Second Thoughts on Capitalism and the State

Second Thoughts on Capitalism and the State

By

Leslie Sklair

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Second Thoughts on Capitalism and the State

By Leslie Sklair

This book first published 2022

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN (10): 1-5275-8273-6
ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-8273-6

For my beloved family, past, present, future.

CONTENTS

PRAISE FOR THE BOOK

"This profoundly reflective book shows a pathway forward for academics and activists alike who are stymied by the disconnect between deep critical scholarship and emancipatory social change, yet who will still not give up the good fight. As a leading scholar of globalization whose work has been central to the study of transnational capitalist development at multiple scales -- from the urban to the global to the architectural -- Leslie Sklair has produced innovative research for more than four decades. In this marvelous compilation of several key texts, he offers his own best list of paradigm-challenging work while also critically re-examining and interrogating it anew, in dialogue with his readers. This is an epistemological tour-de-force that will invite others to re-assess their own scholarship in similar ways. We are indebted to Sklair for his honesty, but more importantly, for his reluctance to abandon hope that scholarly inquiry can still give life to progressive ideals and alternative social experiments, despite the seemingly intractable collusion linking states to capitalism in ways that now threaten the planet."
—Diane E. Davis, Charles Dyer Norton Professor of Regional Planning and Urbanism, Harvard University

"An unusual combination of previously published articles and Sklair's "second thoughts" offers a powerful and often insightful dystopian view of transnational capitalism with its obscenely widening inequality, obsessive consumerism, self-destructive Anthropocene, and iconic architecture in inhumane mega-cities. A must-read tract for the times."
—Michael Mann, Emeritus Professor of Sociology, University of California Los Angeles.

"How does social theory grapple with our fast-changing world in an academic context of ideological rivalries? For the most part, authors deploy their chosen intellectual framework with minimal reflection on how their own (changing) subjectivities have determined their choice and deployment of a given framework. Leslie Sklair's book offers us something quite different. As the title suggests, it is as much an explanation of the dynamics of our evolving world as it is a rumination upon the author's attempts to continuously sharpen and re-deploy his theoretical tool-set. Ranging from

the early days of the globalisation of production, to his landmark exposition on the transnational capitalist class, to discussions of the possibilities of building socialism from communities upwards, to his novel approach to interpreting Anthropocene literatures, *Second Thoughts* represents a glittering exposition of how to apply and re-apply critical social theory to the rapidly changing world."
—Ben Selwyn, Professor of International Relations and International Development, University of Sussex.

"During the half century of his illustrious career, Leslie Sklair has marshalled an array of groundbreaking sociological insights into a rapidly changing world. From the sociology of knowledge to development theory, globalization, social movements, architecture and the environment, one can find here in a single volume a critical selection that spans the breadth of his oeuvre. Not to be missed, this is an important collection of essays from one of the most original and unorthodox sociological thinkers of our time."
—William I. Robinson, Distinguished Professor of Sociology, University of California at Santa Barbara

"Leslie Sklair has rightly established a major reputation for his sociological analysis, most notably for his pathbreaking work on the transnational capital class and the social role of contemporary iconic architecture. This new book draws together a series of his published articles, together with his "second thoughts": his subsequent mature reflections on these earlier works. The essays are partly fascinating for illuminating Sklair's theoretical development over his entire intellectual trajectory. But they also distil the main aspects of his theory about the transnational capitalist class and its class fractions, whilst introducing us to his recent innovative assessments, notably, of the Anthropocene period and of alternatives to global capitalism. This is an accessible and enjoyable collection, offering an impressive introduction to the literatures on several wide-ranging fields. Sklair's studies succeed in being both authoritative and significant, whilst overcoming the fragmentation bedeviling our era of hyper-specialization."
—Bridget Fowler, Emeritus Professor of Sociology, University of Glasgow

"*Second Thoughts on Capitalism and the State* brings together a selection of Leslie Sklair's essays originally published over a 40-year period. Each chapter is prefaced by discussions of the intellectual, political and sometimes personal contexts from which the essay arose, along with reflections that variously present a self-critique of the original argument and/or an updating

of it. The book concludes with a previously unpublished essay, 'Beleaguered City, Beleaguered Planet', reflecting back on his chapters on the Transnational Capitalist Class, architecture/urban design, human rights, and the Anthropocene and envelops them in a biting critique of our capitalist-dominated planet Earth. Most importantly, the book also includes observations on how we can avoid oblivion. Rejecting the idea that better, social democratic forms of capitalism, can halt the destructive dynamics inherent in the Anthropocene, Sklair argues for a non-capitalist future, built step by step from local to ultimately global networks of socialist producer/consumer cooperatives, gradually breaking the hegemony of the Transnational Capitalist Class and its crucial linkages to the nation state and the interstate system. Viewed in its totality, *Second Thoughts* thus brilliantly demonstrates the indispensability of the famous aphorism popularised by Gramsci: 'pessimism of the intellect, but optimism of the will."

—Jeffrey Henderson, Professor Emeritus of International Development, University of Bristol

"In this curated collection of updated versions of his previous publications, Sklair looks back on a long and distinguished career tackling the biggest and most challenging empirical and moral puzzles of our time. Chapters engage topics ranging from the transformation of global corporate power structures to urban development (il)logics, to the perils and ethics of the Anthropocene, providing a veteran scholar's perspective on large-scale social change. His reflections on how both scholarly dialogue and the passage of time affect individual understandings offer rich material for young scholars seeking to advance scholarship and policy debates with their own unique insights. The humility with which he offers "second thoughts" on his past arguments is refreshing and thought-provoking, and Sklair's prescient insights will help inform new generations of the kind of reflexive and deeply curious scholarship that is much-needed in today's complex and changing world. Few scholars would take time in their twilight years to pull together a collection aimed at updating and contextualizing lessons from their careers for new generations of scholars, students, and global citizens. We should therefore be grateful for the generosity and humility Sklair conveys in this important contribution. Moreover, he challenges us to abolish the notion that scholarship can be neutral and to embrace the urgent ethical challenges posed by the Anthropocene."

—Jackie Smith, Professor of Sociology, University of Pittsburgh

"Leslie Sklair's new book brings together a number of his essays that engage with critical contemporary issues and ground these in sociological theory. Each essay is preceded by a new introductory section and concludes with an extensive section of 'Second Thoughts'. Together with various interpolations in the main text, these reflections give new life to Sklair's influential research. The essays cover an impressive range of topics, including the sociology of science, Chinese economic development, the transnational capitalist class, global social movements and capital flows, the future of socialism, human rights, environmentalism, and urbanisation. Original, insightful, and thought provoking, this new collection highlights and expands the relevance of Sklair's ideas for the twenty-first century."
—John Scott, Emeritus Professor, University of Plymouth

"Leslie Sklair is one of the most influential sociologists of the last half century whose work has helped shape our understandings of globalization, capitalism, and the Anthropocene. This volume presents a provocative glimpse into some of his most pioneering work and a vision into how his own insights have developed since they were written. Rather than simply a collection of essays, however, this book represents a framework around which we can understand the development of sociological and theoretical understandings of global capitalism across the last half century. This volume provides not just an historical review, but also the tools necessary to better understand our contemporary globalized capitalist society."
—J. Michael Ryan, Nazarbayev University, Kazakhstan.

INTRODUCTION

When Adam Rummens at Cambridge Scholars Publishing invited me to submit a book proposal on a topic of my choice, I was sceptical. I had just declined an invitation from another publisher to write a short book about the climate crisis and the pandemic (this was a time when many publishers seemed to be soliciting such books). After surveying the current literature on these topics I felt that I had little that was genuinely original to say about these two crises. This led me to look back at some of the articles I had published over the years on various aspects of what is usually theorized as crises of capitalism and the state. Reading through these articles I realized that between the late 1960s, when I first started to publish, and the present, that I now had many second thoughts about what I had previously written, though the same themes kept emerging. The idea for this book, selected essays on how sociology and capitalism have changed and how personally I had changed over these 50 years, emerged slowly. My hope is that these essays, all edited, updated, and full of second thoughts will be of interest to sociologists and perhaps also, more generally, to those who wonder about how the social sciences and capitalism have changed over the last fifty years. The chapters are arranged neither thematically nor chronologically, but with an eye on the complexities of the changing nature of capitalism from the relatively halcyon days of the early 1960s to the present. These essays, all but the last one which was adapted especially for this book (the rather personal Preamble to that chapter explains the circumstances) were previously published in a variety of scholarly journals and I thank the publishers who gave permissions for me to re-publish my own writings (gratefully acknowledged alongside the chapter titles). Every essay is introduced with a Preamble explaining the personal context and the intellectual environment in which it was produced. There is some repetition between the chapters in the interests of clarity. The "second thoughts" sections of each chapter combine my auto-critiques of the original chapters with a running commentary on some of the most significant research published after I wrote the essay. To avoid temporal confusion I would advise readers to bear in mind the original date of publication of each essay. Apart from chapter 12 the original versions are currently available via university libraries and other online sites. Every essay has an Abstract, also rewritten in some cases. This book would have been impossible to write

without the resources of the magnificent library and librarians at the LSE and elsewhere. The cooperation of scholars all over the world (most of whom I have never met) who provided me with hard-to-find copies of their work and constructive criticism is also much appreciated.

This book was in production when the Russian army invaded Ukraine to almost universal condemnation in February 2022, continuing a war that began with the seizure of Crimea in 2014, though the roots of these wars go back for centuries. The economic and other sanctions imposed on Russia in 2022 highlighted the lucrative business and financial ties between the Putin regime and Western corporations and politicians before and since 2014. Lessons were ignored, not learned.

CHAPTER 1

(1977) IDEOLOGY AND THE SOCIOLOGICAL UTOPIAS.
THE SOCIOLOGICAL REVIEW 25/1: 51-72
[COURTESY OF SAGE]

Preamble

With reports of student activism around the world in 1968 resonating loudly, the 1970s were a period of turmoil in British sociology. It was a time of excited soul-searching for politically engaged sociologists. At the London School of Economics, the institution was in crisis with students (and some junior and senior staff) in open revolt. This led many of us to question the role of sociology in the political arena and, for me, to question the place of Marxism in my sociological practice and, in particular, for the sociology of sociology. This youthful effort (written a few years after my appointment as an assistant lecturer in sociology at the LSE) reads now as a rather over-ambitious attempt to assess the relative merits of some influential publications on the sociology of sociology and the ways in which sociology could be "scientific". However, it may be useful for our understanding of sociology in the new millennium to dig up these historical curiosities, and a timely reminder that the name of Alvin Gouldner (over 150,000 results on Wikipedia in 2021) still resonates.

Abstract

Sociology in the Anglophone world was dominated in the decades after the Second World War by theoretical and polemical debates around the competing discourses of Marxist materialism and the school of functionalism created by Talcott Parsons and Robert Merton in the USA. Critical analysis of the work of some scholars in the re-emerging field of the sociology of sociology strongly suggests that the then-common labels of "Bourgeois" and "Radical" sociologies (capitalized to indicate their status as socio-political movements) conceal as much as they reveal. I suggest that these

labels both constitute sociological utopias fulfilling different but complementary ideological functions. However, some of the critiques aimed at "Bourgeois sociology" do expose uncomfortable truths.

Ideological Sources of Sociological Utopias

Like many other innovations, notably television, jet passenger planes, nuclear weapons, and computers, sociology around the 1950s was somewhat esoteric, mostly for the privileged, some cutting-edge academics, and some media people, only rarely penetrating to the wider public. In the decades after World War II, stimulated by much government and private foundation money in the United States and by small sums elsewhere, sociological research blossomed into an industry servicing capitalism and the state. The dominant tendencies, sometimes connected but more often not, were the functionalism of Parsons and then Merton, and the more or less sophisticated empiricism of those driven by a desire to discover how many people thought or were or did something and how this correlated with others who thought or were or did something else. The theoretical enterprise of the American sociologist Talcott Parsons strongly influenced the work of a whole generation of social scientists, for indeed his goal was no less than the development of a general theory of action as the basis of an integrated social science. In this task he was supported by other sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists, economists, and biologists. Large numbers of students, encouraged by the apparent success of this school of thought, carried out many research projects into the functions that various phenomena fulfilled in holding society together. Meanwhile, the technology of empirical research had not been standing still. By the late 1950s techniques of information gathering, recording, storage, and analysis had become relatively cheaply available. So too had large numbers of impecunious students, the reserve army of intellectual labour. It was within the reach of sociologists to construct questionnaires, post them or hire interviewers in person or by phone, and come up with a series of "findings". Thus, like grains of sand and the heap they accumulated, no one grain of sand may be significant but enough of them will eventually make a heap, irrespective of the size, shape, purity, or composition of the individual grains. By the 1960s, computers and their attendant human and mechanical services had spread all around the globe. This was a time when many countries began to augment their censuses to a considerable degree and to permit social scientists, many employed in government agencies and business corporations, to amass huge quantities of data. But who was standing back and reflecting on what sociologists were doing, what their methods and

results really meant, or why anyone should be prepared to pay for all this apparently curious, if not trivial information? Doing sociology was one thing, what we are doing when we are doing sociology appeared to be quite another thing, and not a matter for proper, sustained sociological inquiry. But this situation (like so much else) changed rather dramatically in the mid-1960s, particularly in the USA and Western Europe. So, if we can characterize the years between 1945 and 1964 in sociological theory as a time of theoretical and methodological dispute, largely revolving around the rise and (presumed) fall of structural-functionalism, and the increasing use of and disillusionment with multivariate analysis and similar research techniques, then perhaps the years from 1965 may turn out to be marked by the soul-searching of those who were unable to come to terms with functionalism and/or computer-based data collection. 1965-1984 might well be the age of the sociology of sociology.

Sociology of Sociology: Origins

This is not, of course, to suggest that we are in the grip of an entirely new phenomenon, both Durkheim and Weber at the beginning of the twentieth century had turned critical eyes on their discipline. In 1939 Robert Lynd published his justly celebrated book, *Knowledge for What?* Pitirim Sorokin (expelled from the Soviet Union in 1922) published his largely ignored and quite devastating *Fads and Foibles in Modern Sociology* in 1956; and C. Wright Mills had shocked the professionals and delighted the students with *The Sociological Imagination* in 1959. Lurking in the background were many Marxist-influenced works, notably Karl Mannheim's *Ideology and Utopia* which appeared in English in 1936 and Herbert Marcuse's *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory* (1941). It can even be convincingly argued that the whole process was set in motion by the refusal of Marx and Engels themselves to take the works of some of their contemporaries at face-value, notably in *The German Ideology,* itself an enigmatic text full of "discursive struggles", as Carver (2015) later demonstrated. The theme that runs through all of these works we might now label as a form of reflexive sociology, morphing into the sociology of knowledge and the sociology of sociology in particular. The paradox that has accompanied the writing of the history of the discipline is that sociology can appear to be a profoundly critical and a profoundly conservative activity at the same time. Both its critical and conservative potential inevitably follow from curiosity about how institutions work to produce "consensus" and/or "conflict" in society. Even though many sociologists themselves may not be particularly critical, those whose power rests on their ability

successfully to conceal how the controlling institutions they control do work, will quickly adopt conservative postures in response to sociological analyses. The potential of sociologists to sit on the fence can be summed up in two words: "scientific neutrality". The beauty of some of the best sociology appears in its ability to be both critical (debunking, exposing hypocrisy) and conservative ("value-free") simultaneously. A rather confusing paper published many years later by an American sociologist in a British journal (Black 2013) illustrates not only how contentious an issue "value free" sociology still is but, crucially, how naïve some sociologists are about how scientific much so-called "hard" science actually has been and increasingly is. "Science fictions" (see Ritchie 2021) contribute to the dilemma of all scholarly disciplines that encourage us to work out how things operate and can be maintained or changed but forbids us to take a position on whether or how they should be maintained or changed. This injunction naturally favours present arrangements (the status quo or "business as usual") in most cases.

Two books on the sociology of sociology, both published in 1970 (by A.W. Gouldner and R.W. Friedrichs) raise questions around the critical and the conservative roles of sociology. Alvin Gouldner argues paradoxically that the repressive component of sociology and the suppressed liberating potential of sociology together shape the unique contradiction distinctive of sociology. In my opinion what he identifies is neither *unique* nor a *contradiction*. Friedrichs hangs his account on the twin pegs of the Prophetic (engaged) mode and the Priestly (value-free) mode of sociology. This old/new sub-discipline of the sociology of sociology suffers from a two-fold paradox. First, in terms of the general strain of critical and conservative sociology as both look at and attempt to explain the world; second, in terms of critical and conservative postures towards sociology itself. In the argument rekindled in the discipline by Robert Nisbet's influential theoretical history, *The Sociological Tradition* (1967), we can see a neat illustration of the point. In answer to those who hold (or wish to believe) that sociology has its origins and finest aspirations in the critique of political economy and the debilitating effects of capitalism on society Nisbet argues that, on the contrary, sociology arose as a reaction against socialism, industrialism, and the utilitarian culture (as Gouldner himself strongly asserts with respect to what he calls "Academic Sociology"). Nisbet's heroes are not only the traditional Durkheim and Weber, but also Tonnies and de Tocqueville, scholars who spent as much time on the world they were losing as on the world over the horizon. This is not to be confused with a critical position, for however critical in details it might have been, it was part of a general conservative strategy against radical social change. So,

the conservative-critical paradox is not simply or only a formal distinction pertaining to method, but a substantive distinction which separates out that practice of sociology which operates to defend the societies we have (with a greater or smaller degree of reactionary or progressive influence on social structures) from that sociology which operates to undermine the social institutions we have and to replace them with something better. Each of these sociologies can clearly be seen to perform an ideological function in the sense that it is used by certain social groups (not only sociologists themselves) to prescribe a set of social values, to produce an unchallengeable picture of society consonant with certain interests, and to provide where necessary a legitimation for the enterprise and its consequences.

Following those who write on the subject (directly or by implication) the conservative position has been labelled "Bourgeois sociology" (with Parsonian functionalism playing a major role) and the position of the critics "Radical sociology" (with the works of Marx and Engels playing a variable role). One further and most important difference should be noted: while "Radical sociology" makes a virtue out of the fact that it takes sides between the status quo and some new order, "Bourgeois sociology" makes a virtue (perhaps its only virtue) out of its claim to "scientific neutrality" (the only place where it is unscientific not to be neutral). My argument in the remainder of this post-mortem on the living body of the sociology of sociology is that both Bourgeois and Radical sociologies are utopias in Mannheim's sense, as interpreted decades later for sociologists (see Kumar 2006, and Neurath (1930/2020) on Mannheim's "Bourgeois Marxism"). The bourgeois "neutrality of science" as well as the radical penchant for socialist humanism have almost obliterated the contentious distinction between ideology and science which Parsons and Marx laboured so hard to achieve through their modes of theory formation.

Marx and Parsons

The theoretical enterprises of both Marx and Parsons were probably neither more scientific nor more successful (or both) than that of their competitors. In the 1950s Parsons, funded by the Carnegie Corporation at Harvard, set out to create a science of social relations, as described by Isaac (2010) almost 20 years after Parsons died. Further, elements of the achievements of others were clearly integrated into or developed out of the works of Marx and Parsons as was the case (briefly) for the French Marxist Louis Althusser whose books were very much in vogue amongst younger radical sociologists at the time. It is still a matter of sometimes bad-tempered

dispute whether or not Althusser has provided an accurate account (both textually and in spirit) of what Marx tried to do scientifically, as is Althusser's abounding faith that Marx's scientific achievements matched his intentions (Fuchs 2019). It is I think very striking that, despite their spectacular differences, Parsons and Althusser appear to share some similar somewhat unfashionable views about Freud's scientific achievements. For example, in the distinguished academic journal *Daedalus,* Parsons wrote of "the aspiration of psychoanalysis to scientific status, which in my opinion, in spite of much controversy, has been broadly validated"; and that reading Freud "proved to be one of the few crucial intellectual experiences of my life" (Parsons 1970, 835-837). And in an essay on Freud and Lacan Althusser wrote "Psycho-analytic theory can thus give us what makes each science no pure speculation but a science: the definition of the *formal* essence of its object, the precondition for any practical, technical application of it to its *concrete* objects" (Althusser 1971a, 197-98).

I did not consider when I originally wrote this article that Althusser (or anyone else) was likely to solve fundamental epistemological problems. My views on this have always been pragmatic. While empirical (or substantive as I prefer to say) research is intended to make or break a theory, it is sufficiently distanced from the metatheory that its results need not affect it much. Moreover, it is a common procedural strategy for scientists to respond to the disconfirmation of one theory or hypothesis by replacing it with another that is not disconfirmed by the substantive research ("fits the facts"), where both theories and hypotheses are logically compatible with a common metatheory. This seems to be the case for the metatheory constructed by Marx and his many followers over the years and why I would never claim to be a Marxist (whatever that means these days, see below) but am happy to acknowledge that I am Marx-inspired, gaining insight from his ideas that are developed throughout this book. Prime among Marx's insights in my view are first, the necessity of the abolition of money (the root cause of toxic consumerism) and second the abolition of socially necessary labour time (the root cause of capitalist exploitation of workers) as a means of organizing society. Faced with these goals as the *sine qua non* for ending capitalist exploitation it is no wonder that almost all so-called "alternatives to capitalism" fall short.

Sociology of Sociology: Problems

Three major sets of problems are at the core of the sociology of sociology. First, it should try to explain the origins and growth of sociology; second, it

should try to explain how sociology works historically; and third, it should try to explain the functions that sociology fulfils for the various groups within societies, locally and globally? These are not totally discrete problems. Of all the many books on the sociology of sociology published in the second half of the twentieth century Gouldner's *Coming Crisis* is the only one seriously to attempt to tackle all three tasks and, indeed, it is its breadth of scope which gives the work its initially rather overpowering and dogmatic aspect. It is instructive to revisit the debate in which Gouldner has taken the eminent deviance theorist Howard S. Becker to task over the perennial problem of value-free sociology. Becker, in a famous paper provocatively entitled "Whose Side are We On?" (1967) had argued the case for "underdog affiliation" in sociological research (although, let it be noted, he had remained quite ambivalent about the scientific status of sociological research results). Gouldner, in an equally provocatively reply entitled "The Sociologist as Partisan: Sociology and the Welfare State" (1968) condemns Becker's deviance theory thus: "Insofar as this school of theory has a critical edge to it, this is directed at the caretaking institutions who do the mopping up job, rather than at the master institutions that produce the deviant's suffering" (ibid., 107). Without being a great deal more enlightening than Becker about the central question of the scientific status of research results, Gouldner expresses a vision of sociology which takes it beyond those who clearly regulate much of social life, to the social structures they make and the historical processes in which the whole is embedded. *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology* does not exactly identify these "master institutions" as we might have hoped, although Gouldner does trace the development of social theory through its four great periods, namely Positivism (Saint-Simon and Comte), Marxism (Marx), Classical Sociology (Durkheim and Weber), and Parsonian Structural-Functionalism (Parsons). Somewhat surprisingly, Part II of Gouldner's book (1970) is entirely devoted to "The World of Talcott Parsons". Even more surprising is Gouldner's testimonial for Parsons in this context:

> "There is no question, in my mind, that many of the details and many of the fundamental assumptions that Parsons advances in attempting to solve the equilibrium problems are wrong. There is also no question that Parsons has, nonetheless, developed an analysis of this problem that goes well beyond that of his predecessors. He has gone far in setting out elements that need to be considered and in establishing firmer ground for continuing work on it. Anyone concerned with this matter must and can use Parsons as a point of departure and as a grindstone on which to sharpen his own thought" (ibid., 456).

Despite the ups and downs of Parsons' reputation (see Lidz 2021) I don't think that many sociologists anywhere today would agree. The links that Gouldner makes between social theory and its societal origins are often hinted rather than exact, general rather than specific, evasive rather than direct. For all its merits, his book fails to come to any firm conclusion about the scientific status of either his own work, or academic sociology in its various forms, particularly Marxism. In his last book he went on to make the distinction between "critical voluntarist Marxism" and "scientific determinist Marxism" (Gouldner 1980). His argument is that that both are Marxist because Marx's Marxism is itself contradictory. Gouldner's discussions of Marx and Parsons suggest that the scientific nature of their work and their modes of theory formation are not matters that attract his interest to any great extent. The same conclusion holds for Friedrichs (1970) whose *A Sociology of Sociology* unluckily jumped on to the Kuhnian bandwagon just as the points were being switched, not least by Kuhn himself. This gives Friedrichs' not inconsiderable efforts to prod and push the recent history of sociology into a Kuhnian framework of "scientific paradigms" a laboured and unreal appearance (see Bryant 1975). Friedrichs' view of the history and by implication the sociology of sociology revolves around the purported paradigm struggle between Prophetic and Priestly modes referred to above. He argues that the Prophets prefer criticism rather than construction, while the Priests proclaim, under the cloak of neutrality, that in science prophecy has no place: prediction (an eminently constructive activity) must be our guide. Auguste Comte and C. Wright Mills illustrate the span of the prophets. For the priests it is the computer, particularly exemplified at that time by the youthful Department of Social Relations at Johns Hopkins University, USA (and fifty years later Johns Hopkins is still producing socially relevant data. Notably through its major globally recognized site providing information on the Corona pandemic at https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/). The prophets and the priests appear to be split along the conflict/system dichotomy as well, and this dichotomy is considered to be the form in which the paradigm struggle expresses itself, prophets operate with conflict, priests with system. For Friedrichs, all societies are seen to be systemic, but not all are conflictual, the way forward is some sort of "dialectical compromise" between Bourgeois and Radical (mainly Marxist) sociology. This mode of thought has produced some bizarre results, for example in a paper in the journal entitled *Human Studies* Ajzner (2000) suggests that Marxist Axioms may be considered self-contradictory paradoxes of Parsonian statements in sociology! A book that had previously asked the question "what went wrong with sociological theory?" (Mouzelis 1995) went some way to clarifying these confusions and

the fact that Mouzelis' book is still very well worth reading more than twenty years after it was published tells us something important about the pitfalls of sociological theory. In the UK the challenges of the sociology of sociology were met rather differently, for example with an article by Alan Dawe on "The Two Sociologies" (Dawe 1970) which also brought utopias into the frame but does not mention Gouldner nor the sociology of sociology, and Dick Atkinson's *Orthodox Consensus and Radical Alternative* (Atkinson 1971) reframes Gouldner's dilemma. Two decades later Stewart Clegg's (1992) brilliantly satirical and theoretically acute analysis of the construction (or should that be "structuration") of "Giddensisation" as a new global brand opens up bold new themes for the sociology of sociology.

Conflicting Sociologies of Knowledge

Another alternative contribution to the sociology of knowledge implicitly portrays the social sciences as an onward march of progress, apparently more characteristic of Bourgeois than Radical sociology. Deutsch, et al. (1971) blithely identify "62 major achievements, or advances, or breakthroughs in Social Science" from 1900 to 1965 (including, strangely, philosophy and mathematics). My intention here is not to expose this article as a crude political confidence trick and/or a major exercise in self-deception, however tempting this prospect might be, but to use it as an illustration of what might be termed "the fallacy of eclectic accumulation". Deutsch and his colleagues put forward a selection which includes something from everywhere, no tendency is left out, no charge of bias can be maintained. In a word, it is apolitical, deliberately avoiding issues of morality and justice. While in no way diminishing the achievements of George Bernard Shaw, Gandhi, Mao Zedong, and V.I. Lenin, all on the list as path-breaking *social scientists* but finding no place for Durkheim, Simmel, Lukacs, Sorokin, Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, and C. Wright Mills seems odd, to say the least. Sociology provides only 7 out of the 62 "contributions", 170 in all, spanning the years between 1900 and 1965. The model of the social sciences which Deutsch and his colleagues present emerges implicitly when they claim: "An inspection of our list shows that many of the later contributions were clearly building on the earlier ones, and that they resulted in clear increases in the powers of social scientists to recognize relationships and to carry out operations . . . Together these advances add up to unmistakable evidence of the cumulative growth of knowledge in the social sciences in the course of this century" (ibid., 455). However, the project did reveal some interesting patterns regarding geographical locations, research communities, and periods of time.

The Contrarians

Two contrarian views (both published before Deutsch's analysis of the smooth progress of the social sciences in the twentieth century) stand out. The first is a speech by a sociology PhD student, Martin Nicolaus, in 1968. This speech at the American Sociological Association Annual meeting was first published in *The American Sociologist*. It is still available on the internet with determined searching. An historic document of the Left all round the world, it is a powerful and moving indictment which challenges sociologists to acknowledge their former hypocrisy, as well as a devastating (however "unscholarly") critique of the discipline that welcomes the Secretary of Disease, Propaganda, and Scabbing (officially known as the U.S. Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare). A guest speaker by popular acclaim at the ASA while the war in Vietnam was raging, Nicolaus' vivid "eyes down palms up" characterization of many sociologists will be dismissed as bad taste by those who know it to have a grain of truth but destructive of their prospects. This is a truly scholarly article, though not in a sociology journal. Nicolaus brilliantly expands the argument, again but not in the pages of a sociology journal (Nicolaus 1969). A more playful but just as effective critique of establishment sociology in the USA is "The Sunshine Boys; Toward a Sociology of Happiness" by Dusky Lee Smith, first published in *The Activist* (later reprinted in Reynolds & Reynolds eds. 1970). Smith dissects the Sunshine Boys through a critical analysis of the work of three leading members, the Supreme Sunbeam (Seymour Martin Lipset); the Sustaining Sunbeam (Nathan Glazer); and the Subsidiary Sunbeam (Amitai Etzioni); all three of these luminaries are prominently on sociology reading lists in universities all over the world in the 1960s, still cited today. This is a root and branch attack on the American sociological orthodoxy, on those influential sociologists who have explained why America is as it is, why it should stay more or less as it is, and that it is pretty good for most of those involved. This paper could clearly not have appeared in a conventional sociology journal, it is too rude, sarcastic, and accurate in its exposure of the ideological powerhouse from which the pleasant rays of Sunshine Sociology emanate. And Smith (now deceased) could no doubt gain grim satisfaction from the fact that since the essay was first published in 1964 events in America have seriously undermined though probably not shattered the fond illusions of the Sunshine Guild, if not for themselves but possibly for large numbers of sociology students and even some of their teachers. Smith's polemic is reinforced by his sharp historical analysis in the Marxist journal *Science & Society* (Smith 1965), a well-documented and closely argued analysis of the role of sociology in the rise of corporate

capitalism in the USA with its bourgeois lumber of pluralism, stable democracy, and naive consensus. This is instructive in two ways. First, as an essay in the history of sociology of sociology itself it deserves serious consideration; second, the relative difficulty experienced by writers of this type of criticism (until very recently) in reaching the sociological masses tells us a great deal about the state of sociology and the nature of its institutional openness to that most cherished of all scientific norms, organized scepticism, an idea that I tried to deconstruct in a book on the sociology of science (Sklair 1972, chapter 4). Dusky Lee Smith's work, like that of Nicolaus, lies outside conventional "Bourgeois" versus "Radical" sociological sparring, and the "healthy controversy of civilized debate". Further evidence had already been provided albeit in a rather more "civilized" form by Baritz (1960) and others.

It is here that the exclusivist aspects of Kuhn's notion of paradigms in hard science begin to make some sense for sociology. There are, indeed, many examples of controversies which do achieve a great deal of exposure in the regular journals, textbooks, and literature of the social sciences. The debates over Parsonian and other varieties of functionalism, in particular the so-called "order versus conflict" debate and the struggles around stratification and inequality in most sociological traditions spring most readily to mind (see for example, Rex 1961, and Sklair 1993, a commentary on Rex). The ways in which many of these controversies, by exhaustion or otherwise, have turned out to be rather less about issues than about words, definitions, and levels of discourse, strongly suggests that there really is only one paradigm within sociology, in which "Bourgeois" and "Radical" co-exist to provide a little interest and variety in a situation which threatens to become dangerously dull. Alternative paradigm candidates, such as might be represented by Smith, Nicolaus, and others are more or less tolerated on the fringes of sociology (as was ethnomethodology for a time) but have no proper enduring place in it. All the apparent critical activity can then be interpreted as follows: modern sociology has nowhere to go because its accumulationist ideal (the promise of steady progress as represented in the work of Deutsch et al.) contradicts its methodological canon of absolute purity of variables in a crippling fashion. Nevertheless, in an attempt to prove that conventional sociology is still alive (even virile), it generates as many pseudo-controversies as possible, whose major function is to establish by assumption (the taken-for-granted-world) the inviolability of the current social order or some reforms of it. The debates centre around the conservation of or adaption to our given social structures (system) and the reform or re-creation of our given social structures (conflict). It is not quite like the Left

versus Right. The traffic in sociology is mostly one-way, from Young Radicals to Middle-Aged Sunshine Boys, and a few Sunshine Girls!

Neutralizing Conflict

These discussions, then, take place within one set of categories and it is a major achievement of capitalism friendly (or at least "neutral") social sciences in advanced capitalist society especially in its liberal-democratic form, manifest within the context of sociology, that controversies can actually appear to occur within an arena in which the system itself invites all criticisms and "scientifically and neutrally" rebuffs all its critics, while encouraging them in their work where it is deemed constructive. Friedrichs is totally wrong, I think, to consider that Prophetic and Priestly modes signify genuine differences in sociological practice (as he himself recognizes in his tacit conclusion that we can achieve some state of pluralist cognition in sociology, of which he unblushingly approves). Gouldner seems nearer the mark with his emphasis on "Academic" rather than "Bourgeois" sociology, although he does appear to underestimate the importance of the non-academic, governmental, industrial, and mass media supports of the conventional sociology he describes. It is nothing less than a stunning ideological coup that for so long, and for so many intelligent sociologists, ideas such as the synthesis of Marxism and any other "ism" seem serious and (on the other hand) beliefs that "order versus conflict" orientations on their own really represent overwhelmingly different and opposed ideological postures. To begin to explain how all this has come about in the sociological world, how Bourgeois and Radical sociology have become firm and often mutually indulgent bedfellows, I think it is necessary to look at the ways in which the works of the two main ghosts in the machine in the sociology of the second half of the twentieth century, Karl Marx and Talcott Parsons, are treated. I propose to argue that the answer to my question lies in the theoretical enterprise of Marx and Parsons, their attempts to establish a science of society. As I suggested above, both Bourgeois (conservative) and Radical (critical) sociology constitute sociological utopias fulfilling different but complementary ideological functions. By identifying the social parameters of knowledge, we need not destroy the scientific status of sociological or any other knowledge. But this is not enough. Sociology has been shackled by its ideologies and its utopias, and the time has come for the science of sociology to assert itself in a militant fashion. If claims that Marx and Parsons have laid the foundations for this seem peculiar, it is because we have been too ready to spend our time on these "Radical" and "Bourgeois" sociologies. Utopian and ideological