**THE MACMILLAN
STUDENT ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SOCIOLOGY**

MACMILLAN
STUDENT
ENCYCLOPEDIA OF
SOCIOLOGY

EDITED BY
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Introduction

Sociology presents especial difficulties for constructing the orthodoxy of style, format and content necessary for an encyclopedia or dictionary. Society does not lend itself to clean dissection and neat sub-division: not quite a seamless web, more a slightly ragged, amateurishly stitched patchwork quilt, from which some bits keep falling off, and to which new bits are added. Sociology should, and does, reflect this messiness. It offers relatively little unchanging orthodoxy, either in content or in the way the discipline divides up its internal specialisms. Sociology can only be a society's understanding of itself and this is constantly in flux and contested.

In dictionary terms the word 'sociology' itself is a hybrid, a mixture of Latin (*socius*, originally ally, then society) and Greek (*logos*, knowledge, perhaps science), hence 'knowledge (or 'the science') of society'. Sociologists argue that such knowledge is distinct from that of other disciplines. It refers to what they call the 'emergent' properties of society. Indeed, the best short definition of sociology contained in this encyclopedia is to be found under the entry *emergence*. But there divergencies will become apparent between sociologists as to whether they regard emergence as 'structure' or a 'process'. This is one of the many sociological controversies which are to be found here, but they are not decisively resolved in these pages because no orthodoxy exists. It is for the reader to decide whether to favour 'structure' or 'process', or whether to combine the two. This is the challenge, the excitement, and the subversiveness of sociology: it calls always for an independence of mind, a critical spirit, as much from the student beginner as from the established scholar.

A second aspect of the unorthodoxy of sociology is that its parts move at different speeds. The social problems of each decade differ. Some settle down and we establish quasi-orthodoxies about them. But, just as we are doing so, other problems, hitherto unsuspected, rear up and hit us in the face — usually accompanied by the polemics of contending interest groups. For the editor of an encyclopedia this creates a dilemma: to mirror this situation, so that entries in one field will reflect an established orthodoxy while those in another will reveal bafflement or polemic; or to impose a common orthodoxy of 'on the one hand, and on the other hand' type? As general editor I resolved this by inaction, allowing the specialist in each field to choose. The entries are, in varying combinations, balanced, authoritative, indecisive and polemic. On occasion I have entered the foray to add a dissenting note to an entry. I hope that these varying stylistic qualities convey the varied flavours of sociology.

Most of the contributors have covered their subject area by writing a number of short entries, which is the general style of this Encyclopedia. But a few took the opposite approach, writing only a handful of long entries. Where the information forms a coherent continuous whole, this is perfectly appropriate — as, for example, in JB's excellent account of *Psycho-analysis*, where various concepts and theories ultimately cohere into a single world-view. I confess to having let contributors have their head in another respect too. They sometimes wrote at greater length than I had originally indicated, but the value of their contribution justified extended treatment. For example, MPB's and LS's entry on *Slavery* is far longer than the institution's importance within sociology would appear to warrant — but it is extraordinarily interesting!

Finally, the entries on individual writers are obviously uneven. The length of these entries bears no direct relationship to that person's importance within sociology, and for a good reason. Anyone who has been truly seminal within sociology has developed theories and concepts which will be the subject of separate entries in the Encyclopedia. Marx, Weber and Durkheim all have entries of their own, but their pre-eminence is only truly encompassed by counting also the dozens of other entries, from *Action Theory* to *World System* which bear

their imprint. Of the two Meads, Margaret rather than George Herbert has the longer entry. Yet George Herbert has been of far greater significance for sociology, and this is revealed in the content of about ten other entries from *The Act* onwards.

Despite all this liberality on my part, the Encyclopedia should still have a disciplined, uniform core. I hope that you will find interesting, informative sociology wherever you look, and that your questions are answered in our entries.

I believe my contributing editors have done a magnificent job. I would like to thank them all most warmly. Shaie Selzer and Māra Vilčinskas for Macmillan, and Margot Levy, have been invaluable; and my secretary, Yvonne Brown has coped marvellously with the peculiar typing requirements of an encyclopedia.

London School of Economics
April 1983

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How to use this Encyclopedia

No Encyclopedia or Dictionary can wholly live up to the pretensions of its apparent format. There is no principle of verbal organization which can ensure that every word you wish to look up will appear as a separate entry. Obviously I hope that this is often, even usually, the case. But in the cases where it isn't, please do not turn away in annoyance. If you are recommended under *doctor-patient relationship* to see *sick role*, please try it. If you do not find a term at all, think for a moment of cognate terms, or of other terms with which it is usually associated, and consult the list of entries which appears on pages vii-xi. Thus an explanation of 'Despotism' will be found under *Absolutism* and *Oriental Despotism*; 'American Legal Realism' will be found under *Law, Trends in Legal Theory*. And if, having read the entry, you want more, follow up the cross-references which are given either at the end of the entry or are picked out within the entry — always in SMALL CAPITALS. Both practices are used sparingly, so that you will find directly relevant information there. Bibliographic references to relevant books and articles have also been kept to a minimum. There are no long reading-lists but references given are considered by the writer to be important.

My contributing editors and I have worked to a similar general style and format whose details will become readily apparent. One consistency might appear at first sight to the reader as inconsistency. We have used what is generally called 'non-sexist language' (e.g. 'he/she' instead of just 'he' where the gender of the person referred to is not relevant) except where paraphrasing a writer who does not do this. It is relevant information that most writers in the classic tradition, from Comte to Parsons, did not use non-sexist language.

MM