higher than others, but that structures of personal authority shaped who fit into recognized groups. Kings did not rule peasants directly. They ruled noble lords who ruled lesser lords, knights, and squires. Their authority only reached the peasants through layers, and at each level, the authority of lords only extended through specific territories.

Medieval kings often claimed to rule by divine right. Legitimate inheritance from the previous king was crucial. Modernity saw a demand to rethink legitimacy, with more emphasis on how well governments served the people in their societies. Politics was reorganized, with classical theorists engaged in trying to shape the outcomes as well as understand the process. Three kinds of political change were crucial:

First, the personal power of individual rulers was increasingly augmented (and eventually replaced) by the rise of state administrative capacity. This took place in an era of repeated wars fought partly over religion and partly to try to consolidate territorial power. Waging war was not just a matter of heroism in battle or having more soldiers than an enemy. It depended on the capacity to manufacture weapons, move troops (and feed and pay them), and increasingly to build ships – which in turn meant harvesting trees in inland forests and getting them to coastal shipyards. Military administration helped advance civilian administration as states took over issuing money, building roads, and eventually old age pensions, health care, and education.

Projects of state administration led to the development of bureaucracy – a term coined by the classical sociological theorist Max Weber (excerpted here) who pioneered its study. This wasn't all new. Bureaucracy was pioneered in the Chinese Empire, but it grew dramatically in modern nation-states. This meant rationalizing government, using civil servants forbidden to have other jobs (and thus conflicts of interest) and hiring and promoting them on the basis of their skills (rather than their families or political connections). The expanding role of government also reflected social demands, as businesses demanded better money and better roads, and workers demanded pensions, health care, and education. Expecting more of government produced calls to make government accountable.

Second, political power was increasingly organized in terms of nation-states. Wars of religion both reflected and advanced the change. They were projects of trying to produce uniformity among all the inhabitants of a country – all Catholics, say, or all Protestants. Such projects didn't stop with religion. The idea of nation transformed how modern people thought of culture – not just as elite taste but as a whole way of life. The idea of nation gained material substance with the standardization of national languages in place of local dialects, public education, and infrastructures for shared communication.

Medieval kings could give away a whole region in a marriage or inherit a foreign country where they didn't even speak the language. Frontiers were vague. Modern nation-states emphasized more or less unified populations with clear territories and borders. Domestic integration contrasted with external conflict and, as in the case of colonies, domination.

National integration was accompanied by a new sense that society mattered. For kings and emperors, ordinary people could be a problem or a resource, but they were

seldom a basic value. Indeed, kings and emperors often ruled over collections of societies – the different peoples who lived on the territories they conquered, each with a distinct way of life. Ordinary people didn't really count in politics. Kings thought of them as potential soldiers, but not citizens. At most, there were efforts to make sure their minimal subsistence needs were met – partly out of moral obligation, partly to avoid crime or rebellion.

Third, during the modern era demands grew for wider political participation. These came first of all from elites. Both landowners and merchants with new wealth resisted being dominated by kings. But at the same time there was pressure 'from below'. This came in part because ordinary people were organizing themselves in new ways. Small businesses also grew more numerous (and sometimes bigger). Farmers more often owned the land they worked. Craft societies expanded, including more workers. Education became more widespread. So did practical experience in self-government in a host of different organizations from local churches and schools to burial and charity societies.

The idea of 'consent of the governed' had powerful appeal to people who thought of themselves as independent citizens capable of making choices about the societies in which they lived. Social contract theory drew on this sensibility, and also on Biblical understandings that God created human beings as free individuals. Thomas Hobbes (excerpted here) suggested that originally free people were likely to discover that by themselves they were vulnerable to theft or even murder. Life in a state of nature might be free, but it would turn out to be "nasty, brutish, and short." People might therefore give up some freedom in exchange for security. His theory pioneered a recurrent effort to understand society in terms of the choices of self-interested individuals. But it is no accident that Hobbes focused on property. His approach to individuals stressed their capacity to possess more than their capacity to express creativity.[12]

By contrast, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (also excerpted here) held that private property was the enemy of freedom as well as equality. He used social contract theory to argue that those who had given consent to government could withdraw it. Like many of those who shaped early modern society, Rousseau admired the Roman Republic as an example of virtuous self-rule, lost with the transition to empire. They built on Renaissance experiments with self-governing city-states, constituted a radical wing to the 17th Century English Revolution, and were more successful in the American and then the French Revolutions of the 18th Century.

Alexis de Tocqueville and others in this tradition sought social foundations for democracy in 'civil society'. This meant society that was a free product of relations among private persons. Contract was a model for those relations, but not the only one. Friendship, religious community, and the self-governance of medieval guilds and cities also offered models. Tocqueville emphasized the importance of autonomous local communities and communications media able to reach larger scale publics. He helped classical sociological theory recognize how much of human life was organized at a level between the interior privacy of intimate family life (or indeed, the inner personality of the individual) and the exterior direction of the state. Society was the crucial middle ground in which relationships could not be explained entirely by psychology, politics or economics.[13] Knitting together national societies strengthened democracy's social foundations and efforts like social security to support the welfare of all citizens. Sociologists have both celebrated success

(Durkheim and Parsons) and analyzed shortcomings (Durkheim again, along with Polanyi, Horkheimer and Adorno, and Mannheim).

Political participation is not just a matter of formal electoral processes, thus, but also of civil society organizations and social movements. For example, the US Constitution of 1789 excluded women and slaves, and allowed states to exclude working men who did not own enough property. This was not only unjust, but as Martineau emphasized, a contradiction within seemingly liberal democracy. It called for action and change. Centuries of social movements have struggled to extend democracy to all citizens – and often to increase equality. Movements exemplify the modern idea of people seeking to choose their ways of living in society together.

Revolutions could be celebrated as extreme examples of citizen choice about what kind of government to share. But revolutions also raised two troubling issues. First, there was always the possibility that a new government would be as bad as the old, and that ordinary people who supported the revolution would be excluded from control of the new government. The example of the Russian Revolution was widely seen to demonstrate this. Classical sociological theorists suggested that part of the issue was the power of underlying social conditions that might not support democracy even if most people wanted it.[14] Robert Merton (excerpted here) generalized one dimension of this by pointing out how manifest functions – what seemed to be going on – might contrast with underlying, latent functions. The police might be intended to guarantee security, but instead guarantee property or privilege of some at the expense of the security of others. The revolution might be intended to increase freedom but by tearing down old systems of authority have the latent function of enabling new elites to take power.

This raised the second issue. While peaceful revolutions were theoretically possible, actual revolutions tend to involve violence. The French Revolution started in 1789 but by 1793–4 have become exceptionally bloody. Thousands were killed by the supposedly human guillotine. Many of those killed were themselves revolutionaries, not monarchists, but condemned by other factions of the revolutionary government. The issue has persisted as groups struggling against injustice or abusive governments question whether these can be changed by peaceful means. There is a tradition arguing that violence can be positive, even purifying. The classical sociological theorist Hannah Arendt (excerpted here) argued forcefully against this. Violence should ever be used to resolve political questions, she said, these always needed to be approached as matters of human action, including communication and debate.

Economies. Through much of history, production was mostly for the subsistence of those who produced it. Food was the dominant good, though craft products became increasingly important. With sedentary agriculture larger surpluses were produced – and mostly extracted to feed people in growing cities and support rulers in projects from majestic mausoleums to wars. Trade was initially as much a matter of ritual as material redistribution. Eventually, though, it linked cities and regions and flowed along some very long-distance routes. There was more wealth, more luxury consumption – like fine fabrics or elegant jewelry. But there was not any idea of *the* economy – as distinct from wealthier cities or rulers or indeed temples – and the political or military capacity to defend them.

The very idea of '*the* economy' is modern. The word comes from the ancient Greek term for household management. It was extended to thinking about other and larger enterprises.

But the modern idea of '*the* economy' is a significant departure. It refers not just to decisions about investment and consumption, but about an overall *system* of relationships – buying and selling, of course, but also borrowing and lending, investing and management. These are increasingly organized in an impersonal credit and monetary system and through corporations in which management is a job separate from ownership – and owners can be other corporations, further abstracting away from individuals.

A key feature of the modern era has been the attempt to separate economics from politics. Weber called them different 'value spheres' – reflecting among other things the contrast between pursuit of the public good and pursuit of profit. One of the ideas of liberalism has been the notion that to protect freedom in each sphere, they should be free from each other. This is different from, say, a feudal system in which economic exploitation and political domination are organized directly by the same system of power and authority. Adam Smith thought government 'interference' in the economy could upset its 'natural' self-regulation. Karl Marx and Karl Polanyi both disagreed, holding that it was mistaken to think of the economy as natural rather than historically produced.

Classical economists formulated the idea of universal, natural economic laws in a 19th Century argument against state efforts to control export and import prices. The timing was surprising. In precisely the same period, the social impact of industrialization was so dramatic that observers called it 'industrial revolution' and classical sociologists showed that it changed society as much as political revolutions.[15] Agriculture was industrialized first, leading to the decline of rural villages and the rise of cities.

Modern markets are vastly larger than earlier ones, and organize a much larger proportion of human activities. Modern society doesn't simply have markets, as kingdoms, empires, and feudal societies elsewhere have had markets. It is structured in a basic way by markets. Moreover, continuous marketization has meant that activities previously organized in other ways have been reorganized on market bases – like paying for a nursing home rather than caring for aged parents at home. Of course, states could also provide care on a non-market basis, but the dominant trend has been 'commodification', the organization of production and provision as for monetized exchange. Property that was previously passed on through generations, like family farms, has been commodified.

The discipline of economics developed to understand this new phenomenon of large-scale economic systems. It was initially called 'political economy' largely to signal a concern with trade, production, and wealth at the scale of states not just households. Mainstream economics is not about state-dominated economies, but about private property and how to allocate it in decisions about consumption, savings, and investment. Though grounded in an idealized image of individuals making such decisions, it uses mathematics and statistics to address both larger scale and law-like patterns. Classical sociological theory engaged both the contexts and social organization of economic activity.

A classical sociological theorist as well as economist, Adam Smith (excerpted here) showed how manufacturing was transformed not only by new technology but new social organization.[16] A coordinated division of labor was basic to every factory. This depended not just on management but on an ethic of work discipline, as Max Weber showed, and discipline was also necessary to investment: saving and reinvesting profits rather than only consuming luxuries. While Weber stressed this "spirit of capitalism" which he thought had religious sources. Karl Marx and Karl Polanyi both showed how labor discipline was more

coercively enforced, by fear of poverty, the power of capitalists, and government regulation. Trade unions and socialist politics were socially organized responses. Work, management, and investment were all transformed by the rise of large corporations.

Evolutionary theorists examined the transition from the fixed statuses of premodern societies, where most roles were determined by gender, age, descent, and kinship, to modern societies with their range of roles based on individual attributes, achievements, or contracts.[17] Adam Smith analyzed how new divisions of labor made work more productive; markets expanded as different people and whole countries had different things to sell. Herbert Spencer, one of sociology's great 19th Century founders, saw differentiation as the key to social evolution, including the transition from 'militant' societies based on sheer power to industrial societies based on structures of cooperation. It was key as states branched out beyond simply exercising power through a military hierarchy, to undertake a range of different kinds of administration including eventually education, housing, and health care. Emile Durkheim (excerpted here) linked division of labor to 'dynamic density' – a matter not of physical crowding but of the number and complexity of transactions typical of modern society – and through this to social integration based not on similarity alone, but on relationships among people who were different from each other. Talcott Parsons continued this functional analysis by showing the relations of economic activity to other institutions, like education. He held that by the post-WWII era, problems of economic exploitation and disruption had been minimized; government policy combined with representation of workers through unions to produce a functional balance.

Functionalist theories emphasized the evolution of spontaneous structures of cooperation, though they thought good policies could help these along. Their examples of 'earlier' stages came mainly from smaller scale peoples of the Americas and Africa. But colonialism brought greater knowledge of India, a very large-scale society that didn't fit the premodern/modern contrast easily. India's caste system was an almost infinitely complex hierarchy built largely out of kinship and descent, but also religion and occupation. But caste hierarchy was different from class. As Marx analyzed it, class was based on the sale of labor power as part of the relations of production. Others saw class simply as differences of income and wealth. Either way, class was reproduced more in strictly economic distinctions and less in elaborate cultural codes. Later sociologists would use the distinction to analyze the relations between race and class – for example in the US South. Race was embedded in a whole set of cultural norms governing things like who could mix with whom – or drink out of the same drinking fountain. Efforts to forge class solidarity based on the common interests of Black and white workers kept foundering on these caste distinctions.

Issues like this illustrate what Polanyi called the 'embedding' of markets in society. To say something like "it's all just supply and demand" is not realism about economic life but a radical abstraction from actually existing markets and social life. Abstraction can be a useful tool, but when it is confused with more complex reality it becomes ideology and is usually misleading. Similarly, evolution is not just a shift from culturally embedded codes of status to markets and contracts that are somehow autonomous from culture and society. First, changes usually reflect power relations. Second, both markets and contracts are shaped deeply by differentiations rooted in the rest of social life. The different roles and rewards given to women workers offer a prime example.

Karl Marx also pointed out that economic production depended on social organized reproduction – like raising children. Polanyi showed how both family and community mattered. But neither Marx nor Polanyi went deeply into the gender roles that made childrearing and reproduction more generally largely women's work. This became a theme for 20th century feminist theorists. As Jane Addams (excerpted here) pointed out, much was unpaid, embedded in family relations. And when household labor was paid – commodified – it often meant racial minorities and immigrants working for middle class families.

Marx, Polanyi and others also pointed to the exploitation embedded in the relation of rich countries to colonies. Slavery was one extreme form, developed in its modern form to serve plantation economies. Plantations produced cotton, which the textile mills of Britain or the US North converted into cloth and clothing. Colonies were run for the benefit of capitalist colonizers, as for example Britain undermined craft textile production in India in order to have markets for factory-made goods. Followers of Marx saw former colonies locked into subordinate positions and exploitation. Followers of Parsons and other modernization theorists argued that a process of development could enable them to follow in the path of the already rich countries.

Individuals. In the Middle Ages, and indeed in much of history beyond Europe, most people were peasants, making a living in agriculture, with any surplus production beyond their mere subsistence needs appropriated for cities and their elites. Indeed, they had less leisure time and freedom than people in small-scale societies that lived by hunting and fishing. Peasant lives were short, focused largely on survival, with few choices about consumption. The individuality of a few people – kings, heroic warriors, poets, priests, and philosophers – was celebrated but treated as exceptional. This doesn't mean that individual qualities weren't recognized among non-elites or that they were never individually creative. It means their material choices were limited. One effect of producing economic goods beyond the requirements of subsistence was that choice could proliferate. This was a major source of the individualism classical sociological theorists saw as characteristic of the modern era.

Individualism could mean lots of things.[18] It could mean valuing personal freedom over social obligations. It could mean that people should have rights as individuals, like those to life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness claimed in the US Declaration of Independence. It could mean that people should look inside themselves to find the authentic inner meaning of their lives or that expressing one's own thoughts and desires was important. It could mean an honorable independence of mind or a disreputable selfishness.

We saw that Hobbes and other social contract theorists analyzed legitimate government by positing separate individuals and asking about their choices. This is sometimes called atomism or methodological individualism. The basic idea is not to take a stand on how much individualism is good, but to break society into its smallest units for clearer analysis. Emile Durkheim objected, arguing that individuals *by themselves* were *not* the smallest units of society. Society was made up, rather, of social relationships; individuals were always embedded in these relationships. Talcott Parsons continued this argument for seeing the social whole which conditioned all such individual behavior.

Most classical sociological theory rejected the idea that individuals were completely psychologically autonomous. "Self and society are twin-born," wrote the pioneering

American sociologist Charles Horton Cooley.[19] This insight was also basic to the work of George Herbert Mead (excerpted in this volume) who saw the self as emerging only in communicative interaction. The founder of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, saw individuals as striving for autonomy but never achieving it, partly because of complex and contradictory inner life, but also because they developed in constant and challenging relations with other people.

Georg Simmel (excerpted in this volume) wrote an influential pair of essays asking "how is society possible?" and "how is individuality possible?" He too saw the two as fundamentally interdependent, though sometimes in tension. Social structure provided the conditions for individuality to develop, including freedom. This could never be based on perfect autonomy. At the same time, individuals are not fully contained within their social roles and necessarily experience social structure as external. Simmel's famous example was the way growing modern cities allowed individuality to flourish, freeing people from the constant gaze and restrictive norms of small communities. This freedom was the result of social conditions – the relative anonymity of urban life for example. It was not just human nature.

Ferdinand Tönnies formulated a similar distinction as a contrast between community and society (or association). Community was grounded in a sentiment of closeness of families as well as individuals; society was built out of more formally chosen associations like business corporations or professional societies. It was still a matter of connections, but with more feeling of autonomy, less of mutuality.[20]

Many other classical sociological theorists wrestled with shifts in community life, transition to cities, and the growth of more individual chosen and formally organized relationships. Tocqueville saw balance as crucial to the future of democracy in America. Durkheim and many others worried that family, community, and social solidarity generally were being undermined by excesses of individualism.

Parsons saw his work as resolving the question Hobbes had asked: how could social order emerge. He resolved it partly by denying that individuals ever existed outside social order, but also by studying the many different kinds of formal and informal organizations and larger institutions that people created. These gave scope for individuality, but within social relations. And they were knit together with each other in a web of functional interdependencies.

In the mid-20th Century, a number of sociological theorists suggested that Durkheim and Parsons had gone too far in privileging the social whole vs the individuals within it. George Homans and Peter Blau (both excerpted here) offered new theories of how social organization was generated from interaction among individuals. This was microsociology as opposed to the macrosociology of those like Parsons analyzing society at its largest. But it was different from symbolic interactionism, the approach that grew out of the work of George Herbert Mead. Mead's approach focused on the ways individuals communicated with each other. Homans drew on behavioral psychology, including theories of operant conditioning. He sought an objective account of social exchange and the formation of groups. Peter Blau's theory built on Homans, but emphasized how exchanges among individuals reflected their interests, a sort of cost/benefit analysis.

These sociological accounts of individuals and community partially mirrored distinctions of liberalism and conservatism in political thought. Liberalism is a tradition

of political and social thought founded on individualistic ideas of freedom. Though in their exchange theories neither Homans nor Blau engaged political ideology, they shared the liberal focus on individuals. Conservatism, by contrast, often holds that too much freedom can be a problem if it undermines marriages, communities, and moral commitments. In one of the most famous works of classical sociological theory, *Suicide* (excerpted here), Emile Durkheim agreed with the conservatives on this point, offering evidence that an excess of freedom – or extremely rapid social change, whether good or bad – could produce 'anomie' or normlessness. This deprived peopled of good bases for moral judgement and even finding meaning in their lives; it could contribute to suicide. Here Durkheim followed Tocqueville, who coined the term 'individualism'. He wanted to distinguish selfishness, which he said was found in all times and places, from the specifically modern equation of freedom with independence. He saw individual rights as basic to modern freedom, but as necessarily organized in social relations and a republican culture of virtue. He thought the Americans he observed were one-sidedly obsessed with personal freedom. In fact, Tocqueville and Durkheim were both political liberals, they were simply worried about excesses of individualism and drew on conservative thought to understand the more communitarian side of the equation.

Herbert Marcuse, a critical theorist and humanistic Marxist, also noted that exaggerated freedom could undermine the specifically capitalist form of modern society. This depended on self-discipline – even psychological repression. In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, for example, Weber had described the importance of saving and reinvestment, both dependent on resisting impulses to enjoy luxuries. Equally, it was important for workers and managers alike to be committed to hard work, disciplined, and rationalistic. Parents absorbed this orientation and objected to their children choosing lifestyles that emphasized liberation over authority and discipline. But by the late 1950s and 1960s, Marcuse argued, capitalism had become more consumer-oriented. Workers were motivated less by discipline and more by the cash to purchase the ever-growing ranging of consumer goods – Cadillacs with fins, for example, refrigerators with ice-makers. This brought a loosening of repression. Artistic and Bohemian lifestyles and liberated sexual expression spelled a challenge for capitalism and the prioritization of social authority.

The issue for classical sociological theory was not only judging how much or what kind of individualism was good. It was also how to understand societies in which so much of social organization was based on the idea of individual choice. This was full of paradoxes and questions. Did individualism promote the idea of romantic love? Yes. Did individualism contribute to rising divorce rates? Also yes. Was there freedom in children being able to choose different occupations and places to live from those of their parents? Yes. Was family transformed by this freedom? Yes. For one thing, nuclear families were increasingly separated from extended families (grandparents, cousins, etc.). Typical families became smaller.

Individualism's most important early appearance was in religion. The Protestant Reformation encouraged ordinary people – to read the Bible for themselves (not leave that to priests), pray in terms they made up for themselves (not simply by official prayers handed down by the church), and develop a personal relationship with God.[21] These ideas had an influence on the rise of science, which depended on researchers thinking and

judging facts for themselves, not simply accepting what was traditionally understood to be correct.

Pervasive individualism often hid important biases. Analysis spoke of individuals in the abstract – *the* human being. But in both theory and research the focus was often on white men. These were equated with individuals in general, producing misleading, falsely universal claims. The experience and situations of women were different from those of men – and left out when the focus was on an abstract, allegedly universal individual. For example, the sociological pioneer Jane Addams (excerpted here) pointed out the belated recognition of household work, done mainly by women, but commonly forgotten both by economists and labor organizers. Likewise, focusing on the abstract individual obscured race. In *The Souls of Black Folk*, (excerpted here) the great classical sociological theorist W.E.B. Du Bois developed the concept of 'double consciousness' to address what it meant to live with the duality of fitting into a universal category (whether individual or citizen) only with the recognition that one also embodied a marked difference.

The Wider World: Classical sociological theory was shaped by a new sense of how large and diverse the world was. Recognition of the existence of *other* societies helped Europeans recognize their own more clearly. The French, Germans, and English all compared themselves to each other. But more distant and radically distant civilizations also had an important effect on classical sociological theory.

For a thousand years, Europeans had known little about this wider world. Since the fall of the Western Roman Empire, Europe had not been central to any of the world's large empires or expansive civilizations. There were great empires in China, India, Persia, and the Muslim Mediterranean while Europe was a relative backwater.

Connection to the Western Roman Empire is the reason Europeans thought of themselves as 'the West'. The Eastern half of the Roman Empire did not 'fall' in the 5th Century the way the Western did; it split off. Centered in Constantinople, and henceforth commonly known as Byzantium, until the 15th Century it remained central to civilization from the Eastern Mediterranean into Asia. It was also the center of Orthodox Christianity while most of Western Europe was Catholic (and later Protestant). Orthodoxy linked Greek, Russian, Syrian, Egyptian (Coptic) and Ethiopian branches of Christianity, though without the central authority of a Pope. Western Europeans had little engagement with their fellow Christians to the East.

Constantinople was a Greek city, located in what is now Turkey. In 1453, it was conquered, renamed Istanbul, and made the capital of a growing, Turkish-led Ottoman Empire – the most recent of the great Islamic empires. Refugees from Byzantium flowed into Italian cities like Venice and from there into other parts of Europe. They brought texts and learning from ancient Greece and Rome the were preserved in the East while temporarily lost to the West. Their intellectual contributions helped to spark the Renaissance.

Even more important in this regard were the contributions of Arabic scholars.[22] An Islamic 'golden age' had flourished from the 8th Century to the 14th. Among its most important centers was Andalusia, in Spain, long more closely connected to countries around the Mediterranean than to Northern Europe. The Arab Empires traded widely, and presided over perhaps the most 'globalized' phase of history before the rise of the modern Western-dominated capitalist world-system. Shakespeare's character Othello, for example,

was a general in the Venetian Army that fought the Ottomans over Cyprus. He was also a 'Moor' – the name Christian Europeans gave to Muslims from the North African territories of the Andalusian Islamic Empires.

One of the earliest precursors to classical sociological theory was Ibn Khaldun, an Andalusian Muslim of Yemeni background who was born in Tunis and worked mostly as a diplomat in North Africa. His book, the *Muqaddimah*, offered a universal history of the world, with attention to the differentiation of cultures, physical environments, and politics within it.[23] It influenced not only other Arab thinkers and those of the Ottoman Empire but also Europeans from Florentine political theorist Niccolò Machiavelli to the German philosopher Georg Hegel.

The Ottoman empire was impressively cosmopolitan. When Christian rulers expelled Jews from Spain in 1492, most were absorbed into the Ottoman lands. This created the Sephardic diaspora, spread through Eastern Europe and the Middle East – by contrast to the Ashkenazim, who had been settled in Europe since the Middle Ages. Jewish Biblical thought, reflections on law, and understanding of the challenge of sustaining a minority culture all had a significant influence on classical sociological theory.

Parts of Southeastern Europe were incorporated into the Ottoman Empire. Conflicts with Tsarist Russia were recurrent. But Ottoman advance to the West was blocked when Vienna withstood devastating siege in 1529 and 1683. This gave Europeans – including classical sociological theorists – an enduring sense of Europe's civilizational frontier. The very idea of civilization was shaped by awareness of the world to the East of Europe.

The word 'civilization' is rooted in the Latin term for an organized community or way of life. It was used increasingly from the 17th and 18th centuries to denote a process of 'developing' to a higher state of culture. It mattered to the rise of classical sociological theory in two ways. First, Europeans had to acknowledge that there were other great civilizations besides their own. They looked manly to the East for examples, but also to the ancient world. Second, Europeans focused on the idea of development to look for a sequence through which all peoples might pass as they moved from less civilized to more. They looked to their own history but also to peoples throughout the world they regarded as less civilized, especially in Africa and the Americas.

Europeans liked to think of themselves as becoming more civilized. It was not just history; it was aspiration. Civilization was linked to the development of states, not least through the elite culture of courts and palaces. Norbert Elias explored this 'civilizing process' in Europe.[24] His work was shaped by Max Weber's earlier studies of how political, legal, and cultural change entwined. Weber recognized that bureaucracy, which he analyzed as central to the consolidation of European nation-states, had actually originated in ancient empires (without the word, which he coined later). Weber put the history of religion at the center, and wrote studies of India (Hinduism and Buddhism) and China (Confucianism and Taoism). These informed his exploration of why capitalism emerged in Europe rather than, say, Japan – the non-Western society he thought the best candidate.

Focusing on civilization is broader than focusing on individual nation-states. Empires overlap civilizations more closely, and often connect their regions. But the idea is cultural and sociological more than political. Confucianism developed in China, for example, and the Chinese Empire is almost inconceivable without it. But Confucianism also became

important throughout East Asia and in some places beyond. It guided not just politics but family life, ritual, ethics, and the pursuits of intellectuals.

Weber saw religion as central to civilizations, but religious traditions could mingle with each other and spread across civilizations. Western civilization was mainly Christian, but with multiple versions of Christianity and important influences from Judaism (not to mention pagan Greeks, Romans, and early Germans). Conversely, Western Christianity was distinct from Eastern, or Orthodox. Buddhism developed in India but influenced China and even more profoundly Japan as well as many societies in Southeast Asia.

This raised but didn't settle the basic question of why the coexistence of religions in a common or at least overlapping civilizational context could become instead a bitter conflict. South Asia has offered a paradigmatic example. Its Hindu traditions are ancient, but also always plural. There was no single premodern Hindu orthodoxy – just as there was no single Indian language. Into this context came Muslim conquerors who established the Mughal empire. Despite arriving by conquest, they established an impressively tolerant, cosmopolitan empire. Though religiously Sunni, the Mughals were deeply influenced by Persia in matters of art and culture. They invited intellectuals, poets, and spiritual leaders of different backgrounds into their courts.

The Mughals ruled over most of South Asia, including what are now India and Pakistan, from the 16th Century until replaced by the British Empire in the 19th. Indeed, they were the last foreigners to successfully subjugate Afghanistan, over which they fought with Persia, and which went on to be a challenge for the British, Russians, and US. Mughal India was a remarkable center of learning and cosmopolitan culture. A common South Asian civilization incorporated Islam as well as Hinduism and other religions, though in the 20th century movements of Muslims and Hindus sought to purify each from the influence of the other.

Compared to the Arab world, Persia produced both a different version of Islam and a distinctive civilization. This is partly because of a long prior history in which Zoroastrianism was its leading religion. There had been powerful empires in what is now Iran since ancient times. Indeed, Herodotus is considered the founder of history for chronicling the Persia's recurrent wars with Greeks in the 5th Century BC. In popular culture, these are probably remembered most for the story of a runner seeking Spartan reinforcements for Athenians at the battle of Marathon. But an enduring sociological significance was to identify Persians with tyranny. Not only was the Persian Empire ruled by powerful figures like Darius the Great and Xerxes. The Persians appointed tyrants – using that word – to rule conquered Greek city-states.

In the 18th century, a great classical sociological theorist, Charles de Secondat, better known as Montesquieu, wrote a highly influential book called *Persian Letters*. This used the device of two imaginary travelers to hold up a mirror to European civilization. More generally, learning about differences (real or imagined) from other civilizations was a way for Europeans to learn about their own – and debate their aspirations for how they wanted it to develop. In his major work, *The Spirit of Laws*, Montesquieu sought to understand the differences among countries not just by their specific legal or political systems but by the 'spirit' which lay behind them. Behind monarchy he saw love of honor, behind democratic republics he saw virtue. But behind despotism, he saw fear.[25] More generally, Persia, Islam

and the East came to symbolize the despotic or tyrannical rule many Europeans wanted to avoid by developing republics, democracies, and constitutional monarchies.

Karl Marx saw 'oriental despotism' as the product of a distinctive 'Asiatic mode of production'. China, Marx argued, had developed a massively powerful state that enabled it to solve certain problems. State capacity was needed, for example, to build dams and dredge the Yellow River, controlling floods and providing effective transportation. On the basis of such projects, along with technological innovation and the disciplined work of a huge population, China became the most advanced economy in the world at the time when Western capitalism was gathering steam. But eventually the dominance of the state blocked innovation.

China, like Russia before it, underwent revolution that eventually brought Communist parties to power. But classical sociological theorists analyzed both revolutions as driven by social factors beyond ideology. Exploitation of peasants had increased with growing cities and urban elites demanding bigger shares of what was produced. Middle classes grew but were frustrated by intransigent old states that failed to create opportunities for them by modernizing. And, of course, wars destabilized old regimes. Perhaps things could have turned out otherwise, but in these cases, weak social institutions allowed new autocrats to replace the old. Modernization came in some areas, but without political liberation or strong civil society.

Colonialism, Race, and Modernization: Ironically, the same Europeans who were proud of developing legitimate rule at home used force and conquest to establish colonies abroad. This produced an extreme version of the disembedding and disruption Karl Polanyi analyzed as part of the 'great transformation' in Europe itself. Colonial rule was often despotic.

Europeans set out on voyages of exploration with agendas of curiosity, scientific exploration, religious conversion, and opening up trade routes. They were astonished at the variety of human life they found, as well as animals and ecology. Explorations did transform science, notably biology as well as sociology which were entwined in the emergence of evolutionary theory. And missionaries did spread Christianity around the world (though often as an adjunct to power not a peaceful alternative). But agendas of economic gain and state power quickly came to dominate.

Spain and Portugal took the lead, extracting silver and good from brutally administered mines in Latin America. Britain followed, conquering India and establishing lucrative trade in both directions (as distinct from extraction alone). India and neighboring countries like Burma (Myanmar) were also integrated into British trade with China. British, Indian, and US merchants made fortunes selling Opium grown in South Asia to Chinese merchants in exchange for silver, and when the Chinese government tried to crack down on addiction and the trade that fueled it, Britain responded with military force. The US was an ally in Britain's Opium War.

European colonizers soon came into conflict with each other. France and Britain fought each other in North America (and US expansion, which was itself in many ways colonial, came into conflict with Spanish colonies). Piracy was an attempt to seize a share of the gold Spain and Portugal tried to carry to Europe from Latin America, and was backed by European countries. There were also major naval battles. A 19th Century 'race for Africa'

helped pave the path to WWI as different European powers clashed while trying to grab shares of Africa for themselves.

While European empires fought each other, they also established a new global economy with devastating social implications. In some parts of the world, inhabitants were displaced or murdered to make room for settlers. This was the history forged in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and the Americas. In other parts of the world, like both India and Egypt, Europeans ruled over conquered states and civilizations, establishing trade relations to European benefit.

But colonialism never meant just trade or just political power, it was also a transformation in what Marx called 'relations of production'. Extracting mineral wealth called for mines, and working these was commonly deadly. Plantation agriculture was also brutal, but it flourished to supply markets with sugar, cotton, tea, and eventually rubber. The slave trade grew to support this new economy. Slaves were extracted from Africa as gold was extracted from South America. They were sold into work in the mines. They were sold to work on the plantations. An expanding shipping industry linked these different sites.

Settlement, mineral extraction, plantations, slavery, and indeed shipping all shaped distinctive kinds of societies. So did colonial domination – which affected both the dominated and the dominators. The impacts lasted past struggles for independence, creating distinctive postcolonial social formations.

Impacts started with death and human destruction. They included both blocked paths of economic growth, in some cases, and in others channeling of growth into modes of production that unequally benefitted colonial countries. They included arbitrary national borders, drawn for colonizers convenience and often at odds with the organization of indigenous society in Africa. They also included opportunities for some to work in imperial administration, and not only in their home countries. There opportunities in the colonial militaries and in business. The British Empire launched the global South Asian diaspora – that for example saw Mahatma Gandhi make his early career in South Africa, after education in London, and before eventual return to transformative leadership in India. Talented youth from French as well as British colonies had the chance for elite education in the colonial center. This shaped their movements for independence, which were often indebted to European socialism and labor politics – and indeed to Marx and related strands of classical sociological theory.

But in the experience of colonial elites, as of Black Americans, there was pervasive 'double consciousness' (to use Du Bois' phrase). They were at once part of the educated class and sometimes the power structure, and part of the dominated population of the colonies. They were privileged in some ways, yet stigmatized by race. For race – what Du Bois called "the color line" – ran through every aspect of European colonization. It also brought the impact of colonialism into the heart of rich societies that understood themselves as white. After all, without Black, or Brown, or Yellow, or Red what reason was there for the category of white? Europeans fought with each other, but they colonized and enslaved almost exclusively "people of color".

Ending colonialism was the first order of business for subjugated peoples. It was accomplished only by struggle. In the largest single colony, India, the anti-colonial movement was impressively and famously non-violent. This may be one reason that,

though they had been recurrently violent throughout their history in India, British colonizers managed a relatively peaceful exit. They did share in responsibility for the horrors of the Partition that followed, dividing majority Hindu India from the new Muslim state of Pakistan. Elsewhere – in the Belgian Congo, in French Algeria – colonial resistance to independence movements was recurrently, sometimes horribly violent.

There were efforts to forge solidarity among those oppressed in different parts of the world by different colonial powers. The Pan-African Movement (in which Du Bois was active late in his life) sought African unity rather than conflict among the countries into which Europeans had separated Africans. International communism found adherents in the colonies, especially those with industrialized working classes. The most wide-reaching such alliance was the Non-Aligned Movement formed at a great Asian-African Conference in Bandung, Indonesia in 1955. Participants refused to take sides in the Cold War, insisting that their peoples needed decolonization, economic development, and peace – not a conflict between capitalism and communism. Unity was hard to achieve, however, not least because of religious and nationalist divides. The US and Europe (First World) and the USSR (second World of Communism) both worked actively to recruit allies and keep the Third World divided.

The two sides offered support for different projects of development. The West proposed that countries in the Third World follow European and American leadership in combining democracy and capitalism. The USSR proposed that Third World countries choose socialism. Both sides followed classical sociological theory in describing the different paths they advocated as 'modernization'.

Modernization was understood largely in functionalist terms. Following Parsons, this meant combining economic growth with harmonious social integration. The coordinating role of the state should be balanced with individual freedom and psychological autonomy. Within this broadly modernizing frame, socialism meant more state planning, capitalism meant private property rights. The West advocated democracy as a matter of free elections and free press. The Communist East ridiculed this 'bourgeois' approach as overly individualistic and ineffective in providing real democracy to the poor or racially subjugated. The USSR said it was building institutions that brought workers more effective voice in management. To oversimplify a complex history, the West 'won' the Cold War because business institutions delivered prosperity better than the managerial institutions created by actually existing socialism – even if neither delivered fairness. Whether it could have been otherwise – could the Soviet Union have been better run, less distorted by Stalin's political paranoia and violence – remains a question.

Marxist and other critics of 'modernization theory' questioned two core claims. First, they argued that the functionalists ignored the extent to which already 'developed' countries blocked the path of those less well off. The idea of 'development' implied that there was a completely 'internal' explanation of what enabled a country to advance. Did it have enough entrepreneurs, good enough schools, the right mix of freedom and social order? But, critics suggested, if there were already big corporations and lots of exports from the rich countries then the less 'developed' faced a much harder path. And this was true even if the rich were not actively destabilizing or undermining the

less developed – for example, in order to buy their oil at good prices. As the Brazilian sociologist (and later President) Fernando Henrique Cardoso put it, most countries could enjoy only 'dependent development' dominated by one or more rich countries and their corporations.[26]

Second, critics said the modernization theorists suppressed the extent of conflict and contradiction in Western history. Functionalist theory did not pay enough attention to race, for example, and downplayed class inequality. Extraordinarily deadly world wars should have been seen as a problem within the idea of modernization, not just a threat from without. Likewise, the Holocaust should be seen as modernity gone awry, not some sort of carryover of the premodern. For example, Polanyi powerfully analyzed it as one – problematic – response to the same great transformation that also brought labor politics and the welfare state. Modernization theory, he suggested, needed to own the problems and failures of liberalism as well as its appeal.

Oddly, fascism was sometimes described as essentially Eastern, relieving the West of responsibility. Germany was described as marginal to the West. This came not just from French or English thinkers, but from Germans seeking their own claim to distinctive civilization. They looked both to ancient German tribes and to the East, as in the idea of Aryan racial connections to India.

During the Cold War, the idea of the East shaped by historical empires was adjusted to fit the new contrast of democratic, capitalist countries to communism. This tended to overshadow an important distinction. Hannah Arendt distinguished the kinds of authoritarianism which had existed throughout history from modern totalitarianism.[27] Exemplified by Fascism and the Communisms of both Stalin and Mao, this involved attempts to remake society in fundamental ways, not simply a harsh or unfree form of rule. The Cold War saw intense fears of military confrontation between East and West. However, the only actual wars were between smaller countries supported by the US, Russia, or China – like North and South Korea. It remains the case that the deadliest wars the world has ever known have not been between civilizations, or empires, or the West and Communists in the East, but between mainly European nation-states.

Conclusion

Classical sociological theory continues to develop. It is a living tradition as well as an inheritance. There are problems to fix – like inadequate attention to gender, race, or colonialism. There are questions about how to integrate insights from different perspectives. There are historical changes to consider. There's unfinished business like the resolving the tensions between focus on function and power.

All this is true on topics to which classical theorists paid a great deal of attention – like urbanization, inequality or transformations of the family. It is also true when the topic is one underestimated by earlier theory, like the intersectional relations among race, immigration status, class, and gender.

At the same time, classical sociological theory forms a crucial foundation for new theoretical and analytic projects. Without it, new work risks being shallow and repetitive.

The work collected in this book does not exhaust classical sociological theory. It is an introductory sample. There is more important work by each of the theorists excerpted here, and of course there is work by others. To know this tradition enables a sociologist – or a citizen – to approach issues in a deeper way, better informed intellectually, and better empowered to see what will really make a difference practically.

NOTES

1 Mills, The Sociological Imagination, Oxford 1959, p. ii.

2 For the history of sociology, see Tom Bottomore and Robert Nisbet, eds., *A History of Sociological Analysis* (New York: Basic Books, 1978); and Craig Calhoun, ed.: *Sociology in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

3 Habermas, *A Berlin Republic*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997, p. 8.

4 See in particular, *Theory of Communicative Action* (2 vols.) Boston: Beacon, 1980, 1984, excerpted in *Contemporary Sociological Theory*.

5 *Neofunctionalism and After*, Blackwell 1988.

6 Seymour Martin Lipset edited and introduced new edition of Martineau's *Society in America* in 1962 (NY: Doubleday). Yet having one of the most famous white, male, sociologists of the era argue for the importance of her work was not enough to get it well-integrated into how sociologists thought about classical theory. And indeed, though it is more perceptive than Tocqueville on some key points, it hardly replaces his overall theory.

7 On Addams, and more directly on the role of women in founding modern sociology, see Patricia Madoo Lengerman and Gillian Niebrugge, *The Women Founders: Sociology and Social Theory 1830-1930*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2007.

8 Aldon Morris, *W.E.B. Du Bois: The Scholar Denied*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014.

9 See Patricia Hill Collins, *Intersectionality as Social Theory*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2019. In this, Du Bois was greatly influenced by the philosopher G.W.F. Hegel. This is a reminder that though sociological theory is a disciplinary project, it is also importantly interdisciplinary. The concept of intersectionality was formulated by a Black feminist legal scholar, Kimberlé Crenshaw. Sociological theory has been central to, and also received influences from, both Black studies and feminism.

10 *The Sociology of Science*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973; Part 3.

11 Popper, Karl R., *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1992).

12 C.B. Macpherson, *Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962.

13 Adam Ferguson, a Scottish founder of sociology, wrote that society had its own history, distinct from that of politics. *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996; orig. 1767).

14 Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press 1966.

15 The term "industrial revolution" was first used by French writers in the early 19th century and rapidly appropriated into English thought; Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780–1950* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1958).

16 See David A. Reissman, *Adam Smith's Sociological Economics* (London: Croom Helm, 1976).

17 This change was variously described as a move from status to contract or ascription to achievement.

18 On the early history of individualism as a sociological concept, see Steven Lukes, *Individualism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1973).

19 Cooley, *Social Organization*, NY: Scribner's, 1909, p. 4.

20 Tönnies, *Community and Civil Society*, orig. 1887; this ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

21 Marion Goldman and Steven Pfaff, *The Spiritual Virtuoso*, London: Bloomsbury, 2017.

22 David Levering Lewis, *God's Crucible: Islam and the Making of Europe, 570–1215*. New York: Norton, 2008.

23 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History* (abridged edition, translated by Franz Rosenthal). Princeton University Press 2015.

24 Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, orig. 1939; this ed. Oxford: Blackwell 1994.

25 Charles Louis de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu, *Persian Letters*, orig. 1721; this ed., Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973. *The Spirit of Laws* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978; orig. 1748).

26 Cardoso and Enzo Faletto, *Dependency and Development in Latin America*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979.

27 Hannah Arendt, *On Totalitarianism*, NY: Harcourt, 1951.

Part I

Precursors to Sociological Theory

Introduction to Part I

The word "sociology" was coined by Auguste Comte in the 1830s; however, the idea of sociology had been developing for more than a century. Indeed, sociological theory drew on an intellectual heritage stretching back to the Hebrew Bible, Ancient Greece, and Rome, and the birth of Christianity. The roots of modern sociological theory may be traced to changes starting in the 17th century that built on these traditional philosophical foundations.

The Idea of Society

One set of changes had to do with the very idea of society itself. Today, it seems obvious to think society exists and it is important. We may define it as a functional system, the product of meaningful interaction among individuals, or the sum of social institutions. However, although there are debates over its definition, there is a widespread agreement about the importance of the ways in which people are related to each other from love and friendship, family and community to large-scale organizations, such as schools, businesses, and governments to the growing social connections linking the whole world. For society to become the focus of attention and the object of a new science, however, people had to see the world in somewhat different ways.

First, there had to be a separation of the idea of society from government. Early modern thinkers emphasized all the links connecting the members of society to each other, including the culture they shared, the markets in which they exchanged goods, and their communication networks. They distinguished these social relations from control by kings or government officials. This is the basis for the idea of civil society, which remains prominent even today. When we say there is a "civil society" response to an emergency or social problem, we mean that churches and synagogues, non-governmental organizations, and volunteer groups have responded – which are distinct from government agencies. This distinction is rooted directly in the 17th- and 18th-century rise of the idea of society at least partially independent of government.

Second, there had to be an idea that what happened in society was valuable in itself. Early modern thinkers developed the idea that members of society had common interests, that these were morally important, and that social relations should be organized to advance them. Some used the term "commonwealth" to emphasize the connection between the way people were socially organized and their economic productivity and capacity to improve their quality of life. Both sociology and economics grew in part out of this shift in perspective. We see it, for example, in the reading from Adam Smith (and later in that from Émile Durkheim) on the importance of the division of labor. However, the change in perspective was not simply a matter of noticing the importance of social organization, but also a matter of valuing ordinary life. In the Middle Ages, for example, many religious thinkers argued that people should focus only on God, heaven and hell, and salvation, rather than on improving the quality of worldly life. This changed within religious thought as more people looked to the *Bible* and prayer for guidance in everyday affairs, such as family life. Eventually, theories about this worldly social life became more secular and less theological.

Almost as important, an explicit place for the rights of subjects appeared in political thought, as we saw a shift from the complete rights of kings to the notion that rulers had an obligation to serve the interests of the people they ruled. This was an important basis for the theory that revolution could be just, which was important to the founding of the United States (US) and the transformation of France in the late 18th century. The idea of a social contract traces this shift in thought from Thomas Hobbes to Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

Third, the idea of "the people" had to develop in a new way. For democracy to be possible, for example, it had to be possible for "the people" to express their collective opinions – whether through voting or in other ways, that is, from protest demonstrations to petitions. This required a strong idea of "the people" such as that embodied in the US Constitution, which begins, "We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, […]" This opening sentence only makes sense if one believes that "the people" can act collectively to make a Constitution, which depends on the cultural idea that the people can be identified and have a common interest. This was shaped in the early modern notions of nation and citizenship, which defined membership in "the people" and also stressed their common rights, interests, and obligations.

These three core ideas remain influential throughout the modern era: society is distinct from government, ordinary social life is valuable, and large numbers of people can achieve enough social solidarity to make it meaningful to speak of "the people" as the basis for democracy. These ideas changed actual social life and also gave rise to sociology as the scientific field for studying social life. However, in addition to the rise of this new idea of society, the 17th and 18th centuries also saw the rise of new ideas about science and human reason; these are also important for the invention of sociology.

Enlightenment and Science

This second set of basic changes is often summed up in the idea of an "Age of Enlightenment," stretching from the middle of the 17th century through the 18th century. This description was familiar to 18th-century thinkers themselves, who saw

themselves as bringing the light of science, systematic analysis, and new ideas to the shadowy realms of tradition and ignorance. They expected the "light of reason" to illuminate a path of human progress, clarifying both the ways things worked objectively in the world and the values human beings should rightly hold. Like the idea of society, the Enlightenment directly shaped practical projects, such as the American Revolution and the French Revolution, not least by promoting the belief that human beings could choose the social conditions of their own lives, based on reason rather than simply accepting the institutions they had inherited.

The Enlightenment is a label for a collection of partially separate ideas, such as science, the exercise of individual reason, tolerance of difference, and equality of rights (including notably for women who had previously been excluded from most public life and began in this period the long struggle for equality). The reading in the following text from Immanuel Kant is among the most influential of all accounts of the Enlightenment, but it is a summary written near the end of the Age of Enlightenment – by which time most leading European thinkers considered themselves "enlightened." Earlier thinkers, such as Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677) and René Descartes (1596–1650), had seemed much more revolutionary. When their ideas began to attract a growing range of followers in the 17th century, this was widely understood as a direct challenge to religion. Spinoza, for example, argued there should be tolerance for people who held contrary religious beliefs; many thought this amounted to saying that sinful error should be accepted. Descartes held that the basis for certain knowledge started with human reason (famously, he wrote, "I think therefore I am"). Although he held this was consistent with the biblical notion that God gave human beings the capacity for independent reason, many others thought this was an attack on the authority of the *Bible*.

Theories, such as those of Spinoza and Descartes, suggested that individuals should think for themselves and that reason was often a better basis for judgment than tradition. These "rationalist" ideas were soon complemented with the "empiricist" idea that evidence for the truth should be found in observations of the material world. Descartes' contemporary Francis Bacon (1561–1626) had suggested this, but the idea really caught on with the dramatic growth in scientific knowledge that made the 17th century an age of scientific revolution. The father of modern physics, Isaac Newton (1642–1727), was among its most important figures. However, both reason *and* the search for empirical evidence – the hallmarks of science – were applied immediately not only to physics, chemistry, and medicine but also to the project of understanding social life: that is, how markets worked, what government was best, whether population growth would lead to famine, and so forth.

Throughout the modern era, some religious thinkers have remained uncomfortable with the rise of science. Others have sought to reexamine religious questions in light of science. Both religious thought itself and the place of religion in the world have changed. However, this did not necessarily mean an abandonment of religion. Immanuel Kant himself wrote a book arguing for "religion within the limits of reason alone." He meant that it was not necessary to rely on mysterious revelations, but rather that the reason with which God had endowed human beings was sufficient. Certainly, many religious leaders disagreed, but most religious leaders did place more emphasis on the exercise of individual reason.

A variety of other social changes helped the Enlightenment spread its message of reason and reliance on empirical evidence. One of the most important was the printing press, which allowed a much wider distribution of books. With this came growth in literacy and education, which helped the rise of reason. Already in the era of the Protestant Reformation, more Christians had begun to read the *Bible* for themselves, and to think for themselves about its meaning, that is, do not simply rely on the teachings of religious authorities. This same sort of emphasis on individual reason was extended more widely to more questions.

The idea of individual rights was grounded largely in the notion that every individual could exercise reason for himself/herself. This was a key basis for the growing claims that women should have equal rights because they too could reason independently (whatever their other physical differences from men). The ideas of "human rights" coupled the emphasis on reason with equality. Because every human being had the capacity for reason, each deserved respect and had basic rights (such as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, according to the US Declaration of Independence, or those listed in the Declaration of the Rights of Man by the French Revolutionaries). The American revolutionary hero Thomas Paine wrote famously of the importance of common sense, the age of reason, and the rights of man. This inspired both the idea of independence for America and the idea of creating a democratic government to ensure the independence and freedom of Americans inside the new country. If Paine spoke of the Rights of Man, however, he was quickly answered by Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). Wollstonecraft was indignant at the failure to recognize women equally, but she had faith that eventually women's rights would be recognized because this was, literally, only reasonable.

The example of equal rights for women reminds us that simply declaring rights does not mean effectively realizing them and that there are a variety of influential social forces, besides the exercise of reason. Sociology has been shaped both by the emphasis on independent reason – as sociologists have sought to use logic and evidence to understand society scientifically – and by the effort to understand those other social forces, from emotions to tradition to commitments to family or community or nation to the exercise of power. The Enlightenment encouraged a belief in progress based on the exercise of reason, but while many sociologists have believed in progress, most have also studied the limits or impediments to it and some have questioned whether it is as inevitable as the Enlightenment theorists imagined.

Already in the later years of the Age of Enlightenment, there were questioning voices. Mary Wollstonecraft's daughter, Mary Shelley, wrote the novel *Frankenstein* with its theme of a scientist who overreaches himself by seeking to create life. Her work was part of a Romantic movement that complemented and sometimes countered the Enlightenment faith in reason with more emphasis on tradition, emotions, and above all nature. Rousseau was a formative influence on this movement which, not surprisingly, found many of its later leaders among poets and musicians. This too shaped sociology, for the scientific researchers found that the evidence suggested that society was not simply the result of rational decisions by its members.

Authors and Readings

We start our section with two examples from the social contract tradition, representing opposing ends of the tradition. Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) was born in Westport, England and entered the University of Oxford at the age of 15. After graduating, he served as a tutor to the Cavendish family and traveled widely, exchanging ideas with the intellectuals of his age (including Descartes and Galileo). His first publication was a translation of Thucydides (1628), but it was reading Euclid that ultimately convinced Hobbes that matters of political philosophy needed similar axiomatic treatment. He wrote *Leviathan or the Matter, Form and Power of a Commonwealth, Ecclesiastical and Civil* in 1651.

Hobbes was often personally fearful and lived amid civil war; he made fear and the need for caution key themes in his theory. He takes as his starting point that people are by nature equal – in the sense that even the strongest can be overtaken by coalitions of others; and that skill in one area is outweighed by the skills and strengths of others. In the state of nature, the hypothetical time before government, people are characterized by "First Competition; Secondly, Diffidence (that is mistrust); Thirdly, Glory" (*Leviathan* I, 13). People are by nature competitors trying to gain at others' expense. This leads to living in a continual state of war, where the fruits of one's labor are never safe from theft by others. This means, according to Hobbes, that "In such a condition, there is no place for Industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain; and consequently no Culture of the Earth; […] no Arts; no Letters; no Society; and, which is worst of all, continuall feare, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short" (*Leviathan* I, 13). He arrives at this conclusion deductively from the basic point that, without restraint, people try to take what they can from others. That we all lock our doors at night is all the evidence Hobbes needs to confirm the initial premise, and then his conclusion follows from his rigorous application of the deductive method borrowed from geometry.

Hobbes sees only the power of the *commonwealth* as the solution to the problem of the state of nature. Driven by our natural passions to a self-destructive state of war, civilized survival requires a power to check the passions and create order. This power must have the ability to control others through force, since "Covenants, without the Sword, are but Words," which lack the power necessary to enforce order. Hobbes sees this power arising when people give themselves completely to "one Man, or upon one Assembly of men, that may reduce all their Wills, by plurality of voices, unto one Will" (*Leviathan* 2, 17). This is done by each transferring their rights to the leader, which creates the *sovereign*. So long as all give their rights similarly, all are bound to the leader (or leadership body) similarly. Note the sovereign rules completely, as the covenant is among all subjects, not between the subjects and the sovereign, and thus there can be no breach of contract by the sovereign (*Leviathan* I, 18). It is interesting to note that this model does, however, generate power from the subjects rather than God. It is in the covenant of people with each other that the Sovereign's power derives, not from the divine right of kings.
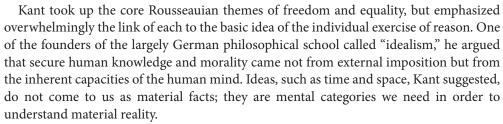
The views of human nature, rights, and the sovereign are very different for Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778). Born in Geneva, Rousseau lived most of his life in Paris. He was influenced by an idealized memory of the smaller community of Geneva, but he also remembered being driven out by the city's Calvinist leaders who found his theories scandalous. He promoted new approaches to music and education, as well as social theory. In all of his work, however, he emphasized the importance of nature – both individual human nature (with its inner voice) and outside nature. In his theory of education, for example, he advocated raising children in the countryside so that they would be close to nature and also discover their distinctive inner selves without the distractions and pressures to conform to the norms of urban society.

Rousseau was passionate about the exercise of individual reason, but in unconventional ways, he burst on the scene by writing the winning essay in a contest calling for discourses on progress in the arts and science. Shockingly, he argued that progress in science actually brought humanity unhappiness by separating people from nature. Rousseau argued that much of what was widely accepted as progress in society in fact brought alienation, that is, separation of people not only from nature but also from their inner, natural selves. (Karl Marx was greatly influenced by Rousseau when he took up this theme in the 19th century; it has been recurrently important in sociology.) Rousseau placed great emphasis on inner reflection to discover the truth, for example, and less on conforming to accepted standards of logic. We see something of this in the reading here where he presents two different ideas about how the common will of the people may be found. One, the "will of all," is more superficial, based on the aggregation of separate, self-interested individual wills (as in voting or opinion polls). The other, "general will," is more basic, he suggests, but cannot be measured in such mechanistic ways. Each of us has within us, however, a capacity to see this light. Though many later thinkers have found the logic of Rousseau's writings difficult, they have been profoundly influential. This is partly because he was a wonderful writer and his work is a pleasure to read even if hard sometimes to pin down. However, even more, his influence stems from the powerful way in which he established the ideas of freedom and equality as basic to modern thought. "Man is born free," Rousseau wrote, "yet everywhere he is in chains," limited by the arbitrary conventions of society and the exercise of power. Nature is given by God to all humanity, yet private property divides it and erects boundaries to exclude. How is this possible? Can it be just? The questions remain basic.

Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) admired Rousseau enormously and kept a bust of the earlier thinker in his study. He lived his whole life in Königsberg, a Prussian city in the north of Germany (which after the Second World War was acquired by Russia and resettled as Kaliningrad). He took walks on such a regular schedule that townspeople were said to set their watches by him (and the very spread of watches was part of the era's more general concern for orderly, precise social life). Though he never traveled, Kant was intensely curious about the rest of the world, reading reports from explorers and missionaries. He sought to develop an intellectual approach that would be valid for all humanity, based on the universal character of reason rather than the differences among cultures.

Kant took up the core Rousseauian themes of freedom and equality, but emphasized overwhelmingly the link of each to the basic idea of the individual exercise of reason. One of the founders of the largely German philosophical school called "idealism," he argued that secure human knowledge and morality came not from external imposition but from the inherent capacities of the human mind. Ideas, such as time and space, Kant suggested, do not come to us as material facts; they are mental categories we need in order to understand material reality.

Kant examined almost every philosophical topic, from mathematics (pure reason) to law and aesthetic judgment (different forms of practical reason). He was concerned to see reason used to settle human conflicts rather than force and imagined progress leading to an era of perpetual peace. He argued that morality needed to be achieved on the basis of human beings' free will because we consider actions properly moral when they are chosen, not forced. This meant that morality was to be pursued by cultivating human capacity for reason rather than limiting human freedom.

Kant also pioneered what he called "critique," a philosophical approach to examining the conditions of actual and apparent knowledge. When he wrote a "critique of pure reason," he therefore did not attack pure reason; he asked how it was possible and urged his reader to try to grasp the underlying, most basic foundations of thought. Too much of what passed for knowledge, he thought, was merely belief accepted out of habit. We need to look critically at such beliefs in pursuit of the truth. This notion influenced all of sociology (and most of modern thought); it was also especially influential for the "critical theorists" we examine later. This notion of basic foundations for knowledge and the pursuit of pure truth became basic to modern science – as well as basic to the versions of "modernity" attacked in the late 20th century by those who sometimes called themselves "postmodernists." It was too easy, they argued, for this idea of perfect knowledge to become the enemy of freedom, especially if it encouraged governments to develop top-down master plans for how society should be organized.

Adam Smith (1723–1790) was a central figure in what is often called the Scottish Enlightenment. Part of the broader European Enlightenment, the Scottish thinkers were distinctive in several ways. One was that they were more skeptical than Kant and most of the Germans about the capacities of unaided reason, and more attentive to the ways in which human beings – and human societies – learned from the accumulated trial and error of history. One of their greatest theorists, David Hume, had provoked Kant to take on his quest for secure foundations of knowledge by severely questioning the limits of abstract reason and arguing that for many crucial questions – such as the nature of cause and effect – we have no choice but to rely on inductions from empirical evidence that can never be entirely conclusive. Another, Adam Ferguson, helped to introduce the idea of civil society and also anticipated later evolutionary theory by holding that history revealed a pattern of improvements in social organization, reflecting among other things growth in productive capacity by which human societies sustained themselves in relation to nature and each other. Smith focused on questions of moral philosophy, arguing that humans would be bound together by natural sympathies and that human sentiments included benevolent dispositions, as well as

sources of conflict. However, much more famously, he helped to create modern economics, as well as sociology, with his book *The Wealth of Nations* (1776). The selection printed here on the division of labor was widely influential. Smith wrote more generally about the extent to which markets created order and produced collective benefits even when the motivations of individual participants were entirely selfish. First, he suggested, markets taught sensible behavior by a kind of external conditioning: they rewarded buying cheap and selling dear and they punished the opposite. Second, markets led people with different skills or properties to cooperate through exchange, thus not only circulating goods effectively but also boosting production. Third, markets did all this without anyone being in charge and directing them. And this was the key point: markets were self-regulating. They were proof, Smith suggested, that it was not necessary to rely on kings or governments to establish all the conditions of social life. Markets could be self-regulating. This is what he meant by saying they worked as though led by an "invisible hand." There were emergent properties of market structure and process that were not the results of any plan or intention. Studying such emergent properties of social organization has remained a key theme for sociology.

The common wealth, Smith suggested, could be better achieved by freeing individuals to compete in self-regulating markets than by central planning or restrictions on trade. Of course, markets could become imbalanced and fail in self-regulation. Smith argued that competition only worked among human individuals, not among large corporations, because the participants had to be relatively equal. And there were some things, such as national defense, that were best provided by government because they needed central authority. However, Smith's points were not only about markets for their own sake. Markets were simply one of the best examples of social self-regulation that went on throughout society – as people found partners to marry, decided how many children to have, wrote books (for the "marketplace of ideas"), and so forth. Most of the civil society could be self-regulating, not only markets – as long as there was freedom for individuals to make their own decisions and at least substantial equality, though not perfect equality since individuals needed to learn from the decisions they made and this meant that some had to win and some had to lose.

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Chapter 1

Of the Natural Condition and the Commonwealth [1651]

Thomas Hobbes

Of the *Naturall Condition* of Mankind, as concerning their Felicity, and Misery

Nature hath made men so equall, in the faculties of body, and mind; as that though there bee found one man sometimes manifestly stronger in body, or of quicker mind then another; yet when all is reckoned together, the difference between man, and man, is not so considerable, as that one man can thereupon claim to himselfe any benefit, to which another may not pretend, as well as he. For as to the strength of body, the weakest has strength enough to kill the strongest, either by secret machination, or by confederacy with others, that are in the same danger with himself.

And as to the faculties of the mind, (setting aside the arts grounded upon words, and especially that skill of proceeding upon generall, and infallible rules, called Science; which very few have, and but in few things; as being not a native faculty, born with us; nor attained, (as Prudence,) while we look after somewhat els,) I find yet a greater equality amongst men, than that of strength. For Prudence, is but Experience; which equall time, equally bestowes on all men, in those things they equally apply themselves unto. That which may perhaps make such equality incredible, is but a vain conceit of ones owne wisdome, which almost all men think they have in a greater degree, than the Vulgar; that is, than all men but themselves, and a few others, whom by Fame, or for concurring with themselves, they approve.

For such is the nature of men, that howsoever they may acknowledge many others to be more witty, or more eloquent, or more learned; Yet they will hardly believe there be many so wise as themselves: For they see their own wit at hand, and other mens at a distance. But this proveth rather that men are in that point equall, than unequall. For there is not ordinarily a greater signe of the equall distribution of any thing, than that every man is contented with his share.

From this equality of ability, ariseth equality of hope in the attaining of our Ends. And therefore if any two men desire the same thing, which neverthelesse they cannot both enjoy, they become enemies; and in the way to their End, (which is principally their owne conservation, and sometimes their delectation only,) endeavour to destroy, or subdue one an other. And from hence it comes to passe, that where an Invader hath no more to feare, than an other mans single power; if one plant, sow, build, or possesse a convenient Seat, others may probably be expected to come prepared with forces united, to dispossesse, and deprive him, not only of the fruit of his labour, but also of his life, or liberty. And the Invader again is in the like danger of another.

And from this diffidence of one another, there is no way for any man to secure himselfe, so reasonable, as Anticipation; that is, by force, or wiles, to master the persons of all men he can, so long, till he see no other power great enough to endanger him: And this is no more than his own conservation requireth, and is generally allowed. Also because there be some, that taking pleasure in contemplating their own power in the acts of conquest, which they pursue farther than their security requires; if others, that otherwise would be glad to be at ease within modest bounds, should not by invasion increase their power, they would not be able, long time, by standing only on their defence, to subsist. And by consequence, such augmentation of dominion over men, being necessary to a mans conservation, it ought to be allowed him.

Againe, men have no pleasure, (but on the contrary a great deale of griefe) in keeping company, where there is no power able to over-awe them all. For every man looketh that his companion should value him, at the same rate he sets upon himselfe: And upon all signes of contempt, or undervaluing, naturally endeavours, as far as he dares (which amongst them that have no common power, to keep them in quiet, is far enough to make them destroy each other,) to extort a greater value from his contemners, by dommage; and from others, by the example.

So that in the nature of man, we find three principall causes of quarrell. First, Competition; Secondly, Diffidence; Thirdly, Glory.

The first, maketh men invade for Gain; the second, for Safety; and the third, for Reputation. The first use Violence, to make themselves Masters of other mens persons, wives, children, and cattell; the second, to defend them; the third, for trifles, as a word, a smile, a different opinion, and any other signe of undervalue, either direct in their Persons, or by reflexion in their Kindred, their Friends, their Nation, their Profession, or their Name.

Hereby it is manifest, that during the time men live without a common Power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called Warre; and such a warre, as is of every man, against every man. For WARRE, consisteth not in Battell

onely, or the act of fighting; but in a tract of time, wherein the Will to contend by Battell is sufficiently known: and therefore the notion of *Time*, is to be considered in the nature of Warre; as it is in the nature of Weather. For as the nature of Foule weather, lyeth not in a showre or two of rain; but in an inclination thereto of many dayes together: So the nature of War, consisteth not in actuall fighting; but in the known disposition thereto, during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary. All other time is Peace.

Whatsoever therefore is consequent to a time of Warre, where every man is Enemy to every man; the same is consequent to the time, wherein men live without other security, than what their own strength, and their own invention shall furnish them withall. In such condition, there is no place for Industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain: and consequently no Culture of the Earth; no Navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by Sea; no commodious Building; no Instruments of moving, and removing such things as require much force; no Knowledge of the face of the Earth; no account of Time; no Arts; no Letters; no Society; and which is worst of all, continuall feare, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short.

It may seem strange to some man, that has not well weighed these things; that Nature should thus dissociate, and render men apt to invade, and destroy one another: and he may therefore, not trusting to this Inference, made from the Passions, desire perhaps to have the same confirmed by Experience. Let him therefore consider with himselfe, when taking a journey, he armes himselfe, and seeks to go well accompanied; when going to sleep, he locks his dores; when even in his house he locks his chests; and this when he knows there bee Lawes, and publike Officers, armed, to revenge all injuries shall bee done him; what opinion he has of his fellow subjects, when he rides armed; of his fellow Citizens, when he locks his dores; and of his children, and servants, when he locks his chests. Does he not there as much accuse mankind by his actions, as I do by my words? But neither of us accuse mans nature in it. The Desires, and other Passions of man, are in themselves no Sin. No more are the Actions, that proceed from those Passions, till they know a Law that forbids them: which till Lawes be made they cannot know: nor can any Law be made, till they have agreed upon the Person that shall make it.

It may peradventure be thought, there was never such a time, nor condition of warre as this; and I believe it was never generally so, over all the world: but there are many places, where they live so now. For the savage people in many places of *America*, except the government of small Families, the concord whereof dependeth on naturall lust, have no government at all; and live at this day in that brutish manner, as I said before. Howsoever, it may be perceived what manner of life there would be, where there were no common Power to feare; by the manner of life, which men that have formerly lived under a peacefull government, use to degenerate into, in a civill Warre.

But though there had never been any time, wherein particular men were in a condition of warre one against another; yet in all times, Kings, and Persons of Soveraigne authority, because of their Independency, are in continuall jealousies, and in the state and posture of Gladiators; having their weapons pointing, and their eyes fixed on one another; that is, their Forts, Garrisons, and Guns upon the Frontiers of their Kingdomes; and continuall