

## 2 Individual variability in human social life

*Sociology has to be understood as a population science, primarily on account of the degree of variability evident in human social life, at the level of sociocultural entities, but also, and crucially, at the individual level – this latter variability being inadequately treated within the ‘holistic’ paradigm of inquiry, for long prevalent in sociology but now increasingly called into question.*

Human social life is characterised by very great variability across place and time. This can be understood as the consequence of the distinctive capacities of *Homo sapiens sapiens* – modern humans – for both culture and sociality. The following would, I believe, be generally accepted.

While a capacity for culture is not unique to human beings, it is in their case evolved to an exceptional degree, and primarily through their command of language, or, more generally, of symbolic communication (see e.g. Barrett, Dunbar and Lycett, 2002: chs 2, 3; Jablonka and Lamb, 2005: ch. 6). To a quite distinctive extent, humans are able to acquire, store and transmit what could be understood in a broad sense as *information*. That is, information about the world, material and social, in which they live, in the form of knowledge and its embodiment in skills and technologies; and also information about their own responses to this world, in the form of beliefs and values as expressed in myths, religions, rituals, customs and conventions, moral and legal codes, philosophies and ideologies, art forms and so on. But while the capacity for culture is generic, cultures themselves are particular. And across human populations, separated in place and time, the actual content of cultures and of their component subcultures has been shown to be extraordinarily diverse. Humans are far more variable than are

members of all other species of animal: not, primarily, on account of greater variation in their genes or in the ecological conditions under which they live, but rather on account of the knowledge, beliefs and values that they acquire through processes of learning from others of their kind (Richerson and Boyd, 2005: 55–7; Plotkin, 2007).

Similarly, the human capacity for sociality, although not unique, is also exceptional in its degree, and in particular in its extension to non-kin. Underlying this capacity would appear to be humans' highly evolved 'theory of mind' (Baron-Cohen, 1991, 1995; Barrett, Dunbar and Lycett, 2002: ch. 11; Dunbar, 2004: ch. 3, 2014: ch. 2), which allows them not only to be aware of their own mental states but, further, to form ideas of the mental states of others, and up to several degrees ('I think that he feels that she wants . . .' etc).<sup>1</sup> A theory of mind of this kind creates the possibility of intersubjectivity and thus of social action as distinct from, or at least as a special form of, behaviour. It enables individuals to empathise with others and thus to anticipate, allow for and seek to influence what they might do, and in turn vastly increases the qualitative range of social relationships in which they can engage. It underlies, for example, all relationships involving trust or deceit, co-operation or defection, alliance or opposition. In conjunction with humans' capacity for culture, this 'ultra-sociality' can then be seen as the source of the enormous variability in the institutional and other social structural features that are documented across human societies, and that, once created, provide correspondingly diverse contexts within which patterns of social action are both motivated and constrained.

However, a crucial issue that then arises in sociological analysis is that of *how this degree of variability in human social life is to be accommodated*. Within what I shall refer to as the 'holistic paradigm',

<sup>1</sup> Much debate has gone on, and continues, over whether any other animals – for example, chimpanzees – can operate with a theory of mind of even one degree. In humans, a theory of mind is known to develop rapidly between the ages of three and five, but it is significant that this development appears to be impaired in autistic children (Baron-Cohen, 1995; Barrett, Dunbar and Lycett, 2002: 303–15).

variability is in effect treated as occurring essentially *among* sociocultural entities at whatever more micro- or more macro-level they may be distinguished – whether, say, as tribes, local communities, ethnic groupings, social classes or even total, national or state, societies. Such entities are represented as more or less coherent and distinctive ‘wholes’ that in themselves are to be taken as the key units of analysis. Carrithers (1992: 17–19) has aptly referred in this regard to the ‘sea-shell’ view of cultures or societies: that is, as type-specimens that can be arrayed, as in a museum, for purposes of comparison and classification. And one can indeed readily recognise in the holistic paradigm the kind of typological thinking which, as noted in Chapter 1, Mayr would see as being prevalent in the natural and social sciences before the challenge of population thinking arose.

Within the holistic paradigm, much work has been of an expressly idiographic kind: that is, centred on particular cultures or societies and on the detailed description of their features. But where a larger aim has been pursued, it has been that of obtaining an understanding of the variation that is displayed at the level of sociocultural entities *per se*. That is, first, by cataloguing this variation as extensively as possible, and, second, by seeking patterns of association among particular variant features, with the ultimate aim of providing a systematic theoretical basis for the construction of typologies and for the allocation of cases to them.

Research and analysis in this vein did in fact hold a prominent position in sociology – and likewise in cultural and social anthropology – from the later nineteenth century through to the middle decades of the twentieth. As notable early examples, covering mainly tribal and early agrarian societies, one could take Spencer’s (1873–1934) vast *Descriptive Sociology*, Tylor’s (1889) efforts at demonstrating ‘adhesions’ among different forms of economic and familial institutions, and Hobhouse, Wheeler and Ginsberg’s (1915) attempt essentially at widening the scope of Tylor’s analyses while abandoning some of his more controversial evolutionary assumptions. In direct succession of this work, one could then place that of Murdock (1949) and

others on comparative social structure, using the Yale Human Relations Area Files – in the development of which Spencer was an acknowledged influence (Murdock, 1965: ch. 2). And a further clear, if not always fully recognised, continuity (although see Ginsberg, 1965) can be traced between these earlier studies and much of the extensive literature of the 1950s through to the 1970s on the transition from ‘traditional’ to ‘modern’ forms of social life (e.g. Hoselitz, 1952; Mead, 1953; Kerr et al., 1960; Lerner, 1964), whether focusing on change in the cultures and social structures of local communities or of total societies. In this latter regard, what could be taken as the final expression of the holistic paradigm in its most ambitious form came with two books produced by Talcott Parsons towards the end of his remarkable sociological career. In these books, *Societies: Evolutionary and Comparative Perspectives* (Parsons, 1966) and *The System of Modern Societies* (Parsons, 1971), Parsons’ explicit aim was ‘to bring some order’ into ‘the immense variety of types of society’, understood as ‘social systems’ (1966: 1).<sup>2</sup>

The holistic ‘containment’ of the problem of variability has evident attractions, in particular in apparently staking out a quite specific sociological domain. Sociocultural entities can be represented as realities *sui generis* that have to be studied as such rather than in any way that involves ‘reduction’ to the individual level. And the possibility is thus created of giving substance to classic programmatic positions, such as those represented by Durkheim’s (1895/1938: chs I and V) assertion that social phenomena should be treated as ‘things

<sup>2</sup> The irony has often been noted that Parsons’ first major work (1937), in which his ultimate concern was to develop a ‘voluntaristic theory of action’, opens with Crane Brinton’s rhetorical question, ‘Who now reads Spencer?’ Accepting that Spencer is ‘dead’, Parsons then poses as the key problem to be addressed that of ‘Who killed him, and how?’ But in a way illustrative of sociologists’ difficulties in letting go of the holistic paradigm, Parsons eventually returned to a style of sociological thinking remarkably close to that of Spencer – first, in adopting a version of functionalist theory in *The Social System* (Parsons, 1952), and then in combining this with an evolutionary perspective in the works cited in the text.

in themselves' and that 'social facts' can be explained only by reference to other social facts, or by Kroeber's (1917) insistence that cultures should be regarded as non-reducible 'superorganisms' and his and Robert Lowie's methodological maxim of *omnis cultura ex cultura*.

However, a major problem does at the same time arise, and one that over the recent past has led to increasing criticism of, or at all events declining *de facto* commitment to, the holistic paradigm. What is crucially at issue is the degree of variability that occurs *within*, as well as among, sociocultural entities, whether total societies or components thereof: that is, variability at the level of individuals. For example, a question that immediately arises with the holistic paradigm is that of what exactly is implied when a sociocultural entity is said to be characterised by a particular institutional form – as, say, of marriage and the family or of property ownership and inheritance. Does this mean that this institutional form operates quite universally within the population or subpopulation in question, or in a majority of cases though with some exceptions, or perhaps represents only the modal form with then a good deal of attendant variation? In sociological work in the style referred to previously, this kind of question would appear to be more or less routinely evaded rather than seriously addressed.

The holistic paradigm does in effect largely rely on the *assumption* that the entities that are taken as the units of analysis have a high degree of internal homogeneity, resulting from belief and value consensus and normative conformity. In Parsons' (1952) more specific formulation, norms deriving from shared beliefs and values are 'institutionalised' in social structure while at the same time they are 'internalised' in the development of individual personalities through processes of enculturation and socialisation. Thus, for descriptive purposes, it is in turn supposed that knowledge of institutional forms can in itself provide an adequate enough synopsis of prevailing patterns of social action, with allowance being needed only for some, quite

limited, degree of individual variation that can be treated as recognised 'deviance'.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, insofar as attempts are then made to account for features of sociocultural entities and the variation they display over place and time, theories can be adopted in which individual action carries little significance. Under these theories, which prove in fact almost invariably to depend on some form of functionalist explanatory logic, individuals serve as no more than the agents of the realisation of system 'imperatives' or 'exigencies', and in a way that renders their action – or, in effect, their socioculturally programmed behaviour – essentially epiphenomenal.

The very limited explanatory success that such theories have in practice achieved and the difficulties inherent in them in principle – in particular, their lack of adequate 'micro-foundations' (see Elster, 1979: ch. 5, 1983: ch. 2; Boudon, 1990; Coleman, 1990: ch. 1) – is certainly one source of the declining appeal of holism.<sup>4</sup> However, a yet more basic objection has been raised against the holistic paradigm, and one of more immediate relevance for present purposes: namely, that the extent to which it neglects individual variation occurring within sociocultural entities – or, in other words, the *heterogeneity* of their populations – is unacceptable: in the first place, simply on empirical grounds, and at a more basic level, in view

<sup>3</sup> At the London School of Economics in the later 1950s, when I was a graduate student in the Department of Sociology, Ginsberg was still an influential presence, and certain members of the department did indeed still *define* sociology as the study of social institutions, and viewed survey research carried out at the level of individuals as being of little sociological consequence.

<sup>4</sup> A basic and by now well-recognised problem of functionalist theories in sociology is that they provide little account of why individuals *should* act – perhaps to their disadvantage – in ways that are consistent with features of 'social systems' fulfilling the functions attributed to them. And in the absence of any such account, functionalist explanations must then rely on the existence of highly selective 'environments' such that, if a social system does not meet the functional imperatives that it faces, it will simply disappear and not therefore exist as a case going contrary to the theory. But, while there are instances of societies becoming 'extinct', there is little reason to suppose that in general a sufficiently powerful selectivity operates. Societies can, it seems, exist at very varying levels of effectiveness or success – whatever criteria may in these respects be envisaged.

of the seriously limited conception of the human individual that it entails.

To revert to the discussion of human sociality in Chapter 1, it could be argued that a further distinctive feature that it possesses is that, even though (or perhaps because?) developed to an exceptional degree, it does at the same time allow for *individuality* to a far greater extent than is found among all other species of 'social' animal. In particular, human individuals, even while involved in highly complex forms of social relations, are still able to conceive of interests and ends *as being their own, distinct and separate from those of the collectivities to which they belong* (see esp. Boyd and Richerson, 1999).<sup>5</sup> Thus, instead of seeking the approval of others through sociocultural conformity, they may pursue their own ends in diverse ways that disregard or knowingly contravene what might be taken as established beliefs, values and associated norms, and indeed in ways that may go beyond individual deviance and be aimed, perhaps in joint action with others, at the modification, reinterpretation or even radical change of norms.

It was essentially this point that was stressed by some of the earliest critics of the holistic paradigm in sociology in drawing attention to the 'over-socialised' conception of the individual actor and to the extreme 'social mould' theory of human nature that this paradigm implied. Authors such as Wrong (1961) and Homans (1964) observed that while processes of socialisation are indeed fundamental in making individuals 'human' in the sense of endowing them with uniquely human attributes, these processes do *not* thereby entail that within

<sup>5</sup> The point is entertainingly brought out in the animated film, *Antz*. The deviant – because anthropomorphic – ant, Z-4195, bitterly complains (in the voice of Woody Allen), 'It's this whole gung-ho superorganism thing that I *just can't get*. I try, but I just don't get it. What is it, I'm supposed to do everything for the colony and . . . what about *my* needs?' It is, though, important to note that, to adopt Sen's (1986: 7–8) terminology, 'self-goal choice' as opposed to 'other-goal choice' need not be selfish in the sense of being concerned only with 'self-welfare goals'. It can be altruistic even while normatively deviant – as, say, with Robin Hood, stealing from the rich to give to the poor.

particular cultures or subcultures, societies or groups, individuals become essentially alike in the beliefs, values and norms that they accept or in the ends that they pursue (and see further Boudon, 2003a). To the contrary, a high degree of variability in these respects is always to be expected. In later work, Wrong (1999) has emphasised in this connection the importance of diversity in individual life-courses. At the same time as being involved in 'recurrent webs' of social relations, individuals, he argues, are still found, even in what may appear to be highly stable and homogenous sociocultural contexts, to have very different personal histories as a result of the many different factors that can impinge on their lives, including quite chance events (see further Chapter 4).

Research in many different fields of sociology could by now be regarded as providing ample support for questioning of the holistic paradigm on the lines indicated. Consider, as just one example, research into religious or political beliefs and values and their expression in forms of religious or political action. This research reveals vast individual variation. And while analyses that include a range of indicators of individuals' subcultural or social group affiliations are indeed able to bring out systematic aspects of this variation – or, in other words, probabilistic population-level regularities of major sociological interest (see e.g. Evans and De Graaf, 2013) – it is still the case that *only a quite modest part of the total variation is in this way accounted for*; and, it is important to note, *far less* than would have to be expected on the basis of holistic assumptions (see further Chapter 7).

Another way of putting the central issue that arises here would be to say that within the holistic paradigm the attempt is made – but has not in fact succeeded – to 'endogenise' the ends of individual action and the beliefs and values from which these ends derive. In mainstream economics the exogeneity of tastes or preferences has been generally accepted. But sociologists have shown a reluctance to take up an analogous position. Thus, even in early Parsons (1937: 58–65 esp.), the assumption that he identified in the work of the



utilitarians and the classical economists of 'the randomness of ends' was, for him, a major shortcoming, and one which, if correct, would, he believed, render the idea of social order highly problematic. For if a society is to cohere, the ends that its individual members pursue cannot be merely random but have, to a substantial degree, to be integrated through normative congruence at the institutional and individual levels. However, the attempts at endogenising ends that were made by Parsons in his later work progressed little beyond the programmatic stage, and the same limitation would apply to those that have been subsequently made by others (see Goldthorpe, 2007: vol. 1, ch. 8), while human societies would, as a matter of fact, appear capable of existing, and persisting, in a far less integrated condition than adherents of the holistic paradigm have to suppose.

What has then to be recognised, if only pragmatically, is that even if the idea of the randomness of individual ends is an exaggeration in that these ends and the ways in which they are formed and pursued are socioculturally structured *to some extent*, this extent is still quite limited; and also that, as Elster (1997: 753) has observed, why in fact people have the particular ends – the goals, desires, tastes or preferences – that they do remains perhaps 'the most important unsolved problem in the social sciences'. Indeed, what has yet further to be recognised is the possibility that this is a problem that may never be solved insofar as the choice of ends represents the ultimate indeterminism in human social life. At all events, for the time being at least, it is difficult to see that sociology has any alternative than to follow economics and to take individual ends as the basic 'givens' of analysis.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> It is, however, important to note that, from a sociological standpoint, there are no grounds whatever for taking the further step, as proposed by economists such as Stigler and Becker (1977), of treating ends, or 'tastes', as being stable over time and similar across individuals, the purpose of which – highly implausible – assumption is simply to allow all economic analysis to then be done by reference to changes in prices and incomes.

From the foregoing, major implications for sociological inquiry do therefore follow. First, since the states and behaviour of individuals *cannot* be adequately read off simply from a knowledge of institutional forms, it is necessary that individuals and their actions *should be studied directly*. And second, they have to be studied through methods that are fit for purpose in two different respects. These methods have, on the one hand, to be capable of accommodating and revealing, rather than in effect suppressing, the full extent of the variability that exists within sociocultural entities at the individual level; and they have, on the other hand, to be capable of allowing reliable empirical demonstrations to be made of any – probabilistic – regularities that may be emergent from this variability. In other words, what is required is a methodological approach to both data collection and data analysis through which typological thinking can be superseded by population thinking.

In order to give a more specific expression of the issues that arise here, I turn to a now rather little discussed but still, I believe, highly revealing passage from the history of cultural and social anthropology that has its origins in the work of Bronisław Malinowski. In his book *Crime and Custom in Savage Society*, Malinowski raised a direct challenge to prevailing holistic orthodoxy. In particular, he questioned the view – which he associated with Durkheim, Hobbhouse, Lowie and others – that ‘in primitive societies the individual is completely dominated by the group’, that ‘he obeys the commands of his community, its traditions, its public opinion, its decrees with a slavish, fascinated, passive obedience’, and that ‘he is hemmed in on every side by the customs of his people’ (Malinowski, 1926: 3–4, 10). On the basis of his fieldwork among the Trobriand Islanders, Malinowski sought to show that this view was far too extreme. While the Trobrianders were well aware of the social constraints bearing on them, they also had a clear understanding of their own interests and of how these might conflict with those of their community and with its legal and customary norms. Consequently, customary norms, especially, were subject not only to a wide range of interpretation but often also to quite

systematic evasion, as individuals knowingly and openly pursued their own ends. With rather splendid irony, Malinowski could then ask whether tribal or clan solidarity is 'such an overwhelming and universal force' or 'whether the heathen can be as self-seeking and self-interested as any Christian' (1926: ix).

Moreover, and with yet wider-reaching implications, Malinowski had a methodological point to make. He warned of the shortcomings of 'verandah' or 'hearsay' ethnography, in which main reliance is placed on 'informants' rather than on the direct and sustained observation of the people under study – in the way that he himself pioneered. Informants, Malinowski held, tended to tell their questioners far more about prevailing norms than about what people actually thought and did (1926: 120–1). The danger then was – especially under holistic assumptions – that the two things would be inadequately distinguished.

Subsequently, one of Malinowski's most faithful and talented students, Audrey Richards (1957), insightfully elaborated on what had to follow from his substantive and methodological arguments together. She emphasised the way in which in reports on his fieldwork Malinowski always presented extensive data on individuals as well as on groups and on variation in individual behaviour as well as on conformity – implying here, it would seem safe to say, a contrast with Malinowski's contemporary and great rival, A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, in whose analyses, as another of Malinowski's students remarked, 'people...are conspicuous by their absence' (Kaberry, 1957: 88).<sup>7</sup> Then – most significantly for present purposes – Richards went on to spell out what this must mean for research practice that aimed to go beyond – while still maintaining the inherent logic of – the advances in

<sup>7</sup> Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown are often regarded as the twin pioneers of functionalist analysis in sociology. But their functionalisms were of very different kinds. Malinowski was concerned primarily with the functions of cultural practices and social institutions in meeting individuals' biological and psychological needs, rather than in maintaining societal needs of integration and stability. For a revealing account of their contrasting positions in this and other respects, see Kuper (1973: chs 1, 2).

fieldwork that Malinowski himself had made. Her conclusion was that 'Once individual variation in human behaviour was admitted, and it had to be admitted, then anthropologists... were bound to the use of quantitative data'. Such data had to be derived from the appropriate sampling of individuals in the populations studied, so that the extent of variability could be adequately treated, and had to be analysed through the application of various statistical techniques, so that possible regularities within this variability could be revealed (Richards, 1957: 28–30).

Richards was not in fact alone in seeing the radical implications of Malinowski's work – the implications of what Leach (1957: 119) described as his transformation of ethnography 'from the museum study of items of custom into the sociological study of systems of action'. However, for those committed to the holistic paradigm – or, as Richards significantly puts it, to 'social typologies' – these implications appeared seriously threatening. What gave cause for greatest concern was not in itself the requirement for the use of quantitative methods, for such methods had been quite widely – even if not always very convincingly – applied within the holistic paradigm in the attempts, previously noted, at the construction of typologies.<sup>8</sup> Far more disturbing was that a concern with individual variability but at the same time with emergent population regularities, as might be demonstrated through quantitative methods, called into question the practice of typological thinking, and indeed its very point. The

<sup>8</sup> For example, Hobhouse, Wheeler and Ginsberg (1915) regarded their work as 'an essay in correlation', although the methods of correlation they applied were very crude, even by the standards of the time. Murdock (1949) made use of Yule's coefficient of association,  $Q$ , and of significance testing. It might, however, be added that a basic statistical difficulty raised in work of the kind in question is that the results of the analyses carried out rest largely on the assumption of independent observations, whereas Galton (1889b) pointed out, already in commentary on Tylor, that this assumption is very questionable. It could well be that associations among institutional features derive not only from internal functional requirements but also from processes of diffusion across cultures and societies. The 'Galton problem' would seem never to have been entirely resolved in comparative research within the holistic paradigm.

kind of criticism that was most often directed against Malinowski amounted in effect to the charge that his research revealed too much. Thus, as Richards (1957: 28) recounts, Evans-Pritchard regarded Malinowski's analyses as being 'overloaded with (cultural) reality', while Gluckman characterised his field data as 'too complex for comparative work'. But, given their commitment to typological thinking, what such critics were unable – or unwilling – to recognise was the possibility that, with population thinking and associated methods of data collection and analysis, individual variability *and* sociocultural regularity could be treated together.

As a coda to this illustration, it should be said that neither Malinowski's work itself nor Richards' attempt to bring out the need for quantitative methods in accommodating individual variability would seem to have resulted in any immediate questioning of the holistic paradigm within anthropology.<sup>9</sup> And insofar as its hold has more recently been weakened, a probably more powerful influence can be identified: that is, the increasing *historical* study of societies previously supposed to be of a kind 'without history' (see Carrithers, 1992: ch. 2 esp.). Such research has demonstrated in another way that to seek to understand even tribal or peasant societies as 'internally homogeneous and externally distinctive and bounded objects' (Wolf, 1982: 6) is not a viable approach, and that such societies have to be recognised as subject to division, instability and often turbulent change, internally as well as externally induced. Perhaps most striking in this regard is Jan Vansina's work on the history of Equatorial Africa and his

<sup>9</sup> In the post-war years, Richards' position in British social anthropology became strangely marginal – even in her own department at Cambridge, where, during the 1960s, I came to know her. Few systematic attempts were made within anthropology to apply quantitative methods to deal with variability at the individual level – the most important perhaps being in research carried out at the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute at Lusaka on the position of African migrant workers in the urban centres of the Copperbelt. See, for example, the work of Clyde Mitchell (1969) – from whom I later learned much when he became a colleague at Nuffield College, Oxford. Interestingly, Kuper (1973: 188) comments that this research was accompanied by a movement towards 'methodological individualism' – the basis of the individualistic as opposed to the holistic paradigm in sociology, as discussed in Chapter 3.

critique of the practice of taking tribes as the units of analysis on the assumptions that they were 'perennial' and of 'almost indeterminate age', that their members held, traditionally, to 'the same beliefs and practices' and that 'every tribe differed from its neighbours' (Vansina, 1990: 19–20). Against this, Vansina stresses 'ceaseless change' among the populations of the region – including change even in tribal and ethnic identities – and urges that rather than 'tradition' being taken to imply lack of change, traditions should be understood as 'processes', dependent on individual autonomy, that 'must continually change to remain alive' (1990: 257–60).<sup>10</sup>

In sociology, too, it may be noted, historical research – often drawing on quantitative archival material – has provided a basis for telling criticism of the holistic paradigm and of typological thinking, most notably in regard to the idea of traditional subcultures and communities. For example, Thernstrom (1964) showed that Newburyport, the 'Yankee City' studied by Lloyd Warner and his associates in the 1930s, was not the relatively insulated, well-integrated and static community that they suggested (see esp. Warner and Lunt, 1941, 1948), but rather one that had experienced substantial in- and out-migration, recurrent social conflict and high levels of social mobility.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, Baines and Johnson (1999) have observed that the supposedly traditional working class community that Young and Willmott (1957) claimed to find in Bethnal Green in the 1950s must, if it existed at all, have been a relatively recent product of post-war circumstances, since in the interwar years this area of east London was a quite unstable one, characterised by high rates of mobility, both residential and occupational.

<sup>10</sup> I am indebted to my colleague, John Darwin, for drawing my attention to Vansina's remarkable work.

<sup>11</sup> It should be said that Warner and most of his associates were in fact social anthropologists by training, primarily under the influence of Radcliffe-Brown, but were committed to bringing anthropological research methods and theory into sociology and opted therefore to work primarily in modern societies.

However, within sociology at large, the holistic paradigm could be said to have lost its sway chiefly as a result of its quite manifest inappropriateness to societies within which the degree of individual variability, and thus of population heterogeneity, is impossible to ignore – at all events in the actual conduct of research. As will later be shown, in the transition – slow and often more implicit than explicit – from typological to population thinking that is now in train, a crucial driving force has been the inescapable need for quantitative methods of both data collection and analysis through which this variability and heterogeneity can be accommodated and in various ways exploited.