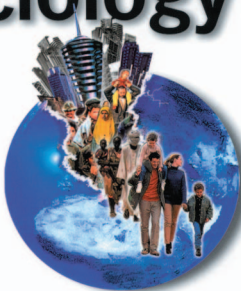


The International Handbook of

Sociology



edited by
Stella R. Quah and Arnaud Sales

SAGE

The
International Handbook
of Sociology

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Foreword

Alberto Martinelli

This book is the first attempt in years to provide a balanced and well-informed assessment of the state of the art of sociology in many of its most important specialized fields. A first, distinctive character of the volume is the choice to focus on specialized fields instead of general theories. It is a wise choice since, while the leading theorists are well known in the profession as a whole, the bulk of the sociological community is made of specialists who, although less widely known, often have a greater impact on the public discourse, on education, and on policy-oriented decision making. A second, related, distinctive character is that the 23 chapters are written by experts in the respective fields who are also leaders of research committees of the International Sociological Association (ISA), with two positive consequences which we do not find in most handbooks of sociology: the book guarantees a more international coverage of the various fields (although sociologists from the non-Western world are still under-represented) and it provides a comprehensive review of the contributions to each specialized field by scholars belonging to different competitive schools. As President of the International Sociological Association, I am glad to add that this book also shows ISA's vitality and its growing importance and legitimation in the world sociological community.

The picture of sociology at the dawn of the 21st century which emerges from the volume is a picture of continuities and breakthroughs in research findings, cooperation and conflict among competing paradigms, achievements in theory and method, and unresolved problems. Major continuities are the ongoing concern with a core of perennial questions of inquiry, such as social order, conflict and change, the meanings of social action, power and legitimacy, inequality and social reproduction, and the reinterpretation of the classics, such as Weber, Marx, Durkheim, Simmel, Pareto among others, as sources of theoretical inspiration, although with the awareness that their analyses are historically bounded.

The common heritage — made of continuing research questions and influences of the classics — did not amount, however, to a core, widely shared, disciplinary paradigm. Actually, the multiplicity of paradigms and theoretical approaches clearly appears as a basic distinctive character of contemporary sociology. For most

sociologists this is perceived as an advantage. Antony Giddens remarks that “the fact that there is no single theoretical approach which dominates the whole of sociology” demonstrates that “the jostling of rival theoretical approaches and theories is an expression of the vitality of the sociological enterprise”. And Raymond Boudon argues that “sociology is in crisis when it pretends to have reached the conditions of a ‘normal science’ and to be led by a unique paradigm”. Not all sociologists are indeed convinced of this advantage, given the fact that some of them prefer to turn to the rational action paradigm of economics; but most seem persuaded that the subject matter of sociology requires a plurality of conceptual perspectives and methods of investigation and that alternative theoretical approaches can be tested with regard to the analysis of specific phenomena.

I think that the advantages and disadvantages of having a core paradigm for a discipline tend to balance each other. The case of economics is illuminating in this respect. In economics alternative approaches do exist, but they do not challenge the core paradigm, which is based on the combined assumptions of rational maximizing behavior, market equilibrium, and stable preferences. This ‘creative simplification’ of human action has brought undeniable theoretical achievements, which are exemplified in Leon Walras’ general equilibrium model as a response to the question of the efficient functioning of a market economy made of millions of individual decisions. But it has also fostered limitations in the number and type of hypotheses which can be derived from the paradigm, as well as apories and difficulties in the empirical validation of the theoretical hypotheses; and it has constrained the ‘imagination’ of scholars in providing interpretations of emerging economic processes.

The reverse seems true for sociology: the freedom from paradigmatic ‘dogma’ has been paid at the cost of more precarious accumulation of knowledge, greater ambivalence, bitter paradigmatic fights which often amount to a waste of intellectual energies. And it has prevented widely accepted solutions to central theoretical questions. A similar question to that of the economists’ relation between rational individual actors and general market equilibrium is at the heart of the sociological inquiry: it is the question of the relationship between structure and agency, with the strictly related ones of the micro-macro links, and of the relation between causal and interpretative methodologies. But there is no theoretical solution to these questions, which could parallel Walras’ general equilibrium model. The preference which most sociologists seem to share for multiple paradigms could, then, be as well a ‘forced preference’, since major attempts to provide a unifying paradigm, from Talcott Parsons to James Coleman to Anthony Giddens, have not lasted or have not been accepted by the majority of scholars. Failures may be due to the fact that the features of ‘homo sociologicus’ are different from those of ‘homo economicus’, and do not allow the creative simplification of the hyper-rationalist assumption, or to the fact that core theoretical questions have to be rephrased and/or most adequate responses must be worked out.

In this situation, however, most sociologists working in specialized fields have not been ‘paralyzed’ by the absence of a unified grand theory, but have proceeded along the most viable paths of Robert Merton’s “middle-range theories”, Arthur Stinchcombe’s “toolkit of analytical instruments” and Jon Elster’s concept of

“mechanisms”. As the latter author argues, “there should be a shift in emphasis in social sciences from theories to mechanisms”, i.e. “small and medium-sized descriptions of ways in which things happen. A mechanism is a little causal story, recognizable from one context to another. A theory has greater pretensions: it is supposed to tell you which mechanisms operate in which situation... Generalizations should take the form of mechanisms, not theories”. This approach, which is close to Weber’s and Simmel’s attitude toward sociology, seems particularly valid for sociological research in specialized areas. In fact, in these situations, the analyst-interpreter will extract from the toolkit those tools, models, mechanisms, that he considers relevant, will adapt them to the concrete research questions, and will verify the correspondence on the basis of the available data and methods.

The continuing work of many sociologists along those lines in specialized fields, as this volume shows, explains why the difficulties in general theory construction have not prevented significant sociological advances in recent years; advances which can be summarized in: methodological advances, better knowledge in specialized fields, and greater consensus of most sociologists on the basic tensions of their work.

Knowledge achievements in specialized fields are well documented in the 23 chapters (and they could be equally easily shown in those areas which are not covered in the volume, such as those of economic sociology), and they are related to the reasonable adoption of the toolkit approach I have discussed.

Methodological advances are also effectively shown in several chapters. They are related to the development of the computer, and range from improved multivariate analysis to graph theory and network analysis, from more extensive comparative research to more rigorous methods of recording and analyzing micro interactional data. Besides, as Smelser points out in a recent work, there is a significant convergence in sociological methodology in the trend toward multi-method analysis with a loss of importance of the qualitative-quantitative contrast and a growing acknowledgment of the bounded applicability of a given methodology.

Positive changes have also taken place in the mode of sociological debate, which have improved from that of destructive attacks aiming at annihilating rivals to constructive critical analysis, with some attempts to bridge contending paradigms and building larger theoretical syntheses. Finally, a growing consensus has developed among most sociologists about the basic tensions of our work, such as the necessary linkage between theory and method and between understanding and explanation.

And there is a growing awareness of both the tension between the universal and the particular, and the tension between involvement and disengagement. In this last respect, sociologists seem increasingly aware of the need to try to combine the search for universality with the respect for specific identities, cultures and languages, and to avoid that legitimate specific cultural and political commitments of individual sociologists prevent a more important and general commitment of the sociological community to collectively validated truth and to knowledge-based public discourse.

Alberto Martinelli
President
International Sociological Association

PART I

Introduction

1 Of Consensus, Tensions and Sociology at the Dawn of the 21st Century

Stella R. Quah and Arnaud Sales

After more than a century of intellectual growth and geographical expansion, the dawn of the next millennium is a fitting crossroad for the global community of sociologists to review the state of the art in their discipline. This volume provides state-of-the-art reviews of classical and more recent areas of sociological specialization from an international perspective. The scope of this collaborative study is not exhaustive but the twenty-two areas reviewed are evidence of the expanse of current intellectual and scientific advances in sociology.

We discuss two contextual aspects of our study in this introductory chapter: the general trends in the discipline as a whole; and the manifestation of these trends in the various areas of sociology. We conclude the chapter by highlighting the main contributions from the twenty-two sociological areas of research discussed in this volume.

A. General Changes in the Discipline

Of the constant and numerous changes undergone by sociology as a vibrant field of knowledge, three deserve special attention. These are: changes in the scale or unit of analysis; the main trends in sociological discourse; and the main tensions in the work of sociologists.

A.1. Globalization and Change in Scale

Adding to their focus on the social actor, communities and institutions, sociologists are also turning their attention towards the 'human' or 'world' society surpassing national borders. The concept of human society (Sztompka, 1993) or world society has been proposed with the aim to reach a macro-sociological level of analysis (Wallerstein, 1974; Ritzer, 1981). This inclination towards a wider range of units of sociological analysis has been brought about by a myriad of worldwide

phenomena including the intensification of transnational flows of activity in all areas of social life, the various powerful forms of hierarchical integration of large world regions, and the accentuation of interdependence among nations and regions of the world. This new perspective of addressing social phenomena at a global scale introduces a number of challenging questions about new agents, new relationships and new institutions involved in the adaptation of national societies, social groups and the individual into a global society which is itself highly diversified.

A.2. Main Trends in Sociological Discourse

Among the major theoretical concerns of contemporary sociology figure three compelling and unresolved issues. One of these three compelling issues is the nature of social agency with the strong debate involving supporters of three seemingly opposed principles: instrumental rationality, morality and emotion. The second issue being debated is the nature of social structure with the discussion centered on randomness versus coherence and asymmetry versus equilibrium. The third unresolved issue is the cogency of methodological approaches with two opposite camps defending the interpretive approach versus the causal approach. These three issues have been acknowledged as major bones of contention by contemporary sociologists (for example, Alexander and Colomy, 1992: 34–35; Giddens, 1993; Archer, 1998). Most of the work published over the past two decades dealing with the above questions on the nature of and links between agency, structure and method, has been produced in North America and Western Europe. A review of the best known contributions to that work reveals four main trends in the style of current discourse among sociologists today.

A.2.a. Continued Inspiration by the Classics

The first trend takes the form of a return to the past for guidance and contrast. This can be seen by authors from a wide range of theoretical perspectives, including those who reject what they perceive as a flawed past. The large number of citations from the work of Max Weber, Emile Durkheim and Karl Marx by authors published in the second half of the 1990s suggests that we are approaching the 21st century, undoubtedly standing “on the shoulders of giants,” to borrow Merton’s famous book title (1965). Moreover, during the past two decades an intense search for philosophical affiliations has been made by several theorists who thereby renewed the strained links between sociology and philosophy. For example, when advocates of the hermeneutic approach look to the past, their citations of the classics tend to converge on philosophers such as Hegel, Bergson, Husserl, Dewey, Lukacs, Heidegger, Dilthey, Schutz or Gadamer.

This rereading of and reference to founders is not simply a chant of old mantras or the habitual invocation of 19th-century thinkers who functioned in a very different societal context (Coleman, 1990: xv). This trend is the response to a need to anchor

theoretical reflection in the larger social science traditions, such as those identified by Collins (1994), namely, the Conflict, Rational/Utilitarian, Durkheimian and Micro-interactionist traditions. These sociological traditions, kept alive by and through the work of widely influential sociologists and other social scientists, strengthen the foundations of the discipline. Looking to the past for inspiration or as a point of reference in the attempt to build something “new” is an almost intuitive tendency and a necessary condition for sociologists, irrespective of their own theoretical persuasion.

A.2.b. Multiplicity and Coexistence of Paradigms and Theoretical Approaches

In his editorial introduction to the *Handbook of Sociology*, a comprehensive review of the discipline in the United States, Neil Smelser (1988: 10) stated that “moments of consensus” have never existed “in the brief history of sociology.” However, we beg to differ to a certain extent as the second trend we observe in sociological discourse today is one of moderate consensus on a dual intellectual concern.¹ That dual concern is the recognition of the multiplicity of paradigms² or major theoretical approaches in sociology and the acceptance of the right of dissenting paradigms to coexist. This near-consensus is a sign of greater maturity of the discipline. Without putting aside their theoretical or methodological rivalries, sociologists are more inclined today than ever before, to recognize that theoretical perspectives that are different from their own may also contribute to the wealth of the discipline. Following the example of Raymond Aron (1967), scholars such as Habermas (1984), Giddens (1993), Collins (1994), Ritzer (1988, 1992a) and Alexander (1987; 1995) have made important contributions to the discipline. Their considerable efforts have provided useful ‘maps’ of the various intellectual trends and their subject matter. The mapping of the sociological domain (of which specialized areas are examined in the substantial chapters of this volume) has facilitated recognition of the multiplicity and coexistence of competing paradigms and of the corresponding diversity of theories and methods within paradigms. The discussion of the contributions of these paradigms is particularly fruitful because it facilitates the identification of conceptual gaps and the integration of different theoretical perspectives. One of the best illustrations of this is, without a doubt, the Micro-Macro debate.

The paradigmatic multiplicity that characterizes sociology is due largely to the scale, scope and depth of its subject matter. It is impossible to tackle an area of research of this magnitude without defining levels (Gurvitch, 1958), or spaces of social analysis, or “paradigm spaces” (Wiley, 1988). A particular paradigm would prove more appropriate for analysis in one space than another (Ritzer, 1992a). As several chapters of this volume show (for example the chapter on ethnicity by Inglis and the chapter on urban sociology by Walton), paradigms can also be identified in relation to areas of specialization. This plurality of perspectives, suggests Kay Erikson (1997: 10–11), leads to the view of sociology as a “special kind of disciplinary territory [which is] unique [because] so many different methods and epistemological stances and ways of looking out at the world meet there.”

Yet, the presence of a multiplicity of paradigms and theoretical approaches in the discipline does not preclude the rise and fall of predominant paradigms over time. Paradigms lose their predominance to other systems of theory when they become inadequate and unable to respond to newly emerging issues in the social world, or to the theoretical concerns of new generations of researchers. Three pertinent examples of this process are Marxist theory, rational choice theory, and feminist theory.

In his analysis of specialized sociological research at the beginning of the 1980s, Tom Bottomore (Bottomore et al, 1982: 31) observed that the predominant trend in the 1960s and 1970s was the growing influence of Marxist theory. He noted that once Marxist theory would enter “into the mainstream of sociological thought and controversy,” it would be subject to the same debates as other sociological theories, for example and particularly, the agency-structure debate. He was right. Despite their importance in European sociology and their penetration in American sociology at the time (which gave rise to over-optimistic predictions of conceptual hegemony) Marxist theories lost their influence very quickly in the 1980s, while one of the central theoretical meta-narratives —the transition to socialism— was overturned with the Soviet Union’s traumatic demise and the subsequent struggle towards capitalism of the former members of the USSR.

Simultaneously, the Rational Choice theory sought to revitalize the individualistic tradition developing often beyond the boundaries of sociology (mostly within the new political economy and new institutional economics as explained in Chapter 3 by Voss and Abraham). Rational choice theory has still not acquired dominant status in sociology, despite the dedicated efforts of its proponents (Coleman, 1990). Yet, its sphere of influence is quite extensive as it was the conceptual frame of reference for neo-liberal public policies in the 1980s and 1990s (see Greffe, 1994; Collins, 1994). At another point of the sociological spectrum, feminist thought took a predominant place in the 1980s and 1990s, as a fight against sexual oppression (see Chapter 4 by Reddock). Feminist thought challenged “both the content and the frameworks of discourse disciplines and institutions to present a feminist alternative” (Murray and Tulloch, 1997: 4).

These three examples show that, contrary to popular belief predominant in the 1970s, a main theoretical approach or paradigm does not usually replace another in a revolutionary and permanent fashion. The relative depletion of seemingly predominant theoretical frameworks usually takes place over time, not infrequently taking up to two decades.

A.2.c. Impact of Structural Conditions and Changes

The third main trend is the recognition (still incipient but likely to become robust given its obvious sociological nature) that the rise and fall of sociological paradigms, theories and methodological approaches is influenced by the changing context of socio-economic, political and cultural conditions. Indeed, theoretical perspectives, controversies and discords do not derive solely from research strategies but from major social, economic and political developments such as the Great Depression,

the Second World War, the radical movements and social unrest of the 1960s and 1970s, the Vietnam War, and the Women's Movement. Large-scale developments such as these have played a role — some believe an important role (Wiley, 1990; Touraine, 1998) in the ups and downs of theoretical schools and methodological approaches in sociology, and in a manner similar to that observed in the natural sciences (Cohen, 1985). The social sciences in turn, through criticism and reformulation of societal goals and means, have influenced to various degrees the values, culture, economic and social policies of a given period in some countries (Touraine, 1998: 124). The mutual influence of structural conditions and research strategies is conveyed well by the assertion that theories are both “value impregnated” and “value impregnating” (Bhaskar, 1980; Bottomore et al., 1982).

The impact of structural conditions (historical events and socio-economic and political changes) on developments in the discipline over the past six decades has also been felt in two ways: first, the alterations in the structures of opportunity available to sociologists (e.g., jobs, research grants, educational policies regulating university funds); and second, sociologists' realization of the inadequacy of the discipline in anticipating macro social developments. Contrasting the progression of 20th-century social history with sociologists' debates on what to study and how to study it, it is evident that none of the theories and conceptual approaches vehemently debated over the past forty years offers the definitive answer (Ritzer, 1992a; Beck, 1992; Beck et al., 1994; Alexander, 1988; Eichler, 1998; Touraine, 1998). As Margaret Archer suggests, we need to “inject a greater modesty in our undertakings” (1998: 14) and proceed by improving what we have and seeking new conceptual and methodological perspectives. Some observers are of the opinion that the proliferation of specialized fields in the social sciences constitutes an obstacle to the holistic view that they feel is needed in times of rapid change. Masini offers interesting views on this problem in this volume's chapter on “Futures Research and Sociological Analysis.”

A.2.d. The Mode of Debate

The fourth trend observed in sociology has to do with the mode of debate over the subject matter and the progress of the discipline. Max Weber once said that societies are made of struggles and consensus. Sociology is not immune to this as there are many conflicts within the discipline. Some scholars' strong determination to impose their perspectives on others has been termed “symbolic violence” by Pierre Bourdieu himself not a stranger to controversy. As discussed earlier, many distinguished sociologists acknowledge the presence of multiple paradigms and conceptual approaches and consider the dissension with regard to paradigms and approaches as a legitimate outcome of open scholarly debate. For Antony Giddens, “the fact that there is no single theoretical approach which dominates the whole of sociology” demonstrates that “the jostling of rival theoretical approaches and theories is an expression of the vitality of the sociological enterprise” and it “rescues us from dogma” (1989: 715). Norbert Wiley concurs that “there is no dominant orthodoxy or even a hint of one — no hegemonic theory, no mandatory method,

no ideological straightjacket and no ruling clique.” In his opinion, “it is a healthy condition for social theory” (1990: 392). Still, there are sociologists who believe that there should be only one reigning paradigm or theory, and who take on the intellectual debate as if it were a combat to victory, to be attained by annihilating the contender (cf., Laclau, 1975, on the famous Miliband-Poulantzas debate in the 1970s on the capitalist State; and the writings of some committed defenders of Foucault’s perspective).

The harsh attacks among some of the contending groups in different domains continued in the 1980s and 1990s, leading distinguished moderate scholars to express their dismay (Wiley, 1990; Ritzer, 1992a; Smelser, 1998). Given the theoretical and frequently also political commitments of sociologists, conflicts cannot be avoided in the discipline. However, it is detrimental to all concerned when such conflicts go beyond the limits of constructive critical analysis and become personal affront or undermine the work dynamics of teaching and research settings.

Interestingly enough, the possibility and the significance of victory in this debate remain elusive. The contentious discourses address fundamentally different philosophical and theoretical perspectives on the nature of agency, structure and the accumulation of knowledge. The latter involves arguments on the viability of research and on methodological approaches. To illustrate: the loudest voices come from those engaged in the “positivist – antipositivist” debate on the accumulation of knowledge. Ritzer sees three differing positions in this debate: the “positivistic model”; the “post-positivist model”; and the “hermeneutic model” but no apparent solution; he advocates more and careful “metatheory” analysis (1992a: 9 and 18–20).

Neil Smelser (1998) explains the situation in terms of ‘ambivalence’. He observes that while scientific rationality is accepted by sociologists committed to sociology “as science” the main opposition lies in “a certain anti-rationality” deriving from “strands of thought such as neo-Marxism, critical theory, varieties of phenomenology, some parts of feminist and gender studies, cultural studies, and post-modernism” (1998: 2). “At the same time”, he adds, “representatives of these approaches themselves appeal to reason and logic and occasionally marshal empirical data to press their perspectives” (1998: 3). Smelser proposes that the ongoing debate, its persistence and the absence of closure spring out of *ambivalence*: “There is almost no facet of our existence as sociologists about which we do not show ambivalence and its derivative, dividing into groups of advocacy and counter-advocacy” (1998: 10). But even such a collective ambivalence may be enriching. The positive side of a plurality of “sociological visions” welcomed by Erikson (1997) is also seen as “more a strength than a weakness” by Bryant and Becker (1990: 6) when their proponents are able to apply different conceptualizations and methodologies in the search for “different kinds of solution.”

A.3. Tensions in the Work of Sociologists

The everyday work of sociologists is naturally affected by tensions evolving from the four macro trends discussed above. While the debates over paradigms and theoretical perspectives take formal shape primarily in the publications of

sociologists as authors, the scope of sociology as a science is also expanding and writing is only one aspect of sociological activity. Other aspects of the work of sociologists include activities such as research, consultancy and teaching. Three main tensions in sociological work deserve special attention.

A.3.a. Specialization versus Amalgamation

As it is illustrated in the subsequent chapters of this volume, practically nothing escapes sociological analysis today. The number of areas of specialization has increased significantly. The diversity and dynamics of social activity, the progressive accumulation of knowledge, the shift in perspectives, the complexity of social systems, in addition to the increase in the number of researchers and the professionalization of academic sociology, are occurrences associated with the identification of new social issues and the creation of areas of specialization within the discipline.

It is within this framework that we find the first tension in the work of sociologists: that of *specialization* (the proliferation of research fields in sociology) versus *amalgamation*. Over the past two decades, in particular, new branches of sociological inquiry have sprung up from the traditional areas of the discipline to address specific areas of investigation. One illustration of this trend is the increasing number of research committees or networks that have been formed within various national sociological associations, and within the International Sociological Association (see American Sociological Association, 1998; International Sociological Association, 1998).

At the same time, there has been a strong reaction from some sociologists (and other social scientists) who are suspicious of the very notion of specialization within the discipline, and who even consider disciplinary divisions within the social sciences as a “fragmentation of knowledge” (see Gulbenkian Commission, 1996) and the redundancy of research subjects and findings (Wallerstein, 1991; 1997). In Wallerstein’s opinion, this tendency “to burrow inward instead of exploding outward” will eventually lead to an impasse. He proposes that the social sciences should be reconstructed in an open perspective whereby sociology would be better integrated, even amalgamated, with other social sciences. Mattei Dogan offers his views on the ‘fragmentation’ within the discipline in this volume’s Chapter 2 “The Moving Frontier of the Social Sciences” and we will refer to them in more detail later on. Irrespective of individual positions on this debate, the opposite pressures to specialize and to amalgamate coexist in sociology. Illustrations of this coexistence are found in theoretical developments, in research, and in the management of sociological work.

A.3.a. (i) On Theory

Concerning theory, efforts to strengthen sociology’s unifying core are evident in the theoretical developments of the past fifteen years. Among the most significant advances

in modern sociological theory affecting the entire discipline and all its specialized areas are: the analysis of the relation between structure and social action at the heart of the debate on social agency (Giddens, 1984; Touraine, 1984; Archer, 1996; Sztompka, 1993); and the exploration of micro-macro links (see, among others, Alexander, Giesen, Münch and Smelser, 1987; Coleman, 1990; Smelser, 1997).

A.3.a. (ii) On Research

Concerning research, while investigation in its specialized fields continues to grow, the status of sociology as the science of social totality is also affirmed through research carried out on a wide variety of themes including the world economy (Wallerstein, 1974; 1980; 1989) and globalization (Albrow, 1996; Robertson, 1992). Additional illustrations are offered by research on societal transitions and the sequences of social transformations. These studies announce in a metanarrative fashion several transitions: from industrial to post-industrial society (Touraine, 1969); from Fordism (Aglieta, 1979) to informational capitalism (Castells, 1989, 1996); from the modernity debate to the questioning of the substantivist perspective of transition in favor of an epistemology centered on the deconstruction of knowledge in the post-modern age (Lyotard, 1979; Giddens, 1989, 1990, 1991; Lash, 1990; Sales, 1991; Touraine, 1992; Hall, Held, Hubert and Thompson, 1996). Moreover, the universal dimension of gender fostered by feminist sociologists has laid claim to a specific and original approach (see Reddock's chapter in this volume; Murray and Tulloch, 1997).

A.3.a. (iii) On the Management of Sociological Work

The coexistence of the contrasting pressures to specialize and amalgamate is also found in the management of sociological work. Most sociologists are familiar with work situations where these pressures are manifested but two points raised about the case of social scientists by the authors of the Gulbenkian Report (Gulbenkian Commission, 1996) fit very well our argument about the tension between specialization and amalgamation within sociology. On the one hand, scholars and administrators have different motivations: "While social scientists, because of the internal pressures generated by their intellectual dilemmas, are seeking to expand the number and variety of pedagogical and research structures, administrators are looking for ways to economize and therefore to consolidate" (Gulbenkian Commission, 1996: 96). On the other hand, there is the unavoidable political dimension of the dilemma between specialization and amalgamation: "different communities of social scientists find themselves in different political situations" whether at the national or university level "and these differences affect their interests and the degree to which they will favor or strongly opposed administrative reorganization" (Gulbenkian Commission, 1996: 97).

The position taken by sociologists (individually or collectively) on whether sociology is specializing too much or not enough and on whether amalgamation

of sub-fields is desirable or should be avoided, is thus determined by both their intellectual concerns as well as their 'political' situation (their position and commitments in the realm of power and authority within their organizations). Given that these are two basic components of the situation of sociologists, sociologists will continue to feel the presence of and the tension between the two pressures, to specialize and to amalgamate. It is unlikely to be otherwise because, as Randall Collins put it succinctly, the process of knowledge creation is intrinsically dynamic and defeats administrative boundaries: "Major advances in research or theory tend to pull followers after them, who institutionalize themselves in turn for a while ... if only until the next big round of discovery" (Collins, 1998: 2).

A.3.b. Involvement versus Disengagement

The second tension in the work of sociologists is that of *involvement versus disengagement*. Sociologists work routinely under the expectation — self-generated or manifested by others — of and interest in the contributions of applied sociology to the analysis of social problems. The prerequisite to this endeavor is the continued effort to improve theoretical perspectives that guide applied and specialized sociology. At the same time, proponents of disengagement call upon sociologists to immerse themselves in philosophical discourse on issues such as the nature of self and knowledge; and to disengage from or reject the preoccupation with social problems which they deemed as prosaic and distracting activities.

The most recent illustration of this tension between involvement and disengagement is the symposia on "A Window to the Discipline" in *Contemporary Sociology* (1998), particularly the contributions by Randall Collins (1998) and Joey Sprague (1998). Although this tension appears frequently in the working lives of sociologists, Risman and Tomaskovic-Devey rightly emphasize the logical connection between theory and applied sociology: "The best kind of sociological activism is ... to create knowledge to facilitate public discourse" (1998: 1).

A.3.c. Causal versus Interpretative Methodologies

The third tension found in the work of sociologists is that between *causal versus interpretive methodologies*. The past two decades have witnessed outstanding improvement in the sophistication of data collection and data analysis techniques due in no small measure to the use of computerization. Accompanying these techniques is the growing interest among sociologists in explanation and a focus on 'the burden of proof' or empirical evidence as the test of theoretical propositions. Concurrently, others promote the narrative interpretation of texts and the rejection of the burden of proof in favor of deconstruction of texts and engagement in humanistic and literary discourse.

The interpretative and causal approaches to sociological analysis are commonly perceived as irreconcilable. However, there have been some efforts

to integrate them based, for example, on a somewhat bipolar conceptualization of society. A recent attempt is that of Michael Burawoy. He proposes that sociology's "disciplinary calling" is to reject "scientific monotheism in favor of a duality of scientific models that portends a mutually enriching, reciprocal engagement of positive and reflexive science" (Burawoy, 1998: 12). His is a work in progress that is compelling and challenging. The debate goes on.

Tensions or contradictions are manifestations of ambivalence in Smelser's (1998: 4–5) sense and they prompt the social actor for a response, however temporary. Agreeing with Smelser (1998: 5) that ambivalence is pervasive, one may expect tensions and contradictions to be a constant feature in sociology. None of the tensions can be resolved by edict, so to speak. These tensions take place at the level of sociologists' everyday life and thus, they are handled, as best as possible by the individual actor responding according to his or her perceived life circumstances and job conditions.

B. Consensus and Tensions in the non-Western Sphere of Sociology

The preceding discussion on the main trends in sociological discourse and the tensions faced by sociologists is based on the analysis of the work of sociologists in North America and Western Europe. What are the implications of those trends and tensions for sociologists working outside North America and Western Europe?

Aware as we are of the pitfalls of classifications, for the sake of clarity we find it necessary at this juncture to introduce a distinction between two spheres of sociological activity, the 'Western' and the 'non-Western' spheres. The Western sphere refers to sociologists working in North America, Europe, Australia and New Zealand. The non-Western sphere covers the highly heterogeneous collectivity of sociologists working in the geographical expanse outside North America and Western Europe.

Historically, sociology developed in Europe and North America, often reflecting the issues, cultural models, modes of access, production and diffusion of knowledge of Western countries or countries where Western intellectual traditions predominate (e.g., the United States, most of Europe, Canada, Australia and New Zealand). Like most branches of knowledge, sociology has steadily expanded world-wide from the time it became "a self-conscious community" in Collins' (1998: 2) words, in mid-19th century. Its geographical expansion accelerated significantly after the Second World War. Today, sociological communities are found in practically every country of the world. Still, their research concerns are rarely included in the typical discourse produced by the 'Western' sphere of the discipline.

The overall intellectual orientation of sociologists in the non-Western sphere leans towards the West. Among the reasons for their 'Western' orientation are the postgraduate training in Western sphere universities of most (if not all) senior sociologists and the current technological advances that facilitate significantly the exchange of ideas among intellectuals and scholars across the globe (Quah, 1993c, 1995). It is not surprising then that the trends and tensions undergone by

sociologists in the Western sphere capture the attention of their non-Western sphere counterparts (cf., Kumar and Raja, 1981; Quah, 1997; Santos, 1998; Gonzalez Casanova, 1998).

However, despite their 'Western' intellectual orientation and their awareness of developments in the West, sociologists in the non-Western sphere are affected differently by the trends and tensions faced in the Western sphere. This is mainly because sociologists in Eastern Europe, Latin America, Asia and Africa work under a different and compelling combination of socio-economic, cultural, political and historical conditions that influence their life and career choices, opportunities and priorities (Quah, 1993a: 15–20). A caveat is in order. The task of discerning the trends in the non-Western sphere of sociology is complicated by its complexity, the extensive range of countries, languages and low accessibility of publications. A further obstacle is the presence of a 'silent majority' of practicing sociologists whose opinions are not known outside their local area of activity because they publish infrequently or not at all (Quah, 1993b). With this qualification in mind, let us examine briefly whether the four main trends discussed in the preceding pages are observed among sociologists in the non-Western sphere.

B.1. Trends

Concerning the first trend on continued inspiration by the classics, there are indications that, like their Western sphere colleagues, sociologists in the non-Western sphere also look to the classics for guidance or as frames of reference in their work (e.g., Cho and Lee, 1993; Ibrahim, 1997; Islam and Islam, 1997; Quah, 1997; Schwery, 1997; Mukherjee, 1998; Santos, 1998). On the other hand, the second trend towards near consensus on the multiplicity and coexistence of paradigms is less clear in the non-Western sphere of sociology. There is awareness of the multiplicity of sociological paradigms and theories. But, in contrast to such concordance, Quah (1998) estimates based on published literature that consensus is lacking on the right of dissenting paradigms to coexist as will be elaborated on the fourth trend on the mode of debate.

The third trend discussed earlier is on the recognition of the impact of structural conditions and changes on the prospects of sociological paradigms, theories and methodologies. This recognition is evident in the published work of many sociologists in the non-Western sphere. But more than just being aware of differing paradigms, the latter are eager to call attention to and to document the impact of socio-economic, political and historical differences of their work settings on their research methodologies and conceptual assumptions (cf., Lee, 1998; Briceño-Leon and Sonntag, 1998).

About the fourth trend on the mode of debate, the same aggressive tendency found in the Western sphere is also present in the non-Western sphere of sociology. It is not difficult to find sociologists in the non-Western sphere who echo belligerent Western voices seeking to annihilate the opposition in debates on the accumulation of knowledge, the nature of and links between agency and structure,

and the cogency of methodological approaches. Interestingly, non-Western sphere sociologists involved in these debates and supporting the hermeneutic perspective, usually emphasize the need to shun Western intellectual influences and favor instead the formation of 'indigenous sociologies' as discussed elsewhere (Quah, 1993b). A probable reason for this seemingly contradictory position is their belief that hermeneutic models of discourse do not convey 'Western' or 'foreign' cultural values. The Western origins of hermeneutic and interpretive models are overlooked. In sum, more effort is needed to foster the right of multiple paradigms to coexist and, correspondingly, the practice of constructive critical analysis in sociology both in the Western and non-Western spheres of the discipline.

B.2. Tensions

The tensions observed in the Western sphere of sociology between specialization and amalgamation, involvement and disengagement, and causal versus interpretive methodologies, are also present in the work of sociologists in the non-Western sphere. However, the latter's structural, cultural and historical conditions modify the relevance and outcomes of those tensions in the daily work of sociologists. They are typically employed in organizations such as universities, the civil service, non-government agencies, and private-sector companies. Their work as employees in these type of organizations is delimited by, among other things, bureaucratic regulations, problem-oriented job assignments, and budget restrictions. Margaret Archer's (1998) frank response to the suggestion that social scientists as intellectuals should dedicate themselves to philosophical discourse and grand narratives is particularly relevant here. Archer states:

We work behind the iron bars of accountability, appraisal and evaluation to teaching and research priorities which are administratively defined and cash driven. ... In other words, the question of 'who pays?' cannot be dissociated from those of 'who cares?' and 'what do they care about?'... Who is going to pay the bill, for we are an increasingly expensive 'class' to keep? (Archer, 1998: 10).

Although directed to the situation in the West today, Archer's comment is particularly appropriate for sociologists working in economically strapped countries within the non-Western sphere. Economic problems are part of the larger picture of low or slow economic development, together with unemployment, crises of political legitimacy, housing shortages, crime, illness, transportation, and other nation-wide problems. Consequently, sociologists are typically expected by their employers to be specialized in one or more areas of the discipline, to focus on problem-solving and/or to make their research relevant to policy formulation and evaluation. In response, sociologists are inclined to resolve the three tensions of sociology in these countries by conforming to the contextual pressures towards specialization instead of amalgamation, involvement rather than disengagement, and causal analysis in place of hermeneutic models.

C. Contributions of and Recent Advances in Specialized Areas of Sociology

The chapters in this volume discuss two important common threads running across the specialized areas of sociology. They are the importance of the link between theory and empirical research; and advances in sociological methodology.

C.1. Specialization and the Link between Theory and Empirical Research

The multiplicity of theoretical systems and the trend toward specialization have their critics. However, it is in the study of specialized areas in sociology where empirical research and theory become connected through the description, interpretation, explanation and possibly prediction of social phenomena. Theorists strive to analyze and develop major intellectual traditions in sociology while seeking to resolve theoretical problems at the heart of the discipline. Specialists, in turn, put the main theoretical systems to the test in their analyses of specific social phenomena. John Walton (Chapter 14) gives a good illustration of this process, with regard to the rise of the critical and interdisciplinary political economy paradigm in urban sociology and the corresponding decline of the Chicago School paradigm of social organization. As Walton explains, the shift came about from the earlier paradigm's inability to explain the international urban crisis of growing inequalities and social unrest. This process of linking theory and empirical research is an important contribution in all the specialized areas discussed in this volume.

By tackling substantive issues in their research, the systematic work of specialized sociologists can also lead to the development of new theories. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992: xx), for example, propose that "we have more to gain by confronting new objects than by getting involved in theoretical polemic which only feed self-engendered and too often empty metadiscourses about concepts treated as intellectual totems." A less radical version of the same point on the importance of pursuing new conceptual and research frontiers or using the "sociological eye" as Collins (1998) put it, has been expressed by sociologists from different orientations (cf., Mennell, 1990; Wiley, 1990; Bulmer, 1990; Archer, 1991). Specific examples of efforts made in the direction of conceptual advances in specialized areas of sociology are discussed in various chapters of this volume.

C.2. Methodological Advances

Specialized sociology also offers a conducive setting for qualitative and quantitative methodological innovations often arising from new conceptual perspectives. More importantly for the present discussion is the fact that the polarity between quantitative and qualitative methodologies is one of our discipline's most enduring myths. Researchers typically defend their chosen methodological approach as the only or best suitable to their subject matter. Yet, the majority of us would agree that both quantitative and qualitative methodological approaches

contribute substantially to our understanding of the social world and that their benefits are enhanced when used in combination.

In his comprehensive review of methodological achievements in the Western sphere of sociology over the past twenty-five years, Peter Abell (1990: 96–97) points to the crucial role played by the invention and development of the computer. He identifies six major methodological achievements and developments in both qualitative and quantitative approaches in sociology. They are: (1) the developing of multivariate causal modeling, including path analysis; (2) “the use of contextual variables and ecological correlation and inference”; (3) “techniques derived from graph and di-graph theory and network analysis”; (4) “the development of production system and generative models”; (5) “a more rigorous framework for comparative research”; and (6) “the development of reliable methods of recording and analyzing micro interactional data” particularly ethnomethodology and conversational analysis. Abell concludes his analysis by joining the appeal voiced by other sociologists on the need to integrate methods and theory if sociology is to advance as a discipline (1990: 110). He also makes a forceful call for the combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies or “triangulation” (1990: 95).

Understandably, there are some areas of specialization where methodological advances are crucial. Specialized research areas such as demography and social stratification, which deal with large data bases, are today enriched by the methodological innovations in multivariate causal modeling. Dudley Poston (Chapter 13) draws attention to the progress made in demography thanks to the use of Hierarchical Linear Modeling, as well as the Survival Models which are currently applied in other fields of specialization. Don Treiman and Harry Ganzeboom (Chapter 6) report on the progress made possible in stratification research by Logistic Regression and Multinomial Logistic Regression which combines the advantages of the quantitative and qualitative methods, and also by new research designs allowing estimations of micro-macro effects.

As indicated earlier, the benefits of applying a diversity of methodological approaches is well recognized. There are areas of specialization that use qualitative and quantitative methods separately to study different dimensions of their subject matter. Examples of this practice are found in medical sociology (Chapter 20 by William Cockerham), mental health research (Chapter 21 by R.K. Price et al.) and sociology of the family (Chapter 8 by Barbara Settles) among other areas of specialization. In these areas of sociological inquiry qualitative, ethnographic and exploratory methods including analyses of textual data, images or films, are commonly applied in the study of interpersonal or dyad relations and small group phenomena. Recently developed methodological tools such as the *Nudist* software package facilitate the systematization of textual data analysis.

At the same time, analyses of trends in attitudes, beliefs and practices in entire communities are undertaken employing survey and other techniques and large representative samples. These type of studies use quantitative methodologies and typically involve multivariate analysis and/or address macro-level phenomena such as the analysis of health and illness patterns, health services utilization, community health, marriage and divorce trends, parenthood patterns, and the like. Other

specialized areas venture into triangulation. William Michelson and Willem Van Vliet (Chapter 15) report this development in the sociology of housing. As triangulation is the combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies, it enables researchers to go beyond the traditional opposition of these approaches which is often the source of conflicts sometimes more deeply rooted than paradigmatic differences.

Yet another vital aspect of international specialized sociology is comparative research. As the chapters of this volume demonstrate, comparative research is conducted in practically all specialized fields and at various levels. Comparative studies may involve distinct units of analysis within the same geographical region, or from regions within the same country, or may be cross-national studies, or any number of creative combinations of these and other levels of comparison.

An additional interesting facet of comparative research is that it has served as the unintended vehicle for the incipient collaboration between sociologists in the Western and non-Western spheres of the discipline. Although a mode of analysis akin to sociological thought was conducted by the Tunisian scholar Abdel Rahman Ibn-Khaldun in the 14th century (Ritzer, 1992b: 8) and sociology was first taught at Tokyo Imperial University in 1881 (Kosaka, 1994), the growth of the discipline in countries outside the Western sphere only began in the 1950s (Quah, 1995). Not surprisingly, then, the presence of non-Western sphere sociologists as authors in Western books and journals has been modest. They are most likely to be involved (typically but not always by invitation from their Western sphere counterparts) in cross-national and cross-cultural research projects. Their participation as sole authors or co-authors in refereed English, French and German publications on comparative research has increased significantly over the past decade. But the pace of this collaboration varies across specialized fields in sociology and remains modest.

In sum, today specialized fields in sociology play an indispensable role in the discipline. Specialized sociologists have furthered knowledge considerably on a multiplicity of phenomena, whether it is social stratification, artistic production, urban dynamics, ethnicity, health, religion, social movements and many others. While the leading general theorists are well known in the profession as a whole, their numbers are relatively small in relation to the number of specialized theorists and practitioners. The work of the specialists influence not only the restricted circle of the specialty, but also the larger public, particularly when their findings attract the attention of the media, always on the look out for new developments and discoveries. It is these advances that are highlighted in this volume.

D. The Contributions of this Volume

A review of major contributions and recent advances in specialized areas of sociology at the turn of the millennium is presented in the twenty-two substantial chapters of this volume. The specialized areas discussed are grouped into six themes: Conceptual Perspectives; Social and Cultural Differentiation; Changing Institutions and Collective Action; Demography, Cities and Housing; Art and

Leisure; and Social Problems. The chapters are written by experts in the respective fields who are also leaders of research committees of the International Sociological Association. Another important feature of this volume is the effort to cover developments in the discipline contributed from both the 'Western' and the 'non-Western' or international spheres of sociology. To this end, each chapter includes a comprehensive review of the literature covering work representative of the different and contesting schools of thought in the respective field of sociology. The authors analyze the progress and challenges in the particular field in a critical, but constructive manner addressing issues from a scholarly perspective.

The first theme on Conceptual Perspectives (Part II) presents four chapters dealing in turn with the conceptual discussion of the frontiers of sociology, rational choice, feminist theory and post-modernity in the context of sociology of religion. As indicated earlier with regard to the debate on the differentiation of sociology by areas of specialization, Chapter 2 "The Moving Frontier of the Social Sciences" by Mattei Dogan compares the processes of specialization in history, geography, political science, sociology and economics. Dogan underlines the dual process that characterizes the history of the sciences. First, formal disciplines are fragmented into specialties, then the specialties resulting from the initial fragmentation are recombined, that is, a hybridization of fragments or branches is formed, which either leads to the creation of a new independent field or a field claiming dual allegiance (e.g., political sociology). Indeed, the interdisciplinary circulation of concepts is a true indication of the porosity of the formal boundaries between the social sciences. Dogan argues that after enjoying "monodisciplinary" expansion up to the 1970s, sociology transgressed the boundaries of the other social sciences to infiltrate practically every domain. A similar development is found in economics. Several areas of specialization with economic connotations have developed into other disciplines (e.g., political economy). Dogan proposes that while monodisciplinary research plays an essential role in scientific progress, hybridization is particularly productive also: "the higher one goes up the ladder of innovations, the greater are the chances that the boundaries between formal disciplines will disappear."

Chapter 3, "Rational Choice Theory in Sociology: A Survey," by Thomas Voss and Martin Abraham, deals with a theoretical current³ whose visibility and influence has increased considerably over the last two decades in several specialized fields of the discipline. Voss and Abraham offer an excellent and comprehensive panorama of this theoretical system. They show the intellectual affiliations of rational choice theory, the formal model used to explain human conduct, and the embeddedness of this approach in general theoretical sociology. They review the progress achieved by the Rational Choice Theory at two levels: on the explanation of the emergence and effects of social norms; and on its application to substantive fields of research, for example, family, religious behavior and social movements.

Chapter 4, "Feminist Theory and Critical Reconceptualization in Sociology: The Challenge of the 1990s," by Rhoda Reddock, reviews the emergence of feminist sociology and its contemporary epistemological challenges. The author argues that despite the large number of contributions in this field, its overall impact on the discipline is uncertain. Reddock discusses the difficulties encountered in

incorporating “Black feminist critique” into the mainstream, that is, White feminist theory, which may be seen as ethnocentric. Only recently has this major problem begun to receive due attention in feminist theory. The author agrees with what she sees as the main tenet of feminist theory today namely, the need to apply re-conceptualized Marxist and socialist perspectives to the analysis of gender and the position of women in society. The historical and fundamental root of feminist scholarship is the argument that the “invisibility of women” in sociology constitutes a “structural weakness of the discipline.” More importantly, the emergence of the concept of “difference” first presented by Black feminists and later emphasized by post-structuralist philosophers, represents for the author one of the major contemporary challenges for mainstream feminist theory in the 1990s. Post-structuralism and post-modernism have had an impact on feminist theory and it is manifested primarily in the challenge against the legitimacy of categories such as “women,” “Black” and “women of color” and the subsequent deconstruction of these categories. The main methodological innovation in feminist research is the “feminist standpoint” which refers to “locations” from where feminists experience and understand the world. Reddock points out that this methodological tool is borrowed from W.E.B. Dubois’ concept of the “double consciousness” that he identified in the American Black community. She argues that, Third World feminist scholarship, with very few exceptions, is relatively unknown, while feminist scholarship from developed countries dominates. In addition to the theoretical dimension given prominence by the author, feminist studies also have a very important substantive dimension, which is not specifically dealt with in Chapter 4 but that may be identified through the literature cited.

Chapter 5 “The Challenge of Modernity/Post-modernity to the Classical Heritage in Sociology of Religion,” by Ivan Varga offers an interesting discussion of the influence of post-modernism in the sociological study of religion. He contends that the post-modern sense of crisis influences the process of “decomposition and recomposition” of religion. The influence of post-modernism is enhanced by several other factors including: socio-economic changes, such as the process of globalization and the incorporation of developing societies; political changes like the demise of the Soviet Empire which restored the freedom of conscience and religious beliefs; the decline in institutional religion; the growth and revitalization of religious movements; and the rise of fundamentalism. The conceptual distinction between religious practice and belief is presented as a new perspective in the study of religion. This trend is represented in work dealing with “diffused” religion and confirmed by empirical studies on the situation of “believing without belonging.” An additional interesting distinction is made between belief, or the notion of the sacred which may be held for its own sake, and the traditional role of institutionalized religion that influenced political preferences or voting behavior. One of the key contributions from current research in the field concerns the analysis of the assumed link between modernization and secularization.

Part III focuses on the theme of social and cultural differentiation and, without seeking to be exhaustive, it covers two particularly productive specialized research areas: social stratification and ethnicity. Both research areas are of great

significance in every society today, from small communities to nation-states. The study of ethnicity is in full re-emergence and effervescence nationally and internationally, given the current movement of populations around the globe, the myriad of local conflicts, nationalist movements, and even genocide, among other phenomena.

Chapter 6, "The Fourth Generation of Comparative Stratification Research," by Donald Treiman and Harry Ganzeboom, traces the advances in social stratification research over the span of fifty years and identifies four generations or levels of development in the field. The first three generations progressed through a steady sophistication of data analysis techniques, but faced a concomitant narrowing of the substantial research focus. The fourth generation represents a significant improvement over its predecessors for three reasons: it provides a welcome return to "broad questions of early stratification research, in particular to the substantive conceptual investigation of how stratification outcomes of individuals are affected by their social environment"; the analysis is aided by new and improved statistical tools and procedures involving qualitative and quantitative methods; and there is a significant emphasis on comparative research, both cross-national and historical. One of the most interesting contributions of the field is the study of major social transformations of stratification systems. Applying historical and longitudinal analysis, stratification researchers analyzed changes in intergenerational mobility and in the positions of political and economic elites in Eastern European countries before and after the collapse of communism and in China before and after its selective opening to a market economy.

As Christine Inglis indicates in her analysis "The 'Rediscovery' of Ethnicity" (Chapter 7) the field of ethnic, race and minority relations is much more marked by discontinuities than stratification research. Race has been for a long time one of the main criteria for classifications within and across societies. In contrast, the question of ethnicity and minority groups re-emerged in sociology as a major issue of intergroup relations during the 1970s. Since then, it has grown rapidly not only in terms of sophisticated middle-range theoretical frameworks and empirical research, but also with regard to problem-solving of practical issues for societies confronted with ethnic differences and potential ethnic conflict. The author stresses that during the first phase of sociological research, the ethnic phenomena was marginalized and associated with the existence of pre-modern forms of society. Assimilation was the dominant paradigm linked to the functionalist model, which was not questioned until the 1970s and 1980s. During this period of transition, class and state-centered approaches were complemented progressively by the new feminist perspectives, cultural studies and post-modernist approaches. The major research issues in the 1990s are racism and its relation to exclusion and citizenship. In opposition to the violence of ethnic conflicts, the author underscores the importance of valorizing the multicultural society perspective that proposes the recognition of cultural diversity within a democratic framework.

Part IV comprises Chapters 8 to 12 and discusses how rapid and profound social change questions and forces the recomposition of institutions and collective action and their proliferation into new forms. The family is one of those institutions. In Chapter 8, "Sociology of the Family: Global Advances and Challenges," Barbara

Settles identifies three main themes in family sociology research. They are: the family's adaptation to rapid social, political and economic changes; the problem of migration and consequent ethnic and national identities of families; and the political misuses of family studies and concepts in their application to legislation affecting the family. Settles suggests that among the conceptual challenges tackled by family sociologists are the fuzziness of cultural definitions of key concepts such as family and kinship, and various contentious and politically influenced visions of the meaning and value of the family in society. Additional examples of crucial conceptual tasks being confronted in the field are the perception of family boundaries in contemporary households and 'family' settings of divorced and separated parents, stepfamilies, absentee parents, single parent families, and other non-traditional family roles. Methodological innovations in family research are promoted by the strong impetus of comparative research and the need to use and adapt qualitative and quantitative approaches. The wealth of research publications, methodological approaches and theoretical perspectives,⁴ reflect the complexity and the current relevance of family sociology.

Richard Braungart and Margaret Braungart examine in Chapter 9 "International Political Sociology," the establishment of political sociology as an international field of study and its development as a comparative research area. Political sociology, a strong interdisciplinary field, is challenged by large-scale transformations such as the post-Cold War, international equilibrium, the emergence of international regimes, and the discourse on public and private domains. In order to map out and present the current debates in the field, the authors identify two intensely disputed metahypotheses which have elicited much investigation: (a) "Economic development correlates with democracy"; and (b) "Political parties and ideological divisions supporting party differentiation and voter alignments have remained remarkably stable since the national revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries." The authors argue that the political party system in the West has remained stable over time, but significant changes have occurred in society because of the growth of the middle class, the rising standard of living in several countries, and the formation of new social cleavages and inequalities. Class politics has been frequently displaced by cultural forms of politics, race, ethnicity, gender, generations and religion.

A more specialized area of research, the armed forces, is discussed by David Segal and Nehama Babin in Chapter 10 "Institutional Change in Armed Forces at the Dawning of the Twenty-first Century." The authors observe the transition of the armed forces from the institutional model of the early Cold War period to an occupational military force specific to the late Cold War period that substituted conscription by voluntary forces, to the post-Cold War model toward which most Western countries are currently moving. Even though three major military interventions were carried out in the 1990s by international alliances, there has been a marked decline in defense expenditures and in the labor force. But the decline has been compensated by technical specialization and the use of sophisticated equipment. Re-orientations have also been observed in the vocation of armed forces when personnel is often deployed, with varying degrees of success, in humanitarian or peace-keeping missions. At the organizational level, the authors

note a slow transformation of armed-forces culture such as the integration of women and the multinational integration in certain army corps. Comparative research is very important in this specialized field of sociology. Based on cross-national research findings, the authors underscore the specificity of Latin American armed forces and highlight their transition toward a post-praetorian model.

A strong interest in “new” social movements developed in sociology since the beginning of the 1980s as Bert Klandermans explains in Chapter 11 “Social Movements: Trends and Turns.” Given the complexity of the social phenomena under study, this active field of specialization in sociology is characterized by strong competition among theoretical approaches. The weakening of the links between class and politics, the larger openness of democratic systems, and the de-differentiation processes specific to post-modern cultural streams have enabled non-institutional forms of action to develop in civil society, to be more easily recognized in political life, and to play a role in cultural transformations. Klandermans discusses a conceptual approach to social movements based on four classical concepts (grievances, resources, opportunities and meaning) from theoretical perspectives that have dominated the field. The main challenge has been to understand why social movements emerge. However, new issues have been identified and analyzed in recent years. Among them are: the *internationalization* of social movement actions; the *impact of political change* (that is, political alignments and configuration of power) on the opportunities afforded by a given social movement; the process of *protest policing* given the rise of more subtle measures of control and the professionalization of the control of protest; and the *impact of culture* on the emergence of social movements and on the processes shaping culture in societies. These issues have given rise to very interesting research in the field and the proliferation of conceptual perspectives. For Klandermans, and indeed for several authors, the social movements field of study is fragmented and it is time to formulate synthesizing theoretical frameworks.

In Chapter 12 “Late Modern Institutions and Collective Action,” Pierre Hamel, Henri Lustiger-Thaler and Louis Maheu focus on social movements and their institutionalization from a different angle, the structure-agency debate. Criticizing the institutional theories of collective action that see institutionalization as the end point of a social movement, the authors argue that institutions are dependent upon the reflexivity, subjectivity and diversity of agents that influence, modify and contest them. There is no longer a direct correspondence between systems and actors channeling conflicts towards social compromises as conceptualized by the traditional institutions paradigm. The authors propound that over the last decade, the sociology of social movements has given more attention to the dimensions of individuality and subjectivity as essential components of action. The actor is not an abstract representation in the movement but an acting agent participating in a network which appears as the result of the action itself.

Part V “Demography, Cities and Housing” covers three chapters on the dynamics of population flows and settlements. In Chapter 13 “Conceptual and Methodological Advances and Challenges in Demography,” Dudley Poston underscores that among the current challenges of the field of demography is the very definition of its scope and boundaries. While a general distinction is usually

made between formal or mathematical demography and social demography, there is no consensus on this distinction. With this backdrop, the author identifies three substantive research areas as the most promising in terms of their contribution to the state of knowledge in demography: the 'proximate determinants' paradigm; bio-demography; and male fertility studies. The most fruitful theoretical approach is, in Poston's view, the 'proximate determinants' model of fertility explaining how various social, economic, geographic and other factors influence fertility via four principal and three secondary determinants. The field of demography operates within the paradigm of scientific analysis whereby theoretical models are tested empirically by means of standardized data on population characteristics. Poston identifies three useful efforts towards methodological innovations in demography: the application of 'multilevel modeling'; the continuous preoccupation with the construction of indices and models to measure and explain phenomena; and the shift in attention from female to male fertility.

Urban sociology is yet another dynamic field of sociology today. In Chapter 14 "Urban Sociology," John Walton reviews critically the developments in the field. He indicates that the classical social organization paradigm of the Chicago School gave way to the critical and interdisciplinary political economy paradigm in the 1980s because of the former's inability to explain the international urban crisis of growing inequality and social unrest. The political economy paradigm has been the most vigorous and unifying paradigm in urban sociology for the past two decades. It proposes a 'political economy of place' based on socially constructed struggles in the market over alternative use of space. One of its most recent applications is the study of global cities and the process of globalization. The methodological approaches suitable for this paradigm are cross-national comparisons and the creative combination of macro-level analysis and case studies. Walton explains that the success of urban political economy with its densely developed theories of structural causation laid to rest earlier anecdotal (community study) and metaphorical (human ecology) treatments of the city. However, Walton argues that the political economy paradigm's two main problems of overconfidence and 'economism,' have led to a re-assessment of its value. Although this paradigm had dominated urban sociology for the past two decades and had produced valuable results, by the mid-1990s, urban sociology was again in need of new direction. The search for a unique "urban object" has proven difficult and Walton stresses that no single formulation of the urban question has yet gained, nor is likely to gain, consensus. Still, the author asserts that in contrast to other subfields of sociology, the proliferation of efforts to define its subject has made urban sociology more coherent.

Following the inclination towards specialization among sociologists, it should come as no surprise that special attention has been given to housing. Today, the sociology of housing is recognized as an area distinct from urban sociology. The approaches of the two domains are different. In Chapter 15 "The Sociology of Housing," William Michelson and Willem Van Vliet present a comprehensive assessment of the field. Significant angles for sociological research are applied to the study of housing for example, family and neighborhood interaction, social and economic stratification and discrimination, labor markets, national policies

and global investment patterns. Sociology plays two roles: sociology *in* housing research through the analysis of the impact of design on social interaction, and the effects of crowding; and sociology *of* housing research which is the analysis of the reciprocal links between housing research and economic, political, demographic and cultural variables. In terms of conceptual developments, the influence of a neo-Marxian perspective was prevalent in the 1970s, but waned in the 1980s. It was replaced by structural analysis which remains influential. The impact of the Weberian perspective can be seen in their structural analysis of professions involved in the production and design of housing for example architects, urban planners and developers. Multidisciplinary approaches, including sociology and psychology, are usually applied to the study of the housing needs and a typical example is the housing needs of the elderly, a theme of current significance. Standard methodological approaches (e.g., surveys, census data, documentary evidence) are now complemented with recent innovations such as methodological triangulation. Although the field began in the United States, it expanded to Europe in the 1970s and it has called the attention of sociologists in many other world regions since then. Today there is a serious emphasis on cross-national comparisons of the impact of macro-level variables on the provision and nature of housing.

Part VI on Art and Leisure comprises three areas of specialization each with a relatively smaller community of researchers, but dealing with important dimensions of social life: the sociology of art which Gurvitch (1958) called “sociology of works of civilization”; the study of the leisure society; and the study of tourism. In Chapter 16, “Sociology of the Art: New Stakes in a Post-Critical Time,” Antoine Hennion and Line Grenier argue that in taking art as an object, sociology has helped to shift the interest from the consideration of a few chefs-d’œuvre and genius painters to mainstream productions, professions, markets, and institutions. Two main perspectives have marked the development of the sociology of art. The first and most dominant is the critical perspective that insists on the determination of art by social factors, without actually taking into consideration the work of art and the aesthetic experience. From this perspective, art is “illusion” or a construction or, to use a religious metaphor, a question of belief. The second is the post-critical perspective that, although conceptually a continuation of the first, it is not hostile or indifferent to art. From this theoretical viewpoint, art is not a creation *ex-nihilo*. It requires mediations, that is, gestures, bodies, languages, institutions, and so on, but it is also a performance, and sometimes an event, as when something new happens in the experience of aesthetic pleasures. On these grounds, sociology attempts to understand the “collective action” and processes behind the production and consumption of art. One of the methodological innovations in this field is the study of the “careers” of works of art. Hennion and Grenier propose the post-critical perspective and the importance of developing the critical and more pragmatic aspect of the concept of mediation.

At the beginning of the 1960s it was predicted that the expansion of automation would lead to ‘the leisure society’ by the end of the century. Today, some sociologists advance in more dramatic terms that the end of work is at hand. However, as Gilles Pronovost writes in Chapter 17, “The Collapse of the Leisure

Society? New Challenges for the Sociology of Leisure,” the sociologists of leisure assert that neither position contributes to a significant understanding of current social changes. Taking a historical perspective, Pronovost shows that several intellectual influences have shaped the sociology of leisure. In the field’s early phase of development, the American anthropological perspective was influential through its emphasis on the relationship of leisure with culture, particularly mass culture. In Europe after the Second World War and up to the 1960s, popular education and the control of time outside work were at the center of grassroots practices and influenced the academic analysis of work and leisure. Dumazedier, the founder of sociology of leisure as an autonomous field of study, related leisure with cultural development and stressed its importance as a social space for the emergence of new values and educational dimensions. Sociologists in the field today recognize leisure as a distinct social phenomenon that has grown significantly both in participation and diversity. Aspects of life such as education, family life, work and time are all closely tied to leisure, which is itself changing with society. Pronovost argues that is time to rebuild the sociology of leisure, in particular by seeking to increase cooperation with other subfields of sociology. In accordance to the increasing importance of comparative research, Pronovost stresses the necessity of taking a critical distance from Western-centered conceptualizations of leisure.

Who would have thought four decades ago that the sociology of tourism would branch out of the sociology of leisure? We will see, however, that in practice, these domains can be relatively distinct in both approach and object specificity. Graham Dann in Chapter 18, “Theoretical Advances in the Sociological Treatment of Tourism” explains that although sociology of tourism began as a subfield of sociology of leisure, it follows now a multidisciplinary approach and applies several theoretical perspectives. Tourism is today a massive social phenomenon representing major transnational flows of visitors. The research themes that have furthered the evolution of the field, often within the framework of strong polemics, are: the study of the tourist system; the significance of the tourism phenomenon in a global and ‘commodified’ world; the tourist’s experience as a quest for authenticity or in response to the appeal of nostalgia; and host-guest interaction, among others. Dann emphasizes that tourism as a factor of social change has significant socio-cultural consequences requiring indigenous adjustments and a reflection on the tourist’s identity as an observer.

Part VII on Social Problems comprises five chapters covering alienation, the controversies of social engineering, physical health, mental health and futures studies. In Chapter 19, “Unravelling Alienation: From an Omen of Doom to a Celebration of Diversity,” Devorah Kalekin-Fishman shows that over the past four decades the study of alienation has undergone a transformation from a relatively unified concern with the threat that alienation represented to the stability of society to more refined perspectives and a wider variety of issues and approaches. She argues that although sociologists are concerned with theory their practical concern with alienation in everyday life (for example, dropping out of school, exposure to violence, aberrant behavior) does influence the agenda of sociological theory. Theoretical trends are diverse. There are traditional discussions

of the philosophical connections of the concept of alienation with the thought of Hegel, Nietzsche, Habermans and Beck; studies focusing on systemic alienation; and theoretical analyses of the association between alienation and anomie within different domains of social reality as suggested by Durkheim and Marx. Still, the author shows that one consistent thread in the sociology of alienation over the past decades was the persistence of Melvin Seeman's conceptual formulations of five dimensions of alienation: powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, social isolation and self-estrangement. Since Seeman's work, alienation theory has expanded in various directions including neo-liberalism, systems analysis, post-modernism, "new age" views and critical theory. The author herself theorizes alienation in neo-Marxist terms, but she recognizes the difficulty of arriving at a theory of alienation that would explain the human condition in all its complexity. Researchers in this field apply a variety of methodological approaches including both quantitative and qualitative techniques.

In Chapter 20 "Medical Sociology at the Millennium," William Cockerham discusses the developments in medical (or health) sociology. In terms of the number of sociologists engaged in medical sociology research and on the volume of research output, this is one of the largest and most active fields in the discipline. The increasing worldwide recognition of the impact of social factors on health and of the health of populations on the overall well-being of society, foretell the continued growth of the field in the 21st century. A wide variety of theoretical perspectives are applied. The initial dominant theoretical approach was structural functionalism. But symbolic interactionism became a major contending approach in the 1960s influencing labeling theory and the study of mental illness. Symbolic interactionism remains an important theoretical orientation in qualitative studies in the 1990s; Weber is influential; and conflict theory is a leading conceptual perspective in studies of health care policy. There is no dominant theoretical orientation in medical sociology today. Cockerham argues that several themes are of concern to experts in the field, including the loss of power and autonomy of the medical profession, and the persistence of class inequalities in health matters to the point where health declines rather than improves with the passing of time in underprivileged communities. Among the new leading studies in the field to date are those which attempt to define the theoretical parameters of health lifestyles, to assess gender and cultural differences, and to specify the powerful role of education in lifestyle choices. A wide variety of methodological approaches are applied in medical sociology, from ethnomethodological and deconstruction studies to multivariable analyses using advanced statistical techniques. Comparative studies have been common in the field for the past two decades and have increased in importance with the advent of worldwide epidemics and the increasing significance of cultural differences in health-related behavior.

Mental health, a closely related but distinct field of specialization is discussed by R.K. Price, C.R. Pope, C.A. Green, and S.C. Kinnevy in Chapter 21 "Mental Health and Illness Research: Millennium and Beyond." The authors describe the field of mental health as a vibrant area of multidisciplinary research bringing together the contributions of sociology, psychiatry, psychology, social work,

public health and anthropology. There is friction with regard to boundaries among the disciplines involved in this field. But the authors see its multi-disciplinary nature as a positive feature because no one discipline can provide sufficient expertise to explain the complex forces involved in mental illness. Such diversity explains the multiple conceptual perspectives and methodological approaches employed in mental health research. The authors favor a judicious combination of conceptual perspectives including positivism, ethnography and others as the best alternative in comparative and cross-cultural research. Still, they propose that cross-cultural psychiatry is a more suitable framework particularly in international comparative research. The cross-cultural approach has two basic schools which tend to converge: (a) the psychiatric epidemiology or “universalistic” approach which follows the biomedical model and seeks a standardized assessment of mental illness applicable to all countries; and (b) the “culturalist approach” or “new cross-cultural psychiatry” which emphasizes the importance of understanding culturally specific manifestations of psychiatric disorders not only from the perspective of biological factors but also as part of the culturally specific system of beliefs and practices. Research progress has been made especially in two topical areas: the mental health of children and adolescents; and mental health care utilization. The authors underscore the importance of applied and policy-oriented research.

Chapter 22 on “Recent Advances and Challenges in Sociotechnics” by Jon Alexander deals with the study of social manipulation, a theme that is still in the fragile stages of formation due to several ambiguities. The 20th century may be said to be characterized by the rise in intentional, planned and strategic actions implemented by States, enterprises and even certain social movements. For sociologists doing research on sociotechnics, these actions often derive from social engineering (SE), which has negative connotations in many circles. The author explains that social engineering arose in connection with state expansion, with extreme forms of totalitarian regimes. He suggests that we are now faced with subliminal social engineering based on high technology and cognitive psychology, which is used to overcome human resistance to change. The field of sociotechnics is not only critical and theoretical, but also practical. It is therefore important to distinguish between the study and the practice of social engineering. Professional and legitimate SE must be distinguished from “dark,” totalitarian SE. To illustrate the differences between these two kinds of SE, the authors highlight the successes and failures of two contemporary social engineering projects: the American “Help Wanted Campaign” of the 1990s, and the “Burundi National Reconciliation Campaign.”

Finally, Chapter 23, “Futures Research and Sociological Analysis,” by Eleonora Barbieri Masini addresses the question on the prospective and predictive capacity of sociology. We have underscored earlier the perhaps too severe criticism often made of the social sciences because they are rarely able to anticipate macro-social events or developments. This raises the question of the legitimacy of the social sciences, which requires reflection, clarification and commitment, for all sciences must be concerned about the future. Reviewing the developments in the area of futures research, Barbieri Masini makes reference

to Bertrand de Jouvenel's remark that we can only conjecture the future, because there are many possible futures. Prospective studies are based on the understanding of the past and can only refer to a set of possible, probable and desirable futures (PPDF). Future studies originated from technological forecasting and progressively integrated the perspectives of the social sciences in a trans-disciplinary fashion to take into account social changes. Future studies have been very useful in understanding social changes, notably because they favor the opening up of disciplines whose boundaries are too often artificial. Correspondingly, many sociologists have played an important role in prospective studies. The author stresses that it is dangerous to look at a phenomenon from the perspective of only one particular branch of sociology, without considering perspectives from other contexts.

E. Concluding Remarks

Introducing the book in this chapter we have outlined what we see as the general changes in sociology in the form of consensus and tensions. We discussed the manifestations of these changes in the link between theory and empirical research and in methodological advances. And we highlighted the main contributions of the chapters in this volume. The prevailing idea throughout this discussion is that the subject matter of sociology requires a plurality of conceptual perspectives and methods of investigation. This, in turn, requires the constant creation and refinement of conceptual and methodological approaches. In the process, debates over agency, structure, knowledge accumulation and method, and the links that may or may not bind these phenomena will persist. But debate needs not be destructive. If the mode of sociological discourse among theoretical schools is *constructive critical analysis* instead of a combat aimed at the obliteration of a perceived enemy, the cacophony of voices heard in sociological debates will invigorate the discipline as we enter the new millennium.

A final and encouraging observation is the current effort at building bridges between what Alexander and Colomy (1992) call the "metaphysical" and "empirical" poles of the "scientific continuum" in sociological thought. Recent examples of these bridges are: Ward's (1997) discussion on scientific knowledge from different conceptual perspectives; the application of functionalist and structuration theories to the analysis of the relationship between socialization and agency (Shilling, 1997); the typology on social integration and systems integration using Parsons' and Habermans' perspectives (Widegren, 1997); the analysis of social class from the perspective of structuration theory (Grusky and Sorensen, 1998); and Burawoy's (1998) call for reciprocal engagement. It is this drive towards a fruitful dialogue among diverse schools of thought that represents the strength and promise of sociology in the 21st century.

We now invite the reader to enjoy the detailed discussions on specialized fields of sociology in the chapters that follow.

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Endnotes

1. There is consensus on two other concerns as underlined by Quah (1993b): the dedication to the study of social phenomena however defined; and consensus on the norm that sociological knowledge must be shared. Evidence on this point is the continuous and rapid growth of sociological publications.
2. The definition of "paradigm" in sociology is a subject of debate. The term is used to refer to major theoretical systems, problematics, frameworks of scientific theory, or even frames of meaning (Giddens, 1976: 142 ff.). See Ritzer (1981: 120) for a well-constructed and very useful definition of the notion of paradigm as applied to sociology.
3. This theoretical current is organized as a specific ISA research committee separate from the ISA Research Committee 16 on "Social Theory."
4. The field of family sociology is among the most successful specialized areas in linking theory and research. The reader may refer to the following additional reviews of family sociology developments to complement the extensive bibliography provided by Settles: for an American perspective see Klein and White (1996). For an European perspective, see Bawin-Legros and Stassen (1996).

PART II

Conceptual Perspectives

2 The Moving Frontier of the Social Sciences

Mattei Dogan

The extraordinary development of all sciences during the last half of the century has brought with it multiple specializations and ramifications. Such a process is obvious in the natural sciences. In most universities “general chemistry” or “introduction to biology” are taught only to freshmen. Fragmentation of formal sciences continues from generation to generation. For instance, the alliance at the second generation between endocrinology and neurophysiology has given birth to neuro-endocrinology. Genetic biology and physical anthropology have combined their efforts to establish maps of prehistoric migrations. The genetic epistemology results from the hybridization of genetic-psychology and epistemology. Phonetics, which developed as a hybrid phonetic physiology is now oriented toward neuro-physiological phonetics, which is a hybridization at the fourth generation. Biochemistry, which was already a hybrid discipline, has given birth to a generation of cousins who do not know each other. They are so numerous that their congresses bring together thousands of specialists who, in most cases, have nothing to say to each other. They work in small groups. This process is more recent in the social sciences, but the fragmentation of disciplines that precedes a hybridization of fragments, is nevertheless visible.

A. The Old Nomenclature of the Social Sciences and its Recent Ramifications

In the social sciences, as in the natural sciences, the contours of formal disciplines are becoming artificial and arbitrary. Between disciplines there may be empty spaces. In this case the pioneers of science behave like colonizers of desert lands. But more often the territory is occupied by a neighboring discipline. Then we see a process of interaction between sub-fields, a hybridization of branches of disciplines.

According to the definition we adapt, one could count between eight and fourteen formal disciplines in the social sciences — certain institutions recognizing some sub-fields as full disciplines. If each of twelve principal social sciences are

crossed with all the others, we would in theory obtain a grid with 144 squares. Some squares would remain empty, but more than three-quarters of them would be filled by hybridized specialities enjoying some autonomy. These hybrid specialities branch out in turn, giving rise, at the second generation, to an even larger number of hybrids. A full inventory of all the existing combinations cannot be obtained by crossing the disciplines two by two, even at the level of the second generation, since some hybrid fields, among the most dynamic ones, are of multiple origin. This is true of cognitive science, environmental research and town planning.

In addition, hybrid fields like prehistory or protohistory which are partly rooted in the natural science do not appear in the 144-square grid, which is confined to recombinations of segments of the social sciences. The configuration of hybrid fields is changing constantly. Social psychology, political sociology, human ecology and political economy have long been recognized, whereas social psychiatry is still having to fight for acceptance. Some specialists in cognitive science announce that the good old psychology will soon exist no more as an independent discipline. Psychology “should ultimately be dissolved in a full-blown neuropsychology, which should show, somewhat as chemistry supplanted alchemy, the illusory and pre-scientific character of the categories of psychology” (Proust, 1991: 15). Which branch of linguistics is on the right path, structural linguistics or generative grammar? The structuralists criticize the historicism of comparative grammar and the generativists reject the presuppositions of the structuralists.

Seven disciplines straddle the social sciences and the natural sciences: anthropology, geography, psychology, demography, linguistics, archaeology and cognitive science. By virtue of this fact alone, each of these seven disciplines is fractured, and cohabitation of the two parts beneath the same disciplinary roof sometimes creates a problem.

Sociometric studies show that many specialists are more in touch with colleagues belonging officially to other disciplines than with colleagues in their own branch. The “invisible college” described by Robert Merton (1963), Diana Crane and other sociologists of science, is an eminently interdisciplinary institution because it ensures communication not only from one university to another, and across all national borders, but also and above all between specialists attached administratively to different disciplines. The networks of cross-disciplinary influence are such that they are obliterating the old classification of the social sciences. The borrowing and lending of concepts from one discipline or speciality to another demonstrates the permeability of the formal frontiers between the social sciences (Dogan and Pahre, 1990: 123–130).

B. The Diffusion of Concepts from one Discipline to Another

One of the most fruitful exchanges between disciplines is the borrowing of concepts. Let's take political science as an example. An inventory of concepts, based on the *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, shows that until the 20th century three giants have generated an impressive number of concepts still used in political science: Aristotle, author of five concepts, and twenty-three

centuries later, Karl Marx with six concepts, and Max Weber with ten. Each of these giants are revindicated by several disciplines.

The 1930s saw an explosion of concepts with dissemination from one discipline to another. Sociology appears as the most productive discipline with twenty-one concepts adopted by political science. Anthropology, economics, psychology and law also offered significant concepts to political science, which has also borrowed concepts from biology, mathematics, statistics, theology, social psychology and game theory. Certain concepts are adapted by almost all social sciences. The word “role” comes from theatre, but Max Weber gave it a sociological meaning. From sociology the notion spread to psychology, social psychology, anthropology and political science. The word “revolution” was concocted by Copernicus, but it was applied for the first time to political events under Louis XIV. Later it was taken-up by historians and sociologists.

“Structure” appeared as early as 1858 in the writings of Herbert Spencer. Soon after it was used by Marx and Engels. A generation later was borrowed by Emile Durkheim, Alfred Radcliffe-Brown, George Murdock, and later became a key concept in the work of Claude Levi-Strauss. From sociology and anthropology, it made its way into political science. During this migration the concept was re-fashioned. Gestalt-Psychology for example underlines that the whole structure represents more than the addition of constituent elements. Statisticians, in their turn, have developed “latent structure”, between invisible variables. The concept experienced a new mutation when it was applied to pressure groups. The concept of ecology is also inter-disciplinary. Considered as a neologism in botany, it opened the way for animal ecology and human ecology. Imported into sociology by Durkheim it became the study of spatial distribution of social phenomena. Soon after it was extended to geography. Social ecology gained a new vigor with the computer (Dogan & Rokkan, 1974).

The migration of certain concepts is sometimes astonishing. “Value”, forged by economists, acquired a new meaning in psychology and social psychology: attitude, norm aspiration, etc. today it is an important concept in political science. “Socialization” spread also to several disciplines. Formed by psychologists, it was rapidly adopted in anthropology, particularly by Alfred Kroeber, Bronislaw Malinowski and Margaret Mead. Imported in political science by Charles Merriam, it is largely diffused today in the United States where several hundred political scientists claim that “socialization” is one of their main sub-field. “Inequality”, an old philosophical concept has become a tool of measurements in economics, sociology and political science. For some authors “inequality” has also a biological connotation (Sesardic, 1992). Even distant disciplines could benefit from the commerce of concepts. A good example is given by Jean Piaget (1970) in reference to the convergence between “entropy” in physics and the theory of information. “Entropy” has proved to be useful even in the codification of genetic information in D.N.A.

Borrowing a concept does not mean simply imitation. To become fruitful, it has to be intelligently sewn in a fertile field. In most cases concepts are not borrowed by an entire discipline, but by a sub-field, a fragment of the formal discipline, in a specialized domain.

C. The Archipelago of Social Sciences

In the history of sciences a twofold process can be seen: on the one hand, a fragmentation of formal disciplines and, on the other, a recombination of the specialities resulting from fragmentation. The new hybrid field may become completely independent, like social psychology, or continue to claim a dual allegiance, like political geography. In the latter case, one may not be sure whether to place a work in the category of geography or of political science. The criterion could be the predominance of one or the other component or the formal affiliation of the author. Political anthropology is a branch of anthropology, but also a sub-field of political science. Where does historical sociology end and where does social history begin? One may feel even more unsure when faced with a case of threefold recombination. As the relative proportions are not always obvious, it remains somewhat arbitrary where the essential affiliation may be said to lie, especially since the degree of kinship between disciplines varies greatly: sociology and social psychology are consanguineous, but geology and social geography are far less so, despite appearances.

Looking at four disciplines, we shall try to show in each case the process of specialization, its fragmentation and the recombination of the fragments by hybridization.

C.1. Varieties of History

History is no doubt the most heterogeneous discipline, dispersed in time and space. It is the most open discipline. Sooner or later, everything falls into the historian's net. The dispute over the role and borders of history, which goes back to Durkheim, Simiand and Seignobos, does not seem to be over. Three generations later, history has been excluded from the social sciences under the authority of an international institution, UNESCO. History is not numbered among the so-called nomothetic sciences covered by the first volume published by UNESCO on "Main Trends in the Social and Human Sciences". The historians do not appear to have reacted very vigorously to this affront. Indeed some historians have come to terms with it. Thus for Pierre Chaunu, "the progress of history in the last 50 years is the result of a series of marriages: with economics, then with demography, even with geography with ethnology, sociology and psychoanalysis. When all is said and done, the 'new history' sees itself as something like an auxiliary science of the other social sciences" (Chaunu, 1979: 5). And here we have the word "auxiliary", which was previously such a sore point, used today by a great historian. This is clearly not the opinion of the Annales School (Annales, 1989: 1323), resolutely committed to interdisciplinarity: "History will progress only in the context of interdisciplinarity, and one of its tasks is to renew the bases of interdisciplinarity" (Le Goff, 1991: 4).

Provided that the focus is on the long time-span and the comparative approach, there is agreement between Durkheim and Braudel. Sixty years a part from each other, using different words, they say much the same thing: "History can be a

science only in so far as it compares, and there can be no explanation without comparison... Once it starts comparing, history becomes indistinct from sociology” (Durkheim in the first issue of *l'Année Sociologique*). Braudel, for his part, is just as accommodating: “Where the long time-span is concerned, the point is not simply that history and sociology tie in with each other and support each other but rather that they merge into one” (Braudel, 1960: 93). But here we are talking about only a part of history, that part which compares while considering the long time-span, for other fields of history have nothing or very little to do with sociology. Similarly, there are not many sociologists who do not need to have recourse to history for the purposes of the problem with which they are concerned. Durkheim and Braudel would have been more explicit if, instead of considering their discipline as a whole, they had referred clearly to their common territory which is now called comparative social history or historical sociology. Once it is accepted that history and sociology overlap in certain delimited areas, for instance in quantitative analyses (Scheuch, 1988) the long territorial dispute between history and sociology becomes a thing of the past. Only one sector of history is brought face to face with a sector of another discipline. Exchanges with economics have thus generated economic history, which is of interest only to some historians and some economists, in sufficiently large numbers however to provide material for several major journals.

Each human activity has its historian, who, in order to perform his task, has to hunt in other people's lands. In the history of urbanization, for example, where he meets geographers, demographers, economists and sociologists, the historians can hoist his own flag. However, urban history is not an independent field, whereas economic history is well established.

History, in its turn, is helped by other disciplines, sometimes unexpectedly. One odd example is the contribution made by biology, or more precisely by one speciality of biology, haematology, to a particular sector of history, namely the study of the origin of ancient preliterate peoples. Blood is a historical record, for the characteristics of a person's blood live on after his or her death in the blood of the descendants. As has been noted by Jean Bernard, “the geography of haemoglobin E and the geography of the monuments of Khmer art are virtually superimposable... The limits of the ancient Khmer empire were defined by archaeology. They can now be defined by haematology” (Bernard, 1983: 49). Haematology has been useful in the study of the migrations of the Vikings and the Ainu and in elucidating certain mysteries of the Andean high plateaux.

Numerous scholars from a dozen disciplines have inquired into the causes of the fall of the Roman Empire. One of the most important was not guessed at until 1924 and was demonstrated only in 1965 through the chemical analysis of bones, namely the lead poisoning of the Roman governing class over many generations (Gilfillan, 1965). The specialists in saturnism thus... poisoned Pareto's theory of the circulation of elites! Moreover, many theories, in the social sciences and the natural sciences alike, suddenly die as the result of an interdisciplinary onslaught. I have deliberately chosen these two examples of recourse to the natural sciences by history, for within the field of the social sciences many examples of exchanges come to mind.

C.2. Geography as a Cross-Road

Large universities list 20 odd branches of geography. Its subdivisions involve relations with every discipline, from anthropology to zoology. These divisions have assumed such an importance that they obscure the old split between human geography and geology. So far-reaching is the fragmentation that we may well ask, along with Roger Brunet: "Does geography have its own specificity? What is its real contribution, does it have its own field or is it no more than a relic of a former division of labour, now superseded? Can the geographer be said to have an identity, and if so what does it consist of?" (Brunet, 1982: 402). Geography is flanked by numerous hybrid fields. On the side of demography we find geography of population: the Third World population explosion is giving considerable importance to this field, highlighted by the publications of the World Bank. One sector of political science, international relations, is directly linked to population geography. Economic geography is more important for geographers than for economists, since for the latter the spatial dimension is not central.

"Geographical factors" long attracted the attention of sociologists until the publication in 1924 of *Civilization and Climate* by the sociologist Ellsworth Huntington, severely criticized by Pitirim Sorokin. From that time on and for more than three decades, sociology, at least in the United States, severed all compromising links with geography. It is only recently, in the context of environmental and ecological research, that sociologists have again shown an interest in "geographical factors", in particular, climate. The most fruitful collaboration between geography and sociology has been in the field of town planning. In the field of cartography, which is the prime technique of geographers, in recent times "meteorologists, geologists, geophysicists, geochemists, plant ecologists, and other scientists have been the major innovators and users" (Jones, 1979: 103). Satellite photography, which can cover areas measuring 100 km in diameter, has rekindled interest in certain aspects of old-style human geography and urban geography. As for the exchanges between geography and history, they are so well known, in the *Annales* tradition, that not a single word can usefully be added here.

C.3. Political Science: Eclecticism

Specialization in political science is shown by the variety of journals to which political scientists can have access for the purposes of documentation or publication. According to a recent survey (cf. Brunk, 1989) conducted in the major American libraries, there are some 500 academic journals of interest to political scientists, 80 per cent of them in English, only one-tenth of which can be considered to be "general", the others being specialized (public administration, comparative politics, political institutions) or attached mainly to other formal disciplines, or devoted to a particular region of the world, like Latin America or Asia (area studies, which are pre-eminently interdisciplinary). Most political sciences consequently keep informed by means of specialized journals that do

not overlap much within the mother discipline, but that do however lead into fields connected with other disciplines.

In their preface to the *Handbook of Political Science*, Greenstein and Polsby (1975), the editors of this important work, confess their embarrassment at the “amorphous” character of the discipline. They acknowledge its far-reaching fragmentation, reflecting its diversity. The theoretical and methodological dispersion of the discipline is underlined by William Andrews: “political science had no necessary logic to its separate existence, that is, it had no distinctive methodology. It had no clearly-defined subject-matter that could not be encompassed within one or more of its sister disciplines. Its various parts could have survived simply as political history, political sociology, political geography, political philosophy and political psychology — subfields in other disciplines... Each of the other social science disciplines claims a piece of political science” (Andrews, 1988: 2).

Political science has undergone the beneficial influence of many sociologists (Parsons, Lazarsfeld, Adorno, Dahrendorf) and many economists (Downs, Arrows, Galbraith, Schumpeter, Morgenthau, Myrdal), not forgetting the philosophers (Popper, Friedrich, Habermas). In some fields political science and social history cannot be dissociated, both being often linked to economics. Structuro-functionalism, which for several decades dominated international comparative analysis, found inspiration in the theory of the anthropologist Malinowski, who showed that a cultural institution transferred to another culture may take on another meaning and fulfil a quite different function in the new context. Game theory, which has been adapted for the study of international conflicts, was formulated by the mathematician John von Neumann and the economist Oskar Morgenstern. The economist Herbert Simon borrowed from the psychologists the concept of limited rationality and drew from it a theory that is enjoying great success in American political science. The political scientists have borrowed not only theories but also methods. As Benson testifies, the bulk of the mathematical literature in political science is the work of outsiders, of people who do not identify themselves as researchers in political science, (Benson, 1963: 30).

To highlight the influence of the various disciplines on political science, Jean Laponce (1989) counted, for each 10 years over a period of 50 years, from 1935 to 1986, the number of references in the American Political Science Review to journals representing other disciplines. At the beginning of the period, law was the only discipline linked to political science. In the 1950s, there were more references to sociology journals than to law journals; mention began to be made of history and philosophy journals. In the 1970s, law journals were cited more rarely, history and philosophy journals to the same extent, references to sociology became frequent, and economics, psychology and mathematics journals made their appearance. In the 1980s economics and sociology became more prominent, as did psychology and mathematics (Laponce, 1983 and 1988). These trends lead Laponce to conclude that “In the last generation those political scientists published in one of the leading journals in the field, those thought by their peers to be creative and forward-looking, often appear to have had their heads turned sideways” (Laponce, 1988: 5). In another study Laponce analyzed import-export flows

between seven disciplines, using the same technique of footnote references in 12 journals, including six British ones. The most intense exchanges in political science occurred in 1975 with sociology and in 1981 with economics (Laponce, 1983: 450).

Many of those most renowned political scientists work on hybrid phenomena or problems: political clientelism (in relation with anthropology and social psychology); socialization (drawing on sociology and social anthropology), nationalism (inseparable from history and sociology), development (linked to 11 of the social sciences), and many others.

It is not just recently that political science has opened up. Today we can but confirm what was written yesterday: "Political science is an inveterate borrower. It may, in fact, be the great eclectic among the social sciences. The history of its growth and development is a history of selecting skills and ideas from the other social sciences" (Sarouf, 1965: 22). The title of Gabriel Almond's (1990) book, published a quarter of a century later is, so to speak, a diagnosis: "A discipline divided, schools and sects in political science". This book emphasizes the theoretical, ideological and methodological splits in the discipline.

C.4. The Dispersion of Sociology: a Discipline Without a Matrix

In the space of four decades sociology has experienced, first, a marked monodisciplinary expansion, then a marked dispersal beyond its boundaries. In the period just after the Second World War sociology was adopted as an official academic discipline in only a few countries, in particular the United States and Canada. In Europe, it had to start practically from scratch, especially in Germany and Italy. From 1955 on its growth was spectacular in several countries, particularly Scandinavia. In France, in 1950, the number of academics who could claim in their professional capacity to be sociologists was no doubt under two dozen: two university chairs, a few master's degrees and a small number of researchers at the CNRS. Other academics, without being primarily sociologists (historians, psychologists, geographers, philosophers), contributed to the revival of sociology. Four decades later, the Who's Who in *Sociologie Française et Francophone* contained some 1,500 names, including about 1,300 French, with 1,000 genuine sociologists and 300 related branches, among whom 500 lived in Paris — the biggest concentration of sociologists in the world. In the United States, the number of sociologists registered in the American Sociological Association doubled in the 1950s and doubled again in the 1960s.

Paradoxically, it was at the time when it was still modest in stature that sociology showed imperialist leanings. It would be easy to put forward a whole number of quotations in support of this assertion, but one will suffice. In 1962, at a time when sociology was not yet an independent discipline in Oxford and Cambridge and scarcely so in London, W.G. Runciman was claiming that if sociology was defined as the systematic study of collective human behaviour, the disciplines of economics, demography, criminology or politics should be considered to be branches of sociology (Runciman, 1962: 1). From 1970 on,

growth started to go hand in hand with a process of fragmentation, with the result that today, in the developed democracies, sociology is a heterogeneous, centrifugal discipline. Depending on how it is defined, there can be said to be between 35 and 40 sectoral sociologies, going in every direction.

The International Sociological Association is today organized into fifty-three research committees. Among these groups, one notices “sociological theory”, “concepts and terminology” or “methodology”, which attest of the persistence of remnants of sociology as a “pure” discipline. But with a few exceptions it is clear that most branches of sociology are “impure”, mixed with other species. There are fields of specialization in sociology focusing on diverse social phenomena for example, family (main traditional domain of demography); education (traditional domain of pedagogy); ethnic groups (traditional domain of ethnology); alienation (claimed by psychology); and health (medicine and epidemiology). There is no social activity that does not have its official sociologist. There are sociologies of work, migrations, organizations, imperialism, armies, arts, science, leisure, ageing and so on. Some sectors of sociology are proclaiming their autonomy, particularly political sociology, economic sociology, historical, religious, urban, juridical, comparative sociology. The sociologist who studies nationalism encounters the political scientist interested in international relations, the economist observing economic dependence or the inevitable historian. The rural sociologist communicates with specialists belonging administratively to other disciplines. The sociology of knowledge is the first cousin of the philosophy of science. It is legitimate to ask if there is still a discipline that we could call sociology without using an adjective? During the last decades, sociology has transgressed the frontiers of all other social sciences, infiltrating everywhere and expanding unmeasurably, to such a degree that it has become a Tower of Babel.

As is pointed out by Neil Smelser in the introduction to his *Handbook of Sociology*, “the likelihood that sociology will be denotative of an identifiable field will be diminished; it is likely that commitment to the discipline in general will diminish, and that smaller groups will seek their interaction and identification in suborganizations that are inside or outside the American Sociological Association” (Smelser, 1988: 13). This is true, for instance, of urban sociology. There are now more experts and researchers in the field of town planning than in the whole of traditional sociology. It is true that these experts include representatives of urban sociology, but they are a minority in a mass of town planners from a wide array of disciplines: geography, economics, architecture, etc., who have cut the umbilical cord attacking them to the mother discipline. But the most heavily populated subdiscipline in the United States at the present time is the sociology of medicine where most of the research work is becoming bogged down in fields devoid of theoretical horizon.

As soon as the problem being addressed concerns society as a whole, cross-specialization becomes inevitable, so much so that it is often necessary to bring together a variety of specialists. Here is a description of the content of a book which, in its day, enjoyed some success: “Each contributor has been an articulator of diverse disciplines: Boulding spans economics, mathematics and sociology; Coleman relates mathematics and sociology; Etzioni, organizational sociology and international

relations; Kardiner, psychiatry and anthropology; Klausner, sociology and psychology; Levy, social theory and sinology; Pool, sociology and political science; Rapoport, biology, mathematics, philosophy, psychology and sociology; and Tiryakian, sociology and philosophy. They were chosen as men familiar with the problems of bridging disciplines, to build an image of a total society" (Klausner, 1967: xv). Replace the word "discipline" by "polyspeciality" and add a generous dose of history, and you will have a better idea of the real content of this book.

As it has matured and put out feelers in every direction, sociology has become aware of its excessive fragmentation and of its dispersal and has felt the need to come back to its centre, without yet succeeding. This process is described by Ralph Turner: "Sociology has gone through a cycle from emphasizing theory with little testable empirical basis to an atheoretical empiricism and back to the evaluation of research primarily for its relevance to grand theory" (Turner, 1991: 63).

D. The Consequences of Monodisciplinary Confinement: The Case of Economics

What happens if a discipline has a tendency to turn in on itself, if it does not open up enough, if its specialities do not hybridize, if it does not progress "in symbiosis with other social sciences"? In such cases, the neighbouring territories do not remain barren. The case of economics is a good example here. There are two ways of looking at economics. According to some its postulates are fruitful and its field clearly delimited. Others, more numerous however, think that economics is fundamentally divided between econometricians and theorists, who remain oblivious of one another. Between these two extremes there are more qualified positions which, while acknowledging the distinctive identity of economics and its theoretical and methodological foundations, stress its relative openness. But it should be recognized that economics lends itself far less than the other social sciences to interaction with other disciplines (this also being true of linguistics).

So deep do the divisions in economics seem to Michel Beaud that he writes that economists agree "neither about the subject on which they are working, nor about the methods, nor about the theoretical tools, nor about the goals of research" (Beaud, 1991: 157), concluding that "economics does not exist, nor does political economy. Instead, there is a very wide variety of tendentious discourses... the knowledge thus arrived at fits into a profoundly heterogeneous universe, structured by two galaxies, one predominantly axiomatic, the other dedicated to the effort to understand reality". He considers that economics "suffers from the fact that its main advances — conceptualization, theorization, model building, mathematicization — have meant that it has become excessively cut off from the other social sciences".

For Jacques Lesourne (1990), reporting on the World Econometrics Congress and the European Economic Association in 1990, economics has been "balkanized, broken up into a multitude of disciplines, each being organized around one or two journals". The same remark can be made about the world congresses on

sociology, demography, psychology or history. The monetarist George Stigler objected to six econometricians (Tinbergen, Samuelson, Malinvaud and their predecessors, Moore, Frisch and Fisher) being described as the authors of “exceptional contributions” because, so he wrote, “econometrics has no unified core or methodology” and “has not yet had a major impact on economics” (Deutsch, Markovitz and Platt, 1986: 342). But three of these six economists have in the meantime won the Nobel prize, as has Stigler himself.

Three lists of major contributions to economics were compiled in 1982 at a symposium in Berlin. The first, prepared by W. Krelle, contained 30 names, the second, by Y. Tinbergen, 36 names, and the third, by B. Fritsch and G. Kirchgässner, 44 names. In the first two lists, there were only two names that were the same (including Klein, Nobel prizewinner, and Krelle himself), and in the first and the third, there were only nine that were the same. The last two lists did not have one name in common (Deutsch, Markovitz and Platt, 1986: 350). Such widely differing views about leading figures do not say much for the coherence of economics. This is also the opinion of the economist Kenneth Boulding, who speaks of economics as being “disorientated” comparing it with the story of the blind man and the elephant. The Nobel prizewinner Wasily Leontieff was not more indulgent: “Year after year, economic theorists produce mathematical models without being able to get any further towards understanding the structure and functioning of the real economic system” (quoted in Deutsch, Markovitz and Platt, 1986: 350).

In spite of its internal division this discipline looks like an isolated island. In many countries large number of economists have locked themselves up in an ivory tower, and as a result whole areas have escaped their scrutiny. Their contribution to the problem of the development of the Third World, for instance, is rather modest when compared with the work of sociologists, political scientists, demographers and statisticians. This is particularly true in the United States, Latin America and India. Economics has had a somewhat condescending attitude towards political science, particularly in the United States and Canada. This has resulted in the development, side by side with it, and in competition with it, of a new corporate body, with an extremely active and large membership in the United States, England and Scandinavia: political economy, protected by only one of its parents, renamed through the revival of an old name from the French nomenclature of the sciences. Political economy is currently one of the main provinces of American political science, with a large output and renowned journals. It is one of the most popular sectors among PhD students in political science. Some eclectic economists denounce the reductionism advocated by other economists, particularly with reference to research on development: “development is reduced to economic development; this is reduced to growth; this in turn is reduced to investment, in other words to accumulation” (Sachs, 1991: 2). And Sachs quotes Myrdal who railed against economists who were in favour of unidisciplinary models.

Because of its theoretical isolation, economics has also forsaken economic history in which not only historians but also former economists have won renown, driven from the garden by their theorist colleagues. At a particular moment, economics reached a fork in the path: it could have chosen intellectual expansion,