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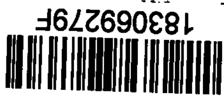

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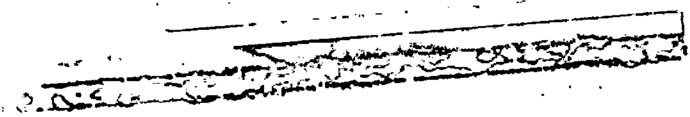

Reflections on social values

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Reflections on social values

Dian Joubert

Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria

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Naturally I accept responsibility for the views and interpretations in *Reflections on social values.* They follow mostly from my reading and research - and teaching. But this is one publication which would not have materialised and would not have attained the quality which I believe it has, had it not been for research and financial assistance from the HSRC.

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Dian Joubert
Stellenbosch
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INTRODUCTION

This study is an investigation into investigations of social values. Or, in the style more typical of social scientists: the work examines the manner and findings of social research or investigations of what is generally referred to as *values* or *social values*. The more cumbersome description of the aim and content of the monograph is not out of mere mischief. It is a first indication that the words (terms!) *investigation* and *research* (and also *methodology*), *values* and *social values*, and, for that matter, *examination* and *reflections*, are not simple and innocent synonyms. Much of social science, of social research, and definitely much of values, is discourse and dialogue in which different, similar, appropriate and inappropriate *words*, rather than the "things" to which they could refer, are the object and medium of our understanding of ourselves, others and the world. Words also happen to be impediments in our comprehension of things, people and ideas.

Perhaps an analogy or two could say more simply what this book is about: One could think of social values as diamonds, and of investigation/methodology (which will be distinguished very clearly a little later, but at present are used as synonyms) as the discovery, recovering, and the marketing of these precious stones. Like diamonds, social values are cherished and highly appreciated treasures. Like the hard work of recovery and the precision of cutting and polishing diamonds, methodology is tiresome, as is its inescapable and self-conscious dissection of "thinking about social thinking" (Flew, 1985).

Things that take ages to establish themselves - and which have a long history - are often difficult to find. This is true of diamonds and social values. In both cases the time and energy spent in the search, discovery and processing of precious items, seem disproportionate to a small sparkling gem - or an abstract principle. Both for diamonds and values, the method of finding and ascertaining seems, eventually, to be out of proportion to the matter (ultimately) in hand. There are, surely, many social objects, ideas or concepts which are much easier to search for and research than social values. In the case of values, however, the method of investigation tends to overwhelm the matter of investigation.

In a study which explores the methods used in the discovery of matter, it could be expected that more time will be spent on the complexities of method than on the characteristics of the phenomenon being investigated. To an appreciable extent this is what happens in the present examination of value studies. But then, all scrutinising of the logic of methods of investigation is very much about the precarious distinction and the tricky relation between method and matter.

It follows that the present text cannot be unreservedly recommended to readers who have no interest in methodology; neither would it be popular with those who prefer answers to questions, matter to method, facts to reflection - and certainty about values to critical and disturbing questioning. Such readers are likely to subscribe to a depiction of methodology as a re-invention of the wheel - as one retiring professor of sociology once dismissed the entire intellectual endeavour of "thinking about social thinking". A pity. But then, many, if not most, wearers of diamond jewellery find the admiration of others more than sufficient compensation for their own ignorance about the origin and processing of these valuables.

One more analogy - or just half an analogy: Some years ago, when coming into Amsterdam by train, I noticed high up against a building an advertisement proclaiming a rather intellectual slogan: *Alles van waarde is weerloos:* everything of value is vulnerable - if not defenceless. I never saw what product was being characterised as such, nor what the recommended cure was supposed to be. But I do think it an apt description of social values. Perhaps their most important characteristic is their vulnerability - their inability to fend for themselves, to realise what they stand for, to secure consistent adherence or at least to be acknowledged and honoured some of the time.

Again we must remind ourselves that values are *words*. Just as words are essential means of communication and decisive elements in all conversation, values are essential components of social normativity and order. Normativity is, simultaneously, the sediment of social life and the guarantee of the maintenance of life's meanings. A society is, intrinsically, a mutual understanding and agreement among people. To bring about such understanding, to make it secure and to make it grow, values are as indispensable as are rules, laws and norms. But as part of a verbal reality, values only have the strengths and the weaknesses of words in a dialogue. The power of value-words resides in our understanding of the world through values. And this manner of understanding - through words and always as interpretation - strengthens the effects and influence of values. In this sense values can fend for themselves - they may in particular conditions become the most effective words at our disposal. The weakness and vulnerability of values, however, also follow from their being words, conceptions, notions, ideas - which can always be countered by another word, notion, idea. The quality of values is a perceived quality. Values are beliefs. Being most general if not ultimate conceptions of what is good and desirable, values can hardly be defended or legitimised by more general, more abstract or universal principles. Their relative weakness and vulnerability also follow from the difficulty to lock them into precise definitions, to factually establish their appearance, content and dynamics. Values and value-words easily lend themselves to abuse and exploitation.

The simultaneous strength and weakness of values show something of a dialectic attribute. That in itself would prove values to be most human, and most humane notions.

Actually that sign should have read: Everything of value is both powerful and defenceless.

*****

Enough of imagery - and philosophising; for the time being, because we will have to return to images and philosophy. Even the unamused reader must have picked up some of the problems inherent in the simple phrase: "the investigation of social values". Even if it is only that so-called ordinary people and so-called learned people very often have quite different conceptions of so-called investigations or social research, and of so-called values.

Let us explain the aims of this book in a more straight-forward way - perhaps the best way - by briefly sketching the contents of the various chapters.

A definition of *social values* is proposed in Chapter One, Par 1: social values are *notions of the good and desirable in personal dispositions, social conduct, societal arrangements and cultural resources.* While the text adheres throughout to this definition, it can be said that the study in its entirety argues - and, I believe, substantiates - this conception of values. An examination of the various ways in which values are investigated, is inevitably - and intrinsically - an analysis of the (perceived) nature and characteristics of so-called *social values.*

Investigations into investigations of values can easily become a going-around in circles within circles. To avoid this and to organise the study as a whole, a scheme of four dimensions of investigation is proposed in Chapter Two; these dimensions are referred to as ontological, epistemological, methodological and sociological. It is argued that each of these dimensions interrelates (as in a triangle) three components or spheres - and that it is from these interrelations that the issues, problems, and decisions of value studies are generated. The distinction of the four dimensions and the four triangles, however, also systematises the most important aspects of values and value studies. Chapter Two thus structures the entire study in terms of the four dimensions - and clusters the various chapters relevant to the different dimensions.

Chapters Three, Four and Five deal mainly with the ontological dimension. In these chapters the basic question *what are social values*? is articulated, and answered from three points of departure. Chapter Three examines the conceptions of *values* in 25 studies by philosophers and social scientists. Chapter Four

analyses the question: why are there different conceptions of "values" and conflicting views about the link between values and behaviour? The name of Max Weber has become a "classic" reference in almost every discussion of values. Chapter Five analyses Weber's concept of *values* and points out a number of difficulties in his views on values in *The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism.*

It is within the ontological dimension that questions about the nature of social reality - and the nature of social values - arise. It is suggested that social reality is constructed (and reconstructed) by the interrelations of three primary social phenomena: behaviour, beliefs and circumstances. Values are a category of beliefs, and its characteristics and functions must be understood in terms of the interconnections with actions and circumstances. It is to these interrelations that Chapters Three, Four and Five return again and again.

Chapters Six and Seven explore aspects of values and value studies that are primarily concerned with epistemological issues. It is argued that sociological knowledge interrelates common social knowledge of "ordinary people" with two modes of systematic and sophisticated knowledge: philosophical social knowledge and scientific social knowledge. The reconciliation of these three modes of knowledge - also of values, and in value studies - gives rise to several problems and alternatives. These are discussed in Chapter Six "Values in and out of touch with common and sophisticated social knowledge", and in Chapter Seven "Values in and out of modernity and postmodernity".

The methodological dimension is seen as comprising three interrelated subprocesses of social investigation: conceptualisation, empirical substantiation, and theorising. Chapter Eight examines various methodological contexts of value investigations. Special attention is given to the distinction of micro and macro contexts. The assumption that methodology inseparably links conceptualisation, the gathering of facts, and theorising, makes meaningful the differentiation of value studies according to various methodological contexts.

The sociological dimension of social investigation is concerned with the relevance and reception of systematic and sophisticated social knowledge. In Chapter Nine we discuss the relevance and consequences of the dissemination of sophisticated knowledge, also of values, and the varied reactions to such knowledge. Reflexivity or the continuous refraction of thought and action upon one another, and its effects on values are given special emphasis.

Chapter Ten is an attempt at a résumé: a number of the more important aspects of values and value studies are selected and briefly commented upon. The chapter can be read as representing what we consider to be the more salient conclusions of this study.

Chapter One

Taking values seriously

Par 1 A time-honoured concept

Values is a much overworked word. Generations have found it indispensable in everyday conversation, and those who partake of learned discourses could for centuries not do without it. Worn and tired, the concept - both the term and the idea - has, however, somehow stood the test of time.

Like most concepts that have been around for a long time, the meaning of the word *values* is diffuse. The connotation given to the term can vary considerably in different contexts and discourses; as is the case in denotation - when conceptions or ideas which have little in common are pointed out as examples of "values". Also to be kept in mind is the use or abuse of the word when it serves the purposes of personal and public justification, or political and ideological ends. If, most generally, *values* refer to that which has or represents worth or goodness (intrinsic or ascribed), what Kierkegaard (1965: 47) once said of concepts, would certainly also apply to *values*:

> Concepts, like individuals, have their histories and are just as incapable of withstanding the ravages of time as are individuals. But in and through all this they retain a kind of homesickness for the scenes of their childhood.

This would imply that essential, or common, to all notions and conceptions of *values*, there is the idea of something worthwhile, good, desirable. This would be a first indication of the meaning of the term.

Of what use could the concept of *values* be? If both the term and the idea behind it are indispensable, what, to ask a modernist question, is its *function*? To distinguish the good and desirable from the bad and the undesirable, of course. This is a distinction we make, consciously or unconsciously, many times a day - because, many would say, we are human, social and cultured beings. It is a distinction inherent in social knowledge and essential to human life itself. What we consider to be *values*, is, naturally, part of tradition and every time the word is used, tradition is confirmed or "reproduced" as contemporary sociologists like to say - which I take to be the same process that the pioneer

sociologist Charles H. Cooley (Brown, 1977: 109) had in mind when he said much more eloquently:

> A word is a vehicle, a boat floating down from the past laden with the thoughts of men we never saw; and in coming to understand it we enter not only into the minds of our contemporaries, but into the general mind of humanity, continuous through time.

We have suggested something about the content or meaning, and the use or function of the word *values*. But what values do we have in mind? What, exactly, is the type of entity that is believed to be good and desirable? The references to sociologists were not all that innocent: We are primarily interested in *social* or *societal values*, i.e. values relevant to our living together with other people.

Prefacing *values* with the adjectives social and societal is, obviously, only a first qualification. It helps, but to a limited extent, as, surely, there are few things *not* relevant to our sharing society with others. One connotation of *value* that can be dismissed at the outset, is the "value", "worth" or "goodness" of material objects. We do not take as "values" any material, spiritual or symbolic entity, which can be "valued", or on which a "value" can be placed. To do that, would be to consider *all* things "values". That everything "has some value", "is valuable", or can be said to "present a value" may well be true. These connotations, however, are disregarded in the present context as uninteresting and irrelevant. We also, respectfully, find of little value for modern social theory, that early and classic attempt at formal definition of *social value* in *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*. It was more than sixty years ago that W.I. Thomas and F. Znaniecki (1927: 21) wrote:

> By a *social value* we understand any datum having an empirical content accessible to the members of some social group and a meaning with regard to which it is or may be an object of activity. Thus, a foodstuff, an instrument, a coin, a piece of poetry, a university, a myth, a social theory, are social values.

Whatever *value* or *values* may mean or refer to in other contexts and discourses, the concentration here will be on: *notions of the good and desirable in personal dispositions, social conduct, societal arrangements and cultural resources.*

Par 2 The study of values

Before entering further into the complexities of values - and the predictable "deconstruction" of the definition given above - the question as to why values

should be the object of serious reflection and tiring research, is a valid one. Like most simple questions, the answer to this one is not completely self-evident.

If social knowledge through the ages has had one consistent theme, it is that values play a decisive role in the lives of individuals and in the weal, woes and fortunes of societies. For ordinary people, for priests, prophets, philosophers, and, more recently, social scientists, values are more than a mere component of social knowledge. It is generally believed and argued by lay and professional people that values are the most important and ultimate principles of social order and culture: the final safeguard and guarantee for a humane society.

Values have been studied by theologians, philosophers and social scientists - and less learned folk - with very similar rationales: Knowledge for the sake of knowledge; to gain a better understanding of man and society; and, by application of such knowledge, to make the world a better and more pleasant place in which to live and die. Philosopher Degenaar (1986) has said it simply: "The role of values in the lives of people is so basic that it features in all studies of man." Garbers (in Joubert, 1986), a former President of the South African Human Sciences Research Council, writes in a preface to a publication on values completed under the auspices of the Council:

> I am convinced that if the human sciences do not succeed in gaining deeper insight into the dynamics of values in the lives of people, and do not get an empirical grasp on the manner in which values influence behaviour, in many fields real progress will not be made.

The phrase *empirical grasp* is, of course, indicative of scientists' insistence that statements on social phenomena should be maximally substantiated by empirical evidence. Ordinary people, theologians, philosophers and writers of literature have never saddled themselves with such a stipulation or requirement. But then, this is where common-sense, religious, philosophical and literary discourses on values part ways with the social sciences. Even if sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists and political scientists do not all, or always, remain on the high road of positivism - and the conversion to humanist or interpretative studies has been extensive - the requirement of maximum factual substantiation has, correctly, been respected and adhered to as *the* epistemological divide between social philosophy and social science. This is what Comte's so-called "law of three stages" was all about: Theology and religion, and philosophy and historiography, have had their say about man and society - and about values; it is now the turn of the social sciences - sociology for Comte in 1836 - to research the social patterns and regularities and thus determine the "laws" of societies.

Be that as it may, several consequences of or reactions to the development of scientific social knowledge, particularly in sociological, psychological and anthropological studies of values, must be pointed out. These reactions proved to be rather sobering experiences compared to one-time enthusiasm and expectations of what the social sciences could and would tell us about values.

Value studies which insist upon precise conceptualisation, operationalisation of abstract terms, empirical proof of factual regularities between variables, closely argued theorising on the dynamics of values, the precise plotting of processes in which values are involved - many of these studies have often either questioned conventional and popular beliefs about values, or "proved the obvious and told us what everyone knew all along". Neither of these two outcomes did much to endear these disciplines to ordinary people - who usually have a very "human" way of coping with discrepancies between behaviour and normative ideals. Ordinary people (and the term applies throughout to all of us whenever we are not acting in a professional or formal role) have, I believe, discovered "situational ethics" long before Paul Tillich coined the term!

This little cynicism ties up with a second reaction to (at least some) value studies done in sociology and psychology: These studies (and often the entire teaching of these disciplines) have been accused of "debunking" established values. Instead of bolstering all important values, social sciences are said to advance scepticism and relativism. Such accusations cannot summarily be dismissed and we will have to respond to them.

A third consequence of or reaction to sociological, psychological and anthropological work done on values comes from social scientists themselves: There are admissions that we have not made much headway. Remarks made at a South African seminar on values five years ago suggest great modesty if not scepticism about the fruits of our labours. I do not think that these are uninformed or excessively honest observations. I believe they represent realistic opinions about value studies.

Psychologist Du Preez (1984) responded to the discussion:

> People have, several times, questioned the relation between values and behaviour. Of course there is no answer. The reason is perfectly simple; there is no single relationship. Values can contradict behaviour, it can rationalize behaviour, it can mystify, there can be an antagonistic relationship, there can be congruence, and we'll probably find several other relationships.

Anthropologist Preston-Whyte (1984) said: "Despite fifty years of study we do not have any clear or generally accepted model of how values affect behaviour or for that matter how exactly values change". Also, she wisely

remarked: "In many real life situations people have no choice so it matters little what their values are".

My own reaction, (Joubert, 1986: 8) I now realise, was, for a sociologist, a little shrill:

> It has become old-fashioned to explain social order primarily in terms of value systems; to believe, idealistically, that values form both the existential base of consensus and ultimate ideals of a society. Since the departure of Parsons and partners, there has been a return to realism if not historical materialism in which values have been deconceptualised, defunctionalised and detheorised.

A last point to be made about value studies done within the social sciences, sounds a more balanced and positive note. Yes, there are indeed examples of intelligent and successful research on values which have produced findings that are scientific, substantive and in coherence with the perspectives and established knowledge of social science. Some of these studies are quite ingenious and their findings more than interesting if not fascinating. Investigations into values are alive if not consistently well. An explicit aim of the present publication is to bring together - and analyse - a number of value studies that have been done by social scientists.

The above remarks on value studies say something about the present "state of the art". It should be evident that values can be, and are, studied or researched (and beyond positivism few will seriously try to maintain a distinction between the two!) on different levels; in different disciplines and discourses; in accordance with different domain-assumptions and points of departure - and, of course, in terms of different definitions of that most evasive idea: *values*.

Perhaps it would only be fair at this stage to make explicit a suggestion that has been kept between the lines thus far. For this we have to go back to Auguste Comte. Comte's distinction of three "theoretical conditions" of theology, metaphysics and science, refer not only to epistemological modes, but also to the "progressive emancipation of the human mind", the evolution of social organisation and material conditions of life. No less, it outlines the growth of humanism: the *condition humaine* being first interpreted as the will of divine and transcendent beings, then as being brought about by abstract forces, and finally understood as the result of specific existential circumstances which can be ascertained and changed. Comte formalised the secularisation of social knowledge, prescribed its transition to scientific social knowledge and with great cogency preached a new gospel: Precondition for a more humane society is scientific social knowledge. Only enlightened social knowledge, Comte believed, would induce people to commit themselves to the values of love,

altruism, order and progress. Comte thus changed both the traditional *locus* of values and the conventional motivation for commitment to them: No longer were values God-given and compelling religious directives; they were, he believed, rational principles for human societies explicated by social science after proper empirical investigation of the human condition.

Comte's vision of a sociologically researched, informed and planned society has, of course, not been realised. Utopian ideas seldom are.

Par 3 Scientific social investigations

If there is a lesson to be learnt from Comte's disappointment, it could be this: The commitment and application of the scientific method(s) in the understanding and explanation of social reality, have exacted their own price: failure to grasp consistently and make explicit the full humanness of that reality (Joubert, 1990: 81). This is much the same sentiment expressed by psychologist Giorgi (1970: 2): "... there is a serious question whether or not aspects that are amenable to the natural-scientific conception reveal the humanness of man in an adequate way".

Applied to the study of values, the use of social scientific procedures and techniques showed an initial and sustained uneasiness if not strain. Values apparently have qualities that do not easily submit themselves to the rigour and precision, objectivity and clarity, which social scientists have achieved to a satisfactory degree when subjecting other social phenomena to scientific investigation.

If all this sounds like complaining - and also vague and somewhat sentimental - there is a way of moving beyond these misgivings and doubts about whether values - or for that matter, any social phenomenon - could, with meaningful results, be subjected to scientific investigation. Such doubts can be settled or at least clearly explicated, if four questions are explored and answered: (i) What is the nature of social phenomena - or what we will refer to as "social reality"? (ii) What are the sources and quality of social knowledge? (iii) What are the processes of scientific social investigation? (iv) What are the social circumstances relevant to interest in such investigations, and in what way do social conditions influence the manner in which these investigations are conducted? Also, what is the social reaction to the results of investigations by social scientists?

The seemingly simple question whether social values can be investigated in a scientific manner, may be answered with some conviction if we have an adequate understanding of social reality, social knowledge, the process of investigation, and relevant social circumstances in which such investigations

are conducted. The formal adjectives for these "dimensions" that have to be explored, are: *ontological* (the nature of (social) reality), *epistemological* (the nature of (social) knowledge), *methodological* (the nature or logic of the process of (social) investigation), and, *sociological* (the nature and effect of relevant social circumstances).

This essay is an exploration of the investigative dimensions of value studies. We consider this to be one way of getting a grasp on the many aspects of social values. It also means that we are trying to understand the nature and functions of social values by looking not only at the results of value studies, but also, and primarily, at the decisions confronting social scientists when investigating social values. The essay could be seen as an investigation into investigations of values. Many colleagues would have said it much simpler: an exploration of the *methodology* of value studies. However, we consider *methodological* considerations to be only one dimension of scientific social investigations. There are also the *ontological, epistemological,* and *sociological* dimensions that have to be taken into account in value studies - and in all scientific investigations of social phenomena.

It follows that the four dimensions of investigation are postulated as the *framework* or *parameters* within which value studies will be examined - parameters meaning "the limits within which something must be done or someone must work" (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 1978).

The four investigative dimensions - and thus the parameters of this monograph - are discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Two

Dimensions and issues of investigation

Par 4 Dimensions, issues, problems and decisions

The idea to "structure" the field or establish the parameters of scientific social investigation in terms of a number of *dimensions* comes from Mouton and Marais's *Basic concepts in the methodology of the social sciences* (1988, 1990). Five dimensions are distinguished by Mouton and Marais: the ontological, epistemological, methodological, sociological, and teleological. In the present monograph this scheme of five dimensions has been adapted considerably. The teleological dimension is omitted as a separate or distinct one, and the content or conceptualisation of the four remaining dimensions differs appreciably from that of Mouton and Marais. If the teleological dimension primarily concerns the goals or aims of investigation - within a particular research project, paradigm or discipline - I would suggest that such goals and aims are largely methodological or epistemological matters, and can be treated as part of these dimensions.

It may be useful to think of each of the four dimensions as a triangle in which the three "angles" are interrelated and mutually affect one-another. If the confusing geometrics of dimensions and triangles can be condoned, one could generalise that it is from the "interface" of the three angles that investigative *issues* and research *problems* arise. Let us take the epistemological dimension as an example: Epistemology concerns the characteristics of knowledge - in the present context *social* knowledge. In this dimension, we suggest, three modes of knowledge are triangularly related: common social knowledge, philosophical social knowledge, and social knowledge produced by the social sciences. Precisely because the three modes are interrelated and affect one-another, *issues* arise within the epistemological dimension. These issues have led to drawn-out debates among social scientists and philosophers of social science in which various options were and are still argued both from the practice of social research and from philosophical points of departure. Examples would include: the differentiation of belief systems; the links between social science and ideology; the similarities and differences between common, everyday social knowledge of "ordinary people", and, social knowledge that results from research by social scientists; the domains in which social values could be inves-

tigated; the question of validity of knowledge statements; the different types of research projects, etc.

In particular research projects, such as an investigation into social values of teenagers, social scientists experience these issues as research *problems* that they have to solve by making *decisions* among the various options and possibilities.

The discussion of the issues, problems and decisions involved in the investigation of social values, constitutes the substance of this monograph. In the paragraphs which follow, the four dimensions are described and the issues within them that are especially relevant to value studies, indicated.

The four dimensions of investigation - and the four triangles - represent an attempt to "structure" or distinguish parameters of scientific social investigation. At the same time these systematic distinctions are used to bring some order to the present investigation of investigations of social values. Particular chapters concentrate on specific issues and problems that arise within each of the four dimensions. These concentrations or foci of individual chapters are indicated in the following four Paragraphs.

Par 5 The ontological dimension: Social reality and social phenomena

The term *social reality* is increasingly used to describe the subject matter of the social sciences - contrasting it to the reality of nature which is the subject matter of the natural sciences. The term *social reality* is, however, seldom if ever found in dictionaries of the social sciences such as sociology, political science or anthropology. This could be taken as an indication that the concept of "reality" is more frequently and better articulated in philosophy and in philosophy of science, than in the everyday investigations of practising social scientists. It is in this more philosophical, if not essentialist sense, that Mouton and Marais (1990: 12) write about (social) reality:

> What is important ... is to realize that individual social scientists or groups of social scientists frequently hold explicit beliefs about what is real and what is not: beliefs which profoundly affect the definition of research problems. Beliefs of this nature will be referred to as *domain assumptions* and will be taken to refer to beliefs about the nature, structure, and status of social phenomena.

It should be pointed out that the majority of social scientists are not very philosophically minded, and that few find it necessary to explicate their "domain assumptions" or to define *social reality* before they start on an inves-

tigation of a chosen social phenomenon. Also in *practice,* explicit beliefs of what is real and what is not, do not necessary affect the definition of research problems.

I would argue that the differences between the various schools or paradigms of the social sciences are *not primarily determined* by a philosophical conception of what is real or unreal, and neither primarily by the ontological dimension - whatever conception of the nature of social reality is chosen. The existence of various schools of thought and paradigms results from a rather loose clustering of options in all four dimensions - with the epistemological and methodological ones probably more important than the other two. It should be evident that my position on the ontological dimension does not tie itself to the question of real/unreal. The ontological dimension, I would suggest, concerns the empirical characteristics, elements or components common to all social phenomena. Social reality, I would contend, is constructed (and continuously reconstructed) through the dynamic interrelation of three empirical components: behaviour, beliefs and circumstances.

It is my view that the content and meaning given to the different dimensions, issues and levels should be as near to the practice of investigation as possible. Thus, the content given to the ontological dimension should be such that it helps to understand better the nature and dynamics of the process of scientific investigation. I have argued that ontological content should be identical or closely linked to the empirical characteristics of the observable components common to all social phenomena. The ontological dimension should thus characterise the "stuff" of social reality, telling us how this reality is constituted and comes into existence.

Obviously, not all social scientists would agree to an insistence that the empirical characteristics of social phenomena, or of social reality, should be the core of the ontological dimension; neither that behaviour, beliefs and social circumstances are the three interrelated constituent components of all social phenomena. The "empirical content" that both Mouton and Marais and Babbie (1979) ascribe to social phenomena (within the ontological dimension) is greatly in accord with our own ontological triangle: Mouton and Marais (ibid: 39-40) accept Babbie's (1979) four units of analysis: individuals, groups and organisations, social artefacts or objects, and social interaction. They also refer to them as "units of measurement", and eventually cross-categorise the units with what Babbie (ibid: 93) calls "characteristics" (of units of analysis) or "topics for research" - of which there are three: conditions, orientations and actions. In a subsequent edition (1989: 87) Babbie changes "conditions" to "characteristics" - thereby confusing the clear distinction of conditions (= circumstances), orientations (= beliefs) and actions. It should be pointed out that Mouton and Marais (ibid) distinguish, apart from (five) dimensions of investigation

(research), three "levels" or "perspectives": (i) a particular research project, (ii) the paradigmatic context or research tradition, and (iii) the disciplinary context. Sketched as three concentric circles, the scheme makes much sense. In fact - or rather in logic - the empirical specification of social phenomena and social reality could not meaningfully be done if these three levels or circles are not consistently kept in mind.

Before we formalise our own conception of the ontological dimension and indicate the issues relevant to value studies that will be explored, it could be worthwhile to look at a study that explicitly uses the word *social reality* and postulates that the nature of social reality is seen as either *material* or *ideal*. A study by Johnson, Dandeker and Ashworth analyses *The structure of social theory* (1984) explicitly and purposively on the level of metatheories (i.e. what Mouton and Marais refer to as the paradigmatic context). Four *theoretical strategies* are typologised in accordance with alternative answers to two fundamental questions: Is the nature of social reality (essentially) material or ideal?, and, is social reality known nominally or realistically - i.e., are scientific concepts merely convenient names which we coin in order to summarise the particular things that make up the world, or do concepts have the capacity to "reveal" a social reality that is not immediately accessible to observation?

As a theoretical strategy *empiricism* combines the materialist and nominalist alternatives: "... it entails the view that human activity is best understood as observable behaviour taking place in observable material conditions" (Johnson *et al*, 1984: 19). *Subjectivism* combines the idealist and nominalist alternatives: "[It] includes those views that construe the social world as an outcome of the interpretative activities of individual actors: they socially construct reality. ... social reality is nothing more than a negotiated outcome between individuals' interpretations of 'what is going on'" (ibid: 20). *Substantialism* brings together the materialist and realist options: "The social world is conceived of as an objective material structure of relations. This structure is not accessible to direct observation. What *can* be observed must, in turn, be explained by that underlying structure of material relations" (ibid: 21). *Rationalism*, as a strategy of theorising is a combination of the idealist and realist alternatives: "It understands society as an objective and constraining structure of ideas. Such ideas or meanings are not the attributes of individuals, as in the case of subjectivism; they are beyond any *one* individual consciousness" (ibid: 21).

What is interesting about the four theoretical strategies, is that they explicitly combine ontological, epistemological and methodological alternatives in what is actually more than just a "theoretical" strategy. The authors do not assume or suggest any dominance or priority of any of these "dimensions". On the contrary, the four (investigative?) strategies are seen "as alternative resolu-

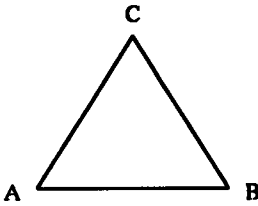
tions which constitute a field of tensions rather than established, unmoving conditions":

> Each of the strategies is then a dialogue, a mediative process which attempts to cope with the persistent sociological paradoxes that are generated by the alternative solutions: between fact and theory, freedom and determinism, structure and action, meaning and conditions, and so on (ibid: 22).

If nothing else, these remarks suggest the precariousness of attempts to structure logically and systematise the field of scientific social investigation - as well as the foolhardiness of being dogmatic about distinctions, categorisations, schemes, models - and dimensions. It should be apparent that the classification of various dimensions and conceptions of social reality, and the role of domain assumptions can be argued in a number of ways - and that there are no correct or wrong solutions in attempts to bring some order to the logic of scientific social investigations. But Johnson and his colleagues do more than advise modesty. Their four investigative strategies demonstrate more than the precariousness of logical schemes. It shows very effectively the linkages and mutual interrelations of what is variously referred to as dimensions, levels, perspectives, theoretical strategies etc. Perhaps one should stop complaining that social science has too many words (terms), and appreciate the numerous schemes that attempt - and succeed - to bring some logical rigour and precision to our wandering reflections.

I would prefer then to describe the content of the *ontological dimension* in terms of three *components*: *behaviour* (social actions), *beliefs* (what people think and know about life, society and other people), and *circumstances* (social conditions or environments that are relevant to behaviour and beliefs).

The "interface" (place or area where different things meet and have an effect on each other - *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, 1978) of behaviour, beliefs and circumstances is such that what we consider to be *social reality* or *social phenomena* are constructed and continuously reconstructed through the dynamic interrelations of these three components. Patterns of interaction, normative patterns (e.g. social values), social collectivities, social relations, social institutions, and social structures are all social phenomena, and thus part of social reality. Though on different levels of abstraction and integration, these phenomena all result from the triangular interrelations and mutual effects of the three ontological components of social reality.



A Behaviour

B Beliefs

C Circumstances

Social values as beliefs and their linkage to behaviour and circumstances have been the subject of extensive discussion and research. These reflections and investigations have developed several issues or debates. Of these I would consider the following to be particularly relevant to value studies:

- Earlier and present conceptions of the nature and the role of values
- The distinctive characteristics of values as beliefs or notions of the good and the desirable
- The linkages between values, actions and social conditions
- Rationality, rational behaviour and their linkages to social values
- Lessons to be learnt from Max Weber about the nature of values

These issues will be discussed in Chapters Three, Four and Five.

Par 6 The epistemological dimension: Modes of social knowledge

Mouton and Marais (1990: 14) consider the epistemological dimension as the "key dimension" of social science praxis, and refer to the high premium that is placed upon the epistemic status of scientific statements:

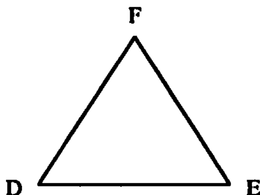
> The requirement that statements must approximate social reality as closely as possible is more highly emphasized in the language game of science than in any other language game. In an important sense, the epistemic dimension may be regarded as the embodiment of the ideal of science, namely the quest for truth.

The authors indicate a number of positions in the historical debate on reality and truth. It was Francis Bacon's view that the goal of all scientific research could only be certain and demonstrable knowledge. Three hundred years after Bacon logical positivists still subscribed to the ideal of empirical verification. After 1930 conclusive verification was first abandoned for maximum probability and then for Popper's idea of conclusive falsification.

The epistemological standpoint of Mouton and Marais (ibid: 15) could be summarised as follows: (i) Complete certainty in the social sciences is unattainable. (ii) Complete relativism or scepticism, however, is not the only alternative. (iii) The epistemic ideal should be the generation of research findings which approximate the true state of affairs as closely as possible. (iv) Falsity, inaccuracy, and error should be consistently eliminated. (v) Verisimilitude in statements about reality is best conceived as validity - which then implies the best possible approximation of the truth of propositions.

Few social scientists or philosophers of science would reject outright the epistemological position taken by Mouton and Marais. Also, few would disagree that "the quest for truth" and the certainty/validity of propositions do not represent a basic epistemological issue. Personally, I have no objections, but I wish to emphasise another issue, and I believe a more basic one, as a primary epistemological concern: the different modes of social knowledge that scientific social investigations have to reconcile with one another.

Social knowledge refers to what is known or believed about social phenomena. Three different, though closely (inter)related and overlapping, modes of social knowledge can be distinguished: (i) *Common* social knowledge of ordinary people who have learnt much about life and living with other people through everyday experience; (ii) *philosophical* social knowledge which is the result of philosophical reflection upon man and society, and which, though also based on observation, consists primarily of logical argumentation; (iii) *scientific* social knowledge which is the product of investigations and research by social scientists.



D Common social knowledge

E Philosophical social knowledge

F Scientific social knowledge

I would contend that the decisive difference between the natural and the social sciences is not that the former has lesser problems of objectivity, validity, causality, quantification, prediction, or whatever. The decisive difference is that natural scientists do not have to take into account lay and popular beliefs, interpretations and knowledge about phenomena of nature, while the social knowledge of ordinary people, their everyday beliefs, interpretations and knowledge about life and society, are part and parcel of the very reality and phenomena that social scientists investigate. This means that scientific social knowledge - e.g. research findings by sociologists - not only has common social

beliefs and knowledge as its object of study and as part of social reality, but that such knowledge eventually forms part of the factual base for scientific generalisations and explanation.

In the case of philosophical social knowledge - of which classical social philosophy would be an important and substantive example - such knowledge as part of historical social thought is also part of social reality, just as the common social knowledge of "ordinary people" and of non-philosophers is part of that reality.

I am not suggesting that the epistemic differences among the three modes of social knowledge be collapsed. I am not arguing that scientific social knowledge, because it takes common and philosophical social knowledge into consideration as a component of social reality and thus as a factual object of study, can no longer maintain the distinctive criteria of scientific knowledge. What I do suggest, however, is that a clear and consistent separation of the three modes of social knowledge is often problematic in the case of social science. And that clear-cut distinctions are problematic for a number of reasons - because of a number of developments in our "thinking about social thinking" (social epistemology or socio-logic?) and changes in social conditions. One example each of epistemic and social changes should suffice: There has recently been a radical rethink of the criteria (of validity) of different modes of thinking. To a significant extent, so-called postmodernism can be said to be a epistemological development and movement. Globalisation and the natural assimilation of scientific knowledge (and social philosophies) by "ordinary people" in their progressive education and sophistication, have obliterated much of the once clear distinctions among common, philosophical and scientific knowledge - also of social matters.

Admittedly and explicitly written (twenty years ago!) from an interactionist perspective, and arguing a methodological stance rather than an epistemological aspect, the following statements by Denzin (1970: 9 & 8) can be taken, I believe, as in agreement with the view that both the differentiation and conciliation of common, philosophic and scientific social knowledge are fundamental to all sociological investigation:

> I wish to maintain a distinction between the sociologist's conceptions of his subject's behaviour and the motives and definitions that subjects ascribe to their own conduct. The way a subject explains his behavior is likely to differ from the way a sociologist would.
>
> Commenting on this fact Becker notes that the sociological view of the world is "abstract, relativistic and generalizing". On the other hand, the everyday conception of reality that guides our subject's conduct is

specific, tends not to be generalizing, and is based on concepts that often lack any scientific validity.

> An adherence to [the methodological principle that the investigator must view human conduct from the point of view of those he is studying] suggests that the sociologist first learns the everyday conceptions of this reality and then interprets that reality from the stance of his sociological theory.
>
> The sociologist must operate between two worlds when he engages in research - the everyday world of his subjects and the world of his own sociological perspective.

Denzin's remarks allow for a generalisation about so-called qualitative analysis: It is often said or thought that only "qualitative sociology" and symbolic interactionism (have to) take account of "the actor's point of view". It is a belief that is naive and indicative of a very limited understanding of the nature of social reality, of social knowledge, and of social investigation. The "*ordinary* individual's point of view" and "common social knowledge" are implied in all investigations of social phenomena.

As in the case of the ontic triangle, it is the interrelations and mutual effects of the three modes of social knowledge that give rise to epistemic issues and problems of investigation - also when social values are explored. Whether, when telling researchers to what social values they subscribe, respondents are telling the truth, is a relatively minor problem in the epistemic dimension. Issues of greater import which are directly relevant to value studies, include the following:

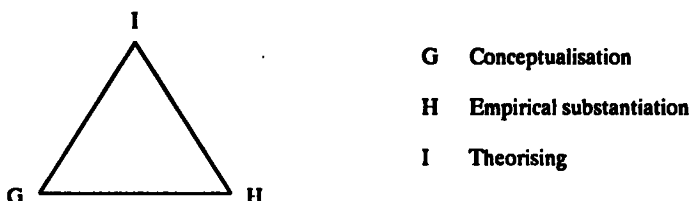
- the similarities, differences and mutual effects of common and sophisticated social knowledge and beliefs about values
- ideas on values and implications for value studies in post-modernist thinking

These issues will be discussed in Chapters Six and Seven.

Par 7 The methodological dimension: Subprocesses of scientific social investigation

What I consider to be methodological issues, problems and decisions, arise from the actual process of social research - or investigation, as I prefer to call it. Rather than describing the research process as a time sequence of a number of steps or stages, the investigation process can be seen as the interrelation and conciliation of three subprocesses which run simultaneously. These subproces-

ses are: *conceptualisation* (the definition and refining of conceptions of strategic words used in the investigation), *empirical substantiation* (the gathering of facts to substantiate statements about the state of affairs as well as those statements which generalise about data); and *theorising* (the explanation or interpretation of phenomena investigated through the application of chosen theoretical approaches and models).



The proposed methodological triangle is in accord with the logic of what is generally called a *research design*, and which Mouton and Marais (ibid: 29-124) discuss extensively in four chapters with the common title *Research Design* and four subtitles: Towards problems formulation; Conceptualization and operationalization; Data collection; Analysis and interpretation. The (logical) similarity between the methodological triangle (and thus the content of the methodological dimension), and Mouton and Marais's four chapters on research design should be obvious. The formal specification of "problem formulation", and "operationalisation" could be seen as part of the conventional model and legacy of positivism! "Problems" in the social sciences are very often problems of interpretative understanding which are not so much "solved" as explored, and which often do not require formal hypotheses or operationalisation.

Not all social scientists, researchers, or even all methodologists, will agree with the characterisation of the research process as a dynamic interrelation and conciliation of three subprocesses that run concurrently and affect one another. Many still think of social research as a sequence of definite steps, each of which is completed before the next one is tackled. Also, the inclusion of theorising with conceptualisation and factfinding as subprocesses and as interrelated components in the methodological dimension, will still raise more than a few eyebrows. What Denzin (1970: 3) said 20 years ago still applies: "Methodology - that vague word sociologists have come to associate with research - has occupied a peculiar role in the sociological enterprise. There are spokesmen who see little connection between method, research activities, and the process of theorising".

cal conflict; relative decline of social class conflict; changes in support for established national institutions; declining legitimacy of nation state; rise of super-national and "tribal" loyalties; change in prevailing types of political participation; decline of elite-directed political mobilisation: rise of elite-challenging issue-oriented groups (ibid:5).

We will not now comment on the possible fusion of the variables of values, skills, and socio-political structure; nor on the possible conceptual merging of causes and consequences - or of system-level changes, individual-level changes, and system-level consequences. Whatever might be the problems in these distinctions, it should be obvious that Inglehart's relatively simple value indices are contextualised and interpreted within specific social and political conditions of advanced industrial societies - which, in terms of values, style and quality of life, and social and political organisation, may well be on their way to become post-materialist, post-industrialised, and post-modernist societies.

Relevant to Inglehart's conception (and categorisation) of values is his attention to two questions: Can values be measured by mass surveys?, and, does a substantial proportion of the general public have opinions on the topics asked about in value surveys? Inglehart argues that analyses of survey results eventually substantiate the distinction of materialist, post-materialist, and mixed types of value priorities - and his interpretation of changing values among Western publics.

20. Geert Hofstede: *Culture's consequences: International differences in work-related values*, 1980

Hofstede's work is the fifth volume of the Sage Series on Cross-cultural Research and Methodology, started in 1975. The Series had the explicit objective to "bridge gaps of methodology and conceptualisations across all disciplines and many cultures" - an objective linked to the belief that "the survival of mankind will depend to a large extent on the ability of people who think differently to act together". It is assumed that people carry "mental programs" which are developed in the family and early childhood and reinforced by school education or otherwise; and that these mental programs contain a component of national culture. These components are most clearly expressed in the different *values* that dominate among citizens of different countries.

A *value* is formally and very simply defined as "a broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others" (Hofstede, 1980:19). Hofstede goes to great trouble to distinguish between *values-desired* and *values-desirable.* The distinction is, however, collapsed - or completely absent - in the questionnaires used. Specific values were inferred from answers to extremely simple questions about *work-related* satisfactions, perceptions, personal goals, and beliefs of

tendency to concentrate on needs that are "in short supply". As Western societies have recently experienced exceptionally high levels of economic and physical security, increasing emphasis is being given to other types of needs - perhaps best summarised in the concept of *quality of life*. Inglehart refers to Maslow's view that different needs are pursued in "hierarchical" order, according to their relative importance for survival. (2) It is accepted that a given set of value priorities is retained throughout adult life once it has been established in formative years. The probability of changes in one's values diminishes after adulthood. (3) This means that different age groups or generations, having experienced different material conditions during their formative years, will have different values. (4) Inglehart neatly and convincingly links needs, values and material circumstances. (5) Six of the 12 value items closely relate to aesthetic and intellectual considerations and to orientations of belonging and esteem; the other six relate to safety and sustenance needs. Social and self-actualising needs are associated with *post-materialist* conditions, societies and values, while "physiological" needs correlate with *materialist* considerations in everyday living and values. *Materialist* and *post-materialist* eventually present the most general distinction in needs, values, skills, social and societal conditions.

Skills, for Inglehart, refer mostly to the ability of the public to understand, be interested in, and participate in political decisions in their society and its social institutions. In Western countries an increase in the proportion of population having skills to participate in social and political decisionmaking, is accompanied by "a decline in the legitimacy of hierarchical authority, patriotism, religion, and so on, which leads to declining confidence in institutions. At the same time, the political expression of new values is facilitated by a shift in the balance of political skills between elites and mass" (ibid:4).

Inglehart is not hesitant to speak of *causes* and *consequences* of value change. He distinguishes three sets of processes of change:

> *System-level changes* involve: economic and technological development; satisfaction of sustenance needs for an increasingly large proportion of the population; distinctive cohort experiences are important - and absence of "total" war during the past generation is relevant; rising levels of education; expansion of mass communications; penetration of mass media; increase in geographical mobility.
>
> *Individual-level changes* involve *values*: increasing emphasis on needs for belonging, esteem and self-realisation; and *skills*: increase in proportion of population having skills to cope with politics on national scale.
>
> *System-level consequences* are: change in prevailing political issues; increasing salience of "life-style" issues; change in social bases of politi-

The notion to which classical sociology always returns is that of values. But all forms of research into social interactions lead us away from values. Must I recall that political sociology and organizations theory have shown us that decision systems - at least in our type of society - are not the application of principles but the result of transactions, a fact that recognizes a certain heterogeneity of the interests confronting one another? It is of strategies and interests that we ought to speak, not of values.

What then is a society's system of values? On the highest level it is the unity of a discourse held by the ruling classes of a society ... The system of values is nothing other than a more or less coherent ideology, always bound up with social categories possessing a certain power. But this ideology does not completely determine the categories of social practice. It exercises a dominion over what may be called society's discourse; it does not provide an account of all its aspects.

19. Ronald Inglehart: *The silent revolution: Changing values and political styles among Western publics*, 1977

As the subtitle indicates, Inglehart is primarily interested in social change in advanced, industrialised societies. The sources and consequences of such change are investigated and explained in terms of three variables; *values, skills,* and *social and political structures.* In a volume of 450 pages Inglehart does not spend half a page on a formal conceptualisation of "values". "Values" are "defined" operationally in terms of (eventually) 12 survey questions which become items or indices of value priorities. These priorities, also referred to as 12 important goals or options, were established in successive surveys among "Western publics" during the seventies. Respondents were asked to indicate the importance of the following:

Maintaining order in the nation; giving people more say in governmental decisions; fighting rising prices; protecting freedom of speech; wanting a high growth rate; ensuring a strong defence force; giving people more say in occupational and communal decisions; beautifying cities and environment; maintain a stable economy; progress towards a less impersonal and more humane society; fight crime; progress towards a society where ideas are more important than money.

The thesis of *The silent revolution* is that the values of Western publics have been shifting from an overwhelming emphasis on material well-being and physical security towards a greater emphasis on the quality of life. This change in value priorities is linked to a number of key "hypotheses": (1) There is a

is the supreme value principle - war, oppression and discrimination are all negatively evaluated. (iv) In the case of *culture* the value principle is that of "optimisation of human meaning creation capacity".

The most basic value principle Loubser indicates as the "desirability of optimal conditions for human development and realisation of human potentials".

17. In 1973, I constructed a typology of value-orientations based on three theoretical assumptions (Joubert 1990): (i) The four system problems of functional categories of Talcott Parsons: Integration (It), pattern maintenance (P), adaptation (A), and goal-achievement (G); these were conceived as four general problem complexes in the total field of social action and social relations. (ii) The four problem-areas were cross-categorised by four dimensions of social engagement: social time (T); social space (S); social movement (M) and social involvement (Iv). (iii) Within the 4x4 cross-categorisation of problem-areas and dimensions of engagement, 16 pairs of dichotomous choices of value orientations were specified - distinguishing ultimately 32 single value-orientations.

These value-orientations were defined simply as: conceptions of what is generally desirable in social actions and relations.

The following dichotomies of value orientations were distinguished: Inclusiveness vs Exclusiveness (InT); Traditionalism vs Situationism (PT); Acquiescence vs Reform (AT); Short-term-objectives vs Long-term-objectives (GT)

Individualism vs Collectivism (InS); Pluralism vs Uniformity (PS); Transcendentalism vs Secularism (AS); Interdependence vs Autonomy (GS)

Ascription vs Achievement (InM); Tolerance vs Conformity (PM); Particularism vs Universalism (AM); Idealism vs Pragmatism (GM)

Discipline vs Satisfaction-of-self (InIv); Perfectionism vs Indifference (PIv); Dilligence vs Carefreeness (AIv); Planning vs Laissez-faire (GIv)

18. The French sociologist Alain Touraine (1977: 5,40-42, 1981: 79) has little patience with functionalist conceptions of social values:

> The word *values* is dangerous because it designates a hodgepodge of cultural orientations, social rules and ideology.
>
> To analyse a society beginning with its values, that is, expressed, hence dominant, values - is not only to turn things upside down but to ideologically take sides with the ruling class.

ence to a "vision of the good life". Valuation is an instrumentality of a "life world" (Lebenswelt) of rational agents ...

Rescher maintains that the rationalisation of action can be viewed from three main perspectives: The first-person perspective of *deliberation* and *decision making* in the context of the question: what am I (are we) to do? The second-person perspective of *advising* and *counseling* in the context of the question: what are you to do? The third-person perspective of the *justification* and *critique* of action: what are the merits (or demerits) of what X is doing (has done)? "The fundamental role of a person's values", says Rescher, "is, not surprisingly, to underwrite the *evaluation* of his actions - to support "practical reasoning", that is, his purposeful thinking about actions in their broadest ramifications ..."

Rescher (ibid: 13-19) distinguishes six principles for *classifying* values:

1. According to who subscribes to the particular value - these could be certain individuals, professions, nations, etc.
2. According to the object(s) to which the value applies - thing values, environmental values, individual or personal values, group and societal values.
3. According to the nature of the benefit at issue. Here the category of value could be: material and physical, economic, moral, social, political, aesthetic, religious, intellectual, professional or sentimental.
4. Classification by purposes at issue would include medicinal, exchange, bargaining, persuasive values.
5. A classification by the relationship between the subscriber and the beneficiary would include self-oriented, other-oriented, and mankind-oriented values.
6. A classification could also be done in terms of the relationship the value bears to others - here categories could be instrumental or means values, and intrinsic or end values.

16. J.J. Loubser (1973: 20-21) developed a scheme of *universal social values* based on Parsons's four systems of action. These values are conceptualised as desirable states of: (i) The human *organism* in relation to its environment; human personality, human society, and human culture. With respect to the organism in relation to its environment the relevant value principle is the optimisation of human adaptive capacity (hence concern about population explosion, destruction of the environment, etc.). (ii) In case of *personality* the value principle is that of optimum human self-realisation - alienation and self-estrangement are negatively valued. (iii) For human *societies* integration

The *values* of the group differ from its *beliefs* in that, unlike the latter, their subject matter is the good life and how to come closer to it. They differ from the group's *norms* in that instead of spelling out courses of action to be followed in certain circumstances, they point to al states for whose realization the group is ready to strive because it believes that their realization would confer benefits.

15. Nicholas Rescher: *Introduction to value theory*, 1969

Rescher, at the time of publication of *Introduction to value theory*, was Research Professor of Philosophy at the University of Pittsburgh. The Preface of the book makes its point of departure and perspective completely clear:

The principal innovation of this philosophical introduction to value theory is its focus upon *values* as they are dealt with in everyday-life situations, and have sometimes been studied by sociologists and social psychologists, rather than upon Value (with a capital V) as has been standard in the philosophical tradition. Its point of departure is, not a philosophical theory about "the nature of value", but a philosophically informed scrutiny of the workings of the value concept with which we operate in everyday affairs.

In a footnote Rescher justifies the use of the word *sometimes* (above) as follows:

I say sometimes, because some social scientists do not concern themselves with values as they function in everyday-life contexts, but with artificial technical value-constructs often so far removed from our informal concept of "Values" ...

Beginning with "the problem of how a value *is manifested*" Rescher (ibid: 9) arrives at a formal definition:

A value represents a slogan capable of providing for the rationalization of action by encapsulating a positive attitude toward a purportedly beneficial state of affairs.

Rescher (ibid: 9, 11-12) explains the concept of *rationalisation* as follows:

... the capacity to have values requires ... the capacity to *rationalize* ... actions. To have a value is to be able to give reasons for motivating goal-oriented behavior in terms of benefits and costs, bringing to bear explicitly a *conception* of what is in a man's interests and what goes against his interest: to operate within reason-giving contexts with refer-

14. Kurt Baier (in Baier and Rescher: *Values and the future*): "What is value? An analysis of the concept", 1969.

Philosopher Baier in 1969 took care of the conceptual clarification[2] of "value" in the voluminous collection of essays: *Values and the future*. The late sixties were the years when there was great optimism for value research in America, and the time when Parsons gave a new meaning to "value theory" - and the functions of values.[3] It is notable that Alvin Toffler wrote the Introduction to *Values and the future* under the title of "Value impact forecaster - A profession of the future".

Baier (1969: 40-1) is emphatic about the difference between the *value possessed by things*, and the *values held by people*:

> The former is an *evaluative property* whose possession and magnitude can be ascertained in appraisals. The latter are *dispositions to behave* in certain ways which can be ascertained by observation. The former are *capacities* of things to satisfy desiderata. The latter are *tendencies* of people to devote their resources (time, energy, money) to the attainment of certain ends. The value of a thing may be great or little, lasting or ephemeral. A particular value among a person's values may be strong or weak, genuine or pretended ... A person's dispositions to devote his resources in certain ways constitute his value if he takes them to be beneficial, to be good ways of expending his resources, or to make his life better than other ways would.

Baier (ibid: 55) postulates an ordered structure of values within a personality:

> We would expect an individual's values to be organized to a considerable degree. We would expect them to be arranged in an order, and we would expect there to be immediate changes in some aspects of this order if there are changes in others. We expect a person's values to be grouped or bunched in certain ways so that a certain characteristic value profile or value orientation or value structure emerges which shows itself in characteristic responses to dangers and threats, opportunities and windfalls in his life. No doubt it will be useful to have at our disposal concepts referring to groupings, arrangements, or emphases of this kind.

Eventually Baier (ibid: 56-7) moves slightly from individual to "group" values:

> The values of a group are thus part of its conventional wisdom. They are those settled habits of and attitudes towards, resource allocations which are essentially appraisal-dependent ...

- A time orientation which could emphasise the past, present or future.
- An orientation towards action which could be *being, being in becoming* or *doing*.
- An orientation with regard to one's fellowmen which could be one of individualism, collaterality or lineality.

12. Neil J. Smelser, 1963: *Theory of collective behaviour*

> Values: The most general component of social action resides in a value system. Values state in general terms the desirable end states which act as a guide to human endeavour; they are so general in their reference that they do not specify kinds of norms, kinds of organization, or kinds of facilities which are required to realize these ends.
>
> Values, then, are the most general statements of legitimate ends which guide social action.

13. Milton Rokeach in *Beliefs, attitudes and values* (1969:124) defines a value as follows:

> I consider a value to be a type of belief, centrally located within one's total belief system, about how one ought to or ought not to behave, or about some end-state of existence worth or not worth attaining.
>
> Values are thus abstract ideas, positive or negative, not tied to any specific attitude, object or situation, representing a person's beliefs about ideal modes of conduct and ideal terminal goals ... A person's values, like all beliefs, may be consciously conceived or unconsciously held, and must be inferred from what a person says or does.

The Rokeach Value Survey distinguishes 18 ideal modes of conduct or "instrumental values":

> ambitious, broadminded, capable, cheerful, clean, courageous, forgiving, helpful, honest, imaginative, independent, intellectual, logical, loving, obedient, polite, responsible, self-controlled.
>
> Eighteen ideal terminal goals or "terminal values" are distinguished:
>
> a comfortable way of life, an exciting life, a sense of accomplishment, a world at peace, a world of beauty, equality, family security, freedom, happiness, inner harmony, mature love, national security, pleasure, salvation, self-respect, social recognition, true friendship, wisdom.

[What] is predominant in any given society cannot be decided *a priori* on the basis of "human nature" or on the "principles of sociology" or by the fiat of grand theory.

... there is no *one* answer to the question, what holds a social structure together? There is no one answer because social structures differ profoundly in their degrees and kind of unity. In fact, types of social structure are usefully conceived in terms of different modes of integration. When we descend from the level of grand theory to historical realities, we immediately realize the irrelevance of its monolithic concepts.

11. Florence Kluckhohn and F.L. Strodtbeck (1961: 4,10,341) also used the term *value orientations* and defined it as follows:

Value orientations are complex but definitely patterned (rankordered) principles, resulting from transactional interplay of three analytically distinguished elements of the evaluative process - the cognitive, the affective, and the directive elements - which give order and direction to the ever-flowing stream of human acts and thoughts as these relate to the solution of "common human problems".

Value orientations were theorised about as follows:

There is an ordered variation in value orientation systems ... There is a limited number of common human problems for which all peoples at all times must find formulae ... While variations in these formulae exist, they are neither limitless nor random but are, instead, variations within a limited range of possible solutions ... All variants of recurring solutions are present in all cultures at all times but receive, from one society to another, or one subculture to another, varying degrees of emphasis ... Every society has, in addition to this dominant profile of value orientations, numerous variant or substitute profiles ... It is postulated that in both the dominant and the variant profiles there is always a rankordering of the reference of the value-orientations alternatives.

The value orientations are linked to five common human problems:

- A conception of human nature - which can be seen as good, evil or a combination of the two.
- Man's relation to nature and the supernatural which can be one of subjection, harmony or domination.

9. R.M. Williams (1957) in *American society: A sociological interpretation* analyses the content and significance of some fifteen important value-orientations or value-patterns:

> Achievement and success; activity and work; moral orientation; humanitarian mores; efficiency and practicality; progress; material comfort; equality; freedom; science and secular rationality; nationalism-patriotism; democracy; individual personality; racism and related group-superiority themes.

Among the generalisations made by Williams are:

> American culture is organized around the attempt at active mastery rather than passive resistance. It tends to be interested in the external world of things and events, of the palpable and immediate, rather than the inner experience of meaning and effect. Its world-view tends to be open rather than closed. It emphasises change, flux, movement. Its central personality types are adaptive, accessible, outgoing and assimilative. The culture places its primary faith in rationalism as opposed to traditionalism. The received culture emphasizes individual personality rather than group identity and responsibility.

10. C. Wright Mills in his seminal *The sociological imagination* (1959: 37-39) rejects the Parsonian conception and theorising of values in no uncertain terms. It is worthwhile to quote some of his incisive remarks at length:

> ... what Parsons and other grand theorists call "value-orientations" and "normative structure" has mainly to do with master symbols of legitimation ... Such symbols, however, do not form some autonomous realm within a society; their social relevance lies in their use to justify or to oppose the arrangement of power and the positions within the arrangement of the powerful.
>
> We may not merely assume that some such set of values, or legitimations, must prevail lest a social structure come apart.
>
> Unless they justify institutions and motivate persons to enact institutional roles, "the values" of a society, however important in various private milieux, are historically and sociologically irrelevant.
>
> So far as "common values" interest us, it is best to build up our conception of them by examining the legitimations of each institutional order in any given social structure, rather than begin by attempting to grasp them, and in their light "explain" the society's composition and unity.

[which, are not the personal problems of individual actors, but the structural problems of societies].

Parsons also developed a scheme for the classification of value orientations. These are the so-called pattern-variables. Defined as "dichotomies, one side of which must be chosen by an actor before the meaning of a situation is determinated for him, and thus before he can act with respect to that situation" (Parsons and Shils, 1954: 77), Parsons originally distinguished five pairs of pattern-variables: Affectivity vs affective neutrality; self-orientation vs collectivity-orientation; universalism vs particularism; ascription vs achievement; and specificity vs diffuseness.

6. Anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn (1951: 395) defined a *value* as:

> A conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable, which influences the selection from available modes, means and ends of action.

Adhering to this conception of values, Kluckhohn (1956, 1958) distinguished three "cultural value emphases and their clusters":

- Man and nature: Determinate-indeterminate; unitary-pluralistic; evil-good
- Man and man: Individual-group; self-other; autonomy-dependence; active-acceptance; discipline-fulfilment; physical-mental; tense-relaxed; now-then
- Both man and nature: quality-quantity; unique-general.

7. Fairchild, H.E. (ed): *Dictionary of sociology*, 1955: 331

> *Value:* The believed capacity of any object to satisfy a human desire. The quality of any object which causes it to be of interest to an individual or a group. Value is strictly a psychological reality, and is not measurable by any means yet devised.

8. Philosopher Charles Morris in *Paths of life* and *Varieties of human values* (both 1956) distinguished three "paths of life": the dionysian, promethean and the buddhistic ones. These paths, which are also referred to as religion, philosophies of life, way of living, world views, values and value orientations, are based on Morris's study of the great religions of the world.

5. In the social theorising of Talcott Parsons the concept of *values* is undoubtedly the most strategic one. Starting with *The structure of social action* (1937), Parsons developed an interpretation of normative order which made all earlier writing on norms and values look like school essays. "After publication of *Structure*", says Spates (1983: 30), "the idea that values might be a controlling factor in social life took on a life of its own in American sociology."

In *The social system* (1951: 12) a *value* was defined as: "An element of a shared symbolic system which serves as a criterion or standard for selection among the alternatives of orientation which are intrinsically open in a situation".

For Parsons, sociology's prime theoretical problem was the one that Thomas Hobbes first made into social philosophy's most basic question: How is social order possible? Parsons's answer was the one that C. Wright Mills (1959: 31) summarised in three words: commonly accepted values. Institutionalised in culture and internalised through the process of socialisation in personalities, the enactment of values in the social system guaranteed social order for society.

Sociology, for Parsons, is the understanding of social systems; and values are the key to that understanding: "Sociological theory ... is that aspect of the theory of social systems which is concerned with the phenomena of the institutionalization of patterns of value orientation in the social system ..." (1951: 552). Ten years later Parsons (1960: 20) said it in an even simpler way: "The main point of reference for analyzing the structure of any social system is its value pattern".

In spite of the social system and values being the prime foci of Parsonian sociology - which, as Johnson, Dandeker and Ashworth (1984) have pointed out, has been explicitly empiricist - the origin and generation of values are not located in the processes of social interaction of social systems but in the cultural system; which means that Parsons's "theoretical strategy" (Johnson et al) has become one of idealism. Ignoring what he himself referred to as "the complex exigencies to which a system of action is subject in the real world" (1955: 358), Parsons (1966: 113) eventually was only honest when he said: "I am a cultural determinist, rather than a social determinist." The idealist position is also confirmed in Parsons's reference to an "ultimate reality". Johnson et al (ibid: 60) summarise:

> Parsons clearly refers to the source of values as "unknowable", and therefore commits himself to the view that they are essentially religious categories - "ultimate reality" or to put it another way, they are Godgiven ... Whatever their origins (and it is clear that Parsons has here moved into an idealist position), whether values persist, depends upon the degree to which they facilitate adaptation and goal attainment

the insight is lost when, in their formal definition of *value* they insist that it includes any object accessible to observation.

2. E.E. Eubank: *The concepts of sociology, A treatise presenting a suggested organization of sociological theory in terms of its major concepts,* 1932: 189.

We may use the term *value* as a general designation for anything wished *for,* that is, for anything to which such a value has been attached that it is desired by someone.

3. The Russian-American sociologist Pitirim Sorokin's (1947: 319) three "culture mentalities" may well be seen as a classification of value systems. The formal definition of a *culture mentality* is a formidable one:

> When in any given universe of ideological systems, we find the vastest combined system of ideology that integrates into one consistent unity most of the essential scientific (including the economic, political, social and humanistic sciences), philosophical, religious, aesthetic, ethical, and technological systems; in which all these articulate the same basic meanings, values, and norms, we have the vastest ideological supersystem possible in a given universe of ideological systems.

The *Ideational* culture mentality views reality as essential, non-observable and non-material; needs and interests are mostly spiritual. The *Sensate* mentality finds reality in what can be experienced by the senses. Needs are largely physical and maximum satisfaction is pursued.

The *Idealistic* culture mentality combines and balances the first two.

4. David Riesman in *The lonely crowd* (1950, 1955: 18) distinguishes three types of personality-directedness, social character or modes of conformity. He describes these modes of conformity as:

> ... the kind of set with which [an individual] approaches the world and people ... The notion of social character permits us to speak ... of the character of classes, groups, regions, and nations ... It will be familiar under one name or another to any of my readers who are acquainted with the writings of Erich Fromm, Barham Kardiner, Ruth Benedict, Margaret Mead, Geoffrey Gorer, Karen Horney.

The well-known three types of modes of conformity are: Tradition-, inner- and other-directedness.

As an illustration of various conceptions, definitions, and nuances of social values put forward by different investigators and theoreticians we have summarised or extracted twenty-five contributions. There is nothing "representative" about the selection, and the only order in their presentation is one of a rough chronology. Chapter Four will attempt a brief "content analysis" of the notions of values. We will try to be specific about the nature, the characteristics of social values. For the reader to judge on the acceptability of the proposed definition of social values, we consider it necessary to show some of the many nuances in scientific social thinking about values.

Par 10 Twenty-five notions of values

1. W.I. Thomas and F. Znaniecki: *The Polish peasant in Europe and America*, 1918-1920 (1927)

Most probably the first systematic explication of the concept *value* in American sociology is that in the *The Polish peasant in Europe and America.* In a "Methodological Note"[1] of some eighty pages at the beginning of the first volume the terms *value* and *attitude* were argued as being of strategic theoretical importance. *Values* were defined as:

> Any datum having an empirical content accessible to the members of some social group and a meaning with regard to which it is or may be an object of activity. Thus a foodstuff, an instrument, a coin, a piece of poetry, a university, a myth, a social theory, are social values..

And *attitude*:

> A process of individual consciousness which determines real or possible activity of the individual in the social world. Thus, hunger that compels the consumption of foodstuff, the workman's decision to use the tool, the tendency of the spendthrift to spend the coin, the poet's feeling and ideas expressed in the poem ...

For Thomas and Znaniecki the juxtaposition of values and attitudes was an attempt to explain the relation between individual and society, or personality and social structure. The distinction (and connection) of values and attitudes were also linked to, respectively, sociology and social psychology - with the suggestion that both these disciplines are necessary in "social theory". Of course, Thomas and Znaniecki's conception and definition of *values* and *attitudes* were much too vague and ambiguous to be useful. The inclusion of some rules of conduct as "values" fuses the distinction between norms and values, but it does bring (some) values within the normative order. However,

may be very different from the meaning (some) respondents attach to the term. (In all social research where questions are asked of respondents, the precise question is as important and decisive in interpretations as the answer of the respondent.) The meaning of words, terms, and concepts may vary among different populations, regions, cultures, etc. Not only the meanings of words may change, but also the characteristics of the phenomenon to which it refers. One last "complication" is the very natural tendency in investigative and theoretical thinking to define concepts functionally or interpretatively. An example would be: "Values are ideological rationalisations of privilege." Again, in social science, and in social reality it is more often impossible to separate completely descriptions of observable characteristics from interpretations of perceived ones.

Lay people's conceptions of "values" could be seen as natural, everyday ideas, and those of social scientists as formal, technical concepts. In some investigations respondents are asked what *their* conceptions of (so-called) values are. This could go some way to conciliate "lay" and "learned" conceptions - and bring some equity between common and scientific social discourses. Such equity or conciliation, we suggested in Par 5, is what distinguishes social reality and social science from the reality of nature and natural science.

There is one last area of reflection and investigation relevant to lay and learned conceptions of values: What could possibly be the influence and effect of scientific studies of social values on the everyday value conceptions of ordinary people? The question suggests the importance of processes such as diffusion, reception, assimilation, and use of (scientific) social knowledge. We have indicated this as an issue within the sociological dimension (Par 8). These processes range from a simple question like: Who reads social science?, to an explicit functional connotation of social science such as the one attributed to it by Berger (1976: 51) in his *Invitation to sociology*:

> The sociological frame of reference, with its built-in procedure of looking for levels of reality other than those given in the official interpretations of society, carries with it a logical imperative to unmask the orientations and the propoganda by which men cloak their actions with each other.

Would this imply that common social knowledge (in "developed" countries?) could eventually become as "sophisticated" as the knowledge produced by social scientists? Could there really be a possibility that Comte could be (somewhat) vindicated!? Or should one rather remember that while concepts and definitions of values may differ, social reality - in the end - is also differentiated?

Chapter Three

Ideas about social values

Par 9 On conceptions and definitions of social values

Social values were defined in Par 1 as: notions of the good and desirable in personal dispositions, social conduct, societal arrangements, and cultural resources. Whose definition is this, and where does it come from? It says something about social science that, while the answer to this simple question can in no way be unusual, the raising of the question is. The answer then: This is a definition that I, as a sociologist, have decided upon after scrutinising publications by sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists, political scientists, other social scientists, as well as writers whose work on values is marginal to social science. Also, I am satisfied that the proposed definition of *values* makes sense to those who do not profess to have formally studied society!

Among social scientists concepts have no registered meanings; only a workable degree of semantic consensus that allows for the particular term to be defined in technical dictionaries, and for colleagues, students, and initiates to know what they are talking about. Precision in conceptual content of technical terms is a matter of degree. As this is also the position with non-technical words in everyday conversation, it cannot be said that (many) semantic difficulties arise from the fact that technical concepts often use the same term (word) common in everyday language. "Values" in everyday understanding and "values" in scientific social discourses are not completely different notions or ideas.

Conceptual and definitional differences among social scientists come about more often when "abstract" terms are involved. There is, of course, no absolute difference between descriptive and abstract terms, but even ordinary people know that words referring to actions and circumstances which can be observed and easily described - like *making love* and *poverty* - have little definitional difficulties. Words which refer to ideas, beliefs, and interpretations - like *ethics, values, democracy, justice* - usually have a number of nuances. Explicit and formal definitions of such concepts are an accepted manner to achieve clarity in scientific investigations and publications. Unfortunately it does not solve all problems: Social scientists sometimes use different terms for the same concept and vice versa. An investigator's formal and operational definition of "values"

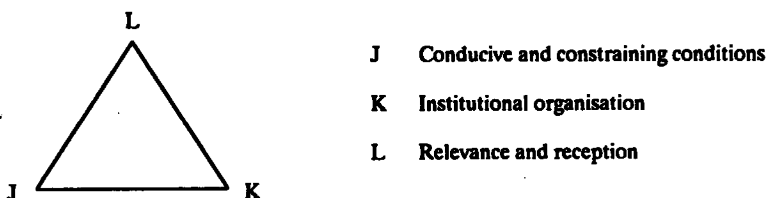
- the denouncement of value studies
- social values and social criticism
- relevance, reception and assimilation of sophisticated social knowledge - also sophisticated knowledge about values

These issues will be discussed in Chapter Nine.

sectors, provided an infrastructure for the generation of a new commodity: scientific social knowledge. The differentiation of the social sciences and the demand for social knowledge produced by scientific research differed significantly in established European countries and in the New World - the USA and its sociological colonies. Also dissimilar has been the esteem in which such knowledge was held as the answer to social problems in both the First and the Third World.

Whatever the historical variations and intellectual nuances in the production of scientific social knowledge, its institutionalisation has brought about its increasing social control and its susceptibility to societal trends. Single, independent investigators are a rarity. Teamwork, research institutes, networks and communities control and often prescribe the social knowledge which is produced. Research is expensive and social scientists are dependent for funding on academic institutions, private and state agencies. Outside universities the personal choices of research subjects are limited and are often contractual assignments. Professional associations and journals facilitate the production of scientific knowledge about society, but also exert control over its quality and over professional ethics. Competent criticism and advice of peers have their counterpart in *public reaction:* ordinary people with their common social knowledge react to what is presented as scientifically researched, valid knowledge about social affairs and society.

Instead of summarising these numerous aspects by generalising that social science investigations are politically influenced (or that all social science is ideologically tainted!), I would suggest that the sociological dimension of investigation can be seen as the interface of three aspects: Social *conditions conducive to or constraining* social investigations; the *institutional organisation* of social science and social research; and, the *relevance and reception* of scientific social knowledge.



Sociological issues relevant to value studies which have been selected for discussion are:

Denzin (ibid) refers to Herbert Blumer's call, fifty years ago, for research and theoretical designs to accurately reflect and capture the features of the phenomenon under investigation. Some sociologists preach the marriage of method and theory but then use methods for neither their theoretical implications or their differing ability to shed light on theory. Already in 1970 Denzin (1970: 5 & 14) made several simple but incisive remarks that can be seen as in accord with our view of methodology:

> I hold that methods are indeed of great theoretical relevance - that in fact every method has a different relevance for theory, and that significant advances in substantive sociological theory will occur only after sociologists adopt a consistent and viable framework for the dual analysis of theory and method.
>
> ... methods can no longer be viewed as "atheoretical" tools. It should be apparent that each theory demands a special view of methods.
>
> ... from the interactionist's perspective the proper use of concepts is at first sensitizing and only later operational. ... By sensitizing concepts I refer to concepts that are not transformed immediately into operational definitions through an attitude scale or checklist.

As is to be expected, the range of methodological issues relevant to value studies is wide. I have decided on three themes which will be discussed in Chapter Eight:

- methodological contexts of value studies
- micro and macro contexts
- methodological equity

Par 8 The sociological dimension: The social and societal context of investigations

If the issues associated with some dimensions have had a long history, the sociological aspects of social science and social research are of more recent vintage. Professionalisation of the social sciences and of social research is a fairly new development. The present demand for social investigations, the training of researchers, and the institutional organisation of this "growth industry", as well as the marketing of its products in the form of packaged social knowledge, are modern phenomena of Western countries in the last six or seven decades. The institutionalisation of academic departments of social science, and the organisation of social research in academic, private and public or state

employees of a single multinational corporation located in forty different countries.

Culture's consequences is based on two rather tenuous assumptions: that "work-related values" are representative of, or can be generalised to "overall" values of national cultures; and, that employees who happen to work for the same firm in different countries, are typical or representative "value- and culture-bearers" of a particular country.

A huge volume of material is incorporated from other, unconnected value studies or research projects relevant to values and national cultures. This is used to substantiate Hofstede's four "value dimensions" and the depiction of differences in national cultures:

(1) *Authority* or *power distance* refers to conceptions respondents had of equality/inequality in the work place.

(2) The dimension of *Uncertainty avoidance* relates to anxiety or uncertainty that employees experienced in their occupational situation.

(3) The dimension of *Individualism* was measured by reactions to 14 questions concerning work goals. It included considerations such as: personal time, freedom, challenge, use of skills, physical conditions, and training.

(4) The dimension of *Masculinity* reflected indications of male-assertiveness and female nurturence patterns - eventually sex roles.

In all four dimensions "work-related values" were extended and generalised, with substantiation of findings of other studies, to national values or characteristics of different national cultures.

Despite its diffuse concept of "values", its questionable "translation" of work-related values into overall values differentiating distinct national characters or cultures, and despite the integration of divergent material in the construction of "value dimensions" and national value systems, *Culture's consequences* remains a *tour de force*. The intensive statistical analyses of its questionnaire data, the sheer volume of "outside" material (concepts, research methods and findings, and theoretical explanation and interpretation) brought together and used to substantiate Hofstede's own explication - all this made an investigation of work-related values into an examination of the social structures and cultural patterns of various national societies. Hofstede's theorising is remarkable. It is not done through imperial and abstract conceptual schemes constructed in advance, but through a most thorough logical exploitation of empirical data. There can be few studies that have achieved such theoretical heights of generalisation through sheer hard work in the salt mines of facts.

Most macro studies attain their heights and bird's-eye views of entire societies with considerable less effort: they simply fly there by Conceptual helicopter!

21. J.J. Degenaar (1986)

Philosopher Degenaar, in a paper read in 1984, subscribed to a broad conception of *values* that could be formalised as "emphases in any scheme of thought or actions". "Values" for Degenaar, would include the (epistemological) criteria of belief systems such as truth and validity - of science, religion, philosophy, ideologies, etc., as well as the measures and principles in everyday beliefs, behaviour and social relations.

22. Psychologist Peter du Preez (1984) makes a methodological distinction between "the collection of values as facts, and attempts to explain values". The former evidently requires precise definitions (and operationalisation) of "values". Du Preez generalises:

> The obvious way to collect value facts is to devise an instrument and ask people to indicate preferences. This is the traditional way of psychologists, and has been used by Allport, Rokeach, Dennis and many others.

While in agreement that values are *preferences*, Du Preez points out that in sophisticated research *preference* itself would have to be qualified, categories specified and the concept operationalised for particular contexts of investigation.

The "explanation of values" would also include explanation of phenomena in terms of values. Du Preez lists several fields of interest: Values as a component of traditional and changing morality; also a critical assessment of moral judgement, and of what is generally considered as justice and injustice. Motivational theories usually acknowledge the role of values, but Du Preez rejects as simplistic those theories of socialisation in which internalised values are consistently functional in personalities and social systems. Such theories, he says, fail to appreciate the complexity of reflection and decision, and, being instrumentalist, lend themselves to social engineering without obvious moral commitment - which is characteristic of natural science rather than the social sciences. Development of moral reasoning has been a focus of the work of Piaget, Kohlberg, Gilligen, MacIntyre, Rawls and Nozick. It has become apparent that moral reasoning and moral decisions are extremely complex, and can differ from one situation to another - also that we have little definite knowledge about the role of values in these processes. Lastly, Du Preez refers

to the values/interests debate, and emphasises that the relevance of values is closely linked to existential conditions:

Moral systems detached from practice are futile exercises in adolescent wish-fulfilment. By critical reasoning and activity, we may use the resources of a tradition to bring about change. What is required is not merely an abstract portrayal of desirable states of affairs, but a series of strategies and practices for achieving these states.

23. Anthropologist Eleanor Preston-Whyte (1984) in a paper read in 1983 accepted Clyde Kluckhohn's definition of values as "conceptions of the desirable" but refrained from any further qualification of the concept:

> I would suggest that values be regarded simply as a sort of "intellectual toolbag" - a complex set of interlocking, but by no means necessarily consistent ideas and preferences. For me Kluckhohn's "conceptions of the desirable" fits the bill admirably and I offer it as a working definition ... "Desirable" indicates that action might follow, but need not do so ...
>
> The point I am making is that choice of values, and more important, behaviour are essentially contextually based. "Values" exist as "conceptions of the desirable" - but they are probably no more than this. What actually affects behaviour ... is an enormous range of "other factors" and even these change from context to context, possibly from moment to moment as the individual sums up his total position in the light of all the relevant (and often rapid changing) information.
>
> Values are, I think, only one of the many pressures which decide action, and I would not even be prepared to say that they are always amongst the most important. In many real life situations people have no choice, so it matters little what their values are.
>
> For any particular group of people, it is not enough to describe or even to rank their "values" alone. Such a study would be of purely academic interest; important perhaps, in the pursuance of scientific knowledge, but hardly useful in telling us about "real life". A really useful study of values would have to be qualified by an assessment of the degree to which these values could be achieved, and even more important, as assessment of their importance to individuals in different "real life" social contexts or situations.

Research, Preston-Whyte advised, should be focused not on values alone, but on the complex interplay of values, circumstances and individual choice of

action. Rejecting the acceptance of theoretical assumptions in advance of research, she said:

> No presuppositions of a functionalist nature would be necessary in research outlined in this way as the objectives of field work would be to see how, and indeed if, the values and the relative importance of the differing values isolated, did change in different contexts and if values did have or, indeed could have, behavioural correlates.

24. *Waardes en psigoterapie* (*Values and psychotherapy*) is a South African study by R.J. van Vuuren (1985). Van Vuuren starts with a review of conceptions, empirical research, and theorising of values by philosophers, social scientists and particularly psychologists. He then investigates the role of values in the practice of psychotherapy. A number of clinical psychologists are subjected to interviews about their work. An application of the phenomenological approach in both the conduction of interviews and content analysis of material, leads to a novel conception of the nature of "values". The explanation of the "operation" of values as experienced by psychotherapists in clinical situations, is itself an exercise in phenomenological analysis. The study focuses on what can be called the work-values of psychotherapists.

In the English summary of the (unpublished) dissertation, Van Vuuren (1985:vi) writes:

> Psychotherapy is a value-laden process and the psychotherapist is a value-bearer. Psychotherapists cannot do otherwise than to enter the domain of values. The whole field of psychotherapy is an expression of various approaches to being human.
>
> In this study I rejected the option of using a questionnaire reflecting a preconception of what values are, because it cannot provide a true representation of the experience of values in the specialized life-world of the psychoterapist.
>
> My point of departure in this study was that values and being a person are an inextricable part of the everyday lifeworld of the psychotherapist. For this reason I designed a phenomenological-psychological method of enquiry into the structure of the experience (of psychotherapists) of values.

Van Vuuren's phenomenological analysis, predictably, brings forward a rather diffuse conception of "values". The psychotherapists were asked for retrospective descriptions of clinical situations in which "value modalities" could be present. The term *value* was not used by the researcher - and neither

did the responding psychotherapists recount their experience of and reactions to clinical situations explicitly as "values". The "value concepts", made explicit by Van Vuuren's content analysis of reports of clinical experiences, are cognitive, affective and volitional reactions experienced by psychotherapists in clinical sessions. These reactions included: ideas, insights, understanding; dispositions like empathy, sensitivity, satisfaction, uneasiness; and, responses to the psychotherapists' own needs. It is these reactions that are considered by Van Vuuren as *values*. He argues that they are generated in the therapeutic situation, in the interaction between therapist and client; that the therapist defines them as meaningful in his own and in the client's experience of the clinical situation, and also as functional (or disfunctional) in the process of therapy. The recognition and appropriate "handling" of these "values", are decisive for the success or otherwise of the process of therapy. Evidently these "values" or "meanings" are evaluations, normative interpretations, empathetic understandings of what is happening in the clinical situation - for both the therapist and the client.

Van Vuuren's analysis demonstrates how psychotherapists not only enter the domain of values, but how they construct, articulate and reconstruct values in the clinical situation - for themselves and their clients. Both therapist and client only really realise the presence and importance of values in the interactive situation. Values are simultaneously generated and actualised by the interactive relationship. The manner in which both therapist and client experience these values, gives them access to the inter-subjective life-world of therapy.

Van Vuuren's analysis does not support the notions of "world views", "value frameworks", "value hierarchies" or "clusters of values". He says:

> The therapeutic life world was found to be flexible and less transparent than concepts such as "world view" and "value framework" seem to imply. I would question whether one can speak of a cohesive and consistent framework of values in psychotherapy at all (1985:vii).

25. Stephan Harding, David Phillips and Michael Fogerty: *Contrasting values in Western Europe: Unity, diversity and change,* (1986)

Contrasting values is the second title in a series of studies in contemporary values of modern societies. The series was initiated by the European Value Systems Study Group (EVSSG) in Amsterdam in the late 1970s.

The European Values Questionnaire which was used in surveys "contained items, some of which might correctly be referred to as "attempts to measure values"; attitudes, opinions, beliefs, emotions and reported behaviour were also investigated. No excuse is made for this catch-all conception of "values". On

the contrary, researching different but related types of items at the same time, is neatly justified:

> ... any attempt to understand individuals' views within a social context requires just such a multistranded approach. There seems to be little point in ascertaining political or religious values, for example, if no attempt is made to discover, if these are related to attitudes toward more specific life situations, beliefs or to behaviour (Harding et al, 1986:2).

The most formal definition of "values" is the following:

> Values are mental constructs (which) cannot be seen, only inferred from what people say or do, the judgements they make and their expressions of preferences. It is the assessment of such judgements and preferences which underscores many of the approaches to the measurements of values (ibid:2).

Two categories of values were distinguished at the outset: *personal* and *moral* values. Personal values are expressions of personal goals or ideals preferred or desired by the individual. The EVSSG project operationalised personal values (also referred to as "attitude preferences") by asking respondents about qualities to be encouraged in children, qualities thought to be important in marriage, and characteristics considered important in a job.

Moral values are defined as: "normatively prescriptive constructs by which we evaluate and regulate our social actions and shared lives". Moral values are said to be operative and functional in social conduct and relationships with others. Typical areas in which moral values obtain, are: regulation of taking a life, sexual relations, justice, familial duties, friendship, pecuniary matters and property. "Such values or norms at the societal level may be backed by rules, rewards, and penalties to enforce conformity, the sanctions being either legal or social in nature" (ibid:3). The authors do not shun the problematic connections between values, beliefs and attitudes. Their remarks, however, bring little conceptual or empirical clarity.

With regard to *moral values*, statistical factor analysis showed that moral judgements tend to cluster in three main areas: Personal-sexual (P), Self-interest (S), and Legal-illegal (L). Looking at different countries in Europe, it was found that the "moral weight" given to acts in these three areas tend to be culture-specific, "presumably reflecting diverse preoccupations resulting from the different socio-historical backgrounds of each nation" (ibid:13). This also meant that if a country showed a high level of strictness in one type of morality, it will not necessarily be strict with regard to another area. Danes, for instance, showed the greatest tolerance in personal-sexual morality, followed by the Dutch and the French, but Scandinavians were among the strictest of self-in-

terest morality and illegality. The greatest strictness on the personal-sexual factors was shown by the Irish.

After relatively simple statistical distributions, the researchers go on to the correlation of different value clusters with social background factors, of which they looked at four: Age, level of education, religious belief, and political affinity. Here the most general finding was that "the groups which show greatest tolerance in moral outlook are the young, the more highly educated, those who are more left-wing, and those describing themselves as non-religious or atheist" (ibid:15). Again and again such generalisations are qualified in closer analysis: "A higher level of education is likely to be associated with greater tolerance on the issues comprising the personal-sexual factor, but the pattern is less consistent on the self-interest and legal-illegal morality items (loc cit)!

Turning to *personal values*, the four most common qualities considered desirable to pass on to one's children were: honesty, tolerance and respect for other people, a feeling of responsibility, and good manners. (The British are distinctive for the relatively strong emphasis they place on tolerance and respect for others, good manners, unselfishness, and obedience, and for the low emphasis (though not as low as with the Irish) on responsibility (ibid:19).)

As in the case of moral values, personal values were also found (by factor analysis) to cluster in three areas: *Social-conformity* orientation which emphasised obedience, feeling of responsibility, independence, and good manners; the *Autonomy* orientation was strong on honesty, but also "imagination" and "independence". The third orientation, the *Altruistic* one, emphasised hard work, thrift, tolerance and respect for others, leadership and unselfishness (ibid: 22). Finer analysis eventually shows a clear divide with regard to all three areas of personal values: there are "traditional" and "post-traditional" positions. This division correlates with the four background characteristics mentioned above.

Traditional and post-traditional positions are also referred to in the authors' generalisation that contemporary morality is more characterised by "anti-traditionalism" than by a different, internally consistent alternative. Such a change, it is suggested, would naturally be strengthened by rejections of absolute moral standards in areas like personal and sexual relations; it would be encouraged by changes in legislation, and, ultimately, by a decline in religious adherence in Western Europe.

A last conclusion is a methodological one:

> We cannot demonstrate definitively from the survey that our contrasts only reveal social changes in the nature of value priorities in Western Europe; however, supported as they are by external evidence, they represent more than conjecture (ibid: 27).

Notes

1 Contradiction about the status of the note and how it came into the world, are of more than passing interest. Historically they reflect some of the first opinions on the integration of concepts, factfinding and theorising.

Thomas (in Blumer, 1939:83) himself said:
It is a fact that the methodological note in Volume One was prepared just before the first two volumes went to press ... It was influenced by our investigation but was not altogether the result of it and its claims were not systematically exemplified by the materials.

Blumer (ibid:74) commented:
It seems quite clear that Thomas and Znaniecki did not derive all of their theoretical conceptions from the materials ... Perhaps not even the major theoretical conceptions were derived from them.

Bain (ibid:177), another critic, called the Note:
an afterthought ... just thrown out by the authors, but it became a very productive stimulus which induced men to study many simple, specific, carefully formulated problems susceptible of empirical verification.

In the Preface it was presented somewhat differently:
The present study was not, in fact, undertaken exclusively or even primarily as an expression of interest in the Polish peasant ... but the Polish peasant was selected rather as a convenient object for the **exemplification of a standpoint and method** outlined in the methodological note forming the first pages of the present volume.

2 Co-editor Nicholas Rescher wrote the chapter: "What is value change? A framework for research". Rescher says that he will not attempt to delineate the concept of **value**, as Baier will be doing that; the reader is, however, referred to Rescher's own **Introduction to value theory** that was published in the same year (1969). Rescher had been unneccessarily modest: After 34 pages of philosophical analysis Baier did not produce a formal definition of **value**.

3 In **Values and the future** Parsons is given one reference in the Index of names; it is a reference within a reference and concerns views of sex roles.

Chapter Four

What, then, are social values?

What is a value and how is it to be recognized? In view of the centrality of the concept in sociology and the ease with which theorists, researchers and social critics all use it, our inability to answer this is alarming (Harold Fallding, 1965).

Par 11 A profusion of notions, terms and definitions?

When philosopher Kurt Baier (1969: 35) had to answer the question *what values are*, he projected some of his conceptual frustration onto sociologists. In search of a terminology which would bring clarity he said:

> It does not take long to discover that sociology is not a good source, not yet at any rate. In fact, sociologists employ a bewildering profusion of terms, ranging from what a person wants, desires, needs, enjoys, prefers, through what he thinks desirable, preferable, rewarding, obligatory to what the community enjoins, sanctions, or enforces.

Diverting the blame for the conceptual confusion surrounding "values" to sociologists is obviously not an option for a sociologist. Also, the accusation is not demonstrated, let alone confirmed, by the 25 notions of *values* presented in Par 10.

I would like to suggest that the profusion of notions, terms and definitions, to the extent that it is seen as a profusion, is generated by four factors or conditions:

A. *Values* are notions, ideas, or conceptions in the minds of people.

B. *Values* are appreciative, evaluative, or normative notions, ideas, or conceptions.

C. *Values* are "notional" in the original connotation of the word *notational:* having an actual meaning in a sentence. More generally: the relevant meaning of a "value" is to be found, and must be established, in the particular situation of discourse or "language game".

D. The variation of notions, terms and definitions of *values* found in the social sciences follows from these disciplines' attempts at sophistication of an ordinary, everyday word and idea. Ordinary people in everyday conversation - together with priests, prophets, politicians, journalists, and writers of stories and of literature - seldom find it necessary to formally conceptualise, operationalise, empirically substantiate, and theorise about the origin, functions, and change of values. That is, they talk and write about values, and apply them, without precise definitions and deliniation of the word from related concepts, without meticulously gathering the facts, or explaining in detail how values work. The question *what are values*? follows from the decision of philosophers and social scientists to make *values* into a *technical and theoretical term,* and from their conviction that values present a *definitive variable*, significantly related to human behaviour, to beliefs other than values, and to social circumstances.

What has been listed as four factors or conditions responsible for the (perceived) disarray surrounding the idea of *values*, could well be used to bring some order to the various conceptions, terms and definitions. This will be attempted in the following Paragraphs - in which we will refer to the 25 notions of values summarised in Par 10.

Par 12 Notions, ideas or conceptions in the minds of people

Precisely because values are notions or ideas, they cannot be observed or verified in terms of obvious properties. Neither can values, being ideas, be defined with any finality. The validity of definitions of *values* rests entirely on the degree and extent of consensus that formal definitions are accorded within a particular context of discourse. As formal definitions are not insisted upon in everyday conversations, value conceptions in everyday understanding are naturally diffuse. Such diffuseness or imprecision, however, is part of everyday communication - and a necessary and functional characteristic, if not a prerequisite of conversation. It could be argued that ordinary people in everyday conversation cope quite well with their individual notions of values, as these notions are, in essence, not very different or divergent. It can also be argued

that so-called diffuseness (and profusion) arise only or mostly when distinctions between values and related concepts (attitudes, opinions, etc.) are considered important. These arguments would emphasise both the similarities and differences among the three modes of social knowledge: common, philosophical, and scientific social knowledge. They would suggest that an answer to the question *what are values*? should also inform us *whose* answer it is.

In conclusion: notions of values do not necessarily have little definity or less consensus of connotation. However, when *values* are made into a technical concept and a variable, which are then researched and theorised, its precise conceptionalisation and formal definition become necessary - and problematic.

Par 13 Appreciative, evaluative and normative notions

Not only are values notions and ideas in the minds of people; they are notions and ideas that imply appreciation of worth, evaluation of alternatives, and judgement of conduct. With these implications or nuances inherent in the concept of *values*, it is not surprising that some see only confusion in the thinking about values. It is, however, I believe, not correct to relate conceptual confusion to the distinction - or non-distinction - of the *value of a thing* and the *values held by people*. This is a suggestion made by Fallding (1965: 223) who says: "Confusion persists in the study of values partly because values are made synonymous with things valued"; and Baier (1969: 36) who writes: "... economists draw the indispensable distinction (largely lost to sociologists) between, on the one hand, the *value* of things, and on the other, the *values* of individuals or societies."

It would, I believe, be much more in accord with the historical development of the concept of *value/s* and of value studies, to acknowledge as factual a shift from the *worth of things* to *conceptions of what is desirable for the wellbeing of society*. But this is not a change or development that left ordinary people, philosophers or social scientists confused about the meaning of *value/s*. In everyday conversations and in learned discussions the two connotations are seldom confused - or fused. The context in which the term is used usually makes its meaning apparent.

This does not imply that a transition from the *value of a thing* to values of individuals or societies has been simplistic or matter-of-fact. To put the record straight, it should, however, be said that this conceptual shift has not been the achievement of philosophers or economists, but that of social scientists. To what extent ordinary people made this shift "on their own", or acquired a new conception of "values" (after listening to sociologists ?!), is hard to say. Social etymological research should be able to settle this question, but we do not at present have anything worthwhile on this. I do know from personal experience

that when one says that you are working on values the most common lay question is: what kind of values?

Baier (ibid: 36-7) points out that the *value of a thing* had been central to traditional economic Value Theory. Investigating the exchange or market value of commodities, most economists ended up by telling us its price. Still, "economists have attempted to develop precise theories of rational human behaviour based on the assumption that such behavior is at least partly determined by human values". Baier does not see the theoretical importance of this linkage of rationality and values, and he dismisses "the terminology developed by economists as insufficient for our purposes". It would seem that philosopher Baier in 1969 had not yet read Max Weber's *Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism* (1905), or Talcott Parsons's *The structure of social action* (1937) - or, for that matter, anything that social scientists had written on values up to 1969.[1]

Be that as it may, it is to Spates (1983: 28-30) that one should turn for a brief but precise account of the roots of the concept of values (in the United States):

> A key accomplishment of *The structure of social action* was to shift the meaning of the concept of values. Inheriting their concern from philosophy, most early social scientists spoke of "values" in a way that conformed to the term's Latin etymology (*valere:* to be worth).

Spates points out that numerous early social scientists preceded Parsons in the conception (if not the term) of values as normative orientations held by individuals and societies. Spates mentions the names of Small and Vincent (1894), Sumner (1906), Giddings (1907), Boas (1911), Radcliffe-Brown (1922), and Ruth Benedict (1934). Parsons, however, went to Europe for his value concept:

> Despite their availability, Parsons ignored all these sources and drew his argument from the European tradition in which he was well steeped. By a careful analysis of the then largely neglected works of Pareto, Durkheim, and Weber, Parsons contended that, at bottom, all three were saying the same thing - that cultural ideas, particularly those with a moral component, were the *determining* and *distinguishing* element of social existence. It was all there in Pareto's concept of "residues", in Durkheim's notion of the "conscience collective", in Weber's focus on the Protestant ethic and the "spirit" of capitalism.
>
> After the publication of *Structure*, the idea that values might be a controlling factor in social life took on a life of its own in American sociology (Spates: loc cit).

Spates continues his sketch of the development of the concept and studies of values through and beyond the contributions of functionalist theories. For present purposes that is not of direct relevance.

Even a cursory reading of the 25 notions of *values* summarised in Par 10, should make it apparent that the overwhelming majority of these notions ascribe to values the characteristics of being *appreciative*, *evaluative* and *normative*. It is significant that only the two earliest definitions of *values* have an accent of "thingness": Thomas and Znaniecki define a value as "an object of action" - and include material objects like coins; while Eubank defines the term *value* as "a general designation for anything wished *for*, that is, for anything to which such a value has been attached that it is desired by someone." If the 25 notions in Par 10 are reduced to keyword definitions, the list shows both the variety of value conceptions, and their common or shared attributes:

1. Object of action (Thomas and Znaniecki)
2. Object of wish or of desire (Eubank)
3. Culture mentality (Sorokin)
4. Social character, mode of conformity (Riesman)
5. Criterion for selection of orientation (Parsons)
6. Conception of the desirable (Clyde Kluckhohn)
7. Capacity of object to satisfy need (Fairchild)
8. Philosophies of life (Morris)
9. Value-orientation (Williams)
10. Symbols of legitimation (Mills)
11. Directive principles of action and thinking (Florence Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck)
12. Desirable end states (Smelser)
13. Beliefs about how one ought to behave, and of end states (Rokeach)
14. Dispositions to behave (Baier)
15. Slogan for rationalisation of action (Rescher)
16. Criteria of desirability (Loubser)
17. Conception of the desirable in action and social relations (Joubert)
18. Ideology (Touraine)
19. Societal priorities (Inglehart)
20. Tendency to prefer certain states (Hofstede)
21. Emphases in any scheme of thought or action (Degenaar)
22. Preferences (Du Preez)
23. Conceptions of the desirable (Preston-Whyte)
24. Reactions functional to therapy (Van Vuuren)

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25. Goals and ideals preferred or desired by the individual; normative constructs by which action is evaluated and regulated (Harding, Phillips and Fogerty)

Par 14 Values in various contexts

In Par 11 it was said that the relevant meaning of a "value" is to be found, and must be established in the relevant situation of discourse or "language game". This "condition" (C) provides both an explanation for the variety and nuances of notions of values, and a "principle" which could bring some order in the conceptual disarray.

It is significant that Rescher (1969: 2) arrives at a formal definition of *values* by beginning "with the problem of how a value *is manifested*". Manifestation is understood by Rescher as value subscription and value imputation. Such subscription and imputation can be done, he says, either by talk or action. Thus values are manifested in what we think, say and do. If the idea of manifestation is extended, one could generalise that *values are made manifest in various contexts,* and that these contexts vary from everyday, informal speech and conversation to deliberately chosen or constructed spaces in which the appearance and characteristics of values are investigated. It should be emphasised that values, being notions, must be *made manifest or explicit*, and that this is done both in lay and learned reflection and discourse.

Various contexts of values have already been distinguished in previous Paragraphs and we can be brief in specifying some of them here. It is only obvious that the various contexts sometimes overlap and that the "list" is in no way a systematic classification.

(a) Values could be made manifest in thought and speech, in recorded or documented thought and speech; also in behaviour and recorded behaviour.

(b) Rescher's (Par 10, no 15) perceptive distinction of first, second and third person perspectives in which, respectively, one can *deliberate* and *make decisions* about your own actions, *advise* and *counsel* others about their behaviour; and *justify* and *criticise* the merits of particular actions.

(c) The suggestion in Par 11 (C) that the meaning or content of a value should be constructed or established from the very situation of discourse, should be taken literally: situation of discourse could well mean the moment of speaking about values. Also Preston-Whyte's (Par 10, no 23) remark that an individual's values are not necessarily a set of consistent ideas and preferences, should be taken seriously - no less for the reason that it directly contradicts the assumption that both individuals and societies have logically consistent and stable value systems - a view clearly supported by Baier (Par 10, no 14) and by

most functionalists. Though none of the 25 authors had said so much, I would extend relevant suggestions and implications to the standpoint that: the verbalisation of a value by a person, or the reaction to a value statement or question, is often, if not always, an instant, and situationally relevant if not situationally induced, construction and reconstruction of a notion of desirability. This generalisation is closely linked to and supported by the fact that all notions and ideas are endlessly rephrasable. Ultimately, it could be difficult to disprove an argument like the following: All that we know about the values of X is what he said at such and such a time and on such and such an occasion. We have no certainty that X will repeat exactly, or confirm with similar conviction, at another time and in other circumstances, what he said in the past. Nor do we know to what extent a spoken confirmation that certain values are held by X is true, or operative in X's behaviour. Values, it could more easily be argued, are verbal facts or word-truths. This is a characteristic that values share with all beliefs which are not subject to empirical observation or proof.

(d) The three modes of social knowledge distinguished in the epistemological dimension (Par 6) imply that there can be significant differences in the value notions of ordinary people, philosophers, and social scientists.

(e) Within each of the three modes of social knowledge, and especially among social scientists, value notions can vary considerably. Not only do psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists and political scientists often differ in their formal definitions of *values,* but, depending on the choice of theoretical approach (paradigm) within the discipline, the methodology (conceptualisation, fact-finding and theorising) used in the investigation of values may differ.

(f) The definition of values that was proposed at the outset (Par 1) encompasses, in effect, what many social scientists consider a sensible theoretical distinction: that between personalities, everyday social life, societies as social systems, and culture as a set of resources. Values are relevant in all four of these contexts, and particular value studies could, and do, concentrate on one or more of them.

(g) Many of the 25 notions of values summarised in Par 10 are *functionalist,* i.e., even the formal definitions of *values* assume or imply a significant relation between values and behaviour. More generally: variations in notions of values are significantly linked to different assumptions (and findings) about values' behaviour-relevance, or behaviour's value-relevance. The 25 value notions demonstrate at least five different positions regarding value-relevance: (i) Values, in fact, influence, direct, decide, motivate, stimulate, determine behaviour. (ii) Values are criteria of selection of orientations, i.e., they are considerations in the choice of normative orientations, and not identical to such orientations.[2] (iii) Values are no more than conceptions of what is desirable;

they are merely opinions, attitudes, perceptions - and have no demonstrable or verifiable impact on behaviour. (iv) Values are ideological arguments that justify and legitimate behaviour and social arrangements which are established interests of those who profess these values. (v) Values represent mankind, civilisation and particular societies' most esteemed goals and ideals. Their explication and propagation may not have a direct normative impact on behaviour or beliefs, but do stimulate reflection upon and examination of life and living.

(h) Variation in conceptions and formal definitions of values is not unrelated to the categorisation of values of which there are examples in Par 10. In fact, no less than 17 of the 25 authors proposed categorisations of values. As classifications are based on perceived or established characteristics of values, such classifications present a denotation of values.

(i) In Chapter Eight an attempt is made to distinguish what could be called *methodological contexts* of value studies. These are the most explicit examples of deliberately chosen or constructed spaces or contexts in which social scientists investigate the presence, characteristics and dynamics of values. Five contexts are distinguished: populations, situations of interaction, bounded collectivities, institutional structures, and discourses.

Par 15 A technical concept and a variable

A fourth condition (D in Par 11) relevant to the variation in notions of values - and to the understanding of this variation - is the sophistication of the term and concept of *values* by philosophers and social scientists. In these disciplines *values* has been made a technical concept and a phenomenon or variable that are subjected to serious and systematic investigation. Such investigation involves the three methodological processes or subprocesses: conceptualisation, empirical substantiation, and theorising (Par 7). A brief analysis of the 25 notions of values (Par 10) shows significant variations with regard to all three methodological aspects. In this Paragraph we concentrate on conceptualisation and empirical substantiation, while Par 16 attends to theorising.

Concerning conceptualisation:

In Par 13 the 25 notions of values were reduced to keyword definitions. A closer look at these keywords allows for the following generalisations:

(a) There are definitions which equate values with *objects of*: actions, wishes, desires, needs, or with the capacity of an object to satisfy a need. (Thomas and Znaniecki 1, Eubank 2 and Fairchild 7.)

(b) In three notions *values* are given the most general connotation of "emphases in any scheme of thought or action", philosophies of life, and ideology. (Degenaar 21, Morris 8, and Touraine 18.)

(c) Two notions relate values to general cultural patterns: culture mentality, social character, and mode of conformity. (Sorokin 3 and Riesman 4.)

(d) Clyde Kluckhohn's notion of values as *conceptions of the desirable* is accepted (explicitly or implicitly) in the definitions of the following authors: Parsons 5, Williams 9, Smelser 12, Loubser 16, Joubert 17, Inglehart 19, Preston-Whyte 23, and Harding et al 25. With one exception, *desirability* for these authors refers to what is considered to be "good for society" and not what is *desired* by individuals for themselves. Harding et al present the exception as they do not insist on the distinction between *desirable* and *desired.*

(e) Though probably all 25 keyword definitions could be said to (at least implicitly) link values to action or behaviour, the terms *action, behaviour, behave* are only explicitly part of the core definitions of authors: Thomas and Znaniecki 1, Florence Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck 11, Rokeach 13, Baier 14, Rescher 15, Joubert 17, Degenaar 21, and Harding et al 25.

While an explicit reference to action or behaviour in formal definitions of *values* makes those definitions more specific, the linking of values and action is also a *theoretical* suggestion. Definitions and notions of values that relate or link values to action are essentially explanations or interpretations of the effects or consequences of values for action. The action-relevance of values will be discussed fully in Par 16. Here it should be pointed out that a definition of values which says: "values are ABC which affect action" is not (merely) a descriptive definition, but an explanatory or interpretative, and thus a theoretical statement - the empiricity of which could be established.

(f) Three notions indicated the function of values as justification, legitimation or rationalisation of action, social or societal arrangements. (Mills 10, Rescher 15 and Touraine 18.)

(g) "End states", goals or ideals were the terms used in the definitions of Smelser 12, Rokeach 13, and Harding et al 25.

(h) In a number of notions *values* were equated with individual preferences, tendencies to prefer certain states, and preferred or desired goals or ideals. (Du Preez 22, Hofstede 20, and Harding et al 25.)

Concerning empirical substantiation:

We will not detail everyone of the 25 authors as to the method of investigation applied or implied - some authors did not do a systematic investigation of values but concentrated on conceptual analysis or logical explication. It can be

said, however, that basically four methods of investigation of values were applied or implied by these authors:

(i) Conceptions of *values* were operationalised and individual respondents asked about their values in interviews and surveys.

(j) Values were ascertained through analyses of documentary material - this is the historical procedure.

(k) Values were established by logical reasoning or logical "theorising", including typological or classificatory theorising: the theorist constructs typologies or categories of values through logical argument. Some typologies, classifications or "models" are substantiated by empirical research; others are never "applied".

(l) Van Vuuren 24, who investigated values phenomenologically, deduced or identified particular values by researching the actual (professional) behaviour of psychotherapists.

Par 16 Theorising about the relevance of values for action

Much more than by formal definitions or empirical substantiation, what we have called the *sophistication* of the idea of values (Par 11, D), was achieved through *theorising* by philosophers and social scientists. In Par 15(e) *theorising* was equated with explanation and interpretation, and it was suggested that especially social scientists would be concerned about factual substantiation of "functionalist" statements about values (functionalist statements being propositions that tell us how behaviour is affected by values).

We take the position that a "good" scientific social investigation is one in which there is "equity" (substance and balance) of conceptualisation, empirical substantiation, and theorising. This methodological ideal is often not realised - and much serious writing on values can still be categorised as "philosophical" or "empirical". Both these terms of course have a double meaning: *Philosophical* can refer to what is written by professional philosophers, but also to writing, studies and analyses which are logical interpretations with no or little empirical substance or evidence. *Empirical* refers to factual evidence, but also to (social) *science* as opposed to philosophy. We do not consider it necessary to choose between these variant connotations. Meanings of these terms should be clear from the sentences in which they are used. The following generalisations, however, would be in order: 1. Value studies by philosophers seldom show a concern about factual evidence. 2. Empiricity is an accepted epistemological and methodological criterion and test in social science. 3. Empirical substantiation is one of three methodological subprocesses (and a requirement) of

scientific social studies - a subprocess and requirement which, especially in value studies, are often given too little or too much attention. 4. A value study in which a social scientist concentrates on the gathering of facts may neglect but cannot completely be without theorising. 5. Many social scientists ("social theorists"!) write on values with little empirical substantiation. Rather than to refer to these studies as "purely theoretical", I would prefer to call them "logical theorising".

All these intricacies concern the problem of value investigators to factually substantiate their statements about how behaviour is affected by values. Values' action-relevance, however, involves more than factually proving that values influence behaviour. That should become clear in what follows.

(a) There is no single relationship between values and action, and various value studies ascribe different effects or functions to values.

Psychologist Du Preez (1984) has said it very simply:

> People have, several times, questioned the relation between values and behavior. Of course there is no answer. The reason is perfectly simple, there is no single relationship. Values can contradict behavior, it can rationalize behavior, it can mystify, there can be an antagonistic relationship, there can be congruence, and we will probably find several other relationships.

Preston-Whyte (1984) said in the same year:

> Despite fifty years of study we do not have any clear or generally accepted model of how values affect behaviour or for that matter how exactly values change. ... the choice of values, and more important, behaviour are essentially contextually based. What actually affects behaviour is an enormous range of "other factors" and even these change from context to context, possibly from moment to moment as the individual sums up his total position in the light of all the relevant (and often rapid changing) information.

In our list of 25 notions of values only nine referred explicitly to action or behaviour: Thomas and Znaniecki (1) spoke of values as an *object* of action; Florence Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (11) defined values as *principles* of action and thinking; Rokeach (13) spoke of beliefs about what one ought to do; for Baier (14) values are dispositions to behave; Rescher (15) defined values as slogans for rationalisation of action; Joubert's (17) definition was "conception of the desirable in action and social relations"; Degenaar (21) spoke of emphases in any scheme of thought or action; Van Vuuren (24) referred to the values of his respondents as "reactions functional to therapy"; and Harding et

al (25) defined moral values as "normative constructs by which action is evaluated and regulated".

Rescher (1969: 23) argues that values are related to action in categorically different ways - "that vary with the nature of the thing valued". His distinction between values "that are related to the possession of diverse items" is, in essence, a distinction of *types* of values. Of these, six are listed:

- motives, habits or dispositions for action like generosity
- physical state like health
- capability, skill or talent like endurance
- state of mind or attitude like indifference to money and patriotism
- character trait like resoluteness
- state of affairs like privacy and economic justice.

The variety of links that are believed to exist between values and behaviour should be evident even from these few examples.

(b) There is often a seductive circularity in the explanation of action by an appeal to values. Rescher (1969: 25-28) writes on "the explanatory invocation of values", or even more precisely, "the explanatory force of an appeal to values in accounting for human behavior", and analyses a few examples of such invocations. While the analysis is interesting, I am not convinced by Rescher's denial of circularity in appeals to values to account for behaviour. Rescher explicates an explanation of behaviour - a patriotic act - in terms of the actor's values as follows:

> We have as background [for explanations] multiple groupings of diverse patterns of human behavior, falling within typical constellations (the *modus operandi* of "the patriotic man").
>
> In giving a value-oriented explanation of behavior ("in doing X, Smith acted out of patriotism") we fit the action at issue (Smith's doing of X) into a classificatory niche (acts of patriotism, i.e., the modes of action of patriotic men) in such a way that, through the ideal type at issue the rough outlines of an explanatory account can be discerned (patriotic men tend to do X-type acts because these conduce to [help to produce DJ] realization of the patriotic values.

Rescher suggests the following objection to the above explication:

> You are saying that Smith acts in this way, because he espouses such and such a value (patriotism). But how do you know he has this value? - simply because he acts this way. What is this but to say that Smith acts as he does (patrioticly) because that's how he acts?

This objection is invalid, says Rescher, because it overlooks the "temporal" aspect:

> We explain Smith's action in the present case with reference to his subscription to a value, but then justify this subscription claim with reference to *the pattern of past actions*. The underlying thesis is one of *stability* in behavior patterns: We suppose that a man's actions tend to be "true to type" so that present behavior conforms to past patterns. This temporal aspect, together with the stability thesis that provides its basis, prevents the ideal-type variety of value explanation from sinking into circularity.

It does not need a logician to see the thin ice philosopher Rescher is skating on: 1. *The pattern of past actions* and the *stability in behavior patterns*, can either refer to Smith's consistent actions in the past, or to the particular society's stable patterns of action. 2. In neither case - whether Smith's action is in accordance with his own behaviour in the past, or in accordance with societal patterns of action, can Smith's present action be explained as his subscription to the value of patriotism; it can only be explained as a repetition of past (patriotic) *acts*. Explaining present *actions* in terms of past *actions*, does not involve or suggest the relevance of *values* at all. Rescher obviously fuses or logically equates behaviour and values. There is no logical reason why, when a present action is explained in terms of past actions, the explanation should be called value-oriented. 3. The most that can be said of Smith's action is that it is in accordance of what, in the particular culture and society, is considered patriotic deeds - and, that as patriotism happens to be a value in this culture and society, Smith's action is in accordance with one of the values of this culture and society. 4. We, indeed, do not know whether patriotism is one of Smith's values, or whether he was indeed motivated by this value when he acted; nor how and with what motivation, he will act in future in a similar or different situation. 5. Rescher's explication of explaining behaviour by an appeal to values is circular in more than one respect: An act is explained as a subscription to a value when that act happens to be in accordance with what is considered to be a value. All that is said, actually, is that a patriotic act is a patriotic act because such acts have long been considered patriotic. Explaining present actions by past actions makes values (whatever that may be) irrelevant; it only suggests a repetition of actions and a repetition is the ultimate circularity. 6. Rescher ends the particular paragraph by equating values and character: "For

it is clear that in the ordinary course of things our standard mode of procedure in depicting someone's character calls in large measure for the description of his values."

What we have analysed is an example of circular reasoning in explaining behaviour as affected by values. Obviously, not all value explanations are circular - and different interpretations give a different content to the effect of values. The example provided by Rescher is, however, relevant as circularity in reasoning is not uncommon in appeals to values as affecting behaviour. And, perhaps, the most common cause of such circular interpretations is the one that, we believe, also led Rescher astray: a diffuse and multiple conceptualisation of *values*. Only a specific, precise and consistent conception of values can ensure a precise and convincing account of actions in terms of such values. The fact that such sophistication is not common and not required in ordinary people's everyday thinking about values, does not invalidate the methodological requirement. It does, however, demonstrate the difference in the relevance of logic and factuality in common social knowledge and the social knowledge produced by philosophers and social scientists.

(c) It is not naive to suggest that the real problem in explaining observable actions as being - somehow and to some extent - produced, determined, or influenced by values, is that we cannot get into the minds of other people. If Smith tells us that patriotism is a value that he holds dear, and that what he did when he assassinated a corrupt politician was motivated by that value, we have only his word for these claims. In our own decisions about actions we may know that we did take into account what we believe to be important values, but we would hardly be able to say precisely what "weight" the particular value had in the particular decision. Values, as was said in Par 14(c), are verbal facts and word-truths. This is a characteristic which they share with all beliefs which are not amenable to (direct) empirical observation or proof. Like ordinary people in everyday life, philosophers and social scientists, when referring to values, have to accept the bona fides and sincerity of those who speak of values. The fact that sincerity happens to be a value, is not ironical; it is the best example of the word-truthfulness and word-empiricity of values.

(d) Values are not only theorised as being relevant to individual actions. Many if not most social scientists see values as traditional cultural and societal orientations that guarantee a stable social order. This means that actions and social structures are but two contexts in which values are thought of as relevant, having an effect or making a difference. In Par 14(i) other contexts were distinguished, and in Chapter Eight it will be demonstrated that theorising of values differs significantly depending on the context in which they are investigated. Here it is sufficient to point out that action or situations of actions, and social structure or societies are considered as, respectively, micro and macro

contexts. The (theorised) links between micro and macro structures are of immediate relevance to theories which postulate societal values as preconditions and effective forces in both normative action and societal order. Socialisation theory is the dominant theory explaining both conforming behaviour and social order in terms of internalised societal values. In Par 10(5) Parsons's theorising of values both on macro and micro levels was summarised. His extremely functionalist views of socialisation and of social systems were contrasted with the views of Mills (10) and Touraine (18). Mills makes the incisive observation that social structures differ greatly in the kind and degree of their integration, and rejects the Parsonian view that values are responsible for all social coherence. For Touraine a society's value system is nothing other than a more or less coherent ideology - an ideology which does not completely determine the "categories of social practice", but does dominate a society's discourse about itself.

(e) It could be generalised that a particular context in which values are investigated, greatly affects the abstraction level of the theorising, as well as the kind and degree of empirical substantiation achieved. This pattern can, to some extent, be seen in summaries of value notions in Chapter Three - especially those "notions" which were not only conceptualisations but full investigations of the phenomenon. This implies that in methodological evaluation of value studies one would have to scrutinise carefully the context chosen, the particular conceptualisation, empirical substantiation and theorising. It would also mean that different criteria, modes of criteria and judgements would be appropriate in the evaluation of different studies. Such a *modus operandi* would be in accordance with the very nature of methodological considerations. We will return to this point of view in Chapter Eight.

Par 17 Returning to the definition of values proposed in Par 1

To a possible - and very reasonable - request that we, now, in one sentence, say what values are, the answer would be that we consider the definition given in Par 1 as being adequately argued in the preceding Paragraphs: *Values are notions of the good and desirable in personal dispositions, social conduct, societal arrangements and cultural resources.*

Without repeating the various interpretations and arguments of preceding Paragraphs, we would contend that this definition avoids most of the pitfalls and pretentions that were indicated in the discussion - at the same time leaving open methodological options. The definition does not prescribe (or limit itself and investigators as to) a particular context, a narrow conceptualisation, a specific mode of factual substantiation, or a particular mode of theorising. In this regard we submit that the definition probably has the best of the five worlds

distinguished in Par 14(g) where possible positions regarding values' relevance for action and social structures were listed.

We have excluded the first position: the notion that values actually influence, direct, decide, motivate, stimulate, determine behaviour. A reference to *social conduct* is retained: values being a notion of what good and desirable conduct would be. The definition drops the second position that values are criteria of selection of orientations - as, surely, this is the same as saying that values are notions of the desirable. A third possibility described values as a conception of the desirable on par with opinions, attitudes, perceptions and preferences - and maintains that their impact on behaviour cannot be demonstrated or verified. We would disagree on two counts: Requirements concerning substantiation need not be made part of a formal definition of concepts. While we have argued that the three methodological subprocesses are inextricably linked and have implications for each other, to postulate that the empiricity of values can not be demonstrated would be to insist on a particular idea of empirical substantiation. It would also insist on a requirement that could be appropriate in the context of individual action, but perhaps not in the context of social structure. Secondly, while values could be, and often are, equated with attitudes, opinions, etc. the choice of the term *desirable* implies an element of social normativeness - a notion of what is good and should be wanted (by many) for the well-being of personalities, social life, society and culture. If investigators choose to include very personal wishes, desires, opinions, etc. in what they consider to be *values*, they are obviously free to do so. Also, if it is argued that *personal dispositions* opens the door to any personal and individual sentiment, one can hardly object and say: "those are not values". Only two requirements should be insisted upon in all value investigations: a precise definition of the concept used in the study, and clarity on whether respondents (necessarily) share this notion of values or not. Not only sociologists believe that notions exist about the good and desirable which are not reducible to or can be equated with what is unique and singular. If such notions did not exist, words like social, relationship, society and humanity would be meaningless. Ultimately, selfishness is not the most common characteristic of ordinary people. That they share notions of a good life may just be the most common and most esteemed human trait.

The fourth position equates values with ideology. Every day value-statements are used and abused for ideological purposes - and also rejected for that very reason. There is, however, no reason why one function or disfunction of values should be made into its only notion. To do that could in itself be ideological. The fifth and last conception presents a society's cherished goals and ideals as its values. Few social scientists and even fewer ordinary people would take issue with that. Of more relevance are public debates about societal

goals and ideals, about politics, policies and programmes. It is in debates on how lives should be conducted, countries should be run and culture should be maintained and developed, that values often become principal arguments and arguments of principle. Touraine was correct when he referred to values as issues of a society's discourse about itself.

Par 18 What happened to the ontological dimension?

The question *what values are* has formally been placed in the ontological dimension. In Par 5 it was argued that this dimension concerns the nature of social reality, and that beliefs, behaviour and circumstances are the three interrelated components of social reality. Values are beliefs and the present chapter has tried to clarify the distinctive characteristics of value beliefs. In doing this we referred to values' links to circumstances, and extensively discussed the links between values and behaviour. Answering the question about the role or impact of values, the present chapter moved beyond the ontological dimension. In attempts to determine what values are, we have involved aspects which were suggested as part of the methodological, epistemological and sociological dimensions. Not only should this be seen as necessary, but accepted as being in accordance with the "logic" of dimensions, the nature of social phenomena, and the logic of scientific social investigation. These considerations should be clear from Chapters Three and Four - and will be further articulated in subsequent chapters. For the present the following generalisations suffice:

(a) The four dimensions can be seen as shafts or levels on which reflection upon and investigation of social phenomena proceed simultaneously.

(b) While the ontological dimension focuses on conceptions of values, such conceptions are also dependent on: the modes of thinking about values in the epistemological dimension - common, philosophical and scientific social knowledge; on the three subprocesses of the methodological dimension - formal conceptualisation, factual evidence and theorising; and on the sociological dimension where ordinary people's everyday understanding and experiences play an important role in their notions of values and their subscription to these principles.

(c) In public debates about political, social and cultural issues, appeals to values are a very natural sociological phenomenon. Such appeals not only contribute to clarity about values; it could also strengthen obligations. It is in public debates that values are reproduced - and reconceptualised. This is values' sociological dimension to which we will return again and again.

Notes

1 Baier (ibid: 36), of course, does refer to a few definitions of values by sociologists like Lundberg, Park and Burgess, Clyde Kluckhohn and Smelser. These are given as footnotes (and as proof of sociologists' profusion of terms) and are identical to Rescher's (1969: 2) footnotes - which are also without indications of exact sources or dates.

2 This is what Fallding (1965: 223) says of Parsons's pattern variables.

Chapter Five

Values and rationality: Lessons from Max Weber

Par 19 On values and rationality

The identification of rationality with the scientific method and assumptions about the rational character of man are part and parcel of what Alasdair MacIntyre has called the Enlightenment project. The belief in the rationality of both science and man generated the confident optimism that the application of scientific knowledge would eventually ensure for enlightened men and women a rational and just society. It was of course not so much natural science as *social science* that was to attempt to realise this utopia. What has actually developed since the high and heady days of positivism, was the realisation that especially social science is *not* undetermined or uninfluenced by non-rational, historical and ideological conditions; as well as the realisation that "rational man" and his brother *homo economicus* are theoretical models which are often far removed from the realities of human nature and social conditions.

While committed to the Enlightenment project, positivist social scientists were initially wary of investigating so-called innerstates - personal traits including intelligence, attitudes, motives and values. Psychologists, of course, could not shun personal and personality traits, and ingeniously developed positivistic methods of research and techniques of measurement to determine these variables. Especially with intelligence and attitudes they have had great success. Values research and measurement have been a much more recent involvement for psychologists. Sociologists and anthropologists came to individual values from their interest in normative and cultural patterns of communities and societies. Working mostly within a functionalist paradigm, the primary focus was on societal values and value systems. The values of individuals, it was generally theorised, are reflections of societal values; they are orientations internalised in the process of socialisation. While anthropologists studied individual and societal values mostly through qualitative methods, sociologists put their trust in surveys to determine both individual and societal values.

One could generalise that the various social sciences chose different methods to cope with those innerstates in which they were primarily interested.

For particular social sciences, attention to, investigations and eventual understanding of these innerstates were largely determined by the methods and techniques of investigation into these elusive phenomena. Public opinion research, incidently, is a rather special case. Whatever its initial relationship to sociology, political science and other disciplines, it has long ago found an independent (and lucrative) orbit. Its success - and meagre theoretical quality - must be ascribed to the development of research methods and especially statistical techniques well suited to its level of investigation. (See Par 24.)

Whatever the methods and techniques of research, and whatever the conception and theorising of values in the various social disciplines, the relation values-rationality has remained an issue in most social studies. Conversely, rationality is relevant in most aspects of investigations into values.

Values and other normative notions have long been considered as non-rational factors in behaviour. Once it was accepted that their factual presence could be determined by social research, a cascade of questions followed: Are values applied intentionally and "rationally" in situations of choice? Can the application of values in actual decisions and overt action really be determined? Is it at all possible to determine empirically the precise process, manner, frequence and consistency in which values operate in people's thinking and acting? Findings like: Mr V confirmed that such and such are his values, or, twenty percent of 40-50 year-old, upper class, white males of country S subscribe to Value 13 - do such findings allow for more than a statement that this is what respondents said about their values? Is it really possible to reconstruct the process or course of arguments, decisions, and actions, whether logical or illogical, rational or emotional, and determine the role of values in human motivation, judgement, rationalisation and action? Are values something more than conformative answers to normative questions? And societal value systems - why has the Enlightenment ideal of a rational consensual society not been realised?

Rationality and rationalism have historically been emphasised as dominant ideas - and values - of modernity and modernism. We will return to this theme in Chapter Seven: "Values in and out of modernity and postmodernity". The present chapter limits itself to that classical contribution to the values-rationality debate: the writings of Max Weber - and particularly *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. The essays, first published in 1905 and written in a style that left even better translations still formidable scripts, led to probably the most extensive debate in social studies. After almost a century and after volumes of interpretations and re-evaluations, comments and criticism, there is still, I believe, much to be learnt from Weber. Weber's conceptualisation of values is inextricably connected to his methodology - which is in itself the more reason why a monograph on the investigation of

values cannot dispense with a courteous nod of acknowledgement to what could well be social science's first value study.

Before we go on to Max Weber some encouragement could perhaps be had from Umberto Eco's lucid little essay "On the crisis of the crisis of reason". Eco (1986: 125) distinguishes five basic connotations of *reason:*

1. That type of natural knowledge, characteristic of man, opposed on the one hand to mere instinctive reactions, and on the other to intuitive knowledge (such as mystical illuminations, faith, subjective experiences not communicable through language). In this case we speak of reason to say that man is capable of producing abstractions and of speaking through abstractions.
2. Reason as a special faculty of knowing the Absolute by direct view; it is the self-knowledge of the idealistic ego; it is the intuition of prime principles which both the cosmos and the human mind obey, and even the divine mind.
3. Reason as a system of universal principles that precede man's abstractive capacity. At most man may recognize them, perhaps with difficulty and after long reflection. This is Platonism, no matter what name it is given.
4. Reason as the faculty for judging and discerning (good and evil, true and false). This is Cartesian common sense.
5. Rationality as exercised through the very fact that we are expressing propositions regarding the world, and even before making sure that these propositions are "true", we have to make sure that others can understand them. So we have to work out some rules for common speech, logical rules which are also linguistic rules.

If conceptions and the application of values are cognitive processes, all five of Eco's connotations of *reason* are relevant in reflection upon values: Values are "abstracted" in our experience and thinking of social reality; it is a widespread belief that societal values are universal, if not transcendental and *a priori* principles; values are indeed criteria in judgements and decisions; they are sociological rules which are and can only be constructed linguistically.

Par 20 Max Weber on values and rationality

"Weber placed the problem of the role of values in the determination of human action in a theoretical light which made the older versions of the problem definitely obsolete." So says Talcott Parsons in the Preface to the 1962

edition of his translation of Weber's *Die Protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus* (1905). It was, states Parsons (in 1958), Weber's immense knowledge and careful structural analysis of comparative social institutions that made such an achievement possible. Parsons continues:

> Thus just as in the case of the industrial order, in the general theoretical field, the important thing about Weber's work was not how he judged the relative importance of ideas or of economic factors, but rather the way in which he analyzed the systems of social action within which ideas and values as well as "economic forces" operate to influence action (Weber/tr Parsons, 1962: xvi).

It comes as a disappointment when, after such a recommendation, the index of *The Protestant Ethic* lists only six references to *value*, and then as: *value, judgements of.* One of the six is, significantly, something more than a mere value judgement: "Where the fulfilment of the calling cannot be directly related to the highest spiritual and cultural values, or when, on the other hand, it need not be felt simply as economic compulsion, the individual generally abandons the attempt to justify it at all" (Weber 1962: 182). Weber's conception of *values* should, obviously, not be sought in the index of *The Protestant Ethic*. It must be gleaned from the full text - and then with expert help from those who have studied and understood the intricacies of the text as well as the complexities of the extensive and ongoing debate on *The Protestant Ethic*. Such expertise and guidance are, for example, to be found in Gordon Marshall's *In search of the spirit of capitalism* (1982).

Put very simply, Weber, in a number of essays later compiled as *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, argued that the origin of modern capitalism can be located in the ethics (or values) of Protestantism in Western Europe. Marshall (1982: 13), after an incisive analysis of the original texts and of the debate, comes to the conclusion that "while Weber has been ill served by many of his critics ... his own case is empirically so thin that the only reasonable verdict for the moment would be one of 'not proven'". Empirical proof, however, is but one aspect of the debate - and for those interested in the nature and role of values, not necessarily the most important one. Obviously Weber tried to explain a *historical* phenomenon - the rise of an economic system in Europe. But being a sociologist, his analysis was not only based on historiography. Weber read and incorporated material from many related or relevant fields. He agreed with (and argued against) ideas of economists, philosophers, theologians and sociologists, and others who at the time would happily have referred to themselves as "theorists" - Adam Smith, Rickert, Simmel, Sombart, Marx, to name but five. At the time, and in such company, and in subjecting the history of an economic system to a sociological interpretation, lack of

"empirical proof" would have been a minor objection. What is considered (ample) empirical proof, depends very much on the procedure and techniques of investigation. *The Protestant Ethic* primarily uses the historical procedure. The Weber thesis was argued on his interpretation of documentary material from various fields of learning - not least publications on methodology and the philosophy of natural and social science.

To extract Weber's ideas about values and rationality from the original texts, from Weber's reactions to critics, and from the mass of material generated by the debate, is no easy task. In what follows we attempt to sketch these views in a number of points. This Nth explication is largely an interpretation of those parts of Marshall's (1982) interpretation that concentrate on Weber's notions of values and rationality.

1. Weber's *The Protestant Ethic* is part of a long and distinguished debate on the possible relationships between religion and the rise of capitalism, says Marshall (ibid: 19-20) and continues:

> In his original essays Weber actually proceeds from the assumption that Protestantism and capitalism are related to each other, an assumption based on the frequently documented observation that Protestants were, and as far as the evidence could show, always had been economically more successful than Roman Catholics.

2. Weber's explanandum (the phenomenon to be explained) was the *spirit of modern capitalism*. He does not start with a formal definition but with a "provisional description" taken mainly from Benjamin Franklin's *Necessary hints to those that would be rich* (1736) and*Advice to a young tradesman* (1748). Retaining all the old world charm and urgence, Marshall (ibid: 18) summarises Weber's long quotations from Franklin in a number of maxims:

> For everyday conduct: be prudent, diligent, and ever about your lawful business; do not be idle, for time is money; cultivate your credit-worthiness and put it to good use, for credit is money; be punctual and just in the repayment of loans and debts, for to become a person of known credit-worthiness is to be master of other people's purses; be vigilant in keeping accounts; be frugal in consumption and do not waste money on inessentials; and, finally, do not let money lie idle, for the smallest sum soundly invested can earn a profit, and the profits reinvested soon multiply in ever-increasing amounts.

This first indication of the spirit of modern capitalism and of the content of an economic ethos, could well be used in current value studies - these maxims would easily fit into modern questionnaires!

3. It is in his response to Sombart that Weber is more specific about the spirit of modern capitalism. Sombart had suggested that this ethos had two characteristics or elements: bourgeois rationality and ruthless acquisition. Weber denies the latter and rejects it as an aspect of an earlier economic tradition which is at odds with the modern variant. As Marshall (ibid: 44) says:

> The modern capitalist mentality is not that of the bold adventurer, nor even the opportunist. Rather it is the ethos of the risk-minimizing though relentlessly profit-maximizing strategist. Modern capitalists seek to maximise their return through rational calculation rather than by means of daring though potentially lucrative gambles.

4. In epistemological and methodological matters Weber closely followed Rickert and it is from Rickert that he took the idea that social phenomena have a "relevance to value". The concept is central to the content of the *spirit of capitalism* and the *Protestant ethic*, and, more important, to Weber's essential argument that the former has its origin in the latter. It is significant that Marshall (ibid: 45) links the "principle of value relevance" to the dubious empirical quality of Weber's conceptualisation of the spirit of capitalism:

> A few generalizations based on "what we all know" about the state of mind of pre-capitalist merchants, alongside the illustrative quotations from Franklin's texts, are scarcely sufficient documentation of Weber's argument. His insistence on separating Sombart's elements of "bourgeois rationality" and "limitless adventurism" is underwritten, however, not so much by his sketchy empirical data as by the Rickertian methodological principle of "relevance to values".

5. The methodological "principle of relevance to value" is rather general and multivalent. It is, also, at the heart of *The Protestant Ethic* if not of Weber's entire sociology. Weber (Marshall, 1982: 50) himself refers to it as "the decisive feature of the method of the cultural sciences":

> We have designated as "cultural sciences" those disciplines which analyse the phenomena of life in terms of their cultural significance. The significance of a configuration of cultural phenomena and the basis of this significance cannot however be derived and rendered intelligible by a system of analytical laws, however perfect it may be, since the significance of cultural events presupposes a *value-orientation* towards these events. The concept of culture is a *value-concept*. Empirical reality becomes "culture" to us because and insofar as we relate it to value ideas.

If one may translate into somewhat more current terminology: We think of, understand and investigate social and cultural phenomena in terms of the *meaning* that we ascribe or attach to them. Ascribing a meaning to a situation,

behaviour or idea, implies that we establish its relevance for (possible) action or reaction to that phenomenon. Thus "relevance to value" can be translated as "in terms of its meaning for us". For Weber the central value or meaning of modern capitalism is to be found in its rationality.

How can such an interpretation or characterisation of a core meaning or value of an economic system be substantiated? While Weber and contemporary social scientists would have agreed that one would have to either ask people what they consider to be the values of capitalism, or examine documents giving historical evidence, Weber chose his own rather unique method - one, which, nominally, does involve individuals and historical facts: *ideal types*. For Weber *the spirit of modern capitalism* as well as his favourite construction "the historical individual" were essential and typical social/cultural phenomena, and exactly the type of concepts to be explored in the social/cultural sciences. This means that Weber selected rationality as the (core) meaning or value of the spirit of modern capitalism. For a conviction, rather than a hypothesis, some documentary evidence was collected in its substantiation. Such empirical evidence was not, however, fundamentally important to Weber. Weber believed his characterisation of the spirit of modern capitalism (rationality) to be valid and true because it was an interpretation in the form of an ideal-type, a deliberate accentuation of one meaning or one value which *could* be scientifically proven *when* a causal relationship *would* be constructed between the value-relevant description of capitalism's spirit and antecedent historical factors.

Marshall (ibid: 51) summarises neatly Weber's appeal to the principle of relevance to value and its application to the meaning of the spirit of capitalism:

> Values-relevance is, as Rickert maintains, the principle which governs the selection of facts by clarifying the value inherent in a situation or phenomenon under analysis. Weber concedes that, of course, there are always several possible plausible interpretations of the values underlying any cultural phenomenon, and consequently several different points of view from which one might conceptualize the phenomenon (or "historical individual") to be explained. However, once an historical individual is constructed for a particular inquiry, *objectively one-sided* social scientific knowledge becomes possible through the discovery of causal relationships between the value-relevant description of the object of inquiry and antecedent historical factors, because the formation of these relationships is governed by the rules of established scientific procedure.
>
> If the particular value standpoint, according to which the object of the inquiry has been conceptualized, does not facilitate an explanation of

> the phenomenon which is both meaningfully and causally adequate (crudely, is both plausible in terms of what we know about social action in general, and can be upheld by comparative analysis), then there may be other values inherent in the phenomenon which permit a more satisfactory explanation to be constructed ...
>
> The spirit of modern capitalism is, [Weber] tells us, an historical individual; an ideal-typical, one-sided accentuation of the mentality of modern capitalists.

6. Weber's insistence that a methodology of deliberately one-sided ideal-types coupled with historical/comparative analysis would eventually produce scientifically valid social knowledge, did not convince those who tried to match logic and empirical facts. The task of empirical substantiation was compounded by what Marshall (ibid: 56) refers to as a change of explanandum, and tautology:

> ... throughout his essays, Weber takes the modern capitalist mentality to be the distinguishing *characteristic* of modern capitalism. On the other hand, and with equal force, he also argues that the capitalist spirit is one of the most important *causes* of modern capitalism.

Equating preconditions and distinctive characteristics makes it impossible to establish true causality and leaves us with the tautological construction: The spirit of capitalism is a cause of modern capitalism. If the spirit is absent, then that capitalism is not modern. If it is present, it has its cause as a characteristic! In the end it is no longer clear *what* Weber tried to explain: the characteristics of modern capitalism, or the spirit which was a cause of that modern capitalism.

7. The dualism, if not confusion, is made worse when Weber moves on to what he argues to be the *cause of the spirit of capitalism:* The ethical and doctrinal principles of an earlier belief system - Protestantism - are proposed as the origins of a particular orientation to economic activities. The argument completes the circle: economic orientations and values are explained as being determined by religious and ethical orientations and values. It was this values-values linkage, and Weber's disregard of possible material conditions that could have been relevant, which earned him the accusation of idealism - and of being insensitive to the distinction between necessary and sufficient conditions.

Actually, it was still more complicated: Weber also made no clear distinction between orientation or attitude or value, and, actions, or behaviour or behaviour patterns:

> Weber, like Sombart, seems unsure as to whether the spirit of modern capitalism is a complex of values which, given appropriate situational conditions, fosters capitalist activity; or, alternatively, is a patterning of

economic and social action in terms of a particular set of values. Is the spirit of capitalism a world-view or the realization of a world-view; an attitude or a pattern of conduct? (Marshall, ibid: 65).

8. What, then, is the *Protestant ethic*? Again it is convenient to follow Marshall who simplifies Weber's complexities to two essential elements: a code of ethics for the conduct of everyday life, and a sanction which operates to compel the faithful to adhere to these ethical maxims. The first comprises an asceticism and the belief that individuals have a personal "calling"; the second involves the Calvinist idea of predestination.

Weber traced these two elements back to a number of Reformed churches of the seventeenth century, including various Calvinist denominations in Western Europe and North America, Pietism on the Continent, Anglo-American Methodism, and sects associated with Anabaptism. Ignoring other differences, Weber generalised that these denominations and sects preached a similar ethics - a "world or inner-worldly asceticism" - with three main tenets: diligence in one's everyday occupation or "calling" (a Lutheran idea), strict asceticism in the use of material goods and the indulgence in worldly pleasures; and a responsible and planned use of one's time. The Calvinist doctrine of predestination teaches that individual believers can neither earn their salvation, nor be certain whether God has elected them for salvation. Uncertainty to the point of fatalism, which would be the logical and psychological response to such a doctrine, was, Weber argued, countered by a belief that if success followed from conformity to the three ethical prescriptions, such success could be taken as a divine blessing and an indication that one's salvation is in order. In the words of Marshall (ibid: 75 and 80):

> ... by tying works to faith such that only the systematic and relentless practice of appropriate worldly activity can permit the individual to draw the conclusion that his or her faith is true and therefore saving, the psychological consequences of Calvinism are made dynamic rather than passive.
>
> The average neo-Calvinist was required continuously, methodically, and relentlessly to prove his or her election by diligence in a lawful calling, asceticism, and accounting for the use of his or her time. In this way the moral conduct of the layperson was deprived of its unsystematic or planless character: it was rationalized in the direction of, and dominated entirely by the aim of, adding to God's glory on earth.

It was ascetic Protestantism that created the modern capitalist mentality and Weber summarises his argument:

One of the fundamental elements of the spirit of modern capitalism, and not only of that but of all modern culture: rational conduct on the basis of the idea of the calling, was born - this is what this discussion has sought to demonstrate - from the spirit of Christian asceticism. One only has to re-read ... Franklin ... in order to see that the essential elements of the attitude which was there called the spirit of capitalism are the same as what we have just shown to be the content of the Puritan worldly asceticism, only without the religious basis, which by Franklin's time had died away (Weber, ibid: 180).

9. Though not explicitly used in *The Protestant Ethic*, Weber's well-known classification of types of action is relevant to his conception of values and rationality. Four types of action are distinguished:

(1) *Zweckrational* - by expectations of the behavior or objects of the external environment and of other persons, and through use of these expectations as "conditions" or "means" for rational ends, rationally weighed and pursued.
(2) *Wertrational* - through conscious belief in the *absolute value in itself* - whether to be interpreted as ethical, aesthetic, religious or otherwise - of a given line of conduct purely for its own sake, quite independently of results.
(3) *Affectual* - especially emotional, through given affects and states of feeling.
(4) *Traditional* - through the habituation of long practice.
(As translated from *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, in Parsons (1937) 1949: 642-3).

Parsons (ibid: 643), Weber's translator, had difficulties with the classification, saying that apparently the four categories are primarily ideal types but that Weber eventually uses them in "a different context - this situation is the source of much confusion".[1]

Of particular interest is the first two types of action: *Zweckrational* and *Wertrational*. Parsons, with the help of a suggestion by Von Schelting, links the two types of action to ethical attitudes, respectively, *Verantwortungsethik* (accountability, justification), and *Gesinnungsethik* (sentiment, conviction). In the case of *Zweckrational* the actor recognises a number of options, values or ultimate ends, and weighs up these against each other. Parsons (ibid: 643-5) says:

Hence the urge of the man in this position for objective knowledge is particularly strong, for only by possessing this can he make such judgements rationally. His action must be directed to the achievement of a

harmony, a maximization of value achievement in a number of fields according to their relative urgency. In this connection Weber was very far indeed from believing in a pre-established harmony with no real conflicts between different possible values. On the contrary, he took a tragic view of the situation, maintaining the existence of very deep conflicts between different possible value spheres and especially emphasizing the tragic effect of the unanticipated indirect effects of action.

In *Wertrational* action the actor

> ... orientates his total action to a single specific value, e.g. salvation, which is absolute in the sense that all other potential values become significant only as means and conditions, possible aids or hindrances, to the attainment of the central value.
>
> Certain considerations of the relations of means and ends which are essential to action of the *zweckrational* type become entirely irrelevant at the *wertrational* pole.

10. Mahmoud Sadri (1982) has attempted a reconstruction of Weber's notion of rationality in what he calls an "immanent model" - *immanent* referring to "the extent that the model exhausts the methodological possibilities of the contexts in which Weber develops the concept of rationality" (Sadri 1982: 619). Sadri puts forward his model after describing Weber's conceptions and uses of *rationality* as: problematic, vague, ambiguous, ambivalent, imprecise, inconsistent, incoherent, lacking in paradigmatic import - and being applied over "a remarkably wide range of sociocultural and sociostructural phenomena and processes that range across several thousand years of cultural history and cover the development of every civilization" (ibid: 617). All this does not deter Sadri (ibid: 620):

> Like any other model of Weberian rationality, the present proposal postulates the inner coherence of Weber's writings ... (It) is based on the conviction that Weber's own understanding of the basic themes of his intellectual endeavour was coherent and systematic, even if frequently unclearly formulated and incompletely developed. Its codes of coherence to be deciphered through the reconstruction of vaguely articulated or even missing parts ... there should be no hesitation about rearranging the parts, no matter how confusing the task, as long as one grants that the picture has been outlined in the mind of the creator.

The case against currently fashionable deconstruction could hardly be better worded than this explication of "reconstruction". (Also, this could not have been what Umberto Eco meant when he said in *Reflections on the Name*

of the Rose "The author should die once he has finished writing. So as not to trouble the path of the text.") Sadri's (1982: 622-3) model established six generic types if rationality, "organized in three counterposed dualities or oppositions":

Theoretical rationality versus practical rationality

The first involves "the systematic thinker" and "an increasingly theoretical mastery of reality by means of increasingly precise and abstract concepts". The second involves "methodical attainment of a definitely given and practical end by means of an increasingly precise calculation of adequate means".

Formal rationality versus substantive rationality

Most clearly in the economic realm, the first refers to the "calculability, especially the extent to which the provision of goods and services can be quantified"; the second "seems intolerably ambiguous, because of infinite variations in identifying 'ultimate ends'".

Instrumental rationality versus value rationality

The first Sadri equates with *Zweckrationalität*, and "reasons of expediency", even "a deliberate adaptation to situations in terms of self-interest". The second is equated with *Wertrational action*, which "is determined by a conscious belief in the intrinsic value of some ethical, aesthetic, religious, or other axiologically determined forms of behavior, independent of utilitarian or pragmatic considerations".

Sadri cross-categorises four of the six generic types of rationality, gives examples of the four types, and names their main bearers:

Formal-theoretical rationality: scientific rationality is exemplified by scientists and academic scholars.

Substantive-theoretical rationality: intellectual rationality is carried by intellectuals, philosophers and prophets.

Formal-practical rationality: technical, bureaucratic or economic rationality is evident with bureaucrats and technocrats.

Substantive-practical rationality: ethical rationality is shown by monks and laity of congregational religions.

Par 21 What Weber tells us about values and the investigation of values

We have purposely outlined Weber's views as a summary of what must be acknowledged as the classic sociological study of values. The ten points are primarily an attempt to clarify Weber's views and we refrained from too extensive criticisms and own interpretations. We thought it prudent to be guided by one recent critic - Marshall - in an attempt to simplify some of the complexities. It now remains to briefly explicate the "lessons" we believe are to be learnt from Weber's study of values. We do this with the advantage of hindsight, obviously. We would suggest that the lessons to be learnt refer to problems still current in value studies. More than that: the fact that the debate about the Weber thesis continues, must be proof that the "question of values" is part of the debate on knowledge and method in the human sciences - and that investigations of values have the effect to stimulate debate in all four dimensions distinguished in Chapter Two: ontological, epistemological, methodological and sociological. One more remark: listing lessons to be learnt could give an impression of pedantry - and of, as a wise mentor once said, criticising Napoleon for not using aircraft - which is a good reminder that we see further (or think we know better) only because we stand on the shoulders of giants. We are, in fact, speaking from rarefied heights where all the meanings of *rarefied* apply.

1. Weber's concept of *values* differs significantly from the one defined at the outset of this monograph and argued in Chapter Four. For Weber a value is a *meaning* inherent in a situation or phenomenon under analysis - a meaning which is identified by the investigator from the knowledge he or she has of the phenomenon. (It was Parsons who referred to Weber's "immense knowledge and careful structural analysis of comparative social institutions".) In Weber's case he identified or selected the inherent meanings/values of both modern capitalism and Protestant ethics from knowledge gained from documentary material. It did not, and would not have occurred to Weber to ask individual capitalists or Protestants what their personal economic, religious, and ethical values were. To do such a pedestrian thing was effectively ruled out by Weber's methodological principle of "relevance to values", and by his use of the (ideal) typological procedure in combination with comparative historical analysis. There can be few studies which demonstrate better the decisive interrelations and mutual effects of conceptualisation, gathering of factual evidence and theorising, and that show as clearly the extent to which all three methodological subprocesses are determined by the choice of a methodological context. The context which Weber chose in order to explain the origin and rise of modern capitalism was - and could only be - *social structure*, and more particularly

historical changes in a religious (Protestantism) and an economic system (capitalism).

2. As the kind and quality of empirical verification or substantiation differ with the context and procedure of investigation, the judgement that Weber's thesis is *not proven*, could easily be a superficial one. "Empirical proof" in *The Protestant Ethic* is not a simple matter, and while Weber can easily be criticised for the quality and range of his documentary sources, such evidence was actually not of decisive importance to Weber. Much more important was his confidence in idealtypes and the directly related principle of "relevance to values". The combination of the two concepts resulted in a methodology which had little patience with meticulous stacking of "the facts".

3. It has been suggested that Weber explains the origin of modern capitalism by causally linking the values or inherent meanings of Protestant ethics and the values (inherent meanings) of capitalism. A set of economic values are thus explained by a set of religious-ethical values. For this Weber has been accused of idealism, and it would be difficult to argue against such a characterisation - whatever connotation is given to "idealism". It could, however, be (more) meaningful to suggest that analyses within the context of social structure tend to be idealistic in the sense of giving priority to dominant ideas rather than to material conditions. Weber's position in this regard is not all that different from that of Talcott Parsons. Both consider values to be a social and societal force, as well as having a normative and motivational function. The difference, I would suggest, is that Parsons's concept of *values* (criteria for an appropriate orientation) is more of an explanatory concept than Weber's *values* which is a more diffused methodological construct (originating in the idea that social phenomena have inherent meanings/values).

It is of course somewhat ironical that Weber, using the historical procedure and documents, does not involve material conditions in his explanations of the rise of modern capitalism. It could be said that Weber chose to explain behaviour only in terms of beliefs and did not take into account material circumstances. This is not necessarily a sin, though in terms of our ontological suggestion of social reality's three interrelated components, it could be argued that taking social conditions into account, would have resulted in a more comprehensive sociological interpretation. In Par 5 we argued that conceiving of social reality as the interrelations of behaviour, beliefs and circumstances, is more meaningful than adhering to the distinction of ideal and material - or to the separation of "idealists" from "materialists".

4. Returning to the idea of "relevance to values", it should be pointed out that the meaning (*Sinn*) which Weber postulates in social phenomena, is not necessarily the meaning that individuals involved with the particular phenomenon would indicate as the one that they attach to it. This is the cruel

irony of Weber's concept of *Verstehen*: The meaning that the *investigator* identifies as that which the phenomenon or situation holds *for the individuals involved*, is never verified by asking those individuals whether these are in fact the meanings which they personally attach to phenomena. The meaning (or value) of capitalist conduct or Protestant ethics that Weber argues are held by individual capitalists and Protestants are never checked with these individuals. The meanings and values remain the interpretations of an outsider who has read much about the principles of capitalism and Protestant ethics, but has never bothered to discuss his interpretations of interpretations with the very people of whom he says that they hold (and conform to) these interpretations.

Actually the real irony is much greater: There are sociologists who believe (and teach) that Weber's *Verstehen* is identical to the view of the individual, or more precisely, to the meaning a particular individual or individuals attach to an action or other social phenomena. This is an illusion. Weber's *Verstehen* is *not* the interpretation of meaning which the *lay actor* assigns to a social object. *Verstehen* is the interpretation of the social scientist. Zygmunt Bauman (1990: 420-1) makes this point conclusively by quoting from Weber's *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft:*

> Like Durkheim, Weber argues the case for the truth of the sociologist through denigrating the cognitive value of lay knowledge.
>
> In the great majority of cases actual action goes on in a state of inarticulate half-consciousness or actual unconsciousness of its subjective meaning. The actor is more likely to "be aware" of it in a vague sense than he is to "know" what he is doing or be explicitly self-conscious about it.
>
> In the course of arriving at such an explanation, the question of what the actor actually thought and felt when acting is the least of the analyst's worries - the "theoretically conceived pure type of subjective meaning" is attributed to the hypothetical "actor or actors in a given type of action".
>
> The actor's unawareness of the motives imputed to him by the sociologist does not detract from the truth value of the explanation. Emphatically, it need not be considered as that truth's indispensable condition.

5. *The Protestant Ethic* is Weber's prime demonstration of social studies' integration or linking of *Verstehen* and *Erklären*: First the meaning (value) of a social phenomenon is interpreted by the investigator, and then this interpretation is made an explanation by supportive historical evidence. For Weber this two-phase procedure of investigation meant that causation could be established among social phenomena, and that social studies could attain the status

of being "scientific". While Weber equated explanation (*Erklären*) with the determination of causal relations, it has since become accepted methodology to differentiate various types of explanation - and various relationships between social phenomena - of which causality is but one. Instead of arguing a *causal* relationship between two social phenomena, most sociologists would be satisfied to establish that phenomenon A is *conducive* to phenomenon B. Saying that A helps to bring about B, or contributes to B could confirm more than just a correlation between A and B. The degree to which A is a necessary and sufficient precondition for B will depend on the particular investigation. It is, however, not unfair to generalise that it was Weber's insistence that causality could and must be determined, that led to the accusations that the thesis of *The Protestant Ethic* was not proven.

6. As pointed out in Par 20(6) Weber took rationality to be the distinguishing characteristic of modern capitalism, but he also argued that the capitalist spirit (of rationality) is the most important *cause* of modern capitalism. I would suggest that this confusion of characteristics and causes follows from Weber's diffuse concept of *causation* - and the difficulties of establishing "true" or convincing causal relations between social phenomena when doing a comparative historical investigation.

7. It should be apparent that Weber conceives of *rationality* as a value in the very sense that we have defined "values". The argument that rationality is modern capitalism's most basic and conspicuous characteristic, meaning and value, upset and dated assumptions that values and rationality are opposing orientations; also that the former is inherently a sentiment and the latter primarily "cognitive".[2] It could be said that *Wertrationalität* formally denies the classic distinction and separation of cognition, emotion and volition; and that *The Protestant Ethic* demonstrates the value quality of rationality and the rational quality of values. With Weber this remains a formal suggestion: the four categories of action still distinguish and separate cognition, emotion, volition, and tradition. One could of course argue that, irrespective of whether the fourfold categorisation of actions is meaningful, *The Protestant Ethic* is in effect a study of *Wertrationalität* - which would support its designation as an investigation into values, even the pioneer study of the values-behaviour link.

8. If *The Protestant Ethic* is an application of the idea of *Wertrationalität*, it does not enhance the meaningfulness of Weber's formal categorisation of four types of action. This classification remains formalistic, artificial and largely irrelevant to everyday behaviour and reflection. Tradition, feelings or sentiments, cognitive, rational, and volitional elements, and values, all enter into behaviour and reflection, into actions and thought, in such a way that their factual separation is hardly possible, and their formal classification as types of action hardly applicable in investigations. While it is possible to describe what

Parsons long ago called *unit acts*, as being traditional, affectual, *zweckrational* or *wertrational*, it would hardly be meaningful to use these descriptions for sets of actions or roles or behaviour patterns such as economic and religious-ethical activities. It thus comes as no surprise that Weber did not apply his categorisation of actions in *The Protestant Ethic*: an investigation into social structure and social change is conducted on a macro level and not a micro one. The reference to Parsons's *unit act* is not all that innocent: The concept belongs to his "theory of action" and is never referred to in his later structural-functionalist sociology. *The Protestant Ethic* could well be described as structural-functionalist theory - in which the classification of actions was left in the backroom to be joined by the box of unit acts.

9. Sadri's categorisations of types of rationality in his "reconstruction" of Weber's classification is a demonstration of the extremes to which one can go in pure logical explication of an idea. While Weber could still defend his types of action as *idealtypes*, Sadri's schemes have no empirical credibility. It is difficult to see how such schemes could be applied in substantial social research. Sadri insists that Weber's writings had an inner coherence. What readers find confusing, was completely clear in Weber's own mind. This view demonstrates what is often forgotten: most sociological knowledge is interpretations of interpretations of social reality - and these precarious constructions should be propagated with some modesty.

10. As a last comment on Weber's analysis of values and rationality it may be appropriate to return to the distinction of so-called micro and macro studies. *The Protestant Ethic* investigated the relationship between religious, and economic dispositions, orientations or values. It assumed as a matter of course that members of religious collectivities enact the ethical principles (values) written into the dogma of their churches. It was further assumed that religious-ethical principles normatively regulate and motivate economic behaviour in accordance with these principles. This relationship between (Protestant) ethics and (capitalist) economics was believed to be empirically proven or substantiated by doctrinal manuscripts and documentary evidence on capitalist economic activities.

The verdict that the thesis of *The Protestant Ethic* is *not proven*, can be based on several grounds. Ultimately, I would suggest, it must be ascribed to the failure - or non-attempt - to explain the link between societal values and individual motivation in action. If this is accepted, two further suggestions may be in order: One can take the view that micro and macro investigations present two different and irreconcilable sociologies, or that sociology should concentrate on social structure and has no responsibility or interest in explaining individual behaviour and especially human motivation. This is indeed a view held by many sociologists. We will return to this issue in Chapter Eight with the

discussion of various methodological contexts. The second suggestion is this: Opting for a macro investigation decisively affects the conceptualisation and the interpretation/explanation of values. The effect is actually reciprocal: Weber has difficulty in proving the impact of values on capitalism because of his choice of methodological context. But also, the choice of a macro context leaves him with a most unsatisfactory conceptualisation of *values*. In the end (and unlike Sadri) one has great difficulties in both the *Verstehen* and *Erklären* of values and capitalist activities. But then, with Weber, difficulties in understanding what he had in mind almost without exception stimulate further reflection and investigation of the problem. With Weber, as with all great theorists and original thinkers, the question asked or implied is often more powerful than the answer suggested.

Notes

1 In a footnote Parsons complains: Weber's actual usage [of Zweckrational] does not seem to be by any means consistent. ... But the above is the only clear meaning which can be extracted from his definitions (ibid: 645).

2 Harding et al (1986: 2) explicitly link values and "valuing as an activity" to emotions and motivation: "Preferring one way of behaviour to another implies an emotional reaction (like-dislike, undesirable-desirable), and in addition values are also attributed with motivational qualities, (we strive for values we cherish ...)".

There are perceptive notions in current work being done in social psychology on emotions and more particularly on the fusion of cognition and affect - which are of direct relevance to values. Conventional wisdom is contradicted by Franks's (1989: 98) statement that "Emotion's grammatical standards mean that they can also be judged reasonable or not - certainly, emotion is in no sense inherently opposed to reason as many still assume."

Citing various sources, Franks (ibid: 97-8) generalises:

Workers in sociology, anthropology, psychology, social history, and philosophy are currently uncovering the "cognitive core" of emotion ... Contrary to the sequence implied in common sense notions of emotions, we do not think or interpret situations and then have an emotion response separate in nature from cognition. Affect and cognition are fused ... Just as every observed fact can only take form in a theoretical context, and every observation is a thought/observation, emotions must be seen as thought/emotions. The linguistic dimension of affect is so much a part of our assumptive order that cognitive processes are taken for granted and we are left unaware of their influence. Looked at this way, emotion becomes a certain type of thinking with its particular grammar. ... Emotion becomes an assessment or appraisal of the personal relevancy that a situation holds for us.

Chapter Six

Values in and out of touch with common and sophisticated social knowledge

Understanding is not, in fact, superior understanding. It is enough to say that we understand in a different way, if we understand at all (Hans Gadamer).

Par 22 Modes of social knowledge in the epistemological dimension

It has been suggested that the core epistemic issue of social science concerns the different modes of social knowledge. In Par 6 three modes of social knowledge were distinguished: (i) Common social knowledge of ordinary people who have, through everyday experience and reflection upon experience, learnt much about life. (ii) Philosophical social knowledge which is the product of philosophical reflection upon man and society, and which, though also based on observation, consists largely of logical arguments. (iii) Scientific social knowledge which is the product of investigation and research by social scientists.

In Chapters Three and Four the value concepts and investigations of philosophers and social scientists were examined in a "content-analysis" of 25 notions of *values*. The present Chapter will refer to the investigations and knowledge of philosophers and social scientists as *sophisticated social knowledge*, in contrast to *common social knowledge*. Also in Par 6 the point was made that the most decisive difference between natural and social sciences is that the former does not have to take into account lay knowledge and popular beliefs about phenomena of nature, while the social knowledge of ordinary people, their everyday beliefs about life and society, are part and parcel of the subject matter of the social sciences. The *subject's point of view*, it was suggested, is implied in all four dimensions of investigation of social phenomena - *values* subscribed to by individuals being an example of subjects' points of view.

In "modernist" social science the *distinction* between a social scientist's conception, interpretation and report of the views, values and behaviour of "subjects", and, the latter's own conceptions and interpretations, was accepted as obvious. As Denzin (1970: 8) said twenty years ago: "The sociologist must operate between two worlds when he engages in research - the everyday world of his subjects and the world of his own sociological perspective. In "postmodernist" thinking "operating between two worlds" has become problematic. And the problem is manifested - and argued - in all four dimensions: Postmodernists have a different epistemology in which scientific social knowledge is seen as *rhetorical social texts,* the truth, validity and certainty of which is no longer a matter of fact. Methodologically, postmodernist thinking has questioned the conventional integration or linkage of "method" and "theory". On an ontological level the notion of a social reality and society "out there" has become unfashionable. Within the sociological dimension, social scientists (and ordinary people) have their doubts about the political and practical relevance of scientific social studies. What is now generally called postmodernism is not merely a paradigm shift within some disciplines. It is - or is becoming - a totally new language game - and its effect on our common and sophisticated thinking about social values is but one consequence.

We will leave the postmodernist implications for the conceptions and investigations of values for the next Chapter. The present Chapter will concentrate on points and planes of contact between common and sophisticated knowledge, and their relevance to values. More particularly we will attempt to provide some answers to questions about the following: differences between common and sophisticated social knowledge; values and their relation to public opinion; values and self-fulfilling prophecies; values and ideologies; as well as the relevance of qualitative sociology for values.

Par 23 Contrapositions in social knowledge

In several respects common and sophisticated social knowledge can be said to present *contrapositions* (Joubert, 1990: 81-93). These contrapositions demonstrate the extent to which, what could be called "very human or humane" characteristics, are part of and acknowledged in social knowledge. It is also suggested that ordinary people and their common social knowledge (including knowledge of values) show more "humanity and humaneness" than do sophisticated discourses on social matters. This suggestion - for all its precariousness - is in accordance (or in sympathy!) with statements made in Par 3: The application of scientific methods to social reality has been done at a price: a failure to grasp consistently and make explicit the full humanness of that reality. Or, as Giorgi (1970: 2) has said: "There is a serious question whether or not

aspects that are amenable to the natural-scientific conception reveal the humanness of man in an adequate way."

(a) The distinction and contraposition of *professional* and *lay* social knowledge are well established and generally acknowledged. Sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists, political scientists, psychiatrists, social and community workers, marriage counsellors, personnel managers, and even men of cloth - are all believed to have superior social knowledge based on study, training and research. The expertise of professional people is seldom questioned, its authority inextricably linked to the social status accorded to "experts". While professional knowledge may differ from lay knowledge only in degree with regard to criteria such as being true, objective, proven, precise, etc., the effective or operative difference between the two variants of social knowledge is a social construction: it is one of *perceived* status, authority, reputation and respect. (The relative nature of such superiority is well demonstrated when ordinary, lay people produce social knowledge that leave professionals green with envy!)

A person's social understanding, views and values, naturally correspond to his or her informal and formal socialisation - home, community, education and job. If such socialisation is affected by social stratification, the diffusion and reception of social knowledge from and among different spheres are similarly stratified. It could be generalised that in a developed society which is also open, egalitarian and which has a high quality of life, the social knowledge of the majority of the population would also be relatively sophisticated. If in such conditions, an informed public shares much of the social knowledge that were once the preserve of learned professionals, it does not necessarily mean that there will also be a consensus on the content and relevance of social values. Modernised and postmodern societies could well accommodate very different conceptions of values.

It is perhaps necessary to distinguish between the extent of a person's social knowledge and its level of sophistication: an illiterate person living in rural Burkina Faso whose everyday life is a struggle for survival amidst poverty, drought, soil erosion, absence of social welfare etc. may be well informed and aware of this social reality. Such knowledge may, however, not be very sophisticated. The "ordinary people" concerned may not have the cognitive "analytical capacities" to enable them to understand the causes, consequences, inter-relatedness, etc. of prevailing circumstances and problems.

Especially in societies which are in the process of substantial change, a new profession has emerged: writers and purveyors of "scenarios" of the future. These are modernday prophets who diagnose the present and provide a prognosis of the future. In telling us what is and what shall be, some of these social analysts, applied philosophers and secular theologians include *values* in

their scenarios. Within the context of such diagnoses and predictions, values are treated as variables. Again, it is primarily because of the esteem in which these "scientific prophets" are held - and the very real need of ordinary people to understand the present and to have their fears about the future allayed - that their social knowledge has such impact and generates the interest it does.

(b) Often sophisticated social knowledge is largely abstract logical constructions separated from everyday understanding of social reality, and perceived as irrelevant to daily living by ordinary people. Raymond Boudon (1988: 1) points out that Emile Durkheim explicitly rejected the relevance or importance of common or lay social knowledge:

> Durkheim taught that sociology should break with common representations. To him, scientific sociology was to be developed against common sense.
>
> Today, with the retreat of positivism and rationalism, the dominant mood is oriented in the other direction: ordinary knowledge - another name for common sense and significantly a positive one - is now very much in. Its powerfulness and richness are celebrated and opposed to the rigidity and poverty of scientific representations.

In Par 21(4) it was shown that Weber subscribed to exactly the same view. He, too, "argued the case for the truth of the sociologist through denigrating the cognitive value of lay knowledge".

In positivist science (natural and social) rational thinking or logic, and empirical observation were of course never seen as "contrapositions". Science and scientific statements were supposed to be both logical and empirically substantiated. Jeffrey Alexander (1982) drew a very simple but convincing little continuum for characterising scientific statements. Placing metaphysics and observation at the two opposite ends, he insists that all scientific statements can be located on this continuum. Some will be rather more abstract, far removed from any observation by our senses; others a simple description of what has been observed. All statements contain both metaphysical and observational elements; logic and observation are inseparable - also in social knowledge.

A contrapositioning of logic and empirical observation is thus rather meaningless. However, the distinction between *descriptive information* and *explanatory or interpretative insight* is one that is used daily in both common and sophisticated social knowledge. When values are involved, it can be said that these notions present, essentially, *insights*. Ultimately, the naming of a notion as a "value" is an interpretation or explanation and not "merely" a description based on observation. In everyday conversation, references to "values" are made with little selfconsciousness, or anxiety, about the validity of these

statements. Empiricity is very much a worry and vexation that social scientists have brought upon themselves.

Relevant here is Johnson et al's (1984) distinction of four theoretical strategies (Par 5). "Subjectivism" as a mode of theorising, it was said, conceives of social reality as the negotiated outcome between individuals' interpretations of "what is going on". Of the four strategies subjectivism is probably the nearest to everyday understanding and common social knowledge (and to everyday theorising!). In indicating the different criteria of validity, Johnson et al link experience to empiricism, logic to rationalism, practice to substantionism, and *convention* to subjectivism. Applied to values, it would mean that ordinary people's identification and acknowledgement of values largely follow from convention - and that such acknowledgement articulates and reproduces that convention.

(c) Common sense and social science are often contrasted - also in the often-heard comment that social scientists establish at great cost what everyone knows - what is "common sense". Boudon in a paper "Common sense and the human sciences" (1988) uses what he calls a "complex" notion of common sense - referring to logic, theorising, and explanation, rather than fact, description or information. Boudon lists a number of commonsensical principles of argument in everyday life - which are so much accepted as being "universally" valid that we are hardly conscious of them. However, these principles or types or argument are seen as invalid in scientific theories. If they are present in scientific social explanations, they could, in the eyes - or minds - of ordinary people be given credibility. "Metaconsciously" familiar and at peace with this type of argument, ordinary people could then turn round and say: "These theories are just common sense"!

Among Boudon's examples of common sense logic are the following: (i) Of two different explanations of a social phenomenon only one could be true. (ii) A true theory represents a phenomenon as it *really* is and when dealing with past events, it tells us: "wie es eigentlich gewesen". (iii) Everything has a cause, and more specifically (or preferably!) everything has one cause. (iv) There are explanations and real explanations. Many people have the idea that *explaining* means finding a "real", substantive (if hidden) cause. (v) Explanations are usually located in either personal and personality traits of the individual(s) concerned, or in prevailing circumstances. (vi) The lay public is usually impatient of explanations which propose a chain of factors or intervening variables. (vii) Ordinary people usually prefer explanations that to them seem "real" and uncomplicated. (viii) Explanations structured by examples are easily accepted by ordinary people, but considered an unsound method of theorising in sophisticated knowledge. (ix) Many ordinary people consider theories to be true, *because everybody believes them.*

In both common and sophisticated knowledge, appeals to value are made in accounting for behaviour. The values-behaviour link was discussed in detail in Par 16. The characteristics of common sense thinking and arguments indicated above are often part of the logic of explaining behaviour in terms of values. To the extent that these characteristics are more often those of common social knowledge of values, than that of sophisticated statements, they confirm the distinction between the two modes of knowledge.

(d) An obvious contrast between common and sophisticated social knowledge is the latter's use of technical language. As social science cannot do without technical terms, I would like to make only two suggestions about them: (i) Sociological writing which both neighbours and colleagues find incomprehensible, often suffers from illogical sentences, poorly constructed arguments and contradictory statements, rather than from weird technical terms. It is the logic of a well-written short story more than its simple language, which makes it an object of jealousy for sociologists. (ii) The words ordinary people use to articulate and implement their social knowledge should be respected for their connotations, tone and the situations in which they are used.

(e) The conventional view that sociology is about society, social structures and social conditions, and not about individuals, personal behaviour and beliefs, has fortunately been left behind. Sociology, psychology, anthropology, history, even linguistics and other fields, are no longer fenced off from one another. There is, however, one contraposition in social knowledge, whether common or sophisticated, that will remain: *societal reference vis-à-vis personal meaning*. Without repeating the discussion of Parr 16 and 17, it should be evident that values is more than a bridging concept for these two references. The conception of values argued in this monograph contains both the element of personal meaning and of societal reference. If in the subprocess of empirical substantiation, this dual reference becomes problematic, it is essential to the conceptualisation and theorising of values.

Par 24 Values and public opinion

Are values connected with public opinion, and are public opinion polls in any way related to value studies? The answer to both questions is *yes*, but, obviously, the specification of the connections and relatedness would require more than an affirmative word. Separating the two questions is but a necessary first step.

Polls have become an accepted technique to determine and measure public opinion. Their statistical sophistication (and authoritative presentation of results) have been such that the research technique is equated, in the minds of many, with the phenomenon itself: public opinion is what the polls say it is. An

obvious parallel is intelligence/IQ tests. In both cases operationalisation and measurement of a strategic but "difficult" factor have been so successful that the phenomena, which cannot be directly observed, are now generally conceived of and understood in terms of their measurement. The method is the message, as it were.

Public opinion (and values) of course, existed long before public opinion polls (and value studies). Both public opinion and social values refer to notions or beliefs that are shared by members of a collectivity. Depending on the specificity of one's definitions, it could well be that shared and expressed *opinions* of a population are indeed normative orientations which many would refer to as *values*, and vice versa. Many opinion polls explicitly ask about social values.

Historically, public opinion has been closely associated (and articulated) with politics - and with the emergence of democratic theories of the state. Mouton (1991) reminds us that Rousseau in *The social contract* recognised public opinion as "the organic will of the community expressed in the public wills of its members. Whoever makes it his business to give laws to a people must know how to sway opinions and through them govern the passions of men." Rousseau may well have been preceded by Machiavelli and others, but the political relevance of public opinion has long been recognised and exploited by politicians, policy makers and planners. Noelle-Neumann (1979: 143) considers Rousseau's views as part of the "classical tradition" of public opinion:

> As early as the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, classical writers like John Locke, David Hume, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau introduced the concepts of climate of opinion, law of opinion and reputation, and public opinion. In their analyses their emphasis was on the social controls, social pressure dimension of the phenomenon - "all governments rest on opinion".

Noelle-Neumann (loc cit) generalises about the functions of the classical concept of public opinion:

> This concept of public opinion permits us to draw a few conclusions: public opinion can be used for social control because of the individual's fear of isolating himself; moreover, public opinion facilitates social integration and social stability, establishes priorities, and confers legitimation.

Only in the twentieth century did the study of public opinion move out of the domains of philosophy and classic political theory to become a distinct and highly specialised field of research within the social sciences.

This is very much an American development for which Mouton (ibid) suggests several conducive circumstances:

> Technological advances in the areas of scaling, sampling and statistical analysis made it possible to do "scientific" public opinion research. These developments were further encouraged by the new demands of private enterprise for marketing information. The growth of the mass media helped popularize the concern for public opinion and made the names Gallup, Harris and Roper household names in the USA. Finally, it also coincided with the emergence of a field of study called political science and with its concern with measuring voting behaviour.
>
> Thus the 1930s were a period of rapid growth in this field as evidenced by the first article on public opinion in *The Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* in 1933, the fact that Roper "Fortune" polls and the Gallup American Institute of Public opinion were established in 1935 and the *Public Opinion Quarterly* began publication in 1937.

It was not irrelevant that the United States of America is a democratic society. Public opinion polls are only possible in an open society where there is right of expression, freedom of speech and press, together with a democratic socio-political structure. In the American case such a democratic structure was established in an immigrant-plural society - a society with divergent populations, cultures and opinions.

Modern public opinion research shows remarkable similarities with modern value studies. Mouton (ibid) says the following:

> The central assumption ... is that "public opinion" is a social fact or given to be investigated, a sociological or political variable that can be measured, analyzed and interpreted in the same way that we study other sociological variables such as status, social mobility or values. In this tradition, various models of the manner in which public opinion interacts with other variables such as the agents of socialization (the family, school, the mass media) and the various actors in the political process have been constructed.

The general use of market research and public opinion polls in most Western countries raises the issue of the impact of polls and poll information on opinions. A similar question can be asked with regard to value studies. We have little if any hard research findings on these questions. One may, however, say that such impact, both for public opinion and values, would depend on social variables such as democratisation, freedom and effectiveness of media, the level of education and of being informed, quality of life, etc.

Noelle-Neumann (ibid: 152) makes a number of incisive remarks about the concept of public opinion and its relation to public opinion polls. The conception of public opinion that she proposes is one that simultaneously tries to retain an element of the classical tradition, and one that links public opinion to individual opinion.

(i) "Public" in a legal sense means "open to everybody"; in the political sphere it would refer to public "affairs", public "interest" or "what is important to the whole society". In public opinion polls it would refer to topics about which opinions are held. Noelle-Neumann bypasses all these connotations. *Public,* to her, refers to a society's court of judgement where individuals are judged - to an anonymous situation in which processes concerning the acknowledgement of opinions operate. The majority of individuals, it is argued, prefers not to isolate themselves by publicly taking an independent view. Rather than speak out and draw attention to themselves as "thinking differently" (Afrikaans has the sociologically significant term of *andersdenkendes)*, most people, when they have a different opinion, choose to be silent. This is very similar - or near - to Riesman's (Par 10) concept of "other-directedness". Noelle-Neumann (1979: 153) describes the "spiral of silence" as follows:

> At the bottom of all processes of public opinion lie both the individual's fear of isolating himself and the exploitation of this fear by those who want to impose their will on society, either to preserve an established opinion or to introduce a new rule. The individual's fear of isolating himself leads to a compromise between his own inclinations and the tendencies he observes as dominating in the general environment. Wherever we find such a compromise, we can assume that we are dealing with a public opinion situation, or, in other words, that the pressure of public opinion is involved.

(ii) Noelle-Neumann considers herself in agreement with Allport that "public opinion" refers not just to opinion, but also to behaviour. Gordon Allport described public opinion as "essentially instances of behaviour". Behaviour here would mean either verbally and publicly agreeing to the opinion of the majority or choosing to remain silent - and thus, in a head-count, be considered as a member of the silent majority!

(iii) Noelle-Neumann insists on a distinction between public opinion and published opinion: "The two can be quite different from each other. In recent times the relationship between them has become a topic of much interest to researchers."

(iv) In a last remark Noelle-Neumann (ibid: 153) forces her conception of public opinion onto what is really established in opinion polls:

> As measured by public opinion polls, the frequency distributions of answers are not an expression of public opinion. In many of these poll results, the "public" element is completely missing, that is, there is no risk of being isolated if one takes a stand on the issue in public. However, almost every issue can, at some time, and under certain conditions, become controversial. Therefore, it seems justified to present, under the heading of public opinion, frequency distributions even if they only present a "latent climate" or preferences considered to be completely private.

To a significant extent these remarks on public opinion and public opinion polls can be applied to values and value studies.

What, then, is the connection or relationship between public opinion and values, and opinion polls and value studies? I would say that both values and public opinion largely refer to normative orientations, points of view of individuals about matters that are of societal importance and relevance. And, that both public opinion polls and value studies stimulate discourse and dialogue about desirable dispositions, social and societal arrangements and cultural resources. Values and public opinion have their origin in conversation and communication; their integrity, effectiveness and rejuvenation depend upon public verbalisation and discussion. Opinions and values are rhetorical constructs which can only maintain themselves by continued discourse and debate. Ultimately, public opinions and values *are the arguments* in a society's debate about itself.

Touraine (Par 10(18)) was right - though some would not insist on the last part of the statement: On the highest level of society's system of values is the unity of a discourse held by the ruling classes of that society.

Par 25 Values and self-fulfilling prophecies

> Consciousness, beliefs, ideals, imaginings, prejudices, values - whatever term one chooses to use - enter essentially and constitutively into the being of the reality studied in the social sciences. What is conceived to be real also tends to become real. The act of thinking ... tends to shape that which is thought about ...

Krishna (1971: 1107) (above) is not the first to link so-called self-fulfilling prophecies to values, but her comments on the idea as expounded by Robert Merton (1957) are some of the more incisive ones. Merton of course got his ideas from W.I. Thomas's (1928) famous assertion: "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences." The theorem of Thomas, Merton

(1957: 421) said, "provides an unceasing reminder that men respond not only to the objective features of a situation, but also, at times primarily, to the meaning this situation has for them". Even in 1957 this insight must have been so commonsensical that Merton's naivety must have been remarked upon.

Krishna (1971: 1104) points out that while Thomas *implicitly* suggests the initial definition of the situation to be a false one, Merton makes this *explicit.* Whether originally false or true, the definition evokes new behaviour which is in accordance with the initial definition (and prophecy). Ultimately, it is not the validity of the initial definition which is at issue, neither whether the prophecy is fulfilled or frustrated. At issue is the ontological nature of social phenomena, and the extent to which "the act of thinking tends to shape that which is thought about". Krishna (1971: 1105):

> Where "beliefs" or, rather, the way consciousness conceives of a situation, forms an integral part of the situation itself, it is difficult to talk of the truth about the situation *independently* of the way it is conceived to be.
>
> Social phenomena, in fact, may be graded by the extent to which the belief or rather consciousness entertains about the situation, is a constitutive element in it. There can hardly be any social situation where belief does not play a significant role in constituting it to some extent or other. If it were not so, the situation, by definition, would collapse into the sort of situation studied in the natural sciences.

The relevance of the idea of self-fulfilling prophecies for value studies is to be found primarily in its notion of social reality as largely, and essentially, constructed by human consciousness and specific beliefs. Such consciousness and beliefs are articulated in conversation and discussion. It is in these social contexts - and in this very specific sense - that also values when defined as real, become real in their consequences.

Par 26 Values and ideologies

It is Touraine who defines values as "an ideology that exercises a dominion over what may be called society's discourse". The coupling of values and ideologies is done frequently - its meaningfulness dependent on the specific conceptions of *values* and *ideology.*

For our purposes it could be sufficient to distinguish three conceptions of *ideology*, and refer to two specific suggestions about the linkage of values and ideologies.

A "neutral" definition of *ideology* could be: A set of factual and evaluative ideas which are believed and propagated within a collectivity in the understanding and justification of an existing or future socio-political order, interests and/or values (Joubert, 1980: 31).

Ideologies are defined by many social scientists as *class-related* constructs. There is a sense in which ideologies so defined are "neutral" if not "positive": the first definition's *collectivity* is specified as a *class* and the *explanation* and *justification* are linked to *economic interests.* More common is the ("negative") Marxist class-related conception of ideology. Marx himself referred to ideology as the false consciousness or image that a social class has of its own situation and of society as a whole. In classical Marxist thinking it is always the *other* class that has this ideology and which they propagate in their exploitation of the non-ruling class. Touraine's concept of ideology (and of *values*) is thus truly Marxist.

These three definitions suggest three different emphases in ideologies. It has, however, become common practice to refer to diverse phenomena as "ideologies" or "ideological". Talking of *the ideologies of* violence, deviance, the nuclear family, postmodernism, etc., means that *ideology* has become as useful a word as has *paradigm*. (Another example I read somewhere: "In the game of human beliefs, the imperative to appear rational is probably the most pervasive ideology.")

Suggestions from Talcott Parsons and Gustav Bergmann specify links between values and ideologies. For Parsons (1951) an ideology seeks to intellectually justify selected values. Bergmann (1968: 129) distinguishes between an *ideology* as a comprehensive belief system, and an *ideological statement* which he defines as a "value judgement disguised as, or mistaken for, a statement of fact".

One could generalise that ideologies most basically have social values as components and that such values are often propagated for political purposes and objectives. If politics is distinguished and separated from *culture,* or the focus is on apolitical cultural aspects, values and their propagation need not be ideological. A societal discourse on values may well be apolitical, in which case the propagation of social values may be a truly moral exercise, or largely so.

Par 27 Values and qualitative sociology

There is a belief - not always articulated explicitly - that values can only, or best, be investigated by so-called qualitative methods. This view is not without merit. However, to understand better the relevance and advantages that

qualitative analysis has or may have for value studies, it is necessary to obtain clarity on what qualitative analysis is. The "investigative status" of qualitative analysis is still very much in discussion: some social scientists consider it to be no more than a technique of observation; others are convinced that it represents (and implements) a separate epistemology, methodology or paradigm. In the present context we will only outline a perception of qualitative analysis and point out its appropriateness in value studies.

What has become known as qualitative analysis (approach, research, method, etc.) has developed from simple research techniques, chosen to achieve a very specific objective: to determine the points of view of ordinary people. The techniques - interviews, participant observation, etc. - for gathering information about, and gaining insights into the lives of ordinary people, have some specific and most appropriate characteristics: (i) They are all close copies of *Alltagstechniken*: ordinary and everyday "techniques" of coping in daily encounters (Gerhard Kleining, 1982). (ii) Observation and reflection centre on the behaviour of ordinary people, but even more on their views, ideas, interpretations, "definitions of situations", values - in short, their *beliefs*. (iii) These techniques as well as the results of their application are seldom quantified. Instead of figures and statistics, ordinary languages are used in notation. It is this preference for a non-quantitative manner of notation that led to "qualitative" analysis being given its label.

The debate on qualitative analysis demonstrates the difficulties of building a social science that takes seriously the most subjective and evasive of social reality's three components: social beliefs. Perhaps this is the greatest contribution that "qualitative" analysis has made to social science: the recognition that what people think, is as important as what they do; that behaviour cannot be fully understood without at the same time understanding beliefs - and social circumstances. And this also applies to value beliefs - perhaps especially values.

Qualitative/quantitative analysis is not an either/or choice in social research. Using, or not using statistics, is not a distinctive or decisive characteristic of an investigation. A focus on individuals' beliefs is. It could rid us of several misconceptions and remove considerable confusion if the term *qualitative* is replaced by something like *humanist.*

We have argued that sociology's subject matter is the triangular interrelations of actions, beliefs and conditions. If this is accepted, it follows that it makes no sense to have a sociology of actions, and another sociology of beliefs - and another of social circumstances (which could only be an old-fashioned social determinism, teaching that conditions determine both actions and beliefs!). If social beliefs are part and parcel of social reality, there can be no justification for a separate *qualitative* (or *humanist*) *sociology*. "Sociology proper" would as a matter of course take into account individuals' perceptions

and interpretations of all things social. The corollary is also valid: a sociology which exclusively focusses on social beliefs and individuals' points of view, and which denies or depreciates the relevance of their actions and circumstances can hardly be considered a proper and fully-fledged sociology. An example of such a sociology would be one that subscribes to the metatheory or theoretical strategy that Johnson et al have defined as *subjectivism* (Par 5).

Within the epistemic dimension common social knowledge *is* the points of view of individuals or ordinary people. If it is accepted, as we have argued, that common social knowledge is both part of the subject matter of social science, and a mode of knowledge that has to be conciliated with the two other modes - philosophical and scientific social knowledge - the incorporation of what is still referred to as "qualitative" analysis would make a humanist sociology epistemologically mature. Bryman (1984: 77) says of qualitative analysis: "The *sine qua non* is a commitment to seeing the social world from the point of view of the actor." For sociology this commitment is indeed a *without which not*.

Taking into account and ascertaining the individual's point of view are not without methodological and research problems. In this regard excellent advice could be had from David Silverman's (1989) deceptively simple paper: "Six rules of qualitative research: A post-romantic argument". Much of what Silverman says, is of direct relevance to value studies.

Investigations into individuals' points of view need not succumb to romanticism. There should be no "lack of analytic vigour", no mere journalistic accounts, but "forms of representation and contexts which inform practical reasoning" (Silverman, 1989: 215). An actor's point of view should never be taken as an explanation. This is Silverman's second rule. It is a warning not to collapse differences between "raw" data gathered by qualitative techniques, and its analysis in establishing an explanation of the phenomenon being investigated. Original qualitative sociologists did not solely concentrate on what people said (that they believe), but also observed their behaviour. Members of the Chicago School, says Silverman, used their eyes as well as their ears. "To take the actor's point of view as an explanation would be to equate common sense with sociology - a recipe for the lazy field researcher" (ibid: 220). "Recognize that the phenomenon always escapes" (ibid: 222), implies that scientific research with its considered and formal concepts, fact-finding and theorising, actually *makes the phenomenon evasive*. Silverman also warns against feeling obliged to choose between all and every polarity and contraposition (including quantitative and qualitative?!) and says that many contrapositions are inapplicable and meaningless in actual research. "In the field, the material is much more messy than the different camps would suggest" (ibid: 222).

Linked to a distinction of "naturally occurring" data, and data purposively developed in a research setting, is the idea of "pure" data. This is rejected by Silverman (ibid: 227):

> [T]here are no "pure" data; all data are mediated by our practices of reasoning as well as those of the participants. So to assume that "naturally-occurring" data are unmediated data is, self-evidently, a fiction of the same kind as put about by survey researchers who argue techniques and controls suffice to produce data that are not an artifact of the research setting.

Silverman refers to Wittgenstein in emphasising that we should not treat people's utterances (including their answers to the question what their values are!) as presenting their unmediated inner experiences. It has to be accepted that we have no direct route to "inner experience", and that, ultimately, "the phenomenon always escapes". This is what happens in all "communal language games". If, in the end, everything is discursive, and the "real" truth always evades us, Silverman suggests, it is not impossible to live with uncertainty. Quantum physicists continue their research, and ordinary people seem to cope quite well with the relativity that comes with the realisation of context-boundedness. Why not, like non-sociologists, find and apply practical solutions to practical problems?

These suggestions could be an appropriate point to end the discussion of the position of values in common and sophisticated knowledge. It is also an appropriate point at which to start looking at the position of values in postmodernist thinking. Much of what has been said about values in previous Paragraphs could be labelled as "modernist". But there have been enough references to values as verbal facts, word truths and situation-revelant rhetorical constructions. Even if these are still early days, we will have to try and understand what value studies could possibly be in an era where scientific social investigations are perceived as "rhetorical social texts".

Chapter Seven

Values in and out of modernity and postmodernity

Statements like "The modern age has come to an end" are easier to resonate to than to understand (Stephen Toulmin).

Par 28 From architecture to zeitgeist?

Frederic Jameson (1984: 54-55) has written a dramatic sketch of postmodernism. The description brings little clarity about the (possible) core ideas of the movement, but it does illustrate the range and divergence of areas in which postmodernism is said to be definitely alive and apparently well:

> It is in the realm of architecture that modifications in aesthetic production are most dramatically visible ... More decisively than in the other arts or media, postmodernist positions in architecture have been inseparable from an implacable critique of architectural high modernism and of the so-called International Style (Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier, Mies) ...
>
> ... one fundamental feature of all the postmodernisms [is] the effacement in them of the older (essentially high-modernist) frontier between high culture and so-called mass or commercial culture, and the emergence of new kinds of texts infused with forms, categories and contents of that very Culture Industry so passionately denounced by all the ideologies of the modern, from Laevis and the American New Criticism all the way to Adorno and the Frankfurt School. The post-modernisms have in fact been fascinated precisely by this whole "degraded" landscape of schlock and kitsch, of TV series and Readers' Digest culture, of advertising and motels, of the late show and the grade-B Hollywood film, of so-called paraliterature with its airport paperback categories of the gothic and the romance, the popular biography, the murder mystery and science fiction or fantasy novel: materials they no

longer simply "quote", as a Joyce or a Mahler might have done, but incorporate into their very substance.

Nor should the break in question be thought of as a purely cultural affair: indeed, theories of the postmodern ... bear a strong family resemblance to all those more ambitious sociological generalizations which, at the same time, bring us the news of the arrival and inauguration of a whole new type of society, most famously baptized "post-industrial society" (Daniel Bell), but often also designed consumer society, media society, information society or "high tech", and the like. Such theories have the obvious ideological mission of demonstrating, to their own relief, that the new social formation in question no longer obeys the laws of classical capitalism, namely the primacy of industrial production and the omnipresence of class struggle.

It may well be that the terms *postmodemity, postmodemist* and *postmodernism* are currently applied to anything from architecture to *zeitgeist*. Such semantic licence is of course not very helpful in achieving our limited objective: to say something specific and meaningful about social values in so-called postmodernist thinking and conditions of "postmodernity". We have, therefore, chosen a middle and modest option: instead of embarking on an essay on "postmodernism" and try to come to a definitive conclusion as to what it "really means" (!), we distinguish a number of areas in which the concept is explicitly used and within which it could have implications for values and value studies. We would suggest that postmodernism (postmodernity, postmodernist, etc.) could refer to: (a) an era or trend in the history of ideas; (b) a rethink and new ideas about epistemological and methodological issues; (c) contemporary developments in the social structure and culture of especially First World societies; and (d) present and future trends in social science and more particularly sociology.

Par 29 Changing intellectual frameworks and world views

Stephen Toulmin's *Cosmopolis: The hidden agenda of modemity* (1990) has been described by Robert N. Bellah as "simply the best discussion of modernity and postmodernity available today". Especially notable is the way in which Toulmin integrates his expertise in natural science, the history and philosophy of science, and ethics in an interpretation of Western intellectual "agendas" of the last three centuries.

The word *cosmopolis* combines the Greek terms *cosmos* and *polis* and refers to the notion that natural and societal regularities are aspects of the same reality. The rather mundane idea that human affairs are influenced by forces

of nature eventually became a philosophical assumption that a rational social order would be one that is in accordance with the laws of nature. "Cosmopolis" thus summarises for Toulmin the characteristics of Western society from the seventeenth to the twentieth century: a society as rationally ordered as Newton's physics and Descartes's philosophy. It is the belief in reason and rationality that was fundamental to the structure, and a stimulus to the achievements of modern society. For all its successes, self-confidence and prestige, Toulmin argues that rationalism has been a one-sided and unbalanced world view. It was based on the erroneous assumption that human nature and human societies could be organised into rational categories and be subjected to completely rational purposes and planning. Stimulated and structured by the ideas of Newton and Descartes, the choice for reason and for a rational society came as a secular act of faith in the diffusion and dissipation of thirty years of religious wars. After the peace of Westphalia in 1648, devastated Europe had great need of principles and directives that could counter religious confusion and despondency, political uncertainty and division, and social disorder. Neither institutional religion nor sixteenth century humanism - the ideas of Rabelais, Erasmus and Montaigne - were seriously considered as values which could give direction and restore order and solidarity:

> Intellectuals saw no way of overcoming the religious and political impasse except to renounce all ambiguities and uncertainties and to embrace clarity and stability at all cost. As a result, the humane occupations of earlier Renaissance humanists were set aside in favor of a desperately longed for logical exactitude and moral purity. The modern era became synonymous with the pursuit of strict rationality unsullied by emotions or sentimentality, in philosophy, natural science, and the study of human society. From the autonomy of the nation-state and the concept of economic man to the dreams of social engineering and a classless society, Humanity became a theoretical abstraction, bloodless and decontextualized (Toulmin, 1990: cover page).

For Toulmin, modernity, modern thought or modern society did not start in the seventeenth century - with the ideas of Descartes and Newton. It started, Toulmin argues, using both historiographical and philosophical documentary material, with sixteenth century Renaissance humanism - in which Science and Humanities were not yet separated as "two cultures". The division between the two intellectual frameworks was enforced only in the seventeenth century when an at least partly practical philosophy became a purely theoretical discipline. "[W]hen Descartes persuaded his fellow philosophers to renounce fields of study like ethnography, history or poetry, which are rich in content and context,

and to concentrate exclusively on abstract, decontextualized fields like geometry, dynamics, and epistemology" (ibid: x).

If 16th century Renaissance humanism is the first albeit brief phase of modernity, "retreat from the Renaissance", and a transition from "humanists to rationalists" represent the beginning of the second period - which lasted well into the twentieth century. Toulmin examines the "modern world view" which held sway for three centuries in paragraphs such as: "The politics of certainty", "The new Europe of nations", and "The high tide of sovereign nationhood". The tide turned at the time of the First World War. Once more a time of disorder and disillusion, it prepared the transition to a third phase of modernity - or "postmodernity":

> The years from the 1690s to 1914 saw the high tide of sovereign "nationhood" in Europe. For two centuries and more, few people seriously questioned that the nation state was the central political unit, in either theory or practice. These years were also the high tide of the view of nature we called the framework of Modernity.
>
> After 1914, however, ... scientific ideas and social practices were again widely questioned. For the first time, the absolute sovereignty of the individual nation was seen to be disfunctional and anachronistic; and, at the same time, science was discrediting the last timbers in the scaffolding of modernity (ibid: 139)

For Toulmin, then, current or late modernity (i.e. postmodernity) is a return to humanism, a humanizing of rationalist modernity, and a recovery of practical philosophy.

This, in very broad outline, is Toulmin's interpretation of three to four centuries of changing world views and intellectual "agendas". The interpretation and presentation could be seen as a study in the history of ideas - the two terms suggesting both the main sources of data and the dominant mode of the argument: historiography and philosophy.

Is *Cosmopolis* also a sociological analysis and an examination of social values? If an answer to this question depends on one's conceptions of *sociology* and *values,* I would suggest that Toulmin's work is indeed sociological to the extent that it examines the interrelations of behaviour, beliefs and circumstances, and, also, that it is a study of (changing) values as the concepts of *humanism* and *rationalism* both have a definite social value content. It is not relevant that Toulmin would probably deny being a sociologist or social scientist, or that writing a sociologically oriented or sociologically relevant text has been an objective. What is relevant, if not compulsory, is to see what "sociological sense" Toulmin makes of changing world views, intellectual agendas, and social values when interpreting Western social thought and social structure of the past three

to four centuries. The way to do this would be to have a close look at Toulmin's conceptions, factual presentation, and his theorising of humanism, rationalism, modernity, and postmodernity - and the social values dominant at various times. We will not attempt to do this with the systematics of a methodological critique. That would be inappropriate. Also, we will not complain that Toulmin did not do a factual survey of the modernist and postmodernist values of specified populations; or regret that *Cosmopolis* does not systematically examine and compare the social structure of modern and postmodern societies; nor will it be held against the author that the "paradigm switch" between modernity and postmodernity is not meticulously explained in numbered epistemological points. The remarks that follow are not based on the judgement that *Cosmopolis* is "the best discussion of modernity and postmodernity available today" (Bellah). It is based on the judgement that the work is of relevance to values and value studies in the historical periods distinguished - eras with differences in social thought and social structure that we are only beginning to understand.

1. Toulmin has several problems with the "standard account" of "modernity". He argues *against* the "received view" that modernity followed directly on late medieval times - as a reaction to those times; that modernity started with modern science (Newton) and modern philosophy (Descartes) in the seventeenth century; and that this period was one of peace, order and consensus. In the familiar tripartite chronology of European history - ancient, medieval, and modern - Renaissance is often seen as a transitional phase. For Toulmin, however, the influence of the leading figures of the late Renaissance - Leonardo da Vinci (b. 1452), Erasmus (b. 1467), Rabelais (b. 1494), Montaigne (b. 1533) and Shakespeare (b. 1564) - is such that the Renaissance should be considered as a distinct *origin* of modernity:

> ... we may therefore ask if the modern world and modern culture did not have two distinct origins, rather than one single origin, the first (literary or humanistic phase) being a century before the second. If we follow this suggestion, and carry the origin of Modernity back to the late Renaissance authors of Northern Europe in the 16th century, we shall find the *second*, scientific and philosophical phase, from 1630 on, leading many Europeans to turn their backs on the most powerful themes of the *first*, the literary or humanistic phase. After 1600, the focus of intellectual attention turned away from the humane preoccupations of the late 16th century, and move in directions more rigorous, or even dogmatic, than those the Renaissance writers pursued (ibid: 23).

Toulmin asks how far later scientists and philosophers explicitly rejected the values of earlier humanistic scholars; and whether modern philosophy and

the exact sciences were actually a counter-Renaissance movement? Many historians of science or philosophy, says Toulman, will consider such questions heretical; not so historians of ideas. "There are good precedents for the suggestion that the 17th century saw a reversal of Renaissance values."

Toulmin thus recognises the substance and influence of the Renaissance humanists - and its rejection by rationalists who equated the essence of Humanity with the capacity for rational thought and action.

2. What were the distinctive values of Renaissance humanism? Most explicitly and generally - and most elitistly - the values of Renaissance humanism were set by the philosophers and writers of the time. It was the focus and style ("the research agenda" Toulmin calls it!) of philosophy itself that changed notably around 1600:

> Before 1600, theoretical inquiries were balanced against discussions of concrete, practical issues, such as the specific conditions in which it is morally acceptable for a sovereign to launch a war, or for a subject to kill a tyrant. From 1600 on ... there is a shift from a style of philosophy that keeps equally in view issues of a local, timebound practice, and universal, timeless theory, to one that accepts matters of universal, timeless theory as being entitled to an exclusive place on the agenda of "philosophy" (ibid: 24).

Renaissance scholars were as concerned with questions of practice and circumstances as with timeless, universal matters of abstract philosophic theory. Reflection on matters of morality and law - and medicine - often took the form of case studies and the examination of particular situations. Rhetoric and logic were complementary disciplines. Respect for the rational possibilities of human thinking and acting was balanced by an appreciation of the limits and limitations of "only human" beings. Instead of summarily applying the judgement of *right or wrong*, Renaissance writers displayed an open-mindedness and sceptical tolerance: "as antagonism between the two branches of Western Christianity deepened, human modesty alone (they argued) should teach reflective Christians how limited is their ability to reach unquestioned Truth or unqualified Certainty over all matters of doctrine" (ibid: 25). The diversity of cultures and the variety of individual motives, actions and beliefs - revealed and dramatised by European explorers of the sixteenth century - fascinated the humanists and stimulated pleas for tolerance, acceptance of differences, plurality, ambiguity; lack of certainty was not seen as an error - let alone a sin.

If the social values of the Renaissance humanists are vague - as if seen through a glass darkly - that is only to be expected. In Renaissance times *values* was not yet a technical and theoretical concept of social scientists. It was then a concept of some sophistication in an intellectual discourse and a corps of

intelligentsia - which at the time could only be the clergy or the philosophers. In the period concerned the theologians allowed philosophers to write their philosophies of life - on earth. The humanists, however, were on the stage for only a brief performance before the rationalists called upon directors Descartes and Newton for an entirely new production.

Even if the values of early humanism were not as explicit as sociologists would like them to have been, the contribution of Renaissance writers is of more than just historical relevance. When, towards the end of the Middle Ages, philosophy took over from theology to become the dominant belief system (Comte's first and second stages), it was the Renaissance scholars who chose the human and humanistic option within philosophy. Their writings were the first texts of what we now refer to as the Humanities - and their interest in everyday life and ordinary people were the first steps on the path to the social sciences. Toulmin writes:

> The 16th-century humanists were the founders of the modern Humanities just as surely as the 17th-century natural philosophers were founders of modern Science and Philosophy.
>
> If [C.P. Show's] two cultures are still estranged, then, this is no local peculiarity of 20th-century Britain: it is a reminder that Modernity had two distinct starting points, a humanistic one grounded in classical literature, and a scientific one rooted in 17th-century natural philosophy.
>
> What has yet to be explained is why these two traditions were not seen from the beginning as complementary, rather than in competition (ibid: 43).

The values propagated by the humanists, also when they were - and perhaps *because* they were - more epistemological and methodological than sociological, show a significant resemblance to what we now increasingly refer to as *postmodernist* orientations.

3. "Retreat from the Renaissance" is how Toulmin starts his characterisation of the orientations of 17th century rational philosophers. They disclaimed, he says, any serious interest in four different kinds of practical knowledge: the oral, the particular, the local, and the timely.

A shift from the oral to the written meant that "[a]fter the 1630s, the tradition of Modern Philosophy in Western Europe concentrated on formal analysis of chains of written statements, rather than the circumstantial merits and defects of persuasive utterances. Within that tradition, *formal logic was in, rhetoric was out*" (ibid: 31). The rejection of "the oral" also meant the rejection of oral statements of ordinary people and thus of the relevance (and validity) of

common social knowledge. The shift from an appreciation of the particular to an insistence on the universal can be summarised as *general principles were in, particular cases were out.* Toulmin (ibid: 31-2) suggests that in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, moral philosophers often argued moral issues using case analyses - and that they followed Aristotle: "The good has no universal form, regardless of the subject matter or situation: sound moral judgement always respects the detailed circumstances of specific kinds of cases." *Thirdly,* abstract axioms and theoretical argument became the preferred mode of rationalist philosophy, while empirical diversity and practical issues were considered unimportant. (Apparently Descartes "confessed" to a youthful fascination with ethnography and history, but said that he had fortunately overcome this immaturity!) Finally, a preoccupation with the "timeless" meant that transient human affairs linked to particular situations and occasions were sidelined if not dismissed.

To these four orientations characterising modern philosophy should be added " the quest for certainty" - which, Toulmin says, fulfilled an urgent social need at the time, above and beyond its epistemic function:

> The 17th century philosophers' "Quest for Certainty" was no mere proposal to construct abstract and timeless intellectual schemas, dreamed up as objects of pure, detached intellectual study. Instead, it was a timely response to a specific historical challenge - the political, social, and theological chaos embodied in the Thirty Years' War. Read in this way, the projects of Descartes and his successors are no longer arbitrary creations of lonely individuals in separate ivory towers ... [Descartes's] reflections opened up for people in his generation a real hope of *reasoning* their way out of political and theological chaos, at a time when no one else saw anything to do but continue fighting an interminable war (ibid: 70-71).

It was of course religious, or more precisely, *theological* uncertainty and confusion that made the philosophical option attractive. The longer the war between Protestants and Catholics continued, the smaller was the possibility of consensus or agreement to differ on religious doctrine. "The only place to look for certain 'foundations of belief' lay in the epistemological proofs that Montaigne had ruled out" (ibid: 55-56). Montaigne was a Renaissance humanist - which means that Cartesian philosophy and rationalism, in effect, simultaneously proposed philosophy as an alternative to theology, rational argument as an alternative to religious belief, and epistemic certainty in the place of (modest) scepticism - even a very human and modest doubt about absolute truth was unacceptable.

A last orientation which was prominent in early modernity is the idea of the clean slate - as much a preoccupation of modern European thinkers as the quest for certainty itself. Anxious to attain certainty, and equating rationality with a trust in formal logic, true rationality demanded the dismissal of inherited tradition and new beginning - "treating *rationality* as "starting with a clean slate" had been a dream of intellectuals: with the French Revolution, it became a political method" (ibid: 176).

4. It could be useful to contrast directly the orientations of modernity, indicated above, with those that Toulmin puts forward as characteristics of late or postmodernity. A brief summary should suffice:

(a) Practical philosophy is recovered: "The "modern" focus on the written, the universal, the general, and the timeless - which monopolized the work of most philosophers after 1630 - is being broadened to include once again the oral, the particular, the local, and the timely" (ibid: 186). There is a renewed concern among scholars about spoken language, everyday communications and conversation, rhetoric and discourse. "Texts" no longer refer to autonomous, decontextualised logical arguments, but are examined as "narratives" in which authors (speakers), reception, readers, audience, contexts - and paradigms - are all relevant and legitimate aspects. A return to the particular includes a new appreciation of diversity, plurality, case studies - even case or situational ethics - particular social problems, attention to minorities and deviance. The characteristics of *situations* are increasingly examined instead of determining the universal traits of phenomena. A re-emphasis on the *local* means that historical, anthropological, and sociological diversity are considered worthy of scientific research - and that the social sciences have become very much the "practical philosophy" of our time. Finally, "relevance to our time" has become a major credo.

(b) Modernist concerns for stability, hierarchy, systemics, systems, rigidity standardization and uniformity, are giving way to adaptation, adaptability, functionality, differentiation, diversity, equity. These orientations would apply to intellectual dispositions, social attitudes and structures and societal arrangements.

(c) The modern nation state may well be the most successful embodiment of modernist ideas and ideals. Its political and social control over its subjects has been extensive and penetrating. For many citizens the modern nation state represent ultimate achievements in democratisation. Increasingly, however, various aspects of this form of political organisation is being criticised. If the dissatisfaction is not about the sovereign political system as such, it varies from protest against (continued) inequality to a rejection of the materialism of the consumer society and a longing to return to "the simple life".

(d) Toulmin also refers to new orientations concerning ethics in which modernist "traditional values" are said to stand in the way of more discriminating and discerning approaches to moral issues - of which situational ethics is one.

(e) Increasingly, an insistence upon certainty of knowledge and of social expectations is replaced by an acceptance of uncertainty, ambiguity, differences of opinion and of behaviour - and a tolerance of diversity. There is a tendency to resist the wielding of power in favour of negotiation and dialogue. "The agenda of 'modern thought'", Toulmin says, "has overreached itself ... we need to balance the hope for certainty and clarity in theory with the impossibility of avoiding uncertainty and ambiguity in practice" (ibid: 175).

(f) Returning to philosophy proper, Toulmin (ibid: 174) says that in postmodernity *foundationalism* - the search for a permanent and unique set of authoritative principles for human knowledge - is increasingly proclaimed as a dream: "which has its appeal in moments of intellectual crisis, but fades away when matters are viewed under a calmer and clearer light". For Toulmin the strategic question is whether we can regain the humane wisdom of the Renaissance, without losing the advantages won during the three hundred years in which Cartesian philosophy and the exact sciences dominated intellectual life.

(g) Finally, one could generalise from Toulmin's discussion that in postmodernism there is a concern for the needs, circumstances, and life-worlds of ordinary people: "sound rhetoric demands that we *speak* to the condition of an audience; honest human understanding requires us to *listen to* their condition with equal care" (ibid: 199).

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We have chosen to read *Cosmopolis* as a study in the history of ideas, and to examine Toulmin's interpretation of modernity and postmodernity for the articulation of social values. As has been suggested, this manner of value-exploration is very different from value studies which employ the procedures and techniques of current social research. More generally: Toulmin's analysis is well substantiated by historical data but essentially it is an account of three periods of philosophic thought - from the 16th to the 20th century. The perspectives of the study are most relevant to social values. It is, however, a relevancy which reveals more about the historical development of philosophy *and* of the social sciences than about the social values of ordinary people in times which are now referred to as Renaissance, modernity and postmodernity. Ultimately, and from a social science perspective, *Cosmopolis* is an analysis of

evolving *methodologies*, of the changing manner in which we try to understand reality - and try to comprehend that understanding itself.

In the history of belief systems the social sciences have only been around for the last 150 to 175 years. It is only 150 years ago that Comte proposed that the scientific method of investigation also be applied to social reality - and predicted that the *science of society* would be as successful as the science of nature; perhaps even more successful as there was an ultimate goal for social science still to be realised: a scientific society. Toulmin's work places this development in perspective - the very idea of a social science and its almost painful emergence from the succession of dominant belief systems may be a "subtext", but it is one that will not be missed by social scientists. In more than one way a concentration on the phenomenon of social values brings to light the distinctive characteristics of three historical periods, three modes of social knowledge, and three methodologies. After the relatively detailed explication of Toulmin's interpretation, a few generalisations should be sufficient to indicate the linkages between these sets of ideas and social values.

After the Middle Ages, philosophy took over from theology as the dominant belief system, and maintained this position of dominance into the 18th and 19th centuries when its initial liaison with natural science came to an end, and science moved into the prestigious position of dominance. Modern philosophy, built on rationality and logic, shared this epistemic mode with natural science, but the latter's insistence on empiricity led to the break-up of a long understanding. Comte's *sociologie* was to become the prototype of social science. But Comte did not build the new science of society primarily on human values: sociology's contribution to a better, more humane society was not for Comte a primary consideration. Positivism was. The founder of sociology thus opted for the rationality, the logic, the method of natural science - for the epistemology of Modernity. Social science started out, not to realise the humanistic values of the Renaissance, but the epistemological and methodological criteria of science. It took the better part of a century before positivism was seriously questioned, and a humanistic sociology eventually challenged the method, the matter, and their relevance for problems of everyday life and living. A social science that could be called *humanistic* for its respect of ordinary people's behaviour, beliefs, conditions of life - and values - only became a reality after both rationalist, modernist philosophy, and positivism could be left behind. Until this happened the epistemological modes of philosophy (rationalism) and natural science (empiricism) were such that the idea of *values* was one or a combination of three positions: (i) A projection and generalisation of the epistemological principles of philosophy or natural science (a philosopher making universal statements about mankind); (ii) A complete depreciation if not dismissal of the everyday social realities of ordinary people; (iii) An elitist

position: modern philosophy has always been elitist; philosophers never did dirty their hands with empirical facts. Values, norms, and ethics were proclaimed from on high - like the theologians did, and still do.

As we argued in Parr 22 and 23, *values* only recently became a social science concept, that is, a variable referring to normative notions of social desirability held by publics of ordinary people. It has become a technical concept and variable for social scientists because it is accepted that notions of the good and the desirable are relevant to behaviour, (other) beliefs, and circumstances, and because such notions can be empirically ascertained by social scientists. With a methodology which is at the same time empiricist and interpretative, the transformation from modernity to postmodernity can now be meaningfully understood (also) as a change of social values.

Par 30 Parading paradigms

Since 1962 the word *paradigm* has come to mean something very different from a classification, scheme or pattern of words - synonyms still to be found in current dictionaries. Thomas Kuhn in 1962 chose the term *paradigm* to refer to the identity and systemic coherence of a particular (natural) science at a certain time. A paradigm is a particular science's systematic matrix in which its basic concepts, methods of research and mode of theory are integrated; such a matrix being dominant and generally accepted as "normal" for a relatively long period of time. Paradigms, Kuhn argued, are (albeit not often) replaced by new ones which have new directives and directions in research and theorising. These incisive changes in a particular science Kuhn described as scientific revolutions - hence the title of his book: *The structure of scientific revolutions.* Paradigms, then, are stations in the historical development and progress of particular sciences.

Social scientists and philosophers of science jumped at Kuhn's interpretation of the growth of science, and the ensuing debate had an intellectual fervour comparable to the one almost exactly a hundred years earlier when social philosophers and social scientists read *The Origin of Species* (1859) and immediately started on *social* Darwinism - the evolutionary interpretation of social and institutional change. Both biological and social Darwinism could be described as revolutionary new paradigms!

The current debate on paradigms in the social sciences centres around two issues: Whether the epistemic characteristics (concepts, methods and theory) of social science or a particular social discipline are affected by social and historical conditions. And, whether the social sciences have passed the preparadigmatic phase, and, if so, whether they are (and will always be) multi-paradigmatic. While the answer to the first question has increasingly

been affirmative, the second question is still largely a conceptual one: it concerns the precise connotation of the term *paradigm*. One has to agree with Lee Harvey (1982: 12):

> The confusion of usage of the concept of "paradigm" in sociology is a product of attempts to extract elements of Kuhn's notion and relate such elements directly to the profusion of sociological perspectives (or "schools").

What Harvey refers to as "elements" of Kuhn's notion, could also be equated to levels of investigation. If this is accepted, an observation by Alexander (1982: I, 25 & 27) regarding Kuhn's concept becomes most relevant:

> ... in his original paradigm concept Kuhn erred by conflating the different levels of generality of the scientific continuum. Although he succeeded in pointing to their variety and their interrelationship, he failed to stress their relative autonomy ... In a scholarly reversal that is as remarkable for its rarity as its insight, Kuhn responded to the criticisms of his work by drastically modifying his original terminology. The various elements that compose his earlier paradigm notion, he writes, are "no longer to be discussed as though they were all of a piece". Instead of utilizing the single term "paradigm" to cover all the different components of scientific thought, he now recommends different terms for each analytic level.

Most generally, the paradigm debate has brought home a decisive methodological notion: Viewed over centuries, our knowledge of the world, society and ourselves is not systematically accumulated in respected depositories. Neither are the results of serious reflection and laborious research, like well-chosen bricks, built into a wall of knowledge. Domains of study, investigations, belief systems and knowledge, do not grow in an evolutionary manner by systematic accumulation of findings. Domains of knowledge change trains at stations: not very often, but still. Old locomotives and coaches are exchanged for new ones. If clusters of metatheories, theoretical approaches, research traditions and models of theorising in the social sciences are seen as different paradigms, it is justified to use the word "multi-paradigmatic".

The debate on paradigms and the general acceptance of the view that scientific (and other) knowledge does not grow in an evolutionary fashion but develops and progresses by revolutionary changes in frames of reference, is very much part of postmodernist thinking - also of thinking about social thinking (Flew). Toulmin (ibid: 84-5) places some of the impact of the paradigm debate[1] in historical perspective:

Not everyone saw at once what a change this move represented, or how far it stepped back from the context-free questions of Cartesian rationalism, toward the historical candor of the humanist tradition. ... In analysing a science, it replaces *axiom systems*, which aspire to universal timeless validity, by *paradigms*, which are the creations of a given age or phase of Science. It also substitutes for the dream of a singular *method*, applied across the board, the fact of plural explanatory *methods*, each of which is limited in scope and lifetime. In place of a *formal* analysis of the logic structure of any scientific theory, as was aimed at by the positivist philosophers of Vienna in the 1920s, it relies on the *historical* analysis of diverse, variable concepts in different sciences, at different times.

Things had come a long way from the decontextualised philosophy of the Grande Encyclopédie (which reduced the entire Cartesian paradigm to the genius of Descartes!), or the formal ambitions of Unified Science.

Once the Kuhnian move had been made, however, the Berlin wall that kept historians and philosophers of science apart was demolished.

In a recent conceptual analysis of *paradigm* and related notions such as "conceptual scheme", "frame of reference", "ball game", etc., Gouws (1990) proposes the neologism *digm* as an umbrella term or these notions. Gouws (1990: 220) describes his article as "a polemic against simplistic, foundational and substantialistic accounts of digms". It is thus a timely warning against reifying digms - which would be replacing one reification (of a singular method of science and formal logic) with another (the idea of a multitude of digms). It could be said that Gouws thus pursues the "postmodernist" critique of conceptual schemes (and of philosophers' resistance to get involved in "empirical matters").

Gouws (loc cit) sees scientific paradigms as only one type of *digm*; although digms of various domains can differ very much, there are a number of characteristics that digms share - though most of these are not very prestigious!

(i) Most digms operate in an even messier, more open-ended and heterogeneous way than scientific paradigms, as described by Kuhn.

(ii) Digms are not monolithic wholes that are hermetically sealed off from each other or their surroundings. The relative autonomy found in the scientific paradigms described by Kuhn, must not be absolutized. Nor should it be generalized to digms in general.

(iii) Digms are not self-defining, self-evident units. They overlap and are internally heterogeneous. What is to be considered as "the same digm", and what as "two different digms" differs in context. One should therefore be wary of facile conclusions based on differences in digm label. This means, i.a., that communication between digms is not *ex hypothesi* impossible; and that communication between digms is not necessarily more precarious than communication within digms.

(iv) There is no dichotomy between digms and non-digms, or between scheme and content. (An insight which has been variously formulated in the latter half of the twentieth century.)

(v) The identification, description and criticism of digms [are] dependent on "first level" commitments regarding the way the world is. Digms therefore do not constitute a unique own object for philosophy (or epistemology), which would allow the philosopher to suspend judgement on all matters empirical.

The fact that sophisticated knowledge is generated by the most untidy of schemes, does not, Gouws suggests, "signal a breakdown" in serious reflection and research. Also in this consolation, he is in accord with the postmodernist stance that reality and our knowledge of it are more often fragmented. Perhaps there is something to be said for retaining *paradigm* for all frames of reference; the Greek *para* could mean *beside, beyond* or *wrong*!

The term *paradigm* has become most fashionable, and increasingly one hears of *modernist* and *postmodernist paradigms*. In an essay on "Philosophical affinities of postmodern sociology" Bauman (1990: 413) formalises such a distinction - even if he does not explicitly refer to *paradigms*:

> I suggest that the two distinct and alternative modes of philosophical and sociological practice recently classified as "modern" and "postmodern" are best described as legislative and interpretive.

Bauman argues that both philosophy and sociology has had their "modern" period and are now moving into a "postmodernist" phase. Both were initially characterised by "legislative" reason which was foundationalist, and denigrated common sense and common social knowledge. Both disciplines have now turned to interpretive reason in which dialogue replaces an elitist soliloquy. We will return to Bauman's explication in Par 31. Here the distinction of legislative and interpretive reason is relevant to the generalisation that interpretive reason and interpretive paradigms are evidently more congenial to social values and value studies than are "legislative" ones. The fact that conceptual content,

research mode and theoretical status of values differ in various paradigms, is to be welcomed. Value studies can only benefit from multiple paradigms. The latter creates a situation of interface where value conceptions, methods and theories can be compared, exchanged, amended and evaluated. Would it be too mercenary to suggest that the multi-paradigmatic situation could for the social sciences become a very profitable common market? Was not the Athenian agora a market where intellectuals (and entertainers) dealt in paradigms (and parables)? And these traders, wisely, never insisted on selling a whole, revolutionary-new paradigm. On offer were information and insights which could, just could, bring a buyer a whole new perspective - or just help him to change and improve a minor formulation.

Par 31 Interpretive reason, rhetoric, texts, and civic discourse - accents in postmodernist epistemology

We have had a look at three perspectives on the modernity-postmodernity distinction - or transition: Toulmin's study depicted the changing ideas about nature, human society, and our understanding of natural and social reality. Kuhn examined the practice and progress of scientific investigation and showed that particular sciences or disciplines do not "grow" by incremental accumulation of knowledge, but are subjected to paradigm shifts. We also referred to Bauman's distinction between *legislative* and *interpretive* reason and its correlation with, respectively, modernist and postmodernist thinking. There are of course many other themes developed and accentuated in the postmodernist debate. For our purpose (focus on values and investigations of values) we consider it necessary to look closer at four concepts that are central to an evolving (and therefore still confusing) postmodernist epistemology. The concepts are: interpretive reason (Bauman), rhetoric, texts and civic discourse. It will not be possible to trace the many criss-crossing paths traversed by these concepts. We will have to limit ourself to connotations that are fairly generally accepted and interpretations built around these keywords that can claim some consensus.

Bauman's article on "Philosophical affinities of postmodern sociology" parallels Toulmin's *cosmopolis* in several respects. Bauman's analysis of "legislative reason" corresponds closely to Toulmin's depiction of rationalist modern philosophy; many of the emphases that Toulmin finds in Renaissance humanism, presentday practical philosophy, and postmodernist thinking are part of Bauman's interpretive reason. Bauman's distinctive insight is that sociology has paralleled philosophy's transition from a legislative style of reasoning to an interpretive one by moving from the positivist orthodox consensus[2] of modern sociology to a postmodernist interpretative strategy. This

parallel change, Bauman (1990: 411) argues, affects the relationship between philosophy and sociology, particularly their altered epistemological concerns in their changed domains:

> From the search for the foundations of cognitive certainty, the outspoken domain of philosophy guided by the legislative reason, epistemological concerns move to the communicative problems of communally founded cognitive systems - the acknowledged realm of sociological investigation.

Modern foundationalist philosophy and modernist positivist sociology shared the ideals of cognitive certainty, consistency of method, systematicality, and universalist explanation. They also shared the denigration of the cognitive value of lay knowledge, including common social knowledge. (As indicated in Parr 21 & 22, even in Weber's interpretation of "meaning", what the actor actually thought and felt when acting were the least of the sociologist's worries: "the theoretically conceived pure type of subjective meaning was simply attributed to the hypothetical actor or actors in a given situation" (Bauman, ibid: 421)). Bauman's generalisation is valid: "In its totality, the search-and-diagnostic strategy of modern sociology served to perpetuate the state of intellectual disendowment in which common sense and lay knowledge in general has been cast (ibid: 422).

Rising - as Bauman describes it - in the slow decomposition of the modern project and the falling from grace of the central modern values, *interpretive reason* took up several positions *contra* legislative reason. Prominent names in the elaboration of this style of reasoning listed by Bauman are mostly those of philosophers: Freud, Heidegger, later Wittgenstein, Gadamer, Ricoeur, Derrida and Rorty; other names are those of Dilthey, Schleiermarcher and Roland Barthes. These names could be taken as an indication that a postmodern sociology is still very much in the making - and that earlier "interpretive" and "humanistic" sociology might have been in sympathy with present hermeneutics but were not really true precursors.

Interpretive reason represents an alternative epistemology for the humanities and the social sciences. More specifically, for sociology it implies a rejection of and alternative to positivism - and the orthodox consensus. It is within the epistemology of interpretive reason that a number of changes have occurred: The *scientific method* has been pushed aside in favour of hermeneutics. *Rhetoric* - what ordinary and learned people say and the language they use in saying something - is being rehabilitated, and elevated from its subordinated position as underprivileged knowledge. Lay and professional understanding, common and sophisticated knowledge, are being given equal noological status. "Text" no longer refers to a written presentation, but includes

"any statement of experience or (more strongly) any lived or imagined experience [as] a discursive practice that is both culturally imbedded and historically situated" (Brown, 1990: 190). In the case of sociology, interpretive reason accepts sociological theories as part of a civic discourse; such a "discourse *about* society embodies members" representations *of* society and engenders further discourse *within* society. It thus sees sociological theory as value-soaked civic talk about our common life" (op cit: 194).

With regard to exchanging the scientific method for hermeneutics it should be said that it is clearer what is being left behind than what is taking its place. However, the rejection of rigour and coping with uncertainty, both in method and results, are explicit traits of postmodernist interpretation. Legislative reason has been rejected also for its rigour and regimentation. As Bauman (ibid: 426) said:

> The *raison d'être* of the legislative project was the possibility of a method - that is, of a procedure that guarantees the validity of the result by the sheer fact that it has been scrupulously followed; and the principle that the findings at the end of the methodological procedure carry a superior validity which no non-methodological effort can claim.

If the scientific method is abandoned for hermeneutics (which is, in fact, a collective term for various and variant modes of analysis) the individual social scientist is very much left to his own judgement - which again is very much dependent on the particular situation or discourse:

> With the new awareness that the discourse is intended to *constitute* the ground whereon to decide what *should count* as a fact in the matters under consideration and to determine *what mode of comprehension* is best suited to the understanding of the facts thus constituted, or that every social scientist ... must deal with his or her own hermeneutical spiral ... The only thing that determines the point at which a social scientist should cease the quest for understanding is his or her good judgement ... (Bauman, quoting Hayden White, ibid: 431).

In postmodernist thinking the dividing line between reality and knowledge has become unclear. What Baker (1990: 233) calls "the one sacred epistemological notion of the modernist past", has been abandoned: the disjunctive polarity between truth and its medium of expression. "Truth" was considered, Baker says, to be something abstract or removed which had to be discovered through research (or be verified through contact with the physical world). Language was thought of as merely a system for transmitting what is real - it only conveyed the truth. Truth, reality, knowledge and words formed a hierarchy in which words had the lowest status as "mere rhetoric" and with no effect

on "reason", "logic", or "method". Postmodernists have taken a radically different view, one in which language *is* knowledge, and reality and truth are constructed rhetorically:

> Postmodernists ... reject the notion that symbols subserviently convey an exterior truth, based on a foundation of unchangeable premises and a transcendent system of logic or reason, and replace it with a poetic-rhetorical theory of knowledge construction.
>
> The origins of knowledge are not fixed in the heavens or in nature but in the metaphoric acts of naming that distinguish humans from all other beings. ... language is not merely an apparatus of transmission but is responsible for telling us how to "see" the "world". Therefore poetic acts of knowing are rhetorical acts of individual and social persuasion. ... humans *enact* or construct truth rhetorically through persuasive symbolic action at the individual, social, and cultural levels, both in the moment and across epochs (ibid: 233).

It follows that sociology and social science are no longer seen as separated industries producing sophisticated and privileged knowledge. Scientific social knowledge is radically relativised, and is, in origin, rhetoric quality, and function, part of a civic debate - a society's reflection upon itself. Individuals living in a postmodern society can be expected to be audibly critical of institutional arrangements, sociopolitical structures, and their ideological or other justifications. Postmodern individuals will also be given to maximum self-reflexivity and self-criticism. Theirs would be a world accepted to be created and continuously being recreated by themselves; where God is dead, nothing is considered absolute, and certainty is no longer a serious subject for debate. It would be a society in which discourse is intellectual and a social context - but also a decontext. It would be a world of contingency *für sich*, of self-conscious contingency - as Bauman describes postmodernity. Of such a world several questions arise: How many of the citizens have made the transition to postmodernity and have developed appropriate dispositions (in modern times referred to by learned persons as *Lebens- und Weltanschauungen*, and by ordinary people as *values*)? How does one cope with the tension and conflict between self-reflexivity and self-criticism, and, personal action? And, how does one react to coercive socio-political forces and structures if one believes that they are, originally and ultimately, rhetorical constructs?

To even begin to suggest answers to these questions, it would be necessary to try and translate and relate postmodern epistemology and *zeitgeist* to the existential conditions (until recently unselfconsciously referred to as institutional structures) of postmodern societies. Such an attempt will be made in Par 32.

Par 32 Postmodern societies and postmodern sociologies

We have in Par 28 distinguished: dominant ideas in postmodernist thinking and in Par 31 concentrated on "accents" in postmodernist *epistemology*; the structural characteristics of postmodernity - suggesting that there are *societies* that could legitimately be described as postmodern; thirdly, we have a number of times referred to postmodernist *sociology*. We have attempted to keep these aspects separate, but preceding paragraphs have shown the validity of a statement by Baker (1990: 241) that logical distinctions and separations which worked well in modernity, are not always self-evident in postmodern thinking:

> Science, scholarship, research, text writing, and the subsequent processes of rhetorical reflection are interpenetrated with society, politics, social and civic discourse, and action. Postmodernism achieves this state by conflating, under the label "text", elements that were distinct in modernism.

In the present text we will *not* "de-differentiate" the distinctions between societal structure and sociological analysis. If this is not in line with postmodernist thinking, it is in line with what we believe to be the historical (i.e. present and factual) position in which societies and sociologies find themselves. We see that position to be one in which *postmodernist* does not categorise a *type* of society, but refers to, and summarises, incisive social changes that have occurred in many industrialised, developed countries. Similarly we have various sociological analyses of postmodernity or postmodernism - some of them presenting themselves as a distinctive sociological interpretation, but we do not have a postmodern sociology of any coherence worthy of that label. I will *not* argue that we will *never* have a postmodern society as a type comparable to "the industrial society" or "the capitalist society". But I am of the opinion that it is sociologically unlikely. Similarly, I do not expect to see a full-blown postmodern sociology before I retire; such a sociology, too, is unlikely. But let us, instead of being speculative about future societies and future sociologies, try to say something about substantive social change and transformation in contemporary societies - that, in itself, would be a sociological interpretation.

I would like to remark on two processes which are presently at work in societies all over the world, which are both conducive to and characteristic of postmodernity, and which are not only internally dialectical, but have a dialectical interrelation. These processes could be called *globalisation* and *search for community*.

Globalisation refers to the increasing exposure of populations and their reactions to what happens in other societies. Involvement with "all the world" follows in the wake of what has been called the technological revolution of the

media, communications and information. More important than technology is the growing willingness, even eagerness, to take into account and to accommodate in one's society what happens in others. Increasingly, social, economic, political, and humanitarian movements and organisations propagate and establish behaviour, beliefs and social conditions which no longer are separatist, exclusive or distinctive of particular societies and cultures. Culturally, globalisation is a process of "de-differentiation" - as Lash (1990: ix) has generalised for all of postmodernisation: "... modernization is a process of cultural differentiation while postmodernization is a process of cultural "de-differentiation"". Globalisation, however, is more than a change of culture - and more than a change of values. It is also a social and political movement which brings about not only new thinking about the way we live (and die), but effectively establishes social and political structures that replace distinctiveness, separatism, and autonomies by inclusivity, interaction and democratisation. Examples would range from enforcing charters of human rights to international military intervention to stop transgressions of international law.

Anthony Giddens (1991: 64) describes globalisation as:

> [T]he intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa. This is a dialectical process because such local happenings may move in an obverse direction from the very distanciated relations that shape them. *Local transformation* is as much a part of globalisation as the lateral extension of social connections across time and space.

Giddens (ibid) uses several concepts in an explication of the process of globalisation. The changing experience of time and space because of daily and immediate exposure to what happens in other places and time zones, means that familiar locations are no longer privileged points of reference - global maps do not have such points. Twin processes of disembedding and institutional reflexivity imply that there is a continuous relocation of cultural goods, a reconstruction of institutions, and also individual and civic reflection on and reaction to new ideas, arrangements and happenings.

Giddens's concept of disembedding of institutions is not unrelated to Lash's concept of de-differentiation. For Lash (ibid: 4) postmodernism is a phenomenon "confined to the realm of culture":

> Postmodernism, is then, for me, strictly cultural. It is indeed a sort of cultural "paradigm". Cultural paradigms, like scientific paradigms, are spatio-temporal configurations. Spatially they comprise a more or less flexible symbolic structure which, when bent too much out of shape, begins to constitute another distinct cultural paradigm. Temporally,

they - like Kuhn's scientific paradigms, or Michel Foucault's discourses - take shape, persist for a duration, and disintegrate.

More specifically, postmodernism and other cultural paradigms are what I want to call "regimes of significance".

Lash (ibid: 5, 11-15) argues that the components of the cultural paradigm of postmodernism are all subjected to a process of de-differentiation: (i) The main cultural spheres - like aesthetics, theory and ethics - lose their autonomy. The aesthetic realm, for example, begins to "colonise" both the theoretical and the moral-political spheres. (ii) The cultural sphere is no longer separated from the social. "This has to do with the partial breakdown of the boundaries between high and popular culture and the concomitant development of a mass audience for high culture. But it is also a matter of a new immanence in the social of culture, in which representations also take on the functions of symbols" (ibid: 11). (iii) The "cultural economy" too, becomes de-differentiated. The relations of *production* of cultural objects change, as well as conditions and mediation of their *reception*, and the manner of *circulation*. (Examples given by Lash include: audience participation in theatre, the "disintegration" of the author or the "merging" of the author into the text, the fusion of literature and criticism, the role of advertising, etc.) (iv) Cultural objects are dependent on specific modes of signification: a particular relationship between *signifier* (sound, image, word, or statement) the *signified* (a concept or meaning), and *referent* (an object in the real world to which signifier and signified connect).

Lash says that while modernism had clearly differentiated and autonomised the roles of signifier, signified, and referent, postmodernisation problematises these distinctions. More precisely: while modernism had problems with *representation*, "(p)ostmodernist de-differentiation on the other hand puts chaos, flimsiness, and instability in our experience of *reality* itself" (ibid: 15).

Giddens's concept of *institutional reflexivity* refers to individuals' coping with the "products" of globalisation - information, commodities, influences, pressures, ideas and realities - that enter the life-worlds of all of us exposed to what happens in the global world. Giddens suggests that this exposure necessitates continuous redefinition of situations, behaviour, beliefs - ultimately and intimately of the self. Reacting to all that is new, different, emancipating or disturbing, individuals not so much *adapt* as *enact a reflexivity* in orientations, dispositions and behaviour. In the process, reactions become additional inputs which add to and change that which has to be reacted upon. To a significant extent, reflexivity, both in orientation and acting, is a process of dialectics of unanticipated consequences. More possibilities, increased contingency, increased personal and political democracy, and more self-awareness, selfreflection and selfcriticism - all make postmodern life and living a risky affair. In a

situation of maximum risk the consequent unpredictability and uncertainty could be handled in two ways: a renewed search for trust, reassurance and community, or a seizing of this experience as a challenging and energising opportunity of enrichment of self and life-world. It would not be strange to find that many (of the few real?) postmodernists actually try both reactions - often at the same time.

"Postmodernity, the age of contingency *für sich*, of self-conscious contingency", says Bauman (1990: 431), "is for the thinking person also the age of community: the lust for community, search for community, invention of community, imagining of community." Writing on postmodernist societies in an earlier article, Bauman (1988) emphasised changes (from modernity) such as: the nature of authority and systems of values, societal integration and cohesion - and increasing of social life as a discourse:

> Postmodernity is marked by a view of the human world as irreducibly and irrevocably pluralistic, split into a multitude of sovereign units and sites of authority ... (ibid: 799).

> Our time is marked by the end to the hierarchic value structure and the rejection of the "binary cuts which represented the domination of the cultural over the natural code", like the cuts between the West and the rest, learned and untutored, upper and lower strata (ibid: 798).

> The old setting derived its solidity from the presence of mutually reinforcing, co-ordinated and overlapping agencies of integration.

> The totalizing impact of economic systemness, body politics, unified law, dominant value-cluster or ideology was tacitly assumed (indeed it served as the very pre-condition of the possibility of discourse) and thus remained throughout the conceiled, yet omnipotent guarantee of the authority of truth and meaning. The new communal spaces ... are grounded in their activities only, and so expose the absence of synchronization between truth-and-meaning oriented action and other dimensions of social existence (ibid: 800).

If, increasingly, social life and knowledge are experienced, perceived and defined as discourses, the "significant others" are those people who are worthwhile, with whom one can talk, converse in a common language, with whom one shares *life-worlds* rather than a society or community.

This would be one way in which to escape the fragmentation of a world believed to have once been better organised, more homogeneous, and where one felt less torn apart between old certainties and new alternatives.

The community searched for is not necessarily an ethnic one. Bauman suggests that those who find postmodernity too radical, too contingent, are

attracted to a communal life-world in which it is still possible to have *the joy of being right* - perhaps not all the time, not at all places, not for all people, but still.

Like globalisation, from which those in search of community try to escape, community develops an internal paradox:

> ... the foremost paradox of the frantic search for communal grounds of consensus is that it results in more dissipation and fragmentation, more heterogeneity. The drive to synthesis is the major cause of endless bifurcations.
>
> The only consensus likely to stand a chance of success is the acceptance of heterogeneity of dissensions (Bauman, 1990: 436).

Bauman refers to intellectuals who accept the political task of creating communities. These leaders, he says, believe that their juridical authority over communities can be made secure by enforcing their version of intellectual law and order, but "each attempt to draw up steady borders of another communal consensus (in as far as it remains unsupported by institutionalised coercion) would itself become one more ingredient of that pluralism it purported to abolish or at least qualify".

Par 33 Values, value studies, and postmodernism

Writing on postmodernism is very much like writing on values: one tends to go on forever. And the reason for this is given by postmodernism itself: writing is writing on writing. Let us try to come to some conclusions about values, value studies and postmodernism.

1. Postmodernism is a stream of consciousness; it is social change; it is change in cultural resources; it is also a change in values. As a stream of consciousness, postmodernism is thinking about thinking about experience. It is an involvement and participation in changing social conditions and exposure to other lifestyles, societies and cultures. It is rearticulation of culture and re-exploitation of cultural resources. It is reconsideration of conceptions of goodness and desirability.

2. As a way of thinking and of living, postmodernism involves all four dimensions distinguished within social investigation: ontological, epistemological, methodological, and sociological. Postmodernism does not collapse these dimensions. It does, however, show them to be analytical distinctions of limited success in the verbalisation of our understanding of experience, and what we consider to be reality. In postmodernist thinking dimensions become shifting levels rather than neatly demarcated areas or foci. Also values, in postmoder-

nist thinking, are ideas which are verbalised - and continuously expressed and explained "in other words" - in the shifting levels of these dimensions.

3. Globalisation is exposure to new experiences and to different ideas about life; it brings a flood of possibilities and alternatives, and tends to collapse or weaken distinctions, boundaries, and certainties. Reactions to such exposure vary (variation and diversity are values in postmodernism) as the intensity of globalisation varies. Not all societies or all cultures are equally affected by globalisation and postmodernism. Lash (ibid: 13) is correct: "not the whole, or even necessarily most of contemporary culture, is postmodern". The impact and reaction to globalisation and postmodernism are thus uneven and stratified - "the producers and relevant audience of modernist and postmodernist culture are found in particular declining and emergent social classes and class fractions" (Lash, ibid: ix-x). Also, whole societies may be thoroughly modernist and largely unaffected by postmodernism - there may even be a few traditional societies left which are in the process of old-time modernisation.

If there is a selective affinity towards postmodernism, it should, however, not be thought only to affect - and be accepted by - elites, upper classes, intelligentsia, etc. To quote Lash (ibid: 14) once more: as a process of cultural de-differentiation and as a cultural type, "postmodernism pervades both high and popular culture, while modernism has been confined to the realm of high culture." It should be evident that globalisation, de-differentiation, institutional disembedding and reflexivity are processes which are at the same time pervasive and uneven in their effect.

4. If we equate postmodernism with styles of life, and what I would like to call styles of orientation, it can be generalised that enacting these styles will vary not only in different strata, but will also depend on individuals' social awareness and sensitivity, as well as on individual experiences. Postmodernism implies and encourages a greater social awareness, self-consciousness, and more reflection about life and living - to such an extent that *discourse* is conceived of as a sociological space rather than a period of debate. This means that the intellectual situation or the discursive (discussion) space in which values are expressed, merges with the social situation in which values are assumed to operate.

5. If, under the impact of, or in reaction to globalisation, some individuals or classes go in search of community, and others prefer to be part of and to participate in postmodernity, such a choice is not comparable to a decision to get married rather than stay single, or to study medicine rather than sociology. Reaction to the multiple facets of postmodernism is never a simple one-off choice. It is a diffuse and complex, life-long process - like growing-up, becoming an adult, and growing old. Also, these - and other - reactions are hardly a conscious choice between existing and new values. Values are abstractions and

generalisations of what one considers to be good and desirable only after one has had some experience of life. It is not strange that the values of young children are seldom investigated. Values grow and are conceptualised - and change - only in the process of growing-up, and growing old.

What would be the implications of epistemological accents of postmodernism for value studies? Evidently, it is through value studies that one could try to determine whether people hold modernist or postmodernist values. But, and this is the more precise question, do postmodernist views of social science have consequences for the methodology of such investigations? The answer is obviously *yes*, and I would suggest the following implications:

6. Surveys have been the most common procedure used in value studies. If in most surveys, respondents are simply asked to affirm or deny particular values, this is too superficial a procedure to gain meaningful knowledge. The procedure, the information gained, and the conception of "values" are hardly superior to questioning prospective buyers whether they would choose a Honda or a Mazda as their next car. Even when value choices are statistically correlated with behaviour, social conditions and other beliefs, this attempt at "contextualisation" is such that it tells us nothing about the personal conception of values, and their relevance to the respondent's life. Establishing values through surveys is one example of practicing modernist-positivist sociology - a mode of investigation that in postmodernism has gone out of fashion. If postmodernism is necessary for understanding social life today, it is also necessary for understanding social values today.

7. Kuhn's discovery of paradigms could be seen as suggestive of postmodernist epistemology, but it could also be seen as a fastening upon conceptual schemes as the scaffolding of scientific research and explanation. Even when the identification of a particular paradigm implies and recognises the existence of others, the concept of *paradigms* can be said to regionalise truth: Epistemologically it is a postmodernist gain to admit to various truths, but it is a moderate postmodernism which ties the validity of a scientific explanation to one paradigm. A radical and consistent postmodernism would see whether the building could stand on its own when the scaffolding is removed, or better, it would ask whether the interpretation or representation of reality makes sense also outside the particular paradigm. But then, postmodernism (perhaps fortunately) does not insist upon consistency.

8. Postmodernism could hardly endorse models of man as *homo economicus* or as a *value-consistent actor.* A postmodern personality would be one that copes with variety and change in circumstances, dispositions, problems, behaviour, and values. If this is accepted, it would imply that values could hardly be thought of as principles internalised for life. It would also imply that investigations would have to be much more sophisticated to produce

meaningful knowledge about the link between values and action. At the outset postmodernism would reject any theological or philosophical edict that *these*, and not *those are* the values of all concerned.

9. If empiricity is problematised in postmodernism, it is also respected - more particularly in the sense suggested in 8 above. The values - if any - of ordinary people should either be investigated with the greatest insistence on factuality, and the rejection of all preconceptions of normative dogmatics or universalist philosophy; or it should be accepted that values are at most an intelligent opinion, articulated in discourse, of what would be in the best interest of all.

10. Value investigations which furtively pronounce values instead of honestly discovering them, could hardly be part of the postmodern project. Such investigations would be ideological and intolerant - both values rejected in postmodern democracies.

Notes

1 Toulmin mentions Theodore Kisiel's reference to his (Toulmin) book **The philosophy of science** (1953) as challenging the orthodoxy of logical empiricism in arguments similar to those of Kuhn but then says graciously: "... undoubtedly, the most influential document of the movement was Thomas Kuhn's book, **The structure of scientific revolutions**, published in 1962." He continues: "By a paradox, Kuhn's book appeared as an annex to the **Encyclopedia of Unified Science**: within a project to base Science on formal logic, it was a Trojan horse.

2 The **orthodox consensus** is a term proposed by Dick Atkinson and defined by Anthony Giddens (1982: 1) as an orthodoxy which dominated sociology, politics, and large sectors of the social sciences in general in the postwar period. It had three characteristics: positivistic philosophy as a logical framework, a dominance of functionalism, and conceptions of the "industrial society" and "modernisation".

Chapter Eight

Methodological contexts of value investigations

Par 34 Domains of value studies

It could be meaningful to distinguish between *domains* and *methodological contexts* of value investigations.

Domains would refer to disciplines or specialised fields in which values are, or have been, the object of serious reflection and examination. The differentiation of such domains came about historically; some of these areas are no longer exploited while others are fairly recent endeavours. Being foci of intellectual attention and part of the historical variations of social thought, domains of value investigations cannot be neatly demarcated or systematised in logical or historical order. On a most general level, however, it would be possible to differentiate between various domains in terms of the three epistemological modes of social knowledge distinguished in Par 6 - common, philosophical, and scientific social knowledge.

"Methodological contexts" of value studies have been referred to a number of times. These are not disciplines or specialisations that happen to focus on values. *Contexts* are purposely chosen and constructed spaces in which social scientists look for and investigate social values. Values never come marching down the main street like a protest rally; the contexts of their presence, manifestation and operation must be methodologically constructed. Particular contexts, it has been suggested (see Par 14), have different effects on the methodological subprocesses of conceptualisation, empirical substantiation, and theorising. This implies that what we have called *equity* or *parity* (Par 16(d) and (e)) of subprocesses vary in different contexts. Very simply, it means that it is quite common for a particular investigation to concentrate on one or two of the three subprocesses and "neglect" the other(s). So-called *macro* investigations, for instance, are known for their emphasis on theorising, and little empirical substantiation. So-called *micro* studies very often are strong on empirical evidence and weak on theorising.

This Paragraph will briefly review various *domains* of value studies. In the rest of the chapter we will discuss the methodological *contexts* that we believe should be distinguished.

It may be meaningful to differentiate the following fields, specialisations, disciplines or discourses as *domains* of value investigations:

* *Everyday, informal discourse* in which ordinary people who have made no special study of social values, speak about and relate their actions, and of those of others, to what they consider to be "values".

* *Metaphysics, philosophy of history, social and political philosophy, ethics, morality:* These disciplines have, for ages, given attention to values.

* *Axiology*

"Axiology" is a term first coined in 1902 to encompass an escalating number of philosophical studies on values. Towards the end of the nineteenth century numerous philosophers, from diverse orientations, worked hard at "synthesising" philosophy's many concerns and congeries on the basis of values. The most abstract logical constructions were attempts to produce the ultimate value theory (*Werttheorie*) that could integrate everything from economics, through ethics to aesthetics. These exercises in logic and system-construction were esoteric schemes, far removed from the worlds outside the stuffy academic studies in which they were put together.

* *Theory of value*

Value theory is what "axiologists" saw as the end-result of their labours - the singular terms *theory* and *value* being indicative of an ideal and a confidence in consensus through logic. *Theory of value* was the banner for many value studies done towards the 1950s and even into the sixties. Inspired by exercises in axiology, these later studies considerably extended reflection on values, and thinking in terms of values. The almost purely philosophical character of value studies was supplemented, if not corrected, by bringing in the empirical social sciences. The ideal of a distinct "discipline of values" was, however, maintained. Pepper (1958: 7) summarised the situation as follows:

> "Theory of value" is the name for a set of problems common to a group of studies known as the value sciences. These include ethics, aesthetics, some phases of logic and theory of knowledge, economics, political sciences, anthropology and sociology. Specialization has more and more separated and insulated these studies from one another. Theory of value is a movement in the opposite direction, drawing out a core of problems in which they all share.

Relevant titles in the "theory of value" and their dates of publication are significant:

> *General theory of value* (Perry, 1906), *The moral economy* (Perry, 1909), *A theory of value* (Reid, 1938), *Theory of valuation* (Dewey, 1939), *Realms of value* (Perry, 1954), *The sources of value* (Pepper, 1958), *Value theory and the behavioral sciences* (Handy, 1969), *Introduction to value theory* (Rescher, 1969).

"Value theorist" Nicholas Rescher (1969: 149-50) tried to systematise the field. His scheme, substantiated by an extensive bibliography, is of some methodological and historical interest. Rescher has four main divisions:

I. Historical accounts; II. Methodological issues; III. Philosophical approaches to value; and IV. Scientific approaches to value. The latter provides for: The psycho-biology of valuation; anthropological and sociological studies which could be comparative, general or special; economic evaluation: theory of economic values, utility theory, game theory, decision theory, cost-benefit analysis, and preference aggregation; and, the logic of preference.

Rescher's scheme makes it clear that "theory of value" was no modest project. It demonstrates an extraordinary epistemological self-confidence, a collegial morale, and an almost cosmological range - all built on the word *value* (singular). If philosophy and reason stimulated the optimism of a single, unified system of knowledge, it was science and empiricity which were to guarantee the final certainty. Given this trust in science, it was only logical to start thinking in terms of "scientific" values:

> Certain developments ... in the last few decades ... will permit us to answer the age-old question: "What is the good life?" ... we think a scientific ethic may be possible (Maslow, 1962: 149).

> ... science itself is capable of deriving moral values. It may yet take years of brilliant and patient research to reach methodologically sound conclusions. During that time we should probably do well to lean temporarily on the ethical framework, though not the superstitions ... (Cattell, 1971: 64).

In an essay "Values and the future" Toffler (in Baier & Rescher, 1969: 30) predicts the appearance of a new profession:

> Value-forecasters ... armed with scientific tools to review in advance all important technological decisions ... not merely describing present and future states of the value system, but actively intervening in the process of value change.

Perhaps one remark about the *theory of value* movement will suffice: Comte would have approved; the founder of positivism never did understand that social science is not the simple application of natural science to human beings and their societies.

** Value studies within the social sciences*

If various social sciences were drawn into "theory of value" by latter-day axiologists, the movement did not recruit and retain many disciples for long. Disciples function well in cults but not in disciplines. And disciplines are what sociology, anthropology, psychology, political science, etc. have become in the 50-odd years since the nineteen-thirties. One may generalise that during most of this period the emphasis has been on internal consolidation. Calls for interdisciplinary co-operation have been persistent, but, as in real life before and beyond social science, good intentions and ideals seldom overcome vested interests - or vested methodologies.

At present the various social sciences still very much do their own value studies. If in concepts, empirical research and theory, sociologists would, for instance, bring in psychological components, or vice versa, there are few attempts - and little success - at an integrated social scientific approach.

** Value studies in institutional spheres*

Sociologists distinguish a number of social or societal institutions: marriage, family and kinship, religion, economy, politics, law, education, literature and art, etc. Frequently studies done within (or outside) the social sciences concentrate exclusively on values in these institutions. Categorising values according to these institutional fields has become common practice.

Values related to sexual behaviour are investigated by various disciplines, more recent ones being sociobiology and bio-ethics. Education or pedagogics is often considered a social discipline. It has always taken social values seriously - in both "theory and practice". Religion is often thought of as having a special status concerning values: it is widely accepted that social values originate in religions and that a deity or some transcendental sphere is the ultimate court of appeal if values themselves are in need of legitimisation. Literature, art, theatre, and music symbolise, explicate and explore social values.

** Professional and applied fields*

Social values are taken seriously in numerous professions, practices and applied fields, even if these professions seldom conduct their own investigations into relevant values.

Consideration of values in particular professions, practices and organisations are sometimes integrated into an "ethic". The ethics of business, medicine, psychiatry, social work, marriage and sexual counselling, socio-economic development, and also scientific research, are often formalised into ethical codes. Such codes are not merely appeals to correct behaviour and good conduct. In many cases they define and prescribe required actions, and indicate what actions are considered deviant.

We have described a number of domains or specialised fields of study in which values are taken seriously and given concentrated attention. In the various domains such attention or reflection, naturally, differs in range and depth. Also, these domains are not the result of a process of logical, systematic differentiation, and they do not have neat or clear boundaries. Concentrated reflection on values thus resembles crystallisations in the diffuse world of "theory and practice". This dappled distribution of serious interest in values must be ascribed to the very nature of what is generally called "values", as well as to the variegated development of social thought in the course of time. Metaphors apart, various and changing value studies, including different conceptions, different ways of research, and different modes of theorising, follow largely in the wake of changing intellectual trends.

Par 35 Micro and macro contexts

"Contexts", for us, refers to areas or spaces in which values are believed to be present and operative, and where they are being investigated. The best known distinction of contexts is the *micro-macro* one. The micro-macro distinction has existed for a very long time in social thought. It has, however, only fairly recently become an explicit theme and methodological issue. Alexander and Giesen (in Alexander et al, 1987: 1) bring some historical perspective:

> Although the micro-macro theme has entered sociological theorizing as a distinct and firmly established issue only in recent decades, its prehistory can be traced from late medieval thinking through postwar methodological debates over science, epistemology, and political philosophy ... The controversy over constitutions versus divine rights of kings [sic] (ibid: 4).

Put very simply, *micro* refers to the *interpersonal*, and *macro* to the *societal* or *institutional* level of social reality. Micro investigations would focus on the actions, interactions and beliefs of individuals in particular observable situations; macro studies would concentrate on patterns of conduct and beliefs among larger aggregates of people - entire societies or more limited collectivities. As micro and macro studies tie up different methodological decisions,

the micro-macro debate predictably generated two opposing views: that there are and will always be two incompatible sociologies; and, that the differentiation is "heuristic" - and only "expresses a methodological exigence and expedience [sic] within sociology" (Mendelsohn, 1990: 1).

The micro-macro distinction is inextricably connected to both the epistemological and the methodological triangles (Parr 5 and 6). The epistemological triangle relates three modes of social knowledge: common, philosophical and scientific. In scientific value studies the ultimate challenge for social scientists would be to determine the values of ordinary people and to conciliate this data with their theoretical models for explanation and interpretation. The methodological triangle refers to the interactive subprocesses of conceptualisation, empirical substantiation and theorising. In each of these subprocesses it is possible to choose either the micro or the macro option.

Values are beliefs and thus part of ordinary people's social knowledge. Their presence, content and operation are well manifested in micro settings such as situations of interaction. While it is generally accepted that values are learnt, constructed and enacted in interpersonal situations, all discourse on values refers, implicitly or explicitly, to societal or institutional, i.e. macro, contexts. To determine the factual connection between what ordinary people *say* about values and what they actually *do* in situations of interaction, would be an ultimate challenge to empirical research. Such research could best be done in micro contexts. Many social scientists, however, have chosen to investigate values within a macro context. Working on a macro level simultaneously brings about limitations, and greater scope in the specificity/generality of the presence and process of values. Thus a choice of a micro or macro study of values can result in very different scenarios of values.

It should be evident that the very personal meaning that ordinary people attach to the word "values", as well as their perception of the role of values in their everyday activities, could best be investigated in micro settings. In a very real sense a micro study of values in a particular situation makes possible the observation of the actual *structuring* of values by individuals interacting in that situation. In a macro study it is the investigator who, to a significant degree, structures - in the theoretical explanation or interpretation - the content and operation of values deemed present in a collectivity, population or social structure.

The past five to seven years have seen several substantive publications on the micro-macro theme.[1] Both in its philosophical and social science versions, the micro-macro debate ranged between the extremes of reduction and dichotomisation, irreconcilable contrapositions, and attempts at linkage. The last mode only gained some success when philosophical reasoning made way for a more empirical discourse, and when some less helpful micro and macro

theories could be transcended. In the process, the naive "individual versus society" dichotomy was replaced by arguments on whether action was rational[2] or interpretative, and whether social order was imposed by collective, or emergent forces, or negotiated between individuals. Micro theories focus on the first question, macro theories on the second.

It should have become clear that the micro-macro debate addresses several questions simultaneously: (i) The distinction of micro and macro *phenomena*; (ii) the contrasting of *theoretical approaches* dealing with micro and macro phenomena; (iii) whether social *action* and *interaction* are primarily to be *explained* as spontaneous conformity to normative orientations (like values), or the furthering of individual/collective interests, or, in terms of simple cognitive decisions; and (iv) perhaps the most difficult question: the link between micro and macro phenomena, as well as the eventual integration of micro and macro theories.

Opinions on these questions vary widely, as the following views demonstrate:

Sociologist Dawe (1970: 214), twenty years ago, wrote:

> There are ... two sociologies: A sociology of social system and a sociology of social action. They are grounded in the diametrically opposed concerns with two central problems, those of order and control. And, at every level they are in conflict. They posit antithetical views of human nature, of society and of the relationship between the social and the individual.

Most recently, it was philosopher Rawls (1989: 103) who went directly to the heart of the matter:

> The question of whether interaction constitutes social structure in microcosm, or whether it has a unique character of its own, is from my perspective the single most important theoretical issue facing modern sociology ... I have proposed that the interaction order has a unique organizational character in its own right. If the interaction order is a *sui generis* phenomenon, then answers to questions about the origins of social order and meaning will be different for interaction order phenomena.

The micro-macro link (Alexander et al, 1987: 385) eventually opted for different theoretical "levels":

> Both microscopic processes that constitute the web of interactions in society and the macroscopic frameworks that result from and condition those processes are essential levels for understanding and explaining social life. Moreover, those who have argued polemically that one level

is more fundamental than the other (in some kind of zero-sum way), or who have argued for the complete independence of the two levels, must be regarded as in error.

In an earlier statement, Knorr-Cetina (in Knorr-Cetina and Cicourel, 1981: 1-2) sketched the challenge that micro theories direct at macro orientations:

> [What] I will refer to as *micro-sociologies*, has been a challenge of established theories and methods in sociology, and particularly of macro-sociological orientations. Macro-sociology is commonly understood as the study of society, of social institutions and of socio-cultural change on an aggregate level. A macro-sociological approach can entail both the use of theoretical concepts on a system level and the use of aggregate data derived from individual micro-level responses to characterize social collectivities. The micro-sociological challenge of such endeavours can best be illustrated by two distinctive but interlocking developments: the move from a normative notion of social order to that of a *cognitive order*, and the rejection of both methodological collectivism *and* individualism in favour of *methodological situationalism*. Both developments have called into question the dimensions in terms of which the micro-macro problem has traditionally been posed, such as the juxtaposition of individual and collectivity or of individual action and social structure. And both developments point in the end towards a reconstruction of macro-social theory and methodology based upon a micro-sociological foundation, or at least based upon an integration of micro-sociological results.

Par 36 Theorising the link between micro and macro phenomena

If Knorr-Cetina's incisive remarks upset much of the more standard thinking about micro and macro contexts, it may help some of us to get an idea of the prominent micro and macro theories, as well as the theories that attempt to link micro phenomena to macro phenomena, and vice versa. We list these 19 theoretical approaches (as I prefer to call them) in (a) to (s) and indicate those that are of special relevance for value studies with a double asterisk:

Alexander et al (1987) list four *micro* theories:

(a) Exchange or rational choice theories developed from or within the neoclassical economic tradition.

(b) Micro-conflict theories in which rational calculation of costs is replaced by rational exercise of power.

(c) **Ethnomethodology and phenomenology: actors do not simply enact cultural norms and values, but give account of their situations. Garfinkel has emphasized that human actors are not "cultural dopes" who act out what is prescribed by objective facts and cultural patterns. Action is seen as an order-producing activity in the process of accounting. Individuals are seen as free from macro constraints but as permanently engaged in the creation of an ordered social world, but it is an ordered world only for the situation itself and not beyond the situation (ibid: 34).

(d) **Symbolic interactionism where interpretation of meaning is of the utmost importance.

The same authors also have four examples of *macro* theories:

(e) Marx's theory of classes.

(f) Dahrendorf's theory of interest groups differentiated in terms of power.

(g) **Durkheimian and Parsonian functionalist theories of normative order. For Parsons, but also for Durkheim, the common or dominant societal value system defines the identity and ensures the maintenance and integration of a society.

(h) **A macro theory of *cultural symbolism* has its origins in some of the ideas of Hegel, Dilthey, Weber and Habermas - and German idealism. It suggests that enveloping cultural ideas - like *Zeitgeist* - are generated over time and become the dominant ideas of an era. The internal consistency of these ideas, whether religious, ideological, scientific or whatever, are purposively increased, and they become authoritative and controlling societal beliefs. So-called *Welt- und Lebensanschauungen,* Weber's rationalization and Sorokin's "culture mentalities" are relevant examples.

The editors of *The micro-macro link* (1987) see five attempted theoretical solutions for *connecting the micro to the macro*:

(i) **Aggregation is based on the assumption that macro structures are built up and maintained through the summation or collective working of its parts.

(j) **Micro interactions can combine with macro conditions such as organised leadership, conducive historical situations or confluence of events.

(k) ***Externalisation* refers to the possibility that what were originally restricted actions, beliefs and patterns, become institutionalised or extended throughout society. Such externalisation takes place because of the original functionality of the patterns for individuals or small groups.

(l) ***Reproduction* means that macro patterns are sustained through their repetitive enactment by individuals.

(m) **Conformity is the result, primarily, of socialisation, i.e. the internalisation of roles and other more diffuse expectations.

Moving from *macro to micro*, the theoretical challenge is to demonstrate the relevance of macro structures for individual actions, as well as to indicate the processes by which macro structures act upon individual actions and situational interaction. Three interpretations crystallise from Alexander et al (1987):

(n) ***Internalisation* is the process by which normative orientations, "pressed upon" the individual during socialisation, become part of individuals' motivation and disposition to conform.

(o) **Some theorists conceive of macro phenomena as *frames of reference which limit the range and possibilities* of individual actions and dispositions. (Hechter (1983: 4) remarks: "In normative explanations, values are conceived to be the most important limits on individual action. Values serve to rule out some possible courses of individual action as inappropriate, and deem others as appropriate.")

(p) **Münch and Smelser (Alexander et al, 1987) end their summary by again referring to the macro theories of capitalism (Marx), conflict (Dahrendorf), normative order (Durkheim), and cultural symbolism (German idealism).

These theories can be most general or most specific in explaining the linkage from macro to micro patterns. While Hegelian ideas of the diffusion of "universal reason" remain extremely abstract and philosophical, Marx's theory of alienation makes much "instant" sense. It should be noted that alienation is an example of macro structures which have a negative and disturbing effect on individuals - creating frustration, perhaps encouraging individualism, deviance, and asocial actions and dispositions.

Six years before Alexander et al (1987), Knorr-Cetina (in Knorr-Cetina and Cicourel, 1981) distinguished three "hypotheses" which not only theorise a link between micro and macro phenomena, but propose a "micro-sociological reconstruction of macro-sociology". These hypotheses, in effect, reconceptualise macro-social phenomena.

(q) **Knorr-Cetina's first "hypothesis" is identical to Alexander et al's *aggregation* theory ((i) above): macro phenomena are made up of aggregations and repetitions of many similar micro episodes.

(r) A second hypothesis is that of *unintended consequences* which postulates that "properties of a more global system emerge by virtue of the unintended (in addition to the intended) consequences of micro events".

(s) **Knorr-Cetina's third hypothesis, which effectively supercedes the first two, suggests that macro elements are endogenously present or represented in micro situations. This is the so-called theory of *representation*:

> ... micro-transactions always in principle transcend the immediate situation ... many micro-situations appear only to exist in virtue of other such situations. ... this implies that many definitions of the situation are constructed relationally, by reference to other imputed, projected or reconstructed situations and events. ... (we may) endorse the model of social reality as composed of micro-social situations, but at the same time expand this model by taking into account the macro-constructions endogenous to these situations (ibid: 31).
>
> Our recourse to the notion of unintended consequences may become redundant ... if the interrelation of scenes of action by and for agents construed through representations of mutual knowledge, intentions, projects, interests, etc., are given adequate attention (ibid: 33).
>
> ... the macro appears no longer as a *particular layer* of social reality *on top* of micro-episodes composed of their interrelation (macro-sociologies), their aggregation (aggregation hypothesis), or their un-

foreseen effects (hypothesis of unintended consequences). Rather, it is seen to reside *within* these micro-episodes where it results from the structuring practices of agents. The outcome of these practices are representations which thrive upon an alleged correspondence to that which they represent, but which at the same time can be seen as highly situated constructions which involve several levels of interpretation and selection. We can also say that agents routinely transform situated micro-events into summary representations by relying on practices through which they convince themselves of having achieved appropriate representation (ibid: 34).

Of the 19 theoretical approaches (theories or theoretical models) listed above, the majority (14) are relevant to the origin, location and operation of values. As theorising concerns the *dynamics* of a phenomenon, most of these theories home-in on the crucial question: what, precisely, is the role or part that values play in personal dispositions, social conduct, and societal arrangements? If the listing of 19 theoretical approaches seems like a thicket that obscures, rather than clarifies the functioning of values, this undergrowth of theorising also suggests that the micro or macro contexts in which values are investigated, greatly determine their conception, content and functioning. It is only through theorising in distinct contexts that we could try to answer two simple questions: how do values get into the minds of people?, and, how do values become part of culture?

Par 37 Five methodological contexts

We would like to propose the distinction of five methodological contexts for the investigation of values:

* populations
* situations of interaction
* bounded collectivities
* institutional structures
* discourses

In the brief descriptions of these contexts we will try to indicate:

* examples of value studies done within these contexts
* whether the context is a micro or a macro one

* the typical procedures and techniques of investigation used in the context
* the methodological equity or parity possible or probable in the context
* the probable theoretical linkage of micro and macro levels in or from a particular context

Par 38 Context 1: Populations

The investigation of values in a number of European countries by Harding, Phillips and Fogerty was summarised in Par 10(25). This study is a good example of an investigation into values within the *context of populations.* Methodologically it has obvious similarities with public opinion polls (see Par 24). Surveys were conducted among samples of citizens from various European countries. Respondents were asked to answer questionnaires and provide information on their social characteristics and conditions, their behaviour and beliefs. Data were then analysed in terms of a number of variables.

It is a valid question whether respondents in a survey, and specifically in the Harding study, are mere samples or distinctive *categories* of people. Do the respondents in the Harding study represent national "collectivities" - particular societies or nations? Are populations not also "collectivities"? This seemingly simple question has no simple answer - and depends not only on one's definition of "collectivity".

Collectivities, it would seem, has become an indispensable term for sociologists. A collective noun, indicating a multitude or assembly, it is commonly used to name any and all "collections" of people. Thus families, organisations, religious denominations and sects, circles of friends, gangs, gays, crowds, communities, entire societies, confederations of states, etc., could all be called "collectivities". Obviously, these "collectivities" may differ widely in sociological characteristics. These would primarily be "structural" traits such as: distinct identity, cohesiveness, involvement and interaction of "members", clarity and stability of interaction and normative patterns over time, etc.

It could be that Harding's national samples in fact represent "typical" nationals or citizens of the Netherlands, United Kingdom, etc. The survey's results may substantiate the existence of various "national characters", even distinctive national value patterns. Depending on one's criteria of a "collectivity" - i.e. the precise social characteristics which have to be shown to be common to (the sample of) respondents involved - one could, *on the basis of the results of the survey,* conclude that these respondents, because of common

social characteristics, indeed represent "real", "natural", "distinctive", "coherent", "integrated" or "societal" *collectivities*.

The following qualifications, I believe, are in order:

(i) Whether a sample of persons surveyed is a "collectivity", depends on one's criteria or characteristics of a "collectivity". (ii) Such characteristics, when established by survey research, can only be characteristics and variables; they do not explain the dynamics or process of inter-action, inter-thinking and inter-responding in specific conditions or particular situations. (iii) The actual characteristics of a population, and especially those taken as proof of an integrated structure, can only be based upon the *results* of the survey. (iv) Surveys gather information about characteristics and can, at most, theorise by correlation of variables. (v) Surveying a population's values, the existence and content of such values can be established. The origin, emergence, operation, and role of values in specified situations and conditions can, however, not be ascertained with any precision.

The Harding study surveyed the values of European nationals. Other populations that are regularly subjected to similar research, are students, men, women, adolescents, and populations categorised in terms of variables such as occupation, religion, education, and social class.

Populations are *macro* contexts. Accordingly conceptualisation, procedures and techniques of empirical substantiation, and theorising are macro in character. A population context requires precast conceptions and formal definitions of the phenomenon being investigated, and the investigation has to adhere to these consistently. The Harding study started out with a precast conception and a formal definition of *values* which were then operationalised. For obvious reasons one can hardly in international surveys ask the (micro) question of what individual *respondents'* personal conceptions of so-called "values" are. In many value surveys the word *values* is deliberately not used! Theorising about values of populations ascertained by surveys usually takes the form of generalisation and correlation of variables. If such generalisation and correlation do not reveal the "deeper dynamics" or "operation" of values, it remains a valid and meaningful mode of theorising. If, in a population, a survey shows that the values of religious and non-religious respondents differ significantly, or that professional and highly educated people differ significantly with regard to values from working class and less educated respondents - then these correlations of values and social variables have an explanatory accent even if they do not establish the actual *process* underlying such correlations.

Surveys within population contexts usually attain a relatively high degree of methodological equity. Not only are conceptualisation, fact-finding and theorising usually explicit and precise, but the three aspects are more often than not well balanced and integrated. Methodological equity obviously has to

be judged in individual studies. In the case of the Harding study, it can be generalised that conceptualisation, empirical substantiation and theorising are all explicit, precise, balanced and integrated.

In combination, population context and surveys represent a rather special case with regard to theorising the micro-macro link. In value studies using surveys within a population context, respondents are asked about their values, and their responses are then aggregated in generalising about the values of the total population. While this is an accepted mode of theorising, it does not necessarily or explicitly involve any of the theoretical approaches listed in Par 36. The reason for this is obvious: The Harding investigation does not explain or attempt to explain the psychological-social-culture *process* whereby the values of individual respondents are, become or represent the values of a national population. Individual, micro values, and societal, macro values are linked if not equated through statistical aggregation and generalisation. The values of a representative sample of respondents are *accepted* as the values of the particular national society. It could be argued that the Harding study (like other surveys of populations) explains values through the aggregation theory listed as (i) and (q) in Par 36. This is the interpretation that macro phenomena are built up and maintained through the summation or collective working of its parts; that macro phenomena are aggregations and repetitions of many similar micro episodes. At issue here is the meaning of *aggregation*. It can either mean *addition*, in which case the generalisation (equation) of individual values to societal values is simply a matter of statistics; or it can mean that summation and repetition of a component has the social effect of maintenance, consistency and conformity. I will not force either argument. That can be left to the reader. I would like to suggest, however, that what many would see as the splitting of theoretical hairs, does demonstrate the close interrelations and mutual effect of concepts, fact-finding, theorising and contexts.

We have of course summarised two other examples of value studies that apply the survey procedure within the population context: Inglehart's work on Western publics (Par 10(19)), and Hofstede's study of word-related values in various countries (Par 10 (20)). Hofstede does two things in theorising about work values. First, numerous theoretical interpretations of values are explicated, and then Hofstede's own data are subjected to stringent statistical analysis to produce generalisations about the correlation between value patterns and other variables. Informing us about existing theories is of course not the same as applying them to the data in hand. The second option of statistical correlation of identified values with other variables is comparable, if not identical, to what was done in the Harding study. Thus also in respect of the Hofstede study two questions remain: (i) Can factor-analysis really explain the *process* through which values originate, are manifested, maintained and

enacted? (ii) Do population surveys of values tell us anything more than the distribution of values in the population and the extent to which these values correlate with selected social variables?

These questions correspond to those that are posed by Inglehart: (iii) Can values be measured by mass surveys, and (iv) does a substantial proportion of the general public have opinions on the topics asked about in value surveys?

I would suggest the following answers to these four questions: (a) Mass surveys are appropriate and meaningful procedures to ascertain the values of a population as long as it is completely clear to both investigators and respondents what exactly is being asked. The conceptualisation and operationalisation of "values" should be explicitly clear. This is an answer to question (iii). (b) Theorising of survey data is dependent on and restricted by conceptualisation and procedures/techniques of research. If a survey only identifies values, determines their distribution within a population, and correlates these values with selected variables, generalisations about the origin, impact or "dynamics" of values cannot legitimately be made. Statistical and factor analysis seldom produce more than correlations. The answer to questions (i) and (ii) is *no*. (c) Whether a population can or cannot answer value questions put to them in a survey, is dependent on the manner in which the questions are formulated. The possibility that some respondents would not know what is being talked about, could of course be accommodated by a *Don't know* reaction slot. It has to be accepted that *Don't knows* include respondents who find the questions too complicated, those who do not feel like answering, as well as those who really do not have an opinion. This would be an answer to Inglehart's question (iv).

Par 39 Context 2: Situations of interaction

Situations of interaction have a few features which make them a very special context - one which is usually limited to place, time, and participants, but which can have a relatively wide "cognitive scope" when participants, at least in their thinking, transcend the immediate situation.

Knorr-Cetina (1981: 9) argues that the special features of social situations happen to be the same features distinctive of social action:

> ... the argument as to a reality *sui generis* of social situations refers to two distinct features of social action. It requires us to see the outcome of social action as tied to particular *occasions* and to *other participants* in the situation. ... while it might be correct that only individuals are intentional actors, social action arises from the interlocking of intentionalities rather than from their singular existence.

Strictly speaking, the word *occasion* (also *episode*) and the phrase *other participants in the situation* would imply that a situation of interaction can only remain the same situation as long as the same participants stay together. If the "meeting is adjourned", or if some participants leave, or other persons join the meeting, the original situation has ended or has changed. Depending on what is being investigated in the context of situational interaction, and what research procedures and techniques are applied, one could insist on such a limited definition of a social situation. It would, however, be possible to retain the two criteria of *occasion* and *other participants*, and investigate the same phenomenon in separate meetings if the "problem", the "setting" of the situation, and the participants are similar enough. This would imply that one does not have to insist that social situations have an immediate presence of face to face interaction. We have here an example where the phenomenon or approach or model being applied, very much determines the physical structuring of the context and the research methods. Case studies, interviews, highly controlled observation and conversation-analysis would be appropriate methods of investigation in this context. At the same time these methods do not easily lend themselves to generalisation.

It follows that few social situations have natural beginnings and ends. As Knorr-Cetina suggests, it may be necessary for researchers to impose cut-off points.

What has been called the representation hypothesis (Par 36(s)) acknowledges and provides the "scope" for participants to use their "links" to the "outside environment": "... members themselves selectively organize and draw upon their 'environment' ... circumstances of action which *transcend* the immediate situation are continually called upon by social actors" (Knorr-Cetina, 1981: 11). It could well be that the way participants act and think in a particular situation is overwhelmingly prescribed and determined by their experience, beliefs, etc. gained outside the specific situation. As it is, few situations allow for much originality of action or belief. Such predetermination of action and interaction in social situations is obvious, natural and absolutely necessary if life is to be even minimally ordered, meaningful and predictable. It also calls for, I believe, a more precise formulation of the hypothesis of representation. Knorr-Cetina's "macro-constructions endogenous to these (micro) situations" (Par 36(s)) is not an unproblematic phrase.

Situations of interaction are obviously micro contexts. They are also the most natural, common, elemental context of everyday living.

Van Vuuren's investigation of the (professional) values of psychotherapists was summarised in Par 10(24), and can be read as an example of a micro study within the context of a situation of interaction. Actually, dual situations of interactions are involved here: the respondents' clinical sessions with their

clients in which values were constructed and enacted, and the interview situations in which Van Vuuren discussed the interaction of the clinical sessions with psychiatrists. Both situations allowed maximally for the construction and verbalisation of values by respondents. Values thus constructed and expressed were identified by the investigator in interviews. As suggested above, various other techniques would be appropriate to the context of situations of interaction.

Van Vuuren describes his investigation as a *phenomenological* study. *Phenomenology* is one of four "micro theories" listed by Alexander et al (Par 36(c)). As to methodological equity and the interpretation of the micro-macro link in phenomenological studies, the following observations would seem appropriate:

(i) Phenomenological studies seldom differentiate clearly between the processes of conceptualisation, empirical substantiation, and theorising. (ii) Conceptualisation of key ideas and words are maximally left to respondents. (iii) Techniques of investigation tend to be informal rather than formal. (iv) Theorising is seldom done with a formal theoretical model; more often the investigator *interprets* the phenomenon and situation as both observer and participant. (v) A formal theoretical model to explain a linkage of micro and macro phenomena is seldom used, and boundaries between micro and macro are seldom emphasised or problematised.

Van Vuuren's work happens to be an exercise in phenomenology. Value studies in the context of situations of interaction can of course use other theoretical approaches. This means that within the context of interaction situations various methodological options are possible.

Par 40 Context 3: Bounded collectivities

If populations are frequently a context for value studies, a close second could be value studies done within families and organisations. I would like to propose the label *bounded collectivities* for this context. "Bounded" ("bonded" could well be a synonym) collectivities would be "groupings" that are maximally: institutionalised; internally organised and structured in terms of roles, patterns of interaction and normativity; that are relatively stable units, enduring over time, of which individuals are "natural" members (families, clans) or members by choice (occupational, religious, educational, cultural and other organisations).

Taking such bounded collectivities as a context means that the investigation of values (or whatever) has to be done *within* the boundaries of such "groups". It would be pragmatic to define the *bound*-aries in terms of membership.

It could be said that bounded collectivities take a position between the contexts of population and situational interaction. In bounded collectivities the characteristics and variables of populations are often defining and operative features. For instance, marital status is a characteristic or social variable, but a marriage or a family is a bonded and bounded unit in which marital status is enacted, structured and lived. Bounded collectivities take from the situational interaction context the exclusivity of interaction among participants. However, these collectivities transcend the occasional character of situations by structuring and organisation which endure and function over time; simultaneously, participants are converted to members.

One last difference between populations and situations on the one hand, and bounded collectivities on the other, could be the unit of information/analysis: In the contexts of population and situations, individuals usually supply information about their activities, views, reactions, etc. In the case of bounded collectivities, one could obtain data from individual members, from group discussions held with ordinary members or leaders, or consult formal documents relevant to an organisation.

Bounded collectivities could be micro or macro contexts. A particular family, clan, sect or small business firm would be a micro context for investigation. A nation-wide political, labour or religious organisation - given criteria of membership, involvement, internal structuring and control - could well be regarded as operative on a societal or macro range.

Par 41 Context 4: Institutional structure

A fourth context of investigation could be referred to as *institutional structure* - also *social* or *societal order*. This is the context of Parsonian sociology - and the *context* of his views on social values which was summarised in Par 10(5).

One could see a particular society as an empirical, historical, and clearly demarcated object of study; write the history of this society or investigate its total social structure. This would then be a macro study. Depending on the methods and results of the investigation and the manner of theorising, this society could be shown to be a bounded collectivity - such a typification also depending on one's conception of "boundedness". While there are many examples of "whole sociologies" of entire societies - in which values and values systems are seldom left out - this is not exactly the type of sociology that Parsons (and other "grand theorists") produce. Macro-sociology at its "best" or "logical extreme" does not work within the boundaries or framework of one particular society. It concentrates on societal order and established institutional structure

in general. *Social order, institutional structures,* and *culture* are, typically, concepts abstracted beyond particular societies.

Macro and grand theories focus on conceptualisation and theorising, and its scant attention to empirical substantiation represents not only the methodological pattern of macro sociology; it also follows logically from a conscious methodological choice: to take as theoretical focus the problem of social or societal order. This was the starting point and crucial question for Parsons and other macro sociologists of which at least Marx should be named. Parsons, as Lassman (1982) has said, believed that sociology's one problem is the explanation of social order. Parsons referred to it as the Hobbesian problem: How can society exist in a stable way given the conflicting interests of individuals - and the war of all against all? Parsons's theoretical answer has been: commonly accepted values. This macro-level conception of order is at the same time a normative conception of order - and vice versa (Knorr-Cetina, 1981: 3).

When institutional structure is taken as a context of investigation, the theorist or investigator can, of course, concentrate on any one or a number of institutions: economics, education, religion, kinship, politics, etc. Investigations using institutional structure as context would find their empirical input largely in documentary material, produced by historians, social scientists and others, and in personal observations. They would analyse and interpret this material and their observations and logically construct theories and models. This would, as we have said, be macro sociology at its logical best.

Parsons must be the most extreme or most consistent example of a macro theorist who has theorised a societal system with the absolute minimum of empirical substantiation. Arguing by concepts and classificatory logic (Turner, 1982) Parsons's theoretical structures remind one of the bold outlines of modernist Bauhaus edifices - with no work specifications or quantity surveyors' lists of materials needed to flesh out these blueprints. The name of the game is *systembuilding* - in which concepts rather than empirical facts serve as bricks. Parsonian macro sociology has another feature: normative functionalist theorising links macro societal values to micro personal values through a theoretical model of *internalisation* (Par 36(n)): normative orientations "pressed upon" individuals during socialisation, become part of their motivation and dispositions to conform. Parsonian socialisation theory (which is a skilful sociological translation of Freudian personality theory) is widely accepted as a convincing explanation of the personal, social and cultural functionality of values. On all three levels, Mills and Touraine (see Par 10(10) and (18)) have raised serious objections to Parsons's extremist view of the functions of values. Extreme positions - and their total rejection - are not uncommon in macro theories. Purely logical theorising can only maintain itself if its initial assumptions are

accepted and remain intact. Having little or no empirical substantiation, it can seldom survive by an adaptation of empirical evidence.

Par 42 Context 5: Discourse

Social values are beliefs, notions of the good and the desirable, which are, and have to be verbalised. It is thus through language, dialogue, conversation, debate, discourse - in speaking, much more than in acting - that values are constructed, manifested, changed and enacted. Discourse is not only a natural context for value studies, but is increasingly seen as the strategic paradigm of postpositivist and postmodernist social analysis. This "rediscovery" of the social importance of language, conversation and discourse was discussed in some detail in Chapter Seven, and it is hardly necessary to further argue *discourse* as a fifth context for value studies. A few brief remarks should suffice.

Discourses would include informal conversation and arguments, formal public speeches, lectures, statements, prose, etc. All these could be of either an oral or documentary nature. Public debates are an excellent context in which to examine values. An example: In a recent paper "What's right, is right - Socio-logic in an incident of race discrimination" (Joubert, 1991) the technique of content-analysis was used to examine arguments in a media debate. Of the twelve types of arguments distinguished, one concerned the social values which were expressed. It was suggested that the debate represents a good example of "ordinary sociology": ordinary people's perceptions and interpretations of their life-world and of the society in which they live.

The technique of content-analysis can be used for a variety of "texts" - in the word's more conventional and "postmodernist" connotation.

When social values are examined within a context of discourse, the precise words used by the participants are obviously of the utmost importance. Perhaps this is the nucleus or focal point of social scientists' greatest challenge: to conciliate the words of ordinary people with the technical, theoretical words and language of scientific social investigations.

Par 43 Could "life-worlds" be a context?

References in the previous Paragraph to *conversations of ordinary people* and their *life-worlds* bring to the fore the German *Lebenswelt* which, translated as *life-world*, is increasingly heard in academic circles. The term simultaneously captures several notions: that the way people conduct their lives and what they believe, are, to a significant extent, determined and constructed by themselves. But while men and women construct and live their own lives, they do not

construct and live in their worlds just as they choose or wish. Social reality and circumstances in which they find themselves, structure, in a meaningful way, not only their needs, ideas and achievements, but also actual possibilities and life chances. The exchange, interaction, and mutual restructuring between personal and social, individual and collective worlds are continuous.

It has been suggested that life-worlds are the "real" and meaningful living spaces of "ordinary people" - and that these are the spaces and *contexts* in which values are present and operative, and where they could, even should, be examined. In Par 32 we referred to Bauman's (1988) characterisation of "postmodern" society in terms of communal spaces, communities and discourses. Bauman, and others, suggest that contemporary social experience and existence, social knowledge and understanding of social reality have increasingly become "regionalised" into different life-worlds and discourses. Rather than experiencing the world as a "global village", ordinary people have their life-worlds in particular suburbs. ("Visits between suburbs are rare, and not one resident of the city has visited them all" (Bauman 1988: 802).) Social reality is not perceived or experienced in terms of universal parameters; social knowledge not developed in universalistic paradigms. Increasingly, social life and knowledge are experienced and perceived as discourses. The "significant others" are those people who are "worthwhile", with whom one can talk, converse in a common language, with whom one shares life-worlds rather than a society.

While this could be an acceptable description of a trend in "postmodern" countries, it is an intriguing question whether regionalised and localised life-worlds have not always existed as the only worlds for people of the so-called third world. Be that as it may, much of what is now labelled *life-worlds*, has always existed as either part or parcel of ordinary people's everyday lived experience. And it is from and within this natural everyday world that ordinary people conceive of, articulate and live their values. It, therefore, comes somewhat as a surprise that Alexander (in Alexander et al 1987: 293) ropes in half a dozen authors in support of an interpretation that *life-worlds* present a distinctive social reality which requires a distinctive social discipline to examine it:

> The "life-world", [Schutz] believed, is an area never previously perceived by social science, let alone illuminated in a systematically theoretical way. Only the perception of this life-world, the subjectively experienced horizon of individual action as defined by the actor, allows for a voluntaristic theory, a theory of motive, a theory of self. It provides, Schutz believed, a perspective drastically at odds with even the most ostensibly interpretive sociology, and it implies not only a new method but an entirely new theory of social life. Berger and Luckman (1966) and, much

more extensively, Garfinkel (1967) later elaborated these claims in a more polemical form, suggesting that phenomenology has discovered an empirical object that justified a new social science itself. Building particularly on Garfinkel's claims, Giddens (1976, 1979) suggested that the discovery of individuals' reflexivity warrants the formulation of completely "new rules" of sociological method. Habermas (1984), returning to Schutz and linking him with pragmatism, raised the life-world to new empirical and ideological heights ... Not only is it a phenomenon sharply separated from such supraindividual structures such as norms, institutions, and systems, but it allows for the kind of immediate and satisfying experience that can ameliorate alienation of late capitalist life.

The idea of life-worlds, it would seem, is simultaneously being theorised and romanticised. If such elevation is nothing more than pointing out the natural humanity and humaneness of the everyday lives and living of ordinary people, one could whole-heartedly agree and applaud. But is it really necessary to have life-worlds as a new and separate context for value or other social studies? Life-worlds are the existential, factual base of all social experience, action, beliefs and circumstances. Rather than a methodological or theoretical space and context, life-worlds are the very ground and substance for other more intellectual and abstract constructions of social science and scientific social investigations. Maybe there is a lesson to be learnt from the discovery of this "never previously perceived area": that an over-sophistication of the way we conceive of human things and of the manner in which we examine and explain them, can easily alienate social scientists from the very reality that is also *their* everyday lived experienced as ordinary people. When conceptualisation, empirical substantiation and theorising become so clever that ordinary people no longer recognise themselves - and their values - in those learned publications, then *Against interpretation* and *Against method* may not only refer to two titles.

Notes

1 See for example: K. Knorr-Cetina and A.V. Cicourel (eds): **Advances in social theory and methodology: Toward an integration of micro and macro theories**, 1981; Michael Hechter (ed): **The microfoundations of macrosociology**, 1983; H.J. Helle and S.N. Eisenstadt (eds): **Macro-sociological theory: Perspectives on sociological theory**, and **Micro-sociological theory: Perspectives on sociological theory**, both 1985; and Jeffrey C. Alexander, Bernard Giesen, Richard Münch and Neil J. Smelser (eds) **The micro-macro link**, 1987.

2 The editor, Michael Hechter, says of **The microfoundations of macrosociology**: "[This] volume seeks to discover whether a rational-choice approach ... can offer better explanations of key macrosociological problems (like group solidarity, social order, and collective actions) than those provided by normative or structural theories" (op cit: 10).

Chapter Nine

The relevance and reception of sophisticated social knowledge

This chapter concerns the *sociological dimension* of social investigations (Par 8). In the present context we are primarily interested in "ordinary" people's reactions to the dissemination of sophisticated social knowledge. More particularly, the focus is on reactions to published social research on values. Scientific social investigation is of course but one input into a society or community's self-reflection and public debate on its social structure. Also, the appropriation of social knowledge is not a simple one-way process of listen, learn and internalise-or-reject. In fact, the processes of reception and reaction are increasingly understood as being dialectical. Another aspect which is of great importance is the type of society in which reception and reaction are being investigated. These and other aspects will be discussed in the Paragraphs that follow.

Par 44 Denouncing value studies

Already in Par 2 we referred to the opinion that the social sciences, especially sociology and psychology, eventually, if not directly contribute to relativism and scepticism. Often such a charge is levelled particularly at social scientists' studies of values - sometimes going on to objections to the very teaching of social science. Predictably, such accusations seldom distinguish between the "relativising" of values and the fostering of "scepticism". Also, the word "debunking" - a popular modernism - is used effectively to (un)cover what was earlier somewhat quaintly referred to as "bad influence" and "moral seduction". A few examples will illustrate the concern among some "ordinary people" about values and about what social scientists do (and fail to do) about social values.

Significant is the title of an article published in 1982 in the *American Sociologist*: "Spiritual values and sociology: When we have debunked everything, what then?". The author, McGehee (1982: 42-3) takes on sociology without gloves:

> A human world demands responses, responses which are appropriate for human existence. Yet not one person in sociology ever discussed with [the student] what was right, proper, or appropriate. They only poked holes in everything.
>
> What is worse, the job [the students] must now take is undeniably *part of the system* which they understand so totally, see through so clearly, and locate so thoroughly.
>
> ... the problem lies in our total attention to analyzing what was, is, and ought to be in a factual sense, while ignoring what was, is, and ought to be in a principled sense.
>
> This is not a plea for morality as such. It is a plea, rather, to consider the study of man to be more than the gathering of data and building of theories that merely explain and explain away man. It is a plea to begin the serious discussion of the values that man ought to have as the substance of his life and to abandon the sterile discussion of values as social facts which have no more purpose than to serve as so many balloons to be popped by our intellectual darts.

McGehee's plea is indeed not "for morality as such". Its focus is not on upholding "traditional" or "established" values. Actually McGehee challenges sociologists to a serious analysis of values. Such analysis, however, should be something more than a "sterile discussion of values as social facts", "poking holes" or "popping balloons with intellectual darts". The objection and plea - and metaphors - are essentially methodological: McGehee insists that sociologists investigate social values; he also prescribes what their conception of values should be, how they should not gather facts or build theories. It is a plea not for morality as such, but for an intellectual legitimation of moral values.

Sociology and sociologists are not the only ones in the dock. Comparable to McGehee's paper, and published about the same time, are criticisms directed at anthropologists and psychologists.

The *American Anthropologist* in 1984 carried a review by Victoria Mukerji (1984: 774) of a book by Elvin Hatch: *Culture and morality: The relativity of values in anthropology*. The charge against Hatch was rather more sophisticated than that levelled by McGehee:

> By making his [Hatch] analysis apolitical (and thereby distorting historical reality), the birth of relativism is cast as merely the manifestation of an intellectual disillusionment. Relativism is denied its true role as a more complex reaction to the manipulation of knowledge as an abuse of power against vulnerable and ethnic groups.

Mukerji's remark is obviously not in the same category as that of McGehee. She, in point of fact, commends analyses that would relativise accepted truths - and venerated values - in order to expose the ideological and political use to which such knowledge is put. Relativism, actually, can have a positive role in countering manipulation through the power of knowledge.

Another Hatch, this time an American senator, is involved in an example concerning psychology. Writing on "Psychology, society and politics" in the *American Psychologist* (1982: 1035) the senator substantiates his complaint from an edition of the *Journal of consulting and clinical psychology* - an applied field in which values are of prime importance:

> Prominent psychologists suggest ideas about religion, marriage, and family life that are completely alien to many - in fact, probably most - of our society. ... psychologists must be open about their own values and sensitive to the ways their words can be perceived.

First reactions to Hatch's views were predictable: Garfield (1983: 957-8) argued that no one psychologist ever speaks on behalf of psychology and that professional statements should always be evaluated within the context in which they were made. Psychologists, he says, are well aware of the consequences of their statements. The defence is one in terms of psychologists' professional role:

> As scientists, their behavior should be governed by the accepted canons of science. As professionals, their behavior should follow the ethical principles of their profession.

Another participant in the debate was Bergin (1983: 958-9) who sided with the senator:

> [That individual psychologists] do not speak for psychology, has become less and less true. ... Senator Hatch was right to point out that psychology's corporate biases are often alien to mainstream public values and that expressing them in the name of the organization without scientific evidence causes a loss of respect for psychology among many people and their representatives in Congress [sic!].

The simplicity with which some of the preceding points were made (selective quotations easily lend themselves to impressions of simplicity), does not dispense with the underlying popular conceptions of the nature and functions of social science, or the complexity of the triangular connections of social values, common social knowledge and scientific social knowledge. The examples are indeed illustrations of a few ideas in a debate of which it has been said that social scientists spend more time in arguments on the logic of their

sciences, than on investigating social reality. As the logic of science is, by definition, methodological argument, we will have to console ourselves (and others) that methodology is an attempt to know *what* we are doing - and then, perhaps be forgiven for some of the things that we are doing.

Par 45 On the role of "values" in sociological inquiry

Arguments on the role of values in sociological inquiry are less frequently heard today. However, there are three that are worthy of a brief response.

There is the argument that science, and particularly social science, is itself a "value" - a statement that implies a continuous recoil of value(s) upon itself/themselves. We have, in Par 1, suggested that the equation of *value* to any and everything that *has* some *value* or *worth*, makes the term/concept completely useless in serious discourse. But perhaps Touraine (1977: 19-20) has long ago adequately taken care of the issue:

> ... to recognize science as the contemporary form of creativity - [w]hich is the specific characteristic of post-industrial society in which science is at the same time model of knowledge, cultural model, and even instrument of accumulation - does not in itself entail any judgement on the positive or negative aspects of a society dominated by science. One may say with equal justification either that science creates plenty or that it is threatening humanity with total destruction. It is in this sense that science is not a social value, that it does not distinguish positive conduct from negative conduct.

A second argument, which we would suggest is similarly passé, concerns the neutrality/involvement of social scientists. In defense of neutrality, it was argued that science has a "natural" neutrality, and that also social scientists (even when investigating values) can be sufficiently objective. Again Touraine (1977: 76-77) has put the debate in perspective. While he consistently refers to science, and prefers to speak of sociology rather than social science, I believe that his insights are not only relevant but directly applicable to social scientists' neutrality/involvement:

> Scientists do not exist above and apart from the social and political fray; at the same time their science is not reducible to the ideology of the actors in confrontation.
>
> They must defend their independence against power and therefore feel themselves closer to the forces of opposition and protest. But these latter are also seeking, through their struggles, to impose their own

ideology in the scientific domain. So the scientists fear that political confrontation will destroy science's independence ...

[Scientists] are linked to the ruling class to the degree in which that class dominates the system of historical action and the political system, and thus favours certain areas of research. Inversely, they are constantly setting up their competence in opposition to the political and administrative power of decision and fighting the limits set to the movement of ideas and person. *Professionalism* is often a way of transcending these contradictory tendencies ...

A third argument in the debate on the role of values in sociological inquiry could be seen as a compromise between the belief in neutrality and the acceptance of involvement. This position too, has become somewhat quaint - it has always been simplistic: The effects of the values of the investigator can (greatly) be neutralised if they are declared openly at the start of the investigation. Such honesty, it was said, could further help in "bracketing" the identified values for the duration of the investigation. Assumed in this well-meant advice was the existence of a variety of definitive values held by social scientists, as well as the belief that all or many of these values indeed influence the process of scientific investigation detrimentally. I would suggest that this "solution" to the problem of objectivity has also been left behind.

Perhaps clearer distinctions of the values that are being talked about, could be of assistance. The criticisms of social scientists - and what they do to social values - that were discussed, do not clearly or consistently distinguish between: (i) the social values held by ordinary people *and* also by social scientists as ordinary people, and (ii) the criteria of scientific investigation and (thus) the qualities of scientific knowledge. The latter can hardly be prescribed or objected to by non-social scientists. Commonly held social values, (i) above, can of course be influentual in investigations. Such influence could be asserted by non-social scientists and acknowledged by social scientists. Ultimately, there is only one court of appeal to which the presence and consequences of such social values could be referred for judgement: professionalism.

Par 46 Social values and social criticism

Dictionaries sometimes distinguish between *criticism* and *critique*. The former passes judgment upon the qualities and merits of something - and more often than not, such judgement is unfavourable. *Critique* is usually reserved for professional or technical scrutinisation, critical discussion or review of texts - representations, arguments, or views which have been formalised in writing or speech. The distinction is not one that has to be insisted upon. It should,

however, be pointed out that many of the texts of social science are critiques of texts by other social scientists, and not criticism of established notions of social and societal arrangements.

Criticism, critique or critical thought have a history which, at least for the Western world, is part of history taught at school. Criticism as a mode of thinking is usually said to have started with Aristotle. Many centuries later the Enlightenment elevated all critical intellectual dispositions to a decisive mode of thinking and, what is more important, made it into a prerequisite for human progress, emancipation, reform - a new society that would be more rational and more humane. Hearn (1985: 9 & 191) writes:

> Enlightenment thinkers painstakingly repudiated the then prevailing view that the established order was natural and God-given. ... Existing ways of life, they insisted, were subject to change. Under the guidance of enlightened thought, change would produce a better society.

> The idea of critique as negative thought, a debunking activity concerned with unveiling false appearances which distort or hide the real, is a legacy of the Enlightenment project of political education.

And Abercrombie (1984: 57) says with reference to Hegel:

> In Hegelian philosophy criticism was more than a negative judgment and was given the positive role of detecting and unmasking existing forms of belief in order to enhance the emancipation of man in society.

Auguste Comte's vision of a sociologically informed society is part of the Enlightenment belief that (social) science would eventually bring us the ultimate human society; as is his "grand theory" of the succession of theology, philosophy, natural science, and social science.

From Comte to Marx, it was a small step for a man, but a giant leap for mankind. Marx incisively diagnosed the faults of contemporary capitalist societies and gave the world both a vision and blueprint for a classless society. Marx also identified socialism with social science. It was Marx, more than anyone else, who made social and societal criticism the objective, if not *raison d'être* of social science, particularly of sociology.

One could generalise that scientific sociology is inherently and unavoidably critical sociology. This was my (Joubert 1973: 149) view some years ago:

> To be scientific is to be critical. A scientific sociology is a critical sociology; not in the sense that it is decided in advance to debunk, or propagate revolutionary change, but in the sense of disclosing, revealing, bringing to light, analysing thoroughly - and with detachment. A scien-

tific interpretation of social structures could well be as searing a criticism as moral condemnation (translated from Afrikaans).

More specific was Berger (1976: 51) who wrote in the best-seller *Invitation to Sociology*:

> The sociological frame of reference, with its built-in procedure of looking for levels of reality other than those given in the official interpretations of society, carries with it a logical imperative to unmask the pretensions and the propaganda by which men cloak their actions with each other.

If one concentrates on sociology, it is possible to distinguish variants of social criticisms. Van Rensburg (1989: 27), in a presidential address to the South African Sociological Association, made some meaningful distinctions: Current sociology itself could be differentiated between traditional or conventional, and, radical or critical sociology. Traditional sociology, says Van Rensburg, has always been critical of social and societal arrangements. Such criticism, however, has been mostly directed at particular social phenomena, being often only "cosmetic" in its judgements and suggestions of reform and change. Seldom has traditional sociology risen to Mills's *sociological imagination* or asked for a transformation of a society's entire structure. Also, Van Rensburg (ibid: 28) notes, criticism of particular aspects of society, does not always takc into account the wider structural features and tendencies of that society. Radical sociology, predictably, pursues a radical criticism of a total society. It has the explicit aim of bringing about a reconstruction and complete change of the structures and processes of entire societies. Radical sociology has indeed established itself as Critical Sociology - and is known as such. Van Rensburg quotes Morrow (1985: 712):

> By critical sociology we mean simply and quite inclusively any sociological activity that grounds theoretical work in a normative diagnosis of the fate of man in technocratic society; or, stated more generally, any sociological methodology that explicitly distances itself from its own social present.

Fuhrman and Snizek (1979: 80) said it in even simpler terms: "Critical theory suggests that social theory can only be evaluated by its contribution to emancipatory processes."

Van Rensburg (op cit: 34) refers to various types of analysis in sociology: historical, comparative, functional and dialectical, and relates them to variants of social or societal criticism. One could add to these, grand theories and, what Robert Merton has called, middle range theories. And then go on to indicate which of these theorctical or methodological modes lend themselves to par-

ticularistic or to radical criticism. That such affinities or linkages are not self-evident, is shown by the fact that both conservative Parsons and radical Marx are grand theorists!

Sociology as a critical enterprise has had an undeniable beneficial influence upon people and societies, says Van Rensburg. It is critical sociology which again and again objects to the neglect of human and moral considerations. No other sociology has done more than critical sociology to keep human and moral values in the centre of interest, and to unmask and condemn those social structures and processes which work against these values (ibid: 37-38).

Par 47 Reception and appropriation of (sophisticated) social knowledge

We have in several paragraphs referred to the reception and appropriation or assimilation of sophisticated (systematic) social knowledge by "ordinary people" - people who are not professionals in the production of scientific (and philosophical) social knowledge. We have throughout distinguished between common and sophisticated knowledge, and have in Parr 44 and 45 remarked on examples of reactions by "non-producers" of sophisticated social knowledge to such knowledge.

Advanced societies are often described, even labelled, by their highly developed media of information and their well-informed citizens. It is of course true that modern information technology, the development of the social sciences, and educated and sophisticated populations have all had the effect that in many areas the distinction and separation between *lay* and *professional*, *common* and *learned* people are not nearly as clear or wide as it had been in the past. Not only is social information generated and made known by a variety of agencies, but professional counselling, guidance, and training in social relations have become well established fields of social expertise. Sophisticated social knowledge varies greatly: much of it is practical and applicable; much is also "academic" and "theoretical". Complaints by students in sociology that they cannot see how the content of university courses can be used in their eventual professions are not uncommon. This would be an example of a demand for technical and applicable information, and a non-interest in an understanding of societal arrangements, social change and the causes of social problems - or the nature and role of social values.

Both in lay and professional social knowledge the level of sophistication is often directly related to the level of social consciousness or social awareness. There is a very close link between social awareness and social interest, both

being greatly determined by exposure and experience of particular social conditions, styles of life, and standards of living.

Social knowledge is not received by those who see such knowledge as sophisticated as the poor would receive gifts of charity. Neither is sophisticated knowledge assimilated as electricity would be supplied to a township for the first time. Because social knowledge is existential knowledge - gained through personal experience, inculcated through socialisation and education, and applied in daily life and living - such knowledge is seldom learnt and used as one would learn a foreign language. Social learning is determined by experience, exposure and reaction to social reality itself. Social knowledge is never learnt or applied *systematically*. It is learnt, interpreted or understood, accepted (or rejected), and then made part of the individuals's behaviour, knowledge - and beliefs. Becoming part of beliefs, "items" of social knowledge could be placed on a continuum of "neutral cognition --- committed normativity". On such a line social values, when defined as *notions* of what is good and desirable could be said to be nearer to the "cognition" than to the "normativity" end of the continuum. This does *not* imply that values are only formal knowledge statements, or that they are not (also) beliefs that are held with some emotion, motivation, feelings of integrity - and guilt, etc., neither that values are "only words". The suggested continuum is not one of belief-action, but one of beliefs which differ in degree of normativity. This is in accordance with the conception of social values as most *general, principle-like* normative notions. When values are understood as principles - which has always been the conception of ordinary people - it hardly needs explaining that principles of social behaviour, beliefs and life are not learnt, applied or enforced like French grammar. Like all normativities, and all things social and human, values are constructs, continuously being reconstructed, ideas continuously being rethought and reformulated, orientations in continuous articulation vis-à-vis and within behaviour.

We have, in Parr 24, 25 and 26, discussed social values as self-fulfilling prophecies, as well as their significance in public opinion and ideologies. Naturally these areas are as relevant to the differential appropriation of systematic or sophisticated social knowledge, as they are to social values itself. We will not repeat what was said in those Paragraphs, but rather elaborate on the process of *reflexivity*. It is in reflexivity that items of behaviour, beliefs, and circumstances are in continuous inter-action, and where mutual coherence is dialectical: an interplay of consensus and conflict, of understanding, acceptance and rejection. Reflexivity was discussed in Par 32 and we did refer to some of Anthony Giddens's incisive observations about this process. It could be worthwhile to have another brief look at his interpretation.

In a fundamental sense, says Giddens (1991: 37-45), reflexivity is a defining characteristic of all human action. To "keep in touch", a continued reflexive

monitoring of actions, beliefs and circumstances is necessary. In pre-modern civilisations and traditional societies reflexivity was largely limited to a clarification and reinterpretation of tradition. With the advent of modernity (Giddens prefers to speak of "modernity", "late-modernity" or "radicalised modernity", rather than postmodernity), reflexivity becomes institutionalised - it becomes part of the "very basis of system reproduction". All or most thought and action are now constantly being refracted upon one another. The continuous revision of convention and the monitoring of new technological developments, and of social and cultural trends have become full-time concerns. Reflexivity has become "wholesale" and radicalised; and it includes reflection upon the nature of reflection itself. More important: the reflection on social practices changes not only views about such practices, but constitutively alters their characteristics:

> The reflexivity of modernity, which is directly involved with the continual generating of systematic self-knowledge, does not stabilise the relation between expert knowledge and knowledge applied in lay actions. Knowledge claimed by expert observers (in some part, and in varying ways) rejoins its subject matter, thus (in principle, but also normally in practice) altering it (ibid: 45).

It follows that sociology plays a significant role in (late or radicalised) modernity: "The pivotal position of sociology in the reflexivity comes from its role as the most generalised type of reflection upon modern social life" (ibid: 41).

A serious consequence of persistent reflection and questioning is that the equation of knowledge (both common and systematic) with certitude no longer holds. All elements of knowledge can be questioned and revised. Not any more is "to know" the same as to "be certain". Giddens completes the circle - which, not completely vicious, does not offer much about which we can be absolutely certain:

> In the social sciences, to the unsettled character of all empirically based knowledge we have to add the "subversion" which comes from the re-entry of social scientific discourse into the contexts it analyses. The reflection of which the social sciences are the formalised version (a specific genre of expert knowledge), is quite fundamental to the reflexivity of modernity as a whole (ibid: 40).

These are, for late-modernity or postmodernist societies, the social conditions and sociological discourse in which social values are constructed, reflected upon, questioned, deconstructed and - perhaps - reconstructed.

Chapter Ten

A résumé of selected aspects

Par 48. Aspects of investigation into social values

For this chapter a number of aspects of investigations into social values have been selected for brief comments. The comments do not summarise the text. The chosen extracts represent what we consider to be the more important "findings" of our exploration of investigation into social values. "Findings" in this context can, however, only refer to interpretations and arguments - demonstrating that all sociological texts are comments in a discourse on other texts.

We have tried not to weigh down this chapter with too much technical jargon and intricate argument - and to minimise quotations, references and other props and proof of technical expertise. Both for readers who would prefer to read this chapter as a "self-contained" essay on social values and their investigation, and those who insist on more Teutonic thoroughness, references to the relevant Chapters and Paragraphs in the text are given.

Par 49 Definitions of "social values"

Values is a much overworked word. It is also a concept - term and idea - that has remained indispensable despite its abuse and exploitation both in ordinary, everyday conversation and in sophisticated argument. Invariably, the question of precise definition is raised in the very first sentence following a statement or remark using the word. Every conventional positivist investigation of values would have a formal (and operational) definition of the term in the first ten lines of the research design. In informal discussion, but also in more formal argument, the flow of conversation is invariably interrupted by "Yes, but what is your definition of *values*?", or "why speak of *values*?" Especially in political and moral arguments values are called upon to either justify or condemn behaviour - thus demonstrating the inherent normative content of the concept.

The definition of *values* is neither as problematic and confusing, nor as random an affair as some may think. It is simply not true that every ordinary

person, every social scientist, writer, politician or moralist has a personal and unique conception or different formal definition of *values*. While all languages allow for nuances in meaning - a little appreciated component of freedom of speech and thought - the social construction of language guarantees a substantial consensus on the content and meaning given to the word *values*.

There are a few very simple "rules" or considerations which can effectively settle semantic quarrels about *values* in any conversation or text. 1. Accept that there is no *one*, no registered, no right or wrong definition of the term. 2. Insist on a clear, consistent and appropriate conception of *values* in particular discourse. 3. Accept that, especially in more informal and less sophisticated discourses and writings, there may be subtle shifts of meaning and use of synonyms which alter the content given to *values* beyond its initial meaning. 4. Keep in mind the two options explicitly open in scientific or formal investigation into values - but also available in informal questioning: (a) The "positivistic recipe" which works with precast concepts and would have a formal and operationalised definition of values as a first requirement of any research design. (b) The questioning of people (respondents) about *their* conceptions or notions of so-called *values*. All these considerations, rules or options emphasise the importance of a sensitivity for words - language being the ultimate and decisive medium and context for the investigation of social values.

In the present study, which is an investigation into investigations of *social values*, the concept was defined as: *notions of the good and desirable in personal dispositions, social conduct, societal arrangements and cultural resources* (Par 1). This definition can be justified on three grounds: It is in accord with the majority of value notions used in value studies by philosophers and social scientists - reviewed in Chapter Three. It allows for the identification of social values in the various contexts of personal dispositions, actual conduct, social institutional arrangements, and what is usually referred to as culture. Thirdly, the definition takes into account both formal, sophisticated and precast (research) definitions of social values, as well as the ideas and notions of ordinary people present in more informal, everyday conversation and writings.

Par 50 Dimensions and issues of scientific social investigation

An investigation into investigations of social phenomena can easily become a merry-go-round - and in the case of social values, very likely a going round in circles within circles. One way in which it was attempted to bring some order and rigour in the discussion of values and value studies, was by proposing a distinction of four dimensions of scientific social investigations (Chapter Two).

It is argued that all scientific investigations of social phenomena "articulate" ontological, epistemological, methodological and sociological dimensions. After explaining the content given to these terms in the present publication, the scheme of four dimensions was used to organise the fourfold investigative aspects of values and value studies.

Each of the four investigative dimensions are seen as comprising three components which are interrelated and which mutually affect one another. It is from such interrelation and mutual effects that investigative issues, problems and decisions arise about: (i) the nature and characteristics of social values (ontological dimension); (ii) the modes of knowledge relevant to statements on values (epistemological dimension); (iii) the processes of actual investigation or research of values (methodological dimension); and (iv) the social conditions and contexts within which social values are manifested and researched, and in which the results of such research are received and reacted to (sociological dimension).

The *ontological* dimension triangularly interrelates what people do (their *behaviour*), what they think (their *beliefs*), and what their *circumstances* are. Issues arising in this dimension that are relevant to values include: different notions or conceptions of values; lay or ordinary and expert or sophisticated conceptions of values; assumptions and facts about the relevance of values for action. These issues were discussed in Chapters Three, Four and Five.

Social values are *beliefs* and their interrelations with behaviour and circumstances or social conditions demonstrate the essence or focus of scientific social investigation into values.

In the *epistemological* dimension investigative issues and problems arise when three modes of social knowledge interrelate and have to be reconciled with each other: (i) *Common* social knowledge - the knowledge and beliefs of "ordinary men and women in the street", (including their notions of "values"). (ii) *Philosophical* social knowledge - usually more sophisticated than that of "ordinary people" and most often logical propositions and arguments indifferent to factual support. (iii) *Scientific* social knowledge which is the result of scientific research and complies with the criteria of scientific knowledge.

Issues relevant to value studies in the epistemological dimension include: similarities, differences, and mutual effects of common and sophisticated social knowledge (also of values); and ideas about values and implications for value studies in recent ("postmodernist") thinking about knowledge itself. These aspects are examined in Chapter Six: "Values in and out of touch with common and sophisticated social knowledge" and Chapter Seven: "Values in and out of modernity and postmodernity".

The *methodological* dimension engenders issues and problems, also in value studies, when three subprocesses of investigation are interrelated and have to

be reconciled with one another. These are the processes of *conceptualisation* (definition of concepts like "values"), *empirical substantiation* (the use of research procedures and techniques to establish the facts about the content, manifestation and functions of values); and *theorising* (the explanation or interpretation of the dynamics of values).

Various aspects that fall within this dimension are discussed in Chapter Eight: domains of values studies; micro and macro contexts and the links between the two; specific (methodological) contexts in which values can be investigated: populations, situations of interaction, bounded collectivities, institutional structures, discourses and so-called life worlds.

The *sociological* dimension can be seen as the social environments or contexts in which social investigations are implemented and in which knowledge produced by investigations is received, assimilated and reacted to. We would suggest that these environments are formed through the interrelations of three areas: (i) *The conducive or constraining social conditions* which either facilitate or impede social research; (ii) the *institutional arrangements* which organise and control professional investigation; and (iii) *the relevance and reception* of knowledge produced in scientific social research.

Issues or aspects which arise from the interface of these areas in the case of values studies, and which are discussed in Chapter Nine, include: the denouncement of value studies (usually with the objection that they "debunk" values); the links between values and social criticism; and the perceived relevance, differential reception and assimilation/rejection of sophisticated social knowledge about values.

The scheme of dimensions, interrelated components, and the issues, problems and decisions in actual research, were found to be most functional in the identification and organisation of the many aspects of investigations into social values. It also demonstrated the complexity of values as social beliefs, their multiple connections with behaviour and circumstances, and, not least, the extent to which value studies challenge the ideals of comprehensive understanding and good research designs. In this respect reflections on investigations into social values generated more questions and answers about scientific social investigation - social research - than about the characteristics of social values.

Par 51 Reasons for divergent conceptions of "values"

We have, perhaps, in Par 49, dealt somewhat superficially with the fact of divergent and confusing conceptions of values. Hints on how to "solve the problem of definition" do not explain the fact of persistent differences of opinion about what values "really" are. Freedom of connotations and terms may

be a pleasant experience but, again, does not help to explain the very real problem of conceptualisation. And, of course, there are significant differences not only in notions of what values *are*, but also in assumptions, if not firmly held convictions, about what values *do*. I would like to suggest that such divergent conceptions, and the resultant confusion about what should qualify as values, and what the functions of values are, could be ascribed to four factors or conditions (Chapter Four): (i) Values are beliefs and thus ideas in the minds of people. As the same idea can be formulated in a thousand different ways, and the same word or words used for very different notions, it follows that precise wording of ideas as well as clear ideas are not easily achieved, and even more difficult to establish in research. (ii) Values are a special category of ideas: they are normative beliefs or evaluative notions. As principles they can be reformulated and rephrased again and again. Being normative or evaluative, values are simultaneously precarious views and most general ideas. As normative, evaluative, even explicitly moral ideas, these directive principles seldom prescribe. Their specific role in behaviour or decisions, relevance and application have to be argued; the transition from the abstract and general to the concrete situation and specific implication is seldom straight-forward. It is not surprising that directly conflicting modes of action are sometimes justified by calling upon the same value. (iii) The precise meaning attached to a value and an argument for its relevance are often very much dependent on the particular situation or discourse in which that value is articulated. (iv) A fourth condition pertaining to the variation in notions of values - and to the understanding of this variation - is the sophistication of the term and concept of *values* by philosophers and social scientists. In these disciplines *values* has been made a technical concept and a phenomenon or variable that is subjected to serious and systematic investigation. Such investigations involve the methodological processes of conceptualisation, empirical substantiation and theorising. In each of these processes the notions of what values are and how they function can take a different turn.

Par 52 Max Weber: The classical study of values

Max Weber's *The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism* was first published in 1905. The essays, written in a style that left even better translations still formidable scripts, generated the most extensive debate in social studies. After almost a century and after volumes of interpretations and re-evaluations, comments and criticism, the debate continues. It was Talcott Parsons (Par 20) who said of *The Protestant ethic:* "Weber placed the problem of the role of values in the determination of human action in a theoretical light which made the older versions of the problem definitely obsolete." Values are indeed what

The Protestant ethic - and much of Weber's other works - is about. But, as is to be expected from a classical theorist, values are inextricably linked to historical, methodological and theoretical themes and explorations. Chapter Five looked at several of these themes, including the links between values and rationality; the question whether Weber "proved" his Protestant ethic thesis; the fourfold classification of types of action of which *Wertrationalität* is one; the concept of meaning; and the equation of *values* and *meaning*.

The arguments and conclusions about these themes or aspects hardly lend themselves to brief recapitulation. I, therefore, limit myself to the following generalisations:

(i) Whether Max Weber's thesis that the Protestant ethic has been the decisive factor in the creation of the spirit of capitalism is proven or not, depends on the methodological connotation given to scientific proof. Weber considered the link between religious or ethical and economic convictions by generalisations from historical documents. While this documentary material, as Weber's own historical studies, are interpretations of the best scholars of the time, they are not comparable to the findings of verifiable empirical research. To a significant extent they are sophisticated philosophies of history written by erudite and discerning scholars who could identify and explain social and cultural trends in their historical contexts. Their's were texts that combined knowledge, imagination and vision in exciting and liberating perspectives. They also gave us insights and interpretations that do not lend themselves to rigorous empirical verification.

(ii) Weber equates *value* with the *meaning* a particular phenomenon has for people. Weber's favourite methodological procedure of the ideal type does not require that the investigator verify whether the people concerned in fact attach particular meanings to the phenomenon involved. The meanings/values of both Calvinist ethics and capitalism were thus *ascribed* by Weber to Calvinists and capitalists. For Weber (and many non-empiricists) actors' unawareness of the motives imputed to them by philosophers and social scientists does not detract from the validity or meaningfulness of such explanations.

(iii) Weber's formal classification of types of action which includes *Wertrationalität* is not explicitly used in *The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism*. As a category of action *Wertrationalität* assumes that values have a positive and motivating influence on behaviour. This assumption is part of Weber's methodology of *verstehen* and was never really substantiated in a methodology of *erklären*. Weber argued from the theoretically assumed relevance of values for action that values have a decisive influence on behaviour. He did not ask one "ordinary" man or woman what their values were, what they understood to be "values", or what role values played in their moral convictions, economic decisions, or motivation to work hard, diligently and

rationally in order to maximise profit - or, for that matter, whether such dedication was to guarantee a meaningful and pleasant life in this world and/or the next.

Weber's is an esteemed legacy, but one with great difficulties in both the *verstehen* and *erklären* of values and economic activities.

Par 53 Methodological contexts for value studies

Judgments on Weber's linkage of religious/ethical values and economic actions are ultimately (but also from the outset) determined by one's choice of methodological contexts. In fact, the validity or meaningfulness of the establishment of links between values and behaviour is in effect always determined by the chosen methodological context. This generalisation is, of course, dependent on the connotation given to *methodological context.*

We have, in Chapter Eight, examined the distinction between macro and micro contexts, and discussed the problems and proposals of understanding the linkage between micro and macro phenomena. From that discussion it should be evident that explaining the influence of values on particular actions of particular individuals in a specific situation (which particularises the triangular interrelations of beliefs, actions and circumstances into a case study!) is something very different from theorising that social values are the main guarantee of societal order and social conformity. The first explanation obviously involves a micro context, the second a macro context. Micro and macro contexts are not necessarily or primarily differentiated in terms of scope, the number of people involved, or abstractness/specificity. Most basically they differ methodologically - which means that a particular context could be distinctive in its modes of conceptualisation (its definition of "values"), empirical substantiation (procedures and techniques of investigation employed to establish the facts about values), and/or theorising (the manner in which the operation or dynamics of values are explained - using a particular theoretical model or doing without a formal model).

We have (in Parr 37-43) examined six methodological contexts: populations, situations of interaction, bounded collectivities, institutional structures, discourses, and so-called life-worlds. These contexts can be categorised as either micro or macro; they can be shown to have chosen different methodological options; they may produce different value studies. And they may effectively dismiss a yes or no answer as to whether values determine behaviour as being sociologically simplistic and socially naive.

Par 54 The (perceived) link between values and behaviour

The problems in postulating, proclaiming or empirically establishing links between values and behaviour can be "explained" in another way than suggested in Par 53 - where it was argued that different methodological contexts approach the issue differently. This "explanation" involves what could be referred to as *methodological equity*.[1] It is the idea that good investigation or research would achieve a high standard in each of the three subprocesses, as well as a maximum equilibrium between and integration of the subprocesses. An ideal research project would thus have clear and precise conceptualisation, good and appropriate procedures and techniques for securing maximum empiricity, and convincing theorising - well argued explanation or interpretation. Not only should formalisation of concepts, gathering of substantial data and logical reasoning, all three, be of a high standard, but there should be equity or a balanced integration among the three processes.

Methodological equity is, of course, an ideal. In many investigations, however, its attainment is not even attempted or considered. There could hardly be a better example of methodological disparity (the opposite of methodological equity) than micro and macro studies of values. In a micro context such as a specific situation of interaction between two people, one would be able to establish links between some personal values expressed and some of the situational behaviour - with a degree of facticity. A particular situation allows for relatively precise, if simple, definition of concepts, and the gathering of precise, if uncomplicated, facts. It seldom allows for much theorising. When a macro sociologist such as Talcott Parsons theorises about the existence and functions of societal value systems, and argues that shared values are the answer to the question of what holds societies together and orderly, we have a well conceptualised and strongly theorised explanation of societal structure and dynamics. What we do not have is a factual "database" to empirically substantiate the theoretical house (or pyramid in the case of hierarchical societal value systems!).

At this point it is worthwhile to remind ourselves of what C Wright Mills (Par 10) said more than thirty years ago:

> What Parsons and other grand theorists call "value-orientations" ... has mainly to do with master symbols of legitimation. ... Such symbols, however, do not form some autonomous realm within a society. ... We may not merely assume that some set of values, or legitimations must prevail lest a social structure come apart. ... What is predominant in any given society cannot be decided *a priori* on the basis of "human nature" or on the "principles of sociology" or by the fiat of grand theory. ... There

is no *one* answer to the question, what holds a social structure together? There is no one answer because social structures differ profoundly in their degrees and kind of unity.

It is also appropriate to remember the words of Alain Touraine (Par 10):

> The word *values* is dangerous because it designates a hodgepodge of cultural orientations, social rules and ideology. ... The notion to which classical sociology always returns is that of values. But all forms of research into social interactions lead us away from values. ... It is of strategies and interests that we ought to speak, not of values. ... The system of values is nothing other than a more or less coherent ideology ... But this ideology does not completely determine the categories of social practice. It exercises a dominion over what may be called society's discourse; it does not provide an account of all its aspects.

Then there is a formulation of Touraine in which he renounces the more radical position and acknowledges the importance of societal values (without using the term):

> The central problem of sociology is to understand how a society rests upon a set of orientations while at the same time [is] being directed by power, how it is one and also double historicity and class relations.

It is unnecessary to refer to the many other macrotheorists. (Perhaps Marx would have been happy to let Touraine speak on his behalf!) My methodological position should be clear: Methodology refers to the total process of investigation. Conceptualisation, empirical substantiation, and theorising are subprocesses that are interrelated and mutually affect one another. The three processes cannot be separated, nor any one omitted in scientific social investigation. However, in particular investigations all three processes seldom attain maximum attention or emphasis. In practice so-called micro studies are usually strong on concepts and facts, but weak on theorising. Macro studies are usually strong on concepts and theorising, but weak on facts. I would not support the argument that weak factual substantiation disqualifies a study as scientific social knowledge. Such a judgment would ignore or contradict an assumption of the epistemological dimension: that social scientific investigation has to interrelate and reconcile common, philosophical, and scientific social knowledge.

Two last remarks on the requirement of facticity in linking values and behaviour are in order.

(i) Mills's observation on the levels of integration and normativity, and Touraine's suggestion about the relevance of values in a society's discourse with itself, would perhaps be in accord with the following generalisation: It is part

of the Platonic legacy to believe that every society or community (or "volk") has a hierarchical and logically integrated system of values, and that these values specify all the less general norms, laws, rules and regulations; that all prescriptions are actually deduced from highly elevated principles; that even traffic regulations are in accord with societal values. The idea of an integrated and hierarchical structure of values, though attractive and logically persuasive, is, of course, viritually devoid of empirical substantiation.

(ii) A mere reference to values could in certain circumstances constitute a moral *appeal* to respect and to enact such values. One could generalise, also, that values may have a *directive influence* on behaviour, though the exact extent and nature of such influence, if any, would hardly be ascertainable through observation. Rather, it would have to be deduced from or implied by the behaviour itself, or one would have to accept as factual the verbal explanation of the actors involved. A last "function" of values could be said to be *justification* - usually ex post facto - of actions, interests and beliefs. Whether values function as *appeals* to honour normative principles, as *directive influences* on behaviour, or as *justification* of actions, in all three instances they have the effect of *reproduction and regeneration of - values.*

Par 55 Common and sophisticated knowledge of social values

Positivist sociology, starting with Dürkheim who taught that sociology should break with common representations, has long denigrated, if not rejected, common social knowledge and "common sense". Today, with the retreat of positivism (and rationalism) the dominant mood is oriented in the opposite direction: knowledge of ordinary people is increasingly recognised as the proper object of sociological study - and as a decisive component of social reality. Common social knowledge takes the form of beliefs - of which social values are one category.

The differentiated and specific relevance of common social knowledge has been argued repeatedly in the present text. They range from the simple but significant choice between asking ordinary people what *their* conceptions of "values" are or what their values are, through the postulation of common social knowledge both as the subject of social inquiry and as one of three modes of social knowledge within the epistemological dimension, to the ways in which sophisticated social knowledge is assimilated into or rejected by conventional views and beliefs.

In a number of respects common and sophisticated social knowledge present contrapositions. One of these contrapositions is the perception that common social knowledge is more "humane" than scientific knowledge. This perception suggests that the application of scientific research to social reality

exacts its own price: a failure to grasp and make explicit the full humanness of that reality.

Sophisticated and professional knowledge are naturally and everywhere accorded high esteem. It would be valid to say that the effective or operative difference between common and professional (social) knowledge is a social construction (or belief) in that it is one of *perceived* status, authority, reputation and respect.

There is a substantial link between ordinary, everyday thinking (also about values) and so-called qualitative analysis. Qualitative analysis has developed from simple research techniques, chosen to achieve a very specific objective: to determine the points of view of ordinary people. The great contribution of qualitative analysis to social science consists in the recognition that what people think, is as important as what they do; that behaviour cannot be fully understood without simultaneously understanding *beliefs* - and social circumstances. This also applies to value beliefs (Par 27).

Par 56 Public opinion, self-fulfilling prophecies, and ideologies

There are three areas or aspects of discourse in which social values never fail to become implicated or are explicitly involved. The first is public opinion. There are several similarities between values and public opinion, and between value studies and public opinion polls (Par 24). One example: public opinion (and the publication of results of opinion polls) exert social control because of individuals' reluctance to isolate themselves with regard to commonly accepted views. The same anxiety not to be seen to differ, can influence respondents when talking about values.

The concept of self-fulfilling prophecies (Par 25) - originally explicated by Robert Merton - has become well-known and is significantly relevant to values - and value studies. The idea is part of the view that social reality is largely determined by human consciousness and beliefs - which are constructed in conversation and discussion. In the social context of discourse - to adapt the classical statement of W.I. Thomas - values, when defined as real, become real in their consequences.

The intricate connections between social values and ideologies have become almost a debate in itself. Distinguishing between an ideology as a comprehensive belief *system*, and an ideological *statement*, the latter can be defined as a value judgement disguised as or mistaken for a statement of fact (Par 26). Ideologies most basically have social values as components, and such values are often propagated for political purposes and objectives. To the extent that

culture can be apolitical, values and their propagation need not necessarily be ideological. A societal discourse on values may well be apolitical, in which case the propagation of social values may be a truly moral exercise, or largely so.

Par 57 Modernity/modernism and postmodernity/ postmodernism

Modernity and *postmodernity* would primarily refer to time periods in which societal structures and processes (in "advanced" societies) show distinct differences. These differences are the result of ongoing historical change, changes in social structure and culture. Obviously such transformations are intrinsically linked to changes in belief systems: religion, philosophy, natural and social science, and ideologies are all in the process of being incisively transformed. Whether this transformation is described as traditionalist-modernist-postmodernist, or in other terms, the fact is that all these areas are subjected to an intensive (and disturbing) re-examination. Societal transformation, and a rethinking of ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies have, in our time, become inseparable. It is within these vast and interrelated developments that the implications and consequences for social values and value studies have to be traced. The very close connections between social science and global societal change are well described by Giddens (Par 47):

> Sociological knowledge spirals in and out of the universe of social life, reconstructing both itself and that universe as an integral part of that process. ... the practical impact of social science and sociological theories are constitutively involved in what modernity *is*. Modernity is itself deeply and intrinsically sociological.

We have concentrated on two interpretations of modernity/modernism and postmodernity/postmodernism: that presented by Toulmin (Chapter Seven) and that proposed by Anthony Giddens (Chapter Nine).

Toulmin's portrayal of the two eras may briefly be summarised as follows: Modernism from the seventeenth to the twentieth century, characterised and structured by modern rationalist philosophy, natural science, and the nation state, had distinct epistemological accents: A preference for formal logic rather than rhetoric; general principles instead of situational and case studies; abstract axioms and theoretical argument preferred to an emphasis on empirical diversity and transient human affairs linked to particular situations. These intellectual predispositions were components of a quest for certainty in reaction to the intellectual, religious and social confusion and devastation left by thirty years of religious wars.

Postmodernism could be seen as a stage in the history of ideas, which, as an intellectual agenda, shares several characteristics with early Renaissance humanism (Rabelais, Erasmus, Montaigne). Postmodernity returns to sixteenth century thinking in: humanising rationalist modernity, a recovery of practical philosophy, a tolerance of intellectual differences and social diversity, and a less dogmatic and universalist ethics.

Anthony Giddens suggests that modernity/modernism has not yet run its course to the extent that postmodernity/postmodernism can be accepted as clearly differentiated. "We have not moved beyond modernity", he says (1991: 51), "but are living precisely through a phase of its radicalisation." Three dominant sources of the dynamism of modernity are distinguished by Giddens (ibid: 53):

> (i) The separation of time and space. (ii) The development of disembedding mechanisms. These "lift out" social activity from localised contexts, reorganising social relations across large time-space distances. (iii) The reflexive appropriation of knowledge. The production of systematic knowledge about social life becomes integral to system production, rolling social life away from the fixities of tradition.

Giddens explains the disturbing effect of radicalised modernity in terms of four conspicuous features: the dissolution of evolutionism, the disappearance of historical teleology, a thoroughgoing, constitutive reflexivity, and the termination of the privileged position of the West. These developments, Giddens says, move those of us who live in the industrialised sectors of the world, into a new and disturbing universe of experience. If we do not yet live in a postmodern social universe, these changes provide more than glimpses of the emergence of ways of living - and understanding life - which significantly diverge from that which we considered to be "modern".

The suggested implications and consequences for values and value studies become explicit when they are seen within a process of rethinking social thinking.

Par 58 Rethinking social thinking - and social values

Whether one prefers to call it radical modernism or postmodernism, the recent developments in "the history of ideas" involve all four dimensions explicated in Chapter Two and used throughout this text. Postmodernism could well be described as a rethinking of social thinking, and a re-examination of social knowledge. Questioned and queried are: conceptions of social reality; modes of knowledge - religious, philosophical, scientific and ideological; methods of gathering scientific knowledge about social life and society; and our

understanding of, coping with, and changing of social conditions and societal structures.

It may be sufficient to generalise (boldly) about some implications that postmodernist thinking has or could have in the methodological and epistemological dimensions - implications, that is, for values and value studies - and then return to the insights of Giddens about reflexivity. Reflexivity is a process at the core of reception and appropriation of systematic knowledge, and thus part of the sociological dimension of investigation.

With regard to methodological considerations, one could generalise that postmodernist thinking seriously questions positivist methodology - and its application in value studies. It would be unsympathetic towards procedures which do not respect ordinary people's individual conceptions and verbalisation of "values". It would dismiss abstract theorising and rigid paradigms which pronounce hierarchical and coherent value systems as social facts. Postmodernism is likely to find equally unacceptable the models of *homo economicus* and the *value-consistent* actor: The values - if any - of ordinary people should either be determined with the greatest insistence on factuality, and a rejection of preconceptions of normative dogmatics or universalist philosophy; or it should be accepted that "values" are at most intelligent opinions, articulated in discourse, of what would be in the interest also of others.

The widest, but probably also the most valid generalisation about postmodernist epistemology is that systematic social knowledge is no longer equated with certitude. Giddens, for whom postmodernity is the late or radicalised phase of modernity, says it very simply - and relates uncertainty directly to the process of reflexive thinking (Par 47):

> Modernity is constituted in and through reflexively applied knowledge ... No knowledge under conditions of modernity is knowledge in the "old" sense, where "to know" is to be certain. This applies equally to the natural and the social sciences ... We are abroad in a world which is thoroughly constituted through reflexively applied knowledge ...

Reflexivity refers to the constant refraction of thought and action upon one another. All forms of life, all social phenomena, are at least partly constructed or constituted by the knowledge we have of social life and society. This has happened in all human societies. In late modernity or postmodernity, however, reflexivity has been radicalised - there is revision of all conventions, including reflection upon the nature and process of reflection itself.

A persistent questioning of conventional beliefs and behaviour, and a continuous refraction of beliefs and action upon one another, naturally cannot leave social values unscathed. "Changes in value orders", says Giddens (Par 47), "are not independent of innovations in cognitive orientations created by shifting

perspectives on the social world." Radicalised reflexivity not only challenges particular values directly, but could erode much of a transcendental legitimation or rational basis of social values. Without such a transcendental or rational base, Giddens suggests, "shifts in outlook have a mobile relation to changes in value orientations". With regard to values which have their origin (and ultimate legitimation) in religion, it could be meaningful to suggest that these values have, through the processes of secularisation and politicisation in an increasingly democratic world, given way to secular sets of principles which are not only universal, but which have been written into the constitutions and legal systems of many societies - as declarations of *human rights.*

Par 59 Life-worlds, globalisation and values

Globalisation is exposure to new experiences and to different ideas about life. It brings a flood of possibilities and alternatives, and tends to collapse or weaken distinctions, boundaries, and certainties. The impact and reaction to globalisation and postmodernism are uneven and stratified. However, as a process of cultural de-differentiation and cultural type (Lash, Par 32), postmodernism pervades both high and popular culture.

What are generally called "life-worlds" have always existed as either part or parcel of ordinary people's everyday lived experience. It is from and within this natural everyday world that ordinary people conceive of, articulate and live their values. Life-worlds are affected by globalisation and postmodernism and there appears to be two options in coping with social change that comes with these developments: an acceptance of the fragmentation, plurality, diversity, contingency and uncertainties of a postmodern world as a challenge, emancipation and enrichment of life. Or, to make one's life-world into an (even) more communal space in which more limited experiences and more traditional values can be shared. This would be the choice for a life-world in which behaviour, beliefs and circumstances are maximally integrated and harmonious. And in such a choice the most important beliefs concerned may well be social values.

Par 60 The value of social values

Social values are words; they are also ideas, beliefs, criteria , principles. Ultimately, they represent a rather special category of notions. They are notions which in content and intent articulate what is considered to be desirable, good and necessary for the well-being of social and societal life.

Precisely because they are not specific prescriptions for personal behaviour and collective living, social values are *appeals* in various nuances of the term.

Intrinsically, values are evocations, challenges, appeals to adhere to behaviour, beliefs and circumstances which would ensure a meaningful life and living. Social values are also time-honoured, traditional normative principles, a societal sediment which acts as a court of appeal in arguments of what is in the best interests of societal communities. In essence, social values are moral appeals - whether they are situational ethics or rational argument, or whether they are of religious-transcendental origin. As *appeals* in all three these connotations, social values share the stability, authority, esteem, and all the instability, weakness and vulnerability that characterise all notions dependent upon social consensus.

Social consensus is the prime issue in what Touraine has called a society's discourse about itself. Social values are means and ends in both societal discourse and social consensus. Social values are at issue in behaviour and beliefs, and reflection upon these components of social reality. Reflexivity is an inherently social and socialising process; in the continuous refraction of thought and action upon one another, social values are, again, both means and ends. They are influential orientations which are themselves influenced, challenged and changed in social discourse.

With these characteristics and these functions, social values show themselves to be essentially social phenomena. Social values could well be *the* prototype of social phenomena, and one which well demonstrates the nature of social reality. It is these characteristics which challenge scientific social investigation in all its dimensions.

What, then is the value of social values? I would like to conclude with three suggestions: Social values are an intrinsic part of ideals and attempts to achieve a better society. Social values are arguments in societal discourse, as well as part of the conclusions and decisions reached in these debates. All attempts at systematic investigations of social values have the inestimable value of compelling us to rethink our social thinking.

Note

1 The term **methodological equity** is my own, but I derived the idea from C Wright Mills's **The sociological imagination.** What Mills in 1959 deplored as three unfortunate tendencies in contemporary sociological inquiry correlate well with the three components or subprocesses of methodology: An over-formalisation and excessive systematisation of concepts - making concepts into Concepts, obviously concern conceptualisation. The cultivation and sophistication of research procedures and techniques for their own sake, resulting in countless empirical studies in which statistical precision is achieved at the cost of meaningful interpretation and relevancy

- concern what I have called empirical substantiation. An over-theorising of history which works with entire societies - if not "the society", and which have little patience with historical and social differences and nuances but concentrates on "the structure and function of society" - obviously involve the third component/subprocess of theorising.

For Mills these tendencies imbalance and distort sociological inquiry. If they are curbed and the equilibrium of social investigations restored and maintained - **methodological equity** can be achieved.

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