INTRODUCTION

Contexts of Postwar Social Science

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We need to characterize American society of the mid-twentieth century in more psychological terms ... for now the problems that concern us most border on the psychiatric.

Wright Mills quoted in Herman (1998).

1. THE SOCIAL SCIENCES AND THEIR HISTORIES

To mark of its centenary, the *American Political Science Review* carried a special issue made up of some 25 articles on the “evolution of political science” with special emphasis on the postwar period. It is hard to imagine any other leading journal in social science being sufficiently concerned with its history to do this.\(^1\) Since the Second World War, the social sciences have become less aware of their past with an increasing number of researchers beginning to think of history as irrelevant to the shaping of theory. Of course, this process has not affected every social science discipline to the same extent, which may explain why some of them continue to value their past whilst others regard it with condescension. As social science disciplines see the past in different ways, they write different types of history. In addition, historians of individual social sciences adopt a variety of perspectives. For example, Roy Weintraub (1999), has pointed out some of the contrasting ways in

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\(^1\) For example, the historical reflections commissioned to mark the centenary of the Royal Economic Society were fewer and were published in a volume that was not an issue of its journal. The *American Economic Review* reaches its centenary only in 2010.
which the history of twentieth century economics can, and has been, written: as a history of great figures; as a philosophy-of-science inspired story of progress; as a history of quantification; as a series of revolutions and counter-revolutions; or in the light of science studies. This variety arises because those who write on the history of the social sciences include not only scholars who consider themselves primarily historians (whether their institutional identification is as historians or social scientists) but also practising social scientists who write occasionally about the past.

When one puts together antiquarians, theorists who use the past to justify or criticize current theoretical developments, and historians who believe that texts should be considered in the contexts out of which they arose, it becomes clear that very different histories of the social sciences can be constructed. More importantly, these histories are written separately: not only are people, who write the history of one social science discipline, not necessarily aware of the history of other disciplines, but the writing of the history of one social science often neglects its relationships with other social sciences. Theodore Porter and Dorothy Ross (2003, p. 1) were right then to ask at the beginning of their introductory chapter to Volume VII (The Modern Social Sciences) of the Cambridge History of Science, “How do we write the history of social science?” They pointed to work in different social sciences, much of which was carried out in isolation from the work on the history of other social sciences. Drawing on the historiography of the sciences in general, they argued that the social sciences needed to be considered together despite, or perhaps because of, their diversity.

Given the extent to which, despite earlier pleas by historians such as Porter and Ross, the historians of different social sciences still overlook developments in other social sciences, it is worth restating the main arguments. Because our concern is solely with the postwar period, our list of reasons is not the same as theirs, though there are overlaps.

1. If we are to historicize the evolution of the postwar social sciences, we need to consider them together. Many phenomena (such as “Americanization” or mathematization) are common to many or all of the social sciences. Conversely,
events the significance of which may seem unproblematic for an individual social science (such as the Second World War or 1960s radical movements) turn out to have had a different significance in other social sciences. Considering the histories of various social disciplines alongside each other may help to historicize their evolution.

2. There were many cross-disciplinary research ventures during and after the Second World War, that were significant both for individual social sciences and the social sciences as a whole, but we know relatively little about them.2

3. Some postwar researchers saw themselves as general social scientists trying to combine the tools and theories of various social sciences into a coherent whole. These include, to name but a few, Kenneth Boulding, Talcott Parsons, Anatol Rapoport, and Herbert Simon.

4. Specialization within social science after the Second World War has encouraged the coexistence of a variety of explanations of the same phenomena (for example, anthropologists and economists have studied exchange; economists and sociologists have studied crime; sociologists and human geographers have researched the city; psychologists and political scientists have studied conflict; work on poverty and inequality is found within sociology and economics). This makes it necessary to understand how social scientists from different disciplines have approached the same problems, and why problems attracted the attention of some social science disciplines but not others (see Steuer 2003).

5. The contours of social science disciplines can be more permeable than believed and exchange at the frontiers may have had a significant role in the shaping of these disciplines.

6. After the Second World War, some social disciplines, such as economics and sociology, have been characterized by imperialistic ambitions. This makes it important to obtain a viewpoint from the “history of social science,” that is, to combine the viewpoint of the “invading” discipline(s) with that of the “invaded”

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2 Following Cohen-Cole (2007), we find it useful to distinguish between “interdisciplinary” situations, involving the exchange of intellectual tools, and “multidisciplinary” situations, implying researchers working in parallel. The term “cross-disciplinary” is used to refer to either situation whenever a greater degree of precision is dispensable.
discipline(s) so as to go beyond analysis in terms of invasion.

7. Some tools, concepts, and theories were used in more than one social science. Examples include game theory, the rational-choice model and behaviourism. This implies that to understand them requires a broader picture than the study of any single social science can provide.

When Porter and Ross (2003, pp. 1-10) introduced “The modern social sciences,” interpreted as the period from the eighteenth-century Enlightenment to the present day, they paid attention to changes in terminology, for what are now known as the social sciences had been called, in different contexts, moral and human sciences. These changes in terminology were associated with different perceptions of what this group of disciplines covered – was psychology, for example, a social science or a natural science, closer to biology? Such disagreements over the use of the word “social” were accompanied by disputes over whether, or in what sense, they were “sciences”, the difference between French and English usages of the word being a factor. Dealing with a narrower period, that did not see the same changes in the institutional setting of the social sciences, we do not need to pay attention to these changes in terminology (though the scientific status of the social sciences was repeatedly questioned, particularly by outsiders). The question of which disciplines are to be included within the social sciences is, however, still an issue. Clearly economics, sociology and political science have to be included. Psychology and anthropology were also important elements in the social sciences in this period: indeed, in many postwar ventures in the social sciences, psychology was the core discipline. The final inclusion is human geography, a discipline that came to be seen as a social science after the Second World War, drawing on other social sciences and subject to many of the same intellectual influences.  

3 Though he was more concerned with the definition of the “behavioral sciences,” Berelson (1963, p. 1), who served as Director of the Behavioral Sciences Program of the Ford Foundation from 1951 to 1957, listed anthropology, economics, history (not geography), political science, psychology and sociology under the term social sciences. He regarded the American versions of anthropology, psychology and sociology as the core disciplines of the behavioural sciences and included as well parts of political science, law, psychiatry, geography, biology, economics and
However, whilst these six disciplines span the modern social sciences, the boundaries of the social sciences and their relationships have remained fluid. As is explained below, there were numerous ventures involving two or more social science disciplines. Whilst some of these ventures sought to challenge conventional disciplinary boundaries, others accepted them. These might be based, as was Parsons’s reconceptualization of sociology “as the unifying center of an interdisciplinary nexus” (Nichols 1998, p. 83), on an over-arching theoretical framework. Alternatively, they might be based on no more than a pragmatic, common-sense view that social scientists tackling common problems ought to work together, exemplified by Area Studies. This was self-consciously cross-disciplinary: academic departments and research centres were set up in the 1950s and 1960s to bring to tackle problems relating to the Soviet Union, Africa, Latin America and parts of Asia. In other cases, such as Management science (or its various branches from Marketing to Accountancy), there emerged what effectively become independent disciplines but their practical, applied orientation meant that they never became core social science disciplines. There were also disciplines that were partly within social science yet retained strong identifications outside social science. Social history drew on sociology and might be considered the counterpart of human geography, concerned with time rather than space. However, though it was subject to many of the same intellectual fashions as the social sciences, it retained a separate disciplinary identity linked to history and the humanities (see Sewell 2005).

Linguistics can also be seen as a social science but, like social history, it extends outside the social sciences as they are usually understood. There have also been attempts (such as Communication Studies) to spin new disciplines off established ones. The lesson to be drawn is that the social sciences are complex, reinforcing the argument that the histories of the different social sciences need to be considered together.

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2. THE SECOND WORLD WAR AND ITS AFTERMATH

It is hard to overestimate the significance of the Second World War for the social sciences as a whole, even though it was less significant for some disciplines. Many of the conceptual frameworks or paradigms within which they operated had roots that went much further back but the changed context in which the social sciences existed brought about profound transformations. The most obvious change concerned the political position of the USA in relation to Europe: To quote British historian Tony Judt (2007, p. 13), “Europe in the aftermath of the Second World War offered a prospect of utter misery and desolation. … Europeans felt hopeless, they were exhausted – and for good reason”. The physical destruction had been immense, the death toll, especially among civilians, vastly higher than in the First World War, and at the end of the war tens of millions of people were displaced, in part the result of “an unprecedented exercise in ethnic cleansing and population transfer” (p. 24): Europe was in chaos. On top of this was laid the split between East and West.4

An important effect of this turmoil was that many Germans and other east Europeans had been forced to migrate westwards, most of them ending up in the United States. Germany, a key pole in the social sciences up to the 1920s, lost this position. The émigrés included large numbers of social scientists. The academic credentials of those who obtained academic posts by virtue of their Nazi party connections were often weak. The leading German economists were either forced to migrate or, like Walter Eucken in Freiburg, were severely constrained in their activities (Hagemann 2000). Postwar economic policy in West Germany was set by the Freiburg School, dominated by Eucken, whose members were among the minority who had resisted the Nazis. Economics in East Germany was reduced to a Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy. In psychology a high proportion of full professors remained in post till the 1950s when they were replaced by a younger generation. But aside from this weakening of German academia, the dire economic position of

4 To put this in perspective, Judt (2007, pp. 22-32) notes that the UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) and other Allied agencies were responsible for looking after almost 7 million people, with a similar number placed under Soviet authority.
Germany in the postwar years meant that it was both very difficult and unattractive for American social scientists to visit there, unless as linked to the occupying forces.\(^5\) Human and material resources had become overwhelmingly concentrated in the United States. As with European culture more generally, the combination of profound change and American dominance fed, in the ensuing decades, into discussions of whether the social sciences had become Americanized.\(^6\)

Many social scientists had been recruited to the war effort, on both sides. In the United States, social scientists from many disciplines had become involved in intelligence work, often through the Office of Strategic Services.\(^7\) Working alongside natural scientists and engineers, economists tackled problems related to military strategy and tactics as well as more traditional economic topics. Objectives were much more clearly defined than in peacetime, with the result that the emphasis was generally on efficient resource allocation. Economists therefore came increasingly to see their subject in terms of social engineering to achieve goals that were externally given (Morgan 2003). This led many economists to part company with sociology and political science (except in relation to the parts of those disciplines that took up the rational choice model). Up to the 1950s, there were several departments of

\(^5\) An interesting example is provided by Talcott Parsons who visited Germany and other countries in the summer of 1948. Parsons was sent by the Russian Research Center with a view to exploring the possibilities of an interview programme with Soviet escapees. On that occasion, Parsons met “with officials of the Office of Military Government of the United States for Germany (OMGUS), the State Department, and the intelligence agencies; with officials of the intelligence agencies of other governments; and with a number of émigrés themselves” (see Diamond 1992, p. 89). Another example is the economist, John Kenneth Galbraith, in Germany as part of the US Strategic Bombing Survey (Parker 2005, pp. 177-88)

\(^6\) Needless to say, the academic success of many of these German (and other) émigré social scientists depended on the degree of coherence between their methods and objectives on the one hand and the practices of the relevant social sciences in the U.S. on the other. That is especially true of political science where Gerhard Loewenberg (2006, pp. 597-8) has underscored the impact of Leo Strauss and Hannah Arendt on political theory, Hans Morgenthau on international relations, Theodor W. Adorno on social theory and Henry Ehrmann, John Herz, Otto Kirchheimer, Franz Neumann and Sigmund Neumann on comparative politics.

\(^7\) James G. Miller (1996) provided a lively and instructive account of his work as a psychologist at the OSS selection program during WWII.
“economics and sociology” in the U.S. and several departments of “economics and political science” in Canada, but the trend, except in very small institutions, was for these to separate.\(^8\)

Psychologists were likewise involved in the war effort and their attention to practical problems took up a more collective dimension, going from the natural inclination to address personal difficulties to the handling of group problems and more generally social forces. Psychologists became more aware of the demands for social management and decision makers in government and business realised that the kind of expertise needed to deal with postwar problems could benefit from psychological theorizing.

Sociology witnessed a parallel movement with an emphasis on more practical projects besides the more customary attempts at generalization. By the mid-1940s several voices were rising to defend the compatibility between the two approaches. Robert Merton (1945, p. 462), for instance was confident that “[g]eneralizations can be tempered, if not with mercy, at least with disciplined observation; close, detailed observations need not be rendered trivial by avoidance of their theoretical pertinence and implications”. But, in the late 1950s, some in the discipline continued to regard these two orientations as distinct if not opposed (e.g. Mills 1959). And by the time Alvin Gouldner’s critique of scientism was articulated in *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology* (1970), the debate has shifted away from Merton’s concern and the possibility of mutual coexistence.

In social anthropology, there had been a reorientation of the discipline towards policy issues before the war. Whereas they had previously focused on South East Asia, anthropologists became involved, in the 1920s and 1930s, in the search for a system of indirect rule in Britain’s African empire.\(^9\) Anthropologists could participate in the war effort, for they knew about many of the Asian societies in which fighting took place. Following the death of Franz Boas in 1942, anthropology gained momentum in the United States, bringing about a shift to cultural

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\(^8\) It is worth noting that these changes, when combined with the massive expansion of the higher education system in the United States served to bring about a very marked, and comparatively rapid, generational shift in many disciplines.

\(^9\) See Kuper (this volume), pp. 12-14.
anthropology. This shift reflected Boas’s particularism – “his stress on the uniqueness of each culture and its historical particularity” (Applebaum 1987 p. 2). Though serving to establish cultural anthropology, during and after the war, the value of such work lay in its military relevance. Thanks to their linguistic and cultural skills, anthropologists became indispensable to the military and intelligence agencies and they were employed in a number of activities from espionage, training guerilla fighters, to producing manuals for the use of military personnel (Price 2008).

Geography did not exist as a social science before the Second World War: it was not seen as a core social science and geographers had few contacts with social scientists. But this is not to say that it played a minor role in practical affairs. Susan Schulten (2002, p. 204) has reminded us that “[o]n Friday, February 20, 1942, President Roosevelt asked Americans to buy a map of the world. In his noontime radio address Roosevelt announced that he would explain the nation’s wartime strategy over the airwaves the following Monday and that a clear sense of geography would greatly facilitate this task.” The war brought to the front new realities that geography could help understand better if only because of its familiarity with maps and their power to create knowledge. In a sense the war, because of its demands for practical knowledge, fostered the dialogue between the traditional social sciences and geography, and in the process helped the latter gained a better understanding of the techniques, concepts and theories of the former. As Schulten has observed, the “power of geography to shape history is difficult to apprehend” (2002, p.241).

However, as Neil Smith (2003) has shown in his detailed study of the career of Isaiah Bowman, “Roosevelt’s geographer”, geographers played a far from negligible part in the U.S. advance towards world hegemony.

The war brought about changes the nature of which was still unclear to many in the mid-1940s. Sociologist George A. Lundberg, in “The Social Sciences in the Post-War Era,” (1945, p. 138), betrayed some of these uncertainties when he wrote: “That

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10 Following Franz Boas’s denunciation, in a letter to The Nation in 1919 (reprinted in Simpson 1998, pp. 1-2) of the use of anthropologists as spies in the First World War, there had been considerable discussion of ethical issues in the discipline. However this did not cause anthropologists to refrain from such activities in the Second World War.

11 See Johnston (this volume), pp. 78-83.
attitude [toward social research] has been, to a large extent, that social research was a kind of luxury to which surplus funds might be devoted as a sort of advertising stunt reflecting the benevolence of the donors, or in any event as a side issue not vitally concerned with the serious business of managing society. If social research is really to flourish, this view must change. Sooner or later it will change.” It did. 

Nevertheless, despite this uncertainty, the social sciences emerged from the Second World War greatly strengthened and less divided. Wartime projects encouraged cross-disciplinary endeavours among social sciences themselves and between social sciences and other disciplines as well. Economics had demonstrated its value both to the government and the armed forces through assisting in the solution of highly technical problems; it was needed after the war to ensure that the events of the 1930s were not repeated. Psychology also achieved a reputation for having been essential to the war effort – paradoxically, since the psychological screening of recruits had failed to achieve its intended objective – and after the war was needed to deal with the mental health problems of ex-servicemen. Most psychologists were engaged in clinical and personnel work (Britt and Morgan 1946). After the war, anthropologists began increasingly to engage with other social sciences, with the case of Clyde Kluckhohn at the Harvard Department of Social Relations being exemplary in that respect. Human geographers, who were beginning to see themselves as social scientists began to develop relations with traditional social sciences. Finally, political science, institutionally a purely American discipline before the war, established an independent existence in many European universities.

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12 Solovey (2004) has provided a telling illustration of the uncertain future of the social sciences in the context of the immediate postwar national science debate.
3. SOCIAL SCIENCE, POLITICS AND SOCIETY

The postwar period was one in which social scientists were often led to emphasise their scientific credentials. Labels such as “positive economics,” “positivism,” “behaviourism” and the techniques for empirical analysis developed under them sought to aim at objective inquiry, not tainted by opinion or ideology. “Opinion” and “ideology” were to be the subject of scientific analysis, not its drivers. This was perhaps clearest in political science in which, whilst political philosophy, involving the study of classic texts on the normative theory of politics, might still serve as a unifying factor in the curriculum, the focus shifted to the analysis of how political processes worked: public opinion became something measurable to be used alongside the analysis of how political parties worked. Though the theory of pluralism, developed by Gabriel Almond and others, and which dominated American political science in the 1960s (Merelman 2003), could be seen as offering a political philosophy to justify American democratic institutions, it was, at least ostensibly, rooted in analysis of how democracies worked. This perspective of the social role of the social scientist lay behind the focus on elites in work as different as the Yale school’s pluralism (see Gilman 2003, pp. 50-52) and sociologist Wright Mills’s Marxian analysis of The Power Elite (1956).

This shared attitude reflects the closeness between political science and sociology in this period. Paul Lazarsfeld, an Austrian forced by political developments to migrate to the United States, provides a clear illustration. He was “one of the pioneers in using the survey method for social science purposes” (Barton 1979, p. 6), seeking to transform the study of public opinion into an empirical social science. He began to use surveys in the analysis of social phenomena in the late 1920s and early 1930 at the Psychological Institute in Vienna. While in the U.S. on a Rockefeller fellowship to visit universities and research centres, in 1933-1934, civil war and the banning of the socialist party in Austria made the prospects of going back unappealing. As a result, Lazarsfeld stayed in the U.S. After a first job at the University of Newark, where he created a research centre, he was associated with a project, funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, to study the social effects of radio on
American society, in the fall of 1937. That project had been proposed by Princeton social psychologist Hadley Cantril, co-author of *The Psychology of Radio* (1935) with Gordon W. Allport. The project resulted in the setting up of an Office of Radio Research (ORR) at Princeton though Lazarsfeld continued to work in Newark. Thanks to his appointment at Columbia, however, the ORR was moved there in 1940 and later renamed the Bureau of Applied Social Research. With the help of sociologists, including Merton (from 1941) and Wright Mills (from 1945), Lazarsfeld used survey research to examine a variety of human behaviour, with the classic study of the American Presidential election of 1940 and its final report, *The People’s Choice* (1944), standing as a major contribution to the analysis of voting behaviour (Converse 2006, p. 605). Politics did not concern social science only as an object of research, however.¹³

The Second World War was soon followed by the Cold War, which was in large part a cultural war in which the battle zones were first the newly-liberated countries of Europe and later the peoples of Africa, Latin America and Asia. Social scientists were involved in this cultural war, as well as becoming caught up in a regime, stemming from the Second World War, in which the major part of their funding came from the state, either through direct support of higher education, which expanded rapidly after 1945, or through defence-related contracts. There was also the spectre of McCarthyism – the rooting out of Communists, former Communists or suspected Communists within the United States. When, in the 1960s, the Cold War evolved into full-scale American military involvement in Vietnam, the political context changed.¹⁴ Radical ideas from the left challenged the social sciences in all countries. However, such movements were overtaken by the economic crisis of the

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¹³ Cantril also wrote *Invasion from Mars*, a 1940 study of the events associated with the Orson Welles’s “War of the Worlds” radio broadcast of October 1938. Regarding the relatively limited multidisciplinarity of the Bureau in comparison with similar postwar ventures, it should be noted that it took a surprisingly long time for the Columbia administration to recognize the significance of the Bureau’s work and to provide adequate support for its activities.

¹⁴ Robin Winks’s *The Cold War: From Yalta to Cuba* (1964) provides an informative and telling account of world uncertainties right before the Vietnam War.
American culture came to Europe during the war, symbolized by the contrast between the young, confident and affluent GIs and the defeated German soldiers. This American culture appealed to the young who wanted to rebel against their parents’ generation, reinforced in occupied countries by their desire to distance themselves from Nazi and Fascist ideologies. The devastation of Europe meant that there was no effective local competition. But on top of this was a concerted attempt, starting from the activities of the Office of War Information, to create a favourable image of the United States. American expenditure on cultural foreign policy grew substantially until, by 1953, over 13,000 people were employed in foreign cultural programmes (Wagnleitner 1994, p. 57). These extended to popular culture, in which radio was particularly important (see Wagnleitner 1994), to longer established cultural activities (such as educational exchanges and libraries) and attempts to draw intellectuals away from communism (Berghann 2001; Saunders 1999).

Clearly, social scientists will not have been immune to these developments, and some were caught up with activities such as the CIA-funded Congress for Cultural Freedom. However, their implications ran deeper, for social scientists were caught up in this cultural cold war through the project of making the “cold war enemy” (Robin 2001). The analysis of communist societies and the planning of anti-communist propaganda required a wide range of social scientists. This financial support was part of a much broader Cold War funding of science that included the social sciences. Social science clearly received much less funding, in absolute terms, than the natural sciences, but government funding of social science was nonetheless very substantial and helped underwrite the massive expansion that took place between the Second World War and the 1970s (see Crowther-Heyck 2005). In the United States, this came through a variety of channels but the political justification was the need to strengthen American science in the context of the Cold War. The National Science Foundation, established in 1950, initiated a Social Science Research Programme in 1957. Despite the failure to establish a separate National Social Science Foundation, in 1968, social science was eventually granted “the formal status it initially lacked as
part of the NSF mandate” (Herman 1998, p. 114). There was also significant funding of science through the CIA and the armed forces. Not only did it become far more common for individual social scientists to acknowledge financial support for their research, a substantial part of such funding came from defence-related sources, such as the Office of Naval Research. There was also very substantial support for research centres across the social sciences. Close links developed between providers of government funding and private foundations, such as Ford and Rockefeller. It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that such funding must, through selection bias if nothing else, have influenced the course of social science research. Yet, though some academics may have avoided contentious research in order to obtain funding, it remains true that much highly controversial social science research was undertaken (Crowther-Heyck 2005, p. 427).

CIA involvement in social sciences is clearly illustrated by the emergence of Area Studies, which was driven by the need for intelligence. McGeorge Bundy, Dean of Arts and Sciences at Harvard for much of the 1950s, and National Security Adviser to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, observed that,

> It is a curious fact of academic history that the first great center of area studies [was] in the Office of Strategic Services. It is still true today [1964], and I hope it always will be, that there is a high measure of interpenetration between universities with area programs and the information-gathering agencies of the government. (quoted in Cummings 1998, p. 163)

In 1943, the OSS established a USSR division, comprising sixty social scientists under the direction of a historian, Geriod T. Robinson, Professor of Russian History at Columbia. After the war, Robinson obtained support from the Rockefeller Foundation effectively to continue this work in the Russian Institute at Columbia, established in 1946. Complemented in 1949 by institutes of Asian and European studies, this formed part of the School of International and Public Affairs (Cumings

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15 It was not the first such centre, being preceded by Oberlin College in 1945. It was, however, more important for the field.
1998, p. 163). Controversially, for some academics argued that such methods would produce dilettantes rather than serious scholars, it aimed to provide a multidisciplinary training for those who had roots in a single discipline. Russian studies centres were established at Harvard and Berkeley in 1948 and by 1960 were to be found in thirteen universities. This paralleled a broader investment in area studies and language programs, into which the Ford Foundation alone put $270m, spread over 34 universities, between 1953 and 1966 (p. 163). Such investment also took place outside the United States. The journal *Soviet Studies*, for example, came from the Department for the Study of the Social and Economic Institutions of the USSR, at the University of Glasgow with the aim of broadening the study of the Soviet Union beyond what was being undertaken in departments of Russian, inevitably concerned with literature (Miller and Schlesinger 1949).

These developments started in the Second World War, but were continued as part of the Cold War. For example, as one of many actions taken in response to the launching of Sputnik, the National Defense Education Act of 1958, made significant funds available for area studies. In the early Cold War years, the main focus in area studies was the Soviet Union but as the political climate changed, the emphasis shifted to other regions – China, Latin America and Asia (Cumings 1998, pp. 160-2).

One of the problems postwar academics had to confront was McCarthyism, a point made forcefully by Ellen Schrecker’s *No Ivory Tower* (1986). Before the publication of her book, it was common knowledge that government employees and artists had been the main targets of McCarthyism, but it was less appreciated that

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16 As regards relations between disciplines, two points are relevant. The first is that, though drawing on established disciplines, by virtue of being located in specialist centres, with their own specialist journals, and being involved in work that their disciplinary colleagues might not be able to follow because of language barriers, area studies had many of the features associated with academic disciplines. The second is that whereas early work brought together sociologists, anthropologists, historians, economists and psychologists, the balance shifted firmly towards political science. Bonnell and Breslauer (2002, p. 12) point out that the number doctoral students supported by the Ford Foundation, a major source of such support, covered large numbers of political scientists, and hardly any sociologists or anthropologists.
many in academe had suffered a similar ordeal. One thing that comes out of
Schrecker’s detailed investigation is that the notion of academic freedom was not
only threatened during that period but more importantly that no consensual definition
could easily be identified at the height of the McCarthy era (p. 13).

The argument has been made that the fear of McCarthyism led to caution in
tackling controversial issues and to the adoption of clearly “scientific” language.
Economist Paul Samuelson (in Colander and Landreth 1996, p. 172), for example,
has argued that his best-selling textbook prospered, where an earlier text with
substantially the same content had fallen victim to anti-communist agitation, because
it was written “carefully and lawyer-like”.\footnote{17} However, it remains unclear whether the
need to avoid antagonizing McCarthy and his acolytes directly influenced the way
social scientists constructed their theories. That would have implied having a clear-
cut idea of what the latter expected from academe, whereas it seems that McCarthy
and his associates were less interested in controlling what was being written than in
going rid of real, past and suspected Communists. At university, the red scare often
meant that being, having been or being suspected of being a Communist was simply
incompatible with the normal duties of an academic teacher.

The social sciences were close to politics in a different way with the rise of
radicalism at the time of the Vietnam War. This came at the end of a decade that saw
a second massive increase in higher education, an expansion in which social science
was, again, very significant. In Britain, for example, expansion involved the
establishment of new universities, many of which (for example, Sussex, Essex,
Warwick) chose to specialise in social science. Aside from satisfying rising student
demand for social science education, this strategy aimed to establish concentrations
of social scientists, sometimes (as at Sussex) in cross-disciplinary environments, that
were large enough to challenge the dominance of established institutions. In France,
there were similar developments, with the establishment of universities with strong
humanities divisions such as Paris 8 - Vincennes (1969) and Paris 10 - Nanterre
(1970). The creation of these universities played a significant part in absorbing the
increasing flow of students from the mid-1960s, but it also reflected the political and

\footnote{17} For a fuller account of the episode in question, see Colander and Landreth 1998.
social changes affecting French society. More open to the outside world, these universities were especially permeable to the social agitation of the late 1960s and were also more inclined to pedagogical experimentation and innovation. By the mid-1970, social science education had become more firmly established, this being exemplified by the transformation of the Sixth Section of the École pratique des hautes études into the École des hautes études en sciences sociales.\(^{18}\) In the United States, with its much less centralized university system, new universities were not established in the same way, but between 1960 and 1970, the number of social science degrees almost trebled, rising from 13% to 19% of the total.\(^{19}\) The closest parallel with European experience is probably the rise in the prestige of social science departments in some of the mid-Western universities that took advantage of the reluctance of established centres such as Harvard and Princeton to become involved in quantitative work. For example, the University of Iowa established its “stock market” in political candidates, and Ohio State and Michigan State established reputations relating to Congress and the Supreme Court.\(^ {20}\)

These changes were compounded with the social, political, economic and intellectual challenges of the 1960s and 1970s, which were sufficiently powerful to alter the balance of power within many social science disciplines. However, permeability to social change varied according to every discipline. In economics and political science, radicalism hardly took hold. Economics’s strong disciplinary identity meant that it could be comparatively immune to outside intellectual influences. Radical economics could develop, as in the Union for Radical Political Economy (URPE), established in 1968, but after a brief flurry of interest, it was marginalised (see Mata, forthcoming). Similarly, whereas at least three other social science associations responded to police treatment of demonstrators at the 1968 Democratic Convention by removing their annual meetings from Chicago, the

\(^{18}\) The Sixth Section of the École pratique des hautes études was created in 1947 thanks to the financial assistance of the Rockefeller Foundation.

\(^{19}\) Number of degrees awarded, taken from various issues of the Statistical Abstract of the United States are: 1960, 479215 (total), 59037 (social science); 1970, 1072581 (total), 182593 (social science).

\(^{20}\) We are grateful to Bradley Bateman for pointing us to these examples.
American Economic Association, even though it was under the presidency of pacifist Kenneth Boulding, did not, despite radical pressure to do so (Coats 2002). The discipline’s distance from political concerns may even have been constitutive of its reputation of objectivity and neutrality in the eyes of policy makers.

In political science, the situation was different though the end result was not so different. Though it was highly fragmented, mainstream political science succeeded (at least for a certain time) at keeping the changes of the 1960s at a reasonable distance from theory. The accommodating power of pluralism and its capacity to assume multiple forms (see Merelman 2003), may have delayed the absorption of the events of the 1960s. Radicalism surrounding the Vietnam War did, however, contribute to the rejection of political theory as the centre of the discipline. In sociology, permeability to outside events was greater than in economics and political science. It is little surprising that following a decade of agitation, Gouldner (1970) contemplated *The Coming Crisis in Western Sociology*. Likewise, it is hard not to connect the resurgence of radicalism throughout the decade with the diminishing influence of Parsons’s structural functionalism and the greater recognition of Mills’s *Sociological Imagination* at the end of the 1960s.²¹

²¹ This is not to suggest that there were no internal factors to the difficulties encountered by the Parsonian project. Nichols (1998, pp. 84-5) and Johnston (1998, pp. 30-31) have explained that the story of the Department cannot be dissociated from the unhappy departmental situations of its four founding members. Psychologists Allport and Murray did not necessarily recognize themselves in a scientific psychology based on the experimental method which some of their colleagues endorsed. Kluckhohn, who was already a peculiar social anthropologist, felt remote from the archaeology and physical anthropology dear to most of his colleagues. Finally, Parsons, as is well known, did not get along with Sorokin. In all three departments, there existed divisions concerning disciplinary identity and some of these survived the creation of the Department of Social Relations. Parsons’s colleague at Harvard, George C. Homans (1964), took the opportunity of his Presidency of the American Sociological Association, to launch an attack on “structural-functionalism” in his presidential address “Bringing Men Back In” (see Moss & Savchenko 2006, p. xiv). And by the late 1960s, the attempts at integrating the social sciences through the Department of Social relations had failed resulting in the reestablishment of an independent Department of Sociology, with Homans as its chair (Johnston 1998, p. 37). As of the early 1960, Lipset and Smelser (1961, pp. 45-46) noted significant tensions around functionalism in American sociology and mentioned three main oppositions regarding the place of history in the analysis of
The legacy of the 1970s, during which the world experienced economic turbulence not seen since the 1930s, was not the society for which student radicals of the 1960s had struggled. By 1980, the conservative neo-liberalism of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan was in the ascendant (Cockett 1995 [1994], Kelley 1997, Harvey 2005, Mirowski 2009, Tribe 2009). Not only had academia suffered in many countries due to economic crisis and cuts in government spending – this was the decade when academic social science stopped expanding – but it entered an environment in which many decision makers were hostile to social science, seen as tainted by association with the left. Friedrich Hayek, an influence on both Thatcher and Reagan, may have been a social scientist (an economist who had later turned to psychology and political theory) but he was an outsider to the trends that had dominated postwar social science, hardly taken seriously till his award of the Nobel Memorial Prize in 1974.

This change was accentuated by the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the dissolution of the Soviet Union two years later, both encouraging a form of Cold War triumphalism (see Schrecker 2004). Supporters of free markets used this to argue that the very idea of socialism should be abandoned; market economies had triumphed. This was translated into politics through Francis Fukuyama’s *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992) in which it was claimed, that liberal democracy might represent the “end point of mankind’s ideological evolution” and the “final form of human government”. Though neoliberal political philosophy was challenged by U.S. foreign policy failures in the 2000s, and free-market economics by the banking crisis of 2008, such views were clearly dominant by the turn of the century.

4. THE INTELLECTUAL CONTEXT

Perhaps the most frequently recurring theme in the methodology of postwar social science has been “positivism”. Regardless of whether the term has become too elastic
to have identifiable content, it has served as “an important folk category among social scientists”: it has been both the butt of criticism and, under varying labels, defended in other branches of the social sciences (Steinmetz 2005, p. 30). The origins of postwar positivism lie in logical positivism, developed in the inter-war Vienna Circle and formed the basis of what came to be known as the Received View in the philosophy of science, albeit under labels that reflected modifications of some of the early doctrines (see Suppe 1977). At its core lay the separation of statements about the world from ethical judgments, enabling the ruthless application to science of logical analysis. It suggested that there could be a generic science, represented by Merton’s (1942) norms of universalism, communism, disinterestedness and organized scepticism (see Hollinger 1996, pp. 80-96). Rationality became a technical notion, shorn of any ethical connotations; it was no accident, Mirowski (2005) has argued, that there were historical links between the emergence of philosophy of science and operations research.

This conceptualization of science fitted the science funding model established in the Second World War in which research would be commissioned by the US armed forces, but carried out in universities, controlled only indirectly. In the Cold War, this model continued, augmented by the development of think-tanks, of which RAND was the archetype. When the postwar science funding model was being discussed, the inclusion of the social sciences was controversial, critics being sceptical of disciplines that included scholars committed to political engagement, normativity and ethical judgement. Solovey (2004, p. 416) has argued that the Social Science Research Council’s “deliberations and actions were of critical importance in defining the enterprise of American social science in a nonthreatening fashion, with an emphasis on technical, nonpartisan, and value-neutral professional expertise”. In both economics and political science there was a decisive move away from Deweyian pragmatism towards positivism. This marked an important transition for the social sciences, involving a break with the social engagement of scholars ranging from John Dewey to Karl Mannheim and Gunnar Myrdal, whose voices, though still heard, became marginal to the mainstream of postwar social science.

This positivism emerged in many forms. The emphasis was on testability and
quantification as methods whereby social science could escape subjectivity and dependence on metaphysical notions that had no “scientific” content. The most obvious example is perhaps behaviourism in psychology, represented by B. F. Skinner. Laboratory techniques were developed to explore relationships between measurable observed behaviour of human or animal subjects and the environment. Speculation on unobservable mental processes was redundant. In economics, Milton Friedman’s “Methodology of “positive economics” (1953), though denying that economics could be a laboratory science, argued that economics should be concerned with observable behaviour, not with motives for action. This might be translated into an emphasis on measurement and testing, as advocated in the “positive economics” that Richard Lipsey (1963) advocated in his best selling textbook, or it might be used to justify the pursuit of mathematical theorizing even though theories could not in practice be tested. This resembled what in political science came to be known as “behaviouralism” (not to be confused with behaviourism), associated primarily with Charles Merriam and members of the next generation who were trained at Chicago, including Lasswell, Almond and Herbert Simon (see Dahl 1961). In a Presidential Address to the American Political Science Association in 1925, Merriam had argued that “Some day we may take another angle of approach than the formal, as other sciences do, and begin to look at political behaviour as one of the essential objects of inquiry” (Merriam 1926, p. 7).

Positivism, especially in its logical positivist variant, was a profoundly empirical doctrine. However, it could mesh closely with other approaches to social science that shared its commitment to objectivity – to being “scientific” and rigorous. Individualism and rationality were arguably metaphysical notions, commitment to which might be thought inconsistent with positivism, yet in practice models of individual maximising behaviour and rational choice were seen by many economists.

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22 It is worth noting that Merriam cited with approval, and as echoing his own approach, Wesley Mitchell’s Presidential Address to the American Economic Association a year earlier. It is perhaps worth noting that Friedman had spent many years in the National Bureau of Economic Research, which institutionalised Mitchell’s vision of economic research. Friedman, of course, studied in Chicago in 1932-3 and was a researcher there in 1934-5, though in economics, not political science.
as providing a basis for rigorous, scientific theorizing that also served to provide an ideology to counter Soviet collectivism (see Amadae 2003). Sociologists and anthropologists, in the 1950s and 1960s turned not to rational choice but to functionalism: explaining social phenomena in terms of the contribution they make to social and cultural life.

In the 1960s, however, things began to change. As noted by Quentin Skinner (1985, p. 6), the “empiricist and positivistic citadels of English-speaking social philosophy have been threatened and undermined by successive waves of hermeneutics, structuralists, post-empiricists, deconstructionists and other invading hordes.” In the immediate postwar era, social scientists often found it opportune to point out similarities between the natural sciences and social sciences so as to make the latter more appealing to various decision makers. At a time when the future of the social sciences was uncertain and perhaps threatened, the idea that they could conform to a naturalistic methodology had more supporters than detractors. Yet, the consolidation of the social sciences after WWII and throughout the 1950s paved the way for the reaction of the 1960s.

One of the most obvious criteria used to assert the specificity of the social sciences has often been to underscore that they should take into account the representations individuals form about social phenomena because the understanding of the social world is directly connected with the meanings invested into it. With the publication of the widely read The Idea of a Social Science (1958), the British philosopher Peter Winch crystallised opposition to emulating the natural sciences in the social sciences. With the model of the natural sciences being increasingly challenged in the 1960s, social scientists turned once again to Verstehen. As a method for understanding social phenomena, it allows for a number of variations among which the hermeneutic approach stands as a convenient illustration. In

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23 Scott Gordon (1991, pp. 51-54) notes six major points of difference between the social and natural sciences. As far as writing history is concerned, Gordon insists on the significance of Carl G. Hempel’s “The Function of General Laws in History” (1942) in triggering the debates between those who think that narrative accounts of the past should be cast “in a form that is fundamentally the same as that employed by the natural sciences” (Gordon 1991, p. 392) and those who place more weight on the social sciences.
emphasizing the meaning individuals confer on their actions, that approach echoed the participatory mood associated with the politically loaded environment of the 1960s. It suggested the possibility for social scientists to understand the world by putting themselves in the shoes of the social actors they studied. German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer played no minor role in the re-emergence of empathetic understanding as a method for understanding the social world, though, like many social scientists, he was aware of its inherent difficulties.

Equally important for the development of the hermeneutic approach was the French philosopher and theologian Paul Ricoeur. Kurzweil (1980, pp. 92-93) explains that “at first he tried to limit the definition of hermeneutics to the interpretation of symbolic language, whereas more recently [in the 1970s], he linked hermeneutics to the written texts and looked at the problem of language as such rather than, as previously, at the structures of will or at the symbolism of myth.” When *La pensée sauvage* was published in 1963, Ricoeur criticized Claude Lévi-Strauss for limiting himself to a “structural explanation,” in which an outside observer accounts for an unconscious system. By neglecting the hermeneutic approach, in which an observer interprets myths from within, the observer produces a synchronic, as opposed to a historicized, reading. Whereas hermeneutics encouraged the immersion of the subject into the social world, structuralism, it was argued, tended to avoid it.

One can hardly speak of structuralism without at the same time pointing to those French intellectuals who personified it. Among them, Lévi-Strauss has often been regarded as a father figure, with a progeny of no less talented scholars, such as Louis Althusser, Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault and Jacques Lacan (see Sturrock 1979 and Kurzweil 1980). Some of these intellectuals – and the term here warrants a better grasp of this eminently cultural enterprise – would perhaps not qualify as professional social scientists, especially if one looks at the French postwar intellectual landscape from an American perspective. However, unlike in the U.S., postwar social sciences and human sciences in France overlapped. That being said,

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24 Perrin Selcer (2009, p. 10) argued that “In the late 1940s . . . [f]or many European intellectuals, the social sciences belonged to the humanities”. He noted however that “[a]dopting an American institutional model for social science appealed to an influential subset of European intellectuals –
there is no question that the “structuralists” played a significant role in some of the
debates of postwar social science in Europe and to a lesser extent in the U.S.

Interestingly, the “father of structuralism” had some direct experience of
American social science at a time when it went through dramatic changes. Yet, his six year stay at the highly unusual New School for Social Research in New York,\textsuperscript{25} should not be taken to imply that Lévi-Strauss simply adapted the American model to France’s postwar underdeveloped social science.\textsuperscript{26} Had this been the case, his work and, more generally, structuralism would probably have been better understood in the United States when it became fashionable there.\textsuperscript{27} Still, his American experience, especially his contact with cross-disciplinary ventures, changed Lévi-Strauss to the point that upon returning to France in December 1947, he could reconnect with his intellectual origins without feeling hampered by them. If anything, structuralism à la Lévi-Strauss went against what Kurzweil (1986, p. 115) has called “the fragmentation of knowledge into academic disciplines”. In other words, Lévi-Strauss found the greater institutionalization of American social science disciplines especially helpful in comparison with the more intellectually ambitious, but less professionalized, French \textit{sciences humaines}. The American model showed that disciplinary boundaries could sustain cross-disciplinary research ventures.\textsuperscript{28} At the same time, structuralist ideas could made themselves felt beyond anthropology because of the deep philosophical roots and hence generalist orientations of social

\textsuperscript{25} The New School was notable for the University in Exile, established in 1933 as a base for social scientists fleeing Nazi persecution.
\textsuperscript{26} In a report to the French Government, dated June 1957, Henri Longchambon (1958, p. 94), President of the Conseil supérieur de la recherche et du progrès technique, noted that unlike the \textit{sciences humaines}, the “new social sciences,” including political economy, sociology, ethnography, social psychology, biometrics and demography, were no reason for pride.
\textsuperscript{27} Edith Kurzweil (1980) argued that structuralism is a good example of an intellectual movement being fashionable and yet misunderstood.
\textsuperscript{28} Annie Cohen-Solal (2000, p. ?????) rightfully observed that “Another American novelty Lévi-Strauss discovered [during his stay in the U.S] was that the borders between disciplines seemed more distinctive and yet less rigid than in France.”
By the early 1960s, following the publication of Lévi-strauss’s *Tristes tropiques* (1955) and *Anthropologie structurale* (1958), the idea that there were universal mental structures, which the social scientist could elucidate through studying a variety of systems, became increasingly appealing to a number of French intellectuals. Though they were written in France, these two works bore the mark of the New York experience especially as Lévi-Strauss had befriended Roman Jakobson there and in the process got interested in structural linguistics, which he subsequently strove to apply to the study of kinship structures and more generally social phenomena. One aspect of that approach that perhaps deserves to be emphasized because of the distinct orientations of American social science is that empirical observation was considered inadequate to account for social phenomena unless the latter were at the same time recognized as sets of symbolic relationships (see Kurzweil 1980, p. 17). This in turn can be partly explained by the significance of psychoanalysis for structuralists whose effort at unveiling unconscious structures resembles “a kind of cultural psychoanalysis” (p. 19). Finally, very much like Parsons’s structural functionalism in the U.S., Lévi-Strauss’s structuralism declined in France in the late 1960s. Associated with political conservatism, its emphasis on universal mental structures made it difficult to accommodate the concrete political demands of the age. It is not surprising then that by the late 1960s French sociologist Raymond Boudon, who is not known for his structuralist sympathies, asked “A quoi sert la notion de structure?” in his eponymous book of 1968. And it is no less so that, on the other side of the Channel, the British sociologist W. G. Runciman (1968, pp. 263-4) asked “What Is Structuralism” and concluded that it “should not be claimed to

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29 It may be useful to remember that most structuralists were trained as philosophers.
30 Lévi-Strauss realised the importance of the notion of system thanks to Jakobson’s structural linguistics in the 1940s. A decade later, however, the main influence behind the recognition of that notion in the U.S. was Ludwig von Bertalanffy and his General Systems Theory. Interestingly, natural scientists were then more receptive that social scientists.
31 Psychoanalysis fascinated many social scientists on the other side of the Atlantic as well. To give but one significant example, the founders of the Harvard Department of Social Relations were all very much interested in Freud.
constitute a novel, coherent and comprehensive paradigm for sociological and anthropological theory”.

A more radical challenge to positivism came in the 1970s. David Hollinger (1997, p. 339) has argued that, in the 1970s four movements came together to create a radically new context for social science: “‘Kuhn’, antiracism, feminism and ‘Foucault’.” Knowledge came to be seen not simply as local but also as historicised. Though these movements were rooted in the 1960s, it was only in the 1970s that their effects became significant, at least in the United States.

Thomas Kuhn’s *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962, second edition 1970) had its origins in the attitudes of the 1950s. It was published in Rudolf Carnap’s *Encyclopedia of Unified Science* and, like logical positivism, was concerned with the question of meaning. The difference was that whereas logical positivism sought meaning in the structure of scientific theories, Kuhn argued that it was learned through practice. The problem of meaning in science echoed issues relating to language. Kuhn’s ideas could be taken in a radical direction, rejecting the notion that foundations could be provided for knowledge, yet did not have to be. A philosopher who spelled out a constructivist view of knowledge far more explicitly than Kuhn was Richard Rorty, whose *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979) came to be widely cited in the social sciences and in the humanities more generally. Knowledge, whether scientific, social-scientific or general, could not be understood apart from the communities in which it was created.

This view of knowledge chimed with critiques of knowledge that came under the movements summarized by Hollinger as anti-racism and feminism. Though Rorty

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32 It is telling that only 10 years earlier, Fernand Braudel (1958), who found much merit in Lévi-Strauss’s *Anthropologie structurale* and its capacity “to go beyond the surface of observation to reach the area of the unconscious or hardly conscious elements” (p. 745 – translation ours) exhorted his social-scientist and historian readers to stop arguing about what is and what is not a structure to concentrate instead on long duration as one of the possibilities of a common language for the confrontation of the social sciences (p. 752).

33 Andresen (1999) has insisted on the significance of the relationship between Kuhn’s “inner crisis,” as a result of his move from a pacifist to an interventionist stance during WWII, and the centrality of the notion of crisis in his view of scientific change in *Structure*. Fuller (2000) has emphasised the roots of Kuhn’s work in the Cold War scientific environment.
might offer a liberal, democratic view of the communities in which knowledge was created, focus on communities raised questions of how power was exercised within those communities. Those concerned with race and gender linked knowledge with established power structures, linking the social sciences more closely with political movements and to identity debates within those movements. The notion that the analysis of knowledge was inseparable from considerations of power appeared in much more general form in the work of Michel Foucault, which became widely known in Anglo-American social science in the 1970s through works such as (in translation) *The Order of Things* (1970) and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972).

Knowledge was, for Foucault, linked to material institutions, not something to be considered in abstract terms. The 1970s also saw the emergence of the radical social constructivism of the Edinburgh School, represented by David Bloor’s *Knowledge and Social Imagery* (1976).

Though these developments profoundly altered the social sciences as a whole, anthropology was especially affected, for in the 1970s one of the main vehicles for the development of these ideas within the social sciences was Clifford Geertz’s *Interpretation of Cultures* (1975). This helped promote the idea, taken up in other social sciences, that culture should be understood not in the traditional way, as pertaining to literature and the arts, but to societies in general. Sociology was profoundly affected – indeed, it was significant that the developments that created the sociology of scientific knowledge (as opposed to the more traditional, Mertonian, sociology of science) expanded the domain of sociology into matters that, in the 1950s, were still within philosophy. Reflexivity became a problem that social scientists could not avoid. Here the contribution of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu deserves to be mentioned especially since his core theoretical concepts influenced empirical research in the U.S. (Sallaz and Jane Zavisca 2007). A very helpful analysis of Bourdieu’s sociology can be found in the book edited by Lahire (2001), most notably his chapters on the notions of champ and habitus.

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34 There was no simple relationship between political and epistemological commitments. “Enlightenment” values of universalism were cited by some scholars as essential to the political movements that others wanted to link with postmodernist ideas.

35 A very helpful analysis of Bourdieu’s sociology can be found in the book edited by Lahire (2001), most notably his chapters on the notions of champ and habitus.
between the structuralism of Lévi-Strauss and the existentialism of Jean-Paul Sartre” (p. 23), but perhaps it is better to describe Bourdieu’s effort in his own terms, using the distinction between objectivism and subjectivism, which does not coincide exactly with this divide. Bourdieu was eager to go beyond the distinction between objectivism and subjectivism, which he found damaging for social science in general, by unveiling the objective conditions, which not only make possible and meaningful the subjective experience of the social world but are also implied by the very idea of an objective observer. His views on the subject were expressed in some detail in the first three chapters of *Le sens pratique* (1980) in which he proposed to go beyond the antagonism between objectivism and subjectivism as modes of knowledge. It is interesting to note that in criticizing the neglect of what is implicit in the distance introduced between social scientists and their object of study, Bourdieu took the example of Samuelson, who perhaps represented one of the most accomplished attempts to establish the superiority of scientific over lay knowledge, to the point where the latter is often seen as no more than a set of ill-conceived preconceptions.

Though the above developments were pervasive in the social sciences, from the core disciplines of sociology and political science to “applied” fields such as area studies, social history and business studies, in economics they were confined to a fringe of what, from the 1970s, were increasingly seen as heterodox groupings. The complaint of the radical economists who formed URPE was that economists as a whole ignored (amongst others) issues of class, gender and power: but whereas such challenges had a significant effect on other social sciences, their impact on economics was minimal. Indeed, it was at precisely this time that the rational choice model became firmly entrenched as the basis for economic theorizing in a way that separated economics more clearly from the other social sciences except insofar as they adopted that framework.\(^\text{36}\) In the 1970s and 1980s, cross-interdisciplinary engagements between economists and other social scientists were generally limited to the movements often labelled “economics imperialism”, involving the extension of the self-interest model to a number of topics outside the usual scope of economics. The situation changed in the 1990s when experimental economics began to offer a

\(^{36}\) On the advances of rational choice theory in political science, see (????????); and in sociology see Hechter and Kanazawa (1997).
behavioural alternative to the rational choice paradigm but, even then, rapprochement with psychology was very limited.

5. PSYCHOLOGY AS THE DRIVER OF CROSS-DISCIPLINARY SOCIAL SCIENCE

Though WWII serves as a convenient watershed in the history of American social science because of the significance of wartime projects involving several disciplines and their multiplication afterwards, notably with the creation of nearly 250 cross-disciplinary social science research institutes in the twenty years after 1945 (Crowther-Heyck 2005, p. 421), it should be remembered that similar endeavours took place in the wake of the Great War as well. The Yale’s Institute of Human Relations (IHR) is a good case in point. Whether the Institute should be regarded as a precursor to postwar ventures is of less interest than the part taken by psychologists in its organization and development, for when one considers postwar cross-disciplinary ventures, one is struck by the omnipresence of psychologists.

Because this point is so important, a few examples are in order. Though it implied the cooperation of a number of social scientists, the London-based Tavistock Institute of Human Relations was mostly the work of psychiatrists. At Michigan, the Survey Research Center (SRC), established in 1946, was run by Rensis Likert, who had received his Ph.D. in psychology from Columbia University. When his group, working for the Department of Agriculture’s Division of Program Surveys and comprised mostly of psychologists, moved to Ann Arbor to increase the impact of survey research methodology, it received the support of eminent faculty there, including social psychologists Donald G. Marquis and Theodore M. Newcomb. The Research Center for Group Dynamics (RCGD), which joined the SRC from MIT in 1948 to form the Institute for Social Research, was under the leadership of social psychologist Dorwin Cartwright, who had worked with Likert in Washington, D.C. Originally, RCGD operated under the leadership of experimental psychologist and Germanémigré Kurt Lewin, who had advised the Office of Strategic Services (OSS)
on personnel selection criteria during the war and moved to MIT after it ended.
Lewin was probably one of the most influential social psychologists of the twentieth
century. Still at Michigan, but a few years later, the Mental Health Research Institute,
another interdisciplinary venture, was headed by James G. Miller, who, after serving
as instructor in psychology in the newly created Department of Social Relations at
Harvard, had spent some time in Chicago, where he put together another
interdisciplinary group. At Harvard, sociologist Parsons chaired the Department of
Social Relations, but social psychologist Allport and clinical psychologist Henry A.
Murray were heavily involved.

Perhaps the MIT Center of International Studies is the exception that proves the
rule. Psychologists there were not especially involved even though some of the
activities of the Center, under the intellectual influence of political scientist Harold
Lasswell, denoted a form of psychologizing (see Gilman 2003, Ch. 5). It is often
argued that economics, political science and sociology were the “core social sciences
in the U.S.” (Ross 1993, p. 99), but, as far as most postwar cross-disciplinary
ventures were concerned, it is no exaggeration to suggest that psychology was almost
always central. As its long-time director, educational psychologist Mark May, has
pointed out, IHR was supposed to be the research centre associated with a broader
project devoted to “the study of man” (1971, p. 141). Psychologists, notably social
psychologists, at Yale and elsewhere, could hardly find themselves foreign to
projects that strove to develop an integrated theory of the individual and social
behaviour.

The Institute of Human Relations had been organized in 1929. It is of some
significance to recall that Robert Hutchins, then dean of the Yale’s law school,
played a role in its organization before leaving, the following year, to Chicago,
where he later prompted other cross-disciplinary projects. It was Hutchins, together
with Milton Winternitz, dean of the medical school, who proposed the creation of an
integrated research centre to James Angell, president of Yale. Angell submitted the
project to the Rockefeller Foundation, which subsequently provided a 10-year grant.
Though the Institute intended to transcend disciplinary boundaries, its creation was
not meant to challenge existing departments (May 1971, p. 143). The fact that its
formation was publicized by the *New York Times* "as dismantling the disciplinary ‘Great Wall of China’ " (quoted by Morawski 1986, p. 219) should therefore be taken more as an expression of the novelty of the enterprise and its deliberately problem-oriented nature than of the impediments departmentalism placed on cross-disciplinarity. This indicates in turn that multidisciplinarity did not necessarily imply interdisciplinarity and that the opposition between the latter and specialism had yet to form.

The idea behind the Institute was essentially to encourage communication through physical proximity. That is why the Institute building was meant to house the Department of Psychiatry, the Department of Psychology, the Clinic of Child Development and a number of project undertaken by the Departments of Law, Anthropology, Sociology and Economics (May 1971, p. 146).\(^37\) Despite the vision of Yale’s President that the Institute would help “make greater progress in the understanding of human life from the biological, psychological, and sociological points of view (p. 151), it took almost a decade for the Institute to give body to that vision and yet, as noted by Morawski (1986, p. 220), “its inaugural ideals had been replaced by a search for universal and mechanical laws of individual behavior.” The goal of developing a unified science of behaviour continued to leave room for vagueness. And the “Blue Room,” a staff dining room where people from different departments could meet, which was created to encourage scientific exchanges, did not suffice to achieve a coordinated program of research. In the early years, multidisciplinarity, in the sense of having a team of scientists study a common problem, prevailed over actual interdisciplinarity. After 1935, the Institute, thanks to various efforts to explore the intersections between learning theory, psychoanalysis, culture theory and cultural anthropology, was more successful in promoting its goal of a unified science of behaviour; it managed to obtain a grant from Rockefeller for the period 1939-49, but this was not enough to ensure the Institute’s survival “as an integral part of Yale University.” May explains that “the University administration frowned at that time upon all those parts of the University which did not fit into the

\(^{37}\) Morawski (1986, p. 230) notes that there were 21 original IHR members. In addition to psychologists there were “individuals from law, economics, history, medicine, sociology, political science, and psychiatry.” And for some time cooperative work was difficult to implement.
formal structure of departments and schools” (p. 168). By the end of WWII, following the development of multidisciplinary efforts, the belief that had accompanied the creation of Yale’s IHR – the idea that interdisciplinarity and specialism could go together and that the former could even strengthen existing departments – seemed more problematic.

Reporting on the relations between psychology and the newly created Department of Social Relations (DSR) at Harvard, psychologists Allport and Edwin G. Boring mentioned IHR and a couple of prewar institutions created to deal with the “administrative perplexities” resulting from the synthesis of various social sciences.38 Yet, after the war, the context was already different: “It seems inevitable that urgent and increasing demands will be laid upon the University for the study of the ‘human factor’ in a technological and atomic age. The pressure will come in part from the federal government, in part from the local community, and in part from the social conscience of the university itself. An efficient Department of Social relations with its adjunct laboratory, will be needed to help to select, implement and execute the most worthy projects among those that will be pressed upon the University” (1946, p. 120). This new multidisciplinary venture had antecedents at Harvard itself with the so-called “Pareto Circle” from the early 1930s to the early 1940s. As Heyl (1968, 317) has reminded us, “One aspect of the university climate during the thirties was the widespread popularity of large-scale historical framework employed to describe socio-political phenomena.” Parsons, the would-be chair of DSR, was a member of that group, which, its strong interest in Pareto’s work notwithstanding, was notably influenced by Harvard physiologist Lawrence J. Henderson. It is Henderson who took the initiative of organising a seminar on Pareto’s sociology, some participants of which ended up at the DSR later on. As pointed out by Heyl, the group was interested in the concepts of social system and social equilibrium and it put special

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38 In the spring of 1945 Paul H. Buck, the Dean of the Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences, asked Parsons “to visit and report back on government and university [interdisciplinary] programs.” Interestingly, “Parsons studied the programs at the Yale Institute of Human Relations, the Columbia Bureau of Applied Social Research, the North Carolina Institute of Social Research, the Research Branch in the Information and Education Division of the War Department, and various others” (Johnston 1995, p. 156).
emphasis on the connections between the physicochemical system and the social system. Here one sees that natural scientists played at least an indirect role in later efforts at integrating the social sciences, not necessarily that Parsons was thus prolonging Henderson’s hope for a science of society, but rather that his participation in the “Pareto Circle” convinced him of the benefits associated with collaborative work of a multidisciplinary nature.

Officially opened in January 1946, less than a couple of years after Parsons replaced Pitirim Sorokin at the head of the Sociology Department, the DSR built on the previous experience of interdisciplinary cooperation within the “Pareto Circle,” but its ambitions were broader and reflected the convergence during WWII of a number of research activities, “including community analysis, attitude assessment, the process of socialization in childhood and youth, the study of group conflict and prejudice, factors in national and institutional morale, the nature of institutional behavior, aspects of communication and propaganda, ethnic and national differences and similarities, problems of social and mental adjustment of the individual in his social situation” (Allport & Boring 1946, p. 120).  

More or less, that is what “social relations” meant. These research activities concerned several departments and that is why the new Department included all of the former Sociology Department, the social and clinical psychology part of the former Psychology Department and the social anthropology part of the former Department of Anthropology. One thing that is clear when one compares the DSR and IHR is that the former contested disciplinary boundaries when the latter hoped that multidisciplinary projects would rest on, and might even strengthen, existing departments. As Gilman (2003, p. 73) suggested, it is perhaps more appropriate to speak of omnidisciplinarity (multidisciplinarity) rather than interdisciplinarity to characterise DSR. That is an important distinction as not all postwar enterprises going beyond the realm of individual social sciences meant to challenge disciplinary boundaries in the way the DSR did.

Michigan offers a good example. As at Chicago and Harvard, it was believed that

Crowther-Heych (2006, p. 313) notes the “establishment of dozens of Departments of Social/Human Relations in colleges and universities across the nation during the 1950s and 1960s. These interdisciplinary departments typically replicated the structure of the Harvard Department of Social Relations.”
putting together different social scientists would bring about substantial benefits. However there was no suggestion either that this would cause departmental boundaries to disappear or that some disciplines had to be subsumed under a more general social science. Since the close of the war, well-known researchers, such as sociologist Robert C. Angell (editor of the *American Sociological Review* from 1946 to 1948) social psychologists Marquis and Newcomb, and a few others, had initiated various enterprises at the boundaries of the traditional social sciences disciplines. Established in 1946, the same year as DSR, the Survey Research Center (SRC) represented the culmination of these various efforts. SRC meant anything but disciplinary specialism. Under Rensis Likert and with the help of Angus Campbell, George Katona, and a few others who likewise explored the intersections between economics, sociology and psychology, SRC applied the sample survey methodology, which had been developed during WWII, to a variety of human behaviours, from economic to organizational and political.

The Research Center for Group Dynamics deserves special mention as well. As we have seen, the Center was founded by Lewin at MIT, a few miles away from the Harvard DSR, in 1945. Interestingly, even before the latter was established, Lewin presented the RCGD as the outcome of two necessities, a scientific and a practical one. “Social science,” he wrote, “needs an integration of psychology, sociology, and cultural anthropology into an instrument for studying group life. Modern society demands a deeper understanding and a more efficient and less prejudicial handling of group problems” (1945, p. 126). In comparison with the DSR, one notes the emphasis on cultural anthropology, whose interest for differences between modern cultures had made a rather appealing discipline. Though social anthropology and cultural anthropology were associated with different traditions before WWII, the European for the former and the American for the latter, after WWII differences were less glaring, allowing for more exchanges. And the fact that “social anthropology” at the DSR was represented by Kluckhohn, who had written his thesis on “Some Aspects of Contemporary Theory in Cultural Anthropology,” suggests even greater similarities between the project of the DSR and that of RCGD. In the highly internationalised context of the mid-1940s, the concept of culture may have
had more appeal than that of sociality characteristic of social anthropology. And by the 1950s, it had currency beyond the disciplinary boundaries of anthropology and sociology (Weinstein 2004, p. 23).

On a different level, it should be noted that the RCGD was established in the Department of Economics and Social Science, which combined economics, sociology and psychology. With that multidisciplinary department, Lewin found at M.I. T. what Parsons and others had to create at Harvard. Lewin was especially aware of the benefits of being in an engineering school. To him, WWII had demonstrated “the discrepancy between our ability to handle physical nature and our lack of ability to handle social forces” (1945, p. 128). Awareness of that discrepancy was central to the creation of the RCGD, its endorsement of the “field theory” approach and its choice of research area as small groups dynamics. These orientations were different from those of SRC but there were many intersections, and, after Lewin died, Michigan, with its strong Sociology Department and some of its members being interested in psychology, followed Rikert’s suggestion that RCGD, under the new directorship of Dorwin Cartwright, join SRC in July 1948, with the two centres forming the Institute for Social Research one year later.

Finally, mention should be made of the Mental Health Research Institute formed at Michigan in 1955. Though mental health was then regarded as the most important health problem in the country and the discussions prior to its creation, mostly for institutional and political reasons, emphasized a better understanding of the causes and means of prevention of mental illness as one of the goals of the Institute, its activities went largely beyond problems of mental health. For its main protagonist, James G. Miller, but also his two acolytes, neurophysiologist Ralph W. Gerard and mathematical biologist turned social scientist Anatol Rapoport, one of the functions of MHRI was “to fill the gap . . . between the biological and social sciences.”40 This is clear from the proposal for a “Center for Mental Health Sciences,” as it was still described in January 1955. The proposal had a broad coverage: it included a four-part division between the “Cell and Organ,” the “Individual,” the “Small Group,” and the “Social and Community Aspects of Mental Health,” with the implicit idea –

40 Miller to Gerard, 3 Feb. 1955.
common among advocates of the general systems theory – that the Center “will emphasize identification of general principles, which extend across various levels of systems.” (Miller 1956, p. 3).

The proposal emphasized mental health, but it was articulated in such a way as to open up the possibility for numerous interactions with a wide range of social-science studies of human behaviour. Interestingly, Miller, Gerard and Rapoport were all at Chicago a few years earlier, participating in some of the University’s cross-disciplinary ventures. Miller, the founding director or MHRI, was there from the early 1948, following his appointment at the Harvard DSR as a faculty instructor in psychology. Under the influence of Enrico Fermi, who felt that a better understanding of human behaviour was needed and that it implied the building of general theories, Miller started a new interdisciplinary group of senior faculty members from the biological- and social-sciences divisions – the Committee on the Behavioral Sciences. The latter considered the possibility of developing empirically general testable theories of behaviour, an orientation most evidently associated with the work of Bertalanffy at the time. The Committee began to operate in the early 1950s and continued its activities well into 1955 when some of its leading members, among whom Gerard, Miller and Rapoport, moved to Ann Arbor after unsuccessful attempts to establish a behavioural-science institute at Chicago and Berkeley.

This description of the institutionalization of cross-disciplinary efforts is biased towards the United States, but other countries, notably Britain, developed similar ventures, some of them having close connections with their U.S. counterparts. That was the case of the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations (TIHR). Founded in

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41 [Miller], "Proposal for a Center for Mental Health Sciences at Ann Arbor, Michigan," Dec. 1954-Jan. 1955], Box 1, Folder “History,” Mental Health Research Institute Records, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

42 Before coming to Michigan, Miller had the project of creating an Institute of the Behavioral Sciences at Chicago. In that project, the question of mental health was second in comparison with “[t]he problem of the maintenance of peace and the prevention of international misunderstanding.” Undated, Box 1, Folder “History,” Mental Health Research Institute Records, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

43 According to Jacques (1998, p. 251), The Tavistock Institute had two strong sets of intellectual connections: one with the work of psychoanalyst Melanie Klein and her associates, and the other
1946, it was but one of the organisations that came out of the Tavistock Institute of Medical Psychology, established in 1920.

“From the 1920s to the outbreak of the Second World War, members of the Tavistock Clinic sought to utilize explanations and techniques derived from psychoanalysis and dynamic psychologies in order to explain and remedy problems of disturbed and delinquent children, and troubled adults, and in order to address the difficulties that confronted a wide range of professionals working with human beings – notably social workers and probation officers – and to train them in appropriate ways of understanding and intervening in difficulties of human conduct.” (Miller and Rose 1994, p. 32)

Thanks to a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, in 1946, which was interested in capitalising on the experiences of institutions associated with war medicine to develop social psychiatry, the TIHR emerged as a division of the Tavistock clinic (Trist and Murray, 1990, p. 5). As it turns out, the innovations introduced during the war gradually convinced a number of psychiatrists and social scientists that some of the synergies revealed by wartime collaborative work could be expected from similar work in a peace context. Following the war, the Clinic’s mission was redefined in view of the creation of the National Health Service, with in particular the decision “to incorporate the Institute of Human Relations for the study of wider social problems not accepted as in the area of mental health” (p. 5), among which industrial relations and organizational functionings were prominent. What makes the story of the TIHR especially interesting for postwar social science is precisely that it embodied the conviction that some of the practical problems inherited from WWII could not be understood and solved without first combining the conceptual frameworks of several social science disciplines. The interdisciplinarity of the Institute went together with the variety of issues it dealt with.

Cross-disciplinary efforts were also be institutionalized through journals. Here, with group dynamics and personality theory, in particular British psychoanalyst Wilfred Bion’s theory of group dynamics and, on the American side, Kurt Lewin at MIT, Henry Murray at Harvard and Jacob Moreno in New York.
Roger E. Backhouse and Philippe Fontaine

the launching of *Human Relations*, interestingly subtitled “Studies towards the integration of the social sciences,” in 1947, comes to mind. The journal was the result of a joint effort between two well-known interdisciplinary institutions – The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, in London, and the Research Center for Group Dynamics, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. A few years later, *Behavioral Science* was launched. Published by the Mental Health Research Institute at the University of Michigan, the journal had a multidisciplinary editorial board, most members of which had taken an active role in the production and diffusion of interdisciplinary knowledge. With the exception of human geography, all the social sciences represented in this volume had a representative on the editorial board. The editorial in the first issue, in 1956, noted that the “rise of natural science and the flood of its applications have been paced by the creation of broad theories. It is to the development of such theories of behavior and to their empirical testing that this publication is dedicated” (p. 1). In effect, the actual focus of the journal was not the natural sciences themselves but rather the fact that they could inspire a similar movement in the social sciences. The editorial, probably written by psychologist James G. Miller betrayed orientations that he took from Enrico Fermi when they both were at Chicago. It read: “Man’s most baffling enigma remains, as it has always been, himself. He has been unable to fathom with any precision those laws of human nature which can produce social inequality, industrial strife, marital disharmony, juvenile delinquency, mental illness, war, and other widespread miseries” (p. 1). It is hard to imagine that the social sciences had little to contribute to this. Among the three main figures behind the creation of the journal – James G. Miller, Gerard and Rapoport – one notes a shared belief in the virtues of the General Systems Theory (Hammond 2003, p. 169) and its idea that general principles operated across various levels of systems.

Following WWII, many social-scientific beliefs about human behaviour were shaken, leaving researchers with the feeling that human behaviour remained a largely unsolved mystery. Drawing on wartime experience, social scientists strove to bring together teams in which psychologists could inform work by other social scientists. The centrality of psychology in these enterprises can be explained by what Mitchell
Ash (2003, p. 269) has called its “protean identity.” The fragmentation of psychology proved to be an asset, facilitating adjustments to other research cultures and disciplinary traditions. But, as the example of economics amply shows, a far less protean identity could likewise support multidisciplinary ventures.

6. ECONOMICS-CENTRED CROSS-DISCIPLINARY VENTURES

By the late 1940s, the seeds of the most significant cross-disciplinary ventures in social science had been planted. The Second World War and its immediate aftermath were central to their establishment, but the Cold War brought to the front new issues, which opened up new research horizons. With the Truman doctrine of containing Russia in place as of 1947 and the loss of China following in 1949, the issue of getting a better understanding of Russia and to a lesser extent China became central to American foreign policy, as did the connected issue of development. These two issues were interrelated as economic growth was then seen as preventing the propagation of Communism; they raised the question of the U.S. capacity to deal with the rapid changes affecting the world. If all the research centres, institutes and academic departments mentioned so far were in one way or another the outcome of WWII and its immediate aftermath, the MIT Center for International Studies (CENIS), established in 1952, following the critical late 1940s and early 1950s, was above all a Cold War research unit.

Interestingly, economists took little part in the cross-disciplinary ventures in social science in the early postwar years, but they were central in the creation and activities of CENIS. The Center emanated from an anti-Communist propaganda project conducted in the fall of 1950 in the midst of the Korea War (Blackmer 2002, Gilman 2003). It was MIT president James Killian who, only one year after his inauguration, was approached by the State Department to tackle the problem of how best to communicate with populations behind the Iron Curtain. Killian accepted the offer. Like several of his contemporaries, he believed in the possible integration of
Accordingly, with the help of Harvard (hence the association of Kluckhohn who was running the recently established Harvard Russian Research Center), an interdisciplinary team was formed in the summer of 1950, including notably psychologist Alex Bavelas and economist Max Millikan from MIT, to work on the question raised by the State Department. Later, the activities of the team were referred to as “Project TROY.” Its top-secret report, submitted in early 1951, considered a number of ways to improve U.S. propaganda abroad and warned against too intransigent positions towards the Soviet Union. The report from Project TROY encouraged Killian to support three follow-on research initiatives, including a study of Soviet society, under the directorship of MIT economist W.W. Rostow, a defector interview and research program led by Kluckhohn, and the “overload and delay” program (on disrupting communications within the Soviet Union) conducted by Bavelas; it likewise suggested that a permanent research centre, the CENIS, should be established under the leadership of Millikan, in early 1952, following his one-year service as assistant to the director of the CIA (Needell 1993, pp. 416-7; Needell, 1998, pp. 22-24).

44 Allan Needell (1998, p. 3) maintains that “Project Troy also served to powerfully reinforced postwar efforts to associate the social with the natural sciences, not only in terms of the assumed reliability and objectivity of the research methodologies employed, but also in terms of the potential contributions they could make to promoting American interests around the globe”.

45 The connection with Harvard and its Russian Research Center was of great importance if only because the latter, based on the OSS model, had formally opened in February 1948, following the efforts of psychologist John Gardner of the Carnegie Corporation and encouragements from Parsons who believed Harvard was the right place for such a centre. As of mid-1947, following the creation of the Harvard Department of Social Relations, Gardner was trying to find ways to increase the interest of psychologists, sociologists and anthropologists in Russian studies (Diamond 1992, p. 65). Placing the president of the American Anthropological Association for 1947 at the direction of the planned centre and including in its executive committee Parsons, probably the most influential sociologist of the postwar era, could help in that respect. The two men were very close and Parsons and Vogt (1962) wrote Kluckhohn’s obituary for the American Anthropologist. In the latter, one reads that Kluckhohn “felt the absolute necessity of the empathetic understanding of the attitudes of people living in cultures other than his own, which he carried out so outstandingly in his work on the Navaho” (p. 144), and likewise in his research on the Japanese morale within the Foreign Morale Analysis Division during WWII and on the Soviet
Economists may have been important in the work of CENIS, they were not the only sources of intellectual inspiration behind its activities. Political scientists Harold Lasswell and Lucian Pye as well as sociologist David Lerner were also crucial to the whole project. The committee appointed to advise CENIS on a project running from 1962 also included Lazarsfeld, Edward Shils and psychologist Jerome Bruner (Planning Committee of CENIS, 1954). Lasswell’s view of politics as a specific place for the manifestations of private psychological troubles, in particular, lent itself well to the depiction of foreign leaders as unreasonable and it could likewise justify the occasional difficulties involved in understanding them.

In addition, that view suggested that the seductions of Communism may have had less to do with its own characteristics as with the psychological tensions, indeed imbalances, encountered by some people (see Gilman, Ch. 5). Some of these tensions could result from the uncertainties associated with periods of transition especially in “underdeveloped” countries. That explains in turn why the role of economists at CENIS, notably Rostow’s, has been taken as exemplary of the modernization literature developed at the Center. Gilman has rightly nuanced that view, preferring instead to depict modernization theory as “the initial social scientific rationalization of the post-World War II American drive to achieve global free trade and American geopolitical hegemony” (p. 191). But even if we accept Gilman’s characterization, the seductive power of Rostow’s *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (1960), is not diminished. Not only did it provide a simple reading of Western industrialization, but it suggested likewise a ready-to-use alternative to communism, which American policy makers could use at will at the

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Union as the first Director of the Russian Research Center from 1948 to 1954.

46 The attractive power of Communism was largely discussed in the early 1950s. At MIT, the “Appeals of Communism Project,” directed by Gabriel A. Almond, put together a number of scholars who try to fathom the complexities of the phenomenon. An illustration of their work is provided by Herbert E. Krugman who, drawing on data derived from interviews with former members of the American Communist Party, discussed the question of what makes an individual become a communist and what communism makes of the individual. Interestingly, among the 50 interviewees in the article, “The Appeal of Communism to American Middle Class Intellectuals and Trade Unionists” (1952), 24 were journalists, writers, artists, professionals, and students. Two years later, Almond published his own *The Appeals of Communism* (1954).
attention of developing countries.

As in CENIS, economists were also significant at what was perhaps the archetypal Cold War think tank, Project RAND, established in early 1946 by the US Army Air Force as a way of continuing the Second World War practice of bringing together scientists working on problems they believed important but in an environment more like academia than a military institution. Originally, Project RAND gathered physicists, mathematicians and engineers to work on a research programme devoted to air warfare, with the objective of making recommendations to the US Air Force, but with no particular pressure in terms of their practical applications. If anything, in the eyes of its progenitors, Project RAND meant to consolidate the cooperation between science and the military, as witnessed during WWII, but the return to peace occasioned notable changes to the overall climate that surrounded the scientists’ war effort. Social scientists, in particular, had to fight hard to maintain the credit accumulated during the war. Given the nature of Project RAND, it was hard to think of it as a natural habitat for social scientists in general, but the scientist pretensions of some economists and their expertise in quantitative methods made them possible candidates for participation.\footnote{On the creation of RAND, see Mirowski (1991, pp. 241-242), Leonard (1991, pp. 269-71: 1992, pp. 67-9). More detailed analyses of RAND are provided by Jardini (1996), Hounsell (1997) and Amadae (2003, Ch. 1).}

Many of the postwar profession’s leading quantitative economists ended up working for Project RAND. Along with Princeton University, where the mathematics department was home to John Nash, RAND was the major centre for the development of game theory and its applications to problems of atomic warfare. Even before Project RAND became the RAND Corporation in 1948, economists had a foot in the door thanks to “the network of alliances and influences that had grown around economics and economists in the wartime context . . . : OSS in Washington and London, and SRG [Statistical Research Group] in New York” (Leonard 1991, p. 270). And following economist’s Charles Hitch appointment as head of RAND’s new Economics Division, it was clear that economists were there to stay.

It was less so, however, that they would be able to give structure to much work
being done at RAND. In the late 1940s economists (and political scientists) represented no more than 5 percent of the research staff and RAND maintained its original orientation towards hardware analysis. “By the end of the 1950s, however, economists had become the dominant professional group at RAND, outnumbering physicists and mathematicians; ‘systems analysis’ was now RAND’s unique product” (Amadae 2003, p. 40). That success was above all that of the systematic application of economic principles to the treatment of a number of practical issues in an era of increased sensitivity to rational pricing. The adoption of economic criteria in the making of engineering choices was also facilitated by the social engineering ambitions of the RAND economists, which eventually brought them great influence in the shaping of defence policy.

Finally, another example of an interdisciplinary community in which economists played some role is the Carnegie Tech’s Graduate School of Industrial Administration (GSIA).\footnote{This and the next paragraph draw extensively on Khurana (2007).} In the early postwar period it was widely held, in the light of wartime experience, that trained management was important to mobilizing resources, and that, despite the enormous expansion in business education, the average quality of business schools was low and needed to be improved. The major change came in the mid 1950s when the Ford Foundation announced a programme to develop four “centres of excellence” in the field. The Harvard Business School obtained the major share of Ford’s largesse, but more significant was the attention paid to the newly-established GSIA (at what later became Carnegie-Mellon University), which received the first grant. In contrast to the case-study method, based on business experience, that formed the core of Harvard’s MBA teaching, the GSIA sought to follow the example MIT had set in engineering, where underlying disciplines were integrated into a professional curriculum through technical problem solving. This was the model that Ford sought to spread through all elite business schools (see Khurana 2007, pp. 252-3).\footnote{Crowther-Heyck (2006) explores Simon’s effort to build GSIA into a centre for interdisciplinary social research.}

A feature of the GSIA approach that distinguished it from Harvard was to ground
business education in rigorous disciplinary scholarship and quantitative methods, focused on practical problems, out of which cross-disciplinary research could emerge. The approach was thus cross-disciplinary, though driven by economists. The main inspiration behind GSIA was its Dean, Lee Bach, an economist, in conjunction with two young recruits, Herbert Simon (trained in political science at Chicago) and William W. Cooper (trained in economics at Chicago) who shared Bach’s interest in applying technical methods to the solution of management problems. Though their focus was on applied management problems, it did not mean that they became detached from the main social sciences, as had sometimes happened with applied work. Though fully involved in management science, Simon became a major figure in psychology and political science (see Crowther-Heyck 2005), and GSIA's economists (who included Robert Lucas, Thomas Sargent, and Franco Modigliani) became major figures in their own discipline. It is tempting to link the ideas produced by social scientists at GSIA to the concern with information processing and organisational behaviour that arose directly out of the attempt to develop quantitative management tools.

Because of its strong identity, economics was able to give structure to cross-disciplinary research. More importantly, however, was its capacity to combine a theoretical framework, conceptual tools and quantitative techniques to a degree that perhaps no other social sciences could achieve. That meant that although they could contribute to multidisciplinary ventures, economists, unlike psychologists, found it more difficult not to be in the driver’s seat. Whereas psychologists’ satisfaction with equal partnership allowed for their almost ubiquitous presence in most cross-disciplinary social scientific research after WWII, the reluctance of economists made their association with other social scientists more difficult.

50 Lucas and Sargent were key figures in the transformation of macroeconomics that took place in the 1970s, deriving the idea of “rational expectations” from their colleague Muth. Modigliani was at the heard of the transformation of finance in the same period.

51 On Sargent, see Sent (1998). On GSIA’s links with the economics profession, see Fourcade and Khurana (2008).

52 Leonard (1991, p. 265) notes that the “intolerance and at times belligerence towards the ‘blindness’ of other disciplines was to become a recurring theme for the next twenty years in the involvement of economists in military affairs . . . economists remained loath to cooperate
7. CONCLUSIONS

Contrary to the assumption that is implicit in much writing on the history of the postwar social sciences, they need to be considered alongside each other. As we have seen, the Second World War exerted a profound influence across the social sciences, not just because of the wartime experiences of social scientists (though these were extremely important) but because the Second World War changed the contexts in which social science was undertaken. The Cold War continued trends established from 1940 to 1945. Both the patronage of the social sciences and the agendas to which they responded had changed substantially since the 1930s.

There is, of course, a sense in which individual social science disciplines proceeded largely independent of each other: the dividing lines between the social sciences discussed in this volume had by then been laid down and institutionalized. However, it would be wrong to assume that by 1945 the pressures for disciplinary autonomy had become overwhelming. This was emphatically not the case. The two decades following WWII saw a profusion of ventures that bridged different social sciences. It is because we consider cross-disciplinary ventures a key factor in postwar social science that we have explored some of them in detail: doing this contextualizes many of the claims of influence from one social science to another that one finds in disciplinary histories as well as challenging the widespread neglect of such ventures. Cross-disciplinary social scientists such as Boulding, Kluckhohn, Lasswell, Myrdal, Parsons and Simon were, to a certain extent, not isolated mavericks but part of a wider network of well-funded cross-disciplinary institutions that formed a more significant part of the social sciences than is commonly understood.

Though these developments involved all the social sciences, the part each took in cross-disciplinary work was uneven. It is commonly believed, no doubt because of significantly with others, such as historians or political scientists, and only those who adopted the tools of economic analysis commanded their professional respect.”
Parsons’s vision, that sociology must have been at the heart of this process. However, in the immediate postwar period, because of the centrality of the human factor to social science research, it was psychology that was at the centre of most cross-disciplinary activities. As Herman (1998, p. 98) rightfully notes, “[t]o their roles as Cold War military advisers and researchers, psychological experts brought evolving insights into human irrationality. A unified conception of behavior – a conviction that the relevant underlying variables were much the same whether conflicts were geopolitical or personal, whether the actors were the nation-states or individual humans – was central.” Economics, likewise, had its part in cross-disciplinary ventures, but it came in different ways – through the spread of economic metaphors through society and through the application of economic language and techniques to disciplines from sociology and political science to law and philosophy. Needless to say, the cross-disciplinarity initiated by economists did not dictate the kind of co-operation psychologists had in mind when they joined in similar undertakings.

It is arguable that the extent of cross-disciplinary activity reflects indistinct demarcations between certain social sciences (at what point, for example, does sociology become social psychology or political science, political sociology?) but that is not the whole story. As we have seen, economics, which, unlike psychology, had made human rationality its province, and which by the 1950s was rapidly developing methods that would set it apart from other social sciences, was involved. The reason is that cross-disciplinarity has to do with cooperation as much as with competition. Whether the initiative came from patrons (government or foundations) or from academics – indeed, given the role played by academics within foundations, this distinction is not always easy to draw – the practical problems to which solutions were sought were as many occasions for social scientists to claim disciplinary expertise. Following WWII, the commonality of problems accounted for most cross-disciplinary research ventures. Yet, the difficulties to transform multidisciplinary efforts into interdisciplinary achievements reminds us that, beyond the personal penchants of social scientists, cross-disciplinarity should be understood as the struggle by various social sciences to force their own conception of society on each
other so as to emerge as the main providers of solutions to its problems.

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