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## Abstract

The relationship between sociology and history is complex and far from harmonious; it has aspects that make it particularly difficult, leading to theoretical and methodological uncertainty while creating a number of friction topics. While some authors consider historical sociology an established field, and other consider it difficult to distinguish between history and sociology, communication between historical and sociological disciplines is notably limited. One indication of this is the paucity of university departments devoted to the subject. Despite certain expectations of the conjunction of these two disciplines, communication between their respective practitioners is frequently loaded with mutual ignorance, prejudices, bias, and even opinion-extremes. From the outset we should say that, intending to deal with the complicated relationship between sociology and history, we do so in the knowledge that our approach must necessarily be given the thematic breadth of the problem selective, and, moreover, limited by coming from the sociological perspective. It is very likely that if a paper on the same topic were written by a historian, other issues would be emphasised. Opinions on specific issues would no doubt diverge, and accents be placed on different themes.

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# 21

# History and Sociology: What is Historical Sociology?

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## 1. Introduction

The relationship between sociology and history is complex and far from harmonious; it has aspects that make it particularly difficult, leading to theoretical and methodological uncertainty while creating a number of "friction" topics. While some authors consider historical sociology an established field, and other consider it difficult to distinguish between history and sociology, communication between historical and sociological disciplines is notably limited. One indication of this is the paucity of university departments devoted to the subject. Despite certain expectations of the conjunction of these two disciplines, communication between their respective practitioners is frequently loaded with mutual ignorance, prejudices, bias, and even opinion-extremes. From the outset we should say that, intending to deal with the complicated relationship between sociology and history, we do so in the knowledge that our approach must necessarily be - given the thematic breadth of the problem - selective, and, moreover, limited by coming from the sociological perspective. It is very likely that if a paper on the same topic were written by a historian, other issues would be emphasised. Opinions on specific issues would no doubt diverge, and accents be placed on different themes.

## 2. Dialogue of the deaf?

In the early history of sociology many founders of the field sought out the key subject of its research. However, for subsequent generations of sociologists such questioning has gradually lost its importance and urgency. But the matter did not disappear definitively; on the contrary, in some contemporary debates it has returned to the professional scene. Evidence of this is the controversy concerning the relationship between sociology and history.

In the book *Central Problems in Social Theory* the author Anthony Giddens [1979: 230] argued that there are no logical nor methodological reasons for distinguishing between the social sciences and history. This claim was shortly thereafter bolstered by the influential representative of the British historical sociology, Philip Abrams [1982: 2], who formulated the argument that the history and sociology are and always have been one and the same thing. Giddens himself then again tried to argue this position in perhaps his most important theoretical work, *The Constitution of Society* (1984 [1988]), in which he states that there is



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nothing that would prove the difference between the historical and social sciences sufficiently and rationally. Historical research is social science research, and vice versa [Giddens 1988: 416]. If there is a boundary then it is established simply by division of labour on a common subject, rather than any logical or methodological schism.

Whether Giddens claim is accepted or not, the fact remains that sociologists and historians do not speak the same language. Peter Burke [1989: 10] in this connection recalls the statement of Fernand Braudel about a "dialogue of the deaf". In Burke's view [ibid.: 11], the problem requires seeing not only two different professions, but structures with different languages, values and styles of thinking, shaped by differences in education and training: for sociologists, numbers, for historians, words; sociologists recognising rules and ignoring variations, historians stressing the individual and specific.

Peter Burke [1989: 9-10] believes that both disciplines are threatened by a dangerous narrowing of perspective. Historians specializing in a particular problem tend to perceive it as something unique, preventing them from seeing it as a combination of elements with parallels in other places. Sociologists contrariwise have a tendency to generalize everything through the eyes of contemporary experience and to ignore the perspective of long-term historical processes and social changes. The relationship between the two professions is also marked by a number of myths and stereotypes: sociologists have been perceived by historians as people whose abstract jargon lacks sensitivity to particular places and times while historians have had the image of quixotic collectors unable to analyse their knowledge with sophistication and precision.

While many social scientists today believe that the boundaries separating sociology and history should be overcome, there are those who very strongly kick against it. One of them is John H. Goldthorpe, who in 1991 published an essay on this subject which provoked a very strong reaction. It is pertinent to note that Goldthorpe had studied history in the 1950s at University College London. He compares the research approaches of both sociology and history and claims that they differ not only in orientation, either towards the past or to the present, but because historians emphasize their findings as time-space localised whereas sociologists believe their understanding transcends space-time coordinates. Goldthorpe levels his ire in particular at colleagues who airily entered into writing what he scornfully calls "grand historical sociology" – sociological conceptions of history.

Goldthorpe [1991: 212] begins by recalling the time when, as a student of history, he adopted a methodological standard - something like a "catechism" of methods, starting with the question: *What is an historical fact (?),* and continued with the answer: *An historical fact is an inference from the relics* (historical fact is what is inferred from what remains - "relics"). The author reasserts the thesis that the past can be identified only by the form in which it physically survived. Such remains may vary, being natural objects (bones), artefacts (tools, weapons, buildings, works of art) or- as is usual- written documents ("objectivised communication").

On the issue of "relics" Goldthorpe notes that their number (if concerning a specific time) is finite and incomplete (their number may decrease due to destruction, but it cannot grow). What historians press for, is to discover new, undiscovered remains and add them to those that are already known, to serve as a reservoir of evidence for the formulation of statements. In comparison, sociology has, the author claims, one substantial privilege, namely that it is



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not entirely dependent on "relics" but can produce data itself and thereby generate its evidence. Field research produces materials that previously did not exist. Therefore sociology with respect to history is in a substantially better position, but loses the delicacy and care in dealing with sources which characterises the work of historians. According to Goldthorpe this is markedly evident only in works which are developed in the field of historical sociology; the author [ibid.: 222-223] has in mind especially two key exponents of this discipline, Barrington Moore and Theda Skocpol.

Goldhorpe finds a serious methodological problem in works that attempt to generalize the sociological perspective on historical processes. He points out that for historical sociologists analysis of secondary sources becomes the source of their findings rather than exploration of original sources ("relics"); historical sociologists draw their information from the literature written by historians. This leads to situations where, alongside data taken from historians, sociologists unreflectively adopt their interpretation. Goldthorpe does not consider sociologists' handling of sources – acquired by historians with great effort and even more cautiously interpreted - as sufficiently reliable and scientific. The author points to the great reliance of sociologists on extensive yet necessarily selective reference to historical literature to support sociological concepts and theories. He believes that sociologists should deal with the past only where necessary with regard to the nature of the investigated fact, and that in this case they would then have to work with the original sources as historians. Goldthorp concludes by labelling history and sociology as two *significantly different intellectual enterprises* [ibid.: 225]. The author does not believe that sociologists can create a great theory of a "transhistorical" type. Any suggestion that sociology and history may be considered "one" the author considers as wrong and dangerously misleading and he recommends that sociologists refrain from engaging in exploration in the field of history.

Goldthorp's essay provoked a number of polemical reactions, some of which were given space in the British Journal of Sociology in 1994. Michael Mann [1994: 37] disagreed with Goldthorp's thesis that sociology should deal only with contemporary societies; to Mann sociology is the science of societies overall, regardless of the duration of their existence. Joseph M. Bryant [1994: 13-14] rejects the conception that historical sociology should be considered as a kind of secondary structure lacking sufficient empirical basis. He points out that the work of historians and sociologists has two components; the first is "reportage" *(reporting*), the second "interpretation". Reportage refers to the data and information that is available; interpretation tries to find meaning and significance in these data. Relevance and value relate not to the data only, but to the internal consistency and cogency of their interpretation. Nicos Mouzelis [1994: 35] adds that all historians who have created great synthetic works have worked basically with the same secondary material used by historical sociologists, and are thus exposed to the same methodological problems.

A few years later, Gertraude Mikl-Horke [1999a] took up the debate. The Austrian considers Goldthorpe's requirement that sociology abandon engaging in history to be over-wrought. She says that he overlooks the fact that every social reality has an historical nature and all sociological data will finally become part of history. Mikl-Horke [ibid.: 11] mentions that in empirical research historical and social science methods are closer and Goldthorpe does not take this into account; methods of hermeneutics and criticism of sources, mathematical analysis and statistical methods are just as much methods of sociology as history. The author, with reference to J. G. Droysen, notes that historical research is based



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not only on "relics", i.e. existing available traces, artefacts and documents, but also on "traditions". Goldthorpe thus ignores cultural history such as the history of mentalities, ways of thinking, everydayness and collective memory. Part of the past is part of the present and touches the current - either in its orientation, or (in institutions and structures) as a conditioning framework. Inspired by previous discussions Mikl-Horke [ibid.: 22] attempted to define certain conditions which historical sociology should respect in its observations. These include: understanding theory as means and not ends; respectful but not uncritical treatment of historical scientific findings; if possible, working with sources; interpretive caution regarding general, structural factors; and understanding the present as something that is historically based.

Even in the early 1980s Philip Abrams [1982: 300] optimistically claimed that during the previous two decades works had been published of such theoretical self-confidence that the idea that sociology had to be theoretical and history descriptive was clearly an anachronism; the deeper the theoretical dimension of historical science became, the more obvious it was that the assumption of professional historians, excluding theory from their field, was unjustifiable. However, although in recent years some rapprochement has occurred between history and sociology, mainly thanks to historical sociology, it is not possible to overlook the fact that communication and cooperation between the two disciplines is still very complicated and not deepening much. Sociologists have their own views about history, and historians make their way with some basic sociological concepts. The significance of Goldthorp's paper [1991] lies in the discussion that it provoked, bringing the relationship between the two disciplines to the fore. While not denying that the approach to history found among historical sociologists differs in many respects from that of historians, it may not be inferred that sociology should be a theoretical discipline while the task of history is to focus on the gathering of facts and their description.

Though Goldthorp's effort to enforce a sharp dividing line between history and sociology is very problematic, his critique of historical sociology was justified to some extent. Among other things, the lesson can be drawn that sociology cannot address history only with its own perspectives and ignore in so doing the methodological procedures and conventions characteristic of the historical science. It would be a mistake for historical sociologists to be uninterested in methodological discussions on the interpretation of historical sources, using historical literature only as a "stone-quarry" for raw materials from which to create far-reaching constructions. Besides, it must be remembered that even today historical sociology is exposed to the "temptation" to create concepts that could be dangerously close to what Karl R. Popper [2000] once disparagingly described as historicism (the assumption that historical development has a given, binding character due to the nature of discernible universal laws of history by which the future may be anticipated). It is obvious that approaching history requires theory; therefore the question is not "theory - yes or no", but the adequacy of such theories.

## 3. Concerning distancing and approximation

To fully understand the origin of today's opinions on the question of the relationship between sociology and history, we must recall the history of this complex problem. As the format of the professional essay does not permit deeper exploration of the topic we shall confine ourselves to outlining developments in broad strokes.



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Support for this can be found especially in the work of Peter Burke [1989: 12-34], who delves back to the 18th century to recall the time in which social theorists such as Charles-Louis Montesquieu (1689-1755), Adam Ferguson (1723-1816) and John Millar (1753-1801) made important contributions both to the field of history and the history of pre-sociological thinking. At that time it was not problematic for political history, social history and pre-sociological thinking to coexist and intertwine, as is illustrated by the works of British historian Edward Gibbon (1737-1794) and French historian Jules Michelet (1798-1874).

However, there have been distinct divisions since the mid-19th century when the approach advocated by the German historian Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886) began to dominate. In his view historical science should be based on the systematic and critical research of sources whose aim was to show the past as it "actually was" (*zu zeigen, wie es eigentlich gewesen*) [Wiersing 2007: 369]. Ranke's historiography is consequently oriented towards political history, which could be studied on the basis of official documents. This tendency was additionally supported by the professionalization of history, as the first scientific institutes and periodicals arose. Meanwhile governments financially supported the writing of history that could serve as a tool of propaganda and state education of citizens. In this situation the works of social and cultural historians began to be viewed as disorganized, insufficiently scientific and incompatible with new professional standards.

Amongst others, this was the fate of 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 has been recognized only subsequently as a large and significant work. A certain exception occurred in France with the historian (and teacher of Émile Durkheim) Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges (1830-1889), whose book about the ancient village *La Cité antique* (1864) won respect even though it combined historical and sociological perspectives. By contrast in Germany the historian Karl Lamprecht ran into harsh criticism and misunderstanding (1856-1915), when, against the prevailing individualism and the belief that great men make history (Heinrich von Treitschke), he attempted to construct a social, economic and cultural history [Wiersing 2007: 474 - 477].

Since the 19th century, many historians have recoiled from sociology because it seems too abstract, simplifying and unable to catch the uniqueness of particular events. On the theoretical and methodological level this problem was taken up by German philosophers Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911), Wilhelm Windelband (1848-1915) and others [Käsler 1978: 142-162]. Dilthey emphasised the difference between the natural sciences, which strive to explain (*erklären*) "from outside" and humanistic sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*), whose objective is "internal" understanding (*verstehen*).

Windelband described natural sciences as "nomothetic", aimed at the discovery of general laws, and the humanities as "idiographic", tasked with describing single, unique events. Many sociologists have used this boundary between idiographic and nomothetic sciences to explain the difference between history, whose thinking is oriented particularly and descriptively, and sociology, whose task is to obtain generalizations. For history, sociology thus becomes a pseudoscience using methods suitable for enquiry into nature rather than human history.

At the end of the 19th century this sifting of ideas was spurred on by the controversies in economics known as *Methodenstreit* (a dispute over methods) between the Austrian School



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(Carl Menger) and the German historical school (Wilhelm Roscher, Gustav Schmoller, but also for instance Max Weber and Werner Sombart). This dispute took place on three levels and concerned the use of deductive and inductive methods, exact and empirical laws, methodological individualism and collectivism [Loužek 2001].

Sociology in the 19th and in the beginning of 20th century was interested not only in the present but in the past. The historical dimension was reflected in this era by Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, Karl Marx, Émile Durkheim, Max Weber, Georg Simmel, Vilfredo Pareto and others, being an integral component of their sociological concepts (in the case of Weber the link to the history is the strongest; one could say that his sociology is subordinated to history). Among many sociologists of that period a belief in the theory of progress still predominated and with it the concept that history was not just some random sequence of events, but could reveal the laws of historical development (Karl R. Popper would later criticize this as "historicism"). The ambitions of many sociological conceptions of history were substantial and often went hand in hand with dismissive attitudes towards conventional history, which seemed adorned with unnecessary details and improperly organised. If history was granted some meaning, it was perhaps only as a source of material for comparative sociological studies [Burke 1989: 19].

While very few historians in German-speaking countries at the turn of the 19th and 20th century dared to deviate from Ranke's framework (Karl Lamprecht's attempt did not meet with 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 between states, but between "civilization" and "wilderness". James Harvey Robinson (1863-1936) stressed social, scientific and intellectual development against political history. Charles Austin Beard (1874-1948) interpreted (influenced by Marx) the American Civil War as a conflict between industrialized north and agrarian south.

In France a new historical school was initiated by Simiand François (1873-1935), who criticized the reduction of history to historical events and great personalities. Belgian Henri Pirenne (1862-1936) developed a social and economic history of Europe. The works of Dutch scholar Johan Huizinga (1872-1945), dedicated to the late Middle Ages, made a significant contribution to cultural history.

The speculative nature of social development theories that emerged in the second half of 19 th and early 20th century undoubtedly greatly influenced the fact that in the further development of sociological thought there was a noticeable diversion from the study of long-term social dynamics (though not completely; there were exceptions, such as Pitirim A. Sorokin).

In sociology what pervaded was the tendency to form models on current states and focus on the analysis of data evidencing the present (Norbert Elias later identified this tendency as the "retreat of sociology to the present "). The main source of such data had been official statistics, but now, particularly in the United States, sociologists began to develop their own methods of empirical research with gusto (Chicago School, Gallup, Lazarsfeld, and many others). Amidst the growing professionalization of sociology its confidence grew and with



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this its distance from history. Historical sciences ceased to be considered relevant in sociology and their findings were no longer accepted as "raw material" for sociological analysis.

However, in the 1920s there was significant shift toward history, associated with the start of the *Annales* school (from the magazine *Annales d'histoire écnonomique et sociale*)[1], which was initiated by two professors at the University of Strasbourg, Lucien Febvre (1878-1956) and Marc Bloch (1886-1944). They rejected the traditional dominance of political history and attempted to found a broad-based study of history. Taking inspiration from neighbouring disciplines; they let themselves be influenced by Durkheim's sociology, and especially by the emerging structuralism. While in the period before World War II *Annales* represented only a marginal stream, after 1945 it became a very important and influential school, in whose second-generational development Febvre's scholar Fernad Braudel participated (author of the monumental work *La méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'epoque de Philippe II*, published in 1949), and whose third generation is already a very diverse group of historians (representing the so-called *nouvelle history / new history*, characterised by an unusual interest in the history of everydayness), among whom are such names as Georges Duby, Jacques le Goff, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, Phillippe Ariès, Mona Ozouf, François Furet, and others.

Although sociology and history during the 20th century diverged, their complete separation never occurred because of the research orientation which acquired the general name "historical sociology" (in American literature also "historical comparative sociology"). Contemporary authors who endorse it (such as Dennis Smith [2006: 191]), consider it a discipline with predecessors (Hume, Smith, Ferguson, Montesquieu, Tocqueville), which found continuation in the work of the founders of sociological thought (Marx, Weber, Durkheim). German author Rainer Schützeichel includes the so-called "Weimar School" (Alfred Weber, Wener Sombart, Alfred von Martin, Eduard Heimann, Franz Oppenheimer, Emil Lederer, Karl Polanyi, Hans Freyer, Adolf Löwe) from the period between two world wars. A further figure would be Karl Mannheim, who applied the historical perspective to the sociology of knowledge.

In the United States Robert K. Merton, inspired by Max Weber, examined in *Science, Technology and Society in Seventeenth Century England* (1938 [1970]) the influence of English Puritanism on the development of natural sciences. Pitirim A. Sorokin published between 1937-1941 *Social and Cultural Dynamics*; in 1941 George C. Homans published the study *English Villagers of the Thirteenth Century*. All these were significant works, whose authors swam against the dominant stream in American sociology.

In the U.S. at that time, Reinhard Bendix [1960] championed Max Weber and his historical-sociological perspective. The most famous of Bendix's works is *Nation-Building and Citizenship* [1996 (1964)], in which he focussed on the historical processes of the development of relations between the state and its citizens in nation-building. He examined this issue through the examples of Western Europe, Russia, Japan, and India. Bendix concludes that different types of societies may respond to similar problems differently. Each national

[1] The magazine was launched in the year 1929, later it was renamed and since 1994 it is published under the new name *Annales, histoire, sciences sociale*.



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culture is a result of conflicts from the past, shaped by the elites who have alternated leadership.

Another credit for the approximation of sociology and history can be given to researchers starting from Parsons' structural functionalism. In 1957 [1969] Robert Neelly Bellah published a book called *Tokugawa Religion*, attempting to reveal the Japanese equivalent of the Protestant Ethic. Neil Smelser in his book *Social Change in the Industrial Revolution* [1959] focused on the problem of social change based on the example of the development of cotton industry during the English industrial revolution. Interest in the historical perspective can also be found in the writing of Seymour Martin Lipset (*The First New Nation* [1963]). In the 60's Talcott Parsons developed the theory of social evolution based on the concept of the increasing adaptive capacity of the system through functional differentiation, in publications such as *Societies: Evolutionary and Comparative Perspective* [1971a (1966)]) and *The System of Modern Societies* [1971b].

Only in the mid-1970s was wide recognition garnered by the two-volume work *Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation* [1976], created by Norbert Elias in the period before the World War II. The author presents the findings of his "psychogenetic" and "sociogenetic" investigation which resulted in two related theories: the theory of civilization, covering historical changes in personality and behaviour (Part 1), and the theory of state formation (Part 2). Subsequently others of Elias' books were pubished [1983, 2006], including a rich secondary literature.

From the perspective of historical sociology, Elias' approaches are said to be complemented by the studies of Michel Foucault focused on historical changes of power and knowledge and the relationship between them [1999, 2000]. The "German Foucault" is sometimes said to be historian Reinhart Koselleck, who deals with the history of concepts - *Begriffsgeschichte* [2006] and who as editor oversaw the creation of the monumental eight-volume work *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* [1972-1997]. British historian Peter Burke [1989, 2007] meanwhile, operates on the border between the history of culture and sociology of knowledge. We may also assign many of the works of Ernest Gellner to this field, especially those focused on issues of nationalism [1993, 2002] and general questions of the structure of human history (*Plough, Sword and Book* [2001]). Books by these authors have an interdisciplinary character and show how- by simply stepping over narrow disciplinary boundaries – we can obtain fresh knowledge. Such interdisciplinary approaches are now becoming a hallmark of contemporary historical sociology.

## 4. Contemporary historical comparative sociology

In the development of contemporary historical comparative sociology a significant role is accorded to the left-oriented Barrington Moore (1913 - 2005), who worked as an expert on modern Russian history at Harvard University. Moore is the author of *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* [1967 (1966)], in which he presents analysis based on loose comparisons of historical events in England, the United States, France, Germany, Russia, Japan and China across the centuries. Moore focuses his attention primarily on the nature of violent clashes through which the formation of national states took place. The main actors in these conflicts are considered to form the bourgeoisie, especially the peasant classes and groups of landowners.



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In his analysis Moore distinguished three historical paths leading to modern society. The first is bourgeois revolution (the case of England, France, the United States), the second is conservative revolution (Prussia, Japan), the third peasant revolution (Russia, China). Moore points out that the course and outcome of these revolutions anticipates the further development of these countries, heading either towards democracy (revolution in England in the 17th century, the French Revolution in 1789 and the American Civil War from 1860 to 1866), or to fascism (revolution "from above" in Germany and Japan); or to a communist dictatorship ("peasant" revolutions in Russia in 1917 and in China in 1948-1949). Although Barrington Moore was a type of scholar-solitaire, who participated little in academic life, his works became a very important source of inspiration for the next generation of researchers. Notable among Moore's students are Ch. Tilly and T. Skocpol, representing the so-called "new historical sociology" [Spohn 2005].

Theda Skocpol (*1947), American political scientist and sociologist, published her most famous work *States and Social Revolutions* in 1979. She understands social revolution as a rapid basic transformation of society and class structure, accompanied by and largely carried out through a class revolt from below [Skocpol 1979: 33]. She claims that revolution arose as an unintended result of multiple conflicts shaped by a complex of socio-economic and international conditions. In her work, Skocpol focuses on three specific cases: the French Revolution in 1789; the Russian Revolution in 1917 and the Chinese Revolution in 1949, whose completion was preceded by a long civil war. Despite the considerable diversity of these revolutions, according to the author they had features in common. Revolutions occur in countries that are disadvantaged in some way, whose ruling structure is internally inconsistent and fails to respond effectively to existing challenges.

All three countries, Skocpol argues, were characterized by the backwardness of the agrarian sector, coupled with the inability to move to more productive farming. In all three cases there was widespread rebellion in the lower classes, especially among the peasantry. Furthermore the old regime had to face sudden changes in neighbouring states that wielded greater economic and military power and all three countries went through a series of military defeats shortly before their revolutions. Skocpol attributed great significance to mutual relations between states, and international conditions, thus drifting from the ideas about the process of revolutions formulated by her teacher Barrington Moore, while also contributing to the further development of historical comparative sociology (see also [Skocpol 1985]).

The most prominent of Moore's pupils was Charles Tilly (1929-2008), in whose literary inheritance one can find more than 50 books. Tilly was expert in three related areas. He was engaged in the analysis of social movements, protests and violent behaviour (the lion's share of his works), he developed a theory of historical sociology and was also the author of comparative historical overviews. At the very beginning of his professional career was publication of the book *Vendée* [1973 (1964)], which dealt with the rebellion in West France seaside area in 1793, interpreted as a desperate and doomed attempt by a broad rural strata to defeat an urban revolution. Tilly, like Moore and Skocpol, spoke to the problems of revolutions [1978]. For Tilly, collective forced action results from a combination of four factors, including common group interests, an organization with specific organizational structure, mobilization of group resources and opportunity associated with specific situational constellations ripe for exploitation.



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Tilly's works of a synthetic nature include *Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons* [1984] aimed at assessing major events in the field of comparative historical sociology, and especially the work *Coercion, Capital and European States, AD 990-1990* [1995] in which the author asks how the formation of modern states and economies in Europe took place from the early Middle Ages. Unlike authors expressing Marxist positions (Perry Anderson [1979], Immanuel Wallerstein [1974, 1980, 1989]), who unilaterally emphasize the importance of economic processes, Tilly sees a second and major factor in the field of the formation and concentration of military power.

Besides Skocpol and Tilly the third key person in the so-called new historical sociology is Michael Mann (* 1942), author of the monumental two-volume work *The Sources of Social Power* [1986, 1993] focused on the development in the area of social power and power configurations, who in the year [2005] published the work *The Dark Side of Democracy* dedicated to the issue of genocide. Mann [1986, 1993] sees social power as created by four basic sources. These are called the IEMP model: Ideological, Economic, Military, and Political power. Political and military power can be summarized under the concept of geopolitical power.

Mann follows the development of social power, thus defined, from the time of Mesopotamia (i.e. 5000 BC) to the beginning of international capitalism in north-western Europe in the 17th and 18th century. He notes in different historical contexts various combinations of distinct types of power. According to Mann, two types of power configuration have recurred in the course of history . One is empires with a dominant position of military power - empires of domination (an example is the Roman Empire); the second is civilizations with multiple power players (multi-power-actor-civilization), acting not only in military and political, but also in economic and ideological fields (the city states of ancient Greece, for example).

While empires based on the dominant position of military power tended to crumble and decentralize, civilizations with multiple power players evolved towards greater centralization. Arising from multiple historical circumstances, in Mann's view there was a gradual shift of the centre of power North-West from Mesopotamia and Egypt, across Greece and Rome to Western Europe, which in the 18th century became closely linked by four institutional orders: capitalist economy, industrialism, the nation state and multinational geopolitical diplomatic civilization [1986:471], and thanks to this became a form of civilization with multiple power players.

Another large synthetic historical-sociological concept is world system theory, which was formulated outside the field of the so-called new historical sociology. Analysis of the world system, whose main representative is Immanuel Wallerstein (* 1930), developed primarily from two sources of inspiration; one is neo-Marxism with its theory of dependence (dependency theory), originating with Wallerstein, and the other is the conception of historical science, originating with Fernand Braudel .

Wallerstein [1974, 1980, 1989] characterizes the world system as a territorial system interconnected by economic ties. This system, marked by inequality and exploitation, links - on the basis of economic exchange - the rich, developed countries of the so called *core,* with the poor, undeveloped periphery and semi-periphery countries. The author analyzes how this system developed in cyclic phases from the 15th century to the present, as periods of growth alternated with periods of depression. Wallerstein's concept was critically discussed



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by a number of authors (among others, Skocpol) and since the 1990's it has been considered in contemporary theories of globalization.

An important chapter of contemporary historical sociology is so-called comparative civilizational analysis, whose main representative is Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt (1923-2000) Other authors include Jaroslav Krejci [2002], who focused on the long-term development of civilizations, taking inspiration from the works of British historian Arnold J. Toynbee. Jóhann Páll Árnason [2003, 2005] has been engaged in the relationship between the development of civilization and modernization.

Eisenstadt's sociological work is notable for its synthesizing and interdisciplinary character. Eisenstadt was initially influenced by the structural functionalism of Talcott Parsons. The major work of his creative period is the book *The Political System of Empires* (1963 [1963]), in which he deals with large pre-industrial societies, particularly those described as "historical bureaucratic empires". In the next phase of his research, Eisenstadt diverted from structural functionalism and the starting point of his thinking became the term *axial age (Achsenzeit),* borrowed from the German philosopher Karl Jaspers. The axial age means the period from 8th century BC to the 2nd century BC, in which new revolutionary thought appeared: Plato's philosophy in the West and the prophets of Israel, which were followed by Christianity, Zoroastrianism in Persia, Buddhism in India and Confucianism and Taoism in China. For Eisenstadt this is the starting point for a reassessment of the question of the economic ethics of world religions dealt with by Max Weber. The axial age allows Eisenstadt to carry out a systematic comparative analysis of the potential for change of various civilizations [1986, 1987, 1992a, b, c, d] and at the same time opens the way to the development of the concept of multiple modernities [2000, 2003, 2006a, b, 2007].

The concept of multiple modernities contrasts totalitarian notions with the widespread conception that modernization can have only one single (western) form. From this perspective Eisenstadt intervened in the discussions which took place around Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man* [2006 (1992)], and Huntington's book *Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* [1996]. He criticized Fukuyama's naivism by saying that Fukuyama associates modernization with Westernization, and also Huntington's essentialism that sees civilizations as primordially given entities.

Eisenstadt believes that Western patterns of modernity do not present a single "authentic" modernity, though they play the role of historical precedent and continue to be the essential reference point for others. He is of the opinion that in today's world we find manifestations of miscellaneous, mutually competing modernization orientation patterns, which come in connection with the cultures of the axial and also non-axial civilizations.

Prevailing contemporary historical sociology outlines big, ambitious projects of an interdisciplinary nature (Skocpol, Tilly, Mann, Wallerstein, Eisenstadt), oriented towards large-scale comparative analysis pursuing global perspectives over long time intervals. The entire field, however, is certainly not exhausted by these projects. There are also a number of specific research areas [Bühl 2003, Delanty 2003, Schützeichel 2004, Šubrt 2007], including for instance the problems of collective mentalities, habits and emotions, social memory, historical consciousness and cultural trauma. Historical sociology today is a diverse discipline that makes an effort to elaborate general theory, has a number of special theories, ranges in specialized directions and develops research on the empirical level as well. This



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suggests that sociology and history have not separated completely, and that on the contrary that the volume of the recently initiated dialogue between the two branches will develop and intensify further.

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