

## 4 Soaring High

### History from above

The breakdown of the cold-war global order has liberated historical sociology in an extraordinary way. A remarkable surge in collective self-confidence occurred in the mid-1970s. The almost simultaneous publication in 1974 of large works by Perry Anderson and Immanuel Wallerstein – one analysis pan-European, the other global – is a convenient point from which to date the third phase of post-war historical sociology. Both works mobilized an enormous amount of empirical material to support their wide-ranging arguments. Within two years the gauntlet had also been thrown down in the arena of theory, by Randall Collins and Anthony Giddens (Collins 1975; Giddens 1976).

By the mid-1980s major contributions had also been made by Fernand Braudel, Michael Mann and W. G. Runciman. Along with Giddens's recent books, this work marks a movement away from the Marxian emphases of Anderson and Wallerstein.

This chapter focuses on all six writers just mentioned. Taken together, they have been remarkably ambitious in the wide range of societies covered, the long periods of historical time encompassed, and the detailed attention given to the empirical complexities of specific cases.<sup>1</sup> These are examples of global historical sociology written from a towering height, scanning centuries and continents.

### Two Marxian perspectives: Anderson and Wallerstein

Perry Anderson and Immanuel Wallerstein both work within the tradition of Marxism. Their empirical concerns overlap to a great extent, but they disagree on at least four fundamental and closely-related issues: the

way modes of production and social formations shape each other; the relative significance of economic and non-economic forms of coercion within and between societies; the interpretation of variations in the strength and functions of state apparatuses; and the way feudalism and capitalism are related to each other. Let us turn to Anderson first.

*Passages From Antiquity to Feudalism (Passages)* and *Lineages of the Absolutist State (Lineages)* both appeared in 1974.<sup>2</sup> The same year, Perry Anderson was writing the extended essay he later published as *Considerations on Western Marxism* (1976). This coincidence is relevant, because Anderson believed the practice of historical sociology had major implications for the development of Marxist theory (and vice versa).

In his view, the dominant tendency within Marxist theory has to be reversed. After the failures of proletarian revolutions in capitalist Europe following World War I, western Marxism – from Gramsci to Althusser – became increasingly pessimistic. It cut itself off from the real world and retreated into aesthetics, hermeneutics, and abstract metaphysics. Anderson thought pessimism was not justified in 1974. He looked back to 1968 as 'a profound historical turning point' when 'For the first time in nearly 50 years, a massive revolutionary upsurge occurred within advanced capitalism' (p. 95).

Anderson disliked the 'contraction of [Marxist] theory from economics and politics into philosophy' (1976, p. 93). He wanted to turn back to the tradition of classical Marxism – Marx, Lenin, Trotsky – and take up issues they had failed to answer or even formulate, such as:

What is the constitutive nature of bourgeois democracy? What is the function and future of the nation-state? What is the real character of imperialism as a system? What is the historical meaning of a workers' state without workers' democracy? How can a socialist revolution be made in the advanced capitalist countries? How can internationalism be made a genuine practice, not merely a pious ideal? How can the fate of previous revolutions in comparable conditions be avoided in the ex-colonial countries? How can established systems of bureaucratic privilege and oppression be attacked and abolished? What would be the structure of an authentic socialist democracy? (1976, p. 121)

*Passages* and *Lineages*, which are concerned with human history from classical antiquity to European absolutism, prepared the ground for answers to these questions. A more direct consideration of them may be expected in two further works, not yet published. These 'will deal specifically, in turn, with the chain of great bourgeois revolutions, from the Revolt of the Netherlands to the Unification of Germany; and with

the structure of the contemporary capitalist states that eventually, after a long period of ulterior evolution, emerged from them' (1974b, p. 11).

In these studies Anderson has been putting into practice his belief that the balance between 'history' and 'theory', currently favouring the latter, should be 'redressed in any Marxist culture of the future' (1976, p. 112). Historical investigations and theoretical generalizations should be closely related in terms of methodology. After all, the 'mechanisms of single events' and the 'laws of motion of whole structures' are 'equally amenable to adequate knowledge of their causality'. Both should help to increase Marxism's 'capacity for rational and controllable theory in the domain of history' (1974b, p. 8).

Anderson wants 'totalizing' history, capable of understanding 'dialectical movements' and 'contradictory possibilities' (1964, p. 27). One attempt at this is his essay, 'Origins of the present crisis', dealing with English society between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries (1964). Two of his conclusions were, first, that the seventeenth-century revolution was 'the least pure bourgeois revolution of any major European country' (p. 28) and, second, that the English proletariat came into being in highly unfavourable circumstances.

The English Revolution helped create a dynamic capitalist agriculture and a vigorous mercantile imperialism. However, unlike the French Revolution, it left no distinctive ideological legacy. English capitalism accepted the old aristocracy alongside the new bourgeoisie: there was 'no fundamental, antagonistic contradiction' between them. Also, the earliest proletariat came into being 'when socialist theory was least formed and available' (p. 31).

E. P. Thompson parodied this position. He thought it came from the belief that 'other countries . . . do - we are sorry to be obliged to say it - in Every Respect Better. Their Bourgeois Revolutions have been Mature. Their Class Struggles have been Sanguinary and Unequivocal. Their Intelligentsia have been Autonomous and Integrated Vertically. Their Morphology has been Typologically Concrete. Their Proletariat has been Hegemonic' (1978b, p. 37; emphasis in original).<sup>3</sup>

Anderson's response to Thompson can be found in *Arguments Within English Marxism* (Anderson, 1980). He praised Thompson as 'our finest socialist writer today' (1980, p. 1) but questioned his treatment, as a historian, of human agency and human experience. Thompson's definition of class was 'far too voluntarist and subjectivist' (p. 40). Compared to Barrington Moore in his discussion of the German working class in *Injustice*, Thompson paid too little attention to the 'objective coordinates' of class formation and failed to treat 'the whole historical process' (p. 33). Perry Anderson has recently returned to questions of class

formation and state formation in Britain (Anderson, 1987). This contribution is best considered as part of the global vision developed in *Passages and Lineages*.

### *From ancient Greece to absolutist monarchy*

In these two volumes Anderson aimed to identify the distinctive characteristics of historical development in Western Europe, explaining why the capitalist mode of production originated there. Elsewhere, capitalism was imposed or introduced from outside. In carrying out his analysis, Anderson paid particular attention to contacts *between* social formations, including states, and the co-existence of multiple modes of production *within* specific social formations.

In *Passages*, four modes of production were relevant to the argument. First, the slave mode of production, in which individuals captured on military campaigns were made to work on large rural estates. In social formations dominated by this mode of production, slavery, material production, and physical labour became practically synonymous. They all shared low status in the eyes of the free urban citizenry supported by the surplus generated by slave labour.

Second, the primitive communal mode of production in which peasant farmers worked their own household plots but cooperated with fellow villagers to provide communal defence and justice. Military organization was based upon extended kinship ties - although there was a tendency for powerful chiefs to emerge, rewarding their warrior retainers with tribute extracted from the peasantry.

Third, the nomadic mode of production in which geographically mobile pastoralists exploited arid steppeland. Although herds were owned by individuals, nomadic peoples, organized in hierarchical clans, collectively appropriated pasture. Their discipline and riding skills were intermittently used to dominate farming societies based upon the primitive communal mode of production. This enabled the pastoralists to acquire artisans, military conscripts and tribute. However, these empires of conquest were short-lived. Pastoral nomadism operated within strict demographic limits and had no potential for settled urban development.

The fourth variant, the feudal mode of production, was characterized by vassalage and the manorial economic regime. Vassals were granted control over territories (fiefs) by their lord (for example, the king) to enable them to bear the expense of military service. The relationship between the vassal and his superior had a contractual element: in theory

at least, protection and privilege were granted in return for loyal service (and vice versa). Vassals were lords of the manor within their fiefs. As such, they extracted labour from their serfs by extra-economic means, including the threat of physical coercion. Anderson's discussion of these modes of production in *Passages* will be discussed shortly.

In *Lineages*, Anderson turned to the absolutist state. In his view, this came about when market relationships and notions of absolute property rights took the place of feudal obligations at the level of the fief. As this happened, the power of the feudal nobility was reduced. Its conditions of existence were transformed. In spite of this, Anderson still regarded the absolutist state as 'feudal'. The point is that the absolutist ruler protected the class interest of the feudal nobility by making sure it continued to benefit from the surplus produced by the peasantry. The task of imposing extra-economic coercion on the labour force moved upward from the local feudal lord with his manorial court to the central state apparatus of the absolutist ruler. Sovereignty became more centralized.

In these two books, Anderson had two consecutive objects of explanation. In *Passages*, his object was a mode of production; specifically, the feudal mode of production as it developed within social formations which also included non-feudal elements such as the towns and the Church. In *Lineages*, his object was a form of the state; specifically, the absolutist state as it developed within social formations dominated, in his view, by the feudal mode of production. In each case Anderson was concerned with three aspects: the historical origins of his *explicandum*, its structural logic, and its implications for the development of the capitalist mode of production. As will be seen, in each case, his empirical analysis located specific societies or regions within a typology distinguishing, implicitly at least, between 'archetypal' cases and a range of other instances.

In *Passages*, Anderson first considered the slavery-based polities of classical antiquity (see figure 4.1). Athenian participatory citizenship was, in the end, incompatible with imperial expansion, although the latter was necessary for maintaining the supply of slaves. By contrast, Roman imperialism prospered under oligarchic rule by landowners, both Roman and non-Roman. Greek-style participatory citizenship was a casualty of this arrangement. However, the Roman polity was undermined by several factors. These included conflict between landowners and military commanders, the burden of supporting the expanding bureaucracy of the Christian Church, and the increasing difficulty of obtaining captives for enslavement.

The eastern part of the Roman Empire finally broke away. Byzantium

was not based upon the slave mode of production, so it was not subject to the contradictions of the Western empire. The latter, however, became increasingly rural and decentralized. Law and order deteriorated. Border raids by neighbouring Germanic tribes became commonplace. In the face of these onslaughts, the weak sought protection on the estates of local large landowners. The strong built up armed gangs of sworn followers.

In Anderson's view, the feudal mode of production in Western Europe was the product of a Roman-Germanic synthesis. This brought together a collapsing slave mode of production and the primitive communal mode of production of the empire's adversaries – the Germanic barbarians. A 'balanced' synthesis (1974a, p. 155) was achieved in France and, following the Norman invasion, in England. By contrast, Italy and Spain were more heavily influenced by the Roman inheritance of urban commerce and canon law. Germany leaned in the other direction. It retained strong vestiges of the old retinue nobility and a peasantry wedded to communal traditions.

Elsewhere in Europe, the pattern varied widely but systematically. In the north west, beyond the reach of Rome, slave-based Viking society belatedly adopted feudalism. This followed military failures against neighbouring German rivals with a primitive communal inheritance. By contrast, in the south east, interaction between a native primitive communal peasant tradition and Byzantium, the Roman Empire of the East, completely failed to generate the feudal mode. The missing ingredient was agricultural slavery. In Eastern Europe, there were repeated encounters between the primitive communal and the nomadic modes of production. This did not lead to feudalism, but a series of temporary empires run by mounted warriors.

The East/West contrast is central to the arguments of both *Passages* and *Lineages*. It provides a link between them. In the West, dynamic class conflict between peasants and feudal landlords for control of the agricultural surplus had reached a critical stage by the late fourteenth century. Then, a combined economic and demographic crisis permitted the peasantry, aided by strong towns, to throw off their serfdom. Things happened very differently in the East. There, a similar crisis, arriving later, both encouraged and allowed the state and larger landowners to impose serfdom on the peasantry for the first time. In the East, unlike the West, the towns were weak and could not provide support for the peasantry. These structural changes laid the foundation for the emergence of the absolutist state.

The absolutist state developed between the Renaissance and the eighteenth century. The warrior nobility resisted at first, but eventually

<i>North-western Europe</i> (Scandinavia)		<i>Eastern Europe</i> (east of Elbe)
FMP partially developed, though beyond influence of Roman Empire (displaced PCMP plus slave labour).		FMP failed to develop because of the predominance of a fragile symbiosis between NMP and PCMP.
<i>Western Europe</i>		<i>South-eastern Europe</i> (south of Danube)
SMP (Roman)	Italy Spain	FMP failed to develop, in spite of interaction between PCMP and the Eastern Roman Empire (without SMP).
SMP/PCMP (balanced synthesis)	England France	
PCMP (German)	Germany	

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FMP – feudal mode of production  
SMP – slave mode of production  
PCMP – primitive communal mode of production  
NMP – nomadic mode of production

Figure 4.1 Anderson on modes of production in Europe

accepted it, to become a class of courtiers with great influence in the state bureaucracy. The feudal mode of production remained dominant in the absolutist state. However, bourgeois interests were helped by a legal-political superstructure which guaranteed absolute property rights and a uniform body of law.

As has been seen, absolutism had a complex classical-feudal inheritance. This helped to prepare the ground for the capitalist mode of production. The development of rival absolutist states out of the earlier decentralized feudal forms also helped bring into being the structural counterpart of capitalism: the multi-nation state system in Europe. Absolutism strengthened ideas of absolute private property and sovereignty which had been preserved from classical times, mainly by town-people and clerics. In time, bourgeois revolutions within absolutist states would eliminate their feudal characteristics, especially the use of political coercion in the economic sphere.

These remarks apply to absolutism in Western Europe. In the East the story was different. Here the state was strengthened, where possible. But this was not a means of protecting an aristocracy undermined by the end of serfdom. Instead, as already seen, it was a way of imposing serfdom upon the peasantry. The aristocracy resisted at first, then acquiesced as the state imposed its control from above – over nobles as well as peasants.

In fact, increases in solidarity and central coordination benefited not just the ruler, but also the newly-compliant 'service nobility' (1974b, p. 218). After all, the imposition of serfdom meant it was easier to extract the material surplus. Also, a strong state apparatus closely linked to a disciplined upper class was essential in view of the increased military threat from absolutist states in the West.

Anderson's discussion of absolutism in the West and the East contains an implicit typology of societies (see figure 4.2). Firstly, the transformations undergone in Eastern and Western Europe were distinguished from those in India, China, Japan and the Ottoman Empire. The latter cases did not experience the feudalism-absolutism-capitalism sequence. Nor could they 'be reduced to a uniform residual category, left over after the canons of European evolution have been established' (1974b, pp. 548–9).

Secondly, within both Eastern and Western Europe the societies studied by Anderson fell into three groups: examples of archetypal absolutism, examples of incomplete or defective absolutism, and cases where attempts to install absolutism failed. The archetypal case in the west was France; here the contradictions of absolutism eventually brought revolution. Its counterpart in the east was Prussia, with its well-organized state, strong nobility, weak towns and servile peasantry; eventually, Prussia transformed itself into a western capitalist state.

Incomplete or defective cases in the west included Spain, which failed to exploit its American treasure, and Sweden with its weak towns but

	<i>Archetypes</i>	<i>Defective</i>	<i>Failed</i>
<i>W. Europe</i>	France	Spain Sweden	England
<i>E. Europe</i>	Prussia	Russia Austria	Poland

Figure 4.2 Anderson's implicit typology of European absolutism

far-from-servile peasantry. Eastern examples were Austria, with its independent and divided nobility, and Russia which was unable to follow the modernizing road taken by Prussia.

Turning to the third group, absolutism failed in the urban enclaves in Italy and Germany. Other examples of failure included Poland in the east and England in the west. Poland established itself as an aristocratic commonwealth but in the process weakened the state's defences against foreign aggressors. Attempts to impose absolutism in England were inhibited by the lack of a standing army and the control exercised by the commercialized aristocracy and gentry over local administration.

### *The figures of descent*

Anderson took his analysis of the British case further in 'The figures of descent' (1987). This paper also makes reference to the development of the capitalist mode of production in other societies. For example, he argues that the dominant position of the landed aristocracy in England as late as the twentieth century was mirrored in other industrializing societies. However, the English aristocracy outstripped their foreign competitors and, even more so, the English bourgeoisie, in terms of wealth, experience and self-confidence. Under aristocratic influence the English state remained small and wedded to minimalism. Following Geoffrey Ingham and W. D. Rubenstein, Anderson stressed the division of capital between a financial sector oriented to empire and international trade, and a weaker domestic manufacturing sector (Ingham, 1984; Rubenstein, 1981).

England's 1689 revolution was incomplete; it left the job unfinished. Unlike the other major capitalist powers, Britain has not experienced 'a modern "second revolution", abruptly or radically remoulding the state inherited from the first' (Anderson, 1987, p. 47). Modernization was incomplete. No 'independent bourgeois representation' flourished (p. 39). The dominant ruling bloc which had crystallized by World War I trained its offspring to exercise gentlemanly rule, not engage in trade. After this war, the Labour movement stepped into the breach vacated by the Liberal party, and took over policies advocated by the liberal intellectuals, Keynes and Beveridge. Labour politicians were unable to bring about fundamental change. The defensive capacity of organized labour was a powerful obstacle to large-scale reconstruction of industrial capital by Labour politicians in government. So was the power of the international market.

Other capitalist societies had successfully taken corrective measures to make themselves more efficient. The French used a highly trained technocracy. German reform was coordinated by the banking system. Japan had an effective interventionist state. In Sweden and Austria, mass trade-union and party organization provided a strong base allowing Labour to take the leading role. The British government in the 1980s chose to rely upon the logic of the market. Unfortunately, this could not provide a solution. On the contrary, the market-led behaviour of particular capitals was, in Anderson's view, responsible for the structural problems confronting Britain.

The levers for change used by France, Germany, Japan, Sweden and Austria were not available in Britain. Nor, indeed, in the United States. This was relevant because, despite the much greater influence of industrial capital in the United States, it was beginning to encounter similar difficulties to Britain. This was not the end of it. The 'radical internationalization' of the forces of production and circulation occurring in the late twentieth century meant, perhaps, that the structural problems of uneven development encountered in Britain would be generalized 'throughout the advanced capitalist world' (p. 77).<sup>4</sup> This is a good place to turn to the second writer discussed in this chapter, since the globalization of uneven development has been one of his major preoccupations.

### *The capitalist world-economy*

Immanuel Wallerstein, like Anderson, has tried to produce work which combines scholarly objectivity and political relevance. Wallerstein argues that in making this attempt he stands in the tradition of the Enlightenment: 'I myself feel that I am being thoroughly consistent and that my concern with history, with social science, and with politics is not a matter of engaging in three separate, even if related activities, but is a *single* concern, informed by the belief that the strands cannot be separated, nor should they if they could' (Wallerstein, 1979, p. vii; emphasis in original). Like Anderson, Wallerstein responded enthusiastically to the events of 1968. He gave active support to student radicals at Columbia University, where he belonged to the sociology faculty. At the time he published a book showing the links between turmoil on the campus, broader changes in the United States, and shifts at the global level.<sup>5</sup> Two decades later, he returned to the theme in a book, written with two colleagues, entitled *Antisystemic Movements* (Arrighi, Hopkins and Wallerstein, 1989) and a paper '1968, Revolution in the world-system' (Wallerstein, 1989b).

In the intervening period Wallerstein developed in great detail his interpretation of the rise and 'future demise' of the world capitalist system (Wallerstein, 1979, p. 1). Three volumes on the capitalist world-economy have appeared so far, covering its development from the 1450s to the 1840s (Wallerstein, 1974; Wallerstein, 1980; Wallerstein, 1989a). Wallerstein's views on antisystemic movements and the 'Revolution of 1968' (Wallerstein, 1989b, p. 431) are best considered in the context of this major enterprise, still incomplete.

Wallerstein has rejected the Western theory of development, which assumes that each society passes through the same series of determinate stages, moving from tradition to modernity. He also dismisses the 'Marxist embrace of an evolutionary model of progress' (Wallerstein, 1983, p. 98). In fact, historical capitalism has brought 'in both material and psychic terms . . . absolute immiseration' (p. 104) within its sphere. This sphere is the capitalist world-economy. Some definitions are required. A world-economy and a world-empire are types of world-system. The other kind of system is a minisystem. World-systems and minisystems both incorporate a division of labour amongst specialized parts which depend upon economic exchange with each other. Minisystems – such as a hunting and gathering band – are small and have a single culture. Few, if any, have survived. By contrast, world systems are much larger and include several cultures. Within a world-empire – such as the Roman Empire – economic exchange is to a considerable extent guided by a central political bureaucracy. As late as the early sixteenth century, attempts were still being made, unsuccessfully, to recreate this form in Europe. By the 1560s, however, world-empires had given place to world-economies.

Exchange within world-economies is not contained within a single empire, but traverses several polities. The modern world-system is a capitalist world-economy. Its 'essential feature . . . is production for sale in a market in which the object is to realize the maximum profit' (1979, p. 15). Such a world-economy can incorporate production systems based upon 'feudal' forms of extra-economic coercion, and also 'socialist' national economies which do not recognize private ownership: in both cases, the goods and services produced become commodities within an international market driven by profit-seeking. The rules and constraints operating in this market result from:

. . . the complex interplay of four major sets of institutions: the multiple states linked in an interstate system; the multiple 'nations', whether fully recognized or struggling for such public definition (and including those sub-nations, the 'ethnic groups'), in uneasy and uncertain relation to the

states; the classes, in evolving occupational contour and in oscillating degrees of consciousness; and the income-pooling units engaged in common householding, combining multiple persons engaged in multiple forms of labour and obtaining income from multiple sources, in uneasy relationship to the classes. (Wallerstein, 1983, p. 64)

Despite all this unease and uncertainty, the capitalist world-economy maintains its stability as a social system due to three mechanisms: the concentration of military strength in the hands of dominant forces within 'core' societies; the ideological commitment of the cadres who run the system; and the division of the exploited majority into two tiers of subordinate societies – a larger lower tier (or 'periphery') and a smaller middle tier (or 'semiperiphery'). The bourgeoisie within core societies exploit members of societies in the periphery. The economic role of the semiperiphery varies at different stages of the capitalist world-economy. Its chief function is political, its presence weakening potential opposition to the core.

The main actors within the system are classes and 'ethno-nations' (1979, p. 24), two overlapping or alternative identities adopted by social groups. The bourgeoisie – including entrepreneurs, 'nouveaux riches' and 'coasters' (p. 287) – pursues capital accumulation. Its ruling ideology is universalism, the regime of scientific rationality. By contrast, the proletariat have been shaped by 'the ethnicization of the world workforce' (1983, p. 77). Strong ethnic identities contribute to the effective reproduction, socialization and hierarchical ranking of the proletariat.

Historically, the market has been modified in two ways within the commodity chains and production activities binding bourgeois exploiters to the labouring population. First, the commodification of labour has been limited by the persistence of non-waged work within households. Proletarianization is a continuing but incomplete process. Second, this largely *semi*-proletarian workforce has been managed within global structures with a high degree of vertical integration, such as chartered companies, merchant houses and transnational corporations. Bureaucracy, politics, and various forms of bullying have modified the free play of supply and demand within the open market place. Furthermore, unequal exchange – between bourgeoisie and workforce, between core and periphery – has been enforced through the hidden or overt exercise of state power; in particular, the power of strong state apparatuses in core societies.

In the course of competition between state apparatuses and bourgeoisies located in different polities, the capitalist world-economy undergoes repeated geographical restructuring and continual expan-

sion. In fact, it was originally born from processes of restructuring and expansion within medieval Europe. In the wake of the economic, ecological and demographic crisis of feudalism, a search for exploitable land and labour was under way by the fifteenth century. This search was untrammelled by the restrictions of centralized bureaucracy which so inhibited contemporary Chinese explorers. It eventually brought into being a new transatlantic and pan-European market.

Differentiation within the capitalist world-economy was aided by territorial extension. Also by inflation, which distributed profits unevenly between participants. The structural logic of this modern world-system was expressed in the forms taken by the division of labour and modes of domination within the rural and urban sectors of core, peripheral and semi-peripheral societies. During the sixteenth century the core of the modern world-system was located in England, the Netherlands and Northern France. The semiperiphery centred on the Mediterranean, including Italy, Southern France and Spain. America and Eastern Europe belonged to the periphery. Figure 4.3 summarizes some aspects of the capitalist world-economy with particular reference to this first phase.

1 *Struggle in the core* For over three centuries, leadership within the core of the modern world-system was disputed between the French and the English. During the sixteenth century the French were hampered by internal conflicts. Their society was tugged in several directions at once: was it a Mediterranean or an Atlantic power? Maritime or land-based? Under the dominant influence of Paris or Lyons? Capitalist development was more favoured in England, with its uniform and centralized legal system, larger estates and weaker feudal residues. The English benefited from competition between France and Spain, the long-term increase in Atlantic trade, and the existence of the Tudor state – strong enough to resist foreign invasion, but too weak to rake off commercial profits made by its own subjects.

In the early seventeenth century the French state overrode centrifugal tendencies with the help of a prestigious royal court. The French bourgeoisie was feudalized. By contrast, the English aristocracy had long been bourgeois. Centralized but not absolutist, the English state served the interests of the powerful London-based mercantile establishment. Unfortunately, political centralization in France was to the disadvantage of native commercial enterprise since the latter was most vigorous in the provinces.

Economic contraction and political restructuring during the period of the Thirty Years' War (1618–48) led to consolidation and, subse-

	<i>State</i>	<i>Rural</i>	<i>Urban</i>
C o r e	Strong state (compared to periphery).	Free waged labour. Tenant farmers. Early shift to pastoral agriculture on large estates.	Free waged labour. Strong urban bourgeoisie.
S e m i - p e r i p h e r y	Strength of state varies. Stronger if seeking promotion to core status.	Share-cropping. Specialized agriculture (e.g. viticulture) on smallholdings. Moderate levels of skill and supervision.	Strong urban occupational associations (e.g. guilds) inhibit innovation.
P e r i p h e r y	Weak state (compared to core).	Slavery and serfdom. Monoculture. Low levels of skill and supervision. Low productivity.	Weak native urban bourgeoisie dominated by powerful foreign bourgeoisie.

Figure 4.3 Wallerstein's capitalist world-economy

quently, further expansion of the capitalist world-economy. Although the Dutch gained a medium-term advantage, they were elbowed out by the French and English in the new phase of mercantilist inter-state struggle during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. By this time, the conflict extended throughout the colonial periphery.

The Treaty of Paris in 1763 sealed British victory in that conflict. A new phase began during which specialization increased throughout the

system, while mechanization advanced in the core. Industrialization in Britain and revolution in France contributed to the final victory of the former over the latter. By the early nineteenth century 'Britain was finally truly hegemonic in the world-system' (Wallerstein, 1989a, p. 122). This position however, was soon challenged by other societies struggling to rise from the periphery and semiperiphery.

**2 Periphery and semiperiphery** The economic recession of the early seventeenth-century led to an intensification of labour repression in the serf-based regimes of Eastern Europe. Where, as in Poland, the state remained weak, this resulted in serious internal conflict and social disruption. Elsewhere in the periphery, in the Americas, a reduction in the volume of trade with core societies allowed local manufacturing interests to become more powerful.

From the mid-eighteenth century Russia, the Ottoman Empire, India and West Africa were incorporated in the periphery as the system expanded. Ironically, one effect of including African mini-systems was that the social disruption imposed by the slave trade could no longer be externalized. In due course this trade ceased. By that time the American colonies were becoming independent states and were competing to enter the semiperiphery. When the modern world-system came into existence the semiperiphery included the commercial heartland of medieval Europe – North Italy, Southern Germany and Flanders – and the two Iberian societies. Spain and Portugal had failed to establish themselves as core societies. Instead, during the seventeenth-century Spain came to be 'at best a rather passive conveyor belt between the core countries and Spain's colonies' (Wallerstein, 1980, p. 185).

A typical approach of would-be entrants to the semiperiphery was to strengthen the state apparatus, protect home industry and exploit local monopolies to the full. Sweden, in alliance with the Dutch, effectively adopted this strategy during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Even more successful was Prussia, with its strong alliance between the *junkers* and the state bureaucracy. By the late nineteenth century the German Empire and the United States were both mounting a strong challenge to British hegemony from within the semiperiphery. In both cases, manufacturing interests had established dominance over 'peripheral' agricultural sectors. Russia and Japan had also entered the semiperiphery by this time.

**3 Consolidation and challenge** Since World War II, following a period of American hegemony, the principal members of the core have become the United States, USSR, Japan and the EEC. Wallerstein

argued that socialist republics such as Poland and Hungary belonged to the semiperiphery. The Third World constituted the periphery. However, this arrangement has been undermined by conflicts whose origins lie at least as far back as the French Revolution. Proletarianization, urbanization, industrialization and the reinforcement of organizational structures have undermined established hierarchies in various ways. For example, urbanization has made it easier to organize opponents of the power structures. Industrialization has undermined the political and economic justifications for inequality. Bureaucracies have become top-heavy and cumbersome.

Antisystemic movements asserting the rights of oppressed classes, nations and ethnic groups grew stronger throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By 1848, 'as good a symbolic date as any' (Arrighi *et al.*, 1989, p. 30), such movements had begun to create continuing organizations with specific political objectives. Their chief objective was to capture the state apparatus. By the mid-twentieth century social democratic movements, communist movements, and national liberation movements had achieved this objective to an impressive degree.

However, the achievement of state power resulted in little redistribution, disappointing rates of economic growth, and 'a very widespread sense of unfulfilled revolution' (p. 34). The sovereignty of the state was hedged about with *de facto* limitations, including the power of multinational firms managing a global division of labour. The old antisystemic movements failed to represent the interests of the young, the old, females, migrant workers, ethnic minorities, and workforces in the semiperiphery. Or to overcome the contradictions between the systemic demands of capitalism and the claims of welfarism and human rights. Furthermore, their westernized assumptions were subject to increasing criticism.

The year 1968 signalled a 'Revolution in the world-system' (Wallerstein, 1989b, p. 431). It drew energy from destalinization, anti-colonial wars and minority protests. The revolution embodied a protest against the system of alliances and stylized conflict associated with American hegemony. It also expressed disappointment with the old antisystemic movements. The central images promoted by these movements – their visions of the urban industrial proletariat and the oppressed nation – had become crude clichés, insensitive to complex realities. Racial, sexual and other minorities were no longer prepared to take second place. They set about creating their own 'rainbow coalitions'.

In Wallerstein's view, the key debate of the late twentieth century is under way. Its protagonists are the old and new antisystemic move-



ments, and it concerns 'the fundamental strategy of social transformation' (p. 440; emphasis in original). Six movements are in play: the western 'old left'; new social movements in the West concerned with women, 'green' issues, ethnic minorities and so on; the traditional communist parties of the socialist bloc; new movements for human rights and against bureaucratic rule in the socialist bloc; traditional national liberation movements in the Third World; and anti-western Third World movements, often taking religious forms.

The mutual suspicion of these six movements has diminished since the late 1960s as they have begun to debate the desirability and relevance of seeking state power, and the value of egalitarianism. A number of queries dominate the agenda, according to Wallerstein. For example: can significant political change be achieved not by taking state power directly, but by increasing civil society's control over the state? How can the dangers and limitations of bureaucratic organization as a way of seeking change be overcome?

Furthermore, is it possible to overcome short-run disagreements among antisystemic movements and achieve cooperation in transforming the capitalist world-economy as a whole? How can we reconcile the tensions between universalist appeals to liberty and equality on the one hand and, on the other, the particularist demands of ethnicity and gender? And, finally, how can we resolve the conflict between the demand for economic growth and the need to protect the global ecology?

How these issues are resolved will be influenced by the outcome of the latest of 'those periodic downturns, or contractions, or crises that the capitalist world-economy has known with regularity since its origins in Europe in the sixteenth century' (Wallerstein, 1979, p. 95). In an article initially published in 1976, Wallerstein looked forward as follows:

The heyday of US world hegemony is over . . . The unity of what was a bloc of socialist nations is more or less definitely broken, and the USSR and China are both challenging each other's socialist credentials . . . One of the most important consequences . . . is the destruction of the myth about the monopoly of party and state in socialist countries . . . We are now forced to take seriously the reality of continuing internal class struggle *within* socialist countries. . . At the end of this present downturn (which may not come until 1990) there will probably be a new interstate political alignment of forces at the world level, reflecting a new phase in the economic history of the capitalist world-economy. (pp. 95-6; emphasis in original)

This must have appeared a very bold statement in 1976. In retrospect, it appears remarkably prescient.<sup>6</sup>

### *Comparing Wallerstein and Anderson*

No attempt will be made to synthesize or adjudicate between Wallerstein and Anderson. However, some systematic differences between them may be summarized. For example, the passage just quoted indicates once more the close connection made by Wallerstein between class struggle and inter-societal relations. The state plays an important mediating role. As far as Wallerstein is concerned, both the strength of a state apparatus and its function are mainly understandable in terms of its location within the capitalist world-economy: is it in the core, periphery or semiperiphery? What part does it play in the management of unequal exchange relationships between societies through the market? Is it seeking to maintain or alter the position held by the society in which it is located within this system of relationships?

By contrast, for Anderson the strength and function of the state apparatus within a society are mainly understandable in terms of the contribution it makes to maintaining the dominant mode of production within that society. Interstate relations are relevant to his argument, especially in explaining the transmission of the absolutist state to Eastern Europe. But Anderson treats the sphere of contact between competing polities as a crucible helping to stimulate change *within* specific societies at particular times, not as a system whose cycles and processes are all-determining.

Perry Anderson and Immanuel Wallerstein both acknowledge that Western Europe's feudal heritage made a decisive contribution to the development of capitalism. For Wallerstein, the crisis of feudalism was the stimulus for the transatlantic discoveries which made the capitalist world-economy possible; and – by virtue of its decentralized character – feudalism raised no bureaucratic obstacles to the vast movements of labour and capital entailed. In other words, its contribution was largely negative.

By contrast, Anderson believes that feudal social formations not only carried the seeds of capitalist relations of production, transmitted from classical times, but also provided the basis for a decentralized Europe of competing nation-states. Furthermore, in Anderson's view, feudalism remained dominant, in some European societies at least, for up to three centuries after the sixteenth century – by which time, according to Wallerstein, it had been eclipsed by capitalism.

Wallerstein accepted that 'feudal' forms of labour control entailing extra-economic coercion continued to exist after the fifteenth century. However, they were subsumed within the *capitalist* world-economy. This view may be contrasted with Anderson's perspective on the abso-

lutist state: although there were relatively powerful capitalist interests within absolutist states benefiting from a legal system protecting market transactions and guaranteeing absolute property rights, these interests were subsumed within a social formation dominated by the *feudal* mode of production.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, there are a couple of strategic differences between the approaches taken by the two scholars. Firstly, Wallerstein focuses upon exploitative relationships between societies primarily mediated by the market; Anderson upon exploitative relationships within societies primarily mediated by physical coercion in military and judicial guises. Secondly, Anderson concentrates upon the complex articulation of multiple modes of production within a specific social formation (e.g. French or English society); Wallerstein upon the complex articulation of multiple social formations within a specific mode of production (i.e. the capitalist world-economy).

Both Anderson and Wallerstein have occupied solid institutional bases from which to transmit their ideas. Anderson has his stake in the *New Left Review*. Since 1970, Wallerstein has been employed in the State University of New York at Binghamton, where he is director of the Fernand Braudel Center for the Study of Economies, Historical Systems and Civilizations. The second volume of *The Modern World-System* (Wallerstein, 1980) is dedicated to Fernand Braudel. The regard has been mutual. In his own trilogy entitled *Civilization and Capitalism 15th–18th Centuries* (Braudel, 1981–4), especially in the third volume *The Perspective of the World* (1984), Braudel makes occasional use of a world-system perspective. For all these reasons, Braudel should be the next scholar to be considered. As will be seen, his work has some surprising convergences with Michael Mann's approach.

### Infrastructures of power: Braudel and Mann

In a paper published in 1972 Fernand Braudel wrote:

I was born in 1902 . . . in a little village . . . whose roots go back for centuries . . . Things that others had to learn from books I knew all along from first-hand experience . . . I was in the beginning and remain now a historian of peasant stock. I could name the plants and trees of this village of Eastern France: I knew each of its inhabitants; I watched them at work: the blacksmith, the cartwright, the occasional woodcutters, the '*bou- quillons*'. I observed the yearly rotation of the crops on the village lands which today produce nothing but grass for grazing herds. I watched the turning wheel of the old mill which was, I believe, built long ago for the local lord by an ancestor of mine. And because all this countryside of

eastern France is full of military recollections, I was, through my family, a child at Napoleon's side at Austerlitz . . . (1972, p. 449)

This portrait of a young 'savage mind' naming the local plants, trees and country folk would no doubt have appealed to Claude Lévi-Strauss. The author of *Structural Anthropology* (1963–77) was Braudel's colleague at the *École des Hautes Études* during the 1950s and 1960s. To borrow another of Lévi-Strauss's terms, Braudel's contribution to historical scholarship was a sustained exercise in *bricolage*. It was an impressive feat of individual craftsmanship, drawing on a vast warehouse of accumulated facts, welding them together, and making them 'work'.

Braudel produced three very big books. His best-known work, appearing in two large volumes, is *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (1972a; henceforth *The Mediterranean*), originally published in 1949. Even more ambitious is Braudel's trilogy *Civilization and Capitalism 15th–18th Centuries* (1981–4; originally published in 1979; henceforth *Civilization and Capitalism*). At the time of his death in 1985 he was working on *The Identity of France* and had produced two of the projected four volumes. The first appeared in 1988.

The first words of the preface to the first volume of Braudel's first major work are 'I have loved the Mediterranean with passion' (1972a, p. 17). His last major book begins with the statement: 'Let me start by saying once and for all that I love France with the same demanding and complicated passion as did Jules Michelet' (1988, p. 15). These are clear indications of the very strong attachment Braudel felt to the empirical subjects of his research. Like any ardent lover, his main objective was to get to grips with 'the real thing', rather than spend too much time theorizing about it.

Braudel relied upon relatively simple models, accepting ambiguity or vagueness as the price of flexibility. He was sceptical of complex theoretical constructs since, in his view, they were liable to depart from social reality. Lévi-Strauss went too far in that direction for his taste. So did another colleague, the sociologist George Gurvitch. In fact, although they had important differences, Braudel had great respect for Gurvitch, and happily borrowed elements from his approach.<sup>8</sup>

### *Evolution and discontinuity (1)*

Gurvitch treated social structure as an intermediary between, on the one hand, spontaneous, unorganized phenomena and, on the other hand, institutionalized social interaction, subject to regularized coordi-

nation and control. Structuration maintained, at best, 'a precarious equilibrium, constantly being renewed'. It was 'composed of a multiplicity of hierarchies at the heart of a total social phenomenon'. This equilibrium was 'fortified and cemented by the patterns, signs, symbols, regular and habitual social roles, values and ideas – in brief, by the cultural works which are proper to these structures' (Gurvitch, 1958, p. 214). However, equilibrium was always liable to be disrupted by human beings exercising their liberty in an unexpected way. Social phenomena were constantly subject to processes of 'structuration', 'de-structuration' and 're-structuration' (1958, p. 19) in the course of which 'groups and societies are at once creating and being created, changing and being changed' (p. 20). In some respects, Gurvitch anticipated the approach later developed by Anthony Giddens, although there are differences between them.

Braudel happily accepted the intellectual usefulness of models, and in particular the idea of structure (Braudel, 1958b, p. 90). However, he could not identify with Gurvitch's special interest in the creative potential of personal encounters, or his enthusiasm for microsociological 'sociodrama'. Such a preoccupation with circumscribed events furnished a very inadequate basis for 'global history', and was no way to discover humanity in its 'true social form' (Braudel, 1953, p. 360). There was more significant drama – 'tensions, antimonies, contradictions' – to be found in the 'slow history' of the 'long term' (p. 355).<sup>9</sup> At this point a further point of contention arose between Gurvitch and Braudel.

Gurvitch objected to the way Auguste Comte, like Hegel, had 'identified historical reality with development, with evolution, with a unilinear progress which was spiritual and material at the same time' (1957, p. 75). It was necessary to get beyond these metaphysical dogmatics. In fact, there were radical discontinuities between, say 'archaic' societies (e.g. bands, tribes) and 'Promethean' societies: including charismatic theocracies, patriarchal societies, city-states becoming empires, enlightened despotisms, liberal capitalist democracies, fully-developed organized capitalist societies, techno-bureaucratic fascist polities, state collectivist societies, and pluralist collectivist societies (1955).

These Promethean societies were distinguished from each other by their division of labour, economic and political hierarchies, dominant cultural activities and forms of sociability, and the perceptions of social time operative within them (cf. Gurvitch, 1964). Archaic societies were confined within the limits of tradition or 'collective memory'. By contrast, the Promethean societies had 'historical memory', a capacity to reflect upon history and perceive the possibility of changing it by active human intervention' (1957, pp. 78–9).

In general terms, then, Gurvitch believed sociologists should identify the interpenetrating tensions and conflicts below the surface in each type of society. In fact,

The object of sociology is the typology of total social phenomena: the microsociological types, the types of groupings, the types of social classes, and the types of global societies. (It studies them) in their movements of structuration and destructuration at the interior of these various types located in time segments which are reconstructed (by the sociologist) according to their discontinuity. (1956, p. 15)

Braudel made use of Gurvitch's distinctions between global types (at one extreme), microsociology (at the other) and various kinds of social groupings (e.g. classes); especially the last aspect. However, he objected to the cavalier way in which Gurvitch, having dispensed with the false god of unilinear evolutionism, then subdivided time into a host of temporalities – the 'longue durée', cyclical time, time running ahead of itself, time running late, explosive time and so on. Gurvitch had created a wide range of 'colours' but it was impossible for him to reconstitute them as 'unitary white light'.

In other words, Gurvitch could not cope with 'historical time – this reality which remains violent even if one tries to arrange and diversify it, this constraint which the historian never escapes' (Braudel, 1958b, pp. 96–7). The sociologist was prepared only too well by philosophy – which is 'where he comes from and where he remains' – to ignore this 'concrete necessity of history' and focus on the immediate, the current. As far as Braudel was concerned, the test of a model was how successfully it could be reinserted in the real world. He repeatedly compared models to seacraft. He asked: 'Doesn't every ship have to be launched into its element? Is George Gurvitch's "model" living, does it float?' (Braudel, 1953, pp. 352–3). Would it 'navigate the waters of the *longue durée*'? (1958b, p. 96).<sup>10</sup> Despite its useful aspects, Gurvitch's model was static: 'History is absent from it' (1958b, p. 96).

### *The longue durée*

In 1923, after graduating in history from the Sorbonne, Braudel went as a schoolmaster to Algeria, where he was to be based for a decade. In the same year he began work on a study of Philip II's Mediterranean policy. Gradually, the sea became more interesting to him than the monarch. The next quarter of a century was spent producing a thesis, successfully

defended at the Sorbonne in 1947 and published two years later as *The Mediterranean*. Thousands of hours were passed in many archives, including those at Simancas in Spain where Braudel 'aroused envy and admiration among the archivists and *buscadores* . . . by taking 2,000–3,000 photos a day and rolling some thirty meters of film' (1972b, pp. 451–2).

A brief period working in the faculty at São Paulo in Brazil during the mid-1930s was followed by appointment to the École des Hautes Études in Paris. The main outlines of *The Mediterranean* were composed during 1939, just before war broke out. Braudel wrote the first draft of the text between 1940 and 1945, without his notes, as a prisoner of war in Germany. He later recollected that during these years:

. . . my vision took on its definitive form without my being entirely aware of it, partly as a direct intellectual response to a spectacle – the Mediterranean – which no traditional account seemed to me capable of encompassing, and partly as a direct existential response to the tragic times I was passing through. All these occurrences which poured in upon us from the radio and the newspapers of our enemies, or even the news from London which our clandestine receivers gave us – I had to outdistance, reject, deny them. Down with occurrences, especially vexing ones! I had to believe that history, destiny, was written at a much more profound level. Choosing a long time scale to observe from was choosing the position of God the Father as a refuge. (1972, p. 454)

Braudel fixed his attention on the massive, slow-moving structures of geography, climate, habit and custom, rather than the happenings that fill daily experience. He had little sympathy with the Sartrean view that human beings acquire meaningful existence by the way they act and participate in events.

In fact, personal biography and intellectual methodology were closely intertwined for both Fernand Braudel and Jean-Paul Sartre. J. H. Hexter has pointed out the stark contrast between their respective lives in the period immediately following the 'strange defeat' of France in 1940. While Braudel was stuck in prison, Sartre was in the Parisian Resistance risking his neck, making life-and-death decisions every day. Coping with this 'made him the person he was and required him to remake himself every day in the face of them' (Hexter, 1972, p. 509).

Three years after the first edition of *The Mediterranean* was published, Braudel was working on a second, even larger project at the invitation of his colleague and mentor, Lucien Febvre. Another quarter of a century of research produced *Civilization and Capitalism*, which appeared in 1979. Although it placed Europe at the centre, this work

covered the whole globe in the period between 1400 and 1800. Meanwhile, its author advanced to the top of his profession. When Febvre died in 1956, Braudel succeeded him as head of the Sixth section of the École des Hautes Études and editor of *Annales*. In 1962 he became chief administrator at the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme. Apart from these duties, Braudel also revised and expanded *The Mediterranean*, bringing out a second edition in 1966 (translated in 1972). With great optimism, at the age of 77 he set out on his third great venture, *The Identity of France*. This unfinished work will not be examined here.

This chronology indicates that for well over a decade, during the 1950s and early 1960s, Braudel was working simultaneously on *The Mediterranean* and *Civilization and Capitalism*. It is not surprising that, although the latter work broadens out the focus from a particular region to the world as a whole, it forms a close sequel to the former.

Both works have a tripartite organization (see figure 4.4). The first part of *The Mediterranean* is devoted to 'man in his relationship to the environment', seen from the perspective of the long term or '*long duree*' (1972a, pp. 20, 23). It is dominated by geography, and emphasizes the

	<i>The Mediterranean</i>	<i>Civilization and Capitalism</i>
<i>Vol I: Structures</i>	Humankind and the environment: land/sea, mountains/plains, cities/countryside, East/West, North/South in geographical time.	Material life and everyday human activity.
<i>Vol II: Structures and Conjunctures</i>	Groups, collective destinies and trends in social time.	Choices and strategies within the market economy and merchant capitalism: economies, social hierarchies, states, civilizations.
<i>Vol III: Conjunctures (Events)</i>	Political and military events in individual time.	Economic and cultural conjunctures including the rise and fall of specific world-economies.

Figure 4.4 Structure and conjuncture in Braudel

role of 'structure' in history. The second part focuses upon human beings and 'the history of groups, collective destinies, and general trends' (p. 353). This part of the argument 'combines . . . *structure* and *conjuncture*, the permanent and the ephemeral, the slow-moving and the fast' (p. 353). The third part of the text deals with the history of events. Having traversed 'geographical time' and 'social time', it arrives at 'individual time' (p. 21).

Turning to *Civilization and Capitalism*, the first volume of this work – like the first part of *The Mediterranean* – is preoccupied with structures seen from a long-term perspective. Entitled *The Structures of Everyday Life* (Braudel, 1981), it deals with 'material civilization' as expressed in the daily lives of ordinary people, changing only very slowly over several generations. There is an important difference from the earlier work. Although Braudel regards structures as a product of extended interaction between nature and humankind, in *The Mediterranean* the analysis leans towards 'the role of the environment', to quote the title of part one. By contrast, in *The Structures of Everyday Life* it focuses more heavily upon patterns of human activity.

The second volume of *Civilization and Capitalism*, whose title is *The Wheels of Commerce* (1982), examines in detail the market economy rising upon the base of material civilization. It also considers the choices and strategies available at a still higher level, that of merchant capitalism. Like the second part of *The Mediterranean*, *The Wheels of Commerce* straddles the realms of structure and conjuncture. In both the earlier and later works, Braudel moves from a treatment of the economy to a consideration of social hierarchies, civilizations and states.

The third volume of *Civilization and Capitalism*, *The Perspective of the World* (1984), is concerned with the 'rhythms of the . . . conjuncture' (p. 71) as expressed in the fluctuating fortunes of successive world-economies, from the eleventh century to the 1970s. Like part three of *The Mediterranean*, it deals with the rise and fall of distinct interests. However, the nature of the interests is different in the two cases.

In the earlier book these interests are mainly political and military. Braudel's account culminates in the Battle of Lepanto between Christians and Turks in 1570 and the death of Philip II in 1598. By contrast, in *The Perspective of the World*, the relevant interests are mainly economic ('capitalism') and cultural ('civilization'). In this third volume Braudel bursts out of his self-imposed chronological limits and takes the argument up to the world oil crisis of the early 1970s.

It would obviously be misleading to suppose that the three volumes of *Civilization and Capitalism* correspond directly in content to the three parts of *The Mediterranean*. Differences in this respect have already

been noticed. In fact, *Civilization and Capitalism* is a large-scale elaboration of themes central to the second part of *The Mediterranean*. This is concerned with structural and conjunctural aspects of economic life, social hierarchies, states and civilizations in the 'Greater Mediterranean' (1972a, p. 168) during the sixteenth century. In *Civilization and Capitalism*, the spatial and temporal framework is greatly extended, but the themes just mentioned remain at the heart of Braudel's argument. This argument will be explored shortly.

Running through the earlier and the latter works is an unresolved tension in Braudel's approach – or, rather, a gradual shift of perception. On the one hand, he has a powerful sense of the shaping and constraining power of enduring historical structures. On the other, especially in his later work, he sees that interests at the summit of social hierarchies greatly influence the pattern of rules and resources within institutions, as well as their survival chances. In the preface to the first edition of *The Mediterranean*, Braudel dismissed most previous research. Its concern was 'not the grand movement of Mediterranean life, but the actions of a few princes and rich men, the trivia of the past, bearing little relation to the slow and powerful march of history which is our subject' (1972a, p. 18).

Contrast the following remark, published thirty years later in the conclusion to *Civilization and Capitalism*:

In short, the chief privilege of capitalism, today as in the past, remains the ability to *choose* – a privilege resulting at once from its dominant social position, from the weight of its capital resources, its borrowing capacity, its communication network, and, no less, from the links which create between the members of a powerful minority – however divided it may be by competition – a series of unwritten rules and personal contacts. Its sphere of action has undoubtedly widened, since all sectors of the economy are now open to it and in particular it has very largely penetrated that of production. (1984, p. 622; italics in original)

The actions of 'rich men' and 'princes' (especially merchant princes) were evidently more than 'trivia', after all.

### *The Mediterranean world*

*The Mediterranean* is exhilarating and exasperating. The first part is a marvellous journey across mountain tops and valleys, finding sheep trails and trade routes, tracking migrants, smugglers and pirates, hopping between Naples and Nuremberg, Lyons and London, Ragusa and

the Red Sea. By contrast, the second part is intriguing but confusing, a dazzling stream of imperfectly-related topics, featuring American silver, Portuguese pepper, Ottoman slaves, Flemish sailors, Spanish *hidalgos*, bandits, baroque cathedrals, and ransom notes. Its immanent logic emerges more clearly in the later *Civilization and Capitalism*. Finally, part three of *The Mediterranean* is thoroughly boring and almost unreadable. The sharp contrast with the previous parts could almost be intentional.<sup>11</sup>

Braudel set out to 'create a history that could be different from the history our masters taught us'; in other words, a study that looked 'beyond the diplomatic files, to real life' (1972a, pp. 19, 20). Part one of his book was a challenging restatement of priorities – his first subheading was 'Mountains come first' (p. 25). Successive chapters were devoted to the mountains, plateaux and plains of 'the peninsulas', the seas and coasts at 'the heart of the Mediterranean' (p. 103), the boundaries of the Greater Mediterranean extending across the Sahara, Northern Europe and the Indian and Atlantic Oceans, the impact of climate upon Mediterranean life, and the way urban life and transport patterns helped shape the Mediterranean 'as a human unit' (p. 276).

The Mediterranean world was like 'an electric or magnetic field' (p. 168) whose boundaries were difficult to specify. Climate provided one criterion. Throughout the Mediterranean could be found 'the same eternal trinity: wheat, olives and wine' (p. 236). All the coastal areas, Christian or Muslim, produced wax, wool and skins. However, there were key internal divisions: in part ecological, in part a consequence of the impact made by human beings upon their environment, in part an expression of the biases within contrasting civilizations and political orders.

At least six such divisions can be extracted from these early chapters. The first is between the land masses (or 'peninsulas') surrounding the Mediterranean and the maritime world of coastal shipping and longer, more dangerous crossings. The peninsulas – Iberia, Italy, North Africa, the Balkans, Anatolia, and so on – were by turns conquerors and conquered. Meanwhile, large seaports like Barcelona, Marseilles, Genoa and Ragusa (now Dubrovnik) passed at different periods through a life cycle of prosperity and decline: 'the seashore provinces, always short of men, could not survive for long what we would call periods of prosperity, and which were in fact periods of hard work and strain. To a very great extent, maritime life was a proletarian life, which wealth and the accompanying inactivity regularly corrupted' (p. 147).

A second division was between the mountains and the plains. High places allowed refuge from feudal subjugation. As they became over-

populated, they spilled their human surplus on to the plateaux and into the valleys. Down on the lower ground, different rules applied. For example, human management of nature often took the form of vast irrigation schemes demanding a high degree of collective discipline. The necessary investment typically came from large urban settlements such as Venice and Seville, with their large trading profits and hungry populations.

These considerations have already introduced a third division, between city and countryside – the latter supplying food and people for the former, the former sometimes bringing investment and government to the latter. Closely related to all three distinctions made so far is a fourth; between settled or fixed capital and labour on the one hand, and mobile goods and people on the other. There is conflict between the two, as when farmers and herdsmen clash, or respectable townfolk look out for thieving vagrants. However, there is also complementarity. Cities and roads needed each other. For example, in Spain 'a road system . . . links Medina del Campo, Valladolid, Burgos and Bilbao, four outstandingly active cities: the great fair-centre; the court of Philip II (until 1560); the headquarters of the wool trade; and lastly, the seaport with its sailors and carriers. The road passed through them like an assembly line, distributing tasks' (p. 316).

Two further divisions cut across all those already noticed. They are between East and West, and between North and South. The two great basins of the Mediterranean tended to organize themselves into 'closed circuits' (p. 136), despite the links between them. All attempts by East to dominate the West, or vice versa, were short-lived or followed by a severance of links between the conquerors and their base (as, for example, occurred in Muslim Spain, and the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem). During the sixteenth century East and West were dominated by, respectively, the Turkish and Spanish empires: 'Politics merely followed the outline of an underlying reality' (p. 137).

The gradual rise of the West at the expense of the East was complemented by the steady advance of the North at the expense of the South. In the latter respect, the crucial boundary lay along a line from Lyons to Lvov. South of this line was the land of vineyards, olive groves, and mule trains. North lay a different Europe, with its breweries, forests and wheeled traffic. This was the 'new' Europe of the Reformation, which captured the Atlantic while Spain hesitated. Despite the shift of power from South to North, the decline of the South was not rapid: 'On the contrary, the Mediterranean shaped the Atlantic and impressed its own image on the Spanish New World' (p. 226).

Part one of *The Mediterranean* produces a kind of mental intoxica-

tion. This carries us through the second part, where interesting detail makes up for fuzziness in the overall analysis. However, at the start of part three the law of gravity reasserts itself. We come down with a bump. Titles like '1550–1559: war and peace in Europe', 'The last six years of Turkish supremacy: 1559–1565' and 'Origins of the Holy League: 1556–1570' promise (and deliver) little more than competent but pedestrian diplomatic and military history. Nor does Braudel's first sentence offer much in the way of encouragement. It appears he published the third part 'only after much hesitation'. In his view, 'Events are the ephemera of history', which 'pass across its stage like fireflies' (1972b, p. 901).

In fact, part three is integrated even less closely than part two into the analytical framework established in the first part. Why did Braudel leave it like this, even in his heavily revised second edition? Perhaps because it provided a dramatic illustration that intellectual liveliness and new growth in historical scholarship were to be found not in the dry-as-dust practices of his mentors, but in the study of 'that other, submerged, history . . . which is little touched by the obstinate erosion of time' (1972a, p. 16). Braudel wanted to turn the world of historical scholarship on its head. As a practical move in this direction he had an upside-down map of the world printed in his third chapter (1972a, p. 169).

If this interpretation is correct, Braudel's message was conveyed at the expense of any sustained attempt to trace systematically the interactions between structures and conjunctures, between the long-term and the relatively fleeting. However, a more serious attempt to do this was made in *Civilization and Capitalism*.

### *Civilization and capitalism*

It is convenient to divide Braudel's argument in this work into three pairs of themes: civilizations and societies; cities and states; and merchants and world-economies. For Braudel, a civilization is rooted in earth:

Man lives from choice in the framework of his own experience, trapped in his former achievements for generations on end. When we say man, we mean the group to which he belongs: individuals leave it and others are incorporated, but the group remains attached to a given space and to familiar land. It takes root there. (1981, p. 56)

The simpler societies, from hunter-gatherers, through nomads to hoe-users, were classified as 'cultures'. However, by AD 1500 there was a

handful of 'civilizations', identifiable by their ploughs, domesticated animals, carts, and 'above all, towns'. They formed 'a narrow belt of wells, tilled fields and dense populations' (p. 57) around the whole of the Old World, from Japan to Northern Europe.

Each civilization was 'a world of "things and words"' (p. 333). During the fifteenth century, human beings were enslaved within them, trapped by the tyrannical demands of material life and the constraints imposed by language itself. However, a struggle to slip free of these bonds and establish mastery was under way. Complete escape from the constraints of time, space and culture was impossible. However, there were some remarkable achievements with stretched their limits. The most spectacular success was the conquest of the Atlantic by the West. The skills of northern and southern Europeans were combined in this enterprise, which required considerable self-mastery by those involved. Indeed, 'the greatest difficulty was to conquer one's fear of the unknown' (p. 409).

Other advances gave the West an edge over its rivals: for example, the conquest of empty lands on the outskirts of Europe. In the sixteenth century, Russia pushed east into Siberia and south towards the Volga, Don and Dniester. The Cossacks helped colonize the steppes and, in the process, set up a barrier against Islamic nomads, especially the Tartars from the Crimea.

By the following century, the containment of internal threats to bourgeois thrift and order was also well under way in the West. The indigent and the incompetent were driven into hospitals, workhouses and prisons: 'This "great enclosure" of the poor, mad and delinquent . . . was one psychological aspect of seventeenth-century society, relentless in its rationality' (p. 77). Other conquests – the spread of birth control, the gradual defeat of the plague, and major technological breakthroughs – had to wait until the eighteenth century.

'Civilization' and 'the long term' were closely related. However, 'these major categories call for a supplementary classification, based on the notion of *society*' (p. 561; emphasis in original). In Braudel's view, society was 'not a single container'. It was 'a set of sets' including economic aspects, the social hierarchy, politics and culture. No single sector (e.g. economic or political) could achieve 'permanent superiority over another'. Furthermore, the border-lines between categories or classes had 'the fluidity of water'. And every society contained 'obstinate relics of the past' (1982, pp. 458–61).

Finally, at the level of civilizations (as opposed to simpler cultures), societies contained competing hierarchies. They took the form of 'diversified pluralities . . . divided against themselves'. Following the examples of Marc Bloch and Georges Gurvitch, Braudel characterized 'feu-

dal society' as a combination of five 'societies': seigneurial, theocratic, the ties of vassalage, the territorial state and, 'to us the most important of all . . . the towns' (pp. 464-5). This last comment directs us to the second pair of themes in Braudel's argument: cities and states:

Towns are like electric transformers. They increase tension, accelerate the rhythm of exchange and constantly recharge human life. They were born of the oldest and most revolutionary division of labour: between work in the fields on the one hand and activities described as urban on the other. (1981, p. 479)

This division of labour was between unequals. For here is yet another conquest, the town's mastery of its rural hinterland. In fact, towns were always associated with 'power, protective or coercive' (p. 481). Their self-consciousness was expressed and reinforced by their ramparts. City walls provided security and, in some societies (e.g. China), a means of monitoring and controlling the urban population. Everywhere, towns were active within communications networks (local and long-distance), drawing in people and goods, competing with rivals.

In the West the towns had won an unparalleled degree of independence by the thirteenth century, especially in Italy, Flanders and Germany, where the territorial state was slow to develop. This disjuncture between city and state was vital, since it allowed the former 'to try the experiment of leading a completely separate life for quite a long time. This was a colossal event' (p. 511), a conjuncture with major structural consequences. Towns created a new form of civilization - riven with class struggles, yet united by local patriotism; systematically calculating, but also attuned to gambling and risk. Braudel described them as 'outposts of modernity' (p. 512).

Three basic types of city could be identified. First, the open towns. These were largely non-industrial, and blended into the surrounding countryside - such towns were inherited from the Roman Empire. Second, there were the closed cities. These were self-governing, bourgeois and exclusive - city-states such as Venice were extreme examples. Third, there were the subjugated towns. These had fallen under the thumb of the territorial state. Broadly speaking, the three types also represented three phases through which urban life passed (although this was not an iron rule: for example, Russian towns passed from the first directly to the third phase).

Those large urban centres which became capital cities - London, Paris and so on - 'produced the national markets, without which the modern state would be a pure fiction' (p. 527). Control of economic life within

this market was one of the state's tasks. It needed a regular supply of money, which it siphoned from the wealth in circulation in the form of taxation, loans and, as sophistication increased, the device of the national debt. Two other tasks were the maintenance of order and careful monitoring of cultural movements.

Although the territorial state borrowed and extended institutional forms developed earlier within city-states, rulers were not 'bourgeois': they did not live within their means, and their courts were attuned to display rather than modesty. Braudel recalled the argument of Norbert Elias that royalty in the West was marked by its feudal origins. Kings fought the aristocracy, imprisoned it within the royal court and cut it off from its rural roots. But rulers remained tied to the class from which they came. Instead of destroying it, 'the Crown had to take the nobility under its wing' (1982, p. 550).

Rulers could not achieve a similar degree of control over capitalism, since the latter 'always wore seven-league boots' taking it beyond national boundaries (p. 554). This brings us to Braudel's third pair of themes: merchants and world-economies. Merchants, small and grand, were specialists in the language of money and credit, the means of economic exchange. At the lower end their circuits included local markets, shops, farms and workshops. Higher up they first operated through international credit fairs, later basing themselves in warehouses and exchanges located in key entrepôt cities. The object was to buy cheap and sell dear, a feat often requiring lengthy travel; in fact, long-distance trade was the source of the larger profits. Networks of merchants, linked by kin and ethnic origin, cooperated and competed along intercontinental trade routes.

As markets became more complex and extensive, they played a crucial intermediary role between the other two layers of human activity. The market economy, the world of supply and demand, bit deep into the layer below, the zone of 'material civilization' sanctified by custom and tradition. Households and communities producing mainly for use were bludgeoned into producing mainly for sale. These pressures were usually resisted, in the short run at least. Meanwhile, the settled routines of the market place were themselves, in turn, subject to raids from the layer above, occupied by the very large global operators.

This 'zone of the anti-market, where the great predators roam and the law of the jungle operates . . . is the real home of capitalism' (p. 230). Windfall gains were to be had not by trading in a regular way on well-established markets, but by using the power coming from great wealth to force your way into new areas, or to shift existing terms of trade in your own favour. The largest capitalists could get hold of useful infor-



mation before their competitors. They had special influence with the territorial power.

These predators were very slow to move directly into the sphere of production. They bought grain from Eastern European estates, but were not prepared to undermine the seigneurial regime, there or elsewhere, until very late in the day. Similarly, they left most industrial production in the hands of artisans and local merchants, stepping in at the point where the finished articles came on to the market. Capitalism was originally rooted in trade, not production.

Furthermore, capitalism's arena was not the city or the kingdom, but the world-economy. Braudel introduced this concept into the argument of *The Mediterranean* (1972a, pp. 387ff., 418ff.). It was less elaborate than Wallerstein's later version. However, Braudel's idea of a world-economy was similar in emphasizing the differentiating and integrating function of markets transcending political boundaries. In *The Perspective of the World* (the third volume of *Civilization and Capitalism*), Braudel focused his argument upon this concept, frequently referring to Wallerstein while noting that 'I do not always agree with him' (1984, p. 634).

In Braudel's version, world-economies cut across states, societies and cultures, interacting with them but by no means governing them or determining their shape. Each world-economy had a distinctive centre, identifiable boundaries, and an internal hierarchy of zones. At the centre would always be found a dominant capitalist city and an exceptional state apparatus. Cities took it in turn to take the lead, as did Venice, Antwerp, Genoa, Amsterdam, and London in the West. The principal instruments of domination varied, including (in different cases), shipping, trade, industry, credit, and political power or violence (p. 35).

However, the infrastructure of 'basic distances, routes, delays, production, merchandise and stopping places' remained almost unchanged, despite alterations at the centre:

At ground level and sea level so to speak, the networks of local regional markets were built up over century after century. It was the destiny of this local economy, with its self-contained routines, to be from time to time absorbed and made part of a 'rational' order in the interest of a dominant city or zone, for perhaps one or two centuries, until another 'organizing centre' emerged. (p. 36)

Braudel shared Wallerstein's interest in the effects of slow-moving economic cycles and their contribution to the 'rhythms of the "conjunc-

ture"' (p. 71). However, he thought Wallerstein 'a little too systematic, perhaps' (p. 70). Two differences between them are worth emphasizing.

First, Braudel disputed Wallerstein's assumption that capitalism first appeared in the sixteenth century. He preferred to locate its origins in thirteenth-century Italy. This leads directly to the second difference, which is the much greater sensitivity of Braudel to the pioneering role of city-states. Cities like Venice were driven to batten on to larger states, such as the Byzantine and Turkish empires, in order to gain access to the markets they needed. The shift from city-centred world-economies to world-economies focused on national states (still driven by the dynamism of their cities) did not begin before the mid-fifteenth century.

National integration took several generations. For most of the four centuries (1400–1800) covered by Braudel's trilogy, there was 'a gulf between nation-states on the one hand, the locus of *power*, and urban centres on the other, the locus of *wealth*' (p. 288; emphasis in original). Not until the crystallization of national markets during the eighteenth century were capitalist wealth, political power and military capacity woven closely together within territorial states. In fact, 'Real life capitalism, the form of economy that actually triumphed for a time over Europe and the whole globe, actually presupposed, and embedded within itself, other forms of power, especially military and political power.' The last quotation, which apparently gels so neatly with Braudel's argument, actually comes from Michael Mann's *The Sources of Social Power* (1986, p. 495). A comparison between the work of Braudel and Mann is surprisingly relevant.

Braudel's long career ended with his death the year before Mann's book appeared. Mann makes only fleeting reference to the work of Braudel (Mann, 1986, pp. 205, 445). There are, in fact, important differences between the two writers. For example, Mann pays attention to four major sources of social power, over a historical span beginning before 5000 BC, while Braudel concentrates on the economic sphere and restricts himself to a mere four centuries. Furthermore, while Braudel traces a sequence of world-economies linked primarily through the market, Mann's treatment of the same period emphasizes the gradual formation of a multistate system whose principal actors are governments wielding military power. Finally, while Braudel is sympathetic to a broadly evolutionist approach (e.g. Braudel, 1972a, p. 379; 1972b, p. 681; 1982, pp. 466, 600), Mann asserts that '*No general social evolution occurred beyond the rank societies of early, settled neolithic societies*' (Mann, 1986, pp. 69–70; emphasis in original). This last topic will be taken up at the end of this chapter.

Nevertheless, Mann and Braudel have a very similar 'feel' for society

and history. For example, both emphasized that power is polymorphous; in other words, that the coercive and creative capacities of men and women dominating social hierarchies can take a variety of forms. The leading part may be taken by economic, political, military or cultural/ideological means of power, depending upon the broader world-historical setting. Mann has shared Braudel's keen interest in the infrastructure and logistics of power, especially the limits imposed by time, space and technological capacity. Also in the way people adapt to these limits, whether they are rulers collecting taxes, military commanders putting down provincial revolts, merchants working the spice routes, or peasants ploughing the fields.

Either writer could have composed the following passages, which actually come from Braudel:

Between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries . . . the state was far from occupying the entire social stage; it did not possess the 'diabolical' power of penetration attributed to it today; in the past, the means were simply lacking. (1984, p. 51)

. . . the *power apparatus*, the might that pervades and permeates every structure, is something more than the state. It is the sum of the political, social, economic and cultural hierarchies. (1982, pp. 554–5; emphasis in original)

. . . total society can only be a sum of living realities, *whether or not* these are related to each other: . . . it is not a single container, but several containers – and their contents. (1982, pp. 458–9; emphasis in original)

Of the various social hierarchies – the hierarchies of wealth, of state power or of culture, that oppose yet support each other – which is the most important? The answer is . . . that it may depend upon the time, the place and who is speaking. (1984, p. 623)

Finally, in his analysis of the spatial dimension of social relations, Braudel made creative use of Von Thunen's theory of concentric rings around an imagined city: in successive rings, moving out from the city, will be found market gardening, dairy production, cereals and livestock (Braudel, 1984, p. 38; Von Thunen, 1966). In the same spirit, Mann draws upon Owen Lattimore's theory of concentric rings around a political centre: moving from the inner to the outer circle, successive rings mark the limits of economic integration, civil administration, and military action (Mann, 1986, p. 9; Lattimore, 1962).

### *The sources of social power*

Michael Mann began as an 'empirical sociologist in the regular British mould' (Anderson, 1990, p. 57), critical of both Parsonian and Marxist approaches to consciousness and values.<sup>12</sup> However, during the 1970s his ambition increased considerably. *The Sources of Social Power* (1986) is the first major product of this new phase in his career. In it, Mann set out to trace the 'leading edge' of social power through time and space from Mesopotamia before 5000 BC, to the formation of national and international capitalism in north-west Europe during the late seventeenth to early nineteenth centuries. By social power he meant 'the capacity to integrate peoples and spaces into dominant configurations' (p. 31). In his view, societies consisted of the multiple, overlapping sociospatial networks resulting from the exercise of these capacities. More briefly, they were 'organized power networks' (p. 1).

Mann identified four main sources of social power: economic, ideological, political and military. The last two of these, combined in inter-societal relations, constitute 'geopolitical' power (Mann, 1988, p. ix). None of these four sources of social power has ultimate primacy. Which of them predominates has varied according to the world-historical context. At different times, they have all acted as 'tracklaying vehicles', providing 'social concentration, organization and direction' (p. 28).

Three of Mann's objectives were: first, to trace the logistical capacities of the four sources of social power (in other words, what could be done with them and how); second, to identify 'power jumps' (p. 525), where power capacities have increased sharply, perhaps by more effective organization of 'insterstitial' (p. 16) processes and networks not fully recognized or exploited in existing institutions; and third, to explore the development of the most powerful human society, modern western civilization.

Mann stepped into this arena armed with a number of sensitizing ideas about power. The main ones will be briefly listed. Power may be distributive (A's power over B), collective (the shared power A and B acquire if they cooperate with each other) or, presumably, both (the power of A and B over C). Power may be either extensive or intensive. Extensive power means the ability to produce at least minimal compliance over a large population and a large territory. Intensive power is the capacity generated by high commitment and tight organization within a group. Neither implies the other.

Power may also be either authoritative or diffused. Authoritative power is expressed through command and obedience, stemming from

the enforced will of a specific institution or group. Diffused power derives from widespread acquiescence in social practices (e.g. those of the capitalist market) on the grounds that they are natural, proper or inevitable. Again, neither implies the other.

Military power has both an intensive (mainly defensive) aspect and an extensive (aggressive) aspect. Both aspects rely on the use of 'concentrated coercion' (p. 520), one form of which is the authoritative enforcement of 'compulsory cooperation' (p. 521) upon subject labour. Ideological power may be either immanent (e.g. as intensively expressed in the collective morale of a class or nation) or transcendent (e.g. as extensively and diffusely expressed in a universalistic religion throughout a whole region or continent).

Political power takes the form of centralized state regulation of social relations within a bounded territory – although the claims of the political elite may not be matched by the penetrative powers of the political infrastructure. The state has a dual role: regulation of civil society is complemented by geopolitical diplomacy within the multistate system.

Finally, economic power integrates (intensive) productive labour and (extensive) networks of exchange and consumption within 'circuits of praxis' (p. 520; see figure 4.5).

<i>Military</i>	<i>Ideological</i>
Intensive–defensive	Immanent (intensive)
Extensive–aggressive (concentrated coercion; compulsory cooperation)	Transcendent (diffused, extensive)
<i>Political</i>	<i>Economic</i>
Regulation of civil society; maintenance of territorial boundedness.	Productive labour (intensive)
Geopolitical activity within multi- state system.	Exchange and consumption (extensive)  (Circuits of praxis)

Figure 4.5 Mann's four sources of social power

All four sources of social power are implicated in the distinction between two types of configuration which recur throughout history:

1 *Empires of domination* combined military concentrated coercion with an attempt at state territorial centralization and geopolitical hegemony. So they also combined intensive authoritative powers along the narrow routes of penetration of which the army was capable, with weaker, but still authoritative and far more extensive, power wielded over the whole empire and neighbouring clients by its central state. The principal reorganizing role is here played by a mixture of military and political power, with the former predominating.

2 In *multi-power-actor civilizations*, decentralized power actors competed with one another within an overall framework of normative regulation. Here extensive powers were diffuse, belonging to the overall culture rather than to any authoritative power organization. Intensive powers were possessed by a variety of small, local power actors, sometimes states in a multistate civilization, sometimes classes and fractions of classes, usually mixtures of all of these. The predominant reorganizing forces were here economic and ideological, though in varied combinations and often with political and geopolitical help. (Mann, 1986, p. 534)

A classic example of the former was the Roman Empire, and of the latter, the Greek city-states of classical times. Mann suggests there is some evidence for 'repeated creative interplay' (p. 535) between the two types. In empires of domination, collective social powers created by authoritative power tended to slip beyond state control and into civil society; for example, private property and literacy skills became diffused in this way. This decentralizing and fragmenting process in empires of domination was complemented by an opposite dynamic in multi-power-actor civilizations. In this latter case, there was a tendency towards greater hegemonic centralization. A key role was played by marcher lords protecting the flanks of multi-power-actor civilizations. These military guardians of the hinterlands were able to combine the fighting strengths of agriculturalists and pastoralists, using both as the basis of new empires of domination.

This 'modest' (p. 535) theorizing about change processes was matched by an empirical generalization. There was, Mann pointed out, a steady drift towards the north-west by the leading edge of social power, from Phoenicia, Greece and Rome towards the North Sea and the Atlantic. For example, the Scandinavians were opening up the Baltic just as Rome collapsed.

This process was encouraged by the existence of desert to the south, and Islam to the east, while in the north and west there were the

ecological opportunities offered by 'heavier, wetter, deeper, richer, rain-watered soils and the navigable varied coastlines of the Mediterranean, Baltic, North and Atlantic seas'. In sum, the drift towards the north-west was the result of 'a gigantic series of accidents of nature linked to an equally monstrous series of historical coincidences' (p. 540).

### *Greece and Rome*

The transition from general social evolution to specific local histories occurred, in Mann's view, after the Neolithic Revolution; in other words, after human beings had learned to grow crops and rear animals. In particular, the shift towards stratification, the state and civilization was certainly not inevitable, natural or widespread. On the contrary, although decisive it was a rare and abnormal occurrence. In most cases, it was difficult to advance beyond the village and/or the chiefdom as modes of social organization.

On the one hand, 'delayed return labour investments' (p. 44) – in land, livestock, tools, production teams and exchange relationships – tended to increase social fixity and constraint. On the other hand, it was technically difficult to turn networks into 'cages'. There were no means of imposing central rule upon large numbers of people over extensive areas with a high degree of ecological specialization.

Outside the village, social interaction typically occurred within a 'broader exchanging, diffusing network' (p. 46). People were unwilling to see an advance in collective power become the basis of permanent distributive power over themselves. If elders and chiefs became too oppressive, villagers preferred to depose them or move away. In recurrent cycles, integration was followed by fission, and centralization by decentralization.

However, these cycles were broken in a number of cases – Mesopotamia being a key example – where alluvial agriculture and irrigation predominated (from about 5000 BC). Fertile soil produced large surpluses, but it was limited in supply, fixed in space, and required intensive management. Private property, literacy, grain stores and urban centres became viable, as did trade between a dominant alluvial core and a periphery of pastoralists, miners, fishermen and so on. Moving away was no longer a viable option.

Civilization, stratification and the state – in other words, permanent distributive power of the few over the many – arrived on the scene. At first, small city-states embodying authoritative power and strong territo-

riality operated within a much wider region of 'extensive, diffused, and "transcendent" ideological and geopolitical organization' (p. 127). At a later phase, the inner and outer power networks of these multi-power-actor civilizations merged, mainly through military means, producing empires of domination.

The first empires of domination in the Near East (from about 2500 BC) were pioneered by marcher lords. Federal and fragile, these early empires had to live within their logistical means. There was a 30 kilometres a day limit upon unsupported military advances over land. 'Compulsory cooperation', or militarized economic organization, spread such benefits as pacification, communications, and literacy. However, this was typically followed by greater decentralization of power into the hands of local elites. Centralized state power and decentralized private property were outcrops of the same infrastructure.

The early empires confronted challenges, first, from nomadic warriors (c.1800–c.1400 BC) and, subsequently, from the economic and military power of iron-using peasant farmers (c.1200–c.800 BC). Both challenges came from the north. The advance of the first disrupted centralized political controls, without being able to impose an alternative. Successes by the latter gave positive strength to decentralizing tendencies. The northern ploughlands produced household surpluses which fed directly into trading networks. Villages supplied infantrymen to safeguard these resources. These challenges produced two responses.

The first response was the multi-power-actor civilizations of Greece and Phoenicia (c.800–c.300 BC). The second was the revitalization of empires of domination (c.1000 BC onwards), including the Assyrian, Persian and Roman empires. Mann paid most attention to the Greeks and Romans. The Greek city-states combined profitable plough-based agriculture and cheap sea transport. They traded in wine, oil, slaves and mercenaries. Military and economic power shaped a symmetrical and politicized class struggle between rich and poor.

The consciousness of the common citizenry was sharpened by service in the infantry. Over time, these divisions within the *polis* were overlaid by stratification of the city-states in terms of military power and economic wealth. Imperialist tendencies and increased reliance on mercenary soldiers undermined democracy within the *polis*.

Unlike the Greek city-states, Roman society managed to combine widespread citizenship, social stratification, tribal loyalties, and a sense of shared ethnicity. Militarism was central. Roman success was based upon extensive power networks created and dominated by its legionaries – serving as soldiers, administrators and civil engineers. This was matched by a willingness to extend citizenship to incorporated territor-

ies and to give membership of the Roman upper class to conquered elites.

Far from following Perry Anderson's argument that the weakening of slavery fatally undermined Rome, Mann argued that the blurring of free and slave statuses in the category of *colonus* (dependent cultivator) provided a means of extracting further surplus from the peasantry. In fact, the fatal weakness lay in the chronic conflict between the upper class on their provincial estates and the military in control of the state apparatus at the centre. State and upper class could not cooperate to make the shared sacrifices necessary to pay for effective defence against the empire's enemies (cf. Skocpol on the causes of social revolutions). As a consequence, the fiscal-military system broke down. This was disastrous for the economy and, ultimately, for the empire itself.

A major legacy of the Roman empire was the transcendent ideological force of Christianity, embodying the ideal of 'a universalistic, egalitarian, decentralized, civilizing community – an *ecumene*' (Mann, 1986, p. 307). Like the other world religions, Christianity was a 'tracklayer', even though it compromised in many ways with particularism, hierarchy and centralizing rulers. Building on the universalizing capacities of literacy and trade, it extended awareness of personal identity, acquired great influence over the family life cycle, and mobilized the people into a normative community. The key world historical moment for Christianity was the period between the fall of Rome and the dynamic revival of Europe.

### *The European dynamic*

After AD 800 Christianity became thoroughly incorporated into the chivalric culture of medieval Europe. In fact, its influence spread throughout society, providing normative regulation of economic and political activity. It wielded an 'unseen hand, not Adam Smith's but Jesus Christ's' (p. 398). Beneficiaries of this framework of rules included the owners of private property successfully 'hidden' (p. 399) from state, ecclesiastical or baronial control. They were able to exploit intensive techniques of economic production. Dynamism was greatest along the commercial corridor between Northern Italy and Flanders, where kings, bishops and feudal lords were weakest.

By 1500, extensive power networks were rapidly developing, not only in trade but also in the political and military spheres. Gradually, national states took over from Christendom the task of normative pacification. During the sixteenth century, the rapid diffusion of technical advances in navigation, printing and the instruments of land war

increased the interdependence of capitalism and the national state. As the financial costs imposed by the geopolitical commitments of states became greater, considerable pressures were exerted upon states to increase their coordinating role within civil society, regulating and taxing its members.

As interpenetration of civil society and state increased, the relationship became more organic. The Protestant Reformation and the establishment of national churches helped bind the constituents closer together. Monarchy became more 'public' (p. 459). The nobility and bourgeoisie increasingly acquired collective organization as classes in the course of managing their relationship to the state. To a considerable degree, they became part of the state, serving as its officers. At the same time, the state developed its infrastructural powers (e.g. its ability to collect taxes and enforce laws), enhancing its capacity to get its way within civil society.

In practice, cooperation with the major landowners was inescapable. In constitutional regimes such as England and Holland, taxes were collected from rich households in city and countryside, with their consent. By contrast, in absolutist regimes such as Spain and France, taxes were imposed upon the poor peasantry and rich tradespeople with the forceful backing of the rich landed class. Despite the despotic claims of the rulers of absolutist regimes, their infrastructural capacities were less well developed. Absolutist states had more internal divisions among the rich, and were less organic than constitutional societies. The organic character of the latter was enhanced by processes of class development within the centralized and bounded territoriality of the nation.

By the eighteenth century, in England a 'class-nation' had developed 'stretching across and whole country [and] comprising gentry, nobility, burghers and political "placemen"' (pp. 459–60). It was part of a larger entity: 'Modern Europe has been integrated by four interrelated, secular institutions: (1) by the capitalist mode of production, which soon took the form of (2) industrialism, both of which have been normatively and geographically channelled by (3) a national state within (4) a multistate, geopolitical, diplomatic civilization' (p. 471). The leading edge of social power had once more been embodied within a multi-power-actor civilization.

### *Classes, nations, states and warfare*

In Mann's view, classes, nations, states and warfare are bound closely together. For example, classes and nations depend on the same diffused practices, sentiments and identities. Before the development of class-

nations in Europe, class solidarities were grounded in the infrastructure provided by Christianity. Class remained latent until this infrastructure came into being with the spread of literacy, trade and coinage.

As the infrastructure developed, extensive class organization and consciousness took shape, first among the upper class, where it often took the form of class-based political control. The penetration of the market into the countryside and the growth of national identity ensured that the lower class also developed organization and consciousness (cf. E. P. Thompson). As a consequence, extensive political and symmetrical classes appeared within state boundaries.

Centralizing territorial states structured the social spaces into which social classes – including the bourgeoisie and, at a later date, the proletariat – entered. States benefited from the realizable and taxable wealth generated by capitalism. The symbiosis between states and capitalist interests hardened national boundaries even further. With industrialism, class consciousness and national consciousness ‘rose up together’ (1988, p. 142). The development of mass citizenship was closely associated with mass mobilization for warfare. This leads directly to Mann’s critique of T. H. Marshall’s approach to citizenship.

Mann criticized Marshall’s ‘Anglophile and evolutionary model’ (p. 189) of the development of citizenship. In fact, the British pattern represents only one possibility from among several actually pursued by advanced industrial countries (see figure 4.6). In each case, head-on collisions between ‘massive, antagonistic classes’ (p. 190) were converted into more limited, complex and institutionalized conflicts. A key part in this was played by ruling-class strategies. These were shaped not so much by industrialization, as by structural transformations within old regimes and the impact of geopolitics.

In Mann’s view, Katznelson’s work (Katznelson, 1981b) helps explain how American labour was absorbed into a liberal regime. This regime permitted conflicts between narrowly-defined special interests exercising their civil and political rights, but denied legitimacy to class-based organizations. The rights and privileges associated with citizenship and class membership did not come on to the agenda of industrial confrontation. One consequence was relatively weak pressure from below for the enhancement of social citizenship.

In the case of Britain, the second main example of a constitutional regime, the struggle for political citizenship brought class-based organizations fully into the arena. The state veered between a non-interventionist liberal strategy and active reformism. One consequence was to provide more substantial rights of social citizenship than in the United States.

In several countries, constitutionalist and absolutist tendencies were in contention. In Scandinavia, mutual accommodation and merging occurred early on. Sufficient of the absolutist tendency remained to buttress a corporatist state committed to reformism, corresponding more closely than Britain to Marshall’s vision. By contrast, in France, Spain and Italy, anarchist, revolutionary and socialist ideologies flourished, as the battle over citizenship continued until after World War II.

The most striking aspect of Mann’s argument is his assertion that the authoritarian forms of modernization stemming from absolutist regimes were relatively stable, and liable to endure – had it not been for military defeats inflicted by alliances of liberal and reformist regimes. More specifically, by use of divide-and-rule tactics, skilful politicians such as Bismarck were able to develop a mix of full civil citizenship and limited political and social citizenship which kept effective power in the hands of authoritarian regimes. Authoritarian monarchy ‘could probably have

<i>Industrializing regime</i>	<i>Ruling-class strategy</i>	<i>Principal examples</i>
<i>Constitutional</i>	Liberal Liberal/reformist	United States Britain
<i>Contested</i> (= constitutional vs. absolutist)	Authoritarian monarchy leading (eventually) to liberal/reformist	France, Spain, Italy
<i>Merged</i> (= Constitutional plus absolutist)	Authoritarian monarchy leading to reformist	Scandinavia
<i>Absolutist</i>	Authoritarian monarchy leading to fascism	Germany, Austria, Japan
	Authoritarian monarchy leading to authoritarian socialism	Russia

Figure 4.6 Mann on ruling-class strategies and citizenship

survived into advanced, post-industrial society' (p. 203). However, World War I was fatal for such regimes. In its aftermath, social citizenship was extended further under fascism, which failed not on account of its internal policies but, again, for geopolitical reasons. Soviet Russia, born during World War I, differed from Germany and Japan in being on the winning side in World War II. Mann concluded that 'the stability of the fifth solution, authoritarian socialism, cannot be in doubt' (p. 204). This was, of course, written before the events of 1989.

The presentation of empirical materials takes priority in Mann's major work on social power. However, he is also quite explicitly concerned with the formulation and presentation of a general theory. It is therefore quite appropriate to follow discussion of his work by turning directly to two scholars who have placed theory construction at the top of their list of priorities.

### Constructing theories: Runciman and Giddens

Grand theory is back – and it takes history seriously. The historical dimension of society has been a major preoccupation of (for example) Randall Collins, W. G. Runciman, Anthony Giddens and Ernest Gellner.<sup>13</sup> Generally speaking, they use empirical cases to illustrate the relevant theory's capacity to make specific socio-historical phenomena meaningful or significant. But their principal purpose is not to provide ordered and detailed surveys of huge tracts of human history. By contrast, Anderson, Wallerstein and Braudel devote relatively little space to expounding in an abstract way the theories and models which inform their work.

The shift of emphasis between the two approaches may be illustrated by contrasting the way Mann and Runciman have organized their respective trilogies. The first two volumes of Mann's *The Sources of Social Power* are 'histories', dealing, respectively, with 'power from the beginning to AD 1760' and 'power in industrial societies'. Not until these histories have been absorbed will the reader be given a third volume, entitled 'A Theory of Power'. By contrast, the first two volumes of Runciman's *A Treatise on Social Theory* (hereafter *Treatise*) deal, in turn, with 'the methodology of social theory' and 'substantive social theory'. Only in the third volume will this social theory be applied at length to a specific empirical case, twentieth-century England.

After *Relative Deprivation and Social Justice*, which appeared in 1966, Runciman undertook an 'exercise in self-education' which helped him 'to see not only why Weber's methodology would not quite do but also

how it might be put right' (1989b, p. 7).<sup>14</sup> This self-education culminated in the *Treatise*. After the first methodological volume, the second volume contains a lengthy exposition, historical and comparative, of a social theory based upon the idea of evolution. At its centre is an emphasis upon the competitive selection of practices. Runciman's third volume, as yet unpublished, will cover a similar historical period to *Relative Deprivation*. (For an early indication of the third volume's approach, see Runciman, 1990). His object is to 'do for the study of societies what Darwin and his successors have done for the study of species' (1989b, pp. 12–13).

At the beginning of the second volume Runciman stated that its aim was 'primarily explanatory' (1989e, p. 4). He was referring back to distinctions made in the first volume between reportage, explanation, description and evaluation as operations carried out by sociologists and other observers of human behaviour. These distinctions will be briefly explored.

### *The methodology of social theory*

In Runciman's view, 'explanation' is one of three modes of understanding. Reportage leads to primary understanding. Explanation or the identification of causes leads to secondary understanding. Tertiary understanding is based upon description, a term used to mean giving an account of what it is like to participate in a specific situation which has been (or might be) the object of reportage and explanation. Reportage (e.g. on a specific kinship system) raises questions of explanation: why is it this kind of system and not another? Explanation, in turn, raises the issue of description: what is this kind of system like for people brought up within its rules? Finally, description raises issues of evaluation: what is good or bad about this system?

Briefly, Runciman argued that reportage involves 'recovering the constitutive intentions and beliefs' (p. 70) of actors, a process that typically entails paying attention to the social, political and historical contexts that give specific intentions and actions their meaning. If it is to withstand potential criticism from rival observers, especially those with competing theoretical orientations, reportage in specific cases has to avoid pre-empting explanation, description or evaluation of those cases. Some terms often used in reportage do pre-empt explanatory or evaluative positions: for example, 'social class' and 'exploitation', respectively. However, this need not render all such accounts invalid as reportage. Rival observers with different explanatory strategies or evaluative dis-

positions may, in some cases, be able to transpose into their own frameworks empirical data initially reported in terms they do not accept.

In Runciman's view, the mode of reasoning most appropriate for explanation is 'quasi-experimental'. More specifically, 'practising sociologists should normally be looking neither for regularities nor for probabilities but for suggestive contrasts' (p. 168), capable of testing or extending theories about specific ranges of social phenomena. They would find it most rewarding to concentrate on hypotheses which history provided the empirical means to test in a quasi-experimental way, for example through comparison.<sup>15</sup> However, practical limits were imposed on the possible scope of generalization by the diversity of causal influences at work; often, any one of them is contingently sufficient if the others are held constant.

A reasonable objective is to devise quasi-experiments which prevent rival theorists talking past each other. Runciman recommended, as did Skocpol, the methods of similarity and difference set out by J. S. Mill. A decisive controlled comparison varying antecedent and initial conditions may be impractical in a specific case. However, thinking through what would be required in such a quasi-experiment makes it possible to see at what level rival theories differ – presupposition, theory, model or hypothesis – and whether such differences are reconcilable.

Description (or tertiary understanding) is liable to lapse into 'misapprehension' or 'mystification' (p. 244). Misapprehension may involve incompleteness, oversimplification, or ahistoricity. Mystification may take the form of exaggeration, ethnocentricity, or the suppression of relevant information. Description and evaluation are closely related in practice. This may lead to pejorative, hagiographical, or romanticized accounts being given. Many valid descriptions of the same experience are possible. The only test of whether or not such a description avoids the dangers stated, and therefore enlarges the reader's tertiary understanding, is that 'those who had the experience could in principle be brought to agree that it does' (p. 272).

Turning finally to evaluation, Runciman argued that moral, political and aesthetic values were only contingently related to the values of science. Value judgements could always be 'sifted out' (p. 303). In practice, all scholars shared 'some sort of tacit, if unspecific commitment to the value of benevolence'. They would tend to support whatever 'promoted the well-being as they interpret it themselves of the members of the society under study' and would be hostile to 'rulers who can be shown to have permitted, encouraged or even actively promoted avoidable hardship or distress for its own sake' (p. 304).<sup>16</sup> In Runciman's view,

in so far as scholars could 'properly submit to their readers' this 'one limited kind of evaluation' (p. 333), then explanation and description could, to that extent, be subordinated to it. The presumption of benevolence could be built into theoretical terms as long as explanations and description passed tests of validity.

Furthermore, there was nothing wrong with scholars with particular political biases trying to persuade readers of the validity of specific reports, explanations and descriptions which, if accepted, tended to support their point of view. However, they were at fault if they 'have chosen their reports, explanations and descriptions to illustrate rather than to test an answer to which they are pre-emptively committed in advance' (p. 324).

### *Social evolution*

Turning to Runciman's second volume, he concentrated on two questions: what kinds of society – i.e. 'what modes and sub-types of the distribution of the means of production, persuasion and coercion' (1989e, p. xi) – were possible at given stages of evolution; and why did any given society evolve into one mode or sub-type rather than another?

The key actors in any society are, in Runciman's view, role-incumbents who actually pursue their 'systactic interests' (p. 38). The term 'systact' was invented by Runciman. It refers to a group or category – e.g. a class, status group, caste or faction – which contains people in roles which have 'a distinguishable and more than transiently similar location and, on that account, a common interest' (p. 20). Competition for power among the key actors determines how their societies work and evolve. At any point in time each society is the outcome of a process of competitive selection. The process selects not societies, groups or ideas, but '*practices* – functionally defined units of reciprocal action informed by the mutually recognized intentions and beliefs of designated persons about their respective capacity to influence each other's behaviour by virtue of their roles' (p. 41; emphasis in original). Examples of practices include, say, share-cropping, or the use of firearms.

Practices carried out by incumbents of specific roles have, under specific conditions, a survival value deriving from a power advantage gained in terms of production and/or persuasion and/or coercion. The systacts and institutions in which these roles are located are the beneficiaries. In each case, the question 'which particular practices gives those systacts or institutions a power advantage?' has to be argued by



testing hypothetical explanations through quasi-experimental contrasts between specific societies, institutions, systacts, roles and practices. Careful reportage is essential, paying attention to the wider context in which practices occur.

Institutions in two societies may be homologous (i.e. similar in structure) but perform dissimilar functions for the working of the societies, and produce dissimilar consequences for the way power is distributed within them. For example, share-cropping may work to the great landowners' advantage on large latifundia in one society, yet be a means of cooperative risk-sharing by village communities in another (p. 149). To cite another case, slavery produced little dissent in classical Athens, whereas Roman authorities were faced with the Spartacus revolt. Slave soldiers were successfully used in the Ottoman empire but were disastrous when employed by the Portuguese in East Africa (p. 128). By the same token, institutions with different structures may perform similar functions and produce similar outcomes with respect to power (i.e. they may be analogous). For example, in certain circumstances class may be the analogue of caste, in the allocation of people to occupational roles (p. 120).

Reportage and the testing of explanatory theories should be oriented to 'Darwinian' and 'Linnaean' typologies of societies (p. 49). A Darwinian typology locates societies in 'a presumptive evolutionary sequence' (p. 49). A Linnaean typology distinguishes reported societies synchronically with respect to similarities and differences in their modes of production, persuasion, and coercion. Runciman did not accept Michael Mann's separation of military from political power, since that was 'to confuse the different kinds of . . . inducements and sanctions which the incumbents of different roles can bring to bear on one another . . . with the different kinds of institution and forms of organization through which this is done' (pp. 14–15). Runciman's provisional version of a Linnaean typology, admittedly not 'totally rigorous or exhaustive' (p. 58) is summarized in figure 4.7. His proposed Darwinian typology will be indicated shortly.

Runciman's argument had three stages. First, he showed how systacts could be identified with reference to the location of roles and institutions within the modes of production, persuasion and coercion within societies. Second, he looked at these 'systems of social relations in motion' in a number of societies, asking in each case 'how does it work?' (p. 123). Third, he elaborated and tested the theory of competitive selection of practices. These three stages will be examined briefly.

An initial report on a society should pay particular attention to 'standard roles' and 'routine careers' (p. 70), such as those associated

with leadership and the exchange of goods and services. Standard roles will, typically, involve practices impinging on all three dimensions of structure (production, persuasion, coercion). These effects are conditioned by a broadly positive correlation between the level of usable resources in a society, the complexity of its social organization, and the distance between roles (pp. 77–8).

The formation of systacts depends upon the existence of a common interest among role-incumbents, whose effects are not diluted or undermined by cross-cutting interests, internal divisions or hazy perceptions. A complex part is played by kinship and geography. Particular attention

*Mode of production*

- (i) Serfdom.
- (ii) Tenancy.
- (iii) Autonomous peasant cultivators.
- (iv) Debtor-creditor relations.
- (v) Indentured or corvée labour.
- (vi) Division of labour and ritual exchange by status group or caste.
- (vii) Wage-labour.
- (viii) Slavery.

*Mode of persuasion*

- (i) Ritual hierarchy of purity and pollution.
- (ii) Hereditary status of king/nobles/commoners.
- (iii) Hierarchy orientated to the sacred.
- (iv) Ethnicity ascribed by birth.
- (v) Age-set ranking.
- (vi) Genealogical ranking by proximity to king, chief or head.
- (vii) Prestige according to functional value attributed to occupational roles.
- (viii) Charismatic rank-order by personality/achievement.

*Mode of coercion*

- (i) Conscript army at disposal of ruler.
- (ii) Warrior aristocracy monopolizing weapons.
- (iii) Republic magistracy and civilian militia.
- (iv) Sovereignty decentralized among local magnates.
- (v) Servile administration and military directly answerable to monarch.
- (vi) Professional administrators and politicians voluntarily recruited.
- (vii) Aliens hired for pay.

Figure 4.7 Runciman's Linnaean typology of modes of production, persuasion and coercion

should be paid to systacts which are capable of engaging in collective action based upon collective consciousness and a sense of relative deprivation. Having identified the principal roles and systacts, in many instances 'there will almost be forced upon observers of all theoretical schools certain initial conclusions . . . broadly speaking, to the effect that there is one institution, or perhaps one set of practices observable in several institutions which is, self-evidently, central to the pattern of social relations as a whole' (p. 113). An example is the pervasiveness of economic sanctions (as distinct from ideological or coercive ones) in the early consumer society of eighteenth-century England.

The second stage of the argument explored how societies 'work'. At this point Runciman introduced his Darwinian typology. Although practices are the object of competitive selection, the typology locates them within the broader structural context which gives them significance. In other words, it is a typology of systactic patterns and modes of the distribution of power. A simplified and schematized version of it is set out in figure 4.8. The typology identifies the following: simple societies based upon generalized reciprocity such as hunter-gatherers in which power is limited; societies, some with specialized political roles (including the Melanesian 'big-men'), in which power cannot be stored but is continually being dissipated, for example through resource transfers to followers; societies (again, sometimes with specialized political roles) in which power is shared approximately equally within a restricted group; societies, such as Hawaiian chiefdoms, with specialized political roles and tribute collection, but where power is obstructed 'at a point just short of statehood' (p. 153); protostates, a category including patrimonial societies, societies (e.g. city-states) based on the distinction between citizens and non-citizens (e.g. slaves), warrior societies (e.g. the Teutonic knights), absolutist societies, feudal societies, and bourgeois societies such as seventeenth-century England; and, finally, industrializing nation-states, including capitalist, socialist, and authoritarian societies.

Using this typology as a framework, Runciman carried out a number of empirical comparisons. This enabled him to note, for example, that within the citizen sub-type of protostate, the classical Greek *polis*, a centre of administration and consumption, was 'an evolutionary dead-end', while the North Italian towns of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, centres of production and commerce, nurtured mercantile capitalism 'with all the long-term consequences which that turned out to imply' (p. 198). Elsewhere, he suggested the great success of the Roman empire as a 'working absolutism' was due to its combining all four of the major functional alternatives available to that type of protostate: a venal

<i>Limited power</i>	e.g. hunter-gatherer societies	Generalized reciprocity
<i>Dissipated power</i>	e.g. 'big man' societies	How can a usable surplus of power be attached to superordinate roles?
<i>Shared power</i>	e.g. societies dominated by adult male household heads	
<i>Obstructed power</i>	e.g. chiefdoms	
<i>Protostates</i>	e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• permanent state apparatus</li> <li>• institutionalized inequality</li> <li>• free-floating resources</li> </ul>	How is the surplus to be institutionally distributed and applied?
	subtypes: Patrimonial Citizen Warrior Feudal Bourgeois Absolutist	
<i>Industrializing nation-states</i>	e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• wage-labour</li> <li>• secular rationalism</li> <li>• mass political mobilization</li> </ul>	How is the surplus to be institutionally distributed and applied?
	subtypes: Capitalist Socialist Authoritarian	

Figure 4.8 Runciman's Darwinian typology of systactic patterns and modes of the distribution of power

bureaucracy, a service nobility, a professional mandarin and specialized slaves (pp. 228–30).

In the third stage of his argument, Runciman focused directly on the selective pressures causing societies to evolve, bearing in mind that 'Evolution is, by definition, movement away from rather than towards' (p. 297). He examined processes of regression, possible dead ends and turning points, and examples of rebellion, reform and revolution. Finally, he looked very briefly at a series of 'test cases' (p. 367). Instead of discussing these particular cases here, it will be more interesting to look at the tests Runciman applied to the competing intellectual practices of Perry Anderson, especially in the latter's *Passages* and *Lineages*. Anderson was a worthy subject for this treatment since, like Runciman, he set his 'constructive and illuminating' analysis within a broadly evolutionary framework (Runciman, 1989b, p. 17). Runciman's review of Anderson, initially published in 1980, was reprinted in *Confessions of a Reluctant Theorist* (Runciman, 1989a).

In Runciman's view, Anderson's history 'implicitly recognizes' that the process whereby societies evolve is 'analogous, although by no means equivalent, to natural selection' (p. 203). Furthermore, he paid attention to homologues and analogues between societies. For Runciman, these institutional and functional variations were evidence of the need for a wide variety of distinctive explanations to account for them. These explanations should be organized in terms of 'explicit and illuminating comparisons'. Unfortunately, Anderson diverged from this approach in two ways. First, he preferred to present his argument 'diachronically, case by case'; narrative took precedence over comparison. Second, instead of exploring in an open-minded way how institutions related to their wider structural context and evolved over time, Anderson constrained his account 'within a narrative sequence in which certain sequences are taken to be expected in the absence of special explanation' (p. 194). This criticism of Anderson's approach, incidentally, is similar to the case made earlier against Smelser's *Social Change and Industrial Revolution*.

Three of the sequences assumed by Anderson were: first, that an agrarian empire dependent upon slavery faces insuperable internal contradictions, which become critical when imperial expansion ceases; second, that feudalism is a necessary precondition of an endogenous transition to capitalism; and, third, that in Western Europe the transition from feudalism to capitalism was by way of an absolutist phase, during which the domination of the feudal aristocracy was perpetuated. Runciman set out to undermine the assumptions underlying these sequences. He pointed out, for example, that Anderson neglected the

possibility that Japan's differences from Europe were at least as significant as its partial similarities in explaining that society's successful transition to capitalism. Likewise, he wrongly categorized England before the Civil War as 'absolutist'. Furthermore, by neglecting the part played by urban businesspeople in absolutist societies, Anderson failed to notice how similar were the French and Russian cases, even though one was western and the other eastern.

A comparison of the Roman empire with the later Han empire, in which slavery was at best marginal, suggested that the power and relative autonomy of large estate owners may have been a much more significant cause of imperial collapse than slavery. The Ottoman empire, with its servile soldiery and free peasantry (the reverse of the Roman situation) provided better material for Anderson's argument. By contrast, the Scandinavian case was less promising. With the end of the Viking conquests, agricultural slavery did not die out. The feudal mode of production was only partially adopted. Yet Sweden went on to develop 'one of the most successful absolutisms in Europe' (p. 206).

Despite his effective critique of Anderson, Runciman has produced no hypotheses of equivalent scope. As Anderson commented, 'Runciman's typology itself lacks any dynamic' (Anderson, 1990, p. 66). However, hovering in the background of volume two of the *Treatise* is the perception that Europe's 'dominance over the period from roughly the fifteenth century AD to the present is an unarguable social fact which has therefore to be explained.' This 'old question', as Weber called it could only be answered by way of appropriate quasi-experimental contrasts. Volume two was not 'directly addressed' at this question (Runciman, 1989e, p. 368). However, the implication seems to be that all such questions will be settled as sociology, anthropology and history move towards the ideal of a classification in which every single society 'has its own "Linnaean" polynomial and its own "Darwinian" niche' (Anderson, 1990, p. 57). This is a convenient point at which to introduce a contrasting approach to historical sociology, incorporating a trenchant rejection of evolutionist theory.

#### *Structuration or evolution?*

Anthony Giddens became a fellow of King's College, Cambridge in 1969. This followed a period of eight years as a lecturer in sociology at Leicester University. In the early 1960s Norbert Elias, nearing retirement as a university teacher, was teaching a course on sociological theory at Leicester. Despite their paths crossing in this way as junior

and senior colleagues, Giddens's work shows little sign of having been greatly influenced by Elias. On the contrary, Giddens has forged his own distinctive approach to sociology. Ever since the publication of *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory* (1971) and *The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies* (1973), he has pursued the twin objectives of rethinking central problems in social theory and analysing the principal institutional features and tendencies in modern societies.

Giddens indicated the direction in which he was moving in 1976 with the publication of *New Rules of Sociological Method* (henceforth *New Rules*), a critique of 'interpretative sociologies'. This concluded by listing in summary form a series of propositions concerning the nature of society and sociology. The mid-1970s was a time of ambitious projects and manifestos, as has been noticed. However, Giddens modestly produced only nine 'rules', as opposed to the four hundred-plus theoretical propositions generated by Randall Collins the previous year in his *Conflict Sociology*. Collins was in pursuit of causal empirical explanations accounting for variations within and between complex interaction networks. By contrast, Giddens wanted a valid account of sociology, its subject matter and the relationship between them. Collins's conflict sociology 'emphasized the social construction of subjective realities and the dramaturgical qualities of action, while viewing these as based upon an underlying world of historically conditioned material interests' (Collins, 1975, p. 14). Giddens also set out, in a rather different way, to establish links between subjective meaning and the practical involvements of human beings in the material world.

To oversimplify, in *New Rules* Giddens argued that human beings make a meaningful social world by their skilled practical activity, not least in using language. By getting to know this language and the culture ('frames of meaning' and 'mutual knowledge') on which it draws, social scientists can analyse social conduct. Explanations should also take account of the causal conditions of human action, including the way social norms are related to power and the division of labour. For example, routine reflexive monitoring of conduct is expressed as 'intentions' and 'reasons' only when conduct is challenged with reference to moral norms backed by sanctions. When Durkheim and Parsons try to relate action to institutions, they cannot cope with inequalities of power and conflicts of interest. In fact, although human beings do not realize it, when they are constituting the social world through their activity, they depend on resources and conditions brought into being and reproduced through 'modes of structuration'. These modes of structuration – asymmetrical power relations and forms of meaning and morality – are, in turn, reproduced through the interaction of human subjects (Giddens, 1976, pp. 155–8; emphasis in original).

During the early 1980s Giddens moved into the heart of the academic establishment, becoming a member of the Executive Committee of the British Sociological Association (1983), co-founder of Polity Press (1984) and Professor of Sociology at Cambridge (1985). The two works discussed here – *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism* (1981; henceforth *A Contemporary Critique*) and *The Nation-State and Violence* (1985) – both stem from this period. As in the cases of Anderson, Wallerstein, Runciman and Mann, these books represent only part of an unfinished *magnum opus*. At the centre of both *A Contemporary Critique* and *The Nation-State and Violence* is the distinction between class-divided societies such as agrarian empires, and class societies, especially modern capitalist industrial nation-states. A third volume is to appear dealing with 'the institutional parameters of modernity' and 'the extraordinary dynamism of modern institutions' (Giddens, 1990, p. 305).

The first volume of the trilogy has a strong negative theme: a comprehensive attack on historical materialism, especially in the form of neo-evolutionary Marxism. More positively, Giddens also developed an approach to time-space distanciation, power, surveillance, the city and the state in class-divided societies and class societies. A number of these ideas were developed in the second volume at greater length, in a more integrated way and with more empirical support. Further ideas were also added. The present discussion will move freely between the two books.

It is worth beginning by briefly contrasting the approach to evolutionary theory taken by Giddens with that of Runciman. Giddens had 'some sympathy . . . with what is sometimes called "limited multilineal evolution"' (Giddens, 1981, p. 23) – with one major reservation. His main objection to evolutionary theories was their assumption, as he saw it, that 'adaptation' – essentially understood as the process of mastering the material environment – explained processes of social change. Logically, it did not. In any case, many simple societies (e.g. hunter-gatherers) have deliberately avoided maximizing their productive potential. 'Only with the advent of capitalism is there established a constant emphasis upon, and capacity for, the chronic expansion of the forces of production' (p. 22).<sup>17</sup> Criticism was aimed explicitly at Marx's evolutionary scheme.

In fact, Marx's scheme was also criticized by Runciman, 'because capitalist societies have evolved in a way different from that predicted by it, and for reasons that cannot be accommodated within it' (Runciman, 1983, p. 220). However, Runciman embraced not only the idea of evolution, but also the concept of adaptation. In his view, adaptation is a process occurring at the level of specific roles in response to the

competitive selection of practices. Adaptation consists of changes in the practices associated with specific roles as the balance of advantage flowing from particular practices alters (Runciman, 1989e, p. 291). Runciman focused his attention not upon the relationship of whole societies to material environments, but upon the relationship of practices, roles and institutions to modes of production, persuasion and coercion within specific societies. Potential explanations of particular processes of competitive selection and adaptation had to be tested through quasi-experimental contrasts. As developed by Runciman, the idea of evolution did not provide a general explanation of social change, so much as suggestions about which social relationships to explore if you wanted specific explanations of particular changes.

Runciman's approach inevitably leaves gaps. For example, as Anderson pointed out, Runciman's focus upon just one aspect of society, the distribution of power, is 'even more single-minded than Mann's' (Anderson, 1990, p. 66). Furthermore, despite his work on the origins of states in archaic Greece (Runciman, 1989d), Runciman generally paid little attention to the multiple origins of the wide range of competing practices. He showed more interest in the subsequent process of selection. Also, although reportage has, in his view, to take full account of 'the intentions and beliefs constitutive of the agents' observed behaviour' (Runciman, 1983, p. 77), specific explanations of social change through social selection do not: 'Given the initial conditions, it is the practices themselves which are "the" causes of the change, not the state of mind of those performing the actions which constitute them' (1989e, p. 286).

Giddens objected to what he saw as evolutionary theory's neglect of 'the knowledgeability of human subjects' (Giddens, 1981, p. 22). His own theory of structuration postulated knowledgeable human actors who express meanings (embodied in rules) and exercise power (drawing upon resources). Human beings creatively engage in '*situated practices*' which lead to the '*reproduction* of social systems across time-space'. The knowledgeability of these actors is, however, 'always *bounded*, by *unacknowledged conditions* and *unintended consequences* of action' (pp. 27-8; emphasis in original).

Rejecting evolutionary theory does not mean neglecting time as an aspect of society. In fact, the structuration of social systems occurs within at least three time-frames, as expressed in everyday social interaction, the human lifespan, and the generational reproduction and transformation of institutions. Questions of time are closely related to questions of space. Both may be expressed in terms of presence and absence. For example, while hunter-gatherers experience 'high presence-availability', developments in transport and communications

permit 'time-space distancing' (pp. 4-5). Technological advance (in record keeping, time measurement, surveillance capacity, and so on) facilitates the concentration of allocative (material) and authoritative (political or coercive) resources within various forms of 'storage container' (p. 5) or 'power container' (1985, p. 13). Cities and nation-states are two key examples.

The basic logic for classifying social institutions derives from the structural properties of social systems. The principal types of institution are: symbolic orders (and modes of discourse) which express the property of signification; the law (and legal sanctions) which express the property of legitimation; political institutions which express domination through authoritative resources; and economic institutions which express domination through allocative resources. These distinctions apply, in principle, to all societies.

However, with modernity, four 'institutional clusterings' become prominent, of which 'None is wholly reducible to any of the others' (1985, p. 5). These clusterings are associated with heightened surveillance, capitalistic enterprise, industrial production, and consolidated central control of the means of violence. Exploration of these clusterings is part of the task for a 'Discontinuist interpretation of modern history' (p. 31); in other words, one based on the perception that 'originating in the West but becoming more and more global in their impact, there has occurred a series of changes of extraordinary magnitude when compared with other phases of human history' (p. 33).

More specifically, the development of capitalism marked 'a series of fundamental discontinuities with previous history' (Giddens, 1981; p. 81). At first sight, this may seem to refer back to Weber's 'old question' (Runciman, 1989e, p. 368) about the origin and nature of the competitive advantage achieved by European societies since the early modern period. However, Giddens's main point is that analysis of the contrast between the world before and after these great changes is often more illuminating than discussion of the historical continuities which link the two worlds. Understanding the discontinuities helps carry out 'the task of "sociology"' which was 'to analyse the nature of that novel world in which, in the late twentieth century, we now find ourselves' (Giddens, 1985, p. 33; emphasis in original).

#### *From class-divided to class societies*

The key discontinuity for Giddens is between class-divided societies – which have classes, but whose organizational principles are not based on class – and class societies whose organization is indeed class-based (see

<i>Simple societies</i>	Limited time--space distancing: nomadism, kinship, tradition.
<i>Class-divided societies: general</i>	Increased time--space distancing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• literacy enhances surveillance capacity;</li> <li>• cities as power containers;</li> </ul> <i>But</i> in agrarian empires cosmopolitan ruling class at centre is superimposed on segmental polity of local villages; no labour market; property inalienable; empires have frontiers, not borders.
<i>Class-divided societies: absolutist states</i>	Increased time--space distancing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• war and diplomacy within interstate system fosters territoriality, mutual surveillance, improved military technology;</li> <li>• development of sovereignty, rational legal codes, carceral organizations, improved fiscal system and centralized state administration as aspects of enhanced internal surveillance capacity.</li> </ul>
<i>Class societies: capitalist societies/ nation-states</i>	Increased time--space distancing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• nation-state as principal power container within international economic, political, military and symbolic systems;</li> <li>• insulation of economic, political and military spheres within nation-states;</li> <li>• capitalism, industrialism and the nation-state mutually supportive but not reducible to each other;</li> <li>• interplay between nationalism, sovereignty and citizenship;</li> <li>• dialectic between internal pacification and contestation in four key institutional clusters:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) surveillance (resisted within polyarchic political system);</li> <li>(b) private property (resisted by wage-labour within limits imposed by capitalistic labour contract);</li> <li>(c) commodified urban environment (resisted by ecological social movements);</li> <li>(d) military violence (opposed by peace movements).</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

Figure 4.9 Giddens on simple, class-divided, and class societies

figure 4.9). A subordinate distinction is made between, on the one hand, class-divided societies such as agrarian empires, city-states and feudal societies and, on the other hand, simple or primitive societies such as hunter-gatherers and settled agricultural communities which do not have classes. Within class-divided societies (sometimes referred to as traditional states) there is an important sub-category: absolutist states.

Time-space distancing is very restricted in simple band societies. Their nomadism gives them some extension through space. Extension backward in time is mediated by kin relations between the generations, living and dead, and the collective memory embodied in tradition. Kinship and tradition remain powerful in more complex class-divided societies within urban and rural communities. However, rulers in city-states and agrarian empires have two new sources of power. First, the technology of writing provides a means of information storage, surveillance and administrative control. Second, cities are major power containers, concentrating the religious, political and military means to dominate the surrounding countryside from which they derive economic resources through trade and taxation.<sup>18</sup>

Traditional states are segmental and heterogenous. Within them, networks of political and economic life are not closely related to each other. The effective authority of the central state administration over local rural communities is limited and intermittent. There are no labour markets and there is very little alienability of property. Taxation is little more than taking booty by force from unwilling peasants. The military do not so much administer borders as defend frontiers. Internal social control by the ruler is most effective among the bureaucracy. It is only intermittent in the outlying peasant villages. The unified and cosmopolitan cultural world of the ruling class is far removed from the beliefs and practices of local rural communities. No society belonging to any of the categories considered so far existed in isolation. Simple societies typically belonged to local cultures containing other bands or tribes. City-states traded with others. Feudal states fought with others. Agrarian empires threatened their neighbours and were threatened by them. However, a distinctive and highly developed system of interstate relations came into being with the dominance of absolutist states in Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

In the period of absolutism, relations among the ruling classes of competing states, sometimes peaceful, sometimes warlike, became more orderly and rule-bound. Elaborate diplomatic techniques developed in conjunction with increased emphasis upon territoriality, mutual surveillance, the maintenance of precise boundaries between states, and

a distinctive ideology of sovereignty. Warmaking provided a strong incentive for concentrating authoritative and allocative resources in the hands of the state. It also stimulated improvement in military technology (e.g. more effective field artillery), rationalization of organization and discipline within the armed forces, and a great advance in naval capacity, including the invention of ships that could sail in all weathers and brave the Atlantic. The great voyages of discovery provided knowledge of the globe as a whole for the first time as well as bringing new wealth to Europe from the New World. However, Giddens commented, 'it would be foolish to press all of this into some sort of functionalist frame' (1985, p. 92).

This last remark was, perhaps, directed against Wallerstein. By contrast, Giddens was more sympathetic to Anderson's approach to absolutism. This sympathy did not extend to Anderson's 'progressivist' desire to locate the modern state's origins in 'a disintegrating medieval order' (p. 83). However, Giddens agreed that absolutist states were hybrids combining 'surface "modernity"' with 'a subterranean archaism' (p. 93). His own account stressed the relative modernity rather than the continuing archaism. He emphasized three aspects of absolutism: first, expansion and centralization of administrative power, as authority was displaced upward at the expense of great landowners and peasant communities; second, the development of rational legal codes enacted by the state, backed up by carceral organizations designed to enforce social discipline; and, third, reforms in fiscal administration to cope with the enormous strain imposed by military involvements.

As the absolutist state solidified, the market and the cash nexus penetrated into more areas of life. The maxims of Roman law gave increased recognition to a distinct economic sphere and helped define the private rights of those who owned property or sold their labour. Meanwhile, taxation provided the means and incentive for improving the state's capacity to monitor and regulate the population.

The interstate system of European absolutism helped shape the system of nation-states which succeeded it in the modern world. Giddens defined a nation-state as 'a set of institutional forms of governance maintaining an administrative monopoly over a territory with demarcated boundaries, its rule being sanctioned by law and direct control of internal and external violence' (p. 121). The nation-state enabled 'capitalist society' to exist (p. 141). Understanding each helps make sense of the other.

In Giddens's view, capitalism – the form of economic enterprise arising in sixteenth-century Europe – marked a 'massively sharp wrench' (p. 132) away from traditional ways. Capitalism entailed an advance in

commodification within social relationships, including the employment of labour power. Capitalist societies, as distinct from capitalism, originated around the beginning of the nineteenth century. To understand them, attention must be paid to the interplay between industrialism (which by itself lacks an inner dynamic), capitalism (which is driven by the pursuit of profit) and the nation-state (which delimits the external borders and key internal boundaries of the capitalist society).

The state's autonomy in a capitalist society is conditional on a process of capital accumulation which is outside its control and which extends beyond its territorial borders. However, the state maintains the insulation between the 'economic' sphere based upon private property and the capitalist labour contract and the 'political' sphere based upon citizenship rights (the franchise) and nationalism. This insulation is intrinsic to the character of capitalist societies as class societies.

The relationship between commodified wage-labour and the private ownership of capital is the basis of class conflict which plays a much more central and dynamic role than in class-divided societies. However, as already mentioned, the institutions shaping class conflict are closely tied to three other clusterings, all of which express the interplay between capitalism, industrialism and nation-state. These are: institutions radically increasing surveillance capacity within the political and economic spheres (including the workplace); institutions through which industrial capitalism transforms the connections between social life and the material world, producing a 'created environment' (p. 146), especially in the form of modern urbanism; and, finally, institutions mediating the control of violence, especially military power.

This leads to Giddens's central thesis, which is as follows:

In industrial capitalism there develops a novel type of class system, one in which class struggle is rife but also in which the dominant class – those who own and control large capital assets – do not have or require direct access to the means of violence to sustain their rule. Unlike previous systems of class domination, production involves close and continuous relations between the major class groupings. This presumes a 'doubling up' of surveillance, modes of surveillance becoming a key feature of economic organizations and of the state itself. (pp. 159–60)

### *Surveillance and citizenship*

As administrative coordination by the state increased with the transition from absolutism to the nation-state, internal pacification occurred. The

new industrial order was stabilized, nationally and internationally, by a concentration of authoritative resources. More specifically,

... the correlate of the internally pacified state – class relationships that rest upon a mixture of ‘dull economic compulsion’ and supervisory techniques of labour management – is the professionalized standing army. The process of internal pacification... is only possible because of the heightened administrative unity that distinguishes the nation-state from previous state forms. On the other hand, this very administrative unity depends upon the ‘infrastructural’ transformations brought into play by the development of industrial capitalism, which help finally to dissolve the segmental character of class-divided societies. (p. 160)

Infrastructural transformations brought about by mechanized transport, the electronic media, computerization and so on were complemented by the systematic collection of statistical and other data, allowing a ‘vast expansion of the reflexive monitoring of social reproduction that is an integral feature of the state’ (p. 181). As the term implies, internal pacification largely eradicated the means and habit of violence, both from the streets and from the labour contract. As violence diminished, there was an expansion of ‘disciplinary power’ (Foucault’s term), for example through new forms of ‘sequestration’, such as lunatic asylums.

Total institutions of this kind provided locales in which a high degree of supervisory control could be exercised. Intense monitoring and strict regulation were techniques applied not only by the state to ‘deviants’ in total institutions, but also, as far as possible, by private employers to their employees in the work place. The latter, of course, had more opportunity to exercise countervailing power as part of a ‘dialectic of control’ (p. 186).

Internal pacification was complemented by ‘regionalization’ (p. 193), in other words, the multiplication of heterogenous locales due to uneven development, the complex intersection of product, labour and housing markets, and so on. This process of fragmentation was, in turn, compounded by the relocation ‘behind the scenes’ of basic human events such as birth and death, excluding them from daily life and so suppressing the existential contradictions which give moral life its depth and meaning. The ensuing psychological emptiness prepared the ground in which nationalism took root in the industrial capitalist nation-state.

In Giddens’s view, nationalism has to be understood in the broader context of class, sovereignty and citizenship. ‘Polyarchy’ (p. 199), or rule by the many, is generic to the nation-state. Citizenship rights are the counterpart of the state’s sovereignty. The irreducible interdependence between rulers and the population at large allowed the latter to

bargain forcefully for rights. To borrow T. H. Marshall’s tripartite distinction, they pursued civil rights to limit police powers, political rights to monitor state administration, and economic rights to counteract their disadvantageous position in the sphere of production.

Ironically, the enactment of citizenship rights to some extent facilitated class domination through surveillance. As already noted, the key site was the capitalist labour contract. It excluded workers from influence over the organization of the workplace. This exclusion was a manifestation of ‘bourgeois’ civil rights protecting the rights of private property. Only in the political sphere could workers exercise a franchise denied them within the workplace. Within both the political and the economic spheres, citizenship rights have been ‘a focus of class conflict’ (Giddens, 1982, p. 174; italics in original).

Civil, political and economic (i.e. social) rights were ‘three arenas of contestation or conflict’ (Giddens, 1985, p. 205; emphasis in original), each with its distinctive form of surveillance. Struggles over civil rights were focused upon the law court and entailed police surveillance. Political rights resolved around parliamentary institutions and the ‘reflexive monitoring of state administrative power’ (p. 206). Economic rights were fought over at the workplace and in the context of managerial surveillance of production.

Giddens emphasized the active struggles by individuals and social classes over citizenship rights, the fact that successes were potentially reversible, and the significance of international relations, especially war, in shaping outcomes. In contrast, Marshall stressed the rhythm and ‘logic’ of the historical process through which citizenship rights had been realized in Britain. Giddens drew attention to differences between his own and Marshall’s account. However, they were not as far apart as he implied.

For example, Giddens noted that civil and political rights developed together. In other words, the separate spheres of the economic and the political appeared at the same time rather than being ‘as Marshall describes them, successive steps in the expansion of “citizenship” in general’ (Giddens, 1982, p. 173). This oversimplified Marshall’s position. In fact, Marshall acknowledged that a distinct political sphere with its characteristic form of political citizenship appeared as early as the eighteenth century (in this context, 1689–1832), during the ‘formative period’ of civil rights.

In Marshall’s view, the nineteenth century saw more people entering the public sphere through ‘the granting of old rights to new sections of the population. In the eighteenth century political rights were defective not in content, but in distribution’ (Marshall, 1963b, p. 80). Marshall



emphasized the gradual process of empowerment of the mass of the citizenry in the political sphere as industrial capitalism developed. By contrast, Giddens laid stress on the restriction of workers' rights in the economic sphere. However, both acknowledged the existence of separate spheres, and observed that working-class pressure for increased social/economic rights became strong in the economic sphere through the agency of trade unions. Both agreed that a regime of social/economic rights would contradict at many points a social order governed by the market and the capitalist labour contract.

It is true that Giddens stressed the different and conflicting roles played by the bourgeoisie and the working class in achieving and implementing these rights. He also speculated about the implications of his analysis for a theory of socialism. However, this analysis was not incompatible with Marshall's account, despite the latter's evident political preference for the vigorous individual rather than the obstructive collectivity clogging up the market. Even here there is some similarity of tone. Giddens sounded a distinctly Marshallian note in the following comment: '[Union] power has turned out, in some circumstances and contexts at least, to be quite formidable. But as sheerly negative power it almost inevitably tends to be obstructive – and often is obstructive – to those who actually form policies either in industry or government' (1982, p. 174).

Although Giddens very usefully located citizenship in the context of power struggles involving the state, capital and surveillance strategies, in one respect, at least, Marshall's was the more sophisticated account. He brought the education system into his analysis as an institutional order at least as relevant to social rights as the sphere of economic production. Both in the schoolroom and on the shop floor, expectations about social rights challenged the dictates of *laissez-faire*. Unions made demands which took little account of the employers' market position. School-leavers thought their grades should get them the jobs they 'deserved', irrespective of supply and demand. The education system does not figure very largely in Giddens's discussion of citizenship.

Giddens and Marshall are closer together, intellectually, than they are to some more recent commentators. Both were preoccupied with the relationship between citizenship and social class. By contrast, Bryan S. Turner and David Held have been more interested in the use of civil and political rights to assert specific social rights within contexts other than social class: for example, gender, race, ethnicity, the family and the environment.<sup>19</sup> They raise, but do not resolve, the question of whether gains on these fronts are transforming the relationship between labour

and capital or, instead, are 'permitted' because they occur in a segregated political sphere which leaves the economic sphere untouched.

However, the relationship between citizenship and social class remains central to the debate. Citizenship is negotiated with and through the state; social class is shaped by the market. As Ira Katznelson has noted, markets cannot reproduce themselves unaided: 'From the outset, therefore, state intervention to secure the functioning of markets and to mitigate their outcomes defined a *contested* terrain of discourse and policy with regard to capitalism, the state and citizenship'. Tensions result throughout the welfare state: between clientship and citizenship; between autonomy and subjection to therapy; between universalism and ascriptive identities; between 'equal' opportunity and unequal outcomes; between needs and deserts; between free exchange and planning; and so on (Katznelson, 1988, pp. 523, 528–9; italics in original).

### *Nationalism*

Giddens argues that the ideology of nationalism supplies a patina of tradition and allows dominant classes to define and appeal to 'the national interest'. In some nation-states, nationalism may provide a means of linking together the universalistic, centralized administrative organization of the state with a wide variety of localized cultures whose legitimacy is acknowledged. In others, however, it might constrict citizenship rights and emphasize the people's duty to obey national leaders controlling the state, to advance the nation's cause against its rivals. This leads to a consideration of the external face of the nation-state.

The internal pacification of nation-states in Europe during the nineteenth century occurred in the context of increasingly industrialized warfare, drawing upon and stimulating science and technology. For example, Britain participated in fifty major colonial wars between 1803 and 1901. A major outcome of World War I was international recognition that nationhood and the nation-state should be the norm. A system of mutual surveillance was established through international organizations such as the League of Nations and, later, the United Nations.

Military service by conscripted soldiers during that war strengthened the connection between national sovereignty and citizenship rights. More generally, the two world wars have had a large influence upon the development of class struggles within participating nation-states, for

example through the displacement of existing ruling classes (in Germany and Japan) and by enabling large social security programmes to be pushed through (as in Britain).

The importance of military aspects of the nation-state does not imply they are ruled (as C. Wright Mills suggested) by a 'military-industrial complex' (Mills, 1956, p. 247). In fact, the separation between the 'economic' and 'political' is matched by insulation between the 'political' and the 'military'. The existence of military governments in the Third World is an indication that the states concerned are relatively underdeveloped in terms of centralized administrative coordination; they have not yet become proper nation-states.

Giddens distinguished among nation-states according to their geopolitical locations within a bipolar world state system – focal/hegemonic, adjacent/subsidiary, central/aligned, central/non-aligned, peripheral/aligned or peripheral/non-aligned (1985, p. 267) – and modes of original state formation (p. 269): classical (e.g. France), colonized (e.g. United States), post-colonial (e.g. Nigeria), or modernizing (e.g. Japan). The complexities expressed in distinctions of this kind showed up the limitations of an analysis giving too much prominence to the 'world capitalist economy'. On the one hand, Wallerstein's analysis overemphasized exchange relationships at the expense of the global spread of capitalist production; on the other hand, economic institutions were interwoven with political institutions (the nation-state system), symbolic orders (the global information system) and international laws and other sanctions (enforced through the world military order).

Giddens's analysis of the modern nation-state led him towards moral and philosophical issues. At the end of *A Contemporary Critique* he argued that 'A philosophical anthropology relevant to socialism' must come to terms not only with the 'empty routines of everyday life' in the world created by capitalism but also with 'the shadow of possible destruction' (1981, pp. 251–2). *The Nation-State and Violence* concluded by recognizing the difficulty of reconciling the state's monopoly of violence with received political ideas about the 'good society'. The potential for totalitarian rule is inscribed in the nation-state's capacity for surveillance and terror, especially if linked to nationalism. Furthermore, tensions, struggles and social movements centre upon each of the four institutional clusters.

People organize to defend democratic freedoms against surveillance, advance labour's claims against capital, demand global peace in the face of military power, and defend ecological interests against the harm done through the 'created environment'. These and other movements 'exist in the same "arenas of historicity" as the organizations they oppose, seek

to modify or create' (p. 318). The actors involved have self-consciously reflected on history and, as a consequence, seek to alter it.

Giddens concluded that rights are always liable to erosion, and need defending; especially against the state. A normative political theory of control of the use of violence within and between nation-states is needed. So is a critical theory which builds on historical understanding to show how institutions can be transformed. At this point the sociologist must turn towards philosophy. Similar concerns have been expressed by a philosopher who has turned to sociology:

It is the sphere of coercion, of politics, which is now crucial . . . [The] political order can neither be diminished and consigned to the dog-house, nor will it wither away. A new kind of need for coercion or enforcement of decisions has arisen. The new affluent economy requires an enormous and largely lumpy, indivisible infrastructure. Strategic decisions concerning its deployment and form affect enormous populations for long periods and often do so irreversibly. This infrastructure is not, and cannot be, spontaneously generated, but needs constant attention and servicing. The state is now largely the name for the cluster of agencies that perform this role. How it is to be organized and checked, in conditions simultaneously of moral premiss-lessness [sic] and of great economic leeway – that is the question. (Gellner, 1988, p. 278)

This question is taken up, indirectly at least, in the final chapter. In the mean time, there is one final aspect of the third phase worth discussing briefly.

### *Evolution and discontinuity (2)*

In the third phase of post-war historical sociology, the distinction between evolutionist and discontinuist approaches has become more visible. This distinction is obviously not a recent one. Giddens in *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism* (1981) and Mann in *The Sources of Social Power* (1986) – both discontinuists – were anticipated, in important respects, by Gellner in *Thought and Change* (1965) and Foucault in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972; see Poster, 1984, pp. 74–8). As has been seen, Bendix was issuing warnings in the 1950s and 1960s about the evolutionism implicit in structural-functionalist vocabulary. On the other side, the line stretches back from Runciman (1989e) and Anderson (1974a; 1974b) to include (for example) Lenski (1966), the later Parsons (1966; 1971) and Marshall (1963d).

It is important that differences of approach should not become battle lines – that would obscure the many overlaps that exist. For example, discontinuists oppose the idea that, as a society adapts to its environment, endogenous mutations are stimulated which pass through a determined sequence of stages. But so do Runciman and Anderson.<sup>20</sup> Discontinuists concentrate on identifying discourses, structures, tensions and contradictions intrinsic to specific totalities such as civilizations, cultures and epochs. However, a writer like T. H. Marshall who expounded the unfolding logic of citizenship was also able to make a major contribution to our understanding of the self-contradicting discourses of modernity, a contribution that is, in principle at least, detachable from his evolutionist tendencies. To take another example, in his discussion of the absolutist state, Anthony Giddens feels able to draw upon Perry Anderson, albeit critically, to buttress parts of his own case (e.g. Giddens 1985, pp. 93, 97). John Hall, who develops arguments from both Mann and Gellner in *Powers and Liberties*, happily presented himself as an evolutionist (1985, pp. 17–19, 249).

Discontinuist accounts do not depend upon assumptions about whether or how totalities are causally related to each other in the flow of history. However, they do not exclude, and sometimes incorporate, accounts of the way particular totalities came, or might have come, into existence.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, they may observe secular tendencies within totalities; for example, Bloch's account of the transition from the first to the second feudal ages.<sup>22</sup>

This is obviously not a new debate. Nor was it new four decades ago, when Fernand Braudel commented in a review of George Gurvitch's *La Vocation Actuelle de la Sociologie* (1950) that 'Some dead things have to be killed twice'. Braudel was referring to Gurvitch's enthusiastic attack on unilinear evolutionism. Braudel recalled that before World War II Bloch dissented from the 'sacrosanct principle of continuity' at a meeting of modern French historians – and received a frosty reception for his pains (Braudel, 1953, p. 348). However, Braudel feared that Gurvitch would go too far. In the course of his vigorous critique of evolutionism as a philosophy of history he might make it impossible for sociologists to use the past. They would become isolated in the 'brief living present' (p. 349).

Like Gurvitch, Braudel rejected unilinear evolutionism. Furthermore, as has been seen, he happily incorporated aspects of Gurvitch's anti-evolutionist theory. However, Braudel felt perfectly comfortable writing about (for example) the way each society in its own zone within the world-economy 'was responding to a different economic obligation and found itself caught by its very adaptation, incapable of escaping

quickly from these structures once they had been created', although (he added) this adaptation 'had nothing of the foregone or mechanical conclusion about it' (1984, pp. 63–3).

Elsewhere, he argued that his empirical research had shown, inside and outside Europe, 'the same sequence of events, the same creative evolution', proving that 'the market economy, the same everywhere with only minor variations, was the necessary, spontaneously-developing and in fact normal base of any society over a certain size' (1982, p. 600). In fact, Braudel found room for cycles, long waves, world-economies and human choice as well as evolutionist ideas in his work. He depended utterly on none of them. As has been seen, the result was an interpretation of capitalism and civilization which had many convergences with Mann's discontinuist approach.

The debate between the two approaches has caught fire again in recent years.<sup>23</sup> The worst outcome of such a debate would be that all evolutionist vocabulary – e.g. adaptation, competitive selection – was stigmatized as entailing a unilinear, teleological view of history, and all discontinuist thinking condemned as ahistorical.