

THE PERSPECTIVE OF HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY

The Individual as
Homo-Sociologicus through
Society and History

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Homo-Sociologicus through
Society and History

BY

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United Kingdom – North America – Japan
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Emerald Publishing Limited
Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2017

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-78743-364-9 (Print)

ISBN: 978-1-78743-363-2 (Online)

ISBN: 978-1-78743-456-1 (Epub)



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Acknowledgments

This book is the culmination of my longstanding labor in the field of historical sociology. My approach within this has been accompanied by a number of scholars who have helped me research and establish my orientation. At the very beginning, during my studies at the Charles University in Prague at the turn of the 1980s, these included my teacher Eduard Urbanek. Later, in the 1990s, when I began to get acquainted with the work of Norbert Elias, I was very much helped by Hermann Korte, who at that time worked at the University of Hamburg. Of great importance to my professional development too were repeated study visits at the University of Vienna spent alongside Reinhold Knoll, at the University of Konstanz alongside Bernhard Giesen, and at the Free University of Berlin alongside Harald Wenzel. My approach to historical sociology has been associated with my interest in time, in which context I associated with Patrick Baert of Cambridge University, who greatly influenced me with his concept of temporalized sociology. Johann Pal Arnason and Willfried Spohn have played key roles in my direction in the last decade, and with their help and support I founded the Department of Historical Sociology at Charles University in Prague and designed the content of the study program taught since 2009. Last but not least, I cannot forget Prof. Dennis Smith from Loughborough University, whom I have consulted on many topics over the past few years. The book I present here to the reader would not have been written without the help of Martin Tharp, a doctoral student of historical sociology, and the long-term cooperation of my

friend, proofreader, and language advisor Edward Everett. In addition, this book represents one of the outputs of the Homo sociologicus revisited project (No.: 15-14478S), financially supported by the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic GACR. I would also like to express my thanks to the representatives of Emerald Publishing for their friendly assistance in guiding this book to the light of publication.

Part I

The Perspective of Historical Sociology (By Way of Introduction)

In the late 1950s in his book *The Sociological Imagination*, Charles Wright Mills formulated a remarkable reflection on the relationship of the human individual to history, one which was exceptional in the context of the then-sociological thought for several reasons. First, Mills talked about the importance of this relationship to sociology at a time when it was widely understood as a science concerning contemporary societies, and the past was wholly consigned, as it were, to history. Second, Mills applied sociological knowledge not only to social entities but also to individual human lives and destinies. Finally, there was the concept of “sociological imagination” as an attribute to be developed. Mills argued that the sociological imagination would allow those who possessed it to understand the broader historical scene in its importance to the inner life and careers of various individuals. “Sociological imagination” is intended to help in the understanding of history and biography and their interrelationship within society; that is its challenge and its promise (Mills, 1959, pp. 3–6).

In this book, I want to supplement Mills’ ideas, aspiring to contribute to the development and cultivation of the sociological imagination in the directions outlined earlier. Apart from providing an educational guide to leading figures of historical sociology,

I want to examine the relationship between history and sociology, and to give attention to the issue of how sociology looks at the human individual in society and history. As Elias put it, we want to look at how individual people combine to form society and how this society is able to change in relation to its history (Elias, 1991). The perspective that allows us to examine these issues is that of historical sociology, which at one and the same time we want to bring to readers and to develop.

This work is divided into seven parts. In the first, I discuss the issue of the interrelationship between sociology and historical science and what vision of man, society, and history can be offered by historical sociology. The dominant theme of the second part is social change, raising the issue of historical time and what lies behind the expression “temporalized sociology.” I introduce different theories on social change, and include the issue of crises, collapses, and disasters. In the third part, I return to the founders of sociological thinking — Comte, Spencer, Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Halbwachs — and analyze what of their intellectual heritage endures and the essence of their significance, topicality, and inspirational power. The fourth part presents a macro-sociological perspective as developed in the works of structural functionalism (Parsons), in stratification and conflict theory (Coser, Dahrendorf, Huntington), in structuralism (Lévi-Strauss, Braudel, Foucault), in systems theory (Luhmann), and in world-systems theory (Wallerstein). The themes of the fifth part are the concepts of culture and civilization: Norbert Elias and his theory of the civilizing process, the paradigms of the human condition analyzed by Jaroslav Krejci, and the concept of the axial age developed by Shmuel N. Eisenstadt. The sixth part is devoted to the problems of modernization; it includes subchapters on the paths to modern society (Bendix, Moore, Skocpol), nationalism (Gellner, Hroch), totalitarianism (Arendt, Popper, Aron), wars and violence (Tilly, Mann), the theory of modernization (Alexander), the first and second modernities (Giddens, Beck and further), and the transformations of contemporary societies. In the final, seventh part of the book, the issue of the sociological perspective on the human

individual in society and history is summarized, with specific emphasis on the issue of major historical individuals.

The Path to Historical Sociology

As an academic discipline, historical sociology is relatively young, yet its intellectual and theoretical roots reach back to the 19th century. The historical sociology of today began roughly in the 1970s; this was based, however, on the work of thinkers active in the 19th century. The expression historical sociology may give the impression of a kind of hybrid of history and sociology — roughly half and half. This impression is misleading. Historical sociology is first and foremost a part of sociology, though in our case a sociology that emphasizes the historical perspective in its approach to the study of social phenomena. In other words, we are interested in the phenomena and problems of the contemporary world, but we also consider that a true understanding of these phenomena requires approaching them from a historical perspective, mindful of their past development.

One of the key themes of contemporary sociology is the process of modernization — specifically, how social change occurs in the form of a radical alteration of society, for example, the transformation of traditional agrarian countries into modern, industrial ones. Contemporary historical sociology places an accent on comparison, and the use of comparative methods; historical “comparative” sociology is often mentioned. In principle, this comparison can be made in the dimensions of time and space. In the first case, this involves comparison of single phases or stages of historical development in historical succession. In the second case, individual countries are compared with each other, or wider cultures and civilizations. For contemporary historical sociology, this second approach predominates, based on the comparison of events that take place in parallel in different places around the globe. Its intent is to reveal what is common or differs between individual cases, how the social processes in various areas are alike, and what distinguishes them.

Historical sociology is of course not limited to the topic of modernization. It is a broad scientific approach that addresses many areas and problems in culture, religion, nationalism, politics, international relations, globalization, military conflicts, the economy, labor, science, art, everyday life, family life, collective memory, and various other subtopics. Within this approach, historical sociology is structured around three central elements: general theory, research methodology, and special thematic areas. It is true that historical sociology is not only based on one dominant paradigm or theoretical conception, but that different theories and theoretical approaches coexist, and we try to consider historical sociology in the plurality of its theoretical foundations. Different theorists, and different scientific schools, are discussed, and their commonalities and distinctive elements duly noted.

Historical sociology itself has a history, and if we want to understand this field as it exists today, and why it pursues certain tasks and objectives, its previous development must be appreciated, both in the context of sociology as a broader endeavor and the relations between the academically canonical disciplines of sociology and history.

In general, it may be said that the development of sociology has passed through three phases. The first lasted from the emergence of sociology in the 19th century up to the 1920s, and is sometimes called the period of the great theories. Sociology's origins are connected with Europe and the European university system, where sociology developed primarily as a theoretical discipline, largely through university professors with philosophical training. Sociological research received little encouragement. It is important to bear in mind that this first period marks the activity of the "classic" sociologists, whose names and ideas remain of importance to current historical sociology as it in many ways continues their work. Among others, these include Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, Karl Marx, Max Weber, Ferdinand Tönnies, Georg Simmel, Emile Durkheim, and Vilfredo Pareto. What all these had in common was that their sociology contained aspects of historical sociology, because the historical perspective was important to their conceptions of sociology.

The second phase is the period from the 1920s to the 1950s, from the end of World War I until just after World War II. During this second period, the focus of the development of sociology moved to the United States. In America, sociology became a discipline from which scientific outputs with clear practical use were expected. To fulfill these expectations, sociology had to develop empirical research to generate useful knowledge. The main source of this was quantitative surveys based on questionnaires. Along with the emphasis on empirical research, this period was characterized by a shift away from great theories, seen as speculative, unfounded, and unscientific.

At the same time, a further shift occurred — namely the divergence of sociology from history. A significant majority of sociologists (not all, but certainly most) began to accept the idea that sociology had to be a science only and exclusively concerned with contemporary societies, and should not deal with the past. History should accordingly be left entirely up to historical scholarship.

The third phase of the development of sociology began in the 1950s, and is often mentioned as a period of renewed interest in sociological theory. By this point, sociologists had recognized that sociology could not be based on empirical research alone, but that the development of sociological theory was itself a necessity. The upsurge in interest in theory had two causes. The first was that in the previous period sociologists had accumulated an enormous quantity of empirical data, and they realized that for the further development of sociological knowledge these findings needed to be subjected to theoretical analysis. The second was that it had become clear that the problems and experience of mankind in the 20th century could not be studied only on the basis of empirical research, and that the key issues of contemporary societies required the application of a theoretical approach.

As a result, theoretical reflections in sociology revived. The main theorist of sociology in the 1950s and 1960s was Talcott Parsons. It is important to note that the theoretical approaches which began to prevail were of an ahistorical (nonhistorical)

character, attempting to create theoretical models applicable to all types of societies, regardless of historical differences and specificities. Writings that addressed the issue of historical sociology occasionally appeared, but were a very rare phenomenon. An increase of interest in historical sociology became noticeable from the 1970s onwards. This interest has expanded, but never become dominant in sociology. Today, historical sociology is one of the branches of contemporary sociology. Its main representatives are Norbert Elias, Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, Charles Tilly, Theda Skocpol, Michael Mann, and Immanuel Wallerstein.

Of vital importance for historical sociology are, understandably, not only its relations to sociology, but also to historical scholarship. Broadly speaking, we can say that the paths of history and sociology began to diverge significantly in the 19th century, when historical scholarship began to emphasize specific historical sources and the uniqueness of historical events, and rejected attempts at wider generalization. By contrast, sociology in the same era was working toward the creation of broad theoretical generalizations based on analyses of history. The sociologists of the 19th century often regarded historians and historical scholarship somewhat dismissively, judging that historical science was unable to arrive at the higher level of generalization reached in sociology. In other words, sociology then viewed history as a kind of auxiliary discipline useful mostly for supplying the partial knowledge that sociology could analyze and generalize.

During the 20th century, when sociology reoriented itself toward the research of contemporary societies, the gap between history and sociology widened, and the possibility of mutual dialogue between sociology and history became ever more remote. With some simplification, the present discipline of historical sociology can be seen as an effort to re-establish a dialogue between history and sociology. In other words, historical sociology is a sort of frontier discipline attempting to develop the hitherto lackluster interdisciplinary cooperation between sociology and history.

History and Sociology

In his book *Central Problems in Social Theory*, Anthony Giddens (1979, p. 230) asserted that neither logical nor methodological reasons exist for a division between social sciences and history. Shortly thereafter, this claim was addressed by an influential representative of the British historical-sociological profession, Philip Abrams (1982, p. 2), who under Giddens' influence formulated the argument that history and sociology are ever and always one and the same thing. Giddens himself then tried to argue this position in what is perhaps his most important theoretical work, *The Constitution of Society*, in which he states that there is nothing to prove a difference between the historical and the social sciences with sufficient rational justification: "Historical research is social research, and vice versa" (Giddens, 1984, p. 358). If a boundary can be said to exist, it is established through the division of labor on a common subject, but this gives no reason for any logical or methodological schism.

Whether Giddens' claim is accepted or not, the fact remains that sociologists and historians do not speak a common language. Peter Burke in this connection reminds us of the statement of Fernand Braudel about a "dialogue of the deaf." According to Burke (1980, pp. 13–14), it is necessary to see not only two different professions but also two structures with different languages, preferred values and styles of thinking, shaped by differences in education and training. For sociologists, it is more common to work with numbers, while historians work with words; sociologists tend toward the elucidation of general rules and the ignoring of variations; historians on the contrary tend to lay stress on the individual and the specific.

Burke (*ibid.*) believes that both disciplines are threatened by a dangerous narrowing of their perspectives. Historians specializing in a particular area tend to perceive it as something unique, which prevents them from seeing it as a combination of elements which have parallels in other places. By contrast, the tendency among sociologists is to generalize everything through contemporary

experience and ignore the perspective of long-term historical processes and social change. Moreover, the relationship between the two professions is marred by a number of myths and stereotypes: sociologists are perceived by historians as manipulators of abstract jargon without any sense for place and time, while historians are seen as collectors of fragments and curiosities, incapable of analyzing the information before them.

Many social scientists today believe the boundaries that separate sociology and history should be overcome, yet others resist these efforts. One such is John H. Goldthorpe. Goldthorpe's view is that history and sociology are two *significantly different intellectual enterprises* (Goldthorpe, 1991, p. 225). Sociologists, he believes, could never create a great theory of a "transhistorical" type. Any assumption that sociology and history are already — or will become — one and the same discipline, he considers not only wrong but also dangerously misleading, and it is his recommendation to sociologists to turn away from engaging in explorations in the field of history.

To understand the origins of today's opinions on the question of the relationship between sociology and history, we must recall the background to this complex issue. Peter Burke (1980, 15 ff.) directs our attention to the 18th century, recalling an era in which a number of leading social theorists, such as Charles-Louis Montesquieu (1689–1755), Adam Ferguson (1723–1816), and John Millar (1753–1801), produced contributions both to the field of history and to pre-sociological thinking. At that time the boundaries of academic disciplines did not present such a significant problem, hence political history, social history, and pre-sociological thinking could be combined in the writings of individual authors and discussed in mutual interrelation. Other illustrations of this tendency are offered by the work of British historian Edward Gibbon (1737–1794) or later on the writings of French historian Jules Michelet (1798–1874).

However, starting in the mid-19th century significant variations emerged. The dominant approach was that of the German historian Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886), holding that the science of history should be based on the systematic and critical research of

sources, to show how “it actually was” (*zu zeigen, wie es eigentlich gewesen*) (Wiersing, 2007, p. 369). Ranke’s historiography was thus oriented toward political history, which could be studied best on the basis of official documents. This tendency was supported by the emergence of a genuine professionalization of history, with the creation of the first scientific institutes and periodicals. Governments supported the writing of history as a tool of propaganda, or at least for the official education of the state’s citizens. The work of social and cultural historians came to be viewed as disorganized, insufficiently scientific, and incompatible with new professional standards. One victim of this trend was Jacob Christoph Burckhardt (1818–1897), whose work *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860) did not meet with success at the time of its creation, and gained recognition as a major work only subsequently. An exception occurred in France with the historian (and teacher of Émile Durkheim) Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges (1830–1889), whose study of the ancient city-state *La Cité antique* (1864) won respect even though it connected historical and sociological perspectives. In Germany, though, harsh criticism and misunderstanding were the fate of historian Karl Lamprecht (1856–1915), who in opposition to the prevailing individualism and belief that great men made history (Heinrich von Treitschke) attempted to build social, economic, and cultural history (*ibid.*, pp. 474–477).

Since the 19th century, then, many historians have turned away from sociology on the grounds that it is too abstract, simplistic, and unable to catch the uniqueness of particular events. On the theoretical and methodological level, this problem was addressed by German philosophers Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911), Wilhelm Windelband (1848–1915), and others (Käsler, 1978, pp. 142–162). Dilthey emphasized the difference between the natural sciences, which strive to explain (*erklären*) “from the outside,” and humanistic sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*) whose objective is “internal” understanding (*verstehen*). Windelband described natural sciences as “nomothetic,” aiming at the discovery of general laws, and the humanities as “idiographic,” with the task of describing single, unique events. Many sociologists appropriated this boundary

between idiographic and nomothetic sciences, linking it more to the difference between history, oriented particularly and descriptively, and sociology, whose task is to attain to generalization. In turn, historians perceived sociology as a pseudoscience with methods suitable for enquiry into nature but not human history.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, sociology was actively interested not just in the present but in the past as well. In the era of Augustus Comte, Herbert Spencer, Karl Marx, Émile Durkheim, Max Weber, Georg Simmel, Vilfredo Pareto, and others, history formed an essential, integral component of sociological conceptions. (In the case of Weber, the link to history is the strongest, so much so that it may be said his sociology is subordinated to history.) Predominant in the thinking of many sociologists of that period was belief in the theory of progress, and the stance that history is not just a random sequence of events but can reveal definitive laws of historical development (a belief that Karl R. Popper would later criticize as “historicism”). The ambitions of many sociological conceptions of history were substantial, and often went hand in hand with a dismissive attitude toward history, which seemed overwhelmed by the enumeration of unnecessary details and lacking in a proper organization of knowledge. If in such an approach toward history the discipline was granted any meaning, it was perhaps as source material for comparative sociological studies (Burke, 1989, p. 19).

While in the German-speaking countries at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries very few historians dared to deviate from Ranke’s framework (Karl Lamprecht’s attempt met with little understanding), in other countries historians gradually began to appear who contributed to the development of social history. In the United States, an important role was played by Frederick Jackson Turner (1861–1932), who tried to explain America’s unique position in terms of boundaries, not as the delimitations between states, but the ever-expanding frontier between “civilization” and “wilderness.” James Harvey Robinson (1863–1936) stressed the areas of social, scientific, and intellectual development against straightforward political history. Influenced by Marx, Charles Austin Beard (1874–1948) interpreted the American Civil

War as a conflict between the industrialized North and the agrarian South. In France, a new historical school inspired by François Simiand (1873–1935) criticized the reduction of history to historical events and great personalities. The Belgian Henri Pirenne (1862–1936) developed a social and economic history of Europe, while the works of the Dutch scholar Johan Huizinga (1872–1945), dedicated to the late Middle Ages, made a significant contribution to cultural history.

Alongside changes within the historical profession, sociology for its part began to shift its focus away from the broad chronological range of the field's intellectual founders. In particular, the highly speculative nature of the social development theories that emerged in the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries greatly influenced the move away from the study of long-term social dynamics in the development of sociological thought (though not entirely, as the example of Pitirim A. Sorokin showed). In sociology, the prevailing mode was to elaborate models of the current state of affairs, and to focus on the analysis of data evidencing the present (Norbert Elias later dubbed this the "retreat of sociology to the present"). If formerly the sources of such data had been official statistics, now, particularly in the United States, sociologists began rapidly developing their own methods of empirical research (the Chicago School, Gallup, Lazarsfeld, and many others). Along with the growing professionalization of sociology, the field gained much self-confidence, and at the same time distanced itself from history. The approaches of the historical sciences ceased to be considered relevant in sociology and their findings were no longer accepted as "raw material" for sociological analysis.

However, the 1920s brought a significant shift to the area of history as well, associated with the start of the French school of *Annales* (named after its major journal *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale*),¹ initiated by two professors at the University of Strasbourg,

1. The journal was launched in 1929, and was later renamed, being published since 1994 under the name *Annales, histoire, sciences sociale*.

Lucien Febvre (1878–1956) and Marc Bloch (1886–1944). They rejected the traditional dominance of political history and attempted to establish the study of history in a broader sense. Drawing inspiration from neighboring disciplines, they were open to the influence of Durkheim’s sociology, and especially to the then-emerging ideas of structuralism. While in the period before World War II the *Annales* historians represented only a relatively marginal current, after 1945 they emerged as mainstream, their position enhanced in the second generation by Febvre’s pupil Fernand Braudel (author of the monumental work *La méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l’époque de Philippe II*, published in 1949), and in the third generation by a highly diverse group of historians (representing the so-called *nouvelle histoire/new history*, characterized among other things by interest in the history of everyday life), among which were Georges Duby, Jacques Le Goff, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, Philippe Ariès, Mona Ozouf, François Furet, and others.

Although sociology and history diverged to a notable extent during the 20th century, their complete separation never occurred. Their linkage was underwritten by a research orientation known as “historical sociology.” Contemporary authors (such as Dennis Smith, 2005, p. 134) regard this as a discipline with genuine predecessors (Hume, Smith, Ferguson, Montesquieu, Tocqueville), traceable to the work of the founding fathers of sociological thought (Marx, Weber, Durkheim). The German author Rainer Schützeichel (2004) adds to this the so-called Weimar School of the interwar period (Alfred Weber, Werner Sombart, Alfred von Martin, Eduard Heimann, Franz Oppenheimer, Emil Lederer, Karl Polanyi, Hans Freyer, Adolf Löwe). Another figure from pre-Nazi Europe was Karl Mannheim, who applied historical perspectives in the sociology of knowledge.

Across the Atlantic, Robert King Merton, inspired by Max Weber assessed the influence of Protestantism — specifically English Puritanism — on the development of the natural sciences (*Science, Technology and Society in Seventeenth Century England*, Merton, 1970 [1938]). Russian-born Pitirim A. Sorokin, who emigrated to America in the 1920s, wrote an extensive work, *Social and Cultural*

Dynamics, which he published in the United States in 1937; in this book he describes his vision of history, which he regarded as a cyclical change of three types of cultural super-systems: “sensate,” “ideational,” and “integral.” George C. Homans, meanwhile, a representative of behaviorist sociology, published a directly historical study, entitled *English Villagers of the Thirteenth Century* (Homans, 1941). Robert Neelly Bellah — a member of the circle of sociologist Talcott Parsons in the 1950s — published *Tokugawa Religion*, in which he attempts to find a religious equivalent of the Weberian Protestant ethic in the Japanese modernization process (Bellah, 1969 [1957]). Neil Smelser, in his *Social Change in the Industrial Revolution*, analyses the question of social change, taking as its focus the example of the development of the cotton industry during the English industrial revolution (Smelser, 1959). Seymour Martin Lipset wrote the book *The First New Nation*, which was dedicated to the American War of Independence and the formation of the American nation (Lipset, 1963). This flowering of historical-sociological work achieved a high point with the work of Talcott Parsons and his book *Societies: An Evolutionary and Comparative Perspective* in which he developed an original theory of social evolution based on the concept of increasing the adaptive capacity of systems through functional differentiation (Parsons, 1966).²

Though authored in the period leading up to World War II, it was only in the mid-1970s that the two-volume work *Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation* (in English (1994)) of Norbert Elias garnered wide recognition. Based on his “psychogenetic” and “sociogenetic” investigations, he presented his findings in terms of the results of two interrelated theories: the theory of the civilization of manners, covering historical changes in personality and behavior (Part 1), and the theory of state formation (Part 2). Subsequently others of Elias’ books (1983, 1987, 1992b, 2001) were published, including a rich secondary literature.

2. A certain interest in history among American sociologists is also evidenced in the books *Sociology and History* (Cahnman & Boskoff, 1964; Lipset & Hofstadter, 1968.)

From the perspective of historical sociology, a complement to Elias' approach can be found in the works of Michel Foucault, which focus on historical changes in power and knowledge, and their interrelationship (Foucault, 1967, 1970, 1972, 1979, 1980). Occasionally termed the "German Foucault," the historian Reinhart Koselleck dealt with the history of concepts — *Begriffsgeschichte* (Koselleck, 2006) — and as an editor oversaw the creation of a monumental eight-volume series *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* (Koselleck, Bruner, & Conze, 1972–1997). The British historian Peter Burke, meanwhile, forged for himself a position on the border between the history of culture and sociology of knowledge (Burke, 1980, 1992, 1997). Finally, another author whose many works can be considered in this context is Ernest Gellner, especially his writings focused on issues of nationalism (Gellner, 1983, 1998) and general questions concerning the structure of human history (Gellner, 1988, *Plough, Sword and Book*).

In American historical sociology, the left-oriented Barrington Moore (1966) played an important role from the late 1960s up to his death. Another important figure of this period was Reinhard Bendix (1996 [1964], 1978, 2006), who was inspired by Max Weber. Current literature increasingly speaks about the school of "new historical sociology," (Spohn, 2005) which is particularly associated with three names: Charles Tilly (1976 [1964], 1978, 1981, 1990, 1984, 2004), Theda Skocpol (1979), and Michael Mann (1986, 1993, 2005, 2012, 2013). All these authors' research interests largely focus on development in the fields of power — especially military power/armed conflicts, violence, revolutions, and wars.

An important part of contemporary historical sociology consists of conceptions of world-systems, civilizational pluralism, and modernization diversity. The analysis of the world system presented by Immanuel Wallerstein (1974, 1980, 1989, 2003, 2011) proceeded mainly on the basis of two sources of inspiration: a neo-Marxist analysis leading to dependency theory, and Fernand Braudel's conception of historical science. Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt meanwhile dealt with the comparative research of civilizations; in the 1980s he focused on the issue of "axial-age" civilizations, later developing the concept of multiple modernities

(Eisenstadt, 1986, 1996, 2003a, 2003b). Johann Pall Arnason (2003, 2005, Arnason, Eisenstadt, & Wittrock, 2005) addresses the topics of the development of civilizations and diverse types of modernization from a similar perspective.

All of the above-mentioned authors tend toward an interdisciplinary approach in their research and publications, providing examples of how — if narrow academic-professional boundaries are disregarded — it becomes possible to arrive at new, original knowledge. Such interdisciplinary approaches are becoming a hallmark of contemporary historical sociology, but while the main tone of contemporary historical sociology is set by such large and ambitious projects, its field is not limited to them. No less a part of this field are research efforts into integration and disintegration processes, relationships of continuity and discontinuity, religious and cultural pluralism, the linking of the global and the local, the opportunities and risks of social development and the analysis of conflict situations and ways to overcome them. Historical sociology now has its own professional journals (the *Journal of Historical Sociology*, established in 1988; the Czech journal *Historická Sociologie*, from 2009), expert forums, and representation within the *International Sociological Association* ISA (Research Committee No. 56 “Historical Sociology”). It also boasts an extensive scientific literature, a range of textbooks (Abrams, 1982; Bühl, 2003; Lachmann, 2013; Romanovskyi, 2009; Schützeichel, 2004; Skocpol, 1985; Smith, 1991; Šubrt, 2007; Szakolczai, 2000), and works of an encyclopedic nature (Delanty & Isin, 2003).

Historical sociology seeks to create a space for dialogue between history and sociology, for their better communication and cooperation, yet this does not imply that its representatives believe that the boundaries between the two disciplines should be completely erased. Social reality is so complex that both sciences are important for its exploration. At the same time, it is also true that, as academic specializations develop and deepen, boundaries and obstructions emerge between scientific branches which must be bridged in order to acquire an integrated picture of reality, not just a fragmented mosaic.

Theoretical Dilemmas

Before we turn our attention to the individual representatives of historical sociology, it is necessary to say something about their different starting points. Not just historical sociology but sociology in general is a multi-paradigmatic science, and different approaches and ideas have always existed regarding the foundations on which theory should be built.³ These differences arise from certain basic oppositions and theoretical dilemmas which have divided sociological thought into opposing camps. Such oppositions and dilemmas are numerous,⁴ and the outline that

3. In the 1970s, Jonathan H. Turner in his book *The Structure of Sociological Theory* (Turner, 1974) defined four dominant paradigms of sociology as follows: (1) functionalism (T. Parsons, R. K. Merton), (2) conflict theory (R. Dahrendorf, L. Coser), (3) interactionism (G. H. Mead, H. Blumer), (4) exchange theory (G. C. Homans, P. M. Blau); in addition, Turner also dealt with the then-popular ethnomethodology (H. Garfinkel) while asking whether there was any alternative to the given four theoretical paradigms. In the fourth edition of his book (Turner, 1986), the author assigned Garfinkel's ethnomethodology to interactionism and added a chapter entitled "structural theory," in which — among other things — he included C. Lévi-Strauss' structuralism and Anthony Giddens' structuration theory. In the seventh edition Turner (2003) added an extensive chapter on the theory of evolution (ecological theory, sociobiology, etc.). In chapters devoted to structuralist approaches, "Structuralist theorizing," he added a new subchapter on P. Bourdieu and the theory of networks. Turner also edited the *Handbook of Sociological Theory* (Turner, 2001), which differs in just one detail, namely that exchange theory and rational choice are dealt with as "utilitarian" theories.

Other publications on this topic include the sixth edition of the work of George Ritzer and Douglas J. Goodman (2004) *Modern Sociological Theory*. The authors distinguish seven main schools of modern sociological theory: (1) structural functionalism, conflict theory, and neofunctionalism (T. Parsons, R. K. Merton, J. Alexander, R. Dahrendorf), (2) neo-Marxist theory (critical theory, I. Wallerstein, H. Lefebvre, E. Laclau – C. Mouffe), (3) systems theory (N. Luhmann), (4) symbolic interactionism (G. H. Mead, E. Goffman), (5) ethnomethodology (H. Garfinkel), (6) exchange theory, networks, and rational choice theory (G. C. Homans, P. Blau, R. M. Emerson, M. Granovetter, R. Burt, J. Coleman), (7) contemporary feminist theory (J. Bernard, D. E. Smith, P. H. Collins). Furthermore, Ritzer and Douglas talk about recent integrative approaches (R. Collins, Elias) and conceptions integrating action and structure (agency — structure integration: Bourdieu, Habermas, Giddens, Archer).

4. Piotr Sztompka (1979) devoted a whole monographic work to these topics, in which he systematically deals with six dilemmas: (1) Naturalism vs. Antinaturalism, (2) Reductionism vs. Antireductionism, (3) Cognitivism vs. Activism, (4) Neutralism vs. Axiologism, (5) Passivism vs. Autonomism, (6) Collectivism vs. Individualism. More recent work on this

follows includes only the most important. Essentially, they may be expressed by the following conceptual opposites: consensus and conflict, individualism and holism, micro- and macro-levels (or micro- and macro-perspectives), positivism and anti-positivism, and quantitative and qualitative methodologies. To elaborate slightly, consider the following.

Consensus and conflict. This point of division is related to one of the fundamental sociological issues: how orderliness emerges in society, what we call "social order." Representatives of consensus theory argue that social order in society is the result of consensual factors and forces. Two main factors are considered to be jointly held religious beliefs and the resulting systems of values and norms (called a consensus of values), and cooperation based on division of labor (in other words people are forced to work together to survive). The representatives of conflict theory claim that social order arises from conflicts and struggles and is maintained by means of violent force. Representatives of consensus theory have included the founder of sociology, Auguste Comte, and Talcott Parsons. Perhaps the most significant representative of conflict theory is Karl Marx.

Individualism and holism. A broad range of sociological approaches are based on the assumption that the starting point of sociological thought and research must be the individual, his thinking, motivations, and actions. This is the individualistic approach, whose first representative was German sociologist Max Weber. An alternative sociological approach is based on the assumption that sociological thought and research must start with society as a whole — the supra-individual social reality,

theme is the book *Core Sociological Dichotomies* edited by Chris Jenks (1998), in which the following contradictory conceptual pairs are analyzed : Structure/Action, Continuity/Change, Fact/Value, Local/Global, Qualitative/Quantitative, Normal/Pathological, Culture/Nature, Relativism/Absolutism, Public/Private, Sex/Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Idealism/Materialism, Nationalism/Internationalism, Theory/Practice, Civil/Political, Activity/Passivity, Subject/Object, Image/Text, Needs/Wishes, Life/Death, High/Mass, Modernity/Postmodernity, Work/Leisure.

and supra-individual social facts. This is the holistic approach represented originally by French sociologist Emile Durkheim.

Micro- and macro-perspectives, meanwhile, deal with different levels of social reality. Micro-sociological approaches are focused on issues of social interaction among individuals within small social groups. An example of such an approach is the work of the American sociologist Erving Goffman, dealing with everyday interactions between individual human beings. Macro-sociological approaches are focused on examining whole societies, cultures, civilizations, and social systems. An example of such an approach is provided by Immanuel Wallerstein, who deals with the historical development of the global “world system.”

The opposition between positivism and anti-positivism is related to the question of what the nature of social reality is, and whether this is, or is not, similar to the natural reality explored by natural sciences. Positivist sociology is based on the assumption that there is a similarity and agreement between social reality and natural reality, and sociology therefore has to take the developed natural sciences as a model for the development of sociological theory and research methods. A representative of such a positivist sociology was the American sociologist George A. Lundberg. Anti-positivist sociology argues that natural reality and social reality are fundamentally different, because social reality contains human agency and consciousness, as well as language and culture, which are not present in the natural environment. For that reason, the theory and method of sociology should remain different from the theories and methods of natural sciences. One representative of anti-positivism is, for example, the phenomenological sociology of Alfred Schutz. The tension between *positivism and anti-positivism (hermeneutical sociology)* is reflected in methodology as the opposition between quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Representatives of positivist-oriented sociology tend to consider social facts as things of a natural character and use quantitative methodology in their research, based on the employment of statistical and mathematical techniques and methods. Representatives of anti-positivist (i.e., hermeneutical) sociology, by contrast, focus on exploring the meaning and significance that

people associate with their actions, therefore requiring the use of qualitative methodology.

In general, we can say that all these above-mentioned approaches have impacted historical sociology, which means that we encounter notably heterogeneous conceptions and currents of thought within the discipline. This theoretical variety reflects the diversity of characters who have successively contributed to the basis of historical sociology, and who attributed vital importance to the matter of history in the founding and formulating of the general theoretical framework of sociology (Marx, Weber, and Durkheim, among others). We may add that theoretical construction of this nature has sometimes been of importance to history itself, as conceptions within it have, as well as being drawn from reflection on certain events, influenced to some extent the shaping of such events themselves. Most particularly this may be seen in concepts connected with the topic of social change, such as crisis, revolution, modernization, etc., of which more follows in the subsequent chapters.