



## Classical sociology and cosmopolitanism: a critical defence of the social

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### Abstract

It is frequently argued that classical sociology, if not sociology as a whole, cannot provide any significant insight into globalization, primarily because its assumptions about the nation-state, national cultures and national societies are no longer relevant to a global world. Sociology cannot consequently contribute to a normative debate about cosmopolitanism, which invites us to consider loyalties and identities that reach beyond the nation-state.

My argument considers four principal topics. First, I defend the classical legacy by arguing that classical sociology involved the study of 'the social' not national societies. This argument is illustrated by reference to Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons. Secondly, Durkheim specifically developed the notion of a cosmopolitan sociology to challenge the nationalist assumptions of his day. Thirdly, I attempt to develop a critical version of Max Weber's *verstehende soziologie* to consider the conditions for critical recognition theory in sociology as a necessary precondition of cosmopolitanism. Finally, I consider the limitations of some contemporary versions of global sociology in the example of 'flexible citizenship' to provide an empirical case study of the limitations of globalization processes and 'sociology beyond society'. While many institutions have become global, some cannot make this transition. Hence, we should consider the limitations on as well as the opportunities for cosmopolitan sociology.

**Keywords:** Classical sociology; citizenship; cosmopolitanism; globalization; recognition ethics

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### Introduction: canons, founders, and texts

In an age of vigorous interdisciplinary endeavour, defending the discipline of sociology and especially defending 'the classical sociological tradition' is clearly unfashionable and problematic. Since sociology is inherently a critical

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form of social inquiry, it is well suited to debunking itself. Hence sociology is so to speak a nervous discipline. My general task is to define and defend classical sociology against the claim that it is limited by its implicit focus on the nation-state. The counter-argument is that classical sociology attempted to define 'the social' not (national) society, and that it can address global phenomena without needing to re-define itself. I shall take two classical examples: Durkheim and Parsons. Of course, given greater space, similar arguments could be mounted in terms of the cosmopolitanism of Karl Marx (on the international labour force and the universalistic drive of political economy) or Georg Simmel (on the circulation of money and trust). The latter in particular wanted to capture the social in the aesthetic relationship between a single biography and society, between individualization and the general, as he demonstrated in the famous essay on Rembrandt (Simmel 2005).

But before we can enter such a discussion of specific sociologists, I have first to define 'classical sociology'. Although the period 1890 to 1920 is clearly important as a defining moment in the formation of sociology, it would be absurd to take these three decades as a precise or exclusive definition of the classical tradition. European sociology was a product of the nineteenth-century industrial revolution, and hence one can plausibly argue that sociology as a recognizable form of social analysis was created by Saint-Simon and more specifically by August Comte who used the term 'sociology' in volume four of his *Positive Philosophy* in 1838. Furthermore, we should also recognize that classical sociology cannot be defined by a discrete list of individuals such as Marx, Weber and Durkheim. It is also obvious that the canon of classical sociology has frequently functioned as an exclusionary professional code that has neglected the work of women and black sociologists. To defend the notion of 'classical sociology' does not require us to forget the sociology of knowledge, and in writing this defence I fully recognize that sociology as a form of knowledge and a collection of institutions is socially determined. It would be strange for sociologists reflecting on their own discipline not to regard sociology itself as socially produced knowledge. Classical sociology as a social tradition is in this sense undeniably socially constructed (Baehr 2002), but all knowledge is socially produced. Why should sociology be any different? While the classical canon is itself socially determined, it is not thereby robbed of significance and value.

These apologetic observations are however so far negative. They tell us how not to proceed. What do I mean then by 'classical sociology' and how should it be defended? My argument has four components. The first is that what characterizes classical sociology is the quest to understand and define 'the social' as opposed to 'nature'. The human body for example presents a potential limit to sociological inquiry and hence the sociology of the body is an exploration of the possibilities for a sociology of natural phenomena and objects. Sociology insists on the reality of the social world, but it also wants to distinguish

itself from ‘the economic’ and to some extent from ‘the cultural’. Secondly classical sociological explanations of the social assume a particular form – they typically eschew variables that are characteristic of individuals (their motives, psychology, needs or beliefs). Methodological individualism as an epistemology is not typical of classical sociology. Thirdly, classical sociological explanations tend to assume a critical form because they challenge the taken-for-granted assumptions of the agents themselves. Because in the everyday world people think of ‘individuals’ as having causal priority, sociological accounts are not part of ‘common sense’. Classical sociology is counter-intuitive. It produces arguments that tend to defy or deny commonsense assumptions. Where these three components combine to produce a coherently sociological view of reality, one can speak of the presence of ‘classicality’ and therefore my task more precisely is to defend ‘classicality’ rather than ‘classical sociology’. The former refers to the exploration of the social; the latter, to the period of sociology dominated by Marx, Weber, Durkheim and Simmel. While classical sociology came to an end with the publication of *The Structure of Social Action* (Parsons 1937), classicality is an unfolding tradition whose broad aim is to describe and explain a special domain or field, namely the social. Classical sociology was merely a phase in this development. Classicality involved the systematic study of ‘the social’, not society, and hence this tradition is not negated by the current interest in sociological accounts of globality, networks and flows (Bauman 2002; Urry 2000). Sociology has a direct purchase on the contemporary debate about globalization because it was not a science of (national) society, but the study of the social. In addition, because the social was always a moral field, sociology can contribute directly to the study and promotion of cosmopolitanism, which must also reflect on the ethical dimensions of the social, especially in developing a hermeneutics of Otherness.

Let me make three immediate observations to clarify these claims. Firstly, I draw a parallel between recent attempts to define ‘the political’ as opposed to ‘politics’ as a method of reviving the tradition of political philosophy. ‘The political’ in terms of the philosophy of Carl Schmitt (1996) refers to an emergency in which the struggle between friend and foe shapes moral and social affairs. By contrast, politics is merely the humdrum management of political affairs. In a similar fashion, I define ‘classicality’ in the tradition of classical sociology as the quest to understand and define ‘the social’ as a field of special intellectual endeavour, but also to grasp the social as a moral phenomenon distinct from egoistic individualism. If the political is defined by the nature of sovereignty, the social is defined by the nature of trust. Trust is the social dimension that underpins the contractual relations of the social sphere, and just as money is the medium of exchange in the economy, trust is the medium of reciprocity in the social field. This medium of exchange is necessarily transnational and cannot be analysed within the confines of society.

‘The social’, whatever else it possesses, must have two interrelated core elements. These are firstly patterns or chains of social interaction and symbolic exchange. Secondly, these patterns of interaction must cohere into social institutions. Sociology is the scientific study of social institutions – the family, citizenship, religion, the law and so forth. As one might expect, ‘the social’ is in practice very difficult to define. There were therefore various levels of analysis in the classical tradition. Because the debate with economics as a science was central in much of nineteenth century social thought, it is hardly surprising that Marx and Weber approached their task of analysing capitalist society in terms of a model of economic action. The economic model involved the idea of rational actors satisfying their wants in a competitive market. Social action was modelled on a similar set of notions but sociologists wanted to study other social actors (such as social classes), questioned the rationality of economic behaviour (by including notions such as ideology), and problematized the idea of needs and wants (by demonstrating their cultural relativity). In short, sociology developed a much richer or thicker notion of economic behaviour, but at the cost of precision and predictability. For example specifying the conditions of social revolution is more difficult than spelling out the conditions of inflation.

The strong programme of classicality was to defend the notion of ‘the social’ as an autonomous field of forces. In practice this defence of ‘the social’ amounted to the study of the institutionalization of action into regularly occurring social constraints or norms. Broadly speaking these social institutions are the social forces that bind and unbind communities. ‘The social’ is characterized by a dynamic between solidarity (processes that bind us together into communities) and scarcity (processes that divide and break communities). In practical terms, classical sociology involves the study of the values, cultural patterns, trust, and normative arrangements that underpin institutions and the systems of social stratification that express scarcity (Turner and Rojek 2001). By contrast, the weak programme of sociology is the study of the meanings of social actions for individuals in their social relations. The strong programme insists that, in the majority of cases, the social forces that determine social life are not recognized or understood by social actors. Indeed there is a sense in which social actors in their everyday lives are not interested in such questions – nor should they be. There is therefore an important difference between the motives and reasons for action in the everyday world and the models of explanation of social science.

### **Defining the social: Durkheim and Parsons**

Classical sociology as the quest to define the social is very closely connected with Durkheim’s attempt to define ‘the social’ in his *The Rules of*

*Sociological Method* (1958), namely that sociology avoids reference to psychological variables in its explanations of social phenomena (social facts). In more precise terms, the *locus classicus* of the tradition is in *Primitive Classification* where Durkheim and Mauss (1963) attempted to understand the general schema of logical classification as manifestations of the social structure. Classical sociological explanations are sociological in the strong sense of the term, because they do not refer to individual dispositions as causes of action. The obvious irony of this definition is that it may exclude Weber from the canon precisely because he attempted to develop a notion of social action that was modelled on classical economics and condemned notions of social structure as reified concepts. In response it can be argued that Weber's sociological explanations depended on the notion of 'unintended consequences' rather than self-conscious actions of individuals. The idea of unintended consequences in Weber or of ambiguity in Robert Merton's sociology points to the ways in which the social structure works behind the backs of the social actors. Sociology is concerned with the ironic fatefulness of social actions and structures (Turner 1981). More importantly, not all sociological explanations assume or adhere to Durkheim's *Rules*. In so far as sociological explanations do not employ references to social structure or social facts in Durkheim's sense, they are not examples of classical sociology, but they may nevertheless be explanations that one may want to regard as sociologically convincing. In short we have to be able to define classical sociology as a subset of the total universe of explanations that are in some broad and general sense 'sociological'. It also follows that some authors who are not professional sociologists work with and develop strong programmes of sociological analysis. For example the work of the cultural anthropologist Mary Douglas can be recognized as contributions to classicity because her paradigm of purity and danger, grid and group, and risk are profoundly sociological in the Durkheimian tradition (Douglas and Ney 1998).

Finally classical sociology is a critical discipline, because it represents specifically an attack on the ideology of industrial capitalist society, namely the ideology of bourgeois, utilitarian liberalism. This critical tradition is conventionally associated with Marxism, but here again, Durkheim offers a classical example. Both *Suicide* (1951) and *Professional Ethics and Civic Morals* (1992) are political attacks on (British) economic individualism, and thus his professional or academic sociology was constructed to attack a particular trend in society that was destructive of the social.

If we take the sociological writings of Talcott Parsons, we can use the evolution of the idea of the social in the work of Parsons as a helpful ploy for the elaboration of a variety of meanings of the social. In classical sociology, we can distinguish between the elements of action and interaction, sociability, the social as a field of forces, the social system, society and civil society, and the system of societies. *The Structure of Social Action* (1937) remains a classical

contribution to the analysis of 'the social'. However in *Structure* Parsons was heavily influenced by his early training in economics and we need to read this text as primarily a critical analysis of the limitations of positivistic theories of rational action. It is hardly surprising therefore that Alfred Marshall and Vilfredo Pareto play such a large part in the analysis, and were central to his Marshall lectures at Cambridge in 1953.

Parsons's argument was simply that if you assume a rational economic actor, they will resort to fraud and force to achieve their ends. Such an economic theory cannot explain social order as a normative field of action where actors must pay regard to other's intentions and meanings. Parsons went on to argue that economists solve the problem of social order by recourse to assumptions that are incompatible with their basic individualistic premises. The task of sociology is to analyse the norms and values of action that explain the presence of social order. For example, social contracts are honoured because people share certain common agreements and assumptions. How are stable patterns of action established with actors who do not (overtly at least) share our values and norms? This problem is what we might call, not the Hobbesian theory of society, but the cosmopolitan dilemma of the structure of social action.

Parsons attempted to combine a voluntaristic theory of action with systems theory. In social system theory, there are two system problems that have to be satisfied. These are the allocation of scarce resources and the integration of social actors into social roles. These are the allocative and integrative functions, that is the dynamic or dialectic of scarcity and solidarity (Turner and Rojek 2001). In the famous AGIL scheme, social actors require both motivation and commitment to social roles and their tasks, while the social system needs to solve the functional problems of adaptation and goal-attainment which are basically economic problems and political direction. It would be possible to argue that Parsons tended to equate 'social system' with 'national societies', but this assertion would be inadequate. For example, in *The Social System*, Parsons (1951) treated the dyadic relationship between doctor and patient in the sick role as a social system, and the AGIL scheme was important in Parsons's analysis of leadership in social groups (Parsons et al. 1955).

Parsons's developed different versions of the idea of the social and that in this respect his work offers a map of various approaches to social reality. For example, in his later work Parsons's became more interested in the nature of the media of exchange in social systems, and came to write influential accounts of the nature of money as a system of symbolic exchange. Parsons is one of the few sociologists after Simmel to develop the sociology of money as a medium of exchange between the subsystems of the social system (Parsons 1977). This aspect of Parsons's work involved the introduction of cybernetic notions of management and control through communication and information. Finally, Parsons also came to develop the sociology of the system of social systems, namely the sociology of international relations (Parsons 1971). For

Parsons therefore the social is lodged or present at various levels – social interaction, the social system and the system of societies. There was no naïve equation of the social, with national, that is American society. More importantly, Parsons's development of the idea of an international system of societies illustrates his deep commitment to understanding other societies, especially understanding the successful inclusion of postwar Japan into the world system. Parsons therefore made an early contribution to the sociological analysis of civilizational processes.

Durkheim and Parsons have been discussed as a means of illustrating a variety of meanings of the idea of 'the social' in classical sociology. My argument is that the strong programme of classical sociology involved an attempt to define 'the social' rather than 'national society'. Hence modern critics cannot argue that the equation of 'national societies' with 'the social system' prevents sociology from understanding global social flows. The idea of 'the social' is directly relevant to the task of analysing transnational relationships and global processes. Since the social world was a field of moral forces – for example counteracting the negative effects of utilitarian individualism – sociology can be interpreted as a science with a special interest in the problem of understanding the Other. How can outsiders be incorporated into 'our' social field?

### **Durkheim on patriotism and cosmopolitanism**

With the growth of evolutionary theory in nineteenth-century biology and zoology, two incompatible views of mankind emerged. 'Monogenism' was the belief that the diverse races of mankind had a common origin, but had degenerated at different rates. It was compatible with the Adamic myth in Genesis. By contrast, 'polygenism' was supported by secular rationalists who argued that human races have separate origins and different attributes. While neither argument was egalitarian, polygenism was more consistently used, for example in the USA in the nineteenth century as a justification for racial inequality. The biological theory of evolution in Charles Darwin's *Origin of the Species* (1859) was transformed into social Darwinism, which claimed that human societies were based on endless struggles resulting in the 'survival of the fittest'. The ethical idea of the unity of mankind that had been the basis of Natural Law appeared to have been irretrievably shattered by social Darwinism.

While anthropological research, especially physical anthropology, had the (often unintended) consequence of promoting the idea of human diversity, nineteenth-century sociology as a product of the Enlightenment embraced the idea of a unified science of society. Claude Saint-Simon (1760–1825) and August Comte (1798–1857) shared a common positivism and evolutionary view of society in which the new industrialism would bring about the final

destruction of Christian religion, but Comte saw sociology as a new science – a new ‘religion of humanity’. Positivist sociology promulgated the idea of socialism to transcend both the class divisions of capitalism and the Darwinian struggle of the races. Durkheim, as the heir of Saint-Simon and Comte, saw the moral dimension of socialism as a solution to the individualism and anomie of modern society. For Durkheim, the role of the state was to provide some moral guidance to society to compensate for the instability that was engendered by the market in a capitalist environment. Because Durkheim belonged to the Enlightenment tradition, his view of history was universalistic, and while he was influenced by British anthropology in *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1954), his thought did not incline towards cultural relativism. Durkheim supported the idea of the state as a moral agency, partly because the French state after the Revolution had supported the emancipation of the Jews, thereby converting them into French citizens, but this view did not detract from his cosmopolitanism. His sociology was not nationalistic. While anthropology was the study of Man, its exploration of difference produced a science of men, or the local in the global. Sociology, as a science of the social, has retained a stronger sense of the universality of its moral field, of the global in the local. In this sense, sociology points towards a cosmopolitan epistemology of a shared reality.

While Durkheim was not immune to the biological thought of the late nineteenth century, especially in *The Division of Labor in Society* (1960), Durkheim’s sociology in general, and his views on religion and classification in particular, owed more to the philosophy of Immanuel Kant than to the evolutionary thought of Darwin and Spencer. Durkheim accepted aspects of Kant’s categorical imperative, but translated Kant’s epistemology into a sociology of knowledge in which moral facts were social facts – the collective force of social relationships operating across national borders.

Durkheim’s sociology was a sustained criticism of nineteenth-century individualism, especially utilitarian doctrines of the egoistic self. He attributed much of the instability and uncertainty of modern society – or *anomie* – in the lawless consequences of unbridled economic individualism. Durkheim equated the higher, moral side of human nature with ‘the social’ as opposed to individual existence. Religion is one mechanism whereby human societies have recognized the dignity of social life. Whereas the passions derive from individual constitutions ‘our rational activity – whether theoretical or practical – is dependent on social causes’ (Durkheim 1973a: 162). He denied the capacity of individual minds to arrive at general ideas and ascribed this capacity to social consciousness. ‘The social’ was not however an aggregate of individual minds but a reality *sui generis*. Nevertheless there remained a tension in Durkheim’s moral argument between individual autonomy and the moral order of society (Seigel 2005). In his later writings for example in ‘Individualism and the Intellectuals’ (Durkheim 1973b), he came to distinguish more

sharply between two types of individualism – ‘utilitarian egoism’ and ‘universal moral individualism’. The latter he associated with Kant and Rousseau. In this Kantian view, moral action does not involve behaving in terms of specific circumstances ‘but on my humanity in the abstract’. In this respect, duty means disregarding my ‘empirical individuality in order to seek out only that which our humanity requires and which we share with all our fellowmen’ (Durkheim 1973b: 43–5). Such an attitude is the foundation of cosmopolitan virtue (Turner 2001).

Durkheim’s ethical philosophy was shaken by the First World War and he deplored the rampant nationalism that many intellectuals had enthusiastically embraced. In *Professional Ethics and Civic Morals* (Durkheim 1992), he saw the world divided between two moral positions, namely those who were associated with the national ideal and the state, and those who were identified with the human ideal and mankind in general. He conceptualized this division as a distinction between patriotism and world patriotism. Durkheim optimistically looked forward to the growth of ‘world patriotism’ (or cosmopolitanism), because he argued that in evolutionary terms, ‘we see the ideals men pursue breaking free of the local or ethnic conditions obtaining in a certain region of the world or a certain group, and rising above all that is particular and so approaching the universal’ (Durkheim 1992: 72). This transition would not be easy, particularly because the moral lives of individuals required discipline and authority – the conditions for which appeared to require established societies. While the existence of the state required national pride, Durkheim believed that patriotism could be compatible with seeking a just world rather than being the wellspring of international domination. In equating what he called ‘true patriotism’ with cosmopolitanism, Durkheim anticipated the modern debate about republicanism, patriotism and cosmopolitanism by almost a century (Bobbio and Viroli 2003).

### **Verstehende soziologie as critical recognition theory**

Anthony Giddens in *The Consequences of Modernity* (1990) criticized the limitations of Weber’s sociology as a framework for understanding globalization. Giddens’s own theory of globalization depends on the juxtaposition between four elements – the economic production of commodities, the mechanisms of surveillance and control, the organization of violence, and the extraction of resources from the environment. For example, he describes four key institutions of modernization – capitalism, surveillance, military power and industrialism (transformation of the environment). These dimensions are then used to describe four aspects of globalization – the world capitalist economy, nation-state systems, world military order, and the international division of labour. In turn, there are four high risk consequences of global modernity –

collapse of economic growth mechanisms, growth of totalitarian power, nuclear conflict and finally ecological disaster.

Giddens's approach is limited, because we need a more complex periodization of globalization to consider global processes before the rise of modern capitalism. Secondly, he has relatively little to say about the cultural aspects of globalization and almost nothing about religion, despite the importance of religion to recent global conflicts. Ironically his own work has the same Orientalist assumptions that characterized much of Weber's treatment of historical development. In Giddens's sociology, there is the implicit assumption that traditional society is non-western, and traditional societies are not reflexive. Does this judgment include Confucian China, medieval Islamic Spain, or classical Anatolia? He has been criticized because '[h]is undifferentiated account of the experience of modernity is based on a universalization of the western experience' (Loyal 2003: 127) and consequently he fails to engage with 'reflexive sociology' which is constantly critical of the institutional position on which it stands. As a result, he has not addressed the question of recognition of other cultures.

If earlier forms of sociology were essentially based on the nation-state, is sociology becoming a global sociology? Does global sociology require a cosmopolitan perspective? Existing paradigms of comparative sociology will not suffice, but what are the connections between intensively local ethnographic research and the need to understand global processes? In order to explore these epistemological dilemmas and to engage in a critical discussion of Weber's hermeneutics, thereby defending the idea of critical recognition theory and respect for other cultures, I seek to demonstrate that a cosmopolitan epistemology can be extracted from Weber's philosophy of the social sciences. In this theoretical strategy, I consequently defend Weber against Giddens's criticisms. Weber developed the hermeneutical idea of sociology as the study of the social meanings of action and interaction. Weber's sociology was often conceptualized as a science in the service of the nation-state, for example in his Freiburg inaugural lecture (Weber 1989). However, his methodology can be successfully related to a cosmopolitan ethic of care. Understanding other cultures must imply a certain level of respect for their truth claims, and a care to understand them correctly and carefully (Turner 2001 and 2002).

What would a minimalist hermeneutics of the Other entail? One can propose four stages in a cosmopolitan hermeneutics: recognition of the Other, respect for difference, critical mutual evaluation, and care for the Other. Respect and care for other people cannot take place without a prior recognition of them as human beings. These features of contemporary ethics can be usefully referred to as 'recognition ethics theory'. The claim that an ethical relation requires recognition is derived from Hegel's analysis of the master and slave relationship (Williams 1997). A master cannot receive recognition

from a slave, because the slave is not in a position to give it freely. The master cannot recognize the slave, because the slave appears merely as a possession or household object. By contrast, love was the ideal context of recognition in which two mutually attracted but free individuals offer each other perfect recognition. Hegel's recognition theory is not necessarily individualistic, since the same arguments apply to recognition between communities. Hegel's argument is sociological in the important sense that he accepted the fact that power and inequality acts as constraints on ethical recognition.

Mutual and free recognition is required if people are to be recognizable as moral agents. Rights in any case presuppose free, autonomous and self-conscious agents capable of rational choice, but life is unequal. The master-slave dialectic suggests that neither slave nor master can achieve mutual, inter-subjective recognition, and hence without some degree of social equality there can be no ethical community, and hence a system of rights and obligations cannot function. Nancy Fraser (2002) has expressed a similar argument when, deploring the separation between social theories of egalitarianism and philosophical commitments to recognition ethics, she asserts that redistribution must in fact be a condition of recognition. Social inequality or scarcity of resources undercuts the roots of solidarity or community without which conscious, rational agency is difficult. A variety of modern writers such as Charles Taylor (1992) have appealed to recognition ethics as the base line for the enjoyment of rights in multicultural societies. Without recognition of minority rights, no liberal democratic society can function, but recognition requires some material and legal changes to equalize the relationships between social groups. It is also fundamental to the problem of strategies to achieve the social recognition and inclusion of aboriginal peoples into modern societies. Although much human rights research has concentrated on the aboriginal peoples of North America and Australia, this problem of the difficulty of recognizing aboriginal cultures has also been an issue in Japan, where, given the emphasis on national homogeneity, the Ainu have found it difficult to secure indigenous rights (Weiner 1997).

There must be open channels of communication between dominant host society (master) and subordinate minority groups (slave) in order for mutual recognition to emerge. Recognizing the rights of minorities must be the first step towards establishing a framework of rights. This critical notion can be modelled on Jürgen Habermas's communicative theory of democracy and normative order (Habermas 1997). An ideal speech situation must be in place for any dialogic recognition to take place. An ideal context for recognition requires a set of procedural rules – communication is not systematically or severely distorted by ideology; speakers have roughly equal opportunities to participate; there is no arbitrary closure of the communication; and there is no systematic domination over the speakers. Cultural rights require an open-ended opportunity of dialogue between host and minority, but also between

anthropologists and 'their subjects'. These ideas have been extensively rehearsed in the literature on human rights (Deflem 1996; Deveaux 2000), but in this argument my intention is to develop what I want to call 'a *critical recognition theory*'. It is not enough in recognition ethics simply to recognize the Other. There must be mutual opportunities for reflection, dialogue and criticism. Mutual recognition has to be able to incorporate mutual criticism in such a way that recognition does not lead inevitably and effortlessly towards reconciliation.

Critical recognition theory can be seen as an application, therefore, of Habermas's theory of communicative rationality. Recognition involves recognition of the Other, but it does not necessarily require an uncritical acceptance of their values *in toto*. For example we could imagine an ecumenical dialogue between Christian and Muslim communities that is based on mutual recognition, trust and respect. However, such recognition does not imply mutual acceptance of each other's theologies. Indeed it might involve a highly critical dialogue, in which for example Muslims might argue that Christian trinitarianism is incompatible with a theology of monotheism, and Christians claim that Muslim theology does not have a viable sense of personal autonomy. Habermas's communicative notion of rationality implies that these theological debates might have no solution – at least in the short term. Recognition does not necessarily involve reconciliation of views; it merely means that we respect the other's arguments and where possible accept their intellectual force. It does not mean we have to agree with the Other. There is however one further aspect of this example. It is also the case that some Christians – for example Unitarians – would also agree with some Muslims that the Trinitarian doctrine is ultimately incompatible with strict monotheism. And interestingly enough, some Muslims, for example those known collectively as the *Mu'tazila*, might agree with some Christians that man's free will is difficult to formulate in a creed that is committed to strict monotheism. The problem of human subjectivity and freedom is notoriously difficult in Islamic theology, as many Muslim philosophers and social critics have been only too willing to admit and to explore (Vahdat 2002).

This example is meant to suggest that critical recognition theory recognizes internal debates and internal contradictions in the other's culture, and can remain sceptical about their own arguments and creeds. Critical recognition theory allows for: (1) mutual criticism; (2) scepticism about one's own arguments, and scepticism towards the other's position; (3) failure to reach agreements, and hence ongoing debate; and (4) ultimately a judgment. As a consequence of this intercultural dialogue, it should be possible for both sides in principle to exercise some critical judgment towards the other. In terms of our example, it may be that Muslim scholars, having listened openly to many arguments, make the judgment that Christian orthodox theology is ultimately incoherent. The role of judgment distinguishes critical recognition theory from

anthropological descriptive relativism and from epistemological disinterest, because these anthropological positions rule out any judgment. They merely recognize at best that Christians and Muslims live in different cultures and therefore by different assumptions.

This process of ethical hermeneutics can be seen as consistent with Weber's *verstehende soziologie*. Understanding the Other requires a careful construction of their meanings and values in social interaction; it requires value clarification and description. Sociological understanding tended to exclude the idea of irrationality in action, preferring to argue for the meaningfulness of actions in their context. But sociology remained sceptical about the overt explanations of action ('ideology') and retained the view that sociological explanations (including ideal types) would always be approximations. Sociology sought plausible accounts of the actions of others in terms of their own meaning systems, but as a critical science left open the possibility for criticism of other's actions as well as self-doubt about the ultimate plausibility of sociological accounts. In a global social world, the hermeneutics of social action forces us ever more urgently to engage with 'other cultures' in a context of growing hybridity and cultural inter-penetration. However, sociological understanding should not prevent us from engaging in critical recognition and evaluation of other cultures including notions of *jihad* and crusade (Tibi 1998). In short, sociology can make an important contribution to existing recognition ethics by developing a critical recognition theory, which can be seen as extension of the tradition of sociological hermeneutics of social action.

### **Citizenship: the limits of the global**

Classical sociology lays the foundation for a cosmopolitan social science that is based on an epistemology of recognition and mutual evaluation. However, there may be limitations to the process of mutual recognition which is connected to the possible limitations of globalization. Durkheim cautioned us to be realistic about the emergence of 'true patriotism' and perhaps the limitations of understanding will be co-terminus with the limitations of globalization. Weber as a political 'man of the world' always recognized the limitations of understanding in the face of naked power. I suggest therefore that considering the limits of citizenship might be helpful in thinking about the limits of 'true patriotism'.

There has been much discussion recently of the possibility of global citizenship and global governance. With the growth of the European Union, sociologists have for example considered the possibility of transnational citizenship. Anthropologists have also explored the problem of identity in modern societies with the growth of transnational communities and diasporic cultures. Aihwa Ong (1999) has examined 'the cultural logics of

transnationality' and has described 'flexible citizenship' (Ong 2005) as 'a strategy that combines the security of citizenship in a new country with business opportunities in the homeland'. Consequently T.H. Marshall's famous typology of citizenship has been criticized because it cannot encompass these changes that result from globalization (Marshall 1950). While the sociological analysis of transnational identities is an important and interesting field of research, it is confusing rather than illuminating to use the concept of citizenship to describe these developments.

I argue by contrast that citizenship can only function within the nation-state, because it is based on contributions and a reciprocal relationship between duty and rights, unlike human rights for which there are as yet no explicit duties. To employ the notion of citizenship outside the confines of the nation-state is to distort the meaning of the term, indeed to render it meaningless. The idea of flexible citizenship is what we might call a political fiction. This criticism is not just a linguistic quibble. It implies that some terms are properly national and must remain so. There are limits to the idea of 'sociology beyond societies' because some concepts are inherently not mobile, but necessarily fixed and specific. It does not follow that they are useless; it merely signifies that some institutions cannot become global, and should be left in peace.

Citizenship, the rights and duties of members of a nation-state, is a juridical status that confers a socio-political identity on persons, and determines how economic and other resources are redistributed within society. Its existence is confirmed by the provision of a passport. There are broadly speaking two versions of the social rights that constitute citizenship. In the strong version, citizenship is an important component of distributive justice, because it involves a contributory principle in which there must be some balance between an individual's contributions to society, typically through work, military service and parenting, and the rewards such as welfare, education and subsidies, which such an individual might expect. The central idea behind active citizenship is that the democratic state is an association, where membership and its rewards are ultimately dependent on individual contributions to the public good. For example, old age pensions were historically conceived as a reward for services to society during the lifetime of the recipient. In the weak version of welfare rights, entitlements are related to needs rather than to qualifying behaviour, individual merit or status. For example, provision for handicapped children is a benefice rather than a reward for contributions. This sociological argument is a version of the philosophical argument that rights are necessarily tied to duties, and vice versa.

A citizen was originally the denizen of a city, and citizenship can be traced historically back to the classical world of Rome and Greece via the Renaissance cities of northern Italy, but modern citizenship is fundamentally the product of political revolutions, especially the English Civil War, the French Revolution, and the American War of Independence (Turner 1986). The

notion of citizenship then spread in the late nineteenth century from Europe to Japan to China (Goldman and Perry 2002). In the process of nation-building, nineteenth-century citizenship incorporated the urban working class into capitalism through welfare institutions and social rights, primarily under the umbrella of 'social security' (Mann 1987). Welfare states achieved the pacification of working-class radicalism with relatively little concession to basic inequalities of class, wealth and power. While welfare capitalism avoided the revolutionary conflicts that were predicted by Karl Marx, there were significant variations between capitalist regimes in terms of their relationship to democracy and authoritarianism.

Citizenship and welfare have been profoundly altered by the neo-liberal revolution of the late 1970s, which created a political environment in which governments were no longer committed to the universalistic principles of social citizenship, a comprehensive welfare state, and full employment. These economic changes – reduction of state intervention, deregulation of the labour and financial markets, implementation of free trade, reduction in personal taxation, and fiscal regulation of state expenditure – were a reflection of the doctrines of F.A.Hayek, Karl Popper, and Milton Friedman. New Right theorists argue that the spontaneous order of the market must not be regulated by the state, and that judgments about human needs should be left to the operation of the market. The global neo-liberal revolution has converted the citizen into a passive member of consumer society, where conservative governments understand 'active citizenship' to be a method of regulating the efficiency of public utilities such as the railways. But these changes in the global economy have not produced the global citizen.

There are several arguments against my position. Firstly, the very existence of dual citizenship might suggest that the relationship between sovereignty and social rights is not as close as I have claimed. Secondly, there is a lack of fit between duties and rights, for example in the case of children's rights. Citizenship tends to assume a healthy and intelligent person who is capable of undertaking their civic duties, or at least capable of gainful employment. The physically disabled cannot always fulfil such expectations. Citizenship thus contrasts sharply with human rights since the latter do not presuppose any relationship between rights and duties, and make no assumptions about the mental health of people who are the carriers of rights.

These hypothetical objections in fact strengthen my argument. Generally speaking states are reluctant to admit dual citizenship, precisely because it creates divided loyalties and ambiguous identities, and it is seen as a clear challenge to sovereignty (Glazer 2002). The lack of fit between rights and duties in the case of disabled persons accounts for the fact that they are discriminated against and often treated as second-class citizens. The elderly, while also discriminated against, may be regarded as having retrospective claims on the state. The absence of a relationship between rights and duties in these cases

only serves to reinforce the notion that citizenship is based on contributory rights. In the case of the USA, where there has been a relatively weak development of welfare institutions, the underlying assumption of citizenship entitlements is that citizens will serve in the military, pay their taxes, raise children and generally contribute to the common good.

It is possible to take a cynical view of the growth of welfare rights in the postwar period, by arguing that these welfare states and the growth of civil liberties were an aspect of the Cold War in which western states wanted to demonstrate their liberal values against atheism and communism. The rights of free speech were particularly important in the case of internal struggles within Czechoslovakia and Poland for the rights of artists to publish creative works. In the Post Cold War environment, there is less pressure to uphold those rights and after 9/11 there have been increasing restrictions on personal liberties with the Patriot Act in the USA and increasing restrictions of mobility in Europe where Britain, Spain and Italy have sought greater control over and surveillance of asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants. The attempt to impose greater security measures internally is clearly a response to the specific threat of terrorism when governments have to balance the preservation of civil rights against effective security measures (Ignatieff 2004).

Although these political and legal developments can be connected directly with the perceived threat on terrorism, there is a more general political movement to limit the growth of multiculturalism. In the USA, conservative critics claim that multicultural education programmes distort the historical truth of America's cultural origins and undermines national unity by the effective Balkanization of the American republic (Glazer 1997). Liberal intellectuals had historically believed that Americanization was unproblematic, because ethnic minorities would eventually be culturally assimilated and benefit eventually from growing economic prosperity. However, this optimism has been shaken by the fact that black progress appears to have stalled in the 1970s. The neo-conservative response to alienated black youth is bleak. Marginalized young men can either continue to experience social alienation, unemployment, low wages and resort to criminal careers to satisfy their needs, or they can passively accept limited social inclusion into American society on the hegemonic terms of the dominant community. These developments in Europe and the USA suggest that citizenship is not a flexible institution, and that it is tied inextricably to the sovereignty of the nation-state. The political exhortation of the French Revolution – citizens of the world unite! – appears to have definite institutional limits and shows that not all institutions can be analysed by 'sociology beyond society', because the social world is not simply an intersection of flows. The war on terrorism may become a turning point, in Durkheim's model of universalism, in the evolution of cosmopolitan values, because the conservative critique of multiculturalism is clearly a defence of patriotism against true patriotism. The notion that the republic cannot survive

hybridity is a direct challenge to the values that lie behind a sociological hermeneutic of cosmopolitanism.

### **Conclusion: sovereignty, security and solidarity**

Theories of globalization have been the dominant paradigm in sociology for at least two decades, although aspects of the globalization debate have been part of sociological discourse for much longer. As we have seen, Durkheim's study of *Professional Ethics and Civic Morals* contained the seed of an argument that commits sociology to the study of the moral consequences of a global social world, namely to a cosmopolitan sociology. There were other promising pathways towards a cosmopolitan understanding of social life in Marx's political economy of international capitalism, Weber's philosophy of social action, and Parsons's international system of societies. But the modern notion of globalization did not really take off until the development of modern communications systems. In the 1960s Marshall McLuhan (1964) introduced an influential vocabulary to describe the role of 'the global village' in the analysis of culture and mass media in order to understand how the world was shrinking as a result of new technologies of communication. The globalization literature grew apace in the 1970s and 1980s, but to date few sociologists have taken up the implications of Durkheim's view of the evolution of 'true patriotism' or 'word patriotism', namely that it entails an ethical view. In this article, I have sought to capture that ethical view in the idea of critical recognition theory and cosmopolitan virtue.

As sociologists we need also to explore the constraints that operate on such an ethical view point. The labour markets of the advanced economies depend on high levels of migration, because they have ageing populations and because their own labour force is not sufficiently mobile and is reluctant to take on unskilled or low-paid work. Markets need migrant labour, but democratic governments responding in part to electoral pressures and media campaigns cannot be seen to be too lenient towards high levels of migration. In modern politics after 9/11, there is a tendency to conflate three categories of persons: migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. Conservative or right-wing political parties have successfully mobilized electorates against liberal policies towards labour mobility and porous frontiers. While migrants contribute significantly to economic growth, they are often thought to be parasitic on the host society. They do not fit easily into a welfare model of contributory rights.

In general governments have been reluctant to give citizenship status to migrants without stringent criteria of membership and naturalization is often a slow and complex process. Furthermore, dual citizenship is often regarded as an anomaly. There is an increasing level of social criticism against quasi-citizenship, dual citizenship and flexible arrangements, because these forms of

citizenship and social membership are thought to undermine the hegemonic model of traditional political membership. In the USA, this type of criticism has come from sociologists like Nathan Glazer (1997 and 2002). True patriotism is caught in the contradictions between the capitalist demand for open labour markets and unimpeded labour mobility, and the nation state's quest to preserve sovereignty and national coherence. We could see this economic and political contradiction as a manifestation of the struggle between Schmitt's view of the political (as the struggle for security) and Durkheim's view of the social (as the struggle for solidarity). As a result, the intellectual quest to defend cosmopolitanism is now a matter of some urgency for the sociological community: patriotism or true patriotism?

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