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# Routledge International Handbook of Contemporary Social and Political Theory

Edited by Gerard Delanty and Stephen P. Turner

# Routledge International Handbook of Contemporary Social and Political Theory

The triangular relationship between the social, the political, and the cultural has opened up social and political theory to new challenges. The social can no longer be reduced to the category of society, and the political extends beyond the traditional concerns of the nature of the state and political authority.

This *Handbook* will address a range of issues that have recently emerged from the disciplines of social and political theory, focusing on key themes as opposed to schools of thought or major theorists. It is divided into three parts which address:

- The most influential theoretical traditions that have emerged from the legacy of the twentieth century
- The most important new and emerging frameworks of analysis today
- The major theoretical problems in recent social and political theory.

The *Routledge International Handbook of Contemporary Social and Political Theory* encompasses the most up-to-date developments in contemporary social and political theory, and as such is an essential research tool for both undergraduate and postgraduate students, as well as researchers, working in the fields of political theory, social and political philosophy, contemporary social theory, and cultural theory.

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*Edited by Gerard Delanty and Stephen P. Turner*

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# Introduction: Social, Political, and Cultural Theory since the Sixties

## The Demise of Classical Marxism and Liberalism, the New Reality of the Welfare State, and the Loss of Epistemic Innocence

*Stephen P. Turner and Gerard Delanty*

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The publication of John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* in 1971 coincided with a complex set of changes in the political situation of the west, the role of intellectuals, the state of the social sciences and humanities, and in the development of the welfare state itself. These changes provided the conditions for the creation of a body of thought quite different from the one the sixties had produced, and a significant change from the discipline-dominated thinking of the period after the Second World War. The immediately relevant events included the effective demise of Parsons' systems theory, the waning of the passions of 1968, and an enrollment crisis in universities' humanities and social science departments as economic fear drove students into professional programs, creating a sharp downturn in demand for faculty. The optimism that had characterized disciplines in these fields during the 1960s quickly faded. The idea that sociology was soon to become a "science," the source of the positivism dispute of the sixties, faded along with it. Logical Positivism as a coherent movement collapsed under the weight of the problems of the theory-observation distinction (Suppe 1977 [1974]: 45–50). At the same time Political Theory, which had been taught largely as an historical study – a history of error, as Leo Strauss described the standard textbook of the time, George Sabine's *A History of Political Theory* (1961), or as a continuation of the mood of *Kulturpessimismus*, as in the writings of Sabine's critic, Leo Strauss – revived, partly in response to the stimulus from the success of Rawls, partly in response to new ideas about participatory democracy rooted in the experience of the sixties. Social theory also changed: the role that Parsons had played as a focus of theoretical discussion was replaced; the work of Jürgen Habermas, particularly his *Theory of Communicative Action* (1984–87 [1981]), reassessed and re-appropriated the classical theoretical tradition in social theory to replace Parsons' synthetic account, and this work coincided with a systematic reconsideration of the classic social theorists, especially Weber. An additional source of new thinking came from

the “dependent” periphery, as thinkers such as Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffé (Laclau 1997; LaClau and Mouffe 1985), which emancipated Socialist theory from received dogmas about class struggle and recognized the centrality of other antagonisms and the need for open democracy.

This comprehensive rethinking of the areas of social and political theory had many startling results, especially when it combined with new social movements, and the seventies produced a series of them. The student movement of the sixties was followed by one even more powerful, the Women’s Movement, which asserted its issues within each of the relevant fields and created a new field of Women’s Studies, with a new model of activist scholarship and identity politics. Marxism took a cultural turn. New thinkers who were unclassifiable in disciplinary terms, such as Michel Foucault and Stuart Hall, emerged as fashionable. “Cultural studies” became a rubric under which humanistic Marxists could gather. Ironically, it also became a rubric under which followers of Parsons, such as Clifford Geertz, could replace the Parsonian conception of society dominated by a central value system with an equally “cultural” image of “the mind full of presuppositions” provided by cultural codes (Geertz 1973: 89, 112–13). The content and subject matter of these theories also changed. The sociology of the mid-twentieth century was concerned to a significant extent with “professionalization” as a major social transformation replacing class and class antagonism. Foucault produced a startling inversion of this paradigm. The practicing theories which governed and justified the work of the “professionals” who had taken over such things as the care of the mad and criminal, usually under the flag of progress and humanitarian reform, were treated by Foucault as ideological constructions which represented their own form of rule. The paradigms of incarceration and punishment established in the nineteenth century were the prime example of this (Foucault 1977). Foucault broadened this treatment into a more encompassing critique of governmentality (Foucault 1991 [1978]) as the underside of liberalism – the enabling practices of dominance and exclusion from power that liberal political theory had largely ignored in favor of abstract theories of representation, but which was undeniably a large part of the way liberal democratic regimes actually governed.

The generation of these new perspectives and radical variations on old perspectives was accompanied and justified by a new set of meta-theoretical ideas. “Structuralism,” an idea associated with disciplines, especially anthropology, was followed by post-structuralism, which soon morphed into deconstruction, and postmodernism – an even more encompassing idea which spread throughout the humanities and social sciences. The same emphasis on discourse, and the idea that the institutions of society and politics rested on ideological constructions, appeared in such forms as the idea that history should be understood as a system of rhetorical structures rather than as a science-like study of the facts, the recognition that different disciplines constructed the world in incommensurable ways, and deconstruction, the recognition that construction was an active process of discursive activity which could itself be reconstructed. Identities, which were contested by the social movements that flourished in the seventies and after, were themselves understood in these terms: the social construction and contestation of identities became the subject of the politics of the street. The world appeared as a set of interpretations, or “texts,” which could only be interpreted rather than treated as facts. These ideas came to be called “postmodernism,” and, by the eighties, this name came to be applied to the period itself.

## **Disciplinary Projects and the New Form of Theoretical Discussion**

Postmodernism reaction produced its own reaction. The relativism of postmodernism became old news. But the period left behind a strong sense that the ideas that had been contested so

strongly in the 1960s – positivism, Marxism, and the various disciplinary projects that had been defined in retrospect as “modernist” were impossible to return to or take seriously in the form that they had presented themselves – namely as projects grounded in a uniquely valid methodology, a uniquely true grand narrative, or a unique connection to reality. The idea that one could play a philosophical trump card in favor of one set of descriptions of the social world – a characteristic feature of the lengthy and inconclusive methodological debates of the 1950s and 60s – was seen as a product of a kind of intellectual innocence that was now lost.

The loss of innocence had consequences for what followed. New projects emerged, and flourished, but these projects derived their legitimacy from their relation to problems that had emerged from the inadequacies of past projects: the failure, for example, of traditional organic and juridical conceptions of state and society to account for such central facts of their own domain as citizenship or sovereignty in the face of the phenomenon of globalization. The new projects understood themselves to be trafficking in the domain of constructions. These new projects were intrinsically concerned with connections between domains that had traditionally been divided into the categories of social, political, and cultural. Cosmopolitanism, to take an example from the globalization literature, was simultaneously a cultural and social as well as a political phenomenon at the level of interstate legal relations, just as the national identities with which it competed were cultural constructions (Delanty 2009; Zolo 1997). The properties of cosmopolitanism could not be confined to a single discipline. Mass entertainment was consumed across the world and constructed for world markets. The agents of globalization included a highly internationalized elite that exercised influence in national politics. States were often juridically irrelevant to the settlement of issues of international business, which took place by arbitration in lawyers’ offices, with the effect of creating new forms of global law.

These phenomena and many more depended on the theoretical structures of the past – notions of sovereignty as part of international law, for example – in order to be formulated, but the loss of innocence meant that the validity of these theories as a source of the language of description could no longer be taken for granted. The prior ideological formulations of the nature of the state and of law were built into the conduct and practice of the state: to account for conduct and practice there is no alternative to accounting for this ideology and placing it in a larger and different perspective from the one which originally produced it and validated it. The new theories and theoretical approaches were thus not new grand narratives, but rather meta-narratives. As part of their own project of analyzing new forms of sociality, politics, and cultural life they incorporated, and at the same time accounted for, the limitations of past conceptualizations.

This new form of theory – interdisciplinary, meta-theoretically aware, skeptical of grand narratives, recognizing the role of social and ideological construction in the creation of its subject matter – has not been without its opponents. The reactions have taken various forms, but the central element of each is the reassertion of disciplinary boundaries. In the case of philosophy, we now have “philosophical social theory,” which is concerned largely with the affirmation of the doctrine of collective intentionality. This concept, which has been taken up in ethics and in some contexts of metaphysics, and had been used by John Searle as a means of accounting for the ontological status of social institutions and making the social world (Searle 1995, 2010), is a self-conscious rejection of explanations from other disciplines which undermine conventional philosophical claims. Philosophical arguments deriving concepts (such as “collective intentions”) from other concepts, such as the use of “we” and “together” in ordinary language (Gilbert 1989, 1990, 1996), can be performed apart from empirical issues, such as the question of whether anything explanatory about the real social world is added by reference to collective intentions (cf. Turner 2010). The goal is to get an ontology of the social that avoids skeptical

conclusions of the kind associated with postmodernism. The result is a form of intellectual conservatism that makes some preferred set of terms immune from “external” criticism.

The “philosophical” version of social theory also wants it both ways: to claim a specialized knowledge of ontology, but also to have these results accepted as true in a sense relevant to other concerns. But the “authority” of philosophy in the case of collective intentionality rests on nothing more than the bankrupt project of analytic philosophy based on the idea that linguistic usage tells us what the contents of the world are. The “meaning” that matters is the meaning in common life: the political meaning. Similarly, in sociology, one finds the rejection of interdisciplinary social theory, theory which is not wedded to the relatively narrow range of “facts” of concern to empirical sociology, on the grounds that social theory ought to preserve a close relation to empirical sociology (Joas and Knöbl 2009: xi). Implicitly, this simply means that “sociological” social theory may reject or ignore “philosophical” theories, political theories, and the like, and refer only to disciplinary concerns, while at the same time asserting intellectual authority over “the social” and speaking to the common life. But the authority derives from nothing more than the equally bankrupt project of extracting a science of social life from the kind of data that sociologists traditionally have preferred. Neither claim to authority is credible: these concepts belong to no fields, but to the common life itself.

Apart from these defensive disciplinary reactions, however, contemporary social and political thought is largely free from the kind of compartmentalization that marked the era of disciplinarization in the early and mid-twentieth century. The kinds of new approaches and new problematics discussed in this volume depend neither on disciplinary identities, and therefore authority, nor on the aspiration to be the scientific last word. They typically depend on and incorporate, but critically or at a meta-level, the ideological constructions of the past: one cannot understand issues of citizenship, marginality, and the like without references to the historical concept of citizenship as it is built into the institutions and laws of the nation state and international law. Any meaningful alternative understanding must also be an understanding of these institutions and facts. To go beyond Freud in a Lacanian way is to incorporate Freud. To focus on the underside of the liberal order as in Foucault is also to recognize and reinterpret the liberal order.

## **The New Problem of the Welfare State**

The sixties left a rich but ambiguous legacy. Some of the changes that occurred early in the period after the sixties were rooted in the sixties or earlier; some of them were reactions to the events of the sixties and the successes and failures of the Old and New Left during that period. But the publication of Rawls’ *Theory of Justice*, and its astonishing impact, reflected an important shift in the political concerns of academic social and political thinkers. The publication of this book coincided with struggles over the welfare state, which was consolidated throughout the west in the 1960s. By the 1970s, it was evident that the changes produced by the welfare state were irreversible – that opposition to the welfare state in the future would concern marginal issues of policy and philosophy and questions about the extent of its reach and its goals. But the basic fact of a larger, more intrusive, and more powerful state had become a taken for granted premise, still poorly understood and undertheorized, across the political spectrum.

The welfare state in Europe was rooted in a political lesson. The lesson that had been learned in the 1930s was that the price, and risks, of open class conflict were impossible for modern societies to bear, that the working class needed to be taken care of in the framework of a caring state, and that the traditional, and traditionally hazy, idea of socialism as the property-free brotherhood of man was neither achievable nor, perhaps, desirable. In Europe, the threat of Soviet Communism and fear of the defection of the working class drove the right to accept the

compromises that led to the welfare state. The Left, for its part, accepted (often tacitly) that without the recovery of industry and business there would be nothing to redistribute.

The effect of the welfare state, ironically, was to eliminate the traditional working class as a meaningful political category and force. In the 1930s, and even into the 1950s, the working class was a distinct group, with its own culture and amusements: class difference was pervasive, especially in Europe. By the 1980s, and in most societies earlier, these distinctions— which were originally highly visible, for example in modes of dress – were largely submerged, or had vanished. New media and public education produced a common culture. New wealth produced common patterns of consumption.

The 1970s saw threats to, and a building reaction against, the welfare state. Not everyone shared fully in the benefits of the new order. The remnants of the older Left that had not been raised up in the economic expansion of the 1950s and 60s – miners, in Britain, for example – faced off against the government, producing scenes of violence, and disrupting the economy. The least attractive forms of labor were taken up by immigrants and minority members. The means open to the state to include the least advantaged were often unpopular. Affirmative action programs for minorities, for example, threatened the traditional working-class supporters of the Left. And Left governments came to represent austerity and economic malaise. At the same time, and not unconnected with this, the core loyalists of the Left became public employees – teachers, for example – rather than industrial workers.

The Left of the past is now seen through the powerful distorting lens of these changes. The figures we now celebrate from this period, the Frankfurt School and the critical social theory tradition generally, including cultural critics such as Walter Benjamin and Alexandre Kojève and the *Collège de Sociologie*, Antonio Gramsci, and George Lukačs, were minor players at the time. The dominant Left of the 1930s was very different: concerned with such ideas as comprehensive “planning”: of the economy, and life generally – even the planning of values, in the writings of Karl Mannheim (1940). The language of rights, prior to 1945, was largely disdained as bourgeois ideology. The state was a subject of no interest: in theory, it was to wither away once socialist revolution swept away class antagonism and property. Relations between states were to become pacific once class vanished, so international relations were of no interest. Neither were the traditional ideas of political theory: sovereignty, the idea of the state as resting on the exchange of protection for obedience, legality, legitimacy, and so forth.

The face of the old Left was firmly fixed on the socialist future and its benefits: the present was interregnum or purgatory; the practical realities of socialist governance as seen in Stalin’s Soviet Union were misrepresented, as they were in the writings of the Webbs (1936, 1942) and John Desmond Bernal (1939), or ignored – a pattern which continued long after the war, especially in the writings of French intellectuals such as Jean Paul Sartre (Judt 1992). The Hungarian revolt of 1956 put an end to this for many intellectuals on the Left, but not all of them, and not the Communist parties of Europe: as a result, the issue of defending the Soviet Union continued to paralyze them old Left well into the 1960s.

Yet this period also saw an evolution on the Left. The language of human rights, extended to social rights, was embraced, however cynically, by the Soviet Union in the context of such documents as the United Nations Charter. And the Left in the west loudly asserted its liberal rights to speak freely in support of illiberal regimes in which these rights did not exist. The fifties saw the spectacle of McCarthyite persecution of former Communists who asserted their rights under law, and their innocence under law, to admiring audiences, despite being, in several important cases, compromised by the fact of their participation in espionage. Similarly, in Eastern Europe, prominent intellectuals on the Left who proclaimed their intellectual independence were sometimes involved with the security apparatus itself.



## Freedom: The New Solution

The New Left of the sixties freed itself from these contradictions, but at a cost to intellectual and political coherence. It was a short step from the assertion of liberal rights against McCarthyism to the unqualified affirmation of these rights, and to freedom – the Free Speech movement in Berkeley is an example – against the security regime of the state generally. But freedom in the here and now was not part of the Old Left’s program. The language of freedom itself both relied on the cold war dichotomy of communism and freedom and radicalized it. And in doing so it made freedom into a value as powerful and important as equality itself.

Rawls represented a powerful intellectual response to this conflict: freedom was reconcilable with equality and there was a rational means, something approaching a metric, for balancing the two. The basic idea was that once the rules of the game in society were fair, meaning that they led to egalitarian outcomes, people should be free to act within these rules. His conception of “the basic structure of society” was sociological, rather than legal or ethical: “the way in which the major social institutions fit together into one system, and how they assign fundamental rights and duties and shape the division of advantages that arises through social cooperation” (Rawls 1993: 258). These were open to manipulation to shape the division of advantages to produce the greatest well-being consistent with fairness of distribution. The principle of fairness was that the arrangements should benefit the worst off in society first.

This was a justification of the welfare state not merely as a problematic compromise, short of true socialism and scarcely better than capitalism, but as a positive order based directly on fundamental considerations of justice itself, considerations grounded directly in moral reason. Whatever reservations they had about the details of Rawls’ highly technical argument, among academics in the social sciences and humanities at least, with the exception of economists, the general thrust of these arguments was accepted. The goal of equality was grounded in justice; justice was grounded in reason. Moreover, these were ideals that did not imply the use of revolutionary violence, outright expropriation, or terror. The means available were means familiar to modern states. Moreover, the ideal of justice was understood to be implicit in common morality. Thus it could function as a critical standard that was implied by the basic moral commitments underlying the society and the state itself: still critical, because the state and society characteristically fail to live up to their own implicit aspirations, but, nevertheless, grounded in the morality of the citizens rather than an imposition from outside or on high.

This form of argument put Marxism in a peculiar position. Rawls did not need to appeal to the historical mission of the working class to bring about Communism through revolution, a dead letter by this time, nor indeed any need to appeal to history at all. The goal of equality, something that was a powerful motivator for socialism but not the whole of it (brotherhood, the abolition of the exploitation of man by man, human dignity, and the end of property were more traditional goals), was now ordained by reason directly. Freedom as a normal part of a fair social arrangement was a useful ideal. Concerns about “more” freedom could be dismissed as, by definition, attempts to preserve unfair advantages, and an obsession of right-wing cranks. Whatever reservations one might have about the details of Rawls’ arguments paled: it showed that there could be a powerful defense of the present state that pointed in a “progressive” direction of improvement that preserved the values of liberalism that deserved preservation.

It is important to understand the peculiar double-edged character of this argument. On the one hand, it was a defense of the existing order. On the other, it was the source of a form of critique that had no natural limits and could be varied extensively. No actually existing welfare state lived up to the idea of justice in Rawls. This was the simple form of the critique, and it was the source of much of the attraction of Rawls: as Richard Rorty often said, it represented

the best extant account of what a good society should aspire to be, which happens also to have fit the prejudices of the faculty at Harvard. But the nature of the critique had much more radical implications. The fact that existing social arrangements were not “just” in Rawls’ sense raised questions about the political forms, including the form of liberal democracy itself. If they failed to produce justice, there was something wrong with them, or with the citizens who voted in them. And these flaws might be rooted more deeply, in, for example, a flawed culture, a flawed social order that produced false consciousness, or something else.

The project of the defense of the welfare state thus shaded into the critique of liberal democracy as such, and then into anti-liberalism. Both the extension of the idea of equality and the issue of the failure of liberal democracy to bring about genuine equality could tap into a vast well of non-standard Left criticism, including the critiques developed by the Frankfurt School. The welfare state as it actually existed of course had its own problematic history – the paternalistic mental health and prison institutions created in the early period of liberalism were integral to the actual welfare state. And its subjects could be understood also as its victims. Similarly, forms of inequality not countenanced by Rawls, especially forms of inequality that excluded people, degraded them, stigmatized them, or otherwise defined them in institutional ways which conflicted with their own identities, could be made the basis for new forms of critique. Racism, sexism, and other symbolic and tangible forms of harm were themselves sources of inequality, and therefore of the liberal democratic order that produced them and by extension the welfare state in its present form.

The project of constructing a defense of the welfare state has continued unabated in various forms other than Rawls’ own. These approaches constitute a major part of the contemporary literature in social and political thought, and are well represented in this volume. Critical Theory as presently practiced represents a development of the same project of reconciling egalitarianism to liberal ideas, notably the idea of civil society. Republicanism is an attempt to give an account of freedom other than the liberal account and at the same time justifies the welfare activities of the state, including its assertion of paternalistic powers. Communitarianism is another. The return of interest in such traditions as pragmatism, which was on the Left, in Dewey’s hands, but opposed to the dominant Left of Bernal, is in part an attempt to find a philosophical account of the social sciences and the modern welfare state order that is consistent with the lessons of the postmodern revolt against modernism, but which is nevertheless positive and not merely relativistic. The discussions of racism, of the Foucaultian state, “recognition” in the thought of the Frankfurt School, as well as the revival of the discussion of notions of sovereignty, reflect the use or plundering of the received conceptual tradition in order to make sense of the new reality of the modern state.

## **Social Democracy vs. Liberalism**

One important issue that underlies this discussion could be put as follows: despite serving as an ideal that much of academic thinking accepts without reservation, “social democracy” has been opposed, or rejected in its details, by electorate after electorate. People have not, it appears, acted in accordance with the demands of reason. But at the same time, the welfare state, or at least many of its institutions, is popular. People fiercely defend the benefits of the welfare state when they are threatened by austerity programs. But they do not want to pay for them. Moreover, they have acted against their own interests by rejecting forms of redistribution that would benefit them and which “reason” justifies. This problem – which is a problem only under the assumption that reason in fact justifies the order in question – runs through the literature. Is there something intrinsic to the nature of public discussion, the psychological formation of people, or culture, or in the hidden or overt power of the opponents of

redistribution, that gets in the way of reason and prevents the realization of the kind of social order that reason demands? There is, in short, an analogue to the Marxian problem of false consciousness produced by the failure of the ideal of social democracy to be realized.

False consciousness is not the only model for this question. One of the great puzzles of twentieth-century politics is the fact that liberalism, which in its political as well as economic forms, brought enormous benefits, both economically and in terms of rights, also produced an extraordinarily fierce opposition. Fascism, Nazism, and the Left generally rejected liberalism as an ideology and a practice, and in the most vitriolic terms. The history of liberalism in the twentieth century is largely a history of struggles against liberalism, and the affirmation of anti-liberal ideas against the hidden ideological grounds of liberalism. The terms sovereignty, recognition, and the like are each terms that liberalism either rejects or ignores, or redefines.

The case of “social democracy” is similar: it produced its own reaction, or more accurately its own discontents, though some of these discontents were very powerful. On the Left, these discontents involved the excluded and the issues of equality that the simple economic model of the distribution of wealth left unaddressed – issues arising from ingrained race and gender biases in the law, in policy, and the like, as well as issues involving the status of previously despised groups, such as gays, the disabled, and ethnic minorities. Here the opposition is less fierce, but the reasoning is nevertheless fundamental: the very existence of these claims on the state calls into question the idea of blind justice derived from reason alone.

Liberalism itself fought back, both at the level of electoral resistance to the welfare state, and intellectually. For liberals, the problem of freedom was no more resolved by Rawls than the problem of the nature of equality itself. Robert Nozick, in a famous text of the 1970s, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (1974), made the point that Rawls had conveniently omitted consideration of the ways in which the distribution of wealth was the product of the free choices of individuals, and ignored the rights they had to the disposition of the wealth that they had acquired through their own effort. Even Marx accepted the idea that there was some deep connection between work and the control of the products of work. He merely rejected the institution of alienable private property as the proper form of this relation.

The problem of liberalism is rooted in the political compromises that produced the welfare state itself. Writers like Carl Schmitt (1988 [1923]), Albert Venn Dicey (1962 [1914]), and Joseph Schumpeter (1950 [1942]) had questioned whether democracy and liberalism were themselves compatible: in the end, they thought, the temptation of the working class to overturn property arrangements and impose not only direct egalitarian socialism but an authoritarian regime to enact it would be too great. The restraints on political action implied by the idea of the self-limited state, and the rule of open discussion of the use of the limited powers of the state, would soon fall under the pressure of the misguided desire to kill the golden goose of capitalism and expropriate the wealth of those who ran it. Along with it, the liberal idea of government by discussion would also vanish.

The philosophical form of these ideas produced a similar conflict with liberalism. If it was indeed the case that reason demanded an egalitarian regime, what was the point of liberal discussion or representative institutions other than to provide legitimacy or symbolic acquiescence to the dictates of reason? Kant’s followers, and Hegel, had already faced this implication of the idea that politics was justice grounded in reason: they concluded that the role of the representative was to act in accordance with reason on behalf of those who were represented (Bluntschli 2002 [1869]). It followed that “consent” was genuine only when it was in accordance with the dictates of reason. Liberal discussion was tolerable if it led to the acceptance of reason. Michael Beresford Foster, in his classic discussion of Hegel and Plato, characterized this as “the pitiless domination of reason” (1965 [1935]: 85).

And if one believes that reason does not dictate the solution to political questions, “reason” is being used by these thinkers as a warrant for the exercise of authoritarian power – a means of usurping power in the name of reason and of controlling and eliminating politics and contestation in the name of the end of justice grounded in reason. This is a conflict that is present today in the writings of Chantal Mouffe in response to the Habermasian idea of political reason in a fully realized civil society (Mouffe 1999). And it is posed, in a practical way, by the question of the role of intellectuals in society: if they are the representatives of reason, and have the role of bringing about the public acceptance of reason, they are either – depending on one’s choices in the face of this conflict, merely instruments of public enlightenment and servants of reason or active political agents promoting ideological solutions to the problems of the present.

## The Present and the Past

These issues underlie much of the discussion in Part 1 of this volume. In one way or another, the chapters deal with issues with liberal democracy and the welfare state, and with the need to replace, supplant, analyze, or extend and transform the images of man and politics inherited from liberal political thought, and with the responses to these attempts. The responses take two basic forms: a “French” critique, which understands liberalism as a form which organizes hidden means of distinction, suppression, and harm in the name of universalism and equity. The other, the “German” critique, is an attempt to consider the conditions for the full realization of the liberatory aspirations contained in the original liberal impulse. There is also a kind of American variation on these in the form of pragmatism, and a critique originated from liberalism itself, as well as still living traditions of European liberalism transplanted into the Anglo-American universe, and a resurgence of interest in Republicanism as an alternative to liberalism that allows in an unproblematic way for an extensive welfare state.

The “French” critique follows Foucault’s basic thought that we are complicit in our own oppression as a result of accepting forms of thought and practice that serve to oppress us. These forms acquire a kind of autonomy. They are controlled by no one, but enacted by everyone. “Liberal democracy” is made up of these bodies of practice – they are the underside of the liberal democratic state, and the true significance of the seemingly neutral practices of the liberal state is in these practices, which are the means by which citizens are disciplined, punished, labeled, excluded and included, and the like. Concentrating the project of reform on the refinement of these practices and modes of thought, their equal application, or the production of fair outcomes, as in Rawls’ procedural liberalism, misses the point fundamentally: the procedures themselves are the source of the oppressive power by which people are excluded, suppressed, labeled, and controlled.

This was a powerful idea. It avoided the problem of identifying power with a ruling class or elite – a project which in the 1950s and 60s had produced numerous efforts, which tended to discover beneficiaries of the system and people who maintained it, but few examples of classes which could “rule.” We ourselves, with our complicity in the basic arrangements of such things as the liberal penal and justice system, were the source of its power. Moreover, our complicity was unconscious: part of the fact of an order of practices of this kind is the fact that they supply our own mental apparatus for thinking about these things: conceptual practices.

As Gary Wickham points out, this idea, along with Foucault’s array of technical terms, was eagerly absorbed, especially in the Anglo-Saxon world, where it represented a way of continuing critique despite the disappearance of the most overt forms of the traditional Marxist form of class conflict. It fit nicely with anti-totalitarianism, and indeed had the effect of converting liberal democratic regimes, including the welfare state itself, into totalizing institutions

embodying ideologies of control. Power is about repression in both totalitarian and liberal regimes. But liberal regimes repress in covert ways, ways that are covert even to the repressors, who simply see themselves as dealing with the damaged or deranged and defending society, rather than as taking sides in a conflict. The task of the analyst is to identify and make visible these practices of power.

This was a mode of reasoning that applied widely, and applied at the point that procedural liberalism was especially vulnerable: the problem of minorities and those who are excluded or harmed by the procedural order of liberalism, and the hidden injuries which the welfare state produced when it managed these populations. Indeed, the history of feminist thought in this period as well as thinking about race, reproduces the transition from a kind of procedural liberalism, or a faith in the use of ordinary political and legal processes to attain justice and equality, to a recognition that the issues of racism and sexism, and the kinds of repression and inequality that they generate, are intrinsic to the order of practices themselves and require new forms of theorizing.

Foucault's topics ranged from madness to sexuality, and typically were concerned with the grand historical sweep – the turning points in which new orders of repression were created, usually in the distant past, and the long process of their playing out and development by largely unwitting administrators and minor thinkers. His focus, typically, was on the organizing ideas behind these systems, the ideas which provided their practitioners with ways of thinking about their subject. Pierre Bourdieu, who derived his own thought from the same general French tradition, but was more deeply rooted in the social sciences, carried out an analogous project, but concentrated on the more immediate range: systems of education which conferred and decided academic distinction, the organization of the relation between inside the house, the domain of women, and the outside, the domain of men, in the Algerian household, and so forth.

As Marcel Fournier notes, these studies had their own dramatic effects. In the case of schooling, the perception of schools as relatively autonomous “Republican” institutions was changed: Bourdieu exhibited them as systems for the reproduction of hierarchy, which operated in subtle ways to exclude the poor and advantage the beneficiaries of current hierarchies. And they did so precisely by the adherence to practices, which Bourdieu labeled with the distinctive term “habitus,” that had unconscious distinction-producing effects which the analyst could reveal. Bourdieu, as Fournier shows, was able to do something that Foucault did not: to create an academic corps of followers and collaborators.

Bourdieu is in some ways the symptomatic figure of the transformation of discussion. He recognized that the old questions of class were no longer determinative and that the possibility of struggle now resided in the realm of the symbolic or cultural, against symbolic power and distinction based on symbolic power, and also recognized that the new class to which an appeal needed to be made was the class of government workers created by the expanded welfare state. His main audience and following was among teachers, who were frequently members of the French Communist party. Bourdieu's intellectual and ideological problem was to think through the problem of culture and cultural practices – the locus of hierarchy in the new society produced by the welfare state. This required the development of such notions as symbolic violence, which, as Fournier notes, he used to analyze male domination.

But the thinker with the most distinctive approach to these issues is Jacques Lacan. As Stavrakakis shows in his chapter on Lacan and his influence, his radicalization of Freudian analysis and his terminology of the real, the imaginary, and the symbolic run through thinkers like Cornelius Castoriadis (1998), Bourdieu, and Slavoj Žižek (1989) and represent a particularly powerful kind of means of deconstruction and critique of ideology. For Lacan, as Stavrakakis notes, the realm of the symbolic is, as it is for Bourdieu and Foucault, the precondition for interaction,

including the interaction out of which collectives and individuals are formed – thus this realm is the starting point and subject of analysis.

For Lacan, this was not merely a talking point: it was the basis for a replacement of the notion of the autonomous desiring individual of liberalism with a conception of subjectivity that makes desire into the attempt to overcome a lack, and doing this through such means as consuming or identifying with a political ideology. The lack, however, is never possible to overcome – the autonomous individual never happens, and the solutions to the lack are themselves in the realm of the imaginary. It is this lack that powers capitalism, which provides consumption products that address this lack, including such things as prestige goods that confer identity. But the process never ends. And this endlessness generates its own response in the form of ascetic rationalism, as in Weber, in which pleasure is deferred. Present consumerism is a response to, and of course a rejection of, deferred pleasure in favor of consumption. But it is intrinsically doomed to fail to produce the fulfillment it promises, and constrains us to seek our pleasure in the channels provided by a consumer economy.

These thinkers were each influenced by, or identified with, Marxism. But at the end, appeals to Marx in France came to have little meaning beyond the ceremonial. The larger fate of Marxism, however, is more complex. Peter Beilharz examines the complex fate of Marx and Marxism. Marx, he notes, can be read in many ways, but at the core of his thought was the critique of political economy, especially its disembodied notions of labor. The early Marx had a romantic image of work as a freely given contribution to a collective whole. This image, which made sense only in characteristically rural settings, was set aside when he recognized that the industrial order was here to stay. He expected capitalism to collapse of its own accord. When Marxism became an official ideology of the Social Democratic Party it came to be accepted that socialism could be produced through voting. But the rhetoric of revolution was still employed, both as a motivator for the working classes, and as a promise of a radically changed future. The far Left rejected this cynical strategy, which in any case ended in grief – the revolutionary rhetoric and the far Left itself so terrified the voters that only the least threatening socialist parties attained power. Those that were wedded to this rhetoric were suppressed by force when the opportunity arose – as it did in Austria, for example.

The great exception to this was Russia. Lenin developed an unMarxian doctrine of the vanguard party that justified party rule in the name of the proletariat. The Russian revolution succeeded: it became a model for intellectuals in developing countries and was imposed on Eastern Europe. It retains its power in the poorest parts of the world as a solution to backwardness. In Europe it was recognized more or less explicitly by the Left to be deeply flawed, but the principle of refusing to denounce socialist regimes prevented these flaws from being discussed except in the form of a complex theoretical code. In France, because of the influence and omnipresence of the Communist party, this necessity vanished: one could either operate within the limits of the official party, which many intellectuals were willing to do, or one was free to invoke Marx in a wide variety of ways. The same could not be said for Germany or German Left socialist thought, where an unwillingness to explicitly reject the Soviet Union went hand-in-hand with a willingness to criticize with respect to such matters as aesthetic theory, and the development of a code which allowed for an alternative Left critique.

The Frankfurt School was the master of this kind of encoded discussion, and used it to develop a form of Marxism that had its roots not only in Marx and Hegel but also in Max Weber, the theorist of western rationalization and bureaucratization. As Beilharz puts it, they combined a Marxist critique of commodification with Weber's dystopian critique of rationalization. The product of this marriage was a socialist humanism concerned not so much with capitalism as with the characteristic forms and products of modernity itself, including the Soviet state. Louis

Althusser and Étienne Balibar (1970) and Nicos Poulantzas (1987 [1975], 2001 [1978]) provided a strongly “for Marx” critique of this body of thought, exposing the distance it had come from Marx himself. The collapse of the Soviet sphere in 1989 and the death of both leading figures put an effective end to this line of thought.

The Marxian impulse lives on in various forms. The model pioneered by the Frankfurt School when it added Weber to Marx (and Freud to Marx) continues to be a method of prolonging the life of Marxian ideas: Lacan, Schmitt, deconstruction, and other ideas can be combined with Marx to generate a “position.” And the basic anti-capitalist animus of Marx also takes ever new forms: as a source for the critique of globalization, the current financial crisis of the west, and so forth. But these Marxisms are all post-Marxisms: the proletariat as a revolutionary force exists only in the romantic rhetoric of far Left politics, and not in the realm of social and political theory.

The problem of race is a central example of a source of pluralism. On the one hand, race exemplifies the kinds of inequality rooted in the realm of ideas and the symbolic. As Patricia Hill Collins shows, race theory both has a scientific lineage and serves as a kind of working theory that serves to harm the subjects of its theorizing. It is thus a natural target for critical theory – for a critique that not only rejects it, which she calls traditional theory with a critical intent, but shows the hidden racial assumptions of universalistic accounts, and goes beyond this to identify what she calls “contemporary racial formations of social injustice,” meaning the racially unjust meaning of social formations which appear to have nothing to do with race. Justice, in the case of race, requires not just equality, or the elimination of a harmful form of thought, but the recognition and elimination of these hidden, harmful, racial significances. The nature of the harms, however, is not obvious, so one task of critical race theory is precisely that of theorizing these harms. In this form, critical race theory takes every institution as its subject, because every institution is inveigled in the racial ordering of society.

The same kind of case can be made for gender. As Claire Mary Colebrook points out, one form of feminism would be an extension of the basic language of liberalism, the language of rights and free choice, as well as the language of equality, to domains that were of special concern to women: reproductive rights and sexual rights. And the same “feminization” could be performed on other theories and approaches, so that one could construct a feminist variant of Marxism or post-modernism. But this would keep the forms of theory intact. The larger claim and promise of feminism is that the form of theorizing can and should itself change: that the present form of theory is itself masculine in character, and could be replaced by something with a preference for inclusion and empathy and a rejection of the notion of individual autonomy as a part of masculine ideology. As she notes, the notion of inclusion, both in theory and political practice, opens up realms of experience to theoretical discussion that not only undermine the liberal model of the individual, but raise questions about the notions of sexual difference that the feminist critique of liberalism assumes, and thus about the sexual binary, and ultimately about the notion of difference itself.

If we question, or deconstruct, the very basis of our distinctive form of critique, is this deconstruction tantamount to a kind of political quietism? This is a question that is raised by Judith Butler’s rhetorical analyses of gender difference talk discussed by Colebrook, and Butler’s famous slogan “everyone is in drag.” Thomas Docherty discusses this problem in terms of the infusion of ideas from literary criticism into social theory, especially in the form of Jacques Derrida’s philosophy of decentering and his critique of the philosophy of presence. As Docherty notes, the kinds of analysis of difference promoted by thinkers like Derrida does indeed dissolve the naïve binaries that “political” critiques by academics often depend on. Nevertheless, he points out, this has led, in the thought of such philosophers as Deleuze, to a quest for a stopping

point beyond these distinctions and binaries, such as “the event” and the idea of “becoming” as a way of getting beyond the fixity of difference thinking. In this respect this new turn of thought resembles the response of *Lebensphilosophie* to the rigid categories of neo-Kantianism. But in the hands of thinkers like Alain Badiou this critique becomes a form of the critique of ideology and false consciousness which opposes forms of consciousness to an engagement which cannot be reduced to forms.

Habermas, the embodiment of the second generation of the Frankfurt School, began his career close to Marxism, but like the first generation his thought was motivated in large part by the question of false consciousness, the question which originally was “why did the proletariat fail to fulfill its historical mission.” But Habermas pursued it in the updated form of the question of why people did not vote for Social Democracy, and specifically for the Social Democratic Party in Germany, which in the early years of the German Federal Republic was unable to achieve a parliamentary majority. Habermas, in his classic work on the *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1992 [1962]), inverted the analysis of the Weimar republic and its “sham parliamentarism” produced by Carl Schmitt. Schmitt argued that the possibility of genuine rational discussion and persuasion – the precondition of liberal democracy – had been made impossible by the emergence of anti-liberal “totalizing parties,” such as the Communists and Nazis, and by extension also the largely ideological SPD, which aimed to absorb the state into its own encompassing ideology and viewed parliamentary action as only a means to advance this ultimate objective: the absorption of the state by the party and the subordination of the state to the exclusive ideology of the party. Habermas argued that the public sphere itself was a sham in the conditions of modern liberal democracy, because the kind of rational discussion that should motivate political choice was undermined fatally by the false “news” and sham discussion among peers that actually decided elections. Eventually this argument turned, as suggested above, in the direction of a positive argument for a particular as yet unachieved public sphere in which uncoerced rational consensus would prevail.

James Bohman explains the meaning of the notion of “critical” in the “Critical Theory” that is the enduring contribution of this school to present discussion, and indeed which makes it a paradigm of the kind of social theory and philosophy that became central after the de-disciplinization of this discussion after the seventies. Bohman notes that these theories have a special explanatory structure that makes them both explanatory and normative. They are liberatory theories – designed to account for the obstacles to liberation and to have practical implications for the practice of liberatory politics itself.

In some of its earlier incarnations, this goal seemed to involve a comprehensive social and historical account which would provide its possessors with the means of identifying, from an epistemically privileged and theoretically grounded vantage point, instances of false consciousness in terms of an account of the stages of historical development of capitalism. Bohman argues for a more modest notion of “critical” which is nevertheless consistent with the project of a liberatory politics: critical theory as a form of inquiry consistent with a democratic politics in which a plurality of voices are not only heard but incorporated into critical inquiry itself. As he describes the lessons of pragmatism for critical theory, the kind of inquiry that is envisioned by pragmatism is a form of experimentalism in which there is democratic participation, especially in the judging of consequences. This kind of inquiry contrasts to technocratic, expert-driven inquiry of the kind criticized by Habermas.

Yet, as Bohman notes, there is an unresolved tension in Habermas himself with respect to the issue of theoretical unification. He is open to methodological pluralism, but not quite ready to abandon the idea that at the highest level of thought a unifying philosophy of history is required. Bohman argues that we lose nothing by abandoning this idea, and that we gain by



access to the variety of explanatory strategies found in the pluralistic world of perspectives. But we also gain something in the way of means of verification – something that Critical Theory wedded to a philosophy of history had to give up – in the form of the public verification of the success of particular liberatory measures and policies. This kind of verification can rely, democratically, on the reflexive ability of individuals in the public itself, rather than on technocratic methods.

Pragmatism, however, as Robert Talisse explains, does not speak in a univocal way about the correct methods: he identifies four distinct “pragmatist” approaches to the social and political, including Dewey’s perfectionism, Rorty’s ironism, Richard Posner’s realism, and Cheryl Misak’s deliberativism, which, perhaps combined with Dewey’s slogan that democracy is a way of life, comes closest to Bohman’s development of Habermas. For Dewey as for Habermas, discussion led to solidarity and a recognition of common values. The role of the state is to facilitate moral growth in this direction, a direction whose destination is not fixed in advance, as socialist thinking ordinarily assumed. But as Talisse notes, this is one conception of human flourishing among others.

Richard Rorty, in contrast, faces up to the relativism of conceptions of the human good, and sees the message of pragmatism in its openness to improvement and willingness to experiment with new forms of flourishing. He accepts the need to stand unflinchingly for our values in the face of the reality that there is and can be no grounding for them in philosophy, reason, nature, and the like – echoing in this respect Isaiah Berlin, Schumpeter, and Weber. Posner goes on to describe the democratic mindset that he identifies with pragmatism, which is anti-philosophical and disdains appeals to transcendental reason and transcendental values. He rejects democracy as deliberation, questioning whether this is anything more than utopianism, and suggests that democracy be understood as a competition for votes and nothing more – by reference to Schumpeter as well, who gets this conception from Weber.

As these references make clear, there is a conception of democracy that does not rely on classical liberal philosophy, but which is nevertheless liberal. Weber is one crucial representative of this kind of liberalism, and Schumpeter is another. In each case these liberals operate with minimal assumptions about human nature, and are reluctant to appeal to any kinds of transcendental assertions, whether they are about “rights” or “democracy.” But they are particularly immune to appeals to collective entities – society, race, and the like – and to assertions about the rationality of political values. Jeremy Shearmur discusses two thinkers in this category, Karl Popper and Friedrich Hayek: each of them anti-utopians who applied their arguments to the Marxism of their time, but whose arguments remain relevant. For them, the attempt to assert values as truths leads more or less directly to tyranny: either the market, in Hayek’s case, should decide, or, for Popper, a politics of piecemeal reform which concentrated not on the good life, about which we can never be expected to agree, but on the elimination of bad things about which we can agree.

The Frankfurt School is now in its third “generation.” With the work of Axel Honneth, it has returned to a deeply anti-liberal concept: recognition. The key to the concept is that recognition, unlike, for example the distribution of goods in Rawlsian distributive justice, cannot be generated by ordinary procedures of liberal democracy, by universal law, by government mandates, and the like. It is something that is achieved in history by struggle, by demands. It is a pre-political concept, in the family of the concept of honor, which is a condition for a certain kind of politics, rather than its product. As Mauro Basaure shows, for Honneth this level is fundamental to social life. For Honneth the concept of recognition is a return to the true social order – an order of reciprocal claims and demands whose mutual acceptance does such things as allow the individual to appear in public without shame, without

hiding aspects of their identity. It arises in the sphere of community life and in such forms as maternal love. A positive form of this mutual recognition affirms one's identity and makes possible successful self-realization in general. Honneth takes reciprocal recognition and affirmation to be a condition for the kind of subjectivity that allows genuine democratic political participation. In its critical form, as an account of failure of recognition and the processes that prevent recognition, this account is a novel form of the false consciousness problem itself, though for Honneth the problem now takes the form of asking what failures of recognition now stand in the way of is genuine "social democracy" with genuine democratic participation.

It is easy enough to dismiss the emphasis on recognition as a form of political romanticism, in Schmitt's sense, and to point to the affinities of the idea of recognition with the totalitarianism of the Soviet Union, the totalizing parties of the European Left in the interwar years, and to fascist and Nazi doctrine: the fascist idea of the idea of duty, and therefore of the soldier as its exemplary instance, as a model for the new order and the Nazi concern with the dignity of the working man in the face of his capitalist bosses and with considerations of honor more generally. The association of these ideas and identity politics in general with the notion of race – with the Mexican immigrant party *La Raza* as the exemplary party of identity politics – is also difficult to avoid. Nevertheless, it is clear that there are elements of the notions of human belongingness and attachment that lie beyond the spare and formal liberal legal forms of citizenship, legal rights to due process, the vote, and the relations of the market.

The question is what role these elements should play. Are they "private" and politically irrelevant? Or are they the secret essence of all politics and of realized human life? There is a sharp division over this. Liberalism has an affinity with the Protestant idea that human dignity and the like are ultimately irrelevant and a distraction: the true test for salvation is the individual's relation with God, a god who is "no respecter of persons," as the market and the liberal legal state are. For liberalism, they are private. Against liberalism, both on the Right and the Left, is the idea that true human life is possible only in the context of the rooted, the participatory, and the ecstatic communal: without this humans are atomized Hobbesian individuals incapable of genuine human relations. Liberalism, from this point of view, imposes atomization in the name of freedom and procedural justice, and employs the public-private distinction to suppress and reject the desire for recognition that those whose being is rooted in ethnic, class, gender, and communal identities wish to see acknowledged in order for them to participate as bearers of these identities.

Communitarianism brings these issues into the open. Is there a fundamental conflict between liberalism, including liberal justice in the rather abstract form originally advocated by Rawls, and the kinds of human relations that make up actual communities? Does well-being and social solidarity require more than a neutral framework in which we each pursue our individual ideas of the good? Is liberalism itself not so much neutral as an ideology of its own that contains a conception of the good that is itself problematic? Charles Blattberg points out that these issues are difficult for liberals to answer – if they reduce liberalism to a very spare notion of the good, such as autonomy – and define liberalism in terms of people's freedom to pursue their autonomously chosen ends, and add to this the idea of value-pluralism, that there is no rational ground for choice between these ends, we implicitly exclude the possibility of various forms of human relation – such as those captured by the notion of recognition – and replace these possibilities with the possibility of a society based on the much different notion of toleration.

Republicanism has emerged as an alternative to liberalism that preserves freedom, but does so by redefining it, and allows the state to act in a non-neutral manner in terms of values – a key condition for the defense of the modern, intrusive, welfare state as it actually operates. Richard Bellamy shows how republican arguments serve to avoid the kinds of problems detailed by

Blattberg's chapter, replacing liberalism with a notion of political community in which interventions that liberalism would treat as violations of freedom can be justified in terms of the values of the community itself. This kind of interference – such as interfering in ways that protect a person from self-harm – is neither arbitrary nor an expression of domination.

Moreover, the republican political community can, and to have a genuine community must, intervene to protect its members from the domination of others. Liberalism, in contrast, permits certain forms of domination by shielding it under the heading of rights – the right, for example, of a druggist to arbitrarily deny a drug to a purchaser on the basis of their personal beliefs, or for no reason at all. Political discourse which protects the right to be heard is the key to the prevention of domination: even a minority whose views might otherwise be ignored by the political process can have their voices heard and enter into political coalitions to secure their wishes.

Non-domination, like recognition, is a fact in the social realm. Liberalism secures rights against the state; non-domination is a social condition assured by the state as a means of securing the conditions for genuine democratic participation. What counts as domination, and what kinds of interventions by the state are warranted, are determined by the democratic process itself. But it is a democratic process undistorted by the relations of domination that liberalism allows. Thus republicanism incorporates the idea of assuring recognition and protecting community as these pre-political conditions relate to the integrity of the political process of discussion and exchange itself – and this can allow for very extensive interventions, which produce a *de facto* egalitarianism.

Natalie Doyle describes developments in French political thought that go in what is in some respects the opposite direction. She notes that thinkers like Aron and Francois Furet uncovered a French liberal tradition prior to French republicanism, with a prepolitical notion of freedom – a notion of human sovereignty. Where this notion is similar to the “Republicanism” discussed above is in the idea that this kind of freedom requires the protection of the state, and is fragile. Where it differs is in the way the problem of the state is itself understood: the state is not, so to speak, a natural product of collective willing which legitimates its intrusions on us, but is rather an invention, a mythologized or imagined thing, with no grounding in a legitimacy other than its own constructed imaginary being – no external legitimating fact such as God or the sacred. This reasoning reflected a suspicion of the totalitarian implications of Rousseau's general will. But it also reflected the idea of the state as a human project, an ideological construction, consisting of representations, to use the language of Durkheim as well as these thinkers.

The outcome of this reasoning is that that state, society, and the like – including of course the Foucauldian order of governmentality – are not treated as objects or forces outside of human control, but that the history of the state becomes a history of the humanization of state power, and the exclusion of religious grounding – a kind of disalienation and de-sacralization of the state. The implications of this reasoning for liberal democracy are in a sense the obverse of the lesson one finds in Foucault: that we are the creators, rather than the passive victims, of the state. But we are also engaged in a continuous process of emancipating ourselves from the monarchical, religiously grounded state of the European past, and of creating the subjectivity that makes democratic politics and collective action possible without the sacralized forms of monarch and nation. Individualization is not so much a theoretical error or theoretical premise, or a sign of failure to achieve collective unity, as a product of this process, and of the creative making of states and imaginaries of the state which drives this process.

This kind of more fundamental rethinking of the nature of liberal democracy as an achievement is relevant to the understanding of the political development of Latin America. The early leaders of Latin American republics were also characteristic modernizing intellectuals of the kind that in the twentieth century, in the decolonizing world, looked to Marxism as an alternative

path to development. As José Maurício Domingues and Aurea Mota point out, they reasoned that liberal democracy was not possible with the populations of their country and the Spanish legal and social inheritance, so they opted for more of a Napoleonic model, which gradually settled, in the nineteenth century, into a practice of state centralism. But these nations were also, for the most part, artificial, sometimes highly heterogeneous constructions which concealed a vast collection of minorities. These were for the most part politically excluded and regarded as a nuisance, as the chapter points out.

In the twentieth century, the ideas of the Left had a special influence: the compromises that made for the Welfare state in Europe did not take place in Latin America, and the poor remained, a decisive political reality – appealed to both by Left and in the case of Perón in Argentina, a kind of populist Right. Theorizing about the problem of the poor developed in contact with political movements of various kinds which sought to assert minority rights and regional demands. The possibility of a stable liberal constitutional order was always under threat by these movements. Yet a gradual development of a kind of liberal constitutionalism nevertheless took place, and the preponderance of military dictatorship diminished.

The Latin American experience is a mirror of western European modernity – both a challenge to the standard model of development, which raises questions about its universality, and a reminder of the conditions of its achievement – conditions such as relative ethnic and linguistic homogeneity. It is also a challenge to the notion of democratic participation, which takes on different and problematic meanings when the participation occurs under the flag of collective identities. Liberalism depended on effacing these identities: the price of recapturing them is to render ordinary liberal politics of discussion more difficult.

Deliberation, reason, and critique, to the extent that they become the basic content of politics, place intellectuals in a special position. Although there is a long tradition of discussing intellectuals as a social category in social theory, little of the earlier discussion reflected on the phenomenon of the public intellectual itself. From the time of Zola to the present, however, the forms of public intellectual assertion and presence have evolved, and a more serious discussion of the bearers of public reason, if that is what they are, is needed. Patrick Baert and Joel Isaac point to Bourdieu as an example of a thinker who was a public political intellectual who also theorized about public intellectuals and to some extent thought reflexively about the role of the public intellectual. Behind him was always the example of Sartre, the consummate public intellectual, who had discredited himself as a public thinker by his devotion to the Communist line. Much recent writing on intellectuals in sociology has been concerned with careerism – how an intellectual makes it. But there are other strands: the philosophy of expertise, the contextualist approach in the history of ideas, and an ongoing literature on the conflict between devotion to intellectual goals and political commitment. This is clearly a topic that requires more effort, but which is ready to emerge from its somnolence.

## **New and Emerging Frameworks: Plurality, Contingency, Relationalism, and Transformation**

Part 1 covers a range of theories that in very different ways have emerged out of the crisis and transformation of liberal political thought over the past three decades or so. As we have seen, developments within the French and German traditions opened up entirely new perspectives on the fate of the political in a period of major social and political change. The topics under discussion in Part 2 of this volume are less defined in terms of major schools of thought than by frameworks that have emerged around specific themes. The chapters concern topics that in part represent continuity with the older traditions of social and political analysis, but mostly they

deal with topics reflecting new and emerging frameworks of analysis. Many of the topics covered here are not easily positioned within what have now become established theoretical traditions, though they have been clearly influenced by post-Foucauldian theory, constructivism and interpretivism. The topics under discussion in Part 2 of the volume are largely concerned with challenges to social and political theory that have arisen from the crisis of the very understanding of the social that has come as a result of issues that are often summed under the heading of globalization or, in other words, the crisis of late modern or global society. Some of the more specific problems that this concerns are discussed in the next section of the volume.

A striking feature of current theorizing is the persistence of some of the central questions of social and political theory but which escape normative closure. Indeed the very possibility of a normative critique of society, which was taken for granted in the classical traditions of modern social and political thought, is increasingly questioned – though rarely rejected – in these new approaches. The older assumptions about the objectivity of society, or the reality of the social, and the possibility of an alternative politics has been supplanted by approaches that appear to foreground plurality, contingency, relationalism, and transformation. Until recently cultural theory, under the more general rubric of postmodernism, provided a framework of analysis that challenged the core of classical or modern social theory. As the approaches discussed in this part illustrate, culture is now no longer a domain outside the social and the political, but is constitutive of the social world. But we need to go beyond a notion of culture as such to a understanding of the different processes that it entails. In many ways the postmodern challenge has been normalized around a view of the social world as a site of conflicting interpretations. With this comes a return to some of the older questions and themes, but in new theoretical guises. These chapters cannot be located in a disciplinary field of social science. Most, if all, the chapters are also good illustrations of the merging of the concerns of social and political theory around conceptions of social life that stress plurality, contingency, relationalism, and transformation. In different ways these four conceptions of social life are emphasized in the chapters in Part 2.

The theory of power and the legitimation of authority, the subject of Stuart Clegg's chapter, has been a theme in sociological theory since Weber. Since Lukes' introduction of the third dimension of power in his seminal 1974 publication, which high-lighted a conception of power as the systematic delusion about interests. However Lukes' analysis was beset by the problem of objective interests and the assumption that the theorist might know what these are. Clegg's chapter shows how current theorizing on power goes beyond Lukes' own radical theory of the third dimension of power with greater emphasis on transformative processes at work in situations of power. Noteworthy in this regard is consciousness-raising through the conversion of practical consciousness knowledge into discursive consciousness knowledge. Practical consciousness is a tacit knowledge used in everyday life while discursive consciousness is knowledge that is more reflexive, critical and is potentially transformative. These two forms of knowledge are not entirely separate, but social order – and that is to say the legitimacy of social institutions – often depends on its separation. In other words, people have experiences of power but also have the capacity to understand these in ways that might cast light on their situation in a way that will allow them to challenge power. Alternative discursive consciousness is possible but this will depend on alternative definitions of what had been taken for granted and the capacity to make claims on the basis of such new understandings of the world. Real interests can only be discursively articulated in the generation of new ways of seeing the world. They do not reside in objective truths.

The radical contingency of the social world and the plurality of interpretations are the themes of Peter Wagner's chapter on theories of modernity. The term "modernity" expresses the need for a new language for interpreting the contemporary socio-political condition in light of a situation that cannot be fully explained in terms of postmodernity. A range of new theories of

modernity aimed at re-assessing that the older sociological concept of modern society in view of experiences that were increasingly seen in terms of major societal transformation. But modernity, which cannot be theorized today as a universal or unilinear condition, should also not be pluralized to a point that it ceases to refer to anything common. His argument, which is developed around a critique of the varieties of modernity literature, is that the main features of modernity consist of a “limited set of basic problématiques” that all human societies need to address. These are the questions as to what certain knowledge a societal self-understanding is seen to rest upon; how to determine and organize the rules for the life in common; and to how to satisfy the basic material needs for societal reproduction. Modernity is not a universal condition; against what recent approaches might suggest, it is a condition in which certain questions are posed while the answers to them are not externally given but need to be always open. As with the previous chapter on power, contestation of the validity of existing answers and arrangements is always possible. But here greater emphasis is given to plurality. Thus the plurality of modernity consists of a plurality of possible answers to the problems that all modern societies are faced with.

The legacy of the Enlightenment and modernity is everywhere present. The vision of a social order based on legitimate authority as opposed to violence constituted the basis of the very possibility of society in classical social theory. In this vision, human beings armed with reason, which comes with the advancement of knowledge, could create a political order that makes possible the progress of freedom. To do this they had to conquer both the social world and the natural world. The fact that they were unable to do so fully gave rise to the problem of modernity. As Wagner argues, modernist social and political thought problematized in different ways the tension between the pursuit of freedom and rational mastery, on the one hand, and on the other side the often unintended, collective outcome in the form of major societal institutions. This tension resides in the heart of the very conception of power, as domination and as legitimate authority, as Clegg shows. The fragile condition of modernity and the kinds of power that it creates is in many ways encapsulated as a problem of trust.

Karen Cook and Brian Cook explore the problem of trust in an analysis that distinguishes between social and political trust. Political trust is about the belief in the reliability of the legitimacy of government. Social trust refers to more practical concerns, which are often discussed in terms of the capacity for social capital to be mobilized; it concerns not only confidence in the institutions and organizations but also trust in other individuals. The problem of trust becomes acute in modernity due to the world-wide growth of democracy and increase in human agency and interconnectedness leading to the need for new bonds but ones that cannot be reduced to either force or domination. Complex societies need to find ways to make cooperation possible. The existence of uncertainty and risk is what makes the act of trusting another significant. Trust and risk are inextricably connected. If there is no risk of something going wrong, then there is no real need for trust to be an issue. The act of trusting another party, person, or institution places one at risk. This is the condition of radical contingency that defines the predicament of modernity. Trust is not a psychological state, but it is relational and contingent on the terms of the relation. So trust, like much of the condition of modernity, is not underpinned by an objective reality. Much of the interest in trust is about exploring what factors facilitate cooperation under varying conditions. But, and it is the key point, modernity may not simply give rise to more trust – in so far as this is a general condition – than a desire for trustworthiness. If we want anything, it is likely more trustworthiness since we cannot always trust that our interests will be severed by societal norms. Thus, trust networks, especially in high risk contexts in which distrust rather than trust may best characterize the social situations often lead to a more limited application of trustworthiness. So trust is highly fragile and contingent; it is inextricably bound up with risk.

The analysis of society in terms of risk has been at the forefront of social theory since Beck's theory of the risk society. Risks are assessments – and thus they are interpretations – of problems in the objective order of the social world, and they are the site of new political controversies. The risks may be entirely products of the risk discourse, which itself has the capacity to shape much of contemporary social life and public policy. Tim Luke's chapter explores the important linkages between risk and the environment as contested topics in social and political theory in the more advanced industrial societies of the world. His chapter reflects a certain distance towards social constructionist accounts of risk while at the same time not following a simplistic view of risk as reducible objectively measurable dangers. Risks are real but real in different ways. The embedded necessities of living with risky technologies have become so routinized by expert managers and economic conditions that few question this inescapable fact of life. Much of government is about the reduction of potential risks in conditions of contingent complexity. Nonetheless, the very same energy-intensive systems of mass consumption, which make a high standard of living possible, also arguably are responsible for the increasing endangerment of even living at all well amidst today's environmental crises. As the noxious greenhouse gases generated by fossil fuel use have been identified by the scientific community as the most likely cause of global warming, the many important linkages between risk and the environment clearly need to be more fully explored, particularly with regard to the inequalities behind their initial creation as well as their ultimate impact. This chapter explores how risk becomes widespread as both naturalized abnormality within a society as well as routinized irrationality in the economy. When ordinary unintended irrationalities are recast as the achievements of late modernity, the truly accidental normality of coexisting with systems of complex systems make the environment and risk crucial concerns for social and political thinkers.

The transformation of the social is the topic of several other chapters which all in different ways explore the theme of the plurality, relationalism, contingency, and transformation of social. One of the most influential developments in recent interpretations of the social is network theory. This is not a single field, but includes the diverse fields of Network-Theory, first developed by Bruno Latour and Michael Callon, and generally referred to as Actor Network Theory or ANT, Manuel Castells' conception of the Network Society as the social structure characteristic of the information age, and the expanding field of network analysis, as in the work of Wellman, Fisher, and Granovetter. The notion of the social as a network is of course not new and was an important aspect of the sociology of Simmel who stressed a conception of the social in terms of relationships and, too, was a feature of the sociology of Bourdieu. What is new is the emphasis on the materiality of networks in terms of communication technologies and the current context of globalization. The significance of network theory lies in a relational conception of the social. Society is not an objective reality in itself, as Durkehim claimed. Networks are sets of relationships between nodes and are heterogeneous in terms of their composition, which can include humans, machines and organizations. As Amelia Arsenault says, "the study of networks is, in essence, the study of relationship," and as such suggests a relational conception of society. The social is constructed out of associations and relations rather than out of agents and structures.

This approach blurs the distinction between society and nature since in networks elements of both are present and what is important is the combination. There is no determining structure and no reliance on agency as the prime mechanism in the generation of social configurations. But networks are constitutive; they are, as Arsenault says, "building blocks," but in the sense not of specific networks but the network as a societal form in itself. Thus for Castells, we can speak of the "network society" as a contrast to, for example, the class society. Network theorists might be agreed on the importance of networks as the sociological unit of analysis, but there are

huge differences in how networks are theorized. ANT theory sees the key aspect the connections and especially between different kinds of connectors (humans and non-humans, for instance), while Castells stresses the network itself, not the associations. In any case networks are not outside the social, but constitutive of the social. Such a view would lead to a different conceptualization of mobile phones, for instance: they could be seen as technologies human beings use to communicate or they could be seen as part of a new kind of society, which might be termed the network society. The object of study is the relational field, not the objects in it.

As in other chapters in this volume, the question of power is ever-present. Arsenault considers the subject of network effects. That is, what are the major social and political implications of the rise of networks as a mode of social organization? For Castells, the sphere of power resides in communication. The new privileged sites of power lies in the media. The general point that emerges from this is that “switchers” – or a connection point between different networks, such as those of media, the political and the economic – are increasingly important. While power relations figure less in ANT, the key point here is that the difference between social actors operating between or within networks resides in their successes or failures in constructing associations. Nevertheless, network theory undermines the centrality of the social actor as it does of objective structures.

Performativity, like network theory, has emerged as one of the most important theoretical approaches of recent times, with an extraordinarily varied take-up. The starting point for many contemporary discussions of performativity in social and political thought is J. L. Austin’s *How To Do Things With Words* (Austin 1962). The key idea in this work that was later taken up by social and political theorists is that language is action upon, rather than a description of, the world. The implication of this is that language is potentially transformative. The idea that words could do things – that communication is a mode of action – was to prove hugely influential. It gave rise to one of the main fault-lines within contemporary theories of performativity: between those treating performativity as a formal property of language, as Habermas, and those, such as Butler and Alexander, treating it as a social or cultural practice. As Moya Lloyd shows, a division began to emerge in theories of performativity with the ideas of Derrida and Bourdieu, who took up different notions of performativity, marked between those conceptualizing it as a linguistic phenomenon and those defining it as a social practice. The formal pragmatics of Jürgen Habermas, who brought performativity into his theory of communicative action, marked a further level of complexity in the concept. But the most influential approach is Judith Butler’s argument that gender is performative. The controversial account of symbolic action as social performance developed by Jeffery Alexander *et al.* is yet another illustration of the diversity of appropriations of this notion. For Moya, if it is to operate as an effective social and political theory, a theory of performativity has to be capable of explaining both the reproduction and perpetuation of relations of power (gendered, capitalist, racial, and so on) and how those relations can be contested. The nature of performance is that it may be a failure or a success. Performative success is thus reconceptualized by Bourdieu as a function of social power, dependent upon the “symbolic capital” of a particular actor, and performative failure of their lack. This reasoning, Moya argues, allows the concept of performativity to be transformed from a purely linguistic phenomenon into one concerned with the social conditions, including gender and class, that impact on language use.

The question of networks, discussed earlier, and the relational conception of the social that it implies raises many questions for the meaning of social institutions and related notions of structure and agency. For institutions, the implication is that they are now in an era of change and not necessarily place specific. The advent of the network society undermines the importance of spatial proximity. Of the many implications that this raises, one concerns the fate of the



nation-state and the kinds of belonging that it entails. The chapters on nationalism and empire in different ways attest to the continued relevance of these geopolitical forms. Instead of withering away, much of recent social and political theory has engaged extensively with the legacy of the modern nation-state. Steve Grosby argues that nationality poses a number of significant problems for social and political theory; and, in turn, the insights of social and political theory can importantly contribute to clarifying the character of nationality. However, in order to make that contribution, social and political philosophy will have to put aside the antiquated schema of the historical disjunction between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* – a contrast that still largely dominates many of the theoretical investigations into nationality.

The question of empire is rather more complicated. As Krishan Kumar shows in his chapter, empires have existed throughout much of recorded history but imperialism, as an ideology and practice, is relatively recent. This chapter looks at the interaction of empire and imperialism. It analyzes the concept of empire, distinguishing between land and overseas empires, and examines the relation between empires and nation-states. It traces the rise of imperialism, as a European phenomenon, and its reflection in largely critical accounts of empire, in the works of Hobson, Lenin, and others. Kumar shows the persistence of empire in the twentieth century, despite increasing resistance, and argues that nation-states have lived for much of their time in the shadow of empire. He also considers the condition of empire after the great decolonizations of the second half of the twentieth century, including the fall of the Soviet Union. Is empire now dead? This seems a premature judgement, in the light of the persistence of the “American empire” and the widely-held view that the nation-state is in crisis. Empires not only have an after-life in the cultures of colonizers and colonized alike, but may also be instructive for thinking about possible forms beyond the nation-state.

Whatever forms political community might take beyond the nation-state, the imperial form is unlikely to be Alexandrian, that is embracing cosmopolitan cultures covering the entire earth in a single ecumene. Contemporary cosmopolitan theory is largely post-imperial and, too, post-universalistic. Fuyuki Kurasawa’s chapter on cosmopolitanism discusses the multi-faceted dimensions of this concept in recent social and political thought. Cosmopolitanism refers to a perspective on the world that stresses openness to others. This can be reflected in political, economic and cultural forms depending on the claims being made. The prevalence of cosmopolitanism in recent times has much to do with globalization and the rise in transnationalization more generally. However, it is not directly a product of globalization and in many ways it expresses a normative critique of globalization. In this respect, cosmopolitanism reflects the themes of pluralisation and transformation that mark much of recent theorizing on the social. Cosmopolitanism is a concept that refers both to normative criteria – one’s world as a dwelling-place or the belief in the moral primacy of human unity and love of humankind – and to empirical phenomena that reflect normative principles. The latter is increasingly associated with notions of vernacular cosmopolitanism or rooted cosmopolitanism, grounded in the realities of everyday life where an ethos of multiperspectivism has become embedded in peoples’s lives. For this reason cosmopolitanism is often taken to be an analytical approach in recent social science. Kurasawa identifies three analytical paradigms within cosmopolitan theory: formalism (focussed on intersubjective procedures of public deliberation to develop norms of universal moral equality), ethicism (focussed on the ethics of engagement with alterity), and materialism (focussed on the link between cosmopolitanism and global capitalism).

The next three chapters deal with emerging frameworks of analysis relating to issues that go beyond the traditional scope of social and political theory. These concern cognitive theory, neuroscience, and socio-biology all of which point towards the naturalisation of the social. Byron Kaldis addresses developments of the relation between the natural and the social by

charting the epistemological and social-theoretic standing of human sociobiology. The general idea of the relationship between nature and society is delineated in a discussion that shows what is involved when social theory is attempted to be derived from natural–scientific discourse. The most celebrated and most vilified such attempt, sociobiology, has, along with evolutionary psychology, advanced theses about the nature of society and the evolutionary origin of ethics. Much of this amounts to a strong naturalism, a scientific reduction of the study of human thought and action and economic behavior, to its biological basis. This has all led to the return in a new guise of determinism and reduction, with the twist that human freedom is now only a matter of enhancing evolution by the most suitable forms of technology. The result is that social theory is forced into a normative critique against claims made in the name of science, which have taken on a counter-normative force in the alleged capacity of evolutionary biology to explain social life in all its facets.

Piet Strydom's chapter opens with an argument in favor of a weak naturalistic rather than either a strong naturalistic or a strong idealistic conception of the cognitive approach. Against this background, it seeks to clarify this approach by identifying the principal mechanisms operative in the process of constitution and organization of society: generative (new ideas and claims-making), relational (association), transformative (collective learning), and context-setting mechanisms (state, economy, civil society). The mechanisms are illustrated by way of a cognitive reconstruction of social and political theory as it reflexively ran parallel to the unfolding of modernity through its three major historical phases: from the early modern, through the modern, up to the currently emerging transnational constellation. Central to the account is the dialectical conception of the cognitive immanent in social life and the metacognitive reflexively available in context-transcendent cultural models. It allows a critical analysis of the way in which context-transcendent normative guidelines – e.g. the idea of a democratically self-governing society – can and do play a positive role in structuring immanent social orientations and relations, but are often deformed or even blocked by the interference of context-setting political, economic and cultural factors which themselves have a significant cognitive component. Deformations and/or blockages of this kind blighted modern society by way of such pathologies as authoritarianism, ideologisation, marketisation, instrumentalism, repression and obfuscation, and some of these are in danger of being reproduced in a new form and on a new scale under transnational conditions. A vital aspect of the constitution and organization of the emerging world society in an adequate form is to be found in subject formation, the formation of a subject appropriate to the emerging constellation. On the basis of this analysis the task of a cognitively inspired contemporary social and political theory is restated. This task, Strydom argues, is the practically meaningful one of studying and critically analysing the constitution and organization of the emerging world society so as to contribute to the mitigation, if not avoidance, of unjustifiable interferences in the process and their undesirable pathogenic and pathological consequences.

Strydom's rejection of both strong naturalism – for instance some notion of biological determinism – and of social constructionism with its relativistic implications, is also reflected in the chapter by John Gunnell on neuroscience. A difficulty with cognitive theory is the diversity of approaches and what often enters into social science is in fact philosophical speculation by neuroscientists. Nevertheless it is now widely recognized that it has important implications for social and political theory. Gunnell makes the point that one impetus behind the contemporary interest in cognitive science has been declining interest in rational choice theory. One of the implications of cognitive neuroscience is a new significance for the role of the emotions and social interaction. This relates very much to the relational conception of the social discussed earlier, but in a much more extensive manner. The key concept is connectionism, which, as

Gunnell explains, seeks to explain a wide range of human capacities by reference to neural processes. Neuroscience attests to “social areas” in the brain, but which cannot be reduced to determinism: it is rather a weaker form of naturalism and cannot also be explained in the universalistic terms of Chomsky. However, it does show that consciousness is not something entirely subjective and thus purely relativistic conclusions are not valid. Emotions have a neural basis. Thinking and feeling is multilayered with biology mixed into the social. In this context he refers to William Connolly’s (2002) notion of a “deep pluralism” as an outcome of neuroscience. The resulting neuropolitics draws attention to how political choice and action may be in part shaped by neural processes.

The final two chapters in Part 2 deal with relatively new perspectives in contemporary social and political theory beyond the horizons of the established approaches in western thought. Elena Ruiz-Aho’s chapter introduces the main themes and ideas in feminist border thought, broadly construed as an emerging paradigm for theorizing the lived experience of political borderlands, especially along the U.S.–Mexico border. Specifically, it offers a framework through which the complex experiences of multicultural subjects, and women of color in particular, who are situated at the crossroads of two or more cultures can be articulated. As a leading example in the field, Gloria Anzaldúa’s seminal descriptions of postcolonial life (as they appear in her landmark *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 1987) are presented in the context of recent Latin American social and cultural theory, including Walter Dignolo’s notion of “border thought”. As a political theory that articulates the barriers towards inclusiveness and recognition of cultural differences in multiethnic societies with attention to race and gender, feminist border thought is also presented as a powerful ally in addressing post-9/11 rhetorical constructions of national identity based on assimilation rather than plurality and difference.

Guanjun Wu’s chapter is addressed to new Chinese political thought since the break with the Maoist period (1949–78). The post-Maoist Chinese period saw the rise of intellectuals as a leading group in Chinese society. Whereas it was the Party leadership that had previously set the tone of cultural and intellectual life, academics and independent scholars have increasingly become involved in Chinese social and political thought as this develops in the public sphere. His topic concerns the rise of public intellectuals in contemporary China and “May Fourth Enlightenment” which emerged in the 1980s but which consolidated in the wake of the Tiananmen student protest after 1989 and gained further momentum after 1992 the easing of censorship on intellectuals. This movement invoked an earlier opposition to Confucianism, going back to the early twentieth century, but today it is defined against Maoism and one of the new ideas that has emerged is a new thinking around Confucianism. However, as Wu argues, these ideas were largely confined to cultural critiques as opposed to political ones. As an example of more political orientations within recent Chinese thought, Wu refers to the movement known as “critical intellectuals,” including the prominent thinker Wang Hui, as this took shape in the late 1990s. A key idea is that it is not modernity but China’s premodern past that may offer a resource for new ideas today. His work can be seen as an attempt to find a new intellectual framework for social and political critique on China’s path to modernity and its place and role in the global context. Such attempts to reconstruct Chinese modernity are frequently linked with the revival of classical Confucian thought and serve as a reminder to alternative conceptions of modernity beyond the western experience.

## Emerging Problems

The chapters collected in Part 3 of this volume concern emerging problems and are closely related to the new frameworks of analysis discussed in Part 2. These reflect a sense of crisis, in

particular the fragmentation of the social and the political order of modernity. Much of this is related to the consequences of globalization, which has forced a re-assessment of many of the presuppositions of modern social and political thought. But we also find in these chapters the exploration of alternative scenarios to the discourse of the end of modernity that pervaded some of the earlier theories of postmodernity. As discussed also above, the chapters collected here cannot be so easily located within the context of the cultural turn in the social and human sciences. Many of the topics can be seen as revitalized classical themes addressing major social and political transformations relating to economy and state. These are topics that have been relatively marginalized by the cultural turn, which saw a general turning away from the analysis of large-scale processes such as capitalism and the state. These chapters can be summed up under three broad thematic fields: the crisis of sovereignty and new conceptions of the political, the consequences of transnationalism for political community and social justice, and changes in the constitution of subjectivity and social values.

Sheila Nair discusses how sovereignty, sovereign power, *homo sacer*, and the ban coincide in the making of “the state of exception” and the camp as developed in Giorgio Agamben’s work. She explores how Agamben exposes the ways in which sovereign power depends upon and is sustained by the exception, and how bare life – suspended in a zone of indistinction – is exemplified in the modern camp. While disrupting established notions of sovereignty and security in international relations, and drawing attention to their exclusions, these characterizations of the exception, are nevertheless, seen by some critics as limiting. The chapter then turns to a discussion of the postcolonial exception, governmentality, and sovereignty in the context of critics’ claims that Agamben does not properly account for imperial and colonial narratives in his arguments. Her conclusion is that a postcolonial counter-narrative should matter in the framing of arguments round the exception.

The next chapter offers a case for the continued relevance of the state despite some of the claims made about its demise as a result of globalization. For Georg Sørensen, there are three major modalities of state in the present international system; they are the postmodern states in the OECD-world, the weak postcolonial states mostly in Sub-Saharan Africa, and the modernizing states, mainly in Asia, Latin America, and parts of Eastern Europe. They display new patterns of violence and conflict: large-scale violent conflict is now within weak states while advanced states face an increasing number of transnational bads. In the political sphere, democracy is challenged; modernizing states are not on any secure path towards stable democracy, weak states lack the preconditions for democratic rule, and advanced states face a number of new challenges emerging from cross-border integration. In the economic realm, global capitalism is not in existential crisis, but a stable liberal economic order with benefits for all is not in the cards. As regards common values and identities, there is no strong trend towards the emergence of common liberal values on a global scale. Processes of modernization and processes of decay both help produce more nationalistic or fragmented and divisive responses in terms of identity. Finally, the institution of sovereignty remains in place, but it is being transformed in ways that exposes it to significant challenges. The conclusion is that the sovereign state is alive and well. By no means has it been obliterated by the forces of globalization. But it has been transformed in significant ways and it will continue to change. These changes may not always be for the better. The major types of state discussed here all face considerable challenges to which they have so far not found very good answers. Many observers are too optimistic when they consider processes of political and societal change; the outcome of such processes may not always be development; it might as well be decay.

The following chapter by Paul Blokker addresses a key feature of the modern polity: the constitution. The abstract idea of a written constitution as the foundational basis of modern

democratic societies is a largely undisputed element in much of social, political, and legal theory. At the same time, the nature, form, and distinct functions of the constitution in, and increasingly also beyond, modern democratic societies is an evermore frequent object of dispute. Notwithstanding the identification of a global trend, of the last half century or so, of convergence to an “amplified” form of modern constitutionalism around a form of “new constitutionalism,” more recent trends of pluralization seem to provoke profound changes in the nature of modern constitutionalism and its theorization. While the trends in some ways seem to amplify legalistic and monistic tendencies, they also indicate strong corrosive and diversifying implications for the modern constitutional template. The trends discussed are the fragmentation of sovereignty, cultural pluralism, and substantive or interpretative pluralism. Blokker’s argument is that the challenges of complex pluralism undermine many of the constraining features of modern constitutionalism, but, while in some cases forms of autonomy and democratic participation are strengthened, in many others, constitutional pluralism tends to further compromise the democratic dimension of constitutionalism. In a normative sense, the chapter critically discusses a number of theoretical reflections on these challenges, and in particular emphasizes those approaches that search for the potential reinforcement of participatory, open-ended, and inclusive dimensions in the current constitutional predicament.

The EU is clearly a major example of state formation and of constitutional experimentation. As Erik Eriksen demonstrates, Europe has been transformed from an order of largely independent nation-states to an integrated order with some capacity to rule in the name of all. The European integration process has resulted in a set of institutions premised on a complex mixture of supranational, transnational and intergovernmental principles. It is difficult to understand how this could have happened voluntarily when the Union lacks important enabling conditions, such as a collective European identity based on a common language and culture. The pragmatist approach depicts cooperation as a response to problematic situations, and institution formation as a response to the indirect consequences of such, which increasingly catches on and has polity consequences. The effect is more legal regulation, which triggers claims to democracy. The integration process is to a large degree driven by contestation and opposition. The chapter also addresses “the nature of the beast.” What could the EU possibly amount to? A *regional subset* of an emerging larger cosmopolitan order or a specifically European route? It is however difficult to draw the conclusion that the EU is itself cosmopolitanism, though it could be seen as creating certain conditions for the emergence of cosmopolitics.

The next four chapters are more explicitly addressed to the consequences of transnationalism. Saskia Sassen’s chapter is concerned with the micro shifts that are amounting to a new immigration reality. Central to this is are changes in the position of the state in a world that is not only increasingly interdependent but also one where the national is itself being partly denationalized. States create distinction between nationals and non-nationals, members and non-members. But the de-nationalization of the state means the erasure of this distinction of inside and outside, by developments such as the institutionalizing of the human rights regime and claims for rights made by unauthorized immigrants in all major immigration countries. According to Sassen, the significance of immigration goes beyond immigration policy narrowly defined. The theme of power returns in this chapter which demonstrates that the powerless can challenge the state. Even the most powerful states can reach limits in getting their way in the world and as a consequence they have to negotiate with the powerless who become empowered as a result. The reality she describes does not quite fit into either postnationalism or transnationalism. It assumes neither the end of the state nor does it extend beyond the territory of the state. For this reason the notion of the de-nationalization of the state may be more relevant as a characterization of the phenomena she discusses.

The theme of contestation is the focus of the next chapter but the concern here is rather with transnationalist activism and the emergence of a global justice movement. Donatella della Porta and Raffaele Marchetti examine the conceptual innovations for social and political theory that have been inspired by transnational activism. These constitute significant bridges between empirical and normative research on civil society and social movement and concerns mobilization around collective claims that pertain to global issues. They argue the global justice movement has redefined major political issues around global justice. Unlike the new social movements of the 1980s, which were largely products of societal change in western countries, the global justice movement incorporates elements of diverse movements – gender, class, race, religion, environment – and is not therefore a single issue movement. Under the heading of global justice diverse elements of various cultures are combined in a movement based on transnational activism. Della Porta and Marchetti see the global justice movement as an expression of subaltern and rooted cosmopolitanism and characterize it around the following principles: it is placed based as opposed to be located in global space, it affirms autonomy, diversity and solidarity. The following chapter by Thomas Faist takes up the theme of transnationalism in a discussion of social question. In his view the point of departure for a discussion of the new transnational social question is a growing awareness of cross-border interdependence along crucial issues of social inequalities and the implications not only for so-called developing countries. The contention around inequalities takes recourse to international conventions declaring social rights, moral convictions and actually existing social standards. To survey the theories able to capture the new transnational question yields insights into the framing of social inequalities. Current theory raises the question whether concepts such as social rights and citizenship are adequate to describe contemporary social inequalities. While such concepts arose in the context of the geopolitical framework of modernity, we do not have adequate terms to capture the current situation. It would appear that cosmopolitan currents are largely oppositional and transnational social rights.

As indicated in the chapter discussed earlier by Sassen, the most pervasive implications of transnationalism for political community lie within the nation-state and concern immigrants. While her account emphasizes the capacity of immigrants to challenge the state, other perspectives stress the condition of exclusion and the need for a politics of hospitality. Meyda Yeğenoğlu, in her chapter on hospitality, rights and migration, discusses the concept of hospitality in an attempt to understand the relation between immigrants, exiles, foreigners, refugees, and other displaced populations who are in transit and/or without a home and their hosts or the “new” socio-cultural and political “homes” they are situated in. A series of concepts and issues such as the host, what does to welcome and receive mean, subjectivity, *ipseity*, and interruption of the self, conditional and unconditional hospitality, hospitality as right versus ethics of hospitality, hostility, home, ownership, and expropriation (or dispossession) are explicated. The chapter highlights the problematic and complex nature of the relation between the ethics and politics of hospitality by focussing on three figures: Immanuel Kant, Emmanuel Levinas, and especially Jacques Derrida and his recasting of our understanding of the nature of the relation between the ethics and politics of hospitality that this relation entails.

A theme running throughout all these chapters concerns changes in the constitution of subjectivity and the generation of new social values. This is present in the cosmopolitan current in the previous chapters on social justice and the transformation of political community. It is particularly present in the final four chapters. Adam Arvidsson investigates important new forms of value production that are emerging within the information economy. He argues that the information economy is marked by a radical socialization of processes of wealth production. Empowered by networked digital media the production of immaterial, but increasingly also material wealth is located to networks of productive collaboration that unfold beyond

established forms of corporate control, and that sometimes coincide with the ordinary life process. He also suggests that such forms of “social production” are endowed with a particular logic of value, where value is less related to inputs of labor time or other scarce resources and more to the ability to construct the kinds of virtuous social relations that give purpose and coherence to diffuse forms of cooperation. In other words, social production is part of an emerging ethical economy.

Iain Wilkinson offers an overview of “social suffering” both as a term of analysis and as an inter-disciplinary field of study that has been widely adopted in social science to refer to lived experiences of pain, damage, injury, deprivation and loss. He offers some explanations for the gathering of interest around the topic of “social suffering” in contemporary social science and outlines the contribution of figures such as Pierre Bourdieu and Arthur Kleinman to this development. The critical praxis of “social suffering” is explored in terms of its contribution to contemporary discourse on human rights and the politics of humanitarianism. In this setting, “social suffering” is identified as a critical concern wedded to a new politics of sensibility. This revisits some longstanding ethical debates over the virtue “fellow-feeling” and its bearing upon the establishment of social ties and social commitments to care for others. These are set within a new analytical frame that aims to pay heed to intensifying forces of “mediatization,” “commercialization,” and “rationalization” within late modern society.

The experience of suffering is mirrored in another major theme in recent social and political theory: namely temporalities, especially those that are connected with trauma and collective memory. Both memory and suffering and other related concepts are not static concepts that can be easily defined. Their meaning is rather defined in its historical and social contextualization. Daniel Levy explores the significance of memory for political, social and cultural theory. Rather than viewing memory as epiphenomenal, he argues that memory is an integral and constitutive part of theory. The contemporary preoccupation with memory is reflected in terms of a commemorative boom and the concomitant emergence of memory studies. Memory is omnipresent as it is situated in social frameworks (i.e. family, nation, and personal experiences anchored by symbolic markings), manifested in cultural practices (i.e. externalized into archival repositories such as memorials and museums), and shaped by political circumstances (i.e. wars, catastrophes, and debates generating lasting meanings of these events). Social frameworks and historical circumstances change over time and with them the aforementioned alignments of temporalities (e.g. the discourse of progress in modernity). Studying (and theorizing) memory allows us to shift our focus from time to temporalities, and thus to understand what categories people, groups, and cultures employ to make sense of their lives, their social, cultural and political attachments and the ideals that are validated – in short, the political, cultural and social theories which command normative attention. Levy’s chapter connects memory with the theme of cosmopolitanism reflected in other chapters in this volume. He makes the point that particular orientations towards the past need now to be reevaluated against the background of “global memory scapes.” The upshot of this is not the decline of national collective memories but the pluralization of memory and the cosmopolitan impulse towards the critical engagement with past injustices.

In the final chapter in this volume, Austin Harrington explores recent ideas about the emergence of a consciousness of “post-secular society” in contemporary western democracies. “Post-secular society” may be seen as pinpointing some significantly new dimensions of reflexivity at play in the conduct of states and civil-society actors toward religious as well as non-religious value-orientations in contemporary public spheres. Harrington surveys four bodies of literature: challenges to “classical secularization theory”; debates about religion in public spheres; work on religion in comparative historical-sociological studies of civilizations; and

recent engagements with religion from the side of left-wing traditions of social and political theory. What this chapter highlights is how the logic of pluralization is present within nationality. Nations today can, to varying degrees, accommodate a pluralistic vision of political community in which religion can have a place. The implication is that religious life is not only compatible with modernity but is itself one manifestation of modernity's reflexive self-renewal.

## Conclusion

Liberalism and the socialist Left, as well as European Conservatism and Fascism, presented simplified but compelling images of society which were integrated into the subjectivity and self-reflective activity of the people whose activity created their politics and society. The modern welfare state struck a balance between the claims produced under these images, to justice, freedom, and stability. Contemporary social, political, and cultural theory is not so much a continuation of this project as the continuation of the reflective activity of the people who experience modern society. As with past social theory, this reflection is aided and stimulated by social movements and counter-movements. But for the most part it is not concerned with inventing new simplifications or claiming external authority – from God, Science, or Reason itself – for new simplifications. Instead, it is focused on the problem of understanding what is, and what is not comprehensible in terms of these past images.

Critics on the Left sometimes complain nostalgically about the loss of utopia in modern social theory, and the complaint is well-founded. The thinkers and problems discussed in this volume, and the new approaches that have been made to these problems, are for the most part dealing with obdurate facts that the old utopian self-images of society no longer can be claimed to fit. Globalization, cosmopolitanism, the problems of statelessness, border existences between cultures and identities, suffering beyond the reach of the bureaucratic practices of the welfare state, all anomalous from the point of view of traditional images of societies as contracts, as inclusive hierarchic orders, as caring bureaucracies, and so forth. Even the most ingrained legal and political ideas, such as modern constitutionalism, are problematic in the face of these new facts and the forms they have produced.

Understanding these phenomena needs new approaches: to the memories that constitute new identities, to the generation of new values such as global justice in these new or previously ignored situations, to the networks, new transnational formations and what connects them, to the extension of such things as hospitality and trust, to the mediatized environments in which subjectivities arise and are sustained, and so forth. At the same time, social and political theory cannot rely on the older kinds of philosophical anthropologies, invented images of humanity, that traditional liberalism and collectivism invented. The image of humanity is itself challenged by biology and neuroscience, as well as by the de-stabilizing approach to subjectivity found in Lacan and in theories of the performative.

Finally, contemporary social and political thought has come to recognize that modernity itself is not one thing, produced in one process. The modernities being produced in China, the alternative forms generated in Latin America, and the weak-state chaos of much of the post-Colonial “developing world” remind us that the western welfare state is itself increasingly operating by making “exceptions” to the practices of governance that originally defined it. Today the “normal” of the welfare state itself is not normal. The challenge of contemporary social and political thought is to understand what has changed, and to address the question of whether the modern inheritance of democratic forms of deliberation and decision can be extended to deal with these changes.



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**Part 1**  
**Living Traditions**

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# The Marxist Legacy

Peter Beilharz

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What is the fate of marxism, a hundred and fifty years after its original inception at the hands of Marx and Engels? The results of this story are mixed, and contradictory. On the one hand, marxism seems completely exhausted, expired, perhaps returned to the mainstream as the renewed common sense that capitalism is the central world power and protean agent of creative destruction. We are all Marxists now, perhaps again especially after the Global Meltdown. On the other hand, the status of marxism is newly marginal, at least in the hands of transatlantic university radicals, for whom marxism remains the truth. For marxism became the *de facto* consciousness of a good part of the global radical or university left into the 1960s, and its residual influence is still apparent but often unworldly.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, it was apparent that marxism had some significant influence in civil society, at least in countries such as Germany, where the Social Democratic Party claimed to enshrine Marxist values. But the SPD was, infamously, a society within a society, and socialism has long acted historically as the counterculture of modernity. At the end of the twentieth century the picture was unrecognizably different. After the Russian Revolution, which no one had expected in 1900, marxism became the ideology of Soviet state power. After 1989, the world power that was Soviet communism had disintegrated, and marxism was presented in the media a museum piece. But then there was globalization, and marxism again became a presence, as the mistranslated image of *The Communist Manifesto*, 'all that is solid melts into air' was rediscovered as the *urtext* of the creative destruction process itself. For the other side, meantime, for the opponents of marxism, Marx could be portrayed as the evil genius who somehow was vitally responsible for the Soviet disaster itself.

How do we find a way through all these trails and clues, to begin to make sense of the Marxist legacy today? This chapter makes five moves in this direction. The first, on Marx, addresses the moment of theoretical establishment. All discussion here must still begin from the question of the nature of Marx's project. The second section addresses the theoretical mainstreaming of marxism after Marx. Often referred to as the period of classical marxism, this centres on the experience of the German Social Democrats and the challenges they faced in seeking to reconcile reformist practice with (often) revolutionary rhetoric. But this moment was lost to vision, in effect, when the Bolsheviks seized Russian state power in the name of Marx, and marxism henceforth was identified with Soviet state power, a political and historic elision

from which the emancipatory project of Marx would never recover. The third phrase discussed here involves the revival of the marxian legacy, often via the heritage of critical theory, into the 1960s. Humanist marxism reemerged in this period, only to be suppressed again in a fourth phase, here referred to as the Return of the Hard Left. Under the influence of Louis Althusser and his followers, marxism took a scientific and renewed Bolshevik, first pro-Soviet, then pro-Chinese turn. Fifth, and finally for our purposes there, there is the intriguing and divided phenomenon of postmarxism, itself formed in the wake of the postmodern. The postmarxist moment bifurcates into two streams, one of which is fundamentalist and revivalist, the other of which wears its marxism as a light cloak.

## Marx's Project

Did Marx have a project, or is this a category we impose on his work, like that of others, after the fact? There are many ways to read Marx, or various Marxes available to us. If we begin from the necessary sense that Marx is the starting point, then we also need to accept that we are all after Marx, and in this sense we are all postmarxists, literally after Marx and after marxism, the latter understood as the world-historic project of transforming the world announced by Marx in his Theses on Feuerbach.

Marx can be read as poet, follower of world literature, journalist, revolutionary, historian, or philosophical anthropologist. These days we often classify him as a sociologist, though that thought would never have occurred to him. One way to identify the unity of his thought is to read it as the critique of political economy. This is one arc that holds together the major instalments of his work, from the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (1844) to the *Grundrisse* (1857–8), *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859) through to its culmination in *Capital* (1867).

If economics was to become the dominant discipline into the twentieth century, political economy was already making this claim to hegemony a century earlier. Of course its ambit was broader than that of economics. Political economy was a moral philosophy, that discourse which enquired into the origin of new wealth and its social consequences. Marx's original critique of political economy was based on its failure to historicize. Rather than explaining capital as private property, political economy universalized it. Rather than viewing capital as a process, it viewed capital as the effective cause of labour, whereas in fact, Marx claimed, it was the other way around: labour produced capital, capital was only dead or stored-up labour. As he was later to suggest, capital was like the vampire or the werewolf that consumed labour up without mercy. And this was to become a significant part of Marx's style, or dramaturgy, where images of magic, enchantment, and the supernatural all jostled together, where capitalism was a phenomenon like the world of the sorcerer's apprentice. The spells that had let loose these demonic forces could no longer easily be controlled or reversed. This, in turn, becomes a significant tension throughout Marx's work, where humans both have agency to change the world, and are simultaneously entrapped within processes beyond their ken and influence. But can we be both, at the same time, or only one or other?

Marx's early critique of political economy asserted the centrality of alienated labour to capitalism. The object of socialism, then, would be the pursuit of the autonomous or creative capacity to labour, to make the world through expression. This is what pitted Marx against 'primitive communism'. Socialism, for Marx, could only be imagined as the freely achieved results of the collective labourer. In this, while Marx is often pictured as the man of Enlightenment, he is also the best son of Romanticism (Beilharz 1994). For like Schiller, and differently, Rousseau, Marx dreams of a human wholeness, of a world before the division of labour and its cult of fragmentation. Marx's original utopia, concealed behind his and Engels' public disdain for