Collective Action

In previous chapters it has been argued that much confusion surrounding the words 'race' and 'ethnicity' in sociology and political science can be cleared up by distinguishing practical from theoretical knowledge. Because it served political interests, race in the sense of the one-drop rule became one of the organizing principles in conceptions of the structure of US society. Attempts to give it a place in biological science had failed. First psychology and then economics found ways to build theoretical knowledge about social interaction in general, including black-white interaction, without being dependent upon any concept of race. How can sociology and political science follow their example?

Though psychology, economics, sociology and political science are distinctive disciplines that tackle particular kinds of intellectual problems, there are theories, such as those grouped as the theory of collective action, that can be employed in all these disciplines. Some versions can be used to account for differential behaviour on the basis of race, colour, descent and national or ethnic origin (the five grounds specified in the ICERD), plus those of religion and descent, because behaviour on all these seven grounds shares common features. These grounds are stated in emic terms. The social scientist has to seek explanations at a more fundamental level, employing etic concepts.

Theoretical knowledge grows by the development of intellectual traditions. In sociology one of the most influential traditions has been that deriving from the work of Max Weber, some of which shows him to have been an early pioneer of the theory of collective action. It can be educative to read the history of this, as of any other, theoretical perspective to see why some lines have prospered and why other possibilities have been overlooked or neglected.

The Rediscovery of Weber's 1911 Notes

After Max Weber's early death, a heap of manuscripts was found in his desk; many of them were incomplete, without definite titles or with no titles at all. Among them were two sets of pages apparently written about 1911 at a time when Weber was trying to identify 'universal types of groups' (like the household, the neighbourhood and the kin group) and was wondering whether characteristics of race, ethnic origin and nationality gave rise to the formation of such groups. Maybe he put these sheets of paper aside for possible use when he came back to these questions when writing a planned textbook. His widow, Marianne Weber, gave them a title, *Ethnische Gemeinsamkeitsbeziehungen,* and included them in the volume *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* as if they were a chapter her late husband had prepared for publication. Since the publication of the *Economy and Society* translations, in which the notes appear as part two, chapter V, on 'Ethnic Groups', passages from these notes have been reprinted in several volumes of readings about ethnic relations without any editorial explanation of their provisional character.[1]

Weber's over-riding interest was in the nature of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* (community and association) and in the factors, like the sharing of racial, ethnic and national origin, that led individuals to cooperate. In trying to define what had to be explained, Weber showed an acute awareness of the problematic nature of the ordinary language words available to identify the nature of these bonds. His comments on these apparently distinctive yet related social forms were so perceptive that they deserve careful consideration even after the passage of a hundred years. They bring together, for the first time, identification by race, by ethnic origin and by national origin, subsuming these emic constructs within an embryonic theory of collective action.

According to Weber, the source of the difference between community and association lay in the relationships of individuals[2]:

> A social relationship will be called 'communal' (*Vergemeinschaftung*) if and in so far as the orientation of social action – whether in the individual case, on the average, or in the pure type – is based on a subjective feeling of the parties, whether affectual or traditional, that they belong together.

> A social relationship will be called 'associative' (*Vergesellschaftung*) if and in so far as the orientation of social action within it rests on a rationally motivated adjustment of interests or a similarly motivated agreement,

whether the basis of rational judgement be absolute values or reasons of expediency.

Communal relationships were exemplified by religious brotherhoods, erotic relationships, relations of personal loyalty, national communities, the *esprit de corps* of military units and by the family. Their members were bound together in what have been called 'multiplex' relations. The 'purest cases of associative relationships' were given as: free market exchange; a voluntary association oriented to 'specific ulterior interests'; and a voluntary association that seeks only to serve a cause.

Weber did not make this explicit, but he appears to have believed that while a subjective feeling creates a social relationship, that relationship also creates the feeling. The two are reciprocal, each determining the other. To write of an 'orientation' is to suggest that there is a subjective feeling or an intention that pairs with the obligation; they are like two sides of one coin. If that is the case, the two sentences could equally well have read:

> A subjective feeling will be called 'communal' when it is based on a set of social relationships such that the parties are involved with each other in multiple relationships.

> A subjective feeling will be called 'associative' when it is based on a social relationship with a very narrow range of obligations, such as those of a seller and a buyer.

If the subjective feeling and the objective relationship are reciprocal, Weber's statement can be simplified. When two persons interact, their conduct is governed by the norms of one or more social relationships. *Gesellschaftlich* relations are one-dimensional, governed by the norms of a single pair of roles. *Gemeinschaftlich* relations are multidimensional, governed by the norms of any pair of roles that the parties choose to play. Individuals do not normally choose to enter into communal relations; they are born into them, or find that they have entered them when they have entered into particular relationships, such as marriage, or, to quote one of Weber's examples, have joined a military unit.

Associative relations are formed for specific purposes; parties to them play specific roles. If they start to interact on the basis of other roles as well, the relations between the persons in question are no

longer strictly associative, but are of a mixed character. Thus the contrast between community and association as polar opposites can be changed into a scale starting from one-dimensional relations up to a high point at which two parties identify with one another like identical twins. Multidimensionality is a variable.

Community living brings benefits and costs, both material and immaterial. Young adults may experience the pressure to conform as so great that they want to escape from it. They maintain their membership in their communities of origin so long as they believe the costs of exit to be greater than the benefits of remaining within the group. If they choose to live elsewhere, they may be able to retain a qualified membership.

Four Propositions

Later editors have placed first a page of Weber's that began by asking what might be meant by 'membership of a race'? It offered the answer that common descent only expresses itself in the form of a 'community' when the individuals concerned have a subjective feeling of their common identity that is supported by social relations between them. This emphasis on the subjective element was significant, for if Weber had thought that 'race' might be a universal type of group he would presumably have stressed objective characteristics and the word's horizontal dimension. Questioning whether there was anything distinctive about groups based on race, Weber answered that in the US southern states the whites' abhorrence of biracial marriage stemmed from their monopolization of social power and honour. This was a sociological explanation.

Then he generalized the explanation by noting, 'Any cultural trait can serve as a starting point for the familiar tendency to monopolistic closure.' He went on to assert that while almost any kind of similarity or opposition in habit and way of life could generate a belief that the sense of community sprang from some racial affinity, that belief might have no objective foundation. Its sources might lie elsewhere.

Weber observed that when a man 'is foreign in his external appearance', however he acted or whoever he might be, the primary and normal response was one of rejection. This was not due to any anthropological (or 'racial') difference; it could be a reaction to a cultural difference. His next pages took up the question of cultural difference as

the basis for the formation of an ethnic group. They outlined four important and original propositions.[3] They may be expressed as follows:

1. We shall use the expression 'ethnic' groups to describe human groups (other than kinship groups) that cherish a belief in their common origins of such a kind that it provides a basis for the creation of a community;
2. The 'ethnic' group differs from the 'kinship group' in that it is constituted simply by the belief in a common identity, whereas a kinship group is a genuine 'community', characterised by genuinely communal activity;
3. By contrast, the sense of a common ethnic identity (as that expression is being used here) is not itself a community, but only something which makes it easier to form one;
4. Conversely, it is often the political community, even when formed in a highly artificial way, which gives rise to beliefs in ethnic identity.

The translation in *Economy and Society* used the potentially misleading expression 'ethnic membership'; this distracts attention from questions about the nature of the units of which people were members.[4] Weber focused on the sense of community with certain other persons who might be simply a set of individuals; whether they used this sentiment to change themselves from a category into a social group, and make 'membership' possible, was a further question. As the fourth proposition stated, it was not necessarily the sentiment that created the group. When a group had come into being, it could nurture a corresponding sentiment that contributed to its continuing existence.

Weber found a sense of shared ethnic origin to be associated with a miscellany of differences, linguistic and religious, with the experience of migration, with membership in a political unit like a tribe, with endogamous social circles concerned to defend their status, differences in clothing, style of housing, food, eating habits and the division of labour between the sexes. As if this was not confusing enough already, he added that 'what matters is precisely those things which may otherwise appear to be of only minor social importance'.

In the third chapter of *Economy and Society* there are translations of other pages, presented under the headings 'Tribe and Political Community: The Disutility of the Notion of "Ethnic Group"' and 'Nation-

ality and Cultural Prestige'. Here Weber moved on to the third kind of potential group, the nation. He started from the proposition that 'the concept of "nationality" shares with that of the Volk (or "people") – in the "ethnic" sense – the vague connotation that whatever is felt to be distinctively common must derive from common descent'. But how did the nation differ from the ethnic group? Weber concluded that 'feelings of identity subsumed under the term "national" may derive from diverse sources'. 'Time and again we find that the concept "nation" directs us to political power.'

Where did Weber get his ideas about ethnic community? What stopped him distinguishing the 'ethnic' from the 'national'? That he felt unsure about these constructs can be seen from his liberal use of quotation marks. He seems to have been the first writer to wonder how an ethnic minority might differ from a national minority, or how 'ethnic origin' might differ from 'national origin'.

The answer to the first question may lie in Weber's four-month visit in 1904 to the United States. There he will have met many German-Americans, so he probably had them in mind when he wrote about how 'colonists' spiritual ties with their homeland survive'. He seems to have regarded German-Americans as an ethnic group rather than as a national group, because 'they have become so thoroughly adapted to their new environment that they themselves would find it intolerable to return to their old homes'.

Weber may have put his notes aside because he was dissatisfied with them. He had apparently been looking for a one-to-one relation between a sentiment and a social form, but found no separate sentiment that could promote a sense of shared nationality. Instead of identifying, and focusing upon, an observation that called for explanation, Weber listed some miscellaneous reports of observations and stated that a 'rigorous sociological analysis' of '"ethnically" determined action' would have to separate all the factors that could create ethnic attraction and repulsion; were this done, he noted, 'the collective term "ethnic" would be abandoned'.

The exercise led him to conclude that the concept of an *ethnische Gemeinschaft* 'which dissolves if we define our terms exactly, corresponds in this regard to one of the most vexing, since emotionally charged concepts: the nation, as soon as we attempt a sociological definition'.[5] There were two mistakes here. Firstly, the difference between the ethnic and the national had turned out to be one of circumstance, not of sentiment or *Gefühl*. Weber had failed to spot an

intervening variable. Possibly unlike German-born people in Germany's African colonies, German-Americans constituted an ethnic rather than a national minority because their intention of remaining in the United States trumped their sense of being German. As already noted, in 1916 this issue became critical for them.

Shared ethnic origin can be a dimension of social life at different levels. There is the continental level, exemplified in the distinction between Europeans and Africans; there is the state, or national, level; and there is the substate level. Shared national origin has to be analysed both in relation to movements seeking the establishment of a state, and in relation to the maintenance of an existing state. At this level the other attributes of which a belief in shared national origin can serve as a sign are so important that they enforce a stronger conceptual distinction between state-oriented ethnic action and other ethnic action than is to be found in Weber's text.

Secondly, while Weber recognized that the sentiment, the *Gefühl,* had more influence in some situations than others, he did not build it into the four propositions noted above. Many sentiments are associated with relationships and the same person is involved in many relationships simultaneously. This has earlier been called multidimensionality. Two persons, A and B, may interact as man and woman, or as persons of the same gender. They can also interact as persons of the same, or different, social status, ethnic origin, citizenship, religious faith and so on. The number of possible dimensions to their relations is great indeed. A gender relationship is differentiated from a status relationship or an ethnic relationship by the parties' awareness of norms that define the nature of the relationship. A common ethnic origin may sponsor a norm in one relationship and not in another.

The communities that are considered relatively cohesive are the communities whose members relate to one another on a multiplicity of relationships. They are also the communities in which two or more social categories are very closely associated. The cases of Jews and Sikhs as formally defined by both ethnic origin and faith are well-known, but in many contact situations there is an expectation that ethnic origin and religion (or some other cultural characteristic) will go together. This association of categories is often called intersectionality. Its significance explains why the prominence given in the *Economy and Society* translation to the idea of 'membership' in an ethnic or national group is misleading. Real groups (as opposed to categories) are multidimensional.[5] There are both ethnic and national

dimensions to a social relation if there are distinct ethnic and national norms of behaviour.

Seen in retrospect, one remarkable feature of Weber's 1911 thoughts about the nation is that neither then, nor in what appears in *Economy and Society* as chapter IX, 'Political Communities' (written at much the same time), does he consider the relation between the nation and the state. Nor does he comment on the relation between *Nationalgefühl* and territory; this is astonishing, considering how many 'national anthems' (which are sometimes state anthems) highlight the most distinctive features of those territories, and the identification evident in musical compositions celebrating 'my land' or 'our land'.

At the end of the chapter on 'Basic Sociological Terms', written shortly before his death, Weber has a sentence that is difficult to translate. In *Economy and Society* it appears as a definition of the state as 'a compulsory organization with a territorial basis'.[6] Weber had not revised his earlier statement that 'the concept [of the nation] belongs in the sphere of values', or investigated which values were relevant in this context.[7] Control of territory had not been an important issue in the unification of Germany in 1871; the circumstances of that unification may explain why Weber attributed less significance than other authors to a possible sense of shared territory, or to the association of state power with the control of territory; he gave more emphasis to shared descent and shared language as generators of national sentiment.

The link between the ethnic and the national in Weber's scheme was that they were both forms of political behaviour grounded in a sense of shared descent. The closeness of the link in ordinary language usage is exemplified in the ICERD's reference to 'national or ethnic origin'. It derives from the significance of the word 'ethnos' in classical Greek, from an era before the formation of nation states. The state is often regarded as a European concept dating from the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. It counts the recognition of shared descent as the link between the citizen and the state. Many states in Asia do not use this as such a link. Nor is there a need for one in a technical language where the objective should be to identify a variable that can be measured. To link ethnic group with nation is to introduce the question of how the nation is related to the state. Is there an Arab nation distributed over several states? Are the Roma a nation without a state, or can any action in their name be accounted nationalist?

In Europe, a state is regarded as possessing a territory, and when Europeans established colonies in Africa they defined their new terri-

tory by drawing lines on a map that ignored the boundaries between ethnic groups. In near-desert conditions in East Africa, the borders drawn between Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia disrupted the lives of pastoralists accustomed to moving with their camels or cows to whatever districts had benefited from the irregular rainfall of that region. The interaction between the administrative procedures of the state, and the utilization of state rules by the local people whenever it suited their interests, set in motion a process of ethnicization within Kenya's borders.[8] However, to qualify as a member of some ethnic groups, a person might have to qualify on more than one dimension of membership; in this region no one can now be counted as Somali unless he or she is a Muslim as well, resembling the Jewish and Sikh identifications of ethnic origin with religious profession.[9]

Closure

Before 1920, Weber had prepared for publication three chapters setting out what he called his *Kategorienlehre,* or doctrine of categories. This represented a new departure, inconsistent with the mode of explanation he had employed in his substantive writings on the world religions.[10] Just before his death, he wrote to his former pupil Robert Liefmann, an economist, 'If I now happen to be a sociologist according to my appointment papers, then I became one in order to put an end to the mischievous enterprise which still operates with collectivist concepts [*Kollektivbegriffe*].'[11] The three chapters on interpretive sociology were a first attempt to put an end to the mischievous enterprise. They started from 'the behaviour of one or more individual human beings' instead of from the sources of community. They outlined a bottom-up sociological theory as an alternative to the top-down theories that shaded into philosophies of history.

Weber had observed that a social relationship might be either open or closed to outsiders. An open relationship would be one in which someone was pursuing his or her personal interests in whatever directions they led. A closed relationship would be one seeking to develop collective action of an exclusive kind in pursuit of shared objectives. Thus trade union members could maximize their bargaining power by restraining 'competitive struggle within the group'. By voting for a closed shop, and imposing a rule upon themselves and their fellows, workers could maximize their average earnings – just as the whites

in the southern states of the United States had engaged in collective action to the disadvantage of blacks. On the other hand, Weber wrote, 'If the participants expect that the admission of others will lead to an improvement of their situation, an improvement in degree, in kind, in the security or value of the satisfaction, their interest will be in keeping the relationship open.'[12] Their course would then be one of individual action.

It can be difficult to persuade industrial workers to support occupational closure. This was a starting point for one of the canonical works in the theory of collective action, Mancur Olson's 1965 book, *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups.*[13] He observed that though collective bargaining on behalf of workers in a particular trade might secure them higher wages, an individual worker might calculate that he could benefit from such a raise without joining the union. He could be a 'free rider', benefiting from the collective action of others. To prevent this, a trade union might try to organize a 'closed shop', closing the trade to non-members. Some collective actions, like those of caste-based groups in India discussed in the previous chapter, make an imperative demand upon all their members.[14] There may be no free riders but plenty of captive travellers compelled to go along with the crowd.

Weber provided diverse examples of closure. Apart from those associated with economic relations, he noted that the choice of the language to be used would limit a conversation to those who could speak that language. Status groups often maintained linguistic peculiarities to keep themselves exclusive. If it was the language for a publication, though, closure would probably be expensive. There were degrees of closure; it could be higher for 'a theatrical audience the members of which have purchased tickets' than for 'a party rally to which the largest possible number has been urged to come'. 'Monopolistic closure' was the highest degree. In the competition for social status, some persons wished their groups to appear exclusive, and this required an emphasis on what made them distinctive. Characteristically, Weber added that the details about forms of closure and appropriation 'must be reserved for the later analysis'. He did not furnish comparable examples of the circumstances that occasion the opening of previously closed relationships. Maybe they too were reserved for later analysis.

That was never possible, and the absence of such an analysis has passed unnoticed. It was his writing on the sociology of religion and methodology that appealed most to other sociologists. The 1911

notes attracted less attention than his criticism of racial theories that claimed a foundation in biology. Then, in 1947, part of a chapter on which Weber had been working was published as 'Class, Status and Party'.[15] Particularly because of the publication of this translation, Weber came to be seen as the exponent of the analysis of racial and ethnic relations in terms of status rather than of class. The extract inspired John Rex to argue that the overarching sociological problem was the differential incorporation of racial and ethnic groups into the structures of the states in which they resided. In the process of incorporation, political and legal structures were as important as economic ones, and the groups interacted as classes.[16] When Siniša Malešević included in his text on *The Sociology of Ethnicity* a chapter on 'Neo-Weberian Theory: Ethnicity as a Status Privilege', he reviewed work inspired by the 'Class, Status and Party' text (now reprinted in *Economy and Society,* part one, chapter IV), not that which had been inspired by the chapter on 'Ethnic Groups'.[17]

In its application to the study of racial and ethnic relations, the theory of collective action must begin by recording the significance of values imparted during the process of socialization. According to this theory, actions can be explained as searches for maximum net advantage, comprehending psychic as well as material benefits, and recognizing that choices can be made only between the available alternatives. For the purposes of this book, the introductory argument can be expressed in three propositions:

1. During socialization, a human learns to identify with, and value association with, certain other persons.
2. In dealings with others, a person learns to maximize his or her net advantages, balancing both material and immaterial costs and benefits.
3. In such dealings, the person chooses between available alternatives.

For example, in the US Deep South, some alternatives that would elsewhere have been open to blacks were closed and any attempt to exercise them evoked punishment. Throughout the country, application of the one-drop rule restricted the freedom of individuals to identify themselves.

Seen from this standpoint, changes in the US census open up possibilities, in the practical realm, of further change resulting from individual choices. In the theoretical realm it invites more systematic

study of the factors that cause individuals to present themselves in new ways, and thereby to increase or decrease the closure of relationships.

The Human Capital Variable

It was argued at the end of chapter 4 that interpersonal relations are multidimensional. Two individuals can interact on the basis of alternative social relationships, like those of gender, age, religion, socioeconomic class, language and so on. Particularly when there is a difference in power, one party may be willing to interact on the basis of one relationship only (e.g. a police officer questioning a motorist). Relations can be changed by a shift to a different relationship; this is easier when the individuals in question are members of local communities; these consist of persons who have varied individual characteristics but share a common life and have shared interests. Such a community may close itself off from other comparable communities.

Communities, in Weber's sense of groups bound by multiple ties, maintain a common life and are organized to defend it if necessary. What its members share is a form of social capital, one that facilitates transactions between its members. Definitions of social capital vary, but their core idea is the proposition that social networks have value, for both individuals and communities. So anything that facilitates individual or collective action (such as networks of relationships, reciprocity, trust and social norms) can be accounted social capital. It can be drawn upon for the pursuit of good ends or bad ends. Members of an ethnic or national majority hold some social capital in common. So do members of every social minority, whether religious, ethnic or territorial. The drawing of a color line or the observance of an ethnic boundary can prevent social transactions that would cross the line, while promoting relations within the social categories on either side of it. Ethnic diversity may therefore put brakes on economic performance that may not be counterbalanced by other benefits.

Research that makes use of these ideas about social capital may help the search for new etic constructs. National history can be read as a story of the accumulation, and sometimes the diminution, of social capital. Other experiences may outweigh any such influence, but in general, societies founded upon immigration, like the United States and Australia, can be expected to have less social capital than those that have been accustomed to emigration, like many West European

countries. Both the United States and Australia developed with an immigrant conception of their national society. In very many other countries there is a population consisting of people who, if pressed, will say that they are the *Staatsvolk*, the original inhabitants and therefore the owners of the territory.[18] Most of the time they are not pressed. They are not obliged to think about who they are, and do not want to engage in what many regard as a pointless exercise. Majority-minority relations on the two sides of the Atlantic Ocean therefore differ in this connection.[19]

In most European countries, majority sentiment is inchoate and tacit. It is not easily investigated by survey methods because the shared sentiment is diffuse; in an opinion poll about people's concerns, it would yield place to more specific and immediate priorities. So its importance is easily underestimated.

In a landmark contribution to the study of social capital, Robert Putnam compared two theories. 'The first, usually labelled the "contact hypothesis", argues that diversity fosters interethnic tolerance and social solidarity.'[20] Yet Putnam thought it fair to observe that 'most (though not all) empirical studies have tended instead to support the so-called "conflict theory", which suggests that … diversity fosters outgroup distrust and in-group solidarity'. Whether contact promotes tolerance or conflict depends upon the kind of relationship within which the contact occurs, and the attitudes and expectations people hold before entering into contact. These theories cannot therefore be properly tested by opinion surveys carried out at a single moment in time. Survey methods can uncover associations but not their causes.

In the same lecture, Putnam also distinguished between bonding social capital ('ties to people who are like you in some way') and bridging capital ('ties to people who are unlike you in some way'). High bonding might be compatible with high bridging; he quoted a finding that US whites who have more white friends also have more non-white friends.

The concept of bonding capital has much in common with the concept of morale. It has long been recognized that a small military unit with high morale can often defeat a much larger one with low morale. Victory in a contest between sports teams may go to the one with greater team spirit. There can be an inspirational quality in interpersonal relations. Putnam argued that the central element in this quality, and in social capital, is that of generalized reciprocity. This, in turn, rests upon trust in others.[21] A major study in the Netherlands

carried this argument further by examining the neighbourhood effects of ethnic, religious and economic diversity, plus Dutch-language proficiency, while allowing for the individual characteristics of respondents (such as educational levels). These were assessed against three scales measuring different forms of social trust: 'the first to the quality of contact, the second to trust in the neighbourhood and the third to trust between ethnic groups'.[22]

Putnam had concluded that in the United States ethnic heterogeneity was associated negatively with the quality of contact with neighbours. This finding was confirmed for the Netherlands, even after controlling for the effects of economic, religious and language differences. However, 'We do not find an association between ethnically diverse neighbourhoods and trust in the neighbourhood, neither for the immigrants nor for the natives.' Moreover, 'Ethnic diversity has a positive effect on the level of inter-ethnic trust of Dutch residents, but a negative effect on the quality of contact with neighbours for everybody'.[23]

Diversity in the neighbourhood did not necessarily have, for Dutch residents, the same sort of effect as variations in individual characteristics. Thus religious diversity decreased the quality of contact with neighbours, trust in the neighbourhood and interethnic trust. At the same time, a higher level of individual attendance at religious services increased the scores on all three indicators of trust. A further study in the Netherlands found that the theory of preferences and structural constraints can explain entry into intergroup contact among both immigrants and natives.[24] Economic diversity was associated with higher trust in the neighbourhood and higher interethnic trust among both immigrant and native residents. The authors suggested that economic differences can be 'synergetic'. By this they apparently mean that 'people with a different ethnic background are less likely to compete with one another'. They may even be complementary: 'a consultant needs a bakery, and a renter profits from the owner renovating his house and making the street more attractive to live in'. [25]

A recent study of social cohesion in local communities in Britain found no evidence that racial diversity had an eroding effect upon social interaction once allowance had been made for the association between racial diversity and economic deprivation. At the same time it reported a 'puzzling' finding that racial diversity had a direct negative effect on the perceptions of, and trust in, fellow neighbours.[26] Further research results may modify conclusions of this kind. Much may turn

on whether perceptions of neighbours are derived from personal experience rather than from the mass media.

An analysis of relative ethnic, linguistic and religious heterogeneity in states of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) found ethnic fractionalization to be a significant predictor of economic performance.[27] It did not identify the causes of the observed association. Those who pioneered this mode of analysis traced the negative effects of ethnic fractionalization to ethnic differences in preferences for alternative forms of public expenditure.[28]

The findings of empirical research are in general compatible with the argument that multidimensional social relations embody more social capital than unidimensional relations because they facilitate reciprocity. They suggest that the sentiments that can make a *Staatsvolk* appear distinctive stem from the same source. Moreover, they point to possible ways in which such a mode of explanation may be developed.

Probably the biggest weakness of some of the available studies that were designed to test 'contact theory' is that the techniques currently available to measure the effects of contact are very weak. There are great advantages in examining instead actual changes in behaviour, such as the decisions made by individuals who could identify with more than one line of ancestry. A technique for measuring preferences for association with co-ethnics could be adapted to measure the effects of contact.

The Colour Variable

Another variable influential at both the interpersonal and the global levels is the significance accorded to shades of skin colour. In the United States, discrimination on grounds of colour is treated as a form of racial discrimination; nevertheless both backs and whites sometimes discriminate on grounds of colour. Analysis of data obtained in the New Immigrant Survey 2003 (of 8,573 respondents) found that, after controlling for the effects of education, English language proficiency, occupation in source country, family background, ethnicity, race and country of birth, immigrants with the lightest skin colour (measured on a eleven-point scale) earned on average 17 per cent more than immigrants with the darkest skin colour. An additional unit of skin colour darkness on the scale lowered wages by 1.7

per cent (while an additional inch of height above the US gender-specific average brought a wage advantage of 2 per cent).[29] Many of the employers who were displaying a preference for lighter-skinned and taller employees will have been white. There were also many allegations that African American supervisors and fellow workers discriminated on the basis of skin colour, both of the lighter-skinned discriminating against the darker-skinned and vice-versa.[30] The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission was taking many such cases to court.

A very substantial body of evidence has been accumulated attesting to the existence of a preference for a light skin colour preference within the African American population. In what are perceived as black-white encounters, black solidarity may be strong. When this opposition is absent, other distinctions can come to the fore. Colour preference is often referred to as 'colorism'. Some African Americans underestimate its significance because they do not wish to air what they regard as dirty laundry in public, as if the issue were African American property.[31] Insofar as that is the case, it is a consequence of the so-called one-drop rule. Despite this sensitivity, recent research has gone beyond the earlier studies reporting that infants prefer light-coloured dolls to dark-coloured ones, and that light-coloured females have an advantage in the rating-dating complex. In particular, a national survey of Black Americans has found that among African American women who are judged as having 'low and average levels of attractiveness', self-esteem is associated with lighter skin colour. Self-esteem was not found to be associated with lightness of complexion among women judged 'highly attractive' or of higher socioeconomic status. The influence of skin tone effect among women operated through its consequences for income and education. Differences in skin tone effect were associated with the feeling of self-efficacy among men at twice the rate among women.[32]

African Americans with fairer complexions report higher earnings than darker-complexioned persons. The same survey found that for every dollar earned by a light-skinned African American, a darker-skinned person earned 72 cents. A further finding was that African Americans with a light skin tone were more likely to be married than those with a dark complexion, by a difference of 42 to 27 per cent. The spouses of light-skinned respondents had average earnings of $21,540; of respondents with medium complexions, $20,332; and of those with dark complexions, $17,510. The differences in the social

experience of African Americans can be traced to the ways in which other Americans treat them.[33]

These findings are consistent with the hypothesis that the colour preferences of white Americans have been absorbed into a colour scale governing employment. Other findings support the hypothesis that those disadvantaged by such a scale draw upon their shared experience to construct a scale of their own when they mobilize for political action at the national level or develop ideas of a racial or ethnic identity in interpersonal relations. For example, some people may be considered 'not black enough' to represent African Americans. In these circumstances there may be a colour scale in which a dark black complexion is at the top of the scale and a white one is at the bottom. There are also indications that in very 'mixed' societies some people identify with a midpoint as best representative of the whole population. Advertising agencies may prefer to engage models with intermediate complexions for similar reasons, and the practice of tanning shows that in some circumstances a fair complexion is preferred to a pale one.[34]

The idea of a colour scale has the virtue of generality. It can be manifested in all regions of the world. Sometimes, the whiter a person's skin colour, the higher he or she is ranked. In other countries, or in other circumstances, the blackest persons are ranked highest, while elsewhere an intermediate complexion may be regarded the most favourably. The social significance attributed to a position on such a scale varies with the social relationship; in some relationships it may be zero or even carry a minus value. A colour scale is usually a component of a larger scale of socio-economic status. Other physical characteristics, such as hair form, can be involved.

Describing the system of continuous differentiation in Jamaica around 1950, Stuart Hall testified: 'Anybody in my family could compute and calculate anybody's social status by grading the particular quality of their hair versus the particular quality of the family they came from and which street they lived in, including physiognomy, shading, etc. You could trade off one characteristic against another.'[35] In Jamaica at this time the banks and other commercial establishments recruited staff of fair complexion for positions involving contact with members of the public. In this respect, the practice resembled the colour-based social differentiation practiced within the US black population, particularly before the Civil Rights era. The re-

search worker who seeks to account for such forms of differentiation finds other concepts to be more useful than racism.

In Britain in the 1950s, there was a general tendency among whites to see the population as divided into 'white or coloured'. Following the trend in the United States, there was, from the 1960s, increased self-identification as 'black', yet two outstanding British athletes whom others would have considered black refused to be included in a book about black sportsmen, one on the grounds that he had an English mother and thought this would be an insult to her, the other, who had been fostered in a rural area by another white parent, insisted, 'I may be black but this is not the most important thing about me.'[36]

The possibility of 'identity change' depends upon the options available. If, in the United Kingdom, a person of both black and white parentage refuses to align himself or herself according to the one-drop rule, the social costs of such a decision are likely to be much lower than they might be in the United States. In the United Kingdom, any colour line has been incorporated to a greater extent into the assessment of socio-economic status; non-white minorities have, relatively speaking, been numerically small, and there have been no urban ghettos. Attitudes have long been more fluid than in the United States. This fluidity was not always seen as beneficial when the author was conducting research in London in 1950–52. Several times he heard black men complain that 'in America, you know where you stand; here you never know what to expect'.

Ethnic Preferences

Preferences for association with co-ethnics can be expected among members of any ethnic group.[37] These preferences will not necessarily be of positive value. In some circumstances people wish to avoid co-ethnics. Their preferences will then be of negative value. Because persons on both sides of a colour-based distinction tend to identify collectively, the possibility of their having co-ethnic neighbours may influence their search for housing and the possibility of their children having co-ethnic classmates may affect their choice of schools. These are only preferences, so there will be a trade-off against other values.

A technique for measuring such preferences was developed for use in surveys in which samples of urban Malaysians have been inter-

viewed. Subjects were asked to predict how they thought others would decide in situations designed to measure preference for association with co-ethnics relative to the alternatives of personal gain and desire to meet what was felt as a personal obligation. In one situation they were told that Husin Ali, a representative Malay-Malaysian, bought his groceries from Ah Kow's grocery shop, noted for its cheapness and close to his house. He had been told that someone called Ahmad was about to open a second grocery in the neighbourhood. Respondents were asked whether they thought that Husin Ali would transfer his custom to the new shop. Nothing in the interview said that Husin Ali was of Malay origin, or Ah Kow of Chinese origin. Those interviewed will have made this inference. In research elsewhere, the names or photographs of representative persons can be varied to discover more about the processes of social cognition.[38]

There was a common belief that Chinese-origin shopkeepers sold groceries more cheaply. Would Husin Ali prefer to help his co-ethnic (Ahmad), or would he buy where prices were lower (Ah Kow)? Were he to patronize Ahmad, this would be taken as an expression of social alignment based upon a preference for association with a co-ethnic. The strength of such a preference could be measured, for example, by finding whether Husin Ali was predicted to continue shopping with Ahmad, if, other things being equal, his prices were 2, 4, 6 or 8 per cent higher. In a shopping situation, some individuals will have a preference of zero for association with a co-ethnic; others may have a higher preference, depending perhaps upon their personalities, their financial circumstances or the social pressures they experience.

A prediction that Husin Ali would prefer to shop with his co-ethnic could be seen as an estimation of his individual likes and dislikes, or as reflecting his solidarity with the co-ethnics who have made him the person he is. This latter aspect was measured in the research by asking respondents how they thought Husin Ali's mother would wish him to act in the situations studied. The questions were varied to measure the preference for association with a co-ethnic by comparison with an expected financial gain, a gain in social status and the sense of obligation to a fellow employee. They were repeated in a study of the predicted ethnic preferences of a Chinese-Malaysian.

Just as many individuals will have a preference, in given situations, for association with a co-ethnic, so they may have preferences for association with someone of the same national origin, the same religion, the same gender, the same social class or a speaker of the same

language. Questions could be devised that would enable an investigator to measure the strength of one such association relative to others. The components of forms of behaviour that have been aggregated as 'racial' can be separated. Methods of this kind provide better predictions of likely behaviour than the sorts of question posed in questionnaire research.

Where do ethnic preferences come from? Every child is inducted into a pre-existing network of kin, neighbours and acquaintances from whom he or she can expect support. So preferences for association with certain kinds of other people exist from an early age. They persist only if they are reinforced by everyday experiences of reciprocity. It is on this basis that sets or groups of persons sharing similar values take shape. Andreas Wimmer has investigated the process by reanalysing information in the European Social Survey, a data set with more than 100,000 individuals and 380 ethnic groups in 24 countries. He found that only between 2 and 3 per cent of the variation in the measured values was located at the level of the ethnic group; between 7 and 16 per cent occurred at the level of the country, and between 80 and 90 per cent at the level of the individual. Individuals who reported Islam as their religion did not diverge from the basic values of their countries any more than did Catholics.

The analysis showed that immigrants carried with them the value orientations into which they had been socialized, but that political exclusion had no effect on the value orientation of first-generation settlers. In the second generation, matters were very different. In the groups experiencing political exclusion, second-generation respondents deviated from the measured values three times more than their peers in groups that were not excluded. This supported the thesis that social closure increases the sharing of values in an excluded group.

Earlier in this book, it was held that many social relations are multidimensional, in that someone who has been playing one role can switch to another role. Communities are characterized by the diversity of the bases on which members can interact with one another. Wimmer takes this argument further by identifying four processes (he calls them mechanisms) by which different relationships can be tied with one another: availability, propinquity, homophily (or membership sharing) and balancing processes. Their influence is measured by use of a data set recording the social ties revealed by 1,640 students at a private college in the United States, 736 of whom posted photographs of their friends on Facebook.

This enabled Wimmer and his team to discover the existence of seventeen different communities, some ethnic, some based on the subjects studied and some tying together fans of particular bands or styles of music. The team concluded that 'racial homophily does not represent the prime principle of tie formation … despite the emphasis on "race" that we find in many lay and sociological accounts of American society'.[39] The research opened up new techniques for comparing the strength of preferences for association with co-ethnics relative to other sentiments and ties governing the formation of social bonds.

Opening Relationships

Max Weber maintained, 'If the participants expect that the admission of others will lead to an improvement of their situation … their interest will be in keeping the relationship open', whereas if 'their expectations are of improving their position by monopolistic tactics, their interest is in a closed relationship'. As has already been noted, he believed that the colour line in the US South represented a white 'monopolization of social power and honour'.[40] That action evoked, in the Civil Rights movement, a corresponding movement of closure on the part of blacks.

The statement of F. James Davis in 1991, quoted in chapter 2, that 'the one-drop rule is now as fully accepted in the black community as a whole as it is in the white community' may, in part, have reflected a feeling among black Americans that 'racial' solidarity is a form of social capital. Awareness of shared experience based on racial classification can be a better basis for a mobilization movement than an awareness of distinctions of colour, since those distinctions highlight individual differences. Whatever the belief, it does not long remain in force unless it is confirmed by daily experience, and is not challenged by new alternatives appealing to the participants' personal interests.

Any opening of the black-white relationship in the United States can be regarded as a reflection of changing interests only if the word 'interest' is seen as reflecting more than economic interests. It must comprehend individuals' conceptions of their identities as citizens of a state and as human beings. Eugene Robinson's book *Disintegration* suggests that forms of identification are becoming more complicated.

The change in the US census by which individuals can now identify themselves as being of more than one race, and the movement to

popularize 'multiracial' (or something similar) as an identification, makes available a new alternative. Research into people's decisions (whites as well as blacks) to identify, or not to identify, as being of more than one race, will throw light onto the opening of a previously closed relationship. The degree of openness-closure is another variable that bears upon ethnic relations.

The study of ethnic preferences offers a method for measuring the relative strength of both material and non-material interests. The studies in Malaysia asked whether a subject would define certain situations as requiring conformity to a norm of alignment with a co-ethnic, or whether they would set this aside in favour of their personal advantage, either in terms of money or identification with someone of higher social status, or whether they would observe a norm of social obligation to a neighbour or workmate. The underlying hypothesis was that subjects can draw satisfaction both from complying with norms and from personal advantage. They may trade off the satisfactions of personal gain against those of norm observance. It is not difficult to measure the relative strength of expected satisfactions. Modern market economies are based upon financial incentives; they weaken traditional forms of social categories and they loosen the association of categories. Much new technology works in ways independent of social distinctions and therefore weakens them. Research into the strength of civic norms relative to other norms and incentives should be of wider interest because the opening of social relationships should lead to an increase in social capital.

Use of this kind of technique may open up possibilities for comparing the significance attributed, in specific settings, to various kinds of physical difference, like skin colour, hair, height and weight, and to compare them with the significance attributed to social class, presentation of self and so on.

This book contends that sociology is a distinctive field insofar as there is a body of specifically sociological knowledge. It has invoked Durkheim's analysis of variations in suicide rates in support of the claim that there is distinctively sociological knowledge (though much of it is shared with other social sciences). Durkheim demonstrated that some of these variations were determined by factors of which the parties were not conscious. Some of the best research into racial and ethnic relations – like the US studies of caste and class in the Deep South in the 1930s – has similarly shown how the participants' lives could be structured by social institutions when those concerned often had only

limited understanding of the system within which they lived. These studies added to sociological knowledge about how two-category social systems can work even if the circumstances in the Deep South have since changed.

The further growth of sociological knowledge in this field would surely benefit from locating the intellectual problems, the explananda, within a larger historical and conceptual framework. The field began as an attempt to account for the social significance attributed to phenotypical differences among humans. Those were differences of physique, particularly of complexion and hair. Significance is a relative matter, so the attention paid to physical characteristics had to be considered alongside differences of religion, language, gender and national or ethnic origin. Further progress will depend upon the construction of a framework for explaining the significance attributed, in different sections of a population, to cultural as well as physical differences.

The discovery of etic constructs to supersede the emic constructs of race and ethnicity will not come from research designed as a search for successor concepts, but will be a by-product of research designed to meet other objectives, such as research into the trade-off between ethnic preferences and other preferences, or into the sources of social capital. Research that is not dependent on ordinary language concepts of race and ethnicity will bring the study of racial and ethnic relations into closer relation with sociological research in general.

Notes

1. Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Grundriss der Verstehenden Soziologie,* 1st edition, (1921); 5th edition, edited by Johannes Winkelmann (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck); *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology,* edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, translations by various authors (New York: Bedminster, 1968); *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft: die Wirtschaft und die gesellschaftlichen Ordnungen und Mächte; Nachlass. Teilbd. 1. Gemeinschaften,* edited by Wolfgang J. Mommsen; *Gesamtausgabe. Bd.22. Abteilung 1. Schriften und Reden* (Tübingen: Mohr, 2001).
2. Weber, *Economy and Society,* 40–41.
3. Quoted here from W. G. Runciman, *Selections in Translation,* edited by Max Weber (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 364, because its translation of them is better than that in *Economy and Society,* 389. Some passages in this section also appear in Michael Banton, 'Updating Max Weber on the Racial, the Ethnic and the National', *Journal of Classical Sociology* 2014 14(3): 325–340.

4. Weber, *Economy and Society,* 395.
5. The word 'group' is an emic construct used in different senses. A statistician may group certain observations using the verbal form, and then refer to the resulting set as a group, using the noun. A psychologist may assemble a set of individuals as an experimental group, although its members have no continuing relations with each other. A social group is said to exist when a set of individuals are conscious of belonging to a continuing unit. Many references to 'ethnic groups' relate to ethnic categories.
6. Weber, *Economy and Society,* 56. The original reads: 'Verbandsgenossen, sondern im weiten Umfang für alles auf dem beherrschten Gebiet stattfindende Handeln (also: gebietsanstaltsmäßig)'. As translator, Talcott Parsons took away the parentheses in an attempt to extract its meaning (56).
7. Ibid., 922. Weber made little use of any concept of society; he might have associated its use with 'the mischievous enterprise which still operates with collectivist concepts'. Weber's basic concepts were those of *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft* which are usually represented in English as community and association; 'society' (as in the title *Economy and Society*) is not a true equivalent of *gesellschaft,* but the closest approximation.
8. Günther Schlee, 'Territorializing ethnicity: The imposition of a model of statehood on pastoralists in northern Kenya and southern Ethiopia', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 2013 36(5): 857–874; also Günther Schlee and Abdullahi A. Shongolo, *Pastoralism and Politics in Northern Kenya & Southern Ethiopia* (Woodbridge: James Currie, 2012).
9. Günther Schlee, *Islam & Ethnicity in Northern Kenya & Southern Ethiopia* (Woodbridge: James Currie, 2012), 7.
10. Mary Fulbrook, 'Max Weber's "Interpretive Sociology": A comparison of conception and practice', *British Journal of Sociology* 1978 29(1): 71–82.
11. H. H . Bruun, *Science, Values and Politics in Max Weber's Methodology* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1972), p. 38).
12. Weber, *Economy and Society,* 43–44.
13. Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1965).
14. Donald L. Horowitz, *The Deadly Ethnic Riot* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).
15. Max Weber, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology,* edited by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (London: Kegan Paul, 1947), 180–195.
16. John Rex, 'The role of class analysis in the study of race relations – a Weberian perspective', in Rex and David Mason (eds.), *Theories of Race and Ethnic Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), xii, 64–83.
17. Siniša Malešević, *The Sociology of Ethnicity.*
18. Georg Jellinek, *Allgemeine Staatslehre* (Berlin: Springer, 3rd ed. 1921, 1st ed. 1900).
19. In a comment on Taylor's *Multiculturalism and 'The Politics of Religion',* 99–101, Michael Walzer draws a distinction between two kinds of liberalism. The first kind is 'committed in the strongest possible way to individual rights and a rigorously neutral state. The second kind is committed to the survival and flourishing of a particular nation, culture or religion … so long

as the basic rights of citizens who have different commitments or no such commitments at all are protected.' Nation-states are of the latter kind: 'All nation-states act to reproduce men and women of a certain sort: Norwegian, French, Dutch, or whatever', so there is bound to be 'conflict with the efforts of minorities to sustain themselves over time'. The United States, like other 'immigrant societies', is of the former kind, in which 'there is no privileged majority and there are no exceptional minorities'. To this may be added the observation that in all countries the national bond is a source of social capital; that the bond is political in character, but that where, as in Norway, France and the Netherlands, it has deep cultural roots, it is likely to be stronger.

20. Robert Putnam, 'E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the Twenty-first Century', *Scandinavian Political Studies* 2007 30: 137–174.

21. Following James S. Coleman, *Foundations of Social Theory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 318–321.

22. Bram Lancee and Jaap Dronkers, 'Ethnic, Religious and Economic Diversity in Dutch Neighbourhoods: Explaining Quality of Contact with Neighbours, Trust in the Neighbourhood and Inter-Ethnic Trust', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 2011 37(4): 597–618, at 603.

23. Ibid., 615.

24. Borja Martinović, 'The Inter-Ethnic Contacts of Immigrants and Natives in the Netherlands: A Two-Sided Perspective', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 2013 39(1): 69–85.

25. Lancee and Dronkers, 'Ethnic, Religious and Economic Diversity', 601.

26. Natalia Letki, 'Does Diversity Erode Social Cohesion? Social Capital and Race in British Neighbourhoods', *Political Studies* 2008 56(1): 99–126.

27. Natalka Patsiurko, John L. Campbell and John A. Hall, 'Measuring cultural diversity: Ethnic, linguistic and religious fractionalization in the OECD', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 2012 35(2): 195–217.

28. Rachel M. Gisselquist, 'Ethnic Divisions and Public Goods Provision, Revisited', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 2014 37(9): 1605–1627.

29. Joni Hersch, 'Profiling the New Immigrant Worker: The Effects of Skin Color and Height', *Journal of Labor Economics* 2008 26(2): 345–386.

30. Kathy Russell, Midge Wilson and Ronald Hall, *The Color Complex: The Politics of Skin Color Among African Americans* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992), 124–134.

31. Ibid., 163.

32. Maxine S. Thompson and Verna M. Keith, 'Copper Brown and Blue Black: Colorism and Self-Evaluation', in Cedric Herring, Verna Keith and Hayward Derrick Horton (eds), *Skin/Deep: How Race and Complexion Matter in the "Color-Blind" Era* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 45–64, 53–59.

33. Korie Edwards, Katrina M. Carter-Tellison and Cedric Herring, 'For Richer, For Poorer, Whether Dark or Light: Skin Tone, Marital Status, and Spouse's Earnings', in ibid., 65–81.

34. For a very interesting US study that failed to find any strong preferences as to skin colour among persons purchasing sperm, see Carol S. Walther, 'Skin

tone, biracial stratification and tri-racial stratification among sperm donors', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 2014 37(3): 517–536.

35. Stuart Hall, 'Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities', in Les Back and John Solomos (eds.), *Theories of Race and Racism: A Reader* (London: Routledge, 2000), 144–153, at 149.

36. Michael Banton, *Promoting Racial Harmony* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 91.

37. In writing about black-white relations in the United States, the word 'preference' is used to denote special privileges for persons in particular categories. Here it is used in the sense that someone may be said to prefer to drink coffee without sugar.

38. Michael Banton, 'Ethnic Conflict', *Sociology* 2000 34(3): 481–498, reporting some of the findings in Mohd-Noor Mansor, 'The Determinants of Malay Ethnic Alignment', unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Bristol, 1992. There are advantages in asking subjects how a member of their peer group would behave in a typical situation rather than asking them how they themselves would behave in a situation that, for them, may appear too improbable. A key requirement is that it should not be the experimenter who introduces any social categorization – that is for the subject. A subject can be given a photograph, or told the name of another person, and asked how he or she would behave towards that person in a given situation. The experimenter can than infer whether the appearance, the name or anything else evokes categorization and differential behaviour.

39. Andreas Wimmer, *Ethnic Boundary Making: Institutions, Power, Networks* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 141, 173, 175, 195, 199.

40. Weber, *Economy and Society,* 43, 386.