

Chapter 1: The making of global sociology

1. In chapter 1 we discuss and list five thematic starting points for sociology (pp. 15-18). Here are three: (a) sociology as the study of collective behaviour and our need to lead a social life involving the sharing of customs, values and practices; (b) sociology as the study of subjective understanding – how we endow our social actions and experiences with meaning; and (c) the application of sociological knowledge to issues relating to social policy including adopting a critical stance at times in regard to public and political debates.

Now, investigate and identify the two additional starting points that are ‘missing’ from this list. Write a sentence on each.

2. Mix and match. Read the ‘Timeline in sociology’ in Box 1.1. Now match the following thinkers listed on the left to the key sociological themes outlined on the right.

Auguste Comte	How religious beliefs inhibit or foster capitalist economic development in different societies across the world.
Karl Marx	How social relationships built around shared norms and the division of labour bind members together in solidaristic social formations.
Emile Durkheim	How the caste system - appearing superficially to constitute a totally fixed and closed system of stratification – in reality offers certain modes of social mobility for some social actors.
Max Weber	Applying the scientific aims of Enlightenment Thought in order to further understanding of the laws governing the structures and processes of social life and change.
Mysore Narasimhachar Srinivas	Class differences and sometimes conflicts – possible or actual - lie at the heart of all societies. But the rise of capitalism creates a new class of industrial workers who possess a much greater potential to organize collectively and overcome inequalities.

3. We suggest (pp. 20-22) that until around 1945 most Western scholars were constrained from looking much beyond their own national societies by several factors. Two of these were as follows: (a) the tendency for anthropologists to present a picture of the non-Western societies they studied as exotic, unique and largely separate (even isolated) from other societies and despite the reality that they had only recently been colonized by Western imperial powers; and (b) the Great Depression of 1929-39 focused most scholars and political thinkers on the need to protect the home economy at all costs rather than consider the international causes of economic crisis and the possibility of taking united international action as part of the remedy.

What are the additional two factors that tended to limit the possibility for sociologists to think more globally?

4. True or False on the post-1945 world and uneven development (pp. 22-28). Identify whether the following statements are true or false:
- (a) Wallerstein thought that it was impossible for peripheral countries in the capitalist world system to ever escape their dependency on, and exploitation by, the Western economies.
 - (b) Wallerstein's world system theory has been criticized for underplaying the role of political power and nation-states in explaining why some countries achieved core, global economic status while others became peripheral economies.
 - (c) Froebel's et al theory of the new international division of labour argued that the rise of cheap labour havens in Third World countries from the 1960s led to the consolidation of industrialism and manufacturing employment in the old Western heartlands.

5. In the text (pp. 28-30) we suggest four reasons why globalization and postmodernism may increase the possibilities for ordinary people to shape humanity's global future. Here are two of these factors.

(a) Globalization creates openness and an almost limitless range of uncertainties where virtually everything remains undecided and up for grabs.

(b) Political and economic elites across the world will not be able, as they were in the past, to limit the impact of world problems on their lives or render themselves immune from the consequences of growing crises that are truly global in their scope.

Now, examine the text and identify the other two factors. Write a sentence on each.