2 MARX AND MARXISM

Karl Marx: born Trier, Rhineland, 1818, died London, 1883

Major works

The Poverty of Philosophy (1847)
The Communist Manifesto (1848)
The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte (1852)
Grundrisse (Outline of a Critique of Political Economy) (1857)
Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy (1859)
Theories of Surplus Value (1862-3)
Capital, volumes 1-3 (1863-7)
Critique of the Gotha Programme (1875)

Introduction

'Men make history but not under conditions of their own choosing.'

Marx is an important transitional figure between those writing in the aftermath of the French Revolution of 1789 and the writings of Durkheim and Weber. Whilst Marx sought to further the radical political changes initiated by the 1789 Revolution, Durkheim and Weber's sociologies were in part shaped by their attempts to take stock of its legacy in the politics and culture of early twentieth-century France and Germany respectively.

Marx's ideas developed initially from his criticisms of German Idealist philosophy, particularly the work of Immanuel Kant, (1724-1804), G. W. F. **Hegel** (1770-1831), and Ludwig **Feuerbach** (1804-72). Kant and Hegel were inspired by the Revolutionary ideals of democracy, equality and freedom and yet critical of the practices employed to attain them. Each, in different ways, sought to use philosophy to understand more systematically how peaceful progress towards equality and freedom can be sustained. For this generation of German Idealist philosophers then, the French Revolution was in important senses unfinished, and Marx, beginning in the early 1840s, took up their project to work out how its promise could be delivered.

Marx was one of a series of critics who argued that, despite their best efforts to find a secure rational basis for political progress, the problem with the German Idealists was that their ideas remained just that: *ideas* about how to proceed which left the real world untouched. Marx, in contrast, wanted to bring intellectual analysis and practical political action together to change society. Therefore, he turned to the political economists, Adam Smith (1723-90) and David Ricardo (1772-1823), as well as to French socialists, to develop an ·overall theory of the history, politics and economy of modern capitalist societies. We can see here, then, a clear example of the **Enlightenment-inspired** belief that humans can, by understanding their world, thereby also change it.

Looking at Marx's work from the perspective of the early twenty-first century, it is easy to dismiss his ideas as quite simply both wrong in their analysis of **capitalism** and disastrous in their predictions about the promise of the communist society that he believed would replace it. However, while it is important to expose the failures of Marx's predictions for the future of capitalism, this does not exhaust his significance within social theory. It is this latter aspect of his work which we will discuss in more detail in this chapter.

Marx's was one of the most significant attempts to develop a multi-dimensional analysis of modern society; one which would not just describe the ways things appear to be but would penetrate beneath accepted views and offer a decisive challenge to the most powerful beliefs and values of early capitalist society. This ambition Jed him to develop an historical analysis of modern society which focused on what was often overlooked in other kinds of history. Rather than looking at monarchs and battles, he argued that historians should look at the work of ordinary people, because this is the activity that really makes and changes history. Perhaps more importantly for his significance as a social theorist, however, Marx returns repeatedly to the failure of the leading economists of his time to recognize the social

relationships between real people that are necessary to create the commodities on which capitalism relies. As Giddens puts it, for Marx, 'any and every "economic" phenomenon is at the same time always a social phenomenon, and the existence of a particular kind of "economy" presupposes a definite kind of society' (Giddens 1971: 10).

For Marx, 'economic activity' always includes work or labour as a set of social relationships. This is what he is trying to draw attention to with his argument that the crucial feature distinguishing humans from animals is that humans have to transform the natural world in order to survive in it. Whereas animals can survive by consuming what they need, humans need to *make* everything they need - from clothing to shelter to food - out of materials from their natural environment. Without burrows, lacking fur or claws, in this vulnerable state humans need to work together to survive, hence they need to develop social relationships: 'By social we understand the co-operation of several individuals, no matter under what conditions, in what manner, and to what end' (Marx and Engels 1969: 291-2).

Here, then, Marx is developing a sociological analysis of economic production. It is not only that, for example, we build homes or sow crops, but that we do so as 'praxis'; by this term Marx refers to all the practical know-how, theoretical knowledge and other social resources available to any particular historical society or group within it. This is what he means by referring to his method of social, economic and political analysis as **'historical materialism'** - nature, both 'out there' and our own biological possibilities, is 'the raw material' which we work on and transform in order to produce what we need to survive. The tools and actions we put in place to fulfil basic needs also change nature, and the resulting new product in turn changes our future needs. For example, a particular society may learn that certain crops grow better than others and so focus on these; they then become staples for that society and scarcity will come to mean an absence of this particular crop rather than of any food at all. In a very real sense then, humans are social products too. We create ourselves anew in creating what we need to survive, as 'universal producers' we are also historical products.

Marx's strategy of making explicit the social relationships embedded in all aspects of human society offers a powerful way of making the familiar world strange and inviting us to reexamine it. Consider everything in a particular society, Marx suggests - from fabulous palaces and galleries to factories, roads, beds and beer glasses - as fossil-like renditions of layers of human imagination, labour, know-how and communication. He then invites us to question how it is

that we are led to experience the social world as an alien force, even though we all help to create it. This point goes to the heart of Marx's work and its distinctiveness within social thought. We will return to it at the end of the chapter after we have looked at some of his ideas in detail.

Marx and historical materialism

For Marx, then, **social structures** are not randomly created. He argues that there is a quite definite pattern to the way societies in different parts of the world, and at different times in history, have organized the production of material goods. This theory of history and society is, as we mentioned above, called historical materialism. For our purposes we can identify the following elements.

Looking back over the history of human societies, Marx claims, we can with the benefit of hindsight identify a pattern to the process of economic and societal development and change. Societies that have existed or do exist today exhibit one of five different ways of organizing production. These different ways of producing goods Marx called **modes of production.** The five are (in chronological order): the primitive communist, ancient, feudal, capitalist and communist modes.

Apart from the first and last modes of production - the primitive communist and communist - each mode has one crucial characteristic in common. Each is a way of producing goods based on classes. Though the term 'class' has different uses elsewhere in sociology (and all sorts of uses in speech) the Marxist usage is a quite specific one. According to Marx, in all non-communist societies - in the ancient, feudal and capitalist modes - there are just two classes that matter. These are the class that owns the means of production - it is their property - and the class that does not own it.

In systems of production based on classes, goods are produced in the following way. The majority of people, who do not own the means of production, do the productive work for the benefit of those - the minority - who do own it. In Marxist theory, this is the key feature of non-communist societies existing throughout history. The production of material goods always takes place by means of the exploitation of the labour of the majority, non-property-owning class by the minority class, which owns the means of production and does not work. In other words, whatever degree of cooperation or even friendliness might exist between individuals from each class, their interests objectively conflict. Those belonging to the dominant economic class are by definition

engaged in an exploitative relationship with those in the subordinate class.

There are no classes in either of the communist modes. In primitive communist societies people cannot produce a surplus. This is usually because of an inhospitable environment, or a lack of technological know-how, or a combination of the two. Because such peoples only produce enough to allow them to exist at subsistence level, everyone has to work. There is no surplus property, and so therefore no opportunity for classes to emerge to exploit it. In the communist mode there are no classes because private property has been abolished - individuals are not able to own the means of production. Because in any class-based mode of production goods are produced in this exploitative way, in Marxist theory the owners of the means of production are usually referred to as the dominant class, while the non-owning, exploited class which performs the productive work is called the subordinate class.

According to Marx, the history of human society is the history of different kinds of productive systems based on class exploitation. He says we can divide up the history of any society into different epochs or ages, each of which is dominated by one particular mode of production, with its own characteristic class relationships. All societies will eventually pass through all these stages in history and all will eventually become communist. However, not all societies evolve at the same rate. This is why at any particular time in history different societies exhibit different modes of production - they are at different stages of historical development.

All non-communist modes have in common the production of goods by means of the domination and exploitation of one class by another. What distinguishes different modes of production from one another? Each non-communist mode of production has a different, dominant, property-owning class and a different subordinate, exploited, non-property-owning class. Furthermore, each mode grows out of the previous one.

The ancient mode of production

The oldest form of class production - hence its name - is the ancient mode of production. This mode grew out of the subsistence or primitive communist mode primarily because of technological improvements. For example, in the Iron Age humans developed productive techniques that allowed for specialist animal farming and settled agricultural production. This in turn enabled the production of a surplus, and required a more complex **division of labour** than was necessary in a purely subsistence economy. In effect, a dominant class of *non-producers* could emerge.

The distinguishing feature of this mode of production is that people are owned as productive property by other, more powerful people. That is, it is production based on slavery. Here, then, there is a dominant class of *masters* and a subordinate class of *slaves*. Production takes place by means of the involuntary labour of people who are owned as property by others. Ancient Greece and Rome provide the classic examples of slavery as a mode of production. In the Greek and Roman empires about a third of the population was enslaved. Most had entered into slavery as prisoners-of-war, following battles undertaken as part of the imperialist (empire-building) policies of the Greek and Roman states. One of the main reasons why the ancient mode of production disintegrated was that the state power upon which it depended became eroded. As it became more and more difficult for the ancient states to control and coerce people living in distant parts of their empires, so did the possibility of sustaining slavery as a mode of production.

The feudal mode of production

In place of the ancient mode of production emerged a new mode with a much more local character, called feudalism. Feudal production was based upon the ability of warriors or nobles controlling small local territories by force of arms to coerce and exploit an agricultural labour force. In feudalism the dominant class controls the land, and comprises the *lords*. The subordinate class is made up of *serfs*. Production takes place by means of the labour of those who have to work the land in order to survive. Since these labourers do not own the land, but are merely tenants on it, they are obliged to give up much of the product of their labour as rent (in the form of a 'fee' called a *tithe)* to the landlords. Feudalism dominated Europe from the Dark Ages until early modern times. Two factors in particular heralded its death and helped to usher in a new mode of production, based on a new form of class exploitation. First, strongly centralized political power was re-established in Europe not in the form of large, unwieldy empires, but in the form of absolutist monarchies. This allowed sufficient state control to be exercised within national territories in European countries for proper legal systems to be devised and enforced. This, in turn, provided an opportunity for economic activity to extend beyond local feudal boundaries, and for widespread trade to become possible, for example, through the gradual unification of tax and currency systems

within major trading areas, and along major trading routes such as the Rhine.

Second, as a result of the changes brought about by the agricultural revolution, agricultural production became rationalized and more efficient. One of the most significant consequences of this was the Enclosures Acts. These Acts denied the bulk of the agricultural labour force the subsistence rights over the strips ofland they had been entitled to under feuda lism. Replaced by sheep, and by non-labour-intensive farming using machines, these labourers were made landless. As Marx described it in *Capital,* 'Sheep ate men' (Marx 2008). Thrown off the land, and with no other means of subsistence than their labour power, workers were forced to sell their labour to employers for a wage. A *labour market* thus emerged for the first time.

The capitalist mode of production

Production now took on a new class character. The labour power of a class of landless labourers - the **proletariat,** as Marxis_ts call them - could now be purchased for a wage by a class of property-owning employers, for whom the Marxist term is the **bourgeoisie.**

So capitalism developed in Britain before industrialization: agricultural goods were produced first of all in a capitalistic way. It was only later, when factories were built and industrial machines were developed, that industrial capitalism became established and an urban proletariat emerged. In capitalist society, the bourgeoisie are the dominant class because, like the masters in slave societies and the lords in feudal societies, they own the productive wealth - the means of production.

During the development of capitalism, the character of the property in which capitalists have invested their wealth has, of course, altered. In the early stages of capitalism, as we have just noted, productive property primarily took the form of land, with the proletariat earning wages as agricultural labourers. Later, industrial production gave rise to capitalist investment in factories and machines, with the proletariat earning wages as industrial manual labourers. Still later, capitalism took on the form typical of contemporary industrial capitalism. Today, instead of actually owning and controlling industrial production themselves, the ownership of productive property usually takes the form of capital investment in stocks and shares. (Though of course, capitalist landowners, and owners and controllers of their own enterprises - especially the smaller ones- still exist in plenty today.)

Despite these alterations to the nature of productive property in

capitalist society, for Marxists the character of class relations between owners of property and non-owners of property is essentially the same as in the earlier class-based modes of production. Though the bourgeoisie do not make goods themselve,s they nevertheless own the means of production. For this reason, they will always profit from the difference between the cost to them of the labour of the proletariat, and the value of the goods produced by the proletariat's labour power. The important fact is that workers will always be paid less than the value of the goods they produce. If this did not happen, the system could not work; without profit, reinvestment of this surplus into the productive power of capitalism would not take place, and enterprises would wither and die in the face of competition. This *surplus value* costs the capitalist nothing, and is a tangible symbol of the exploitation of wage-earners' labour power by employers. Though not as obvious as the exaction of tithes by feudal lords, or the ownership of people by slave-owners, the relationship between the capitalist and the wage-earner is of exactly the same kind. In Marx's words, 'The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles' (Marx and Engels 1976 [1848]).

The role of the superstructure

So far, our account of Marxist theory has concentrated on production - on economic relationships. But what about the cultural, political and legal dimensions of social life? As we have seen, in developing his critique of capitalism Marx is concerned to show that economic relationships are also social relationships in that they presuppose a definite social, political, cultural and legal context. This other side of Marx's analysis also needs to be examined now: how does he understand the relationship between economic production and the cultural, political and artistic dimensions of a society?

Marxism is often understood as claiming that those aspects of society placed under the broad heading of 'culture' are really ideas in our heads, individually or collectively, which like mirrors 'reflect' economic relationships. But perhaps it makes more sense to distinguish between dominant systems of belief and the ideas we have as individuals. Marx allows the possibility that there will be individuals and groups within a society who have ideas that differ from or challenge dominant views, and indeed he would have to allow this or else rule out the possibility of his own ideas! However, his argument is that, in a class society, the more dominant beliefs and values will tend to support the interests of the dominant class. In order to convey this, Marx calls

the way a society organizes production its **infrastructure** or **economic base.** The rest of its social organization - its non-economic activities and its ideas, beliefs and philosophies - he calls its **superstructure.** The use of these terms is important, since it stresses the way in which a society's superstructure is created by its base; that is, one set of activities is built upon the other.

Institutions

First, at the level of social structure, the non-economic institutions in any epoch are always organized in such a way as to benefit the mode of production. For Marxist sociologists writing in the twentieth century, the task then became that of analysing how specific institutions which appear to be divorced from economic considerations are in fact structured so as to support the values and activities of capitalist economic activity. Below are two such accounts of key institutions - the family and the education system - in capitalist society:

The family

> Most Marxist analyses draw attention to the way in which families tend to encourage and reproduce hierarchical, in-egalitarian relationships, and to act as a safety-valve for the work-force of capitalist societies, dampening down their discontent so that it is robbed of revolutionary content. In providing a place where children can be conceived, born and reared in relative safety, the family is providing tomorrow's labour force. At the same time, by offering a centre for relaxation, recreation, refreshment and rest, the family helps to ensure that members of today's labour force are returned to work each day with their capacity to work renewed and strengthened. This is what is meant when it is said that the family reproduces labour power on a generational as well as a daily basis.

Education

> Bowles and Gintis argue that schooling operates within the 'long shadow of work': that is, the education system reflects the organization of production in capitalist society. For example, the fragmentation of most work processes is mirrored in the breaking up of the curriculum into tiny 'packages' of knowledge, so that each subject is divorced from all others; lack of control over work processes is reflected in the powerlessness of pupils with regard to what they will learn in school or how they will learn it; and the necessity of working for pay when jobs seem pointless and unfulfilling in themselves is paralleled by the emphasis in schools on learning in order to gain good grades, rather than learning for its own sake. Therefore, Bowles and Gintis claim there is a correspondence between the nature of work in capitalist societies, and the nature of schooling. (Bilton et al. 1981: 292-3; 387)

Each institution betrays the imprint of capitalism and the outcome is the same - the reproduction of capitalist relationships regardless of what might be intended by the individuals involved. In this light, twentieth-century Marxist sociology closely parallels the structural-functionalist theories we shall discuss in the following chapter. For such sociology, as for **functionalism,** the analysis of an institution takes the form of identifying its positive role in the **social system.** Indeed, the above accounts of the benefits for capitalism of family life and schooling could quite legitimately be said to identify the 'function' that these institutions perform in meeting the needs of capitalism. Though both Marxism and functionalism are 'systemic' theories, the crucial difference concerns the way they each characterize both the system and those whose needs are being met by it.

Ideologies

The relationship between the base and the superstructure is apparent in the way the prevailing beliefs in any epoch also support the organization of production. This is especially important in societies where the activity of producing goods involves the exploitation of the bulk of the population, rendering them severely disadvantaged and the society grossly unequal. While the compliance of the subordinate class in this arrangement can be secured by physical force, in the Marxist view the most effective way of ensuring that compliance is via prevalent beliefs and values. As we said earlier, for Marxists, **ideologies** are systems of belief which:

- legitimate the class-based system of production by making it appear right and just, and/or
- obscure the reality of its consequences for those involved.

According to Marxists, the dominant ideas, beliefs and values in a class society (which are the ideas about which there is most agreement) are not there by chance. They act as ideologies, propping up a structure which, without such ideological support, would risk serious challenge from the subordinate class. Marxists argue that although from time to time dominant classes *do* have to resort to naked force to maintain

their power and supremacy, the absence of such obvious coercion should not be taken to signify an absence of exploitation. On the contrary, they suggest, all a lack of naked oppression can ever indicate is a lack of effective opposition, and the lack of any need to use force. It does not mean that domination is not taking place - only that the dominated are insufficiently aware of their condition or else lack the power to have their resistance registered.

How do such dominant ideas become established? Like functionalists, Marxists argue that particular ideas are transmitted through various key agencies of socialization. In contemporary society, for example, both Marxists and functionalists would point to the important role played by institutions like the family, the education system and the mass media in promoting generally held beliefs and values. The essential difference between functionalists and Marxists concerns their interpretations of the role of the socialization process that such institutions try to ensure. For functionalists, socialization is the way we learn ideas that we need to know in order to think and behave in the ways required ofus by the social system. For Marxists, it is the way we learn those ideas which serves to justify the real character of a class society. For both theories there is a prevailing culture which people are expected to learn through socialization. The difference between them concerns the job this culture is taken to perform: For functionalists, it ensures social integration. For Marxists, it is intended to ensure social inequality and domination.

Ideologies in contemporary Britain

We can look at some prevailing ideas in contemporary capitalist Britain to see how a Marxist would explain their superstructural significance. From the Marxist viewpoint, the type of ideas in Britain which help to perpetuate capitalism in this society are ones that attempt to:

- divert people's attention away from the reality of class inequality
- reproduce demand for goods by encouraging consumerism
- encourage the wage-earning class to accept their subordinate role
- justify the inequality between the classes.

How is this done? How do such ideas come to prevail? A Marxist approach to the superstructure of contemporary Britain might include the following.

Diversionary institutions

Capitalist production is exploitative, according to Marxists. A major reason for its survival is that institutions exist to divert the attention of the exploited away from the reality of their condition. One important vehicle for doing this is the entertainment industry. For example, much popular music, with its characteristic emphasis on the attractions of romantic love and/or sexual satisfaction as the pinnacle of human fulfilment hardly aims to shed light on the reality of class exploitation! And the same can be said of much popular literature. Escapism of other kinds also abounds: the never-ending production of crime novels, war novels, science fiction, and so on, bears testimony to this escapism. A substantial proportion of television and radio programmes has similar consequences, From situation comedies to quiz shows, from soap operas to cops and robbers films, such entertainment promotes a trivialization of reality. Programmes like these create 'pretend' worlds to distract and divert us from the facts oflife in a class society.

The family can also perform a similar task. A dominant belief in contemporary society is that individual emotional satisfaction can only be found in marriage and child-rearing. However pleasant or otherwise the successful accomplishment of such goals may be, we must realize that the pursuit of such an achievement renders a desire for fulfilment through other activities, like work, less likely. The result is that exploited, meaningless work is tolerated. Life becomes about the achievement of marital and parental satisfaction, in order to compensate. As a Ford car worker told Huw Beynon: 'I just close my eyes, stick it out, and think of the wife and kids' (Beynon 1973).

Much of the news media perform an important diversionary role in capitalist society too. For example, in Britain, tabloid newspapers like the *Sun,* the *Star,* the *Daily Mirror,* the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Express* traditionally concentrate on the trivial, the sensational and the titillating rather than on a serious reporting of events. This deliberate suppression and distortion of reality can only further encourage people living in a capitalist society to divert their gaze away from inequality, deprivation and exploitation. Indeed, since it is only through mass media that we gain most of our information about reality, a failure to provide such information is not only diversionary. It also means we are being provided with a picture of the world that is false.

Consumerism: the reproduction of demand

Capitalism depends on the reproduction of demand. Any social institution that promotes the purchase of goods perpetuates their production by capitalist means. Clearly, the main way in which we are encouraged to consume is by means of advertising. Whether on television or radio, in the cinema, in newspapers and magazines or on billboards, advertisements glorify the possession of material goods and thereby promote their acquisition. The family helps reproduce demand too. In Western societies, many people live in nuclear families - the smallest kind of family unit. Each family is economically independent, purchasing its own goods. This ensures that demand is maximized. In larger households, demand for consumer goods would decrease.

The acquiescence of wage-earners in their subordination

Capitalism depends on the bulk of the population being socialized into accepting a subordinate role. Once again, the family plays an important part. It is in the family that we first learn the meaning of authority and obedience. Learning to submit to the wishes of parents provides just the training necessary to cope with being a wage-earner and under the authority of an employer. Education obviously reinforces this training.

The justification of inequality

Capitalism depends on its inherent inequalities, if they are recognized at all, being accepted as just. It is in the classroom that we first encounter the inevitability of inequality. Here we learn that people do not only possess *different* abilities. They possess *better* or *worse* abilities. 'Clever' children succeed and are rewarded with good grades and exam results. 'Less able' children deserve poorer rewards. What better training for life in a society where different abilities are also deemed superior or inferior, and judged accordingly? Experiences in school can only encourage people to believe that inequality of reward is just. Such beliefs are expressed in such commonly held views as these: 'Of course doctors should be paid more than refuse collectors. They do a much more important job.' The unequal distribution of rewards among different occupations reflects their importance. Or again, 'Anyone could collect rubbish. Only able/intelligent/skilled people can become doctors.' Achievement within an unequal world reflects merit. In a fundamental way, then, education, with its intrinsic emphasis on competition and selection, on success and failure, on merit and demerit, teaches members of a capitalist society the justice of inequality. In particular, it teaches the 'less able' - the 'failures' - to expect, and accept, low rewards in their lives.

Marxists argue that such an analysis of the relationship between the infrastructure and the superstructure tells us a great deal about power in a class society. The dominant class rules, but not necessarily by being the actual office-holders who make decisions. It rules because its interests are more or less successfully passed off as universal, as common sense, In Marx and Engels' words: 'The ideas of the ruling class are, in every age, the ruling ideas' (McLellan 1977: 176).

Class consciousness

It is for these reasons that the concept of **class consciousness** is of such importance in Marxist theory. However, Marx is clear that the subjective conditions or the state of political awareness of the working class is not the determining factor in bringing about social transformation. According to Marx, the impetus for revolution does not arise randomly, or by chance. Ideas about how a society ought to be restructured can only become influential under certain circumstances. In particular, pressure for change builds up when institutional arrangements (which have come into being to support a particular mode of production) no longer suit productive relationships, because of the alterations these have undergone over time. Marx identifies a series of processes that he believes will happen within the realm of production and will place increasing strain on ideologies intended to contain opposition to capitalism. These objective conditions will foster heightened political awareness among the working class so that full advantage can be taken of the weakened state of the bourgeoisie and collective opposition to their political and economic power can be sustained.

Social change

Feudalism to capitalism

In feudal society, the landowners were the dominant class, owning the dominant means of production. The superstructure supported their dominance, and ideas that reflected their class interests were the ruling ideas. For example, feudal law bound serfs to the land, and political power was in the hands of landlords and nobles. Feudal religion

legitimated these arrangements. As one Victorian hymn puts it, three hundred years later:

> The rich man at his castle,
> The poor man at his gate:
> God made them high or lowly,
> And ordered their estate.

As capitalist production replaced feudalism, the superstructure changed and came to support and justify the new economic arrangements. Technological innovations began to transform the nature of production, from labour-intensive agriculture to mechanized agriculture, and ultimately to industrial production. As these agricultural and industrial revolutions unfolded, so the new capitalist class emerged as the owners of the foundation of the new and growing means of production - capital.

For a time, however, the superstructure lagged behind these changes, its character still reflecting and legitimating the old economic arrangements. For example, though capitalist production required a mobile labour force and land to be freely available for buying and selling, the old legal and political arrangements prevented this.

Eventually, the strain or contradiction between the interests of the new bourgeoisie and the power and practices of the old landowning class became too great, and the landlord class was overthrown. Though this happened quite quickly and violently in other European societies, the change began earlier, and was more gradual, in Britain. By means of various political alterations which took place over a few centuries, the landlord class came to share political power, first with the capitalist landowners, and then with the new industrialists Eventually the control of political decision-making passed irrevocably into capitalist hands, though a residue of influence has remained with the landlords up to today.

Capitalism to communism

Marx predicted that the same kind of process would be apparent in the revolutionary transformation of the capitalist mode of production into the communist one. Again, the practical transformative actions of the people- their 'praxis' - would be the motor of this change. However, these revolutionary practices could only gain momentum and spread in tandem with certain weaknesses in the economic system becoming more evident. This would happen as capitalism developed as a mode of

production. According to Marx, the evolution of capitalism can only occur by means of the continual exploitation of the working class. That is, since capitalism survives only by exploiting the wage-earning class to a greater and greater extent, the increase in such exploitation will do much to radicalize the working class and encourage the development of revolutionary class consciousness. In other words, the very steps taken to ensure capitalism's 'progress' as a productive system will, at the same time, guarantee the sowing of the seeds of its own destruction. This is how Marx believed the transition to communism would come about.

As we said earlier, capitalism was established prior to the development of industry. But it was only with the Industrial Revolution,' · representing progress for capital, that the reality of capitalist society could start to become visible to its members. Industrial production created large urban settlements of workers who found themselves in similar positions for the first time. Living in the same overcrowded conditions of poverty and squalor, and working in the same factories, the urban proletariat could together begin to recognize their common exploited state. Thus, as capitalism develops as a mode of production, exploitation increases, and, as this happens, class consciousness begins to become more revolutionary.

Capitalist production depends on capital accumulation. Capitalists accumulate capital by increasing the return from the sale of their goods while at the same time lowering the costs of production. One major way of lowering costs is to reduce the size of the labour force by increasing the mechanization of production. This has two effects. First, smaller capitalist businesses, lacking the capital to invest in new machinery, are unable to compete successfully. They go to the wall, and join the proletariat class. Second, unemployment increases among the proletariat. Since wage-earners are also consumers, an increase in the impoverishment of some of them reduces demand for goods. Faced with this loss in demand, capitalists have to cut costs still further in order to retain profit levels and remain solvent. This is done by either decreasing their labour forces still further or by reducing wage levels. This can be done in two ways. Wages can be actually reduced. (The 1926 General Strike took place when miners' wages were reduced). More typically, wages can be 'increased' at a slower rate than the rate of inflation. As a result of either of these methods, demand decreases still further and this further affects supply. As this process continues, the gap in reward between the contracting bourgeoisie and the ever-growing proletariat increases. As the proletariat becomes increasingly impoverished in this way, the conditions emerge for the development

of a fully fledged revolutionary class consciousness. The proletariat is thus transformed from being merely an *objective* class, a class 'in fact', to being a *subjective* class - a class in their political actions - as well. It changes from being just a class *in* itself to being a class *for* itself. When this class consciousness reaches its fullest extent, the proletariat is in a position to rise up and overthrow capitalism, taking over the means of production and the state apparatus, as the capitalists did before them. According to Marx, this is the final revolution in a society. Unlike in earlier revolutions, there will be no new exploiting class. Rule by the proletariat means self-government by the vast majority, by the workers. Over time the signal feature of class society - private ownership of the means of production - is abolished and all productive means are collectively owned. This, Marx argues, also brings about the end of **alienation** and the beginnings of a social order which can utilize the productive power of the capitalist infrastructure to support the full development and enjoyment of those aspects of social relationships previously distorted by the endless pursuit of private profit for the bourgeoisie. The productive efficiency of capitalism can now be directed to supporting all members of society. The promise of communism for Marx lies in its enabling people to control their own destiny and 'make their own history' in a more conscious, 'rational' and genuinely collective manner than had been possible in previous class-based societies. Marx resists painting a detailed vision of communist society because this risks the fantasy or utopianism he is critical of in other socialist thinkers. He does however offer a glimpse of the transformation of the experience of 'work'. For Marx the rigid parcelling out of skills and talents is characteristic of class-dominated capitalism where the separation of mental and physical labour is deeply rooted in divisions within individuals and between classes and occupational groupings. Under communism, according to Marx and Engels, it will be 'possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticise after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter , fisherman, shepherd or critic' (McLellan 1977: 169).

So, only in communist society can human beings fulfil their social potential as individuals. In all other forms of society, the production of material wealth by the dominance of one class over the rest denies this possibility.

Controversies within Marxism

Marx died before the influence of his ideas became widespread. Once Marxist politics became established in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and particularly after the Russian Revolution in 1917, such ideas were the subject of immense controversy both as revolutionary political theories and as analyses of capitalist society. As we shall see in the following chapters, Weber and Durkheim at least in part developed their own analyses of capitalist societies as criticisms if not of Marx's ideas then certainly of those of his later political and intellectual disciples. With reference to Marx's analysis of the problems of capitalist society, both Durkheim and Weber departed little from Marx's account of the social conflict and inequality created by capitalist **relations of production,** however neither of them saw this inequality as the core hallmark of **modernity** as Marx did. Moreover, they were both convinced that revolutionary socialism would be more likely to threaten liberal ideals of individual freedom and equality.

For the purposes of this chapter, we will sketch in some of the most significant developments within those social theories that developed after Durkheim and Weber and that sought to update Marx for the twentieth century.

One issue which proved to be particularly fertile ground for the sociological debates around Marxism was that of the relationship between the economic base and the superstructure of society. At this time, critics of Marxism argued that it is guilty of **economic determinism.** According to this criticism, Marxists are arguing that 'all social, political and intellectual development is caused by economic changes and even that all human action is economically motivated' (Lee and Newby 1983: 116). Marxists have insisted that reading Marx this way is to 'vulgarize' Marxism (though they admit, as Marx did himself, that some of Marx's nineteenth-century followers did commit such an error; referring to such work , Marx complained, 'I am not a Marxist'). Marxists say that Marx certainly did not mean that at any particular time the whole of social life is economically determined, or that everyone is always guided by economic motives in their actions.

In part, the emphasis on the determining nature of the economic base within Marxist theory was a reaction to the approach to understanding contemporary capitalist societies offered by, for example, Ralf Dahrendorf and Daniel Bell, which presented inequality, exploitation and class domination as in some senses temporary problems soon to be erased from industrial societies. In this context Marxists wanted to stress the objective nature of class inequality in a capitalist

system - it is not something that can be wished away or removed by the increasing prosperity of capitalism.

If we look to Marx for a set of prescriptions for political action then this debate over the power of ' the superstructure' to generate social change is of crucial importance. According to this view Marx is seen to be offering a blueprint for the creation of the good society, a vehicle for human emancipation via societal progress. For this kind of Marxist, the theory *has* to be right, because it is both a prediction of what will happen and a weapon of political transformation - the purpose of the theory is to destroy capitalism.

With this in mind, the fervour and intensity of the debate among twentieth-century Marxists and their critics is easily understood. If Marx is seen to have been offering a blueprint for social revolution or a crystal ball, then his work must be regarded as a failure. As Lee and Newby put it, modem Marxism has had to come to terms with the occurrence of a non-event:

> In *no* advanced capitalist society has a successful proletarian revolution taken place ... moreover ... the most advanced capitalist nation in the world, the United States, appears ostensibly to be almost a living testament to the falsity of some of Marx's predictions. Not only have the majority of American workers persistently increased their standard of living, there is no significant attachment to socialism among American workers and certainly no widespread revolutionary movement aimed at overthrowing capitalism. In Europe during the 1930s, furthermore, many of the conditions which Marx's writings would lead one to believe would prompt the growth of working class consciousness were present - the widespread immiseration and unemployment of workers in the midst of a severe economic crisis in advanced capitalist societies. The outcome, however, was not the growth of revolutionary socialism within the working class but, equally often, the growth of Fascism ... the proletariat has persistently failed to act in the ways which Marx both predicted and desired. (Lee and Newby 1983: 134)

Living through such a consolidation of capitalism and confronted by a working class that was profoundly disinclined to emancipate itself cannot have been easy for those twentieth-century Marxists who hoped for a theory that would provide a much more accurate map of the future of capitalist society than Marx appeared to have offered. Indeed, living in the twenty-first century, we now have to add the calamitous events (for Marxists) in Eastern Europe in the 1990s. Not only did communist regimes collapse like cards, and not only did the Soviet Union self-destruct, but an ancient form of political ambition

emerged to replace communism in Eastern Europe - nationalism. Furthermore, the new post-communist regimes are enthusiastically embracing capitalism, the free market and *laissez-faire* **individualism.**

None of this *necessarily* means that Marxist theory is a bad theory of capitalism, however. Just because it has been found wanting as a theory of political action does not mean it is therefore faulty as a theory of the political economy of capitalism. This was in fact the position taken by the majority of Western Marxists prior to the fall of Soviet communism - an insistence that the Soviet Union represented only one particularly deviant interpretation of Marxism and that Marx's ideas and analysis of capitalism were too valuable to be thrown away with the Stalinist bathwater. However, this common ground amongst Western Marxist theorists in rejecting Soviet state socialism did not give them a common vision of how to bring Marx into the late twentieth century. As we shall briefly set out below, one version of Marxist social theory sought to rehabilitate Marxism as a scientific analysis of the objective workings of the economy. Another school instead wanted to account for the persistence of capitalism by developing a much more diffuse Marxist analysis of the culture of late capitalism. One particularly bold attempt to add scientific certainty to twentieth-century Marxism as a political theory was initiated by Frenchman Louis Althusser (1918-90).

Althusser and structuralist Marxism

For structuralist Marxists like Althusser, questions about the causal power of 'ideas' represent fundamental misreadings of Marx's work. Or rather, such questions pertain only to the early 'humanist' Marx. This early Marx was still searching for the appropriate scientific methodology he later applies in *Capital,* and so he presented his critique of ca,pitalism in the language of the philosophy, or religion, of his time. The early Marx also presents his critique in terms of the subjective experience of capitalism rather than by analysis of its objective structures. Like the supporters of other forms of structuralism, Althusser completely rejects the relevance of the idea that humans can be 'subjects' - creative agents - in charge of their lives and worlds. Therefore what individuals may feel or experience is irrelevant. For him, human life is always entirely structured, and change can only ever come about at the level of a structure whose workings have nothing to do with human cognition, choice and purpose. Althusserian Marxism thus sees itself as the heir to the 'late' Marx.

Althusser is equally opposed to· crude, economistic Marxism and to humanist Marxism. Concentrating on the base, on economic organization to the exclusion of the superstructure, is for him as faulty as concentrating on ideologies - the ideas believed by the working class. Althusser insists that it is only scientific Marxism, resting on a proper understanding of the complexity of the structure of capitalism, which can lead to the destruction of the latter.

According to Althusser there are three levels in the structure of a class society: *economic, political* and *ideological.* He defines these levels broadly, so that they embrace most aspects of human life. The 'economic' concerns all aspects of material production, the 'political' all forms of organization, and the 'ideological' all kinds of ideas and beliefs. The political level and the ideological level are not the simple creation of the economic. Although the economic level is ultimately the determining level - 'determinant in the last instance' as he puts it - Althusser defines the political and ideological levels as having 'relative autonomy'. They are thus independent and important in their own right, and the interplay between the three levels is complex and varied. Ian Craib uses a nice architectural analogy to explain this:

> We can look at the relationship between the floors of a multi-storey building: it would be nonsense to say that the first and second floors are caused by the ground floor, even though they rest upon it, have some sort of relationship to it. Each is separate from the floor above and below it, and what goes on on each floor is not determined by what goes on below it. The first floor might be a shop, the second floor offices and the third floor living quarters. Althusser's term for describing this relation where there is **a causal connection but not complete dependence is 'relative autonomy'.** The political and ideological levels are neither completely dependent on the economic nor completely independent. If we take this building as a single enterprise, the office work which goes on on the second floor obviously depends upon the sort of trading that goes on in the shop but there **are various ways in which it might be organized, and the work relation**ships there may develop in ways not influenced by the economic activity going on below. Similarly if the owners live on the third floor their standard ofliving and way oflife has its limits set by the nature of the business they run but there are choices within these limits and the development of a marriage and family life has its own dynamics.
>
> Althusser's next step away from crude Marxism is to argue that the causal processes are two-way: the political and ideological levels affect the **economic. Returning to the example, decisions based on administrative** criteria in the offices may have an effect on the trading in the shop - a 'streamlining of the management structure' for example, might lead to increased turnover. Similarly if the business is jointly owned and the marriage fails, the settlement between the partners might haye an important effect on the nature of the business. (Craib 1992: 131-2)

As you might expect from this perception of the structure of class society, Althusser argues that the study of history reveals periods when one level dominates over the other two but that this is never a permanent state of affairs. Thus it could be argued that 'the structure in dominance', as he calls it, in nineteenth-century capitalism was the economic, with the industrial bourgeoisie dominating not only economic but eventually political life, too. The power of the ideological level, mainly represented by the church, could be said to have dominated feudal society, while today a strong case could be made for seeing the · · structure in dominance in present-day Britain to be the political, via the power of the state and its penetration into so many aspects of life.

Althusser is also well known for a conceptual separation of the two elements by which the state exercises its power. He refers to organizations like the police, the army, the legal system and so on as constituting a *repressive state apparatus.* Alongside this political apparatus is another - the *ideological state apparatus* - made up of educational, media, religious and cultural institutions. Althusser's conception of a layered, interconnected structure is apparent here too; just as different structures in dominance prevail at different times in history, so different elements of a particular level will dominate at different times. Thus in modern society, education has taken over from religion as the principal ideological instrument of oppression; the work of Bowles and Gintis (1976) referred to earlier- on the correspondence between the needs of capitalism and the function of education - is an example of Althusserian theory in practice.

Althusserian theory was particularly influential for Marxist sociology at least until the mid 1980s. However, it was not the only nee-Marxist theory around at this time. For those nee-Marxists who w,re not looking to Marx for a blueprint of the future, and for those who were also suspicious of 'scientific' attempts to resolve political problems, Marx's ideas were taken forward into a more nuanced analysis of the culture of late capitalism. These Marxists - Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), and the early 'Frankfurt School' based in the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research (founded in 1928), in particular - attempted to update Marx's ambition of producing a critical theory of society. This would combine sociological analysis with social criticism and give support to the least powerful. Gramsci was imprisoned by Italian Fascists during the Second World War, while the leading figures of the early Frankfurt School were forced into exile from

Nazi Germany. In the face of evidence as to the scale of violence and destruction present within capitalist societies, they all, then, had good reason to be highly sceptical of the optimistic belief that capitalism was but a staging post en route to communism, or that the working class were by definition politically progressive.

In response to this the Frankfurt School sought to develop another core feature of Marx's thinking - the requirement to analyse the culture of capitalist societies. If, as Marx argued, capitalist relations of production filter through into all aspects of social relationships, then we can expect even the most trivial aspects of popular culture, as well as more 'high-brow' art and literature, to bear the marks of capitalist values. Looking at the totality of life under capitalism becomes important in this context because it helps us to understand why people 'buy into' these values as well as to identify more diffuse or indirect signs of critical opposition to capitalism. The Frankfurt School theorists and Gramsci share the belief that Marxist theory requires a more subtle and detailed account than that offered by Marx of how economic power translates into political and cultural domination. However, the Frankfurt School and Gramsci differed over the possibility of bringing about genuinely progressive social change. Whereas Gramsci was optimistic, the Critical Theorists ultimately lost all faith in the revolutionary potential of the working class.

Gramsci

Gramsci is famous for his notion of *hegemony.* He uses this concept to summarize the all-consuming way in which ideologies work to distort a person's view of the world. More than merely referring to the dominance of certain ideas from which capitalism benefits, hegemony conveys the inability of believers even to acknowledge that their beliefs are, in principle, capable of being different, so natural do they take them to be. Describing beliefs as hegemonic, therefore, means indicating that those who subscribe to them take them so much for granted that it requires deliberate and sustained effort to point out their existence, let alone to change believers' minds.

Because of this theoretical view of the nature of belief under capitalism, Gramsci was led to insist on the political importance of directly challenging the hegemony of ruling ideas. Gramsci argued that of course Marx was right to say that social change depends on the proletariat seeing the world as it really is. However, he was wrong to assume that this would happen simply as the by-product of economic

developments. Marxists have to become persuaders, preachers and teachers. Before political action can be undertaken to overturn the system, the battle for the *minds* of the soldiers has to be won - bourgeois hegemony has to be deliberately taken on and defeated.

The idea that ideologies have to be exposed before effective political action can be sustained is essential to Marxism. What is different with Gramsci is the account of how this will happen. He says it will not happen automatically through economic developments because of the strength of hegemonic beliefs; it has to be deliberately secured through education - by means of counter-socialization.

Critical Theory: the Frankfurt School

The three main Frankfurt School thinkers were Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979), Theodor Adorno (1903- 69) and Max Horkheimer (1895-1973). Forced to flee Hitler's Germany (in 1933, to the USA), they watched the rise and fall of the Nazi state and then the post-war entrenchment of the capitalist way of life with increasing disillusion. They eventually came to view the emancipation of the working class as a hopeless prospect, principally because of their belief in the immutability of certain superstructural forces which they saw as inexorably suffusing, and dominating, modern life under capitalism. For many thinkers today, the conceptual tools they used to explain the triumph of capitalism by means of these forces remain highly relevant for an understanding of contemporary life.

Just as Gramsci was concerned to emphasize the control of ideas as the principal source of the power of capital, so Critical Theory also focuses on instruments of cognitive and emotional domination as the key to capitalism's success. For Critical Theory, three features of the culture of capitalism in particular function as these instruments:

ï the way of thinking called **instrumental reason**
ï the role of mass, or popular, culture in stupefying the thought-processes of people and rendering them incapable of being critical of their world
ï the prevalence of a type of personality that not only accepts domination, but actively desires it.

Instrumental reason

The Frankfurt theorists' use of the concept of instrumental reason echoes Weber's focus on **rationalization** as the key feature of modern life (see Chapters 4 and 9). It is intended to convey the predominance of humans and things being seen as instruments - as means to ends - rather than as having value in themselves. Instrumental reason thus focuses on *how* things can achieve goals, rather than on whether the goals are worthwhile, or whether the instruments involved should be used for particular purposes.

The centrality of such reasoning in modern society is in many ways a consequence of capitalist activity, where a preoccupation with new and ever more efficient means of achieving productive ends becomes the be-all and end-all. In this, too, the key role of **positivist** science in modern life - characterized by a never-ending search for the causes of effects, for technical knowledge of how things produce other things - is crucial. Indeed, Marx's own dedication to science as the route to worthwhile knowledge itself eventually came under criticism from the Frankfurt theorists. In summary, for these theorists, the essence of being human lies in the ability to think critically about meaning and value and ultimate good. A preoccupation with instrumental reason means that criticisms of the existing social order are less likely to be effective.

Mass culture

The rise of *mass culture* is another major instrument of mental domination identified by the Frankfurt writers. They insist that an examination of the role of cultural agencies such as popular music, the cinema and radio (writing today they would obviously have included television, the internet and computer games) is essential for understanding the disinclination of modern humans to do anything but passively acquiesce in their subordination. Indeed, Critical Theorists are famous for their contemptuous dismissal of popular entertainment as dehumanizing, debasing and worthless. This has led to charges of intellectual snobbery and cultural elitism, but the Frankfurt writers were convinced that the superficiality of low-brow art, and its apparent mission to trivialize reality, short-changes the mass audience by promising happiness and delivering an empty caricature of it. Indeed, the term 'Critical Theory' to describe their ideas stems from this view. For them, not even intellectuals or artists concerned about, and familiar with, serious and worthy cultural products can escape the shackles and impoverishment of a culture reliant on a system of economic production which treats the producers as commodities or things to be exchanged. This system will spread its poison even into the highest reaches of artistic and cultural life.

Personality manipulation

The final element in Critical Theory is an interest in the sort of *personality* characteristics created by the modern world. Marcuse in particular developed this theme. He uses Freud's ideas to argue that all societies need to promote the repression or *sublimation* of the desires of their members in order to prevent the collapse of social order in al}, · . orgy of individual self-gratification. As a result, any proper analysis of modern society must include an examination of how such repression is achieved in our sort of world. According to Marcuse, in the early stages of capitalism a high degree of repression is necessary to ensure that people concentrate on work and production. In later, mature, capitalism, however, there is less need for such an exclusive focus, so that the retention of such repression becomes surplus to the system's requirements. In such circumstances, continuing to insist on such surplus repression might well lead to discontent, so psychological pressure is exerted - via what Marcuse calls *repressive de-sublimation* - to allow us to realize and pursue our desires, but in ways that are useful to the system. Thus, the routine use of sexual images to sell commodities in capitalist societies - cars, alcohol, coffee, clothes, or whatever - is not only sales technique (associating the commodity with an enviable sexual state or circumstance) but also a way of satisfying desires whose dissatisfaction would be potentially dangerous. As with other forms of human potential, then, for Marcuse, the use of sex in this way takes what for many is an integral and profoundly fulfilling part of human existence and turns it into an instrument of domination or manipulation.

Conclusion

This chapter has tried to outline some of the core ideas to be found in Marx's work as well as map the somewhat bumpy routes along which they were carried in the politics and intellectual debates of the twentieth century.

As we suggested at the beginning of this chapter, Marx intended to apply to direct political ends his analysis of the real historical and

social relationships in which hum ns engage. In this light we can recall his concept of praxis - that unique capacity of humans to collectively create and transform their material and social relationships. He claims that the creative possibilities involved in this concept of praxis remain hidden to us, disguised in ideologies and congealed in the apparently hostile world produced under capitalism. Within capitalist societies, humans are reduced to things, he claims , to packages of skills and labour time to be sold as any other commodity. The social and creative possibilities of praxis are reduced to the value created by labour and measured as profit. We might see this analysis of the paucity of what capitalism allows us as forming the backbone of his later arguments for the overthrow of capitalism. However, it is fair to say that the implications of this concept of praxis were not fully developed either by Marx or in any sustained form by the main currents in twentieth-century Marxism.

Many of Marx's writings contain the word 'critique' , and this really means exposing the extent to which capitalism represents only a partial realization of its human promise. It is not that Marx is anti-capitalist in the sense of wanting to go back to an earlier, easier time, a nd, for him, communism is not a society in which people would live under a grey, enforced conformity, in fact for him the opposite is the case. Capitalism harbours the economic power to allow all to develop their full potential as individuals but within a set of social, legal and political relationships which leave the majority of the population unable to realize their true potential as universal producers and as social beings. As Giddens puts it 'the enormous productive power of capitalism generates possibilities for the future development of man which could not have been possible under prior forms of productive system. The organization of social relationships within which capitalist production is carried on in fact leads to the failure to realise these historically generated possibilities ' (Giddens 1971: 15).

For Marx, and for his later followers, this core point is retained - the overthrow of capitalism is necessary to allow this potential to be fully realized. He resisted spelling out the details of what communism would look like, describing such an enterprise as 'writing recipes for the cookshops of the future' (Marx and Engels 1969: 183). But perhaps the contrastive value of what he does tell us about future communism is clear. Communism, he believed, would be able to harness the productive power of capitalist production in a new set of social relationships that would allow people to develop as fully rounded social beings, rather than as producers who , in being **alienated** from the things they produce, are also alienated from each other.

Debates about the scientific versus the humanist Marx or about the relat.ive importance of base and superstructural features of capitalism can lose sight of what we might see as Marx's deeply-rooted sociological imagination. If we reduce his concept of 'economic activity ' to 'work ', and similarly reduce all we might say and do and make in relation to other humans to 'ideas' , then we are in danger of recreating the division he criticized in the philosophy of his time between human thinking and doing. For him we are social and historical beings, created in and through our dealings with each other (whether via base or superstructural actions). We are social 'all the way down'. Suggesting this is not to ignore evident weaknesses and inconsistencies in his work , but instead to point to some of the ways in which this core identification of humans as their own social and historical products has been taken up by subsequent social theorists, minus the belief in the privileged position of the proletariat as the saviour of humanity from capitalism. We opened this chapter with Marx's comment that humans make history but not under conditions of their own choosing. The work of Giddens and of Habermas can be seen as attempts , outside of a Marxist framework, to consider in more detail both the potential of ordinary human actions to make and re-make the world and the potential of the latter to escape our conscious control. Giddens' **structuration theory** makes this point, as does Habermas in his analysis of the life-world and the system, as we shall see in Chapter 8.

In the following chapter we will look at Durkheim 's work. He too can be seen to develop a deeply socialized concept of humans - to claim that we are as individuals dependent on collective practices for our survival. His work has also, like Marx's, exerted a powerful and controversial influence on later social theorists . But as we shall suggest, for a significant part of the twentieth century the emphasis given to the *political* differences between Marx and Durkheim tended to obscure the sociological richness of their respective works .

Further reading

General introductions

Harvey, David (2009): *Introduction to Marx' s Capital,* Verso.
Harvey, David (2010): *A Companion to Marx's Capital,* Verso.
McLellan, David (2007): *Marxism after Marx,* 4th edn, Macmillan .