

ROYAL HOLLOWAY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
COURSE OUTLINE

Code: PR3113A **Value:** 1.0 **Status:** Core
Title: Society and Sociology in the New Millennium
Year: 2005-6 **Term:** 1 and 2 **Pre-requisites:** None
Co-ordinator: Dr Chris Rumford

Aims: To examine important developments in sociology at the turn of the century in the context of social and cultural change; and to ask students to consider sociology within their everyday lives, and within the wider society.

Intended Learning Outcomes: 1. To recognise and account for recent developments in sociology and their wider intellectual and social context; 2. To provide an analysis of the key issues of contemporary sociology and their main exponents; 3. To understand the key problems and debates that have arisen in sociology in relation to these issues, and their likely development in the future.

Content: Today, sociology might be characterised as a ‘mature industry’, operating in a postmodern and global environment. However, the society in which sociology now operates is more complex and differentiated than ever. Diversity has arguably replaced controversy in sociology, though debates about what it means to say that we live in a postmodern, global, or risk society show that sociology can still be a lively and critical discipline. This course examines some of the most important developments in sociology over the last ten years or so against a backdrop of wider structural and cultural change in society.

Chris Rumford’s webpage

Students are directed to the useful resources collected at:
http://www.chrisrumford.org.uk/plate_noticeboard.html

Coursework and Assessment

All students must submit three essays of between 2500 and 3000 words. The best two of these will contribute 50% to the final mark. All students will also take a 2 hour ("unseen") examination which will contribute 50% of the total marks for the course.

The deadline for the submission of essays is as follows. Please note that essays must be submitted by **MIDDAY** on the specified dates:

First essay – Friday 2nd December 2005
Second essay – Friday 27th January 2006
Third essay – Friday 10th March 2006

Lecture programme

1. Introduction: key themes

Sociology has undergone a transformation in recent times, reflecting significant changes in society and social life. The course will examine the changing nature of sociology and the social transformations which characterize contemporary social life: postmodernity and globalization, in particular. Are these changes far-reaching and epoch-making, or are they overstated? Have issues such as identity, mobility, and risk replaced the more conventional sociological preoccupation with social structure and inequality? Is it business-as-usual for sociology, or has society transformed so fundamentally that a new 'sociology beyond society' is needed?

Giddens, A. 2000: 'The social revolutions of our time' in K. Nash (ed) Readings in Contemporary Political Sociology Oxford: Blackwell 320.01 REA

Bauman, Z. 2000: *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity 301.2 BAU

Delanty, G. and Rumford, C. 2005: *Rethinking Europe: Social Theory and the Implications of Europeanization*. London: Routledge 301.0094 DEL

Urry, J. 2000: *Sociology Beyond Societies: Mobilities for the Twenty-first century*. London: Routledge 301.001 URR

2. Sociology and social theory

Social theory is concerned with understanding the transformations in contemporary societies, particularly those transformations not easily dealt with by the discipline of sociology, which was developed to understand and explain modern, industrial, nationally-contained societies. In the contemporary context social theory deals with questions raised by globalization, postmodernity, postnational identity, the nature and dynamics of transnational communities etc., all areas considered problematic for conventional forms of sociology.

Question: What is the relationship between sociology and social theory?

Gane, N. 2004: The future of social theory London: Continuum (esp. the 'Introduction' and the chapters on Bauman, Urry and Beck) 300.1 GAN

Delanty, G. 2000: 'The foundations of social theory: origins and trajectories' in B. Turner (ed) The Blackwell Companion to Social Theory Oxford: Blackwell 300.1 BLA

Ritzer, G. and Smart, B. 2001: 'Introduction: theorists, theories and theorizing' in G. Ritzer and B. Smart (eds) Handbook of Social Theory. London: Sage 301.01 HAN

Delanty, G. 1999: Social theory in a changing world :conceptions of modernity Cambridge: Polity Press 300.01 DEL

Bauman, Z. 2000: Liquid Modernity Cambridge: Polity Press 301.2 BAU

Beilharz, P. (ed) 2001: The Bauman reader. Oxford: Blackwell 301 BAU

3. Postmodern sociology or a sociology of postmodernity?

Postmodernity refers to the waning of 'modern' social structures and the advent of post-industrial society (or 'second modernity') and the implications for class-based political identities. Postmodernism at the cultural level rests on the assumption that

earlier distinctions are now being thoroughly inverted – high and low art forms – expert and lay views of science and medicine – the public and the private. The implications for sociology have been widely debated.

Question: What kind of social transformation does postmodernity represent, and what are the implications for sociology?

Bauman, Z. (1991) 'Legislators and interpreters: culture as the ideology of intellectuals' in, Intimations of Postmodernity London Routledge 301.2BAU

Bauman, Z. (1991) 'Is there a postmodern sociology?' in, Intimations of Postmodernity London Routledge 301.2 BAU

Seidman, S.

Owen, D. 1997: 'The postmodern challenge to sociology' in D. Owen (ed) *Sociology after postmodernism*. London: Sage 301 SOC

Owen, D. 2001: "'Postmodern' political sociology' in K. Nash and A. Scott (eds) *The Blackwell Companion to Political Sociology*. Oxford: Blackwell 320.01 BLA

Lyon, D. (2000) 'Post-modernity' in G. Browning, A. Halcli, and F. Webster (eds) *Understanding Contemporary Society*. London: Sage. 301 UND

Smart, B. (2000) 'Postmodern social theory' in B. Turner (ed) The Blackwell Companion to Social Theory. Oxford: Blackwell. 300.1 BLA

Crook, S. (2001) 'Social Theory and the Postmodern' in G. Ritzer and B. Smart (eds) Handbook of Social Theory. London: Sage.301.01 HAN

Boyne, R. and Rattansi, A. (1990) 'The Theory and Politics of Postmodernism: By Way of an Introduction,' in Postmodernism and Society, R. Boyne and A. Rattansi (eds) Houndmills, Macmillan 301.2 POS

4. Globalization and its consequences

The term 'globalization' has come into everyday speech in countless areas of life. Although it is often understood as resulting in the dominance of market economics over every other form of life, it can be more usefully thought of as a series of processes (economic, cultural, political) through which the world is becoming more unified – and an awareness that this is so. But what are the main social and cultural components of globalization and what do they mean for experience in everyday settings?

Question: Do we now live in a global age?

Robertson, R. (1992) Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture London, Sage 301.2 ROB

Albrow, M (1996) The Global Age: State and Society Beyond Modernity Cambridge, Polity Press 301.24 ALB

Scholte, J.A. (2000) Globalization :a critical introduction. Houndmills: Palgrave 330.9 SCH

Walters, M. (1995) Globalization. London: Routledge 301.2 WAT

Beck, U. (2000) What is globalization? Cambridge: Polity 327 BEC

Lechner, F. and Boli, J. (eds) 2004: The Globalization Reader (Second Edition) Oxford: Blackwell 330.9 GLO

Lechner, F. and Boli, J. World Culture: Origins and Consequences. Oxford: Blackwell 301.2 LEC

5. Identity and belonging

For most of the Twentieth Century social and political identities were defined primarily by class and/or national belonging, and more recently by gender and ethnicity. The last couple of decades have seen a proliferation identities and the rise of 'identity politics'. Rather than being situated by an 'objective' class position, identities are now subjective, multiple, and often the result of lifestyle choices. We will look at the importance of identity politics and multiple forms of belonging in the contemporary world.

Question: Why has the concept of identity become so central to contemporary sociology?

- Croucher, S.2004. Globalization and belonging: the politics of identity in a changing world. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield
- Castells, M. 1997: The Power of Identity Oxford: Blackwell 301.243 CAS
- Woodward, K. 1997: 'Concepts of identity and difference' in K. Woodward (ed) Identity and Difference London: Sage 301.18 IDE
- Hall, S. 2000: 'The question of cultural identity' in K. Nash (ed) Readings in Contemporary Political Sociology Oxford: Blackwell 320.01 REA
- Hall, S. and du Gay, P. 1996: Questions of Cultural Identity London: Sage 301.2 QUE
- Norval, A. 2001: 'The politics of ethnicity and identity' in K. Nash and A. Scott (eds) The Blackwell Companion to Political Sociology. Oxford: Blackwell 320.01 BLA
- Ashenden, S. 1997: 'Feminism, postmodernism and the sociology of gender' in D. Owen (ed) *Sociology after postmodernism*. London: Sage 301 SOC
- Tomlinson, J. 2003: 'Globalization and cultural identity' in D. Held and A. McGrew (eds) The global transformations reader :an introduction to the globalization debate (Second edition) Cambridge: Polity Press 327 GLO
- Lechner, F. and Boli, J. *World Culture: Origins and Consequences* (esp. Chapter 9) Oxford: Blackwell 301.2 LEC

6. Risk Society

It has been argued that we now live in a risk society. From terrorism to environmental hazards and the risks inherent in everyday lifestyle choices (food, relationships) we seem to be bombarded with information about risk. Contemporary society seems to be characterised by risk and how it should be managed at both the institutional and personal levels. However, we need to ask what it means to characterise western societies as 'risk societies' and investigate further the changes that this designation supposes. Is it not the case that societies have always been 'risk societies'?

Question: How far does risk permeate everyday life, or is it an exaggeration of postmodern sociology?

- Beck, U. (1992) Risk Society: towards a new modernity London, Sage 301.2 BEC
- Beck, U. (1992) 'From industrial society to the risk society: questions of survival, social structure and ecological enlightenment' Theory, Culture and Society 9, 97-123
- Beck, U. (undated) 'Politics of risk society'
- <http://www.envsci.nau.edu/sisk/courses/env555/Readings/Beck.PDF>

- Lupton, D. (1999) Risk London: Routledge 301.1 LUP
- Giddens, A. (1991) Modernity and Self Identity: self and society in the late modern age (esp. Chapter 4) Cambridge, Polity Press 301.001GID
- Furedi, F. 1998: Culture of Fear: Risk-taking and the Morality of Low Expectation. London: Cassell 301.1 FUR
- Elliott, A. (2002) 'Beck's sociology of risk: a critical assessment' Sociology 36, 2, 293-315

7. Cosmopolitanism

Cosmopolitanism has once again become a key concept in the social and political sciences. Traditionally, cosmopolitanism is associated with rather utopian notions of world citizenship or universal brotherhood. In more recent constructions it refers to, on the one hand, the multiplicity of identifications and belongings which characterise life in the contemporary world, and, on the other, a desire to move beyond narrow and exclusive forms of national belonging. Recent developments – Tsunami relief efforts, the postnational citizenship of the European Union, and widespread acceptance of the universality of human rights – have suggested a more concrete content to cosmopolitan aspirations.

Question: Do we need a cosmopolitan sociology?

- Delanty, G. 2006: 'Cosmopolitanism in contemporary social theory: theoretical considerations and methodological implications' British Journal of Sociology 57(1) (copy available from CR)
- Beck, U. 2000: 'The cosmopolitan perspective: sociology of the second age of modernity' British Journal of Sociology 51(1)
<http://www.transformaties.org/bibliotheek/beck.pdf>
- Beck, U. 2004: 'The cosmopolitan turn' in N. Gane The future of social theory London: Continuum 300.1 GAN
- Delanty, G. and Rumford, C. 2005: Rethinking Europe: Social Theory and the Implications of Europeanization. London: Routledge 301.0094 DEL
- Vertovec, S. and Cohen, R. (eds) 2002: Conceiving cosmopolitanism: theory, context, and practice. Oxford: Oxford University Press 301.2 CON
- Archibugi, D. (ed) Debating cosmopolitanism. London: Verso 327 DEB
- Stevenson, N. 2002: 'Cosmopolitanism, Multiculturalism and Citizenship' Sociological Research Online
<http://www.socresonline.org.uk/7/1/stevenson.html>
- Beck, U. 2002: 'The cosmopolitan society and its enemies' Theory, Culture & Society 19(1–2)
[http://www.sunysb.edu/sociology/faculty/Levy/Beck%20Cosmopolitan%20Society%20and%20its%20Enemies%20\(TCS\).pdf](http://www.sunysb.edu/sociology/faculty/Levy/Beck%20Cosmopolitan%20Society%20and%20its%20Enemies%20(TCS).pdf)

8. Theories of the self

Contemporary sociology has been very much concerned with understanding the self. Increasingly mistrustful of essentialist explanations, which explain human action in terms of the expression of an underlying core essence, and privileging approaches that emphasise the distinctiveness of the individual, sociologists have attempted to

understand the nature of the self and its potential for transformation. We will focus on the work of Goffman, Giddens and Foucault.

Question: How have sociologists approached the issue of the self and individuality?

- Giddens, A (1991) Modernity and Self-identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age. Cambridge: Polity Press (esp Chapter 3). 301.001 GID
- Goffman, E. (1961) Asylums. Harmondsworth: Penguin. 362.2042 GOF
- Goffman, E. (1971) The presentation of self in everyday life Harmondsworth: Penguin 301.11 GOF
- Bauman, Z. (2000) Liquid Modernity Cambridge: Polity (especially Chapter 2) 301.2 BAU
- Dean, M. (2002) "The regulation of the self," in T. Jordan and S. Pile (eds) Social Change. Oxford: Blackwell. 301.24 SOC
- Barrett, M. (1999) "Human nature," in Imagination in Theory: Culture, Writing, Words, Things. New York: New York University Press. Founders 809.93355 BAR
- Smart, B. 1988. Michel Foucault. London: Routledge 190 FOU/S
- Dean, M. 1999: Governmentality :power and rule in modern society London: Sage 301.1552 DEA

9. The sociology of the body

'Embodiment' has become one of the watchwords of recent sociology and has stimulated much thinking associated with the 'politics of identity.' The argument has been put forward that earlier sociology was strangely 'disembodied', considering the importance of the human body to social interaction and identity. The advent of postmodernism with its emphasis on consumer culture and bodily display would seem to suggest that the topic of the body should be at the centre of sociological analysis.

Question: Should the body be brought centre stage in sociological analysis?

- Shilling, C. (2001) 'The Embodied Foundations of Social Theory' in G. Ritzer and B. Smart (eds) Handbook of Social Theory. London: Sage.301.01 HAN
- Turner, B (2000) 'An outline of a general sociology of the body' in B. Turner (ed) The Blackwell Companion to Social Theory. Oxford: Blackwell. 301.1 BLA
- Turner, B. (1996) 'Sociology and the body' in, The Body and Society (2nd edition) London, Sage (especially introduction to 2nd edition) 301.4 TUR
- Shilling, C. (1993) The Body and Social Theory 301 SHI 1 x Short loan
- Howson, A. and Inglis, D. (2001) 'The body in sociology: tensions inside and outside sociological thought' The Sociological Review 49, 3, 299-317 (plus other articles in this issue by Crossley and Shilling, and then Inglis and Howson's response in The Sociological Review 50, 1, 136-139 - 2002)
- Sassatelli, R. 2001: 'Body politics' in K. Nash and A. Scott (eds) *The Blackwell Companion to Political Sociology*. Oxford: Blackwell 320.01 BLA

10. Sociology and the emotions

Sociology has traditionally privileged rationality and cognition over the emotions, and emotional responses have been widely mistrusted as means of obtaining accurate information about both ourselves and the world. Today, as with the body, there are

calls for a postmodern sociology to recognise more clearly the role of emotions in everyday life – in nationalist attachments, responses to disasters, personal relationships etc. Sociology has begun to question whether it is possible (and desirable) to maintain an artificial separation between rational and emotional aspects of social existence.

Question: Is it worthwhile for sociology to recognise more explicitly the role of emotions in social life?

Jackson, S. (1993) 'Even sociologists fall in love: an exploration in the sociology of emotions' Sociology 27, 2, 201-220

Hochschild, A.R. (1983) The Managed Heart: commercialisation of human feeling London, University of California Press 152.4HOC

Bendelow, G. and Williams, S.J. (1997) Emotions in Social Life: social theories and contemporary issues London, Routledge 152.4EMO

Craib, I. (1995) 'Some comments on the sociology of emotions' Sociology 29, 1, 151-158

Vogler, C (2000) 'Social identity and emotion: the meeting of psychoanalysis and sociology' Sociological Review 48, 1, 19-42

Elias, N. (1978) The History of Manners: The Civilizing Process vol 1 Oxford Blackwell 301.69 ELI

Duncombe, J. and Marsden, D. (1993) 'Love and intimacy: the gender division of emotion and 'emotion work' Sociology 27, 2, 221-241

Nash, K. 2003: 'Cosmopolitan Political Community: Why Does It Feel So Right?' Constellations 10(4)

11. Intimacy and sexuality

In the analysis of modern social institutions, intimacy and sexuality have been expressed within definite structures. Most notably, marriage and the family have traditionally been seen to regulate sexuality. Recently, however, with the advent of postmodernism, sex and intimacy have been separated from these institutional constraints. On the one hand this has led to the commercialisation of sex, and on the other the possibility of more 'authentic' relationships. One key debate is whether friendship, as a 'pure' form of association, expresses contemporary relationships most accurately.

Question: Are intimacy and friendship threatened by postmodernity and risk society?

Giddens, A. (1992) The Transformation of Intimacy: sexuality, love and eroticism in modern societies (chaps one, three and four) Cambridge, Polity Press 301.41GID

Bauman, Z. (2003) Liquid Love: On the Frailty of Human Bonds, Cambridge: Polity. 301.11 BAU

Giddens, A (1991) 'Tribulations of the self' in, Modernity and Self Identity (chap six) 301.001GID

Woodward, K. (2002) 'Up close and personal: the changing face of intimacy' in T. Jordan and S. Pile (eds) Social Change Oxford, Blackwell 301.24 SOC

Jamieson, L. (1997) Intimacy: personal relationships in modern society Cambridge, Polity Press 158.2 JAM

Russell, J (2005) 'What are friends for?'

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/g2/story/0,3604,1396917,00.html>

Elliot, A. (2001) 'Sexualities: Social Theory and the Crisis of Identity' in B. Smart and G. Ritzer (eds) Handbook of Social Theory London, Sage 301.01 HAN

12. Inequality

Sociology has traditionally seen inequality through the category of class, with gender and ethnicity subsequently being recognised as major sources of inequality in the last quarter of the C20th. Debate on inequality has broadened in recent times and has centred on notions of social exclusion/inclusion, wider notions of global inequality caused by the marketization of societies all over the world, and the crystallization of new notions of rights and justice.

How have sociologists attempted to understand the changing nature of inequalities?

Walters, M. 1997: 'Inequality after class' in D. Owen (ed) *Sociology after postmodernism*. London: Sage 301 SOC

Phillips, A. 1999: Which equalities matter? Cambridge: Polity Press 339.2 PHI

Levitas, R. 2005: The inclusive society?: social exclusion and New Labour.

Houndmills: Palgrave 361.942 LEV

Scholte, J.A. 2000: Globalization: a critical introduction (esp. Ch. 10 – 'Globalization and (in)Justice') Houndmills: Palgrave 330.9 SCH

Steans, J. 2003: 'Gender inequalities and feminist politics in global perspective' in E. Kofman and G. Youngs (eds) Globalization: Theory and Practice (2nd Edition)

London: Continuum. 320.01 GLO

Steans, J. 2003: 'Globalization and gendered inequality' in D. Held and A. McGrew (eds) The global transformations reader :an introduction to the globalization debate (Second edition) Cambridge: Polity Press 327 GLO

Pogge, T. 2003: 'Priorities of global justice' in D. Held and A. McGrew (eds) The global transformations reader :an introduction to the globalization debate (Second edition) Cambridge: Polity Press 327 GLO

13. Community

Community used to refer to tight-knit, cohesive and geographically proximate groups with a strong sense of self-identity. The nature and meaning of community is much changed in the contemporary world. On the one hand, cohesive working class or rural communities are in many ways a thing of the past. On the other hand, new communities have arisen: virtual communities, transnational communities, lifestyle communities. Globalization has led to resurgence in the value of locality and belonging, and created the possibility for new types of 'communities-at-a-distance'.

Seminar topic: What is the meaning of community in the global age?

Delanty, G. 2003: *Community*. London: Routledge. 301.34 DEL

Bauman, Z. 2000: *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity (esp. Chapter 5

"Community") 301.2 BAU

Rose, N. 1999: *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (esp Chapter 5 "Community"). 320.01 ROS

Albrow, M., Eade, J., Washbourne, N., and Durrschmidt, J. 1994: "The impact of globalization on sociological concepts: community, culture and milieu," *Innovation* 7(4).

Putnam, R. 1995: "Bowling alone: America's declining social capital"

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/%7EHYPER/detoc/assoc?bowling.html>

Edwards, B. and Foley, M. 1998: "Social capital and civil society beyond Putnam"

<http://arts-sciences.cua.edu/pol/faculty/foley/putnam2.htm>

Parekh, B. 2000: Rethinking multiculturalism :cultural diversity and political theory. Houndmills: Palgrave 301.451 PAR

Wellman, B. (undated) 'Little Boxes, Glocalization, and Networked Individualism'

http://www.digitalcity.jst.go.jp/cosmos/symposium/3_barry2.pdf

Hampton, K. and Wellman, B. 2001: 'Long Distance Community in the Network Society: Contact and Support Beyond Netville' American Behavioral Scientist 45(3)

<http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/~wellman/>

14. Mobilities

Mobility is a key theme in contemporary sociology. Interest in mobility has arisen as a consequence of the increasing importance of migration, diaspora, tourism, transnational social movements etc, and the more general impact of globalization-inspired accounts of flows, networks and movements. However, mobility does not have to be seen in geographical terms (or even in the conventional sociological sense of 'upward mobility'). The work of Beck introduces us to ideas of 'inner mobility,' and 'place polygamy.' We will look at some enthusiastic readings of corporeal mobility and/or networks as *the* defining feature of contemporary societies (Urry, Castells) and compare these with critiques which argue that the case for such mobility has no sociological reality and/or for a more rooted or emplaced sociology (Favell, Ray).

Question: how important is the idea of mobility to contemporary sociology?

Urry, J. 2000: Sociology Beyond Societies: Mobilities for the Twenty-first century. London: Routledge 301.001 URR

Urry, J. 2000: "Mobile sociology," *British Journal of Sociology* 51(1) also available at: <http://www.transformaties.org/bibliotheek/urry2.pdf>

Beck, U. (2000) What is Globalization? Cambridge: Polity Press. 327 BEC

Ray, L. 2002 'Crossing Borders? Sociology, Globalization and Imobility' Sociological Research Online <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/7/3/ray.html>

Favell, A. 2003: 'Migration, mobility and the new Europe'

<http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/moynihan/programs/euc/pdfs/favell.pdf>

Castells, M. (2000) The Rise of the Network Society: The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture: Volume 1 (Second Edition). Blackwell: Oxford 301.243 CAS

15. Spaces

Space has become an important issue in sociology in recent years, partly as a result of the 'spatial turn' in the social sciences more generally (the recognitions that social space is constructed rather than natural, and also constitutive of social and political

relations). In addition, sociologists have begun to recognise the important relationship between place, space and social organization, and how this has been transformed by globalization. A major contribution to this has been Castells' understanding of the shifting dynamics of space and territory, referred to as the tension between a space of places and a space of flows. Sociology has also become increasingly interested in transnational and global spaces, thereby displacing the study of national spaces from the centre of the sociological imagination.

Do sociologists need to rethink the meaning of social space?

Castells, M. (2000) The Rise of the Network Society: The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture: Volume 1 (Second Edition). Blackwell: Oxford 301.243 CAS

Sassen, S. (2001) 'Spatialities and temporalities of the global: elements for a theorization.' in A. Appadurai (ed) Globalization. Durham: Duke University Press 338.9 GLO

Pries, L. 2005: 'Configurations of geographic and societal spaces: a sociological proposal between 'methodological nationalism' and the 'spaces of flows'. Global Networks 5 (2), 167-190.

Delanty, G. and Rumford, C. 2005: Rethinking Europe: Social Theory and the Implications of Europeanization (esp. Chapter 7) London: Routledge 301.0094 DEL

Brenner, N. 1999: 'Beyond state-centrism? Space, territoriality, and geographical scale in globalization studies'

<http://sociology.fas.nyu.edu/docs/IO/222/1999.Brenner.TS.pdf>

Urry, J. 2000: 'Sociology of time and space' in B. Turner (ed) The Blackwell companion to social theory London: Routledge 300.1 BLA

Brenner, N. et al 2003: State/Space: A Reader Oxford: Blackwell

16. Borders

The very nature of borders is increasingly uncertain in a world traversed by flows and mobilities and characterized by interconnectedness. There exists a major tension between the notion of rebordering, which highlight the increasing securitization and impermeability of borders, and the idea of differentiated, diffuse, and mobile borders consistent with a world of flows. We will look at the ways in which borders are both dissolving in a borderless world, and paradoxically becoming more important as a result of the rebordering processes associated with securitization.

How have sociologists attempted to understand borders in a globalizing world?

Rumford, C. 2006: 'Theorizing borders' European Journal of Social Theory 9(2) (copy available from author)

Rumford, C. 2006: 'Borders and bordering' in G. Delanty (ed) Europe and Asia: Towards a New Cosmopolitanism London: Routledge (copy available from author)

McNeill, D. 2004 New Europe: Imagined Spaces (esp. Chapter 6) London: Arnold

Andreas, P. 2000: Border games: policing the U.S.-Mexico divide Cornell University Press 364.157 AND

Balibar, E. 1998: 'The borders of Europe' in Cheah, P. and Robbins, B. (eds)

Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation. Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press 327.17 COS

Delanty, G. and Rumford, C. 2005: Rethinking Europe: Social Theory and the Implications of Europeanization (esp. Chapter 7) London: Routledge 301.0094 DEL
Walters, W. (2002) 'Mapping Schengenland: Denaturalizing the Border'. Environment & Planning D: Society & Space, 20(5): 561-80.
Kennedy, P. and Roudometof, V. (eds) 2002: Communities across borders :new immigrants and transnational cultures London: Routledge 301.14 COM

17. Knowledge society

There have been many designations for the contemporary age: post-industrial society, postmodernity, risk society etc. Perhaps the most compelling is the 'knowledge society' in which information is the most important form of capital in a 'wired world' of connectivity and technological driven change. The idea of knowledge society is frequently associated with globalization and modern communication and media technology, but there are other important aspects which deserve consideration. Not least of these is the idea that postmodernity has allowed for greater contestation over knowledge than was previously the case. In a world where authoritative figures of knowledge production are increasingly under challenge (the state, scientists, doctors etc.), and alternative sources of expertise and information are available, we live in a society in which access to knowledge is a central component of democracy.

Question: What are the consequences for democracy of living in a "knowledge society"?

Stehr, N. (2001) 'Modern societies as knowledge societies' in B. Smart and G. Ritzer (eds) Handbook of Social Theory London, Sage 301.01 HAN

Castells, M. (2000) The Rise of the Network Society: The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture: Volume 1 (Second Edition). Blackwell: Oxford 301.243 CAS

Beck, U. (1992) Risk Society: towards a new modernity (esp. Chapter 2) London, Sage 301.2 BEC

Delanty, G. (2003) 'Ideologies of the Knowledge Society and the Cultural Contradictions of Higher Education' Policy Futures in Education 1(1)

<http://www.triangle.co.uk/pdf/viewpdf.asp?j=pfie&vol=1&issue=1&year=2003&article=4> Delanty PFIE 1 1&id=134.219.29.57

Fuller, S. (2003) 'Can Universities Solve the Problem of Knowledge in Society without Succumbing to the Knowledge Society?' Policy Futures in Education 1(1)

<http://www.triangle.co.uk/pdf/viewpdf.asp?j=pfie&vol=1&issue=1&year=2003&article=6> Fuller PFIE 1 1&id=134.219.29.57

Webster, F. (2002) Theories of the information society. London: Routledge. 301.14 WEB

Hamilton, P. (2002) 'From industrial to information society' in T. Jordan and S. Pile (eds) Social Change. Oxford: Blackwell. 301.24 SOC

Drucker, P.F. 1994: "Knowledge Work and Knowledge Society: The Social Transformations of this Century"

http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/ifactory/ksgpress/www/ksg_news/transcripts/drucklec.htm

18. Nostalgia

Much sociology is wilfully nostalgic, in the sense that the discipline has constituted itself around comparisons with pre-modern forms of social life which are often held to be more authentic or natural. It is no exaggeration to say that the separation of the modern from the non-modern world was central to the formation and development of sociology in the C20th. However, sociology has not always seen fit to reflect on the formative role of nostalgia, which has often been masked by nationalist perspectives and the enduring search for authentic community. In recent times the study of nostalgia has been placed on the sociological agenda by both postmodernity and globalization, which have (in different ways) sought to relativize history, identity and belonging, and in doing so have promoted more reflexive approaches to sociology.

Question: In what ways is sociology becoming aware of the importance of nostalgia to the sociological imagination?

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19. Review

20. Review

Essay List

1. How far, in your view, do sociological theories of globalization, postmodernity, and risk society present a pessimistic view of the future?
2. Has social theory replaced more conventional forms of sociology in accounting for contemporary social transformations?
3. What implications, in your view, does the concept of postmodernity have for sociology?
4. In what ways has globalization transformed sociology as an academic discipline?
5. 'Identity and difference have become key concepts in sociology' Discuss.
6. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the risk society thesis?
7. What benefits does a cosmopolitan perspective bring to sociology?
8. In what ways have contemporary sociologists understood the self and individuality?
9. How far should the body become a focus for sociological analysis?

10. Evaluate the notion that sociology should examine more explicitly the role of emotions in social life.
11. In what ways are intimacy and friendship changing under conditions of postmodernity and globalization?
12. Is sociology capable of understanding inequalities in modern societies?
13. What you understand by 'community' in the global age?
14. Is John Urry correct in thinking that we need a 'mobile sociology' to understand contemporary societies?
15. What is the significance of Castells' idea that under conditions of globalization a space of flows has replaced a space of places?
16. Has globalization brought about a borderless world?
17. What consequences does living in a 'knowledge society' have for democracy?
18. In what ways does nostalgia shape the sociological imagination?