

A PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY OF EMERGING DEMOCRACIES:
REVOLUTION, GENDER INEQUALITIES, AND ENERGY SECURITY*

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Abstract:

Transition culture offered scholars a terrific way to engage the central policy problems of postcommunist societies, but did not offer sociologists a good vehicle for exploring ways in which scholarship could enhance public opinion and efficacy. By exploring the degree to which political relations between the state and its citizens feature broad, equal, protected, and mutually binding consultation, and working to figure ways in which those qualities of democracy might be enhanced, sociologists can engage non-academic audiences in ways that remain independent of political obligation albeit grounded in democracy's norms. While such a postcommunist public sociology might most readily be applied to social movements pressing for democratic change, it also can be considered in other domains, from gender equality to energy security. By exploring the articulation of these and other issues within the terms of post-communism's emerging democracies, sociologists also can refine and broaden the normative foundations and analytical questions of a more global public sociology.

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Much as American sociologists are challenged to escape American presumptions in their work,¹ sociologists living in postcommunist societies are implicated in the postcommunist problematic. The choice of the ways in which that problematic might influence sociological research and teaching has expanded in the last decade, however. In this essay, I propose a public sociology of emerging democracies as one way in which sociologists can extend the broader value of their disciplinary work beyond transition. I focus in particular on the ways in which this problematic is associated with the study of democratic revolutions, energy security, and gender inequalities, and how each of these arenas contribute to the motive of public sociology in emerging democracies.

Postcommunist Problematics

To a considerable extent, especially in the 1990s, sociological research and teaching was shaped by the terms of transition and its mantras from plan to market and from dictatorship to democracy; but by 1999 this “transition culture” was already fraying. When NATO bombed Serbia in defense of Kosova, transition’s trajectory and Western identification could no longer be presumed (if it ever was so simply cast) as a neutral world historical rightness. That action required military alliances to identify perpetrators and victims, and elevated human rights over institutional transformations in the justification of force.² This return to explicit geopolitical contest was additionally fueled by the new prices accorded energy, the enrichment of Russia as a consequence, and the colored revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine. While those revolutions could easily be understood in democracy’s terms, it was clear that the pretense of political neutrality of

transitions to democracy were gone, for transition was not just about the assumption of progress, but it was also a matter of choosing orbits of influence and the terms of normality.³

The preceding paragraph is my overly simple account of the ways in which world-historical changes influence knowledge production in the post-communist world, and many who read this journal could write a much better account. To be sure, I do not mean to suggest that such a simple narrative directly influences what people write, or how they think; indeed, I would propose that this very explicit and manifest pluralization of power in the postcommunist world over the last decade has not only opened up the space for more critical accounts of transition, but it has also demanded that those elements of change that don't resonate simply with transition culture – like the growth of crime, the spread of corruption, the disaffection of publics from democratic processes, and the incompetence of political authorities across the region – become much more the subject of sociological study.⁴ This pluralization creates the space for sociology's professionalization, where instead of being the facilitator of transition with studies of how to make firms more market-savvy, electoral processes more responsive, and publics more tolerant, sociologists are expected to research questions that don't fit simple narratives rooted in teleologies of progress.

That's good, but it also misses the middle position between the policy advisor working within transition culture and the postmodernist or positivist skeptical of any association with power. The terms of emerging democracy can offer just that approach. Engaging societies whose authorities and publics have symbolically and institutionally broken with an authoritarian past and are crafting institutions, social relations, and cultural forms that extend rule of, by, and for, the people offer possibilities for a public sociology that should not be evaded by familiar stances

that bracket the public consequence of knowledge production.⁵ But even here, one must not rest easy with clever phrases.

Public Sociology in Emerging Democracies

Michael Burawoy delivered, as his 2004 presidential address to the American Sociological Association, an argument for “public sociology”.⁶ He distinguishes this type of sociology from three other dominant American types – professional, critical, and policy sociology. As Zussman and Mira write in their introduction to a volume debating his address:

Professional sociology, Burawoy acknowledges, is the sine qua non of other sociologies, supplying “true and tested methods, accumulated bodies of knowledge, orienting questions, and conceptual frameworks.” In contrast, critical sociology is the “conscience of professional sociology,” constantly questioning the foundations, both normative and descriptive, of professional research programs. Critical sociology insists that sociology “confront the pressing cultural and institutional problems of the time” rather than lapsing into obsessive attention to issues of “technique and specialization”. Yet critical sociology, as Burawoy understands it, is also marked by its unrepentant academic character, a preoccupation with abstract research programs rather than the common sense and actual experiences of those for whom it purports to speak. Policy sociology, unlike either professional sociology or critical sociology, does speak to audiences beyond the university. But it does so, Burawoy argues, “in the service of a goal defined by a client”, and provides “solutions to problems” formulated elsewhere, or particularly in its pathological forms, “legitimizes solutions that have already been reached”.. public sociology is bound to civil society – that vast array of associations and movements that stand apart from both the state and economy.⁷

In many ways, Burawoy's argument for public sociology seems ideally suited to a sociology of emerging democracies to the extent that this sociology is figuring how knowledge production might be used in the service of democracy's extension. After all, Burawoy encourages the engagement of civil society, central to the development of emerging democracies. At the same time, he does not sufficiently engage several dimensions critical to emerging democracies, a limitation I hope this article helps remedy.

On the one hand, one must recognize that equality in the postcommunist world has different cultural connotations than it does in other spaces, given its association with the dictatorial form emerging democracies seek to supersede. This is especially true when it comes to gender relations, and how advocates of patriarchy invoke associations of feminism and communism.⁸ Additionally, postcommunist countries face even more vexing definitions of the proper public reference in democratic discourse. While independence has been identified as the third leg of the triple transition, interdependence and membership in transnational bodies has often been the vehicle of assuring autonomy from old relations of dependence. In such circumstances, the public is not only one's citizenry, but also a broader transnational democratic imaginary and domain into which postcommunist nations work to find their place. These two issues complicate our sense of democracy in emerging democracies, and that is all to the good.

Given how frequently the term is used, and the terrific consequence of that use, democracy's meaning might appear to be simply evident. Of course scholars can deconstruct any term and debate any operationalization, but concern for democracy's connotation is more than an academic matter. Authorities of various sorts allocate resources depending on a nation's association with it. Activists can sacrifice their lives to realize it. With those political

investments, the pressure to normalize democracy's meaning is huge. However, to associate democracy with any authority is intellectually misleading if not also ethically dangerous.

When a word lives with qualifiers (in democracy's case, the words liberal, social, representative, and direct begin the list), one can assume that no authority can define universally what it means.⁹ At least one should consider democracy in terms of degrees, and how any empirical case varies in its approximation of democracy's ideals.

The Freedom House rankings of countries across the world suggest that one can quantify those degrees, but which variables for assessing democracy matter most? Charles Tilly offers one critical starting point when he wrote that a society is “democratic to the degree that political relations between the state and its citizens feature broad, equal, protected, and mutually binding consultation.”¹⁰ That very approach signals, then, how one might interrogate any existing case, and even inspire mobilizations in democracy's defense within societies. It is especially useful when democracy comes to define the discursive terrain on which various authorities and movements contest one another.

For example, how does one engage Vladimir Putin's claim that Russia offers the world another version of democracy different from what is dominant in the West, one called “sovereign democracy”? It's important to address what is implicit in that label – that democracy within societies is linked to the geopolitics defining relations among states, but that is something to which I return. But what is clear is that adjectives rarely supplant the importance of analysis. In the case of sovereign democracy, one might bring Tilly together with the work of Andrew Wilson and examine how various political technologies mirror democratic practices, but in fact subvert the very moral sense of broad, equal, protected and mutually binding consultations between state and society.¹¹ That's very important work, clarifying the various layers of

appearance and substance in democracy's practice. But it also makes it harder to identify which democracies are emerging, and which are still embedded in authoritarian cultures.

Although our political imagination is categorical, and drives us to ask which society is which, we should appreciate that societies differ more in degree than by category. Sociologists should therefore work toward identifying ways to indicate how much an authoritarian past is left behind, and how much we can anticipate democratic futures as a smooth extension of the present in any particular case.

We can look, for example, at the extent to which the old nomenklatura and their kin remain in power.¹² At the same time, we should also be able to consider how participation of those networks and parties associated with the authoritarian past in governance actually help to consolidate democracy's practice.¹³ Finally, we should also be willing to consider the extent to which those formerly in the democratic opposition once in power adopt practices of governance that resemble their authoritarian predecessors. Certainly the dilemmas of interpreting the rule of Mikheil Saakashvili in Georgia illustrate this challenge.¹⁴

How authorities and civil societies address past crimes of their co-nationals might just be the very indicator one should consider in order to assess the grip of an authoritarian past. For example, one might compare how Poles have come to terms with the multiple national associations of Auschwitz¹⁵ or even more powerfully their own implications in horrors like Jedwabne.¹⁶ One could consider how Turks reflect on the fate of Armenians and other minorities in the waning years of the Ottoman Empire and its successor state.¹⁷ One might reflect on how Russians recognize the Gulag and the lessons it offers for that country's future. Some might even argue that such a reckoning with past crimes is the central symbolic break that indicates commitment to democracy.¹⁸ At the same time, others have argued that a focus on past crimes

could decrease the likelihood of the compromises enabling democratic futures. This area, while embedded in arguments of real political passion, deserves more substantial sociological study to turn this matter of huge public consequence into a site of greater reason, more sophisticated argumentation, and better evidence. Debates around Jedwabne and the Armenian genocide suggest just that possibility.

Democracy, however, is not just a matter of principle and reasoned discussion. It's also associated with geopolitical alliances, sets of institutions and social relations, and ensembles of culture, symbols, and attitudes that have real interests and stakes. A realist, rather idealist, public sociology of emerging democracies needs to take into account those very power relations in ways that the transition culture of the 1990s evaded.

That culture was relatively simple; a substantial amount of work addressed how constitutions, elections, and governments might be designed; how laws might be composed that assured proper foreign direct investment and the emergence of a powerful indigenous middle class; how rights might be recognized in law and in everyday practice. Power relations were of course recognized, but more in terms of gradations of influence and authority, and less in terms of friends and enemies. That changed after the colored revolutions at the turn of the millennium. The ouster of Milosević in Serbia meant not only the need to craft democratic institutions, but also to develop transitional justice after war, to recognize the guilty and innocent; Georgia's Rose Revolution and Ukraine's Orange Revolution not only invited more democratic practices, but also challenged the region's geopolitics. Even the study of elections acquired a new power-laden accent.

Some would argue that studying how to make valid elections is the central issue that students of emerging democracies might engage. After all, by having elections, and especially

by submitting them to international monitors, authorities implicitly accept that evaluations of fairness and procedural rationality can be offered by those beyond the nation itself. When linked to the global reference of good social science, the universalism of scholarship and the universalism of electoral rationality can be joined. But focus on these elections goes beyond these affinities. Elections have become the moments when societies mired in authoritarian practices might break free into the terrain of emerging democracies. That, at least, is the narrative surrounding the optimism following the Rose and Orange revolutions.

This interest in movements resisting corrupt electoral outcomes builds on a tradition within sociology that moves beyond the sociological methods and especially the normative penumbræ associated with studying movements in more consolidated democracies.¹⁹ Rather than treat movements as ways to complement existing political institutions, movements might be considered as the means to develop new democratic norms and forms within more authoritarian societies.²⁰ By studying the movements and protests around corrupt electoral outcomes, scholars build on this revolutionary tradition and, to the extent subsequent revolutionaries learn from these past examples, actually contribute to the development of democracies.²¹ Indeed, it might go even further than comparisons and lessons; social sciences have also been directly involved in providing support for the democratic critique of corrupt practices. The systematic social scientific critique of the abuses of the electoral process in Armenia's last presidential election exemplifies how scholarship can be put directly in the service of democracy's extension.²² Geopolitics, however, ultimately complicates this neat association between social science and democracy.

The relative silence of organizations dedicated to democracy's extension around this Armenian presidential election is disconcerting, and reminds one that democracy promotion is

not only an altruistic enterprise, but one that can be implicated in the interests of geopolitics itself.²³ As Gerard Libaridian notes with regard to those 2008 Armenian elections: “it appears that the West has linked its assessment of the regime’s adherence to democratic principles to the promise of the government to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh problem. Fluctuations in the Council of Europe/OSCE assessments of elections and post-election developments can be explained by the degree to which they believe at any given moment the current government in Armenia will deliver on its promise to resolve the Karabakh conflict or the degree to which they can push the current Armenian government to make concession on the Karabakh issue in return for Western sanctioning of the regime.”²⁴

In the contest over elections, one can view realism and idealism collide, especially in such circumstances as we witnessed recently in Armenia where the West’s realist geopolitical interests appear to trump its commitment to democracy. But democracy is, itself, a cultural ensemble, set of practices, and array of institutions that brings together idealism and realism both, especially when democracy is articulated not only with the quality of a state-society relationship, but also the ways in which states and publics are embedded in a world defined by alliances that make democratic connotations, and association, a valued good.

In what follows, I propose to take two very different examples – one around energy security, and the other around gender inequalities – to illustrate how these very different arenas can be part of a broader public sociology of emerging democracies, and how each of them might develop our notions of democracy itself. In particular, I would propose that ensuring gender equality is something typically important to most discussions of democracy, but to assure its practical extension, might be productively delinked from democracy promotion per se, especially in places that are not yet emerging in their democracies. By contrast, another subject typically

discussed in terms of commerce and geopolitics – energy – is vitally important to the substance of democracy itself, in both emerging democracies and authoritarian regimes, and might become a powerful vehicle for thinking about public sociology with democratic accent.

The Articulations of Democracy with Energy Security

One of the reasons transition culture's hegemony has faded is because the price of energy—and the value of pipelines transmitting oil and gas from Russia and Eurasia through these transit states—skyrocketed in this millennium. Consequent support for emerging democracies was not just about extending freedoms and rights, but about assuring European energy security.²⁵ At the same time, energy security was also, especially in 2006, understood in democracy's terms.

In 2006, most of Europe understood Gazprom's shutoff of gas to Ukraine as an act of Russian imperialism or great power politics, even though there was evidence of Ukrainian complicity in the problem's emergence.²⁶ In many ways, the aura of the Orange Revolution inoculated Ukraine from broad European public criticism. By 2009, however, things had changed; criticism over the interruption of gas supplies was leveled equally at Russia and Ukraine. The notion that there should be solidarity among democracies seemed to crash on the shoals of European energy dependence on Russia itself. Although there was sympathy for Ukraine in this circumstance, there was also greater business realism in the air, as the EU Observer communicated to its readers:

Most EU energy firms have contracts with Russian state gas supplier Gazprom or intermediaries. But the Ukrainian side may bear the brunt of attacks due to Gazprom's powerful market position."They will not sue Gazprom because they have signed supply contracts until 2030 or 2035. And you don't want to get into trouble with your partner if

you have that kind of contract," European Council on Foreign Relations' (ECFR) expert Pierre Noel told this website". At the same time, Russian media experts were shaping the European press, inflating a measure of Ukrainian political incompetence: "Ukraine diplomats fear that a vigorous Russian media campaign will see Europeans blame political infighting and high-level corruption in Kiev for the gas mess, damaging bilateral relations. ...²⁷

Although I have not yet pursued this comparison between 2006 and 2009 systematically in terms of its articulation with democracy, others have viewed another energy matter precisely in these terms: the Baku-Tblisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline, connecting Caspian Sea Oil to the west, moving through territories beyond Russia's control.

One scholar, S. Frederick Starr, identifies this as more than a project in energy diversification, and rather as a vehicle of modernity in civic, political, and economic terms for its host countries.²⁸ He writes,

Development issues have loomed far larger in the BTC project than in most other such undertakings. Their centrality has meant that the process of designing, constructing and managing the pipeline has been no less important to the pipeline's success than the mere putting in place of the steel tube. The heart of this process has been an intensive process of consultation that has already run to several thousand meetings. Virtually anyone affected by the work has been given an opportunity to register his or her concerns.

Anyone confused about how and where to do so could consult the Citizens Guide that BP issued and disseminated widely.

An international board of experts, the "Caspian Development Advisory Panel" introduced further dimensions into the wide-ranging discussion. In Turkey alone the project affected

some three hundred villages, nearly all in the relatively backward eastern and south-central zones of Anatolia. There, as well as in Georgia and Azerbaijan, communities were not sufficiently organized to interact effectively with a large international enterprise. Therefore, the Consortium mounted a “Community Investment Program” that included assistance to villages in organizing themselves to take advantage of jobs and opportunities in everything from provisioning to sanitation.

The pipeline became operational only in May 2005, but as one can see from the publicity surrounding its justification, it was already assumed to be an investment in democracy as well. One might compare other investments in energy production and distribution in just these terms, in this mixture of realism and idealism, and ask to what extent energy investments are framed in ways that go beyond commercial interests, or even security matters, toward an expression of democratic virtues?

It is also clear, however, that the explicit valuation of democracy and energy can't be the only means by which we think about their relationship. Instead, one might go to part of Tilly's own sense of democracy, especially around those dimensions assessing the degree to which state-society relations are characterized by broad and mutually binding consultation. BTC represented just such a possibility, as well as its challenges. Elizabeth Eagen draws upon a substantial literature and her own ethnography in Georgia to identify ways in which the possibilities of broad and mutually binding consultation are simultaneously extended and limited.²⁹

In order to become an object of democratic engagement, an issue must become prominent in the public imagination. BP and Georgia itself invested in that very effort, among other things putting into the National Museum materials about the pipeline and the company. At the same

time, during Eagen's 2006 ethnography, BP officials were already worried that too much was expected of the company and the pipeline, and part of BP's public engagement was to lower expectations. Regardless of this management of public expectations, BP fostered consultation about an investment that is not typically on the public agenda in the postcommunist world, and insufficiently apparent within consolidated democracies.

Democracy was not only extended by the work of BP, however. In fact, one might say that civil society was enhanced in opposition to BP. As one representative of the Revenue Watch program at Open Society Foundation Georgia told Eagen: "Civil society has no information about where the revenue goes and no idea about it, and we want to make this idea popular in the society, to engage society in this project, to make it clear that it's important for the Georgian budget."³⁰

The development of civil society is even more complicated than this, and certainly moves beyond simple notions of civil society vs. the state. Sometimes, the stimulation of civil society occurred within BP's own contradictions.

Together with the Eurasia Foundation Georgia, BP created a "Pipeline Monitoring and Dialogue Initiative" (PMDI), which aimed to help civil society actors monitor the ways in which BP was actually maintaining its commitments. The organizations themselves became disaffected, however. Eagen writes,

The confusion over the purpose of this project led to a loss of faith for some NGOs in BP's monitoring process. "They gave money to Eurasia to monitor BP... but the reports would go first to BP, and the NGOs had to sign an agreement that they didn't have rights to open it to a third party. So it was saying it was like monitoring and some NGOs who were monitoring said that they were disappointed and it was not."³¹ In this case the

confusion about BP's purpose loosened their hold on their message; opacity is the opposite of transparency, and indicated to local NGOs that the monitoring was not the open conversation it should have been.³²

Unintended consequences are not only negative, or problematic. Sometimes it is useful to see how there can be unexpected consequences that are actually quite positive, as Eagen discovered:

In 2004, Dr. Rema Gvamichava, a highly respected Georgian oncologist, received funding from BP for a project to have a team of doctors from the Cancer Prevention Center travel along the pipeline in Azerbaijan and in Georgia to do pre-cancer screenings and public awareness campaigns. The objectives of the center focus on the early detection and prevention of cancer, and also on palliative care; the organization established the first hospice in the South Caucasus in 2003. In an interview with BP's public spokesperson, she said that they chose to fund this program because it complemented their goals, even though it was somewhat ad hoc, because "then if a person is diagnosed, he automatically becomes part of the health system with treatment" that BP is partially funding under their original social investment plan.

By making the connection between BP's health priorities and his own organization's goals, Gvamichava is the perfect example of the entrepreneurial NGO leader's understanding of the importance of space and place to investors and to local actors. The pipeline gives the project symbolic meaning of geography, while complementing the goals of the multinational corporation. BP's corporate social responsibility has set up the expectation that Gvamichava can appeal to them to solve a problem that he sees in society, and BP receives the benefit that their investment becomes

a symbol to raise awareness of cancer. BP has changed the repertoire of political action available to local actors and advocates for development and institutional change.³³

Eagen brilliantly extends the point about BP/BTC and its democratic connotations. It's not only in BP's funding of civil society organizations, or even in stimulating debate by their presence; rather, it is in creating, even unintentionally, critique of its own work and possibilities for civil society's development beyond their own anticipation that democracy is extended. By creating a set of expectations, and a repertoire of actions, around the social responsibility of BP and its pipeline, one might argue that concerns for energy security in Europe actually helped to fuel democracy's development in Georgia.

Of course it is not that simple, as Eagen herself is aware. One can't assume that protest or civil society's development directly enhances democracy's quality. In fact, Andrew Barry has argued that transparency around BTC information itself became an object of contention that developed in such a way that instead of transparency facilitating open and reasoned discussion, it debilitated it. Debates about the quality of the information, and the trustworthiness of the actors providing it, turned what was promised to be an exercise in democracy's communicative rationality into a contest that soured relations among local communities, NGOs, various levels of the state, and the company itself.³⁴

In short, one needs to address the qualities of emerging democracies not only in terms of the fairness of elections, but on how publically consequential issues are brought to the public sphere, and the qualities of discussion that ensue. We might take Craig Calhoun's more general method for analyzing the public sphere and ask, then, how critical issues like energy production, distribution, and consumption are embedded in the public sphere and its potentials for communicative rationality:

We need to ask how responsive public opinion is to reasoned argument, how well any potential public sphere benefits from the potential for self correction and collective education implicit in the possibilities for rational-critical discourse. And we need to know how committed participants are to the processes of public discourse and through that to each other. Finally, and not least of all, we need to ask how effectively the public opinion formed can influence social institutions and wielders of economic, political, or indeed cultural power.³⁵

In this appeal to the power of public opinion and the value of public discourse, we also can see the ways in which a public sociology of emerging democracies moves beyond the question of the mobilization of social movements. It's definitional that a public sociology of emerging democracies cannot identify simply with the authorities of any societies, even developed democratic ones. But it's difficult for a public sociology to develop a solidary sociology with civil society itself given the ways in which different organizations within civil society, and modes of communication associated with them, vary in their resonance with the principles of democracy that Tilly identified.

While that might be general advice, it's especially important in emerging democracies precisely because the institutional foundations of democracy are more precarious. Dare we ask whether movements of a certain character might deepen democracy in more consolidated democracies while in emerging democracies they might play into the hands of authoritarian inclinations? If we risk posing such a question, how would we recognize these movements, and avoid allowing such judgments to play into politicized hands?

Public sociology must maintain that critical distance from power relations of all sorts, especially in emerging democracies; at the same time, to fail to take into account how interests

and power work to establish what is democratic and what is not is naïve at best. While these issues can be pursued in relation to the big power politics of military alliances, contested elections, and energy, they might also be engaged most powerfully in the micropolitics of the community and in gender relations even when development and freedom are the key concerns at stake.

Gender, Rights, and Freedom within and beyond Emerging Democracies

Addressing gender inequalities offers a key approach in the public sociology of emerging democracies, precisely because authorities typically defend their national prerogatives against universalizing standards by invoking the private realms of sex and family.³⁶ At the same time, assessing the status of women in particular is not only central to understanding the degree to which a society is democratic in the terms Tilly outlines, but also the conditions for economic development and freedom's extension.³⁷ With those universalizing claims, the status of women becomes a foundation in which both authorities beyond the nation and transnational publics can engage other societies.³⁸ But this very set of assumptions invites several powerful questions, with one of the best starting points being the work of Amartya Sen.

“It is possible to argue that human rights are best seen as rights to certain specific freedoms, and that the correlate obligation to consider the associated duties must also be centered around what others can do to safeguard and expand these freedoms”, writes Sen.³⁹ But this is not the same as capabilities. “Capability concentrates on the opportunity to be able to have combinations of functionings (including, in this case, the opportunity to be well-nourished), and the person is free to make use of this opportunity or not. A capability reflects the alternative combinations of functionings from which the person can choose one combination”.⁴⁰

This notion of capability in the end is not only a set of capacities, but a question of normative choice, enabled by public reasoning, to find the right combination of capabilities, and the comparison of their values, as Sen indicates: “the need for transparent valuational scrutiny of individual advantages and adversities, since the different functionings have to be assessed and weighted in relation to each other, and the opportunities of having different combinations of functionings also have to be evaluated.”⁴¹

I find Sen particularly helpful because public discussion can lead to new recognition of what freedoms are important. He elaborates,

even with given social conditions, public discussion and reasoning can lead to a better understanding of the role, reach and the significance of particular capabilities. For example, one of the many contributions of feminist economics has precisely been to bring out the importance of certain freedoms that were not recognised very clearly — or at all — earlier on; for example, freedom from the imposition of fixed and time-honoured family roles, or immunity from implicit derogation through the rhetoric of social communication.”⁴²

Sen is especially useful to thinking about freedom and gender inequality, as his article on the subject suggests. Indeed, while he analyses various forms of gender inequality on which one might focus, he also makes not only a theoretical but empirical argument about how gender equality extends the good society: “The expansion of women's capabilities not only enhances women's own freedom and well-being, it also has many other effects on the lives of all. An enhancement of women's active agency can contribute substantially to the lives of men as well as women, children as well as adults: many studies have demonstrated that the greater

empowerment of women tends to reduce child neglect and mortality; to decrease fertility and overcrowding, and more generally to broaden social concern and care.”⁴³

Freedom and democracy are not only virtuous but also productive, at least when it comes to its manifestation through gender equality. Concern for equality is not only a way of expressing democracy’s idealism, then, but is an embrace of realism in emerging democracies if economic development is part of what legitimates these governmentalities.

While it might be true that gender equality and freedom’s extension is good for development and simultaneous with democracy’s extension, it too often comes with a liberal imperialist accent, one that is immediately recognizable in the history of capitalism’s nineteenth and twentieth century expansions.⁴⁴ Indeed, to address these issues in the postcolonial world is simpler than in the postcommunist, given that the system of domination from which democracies have emerged in the latter purported to emancipate women. This is especially evident in Central Asia, where the status of women, and their veil, became a central object around which the contest over political authority raged.⁴⁵ Deniz Kandiyoti is especially helpful in thinking about how this gender agenda is tied to democracy promotion in this latter era.

However, the liberal/egalitarian discourse promoted by the international donor community and the NGOs implementing their programmes have cohabited uneasily with the state-sponsored revival of national traditions and the growing influence of diverse Islamist tendencies at the grass roots. Compromises were easiest to achieve around ‘developmental’ goals such as equipping women with new skills to survive in a market economy (hence the emphasis on female entrepreneurship), poverty alleviation through gender-targeted micro-credit initiatives and health campaigns to combat infant mortality and promote family planning. The continuation of these initiatives was, furthermore,

predicated upon the health of government–NGO relations and sustainable funding, hence their extreme fragility. While the ‘market transition assistance’ component of donor-funded aid packages, and gender-targeted NGO projects, were more readily accepted, democracy-promotion initiatives (focusing on human rights, freedom of speech and association and political liberalization) met with much greater resistance. A clampdown on the NGO sector followed the ‘colour revolutions’ in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan when civil society organizations were accused of furthering the political objectives of their foreign donors and imposing an ‘alien’ ideology of state–citizen relations. The women’s NGO sector in Uzbekistan experienced its own share of this backlash and was, henceforth, subjected to vetting by the Women’s Committee of Uzbekistan.⁸² A full frontal ideological attack on the ‘values’ of the West—liberalism, individualism and materialism— was accompanied by elaborations of the notion of ‘Eastern’ democracy, resting on the values of collectivism, paternalism and the priority of public values. The liberal discourse on gender equality, that made its appearance in post-Soviet Central Asia through the unfamiliar technologies of ‘gender-awareness’ and ‘gender training’, could be easily dismissed as unwanted imports.⁸³”⁴⁶

Thus, rather than present the empowerment of women as part of democracy’s extension, sometimes distance from Western democracy promotion needs to be maintained in order to assure the efficacy of these gender politics! It’s certainly true that the empowerment of women, definitionally, extends democracy along one of its axes; but at the same time, given the ways in which gender can be used as a tool of geopolitical interests, its relationship to democracy’s extension can be complicated. This can be seen in at least two ways – around the problematic

association of gender equality with foreign values, on the one hand, and the complications of recognizing grass roots democracy and its implications for gender equality, on the other.

Meghan Simpson is particularly helpful in addressing this first issue, by encouraging us to consider how the local is conceived, especially when so much of the discourse of empowerment has been occupied by western funded NGOs. She encourages us to rethink “the multilayer and multilevel processes by which contexts—communities and territories—are structured, defined, or imagined.” This is especially important, when we think about the relationship between donors and indigenous leaders in the public sphere. As Simpson explains,

Here, a complicated situation arises: first, successful NGOs are commended for their degree of “Westernness”. These organizations are “free”, unburdened by culture, kinship ties or other “uncivil” means or forms of affiliation, and relied upon to disseminate resources and knowledge. Yet, assuming Easternness, many attribute organizations’ achievements and partnerships to clan linkages—among NGOs, donor organizations, and state structures. In fact, NGOs that regularly receive basic grants and support from donors are not universally respected among women’s organizations. Increasingly, an emerging, elite core of well-established urban leaders of women’s NGOs in many ways displays the same “patronizing attitude” suggested as characteristic of administrators of gender programs. Finally, while support for individual NGOs through trade or economic activities provides numerous benefits to women, such as participation in informal support networks, in discussions with NGO participants, such endeavours are only mentioned with reluctance—and largely as a fact of the low status granted to small trade, the perceived Easternness of work in bazaars (as improper, since traditionally the market has been the preveue of males), and the prominence of familial support in these activities.”⁴⁷

These observations are critical to thinking about how democracy's extension through women's empowerment works with the power and privilege associated with Western support. Are there ways to productively delink Western support and women's empowerment conceptually, financially, culturally, and organizationally?

At the same time, however, one cannot assume that a gender-neutral approach to civil society's empowerment works to the benefit of women or democracy's extension. As Marianne Kamp has demonstrated, such liberal notions of returning power to the community base can elevate hierarchies and inequalities within civil society to the disadvantage of women, especially those women who resist, or who are cast out from, patriarchal family settings.⁴⁸

In sum, while Sen and others have made a powerful case for the ways in which gender equality contributes to economic development, an equally strong, if not also axiomatic, case could be made for its contribution to emerging democracies. However, too often gender equality has been the tool of various imperialisms, both communist and liberal. Recognition of the ways in which women's empowerment from beyond the nation plays into nationalist or traditionalist resistance to both gender equality and democracy is a critical element in a realist public sociology of emerging democracies and other societies struggling to move beyond those authoritarian grips. One might, then, think about the ways in which public sociology around gender equality should be considered a complement to, rather than an element, of a public sociology in different kinds of societies with different degrees of democratic consolidation.

Conclusions

The discourse of public sociology is especially powerful for scholars living in emerging democracies, as it simultaneously invites them to engage societies' concerns, as policy sociology embedded in transition culture might. At the same time, by embedding scholarship in the

mobilization of knowledge for the public good, it invites sociologists into dialogue with various publics beyond the authorities themselves. By anchoring that discourse in a clear and thoughtful elaboration of democracy's meaning, it also provides a normative foundation for the critical assessment of any project, especially those that are associated with democracy's extension. And since, in the very definition of emerging democracies one has authorities and publics simultaneously dedicated to extending democracy, sociologists can be allied not only to a set of principles, but set of social goals whose potential for realization can be enhanced by their critical address by scholars in support of norms and publics legitimated by the societies' organizing principles.

While elections' monitoring offers the most obvious and ready object of such a public sociology, it is by no means limited to such self-identified democratic projects. Indeed, as I have tried to demonstrate, energy security and gender inequalities are both critical elements in the public sociology of democracy's extension. On the one hand, gender's address is central to understanding the dynamics by which broader categories of citizenry can be empowered to engage the state, but given the historical legacies of imperialism and policies promoting external visions of gender equality, its explicit association with democratic forms with global resonance should at least be bracketed. On the other, energy is one of the means by which nations are linked in this world, and controlling the terms of energy's production, distribution and consumption one of the most critical issues for publics to address.

Energy matters are hardly the stuff of democratic debate in any society given the degrees to which commercial and geopolitical terms define the discourse around those concerns. However, one of the most productive transformations of postcommunist times has been the degree to which concerns about energy have reached the public sphere and become an object of

public discourse. How they might be implicated in the meaning of democracy's extension might become one of the most productive questions for a public sociology of emerging democracies to ask.

While I have identified several different areas that are critical to such a sociology – energy security, gender equality, transitional justice and recognition of more distant past crimes, and democratic revolutions, social movements and electoral monitoring – this public sociology is not so limited. Indeed, it becomes ever more valuable to the extent the principles of democracy's extension can be linked to various areas of sociological inquiry within emerging democracies, and more globally important to the extent those studies inform how other scholars and publics across the world think about the meanings and values of democracy itself.

¹ Michael D. Kennedy and Miguel Centeno, "Internationalism and Global Transformations in American Sociology" pp 666-712 in Craig Calhoun (ed.) Sociology in America: A History. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press/An American Sociological Association Centennial Publication, 2007).

² Michael D. Kennedy, Cultural Formations of Postcommunism: Emancipation, Transition, Nation and War (University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

³ Michael D. Kennedy, "From Transition to Hegemony: Extending the Cultural Politics of Military Alliances and Energy Security" in Mitchell Orenstein, Steven Bloom, and Nicole Lindstrom (eds.) Transnational Actors in Central and East European Transitions. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2008.

⁴ See for instance the essays in Lucyna Kirwil and Michael D. Kennedy, "Social Change in Poland" International Journal of Sociology, 34:3, 34:4, 35:1, (2004-05).

⁵ The Social Science Research Council in New York City is so dedicated. See <http://www.ssrc.org/>

⁶ Originally published in American Sociological Review, 70:1(2005);, I rely on the reprinted and adapted version in Dan Clawson, Robert Zussman, Joya Misra, Naomi Gerstel, Randall Stokes, Douglas L. Anderston, and Michael Burawoy (eds.) Public Sociology: Fifteen Eminent

Sociologists Debate Politics and the Profession in the Twenty-First Century. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.

⁷ “introduction”, pp. 5-6.

⁸ See Elaine Weiner, Market Dreams: Gender, Class, Capitalism in the Czech Republic. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007.

⁹ I draw substantially from here on the fall 2008 seminar in the sociology of emerging democracies at the University of Michigan. I am indebted to all its participants, both visiting professors and students, for so many insights. See <http://www.i.umich.edu/wced/projects>

¹⁰ Charles Tilly, Democracy. Cambridge University Press, 2007: 59. For a discussion of how the terms with which one investigates democracy shape research, see Julia Paley, “Introduction”, Democracy: Anthropological Approaches. Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research, 2009.

¹¹ Andrew Wilson, ‘Virtual Politics: “Political Technology” and the Corruption of Post-Soviet Democracy’, 21 December 2005, at www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/9324-5.cfm; Wilson, “Virtual Politics” in the ex-Soviet bloc’, 17 June 2007, www.opendemocracy.net/article/democracy_power/ukraine_orange/soviet_political_technology

¹² The work of Ivan Szelenyi has been dedicated to this question in particular. See Ivan Szelenyi and Larry King, Theories of the New Class: Intellectuals and Power (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2004) and Gil Eyal, Ivan Szelenyi and Eleanor Townsley, Making Capitalism without Capitalists: The New Ruling Elites in Eastern Europe. London: Verso, 2001.

¹³ Anna Grzymala Busse, Rebuilding Leviathan: Party Competition and State Exploitation in Post-Communist Democracies. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.)

¹⁴ Lincoln A. Mitchell, Uncertain Democracy: US Foreign Policy and Georgia’s Rose Revolution. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009 is among the first substantial treatments of this problem.

¹⁵ Genevieve Zubrzycki, The Crosses of Auschwitz: Nationalism and Religion in Post-Communist Poland. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006.

¹⁶ E.g. Polonsky, Antony and Joanna B. Michlic, eds. The Neighbors Respond: The Controversy over the Jedwabne Massacre in Poland. Princeton: Princeton University Press 2004.

¹⁷ Ronald Grigor Suny and Fatma Müge Göçek,, ”Discussing Genocide: Contextualizing the Armenian Experience in the Ottoman Empire” Journal of the International Institute, 9:3(2002). <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=jii;cc=jii;q1=ronald%20suny;op2=and;op3=and;rgn=main;view=text;idno=4750978.0009.301>.

¹⁸ Rachel Schroeder is working on this very theme in her dissertation, in preparation, "To Remember in a World of Silence and Forgetting: The Soviet Gulag and the Dynamics of Social Memory in Post-Soviet Russia."

¹⁹ For elaboration, see (2000) "Globalizations and Social Movements" (with John Guidry and Mayer Zald) in Globalizations and Social Movements: Culture, Power and the Transnational Public Sphere (John Guidry, Michael D. Kennedy and Mayer Zald, eds.) (University of Michigan Press).

²⁰ See for example Zhao, Dingxin. 2001. The Power of Tiananmen: State-Society Relations and the 1989 Beijing Student Movement. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. For an earlier generation of such movements, see Michael D. Kennedy, 1991, Professionals, Power and Solidarity in Poland: a Critical Sociology of Soviet-type Society. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

²¹ Mark Beissinger, "Structure and Example in Modular Political Phenomena: The Diffusion of Bulldozer/Rose/Orange/Tulip Revolutions," Perspectives on Politics (June 2007), pp. 259-276.

²² Policy Forum Armenia, "Armenia's 2008 Presidential Election: Select Issues and Analysis" www.pf-armenia.org

²³ Nicolas Guilhot, The Democracy Makers: Human Rights and the Politics of Global Order. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.

²⁴ Gerard Libaridian, "Democracy: Variations and Externalities" forthcoming, Journal of the International Institute.

²⁵ <http://www.ii.umich.edu/ces-euc/academics/projects/energysecurity>

²⁶ Jonathan Stern, "The Russian-Ukrainian gas crisis of January 2006" Oxford Institute for Energy Studies, January 16, 2006.

²⁷ Philippa Runner, "Russia and Ukraine face EU sanctions threat" EU Monitor, January 16, 2009.

²⁸ S. Frederick Starr, "The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline: School of Modernity" in The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline: Oil Window to the West, Eds. S. Frederick Starr and Svante E. Cornell. Johns Hopkins University-SAIS: http://www.silkroadstudies.org/BTC_1.pdf

²⁹ Elizabeth Eagen, "The BTC Pipeline in Georgia: Assessing the Effect of Foreign Investment and Corporate Social Responsibility on Civil Society", MA Thesis, Center for Russian and East European Studies, University of Michigan 2006.

³⁰ Interview with Interview with Irina Lashkhi, Rule of Law and Public Administration Program Coordinator, OSF – Georgia. May 25, 2006 in Eagen.

³¹ Interview with Nana Janashia, Executive Director of the Caucasus Environmental NGO Network. May 26, 2006 in Eagen.

³² Eagen, page..

³³ Eagen, page

³⁴ Andrew Barry, “Social and Human Rights Impact Assessment and the Governance of Technology” <http://www.geog.ox.ac.uk/research/technologies/projects/humanrights.html>

³⁵ Calhoun, Craig. 2003. “Information Technology and the International Public Sphere” in D. Schuler, ed.: Digital Directions. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, pp. 229-251.

³⁶ Alexandra Gerber, Being Polish/Becoming European: Implementation of EU-mandated gender equality policy and discourses of identity in the pre-accession period (1997-2004), a doctoral dissertation in progress, makes very sophisticated arguments about this.

³⁷ Amartya Sen, Development as Freedom. 1999.

³⁸ Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998.

³⁹ Sen, Amartya, “Human Rights and Capabilities,” Journal of Human Development, 2005 (6) 2: 151-166

⁴⁰ Sen, Amartya, “Human Rights and Capabilities,” Journal of Human Development, 2005 (6) 2: 151-166

⁴¹ Sen, Amartya, “The Many Faces of Gender Inequality,” New Republic, 9/17/2001, vol. 225, issue 12.

⁴² Sen, Amartya, “The Many Faces of Gender Inequality,” New Republic, 9/17/2001, vol. 225, issue 12.

⁴³ Sen, Amartya, “The Many Faces of Gender Inequality,” New Republic, 9/17/2001, vol. 225, issue 12.

⁴⁴ Keck and Sikkink illustrates this most powerfully with regard to Chinese footbinding.

⁴⁵ Marianne Kamp, The New Woman in Uzbekistan: Islam, Modernity, and Unveiling Under Communism (Jackson School Publications in International Studies) University of Washington, 2008; Douglas Northrop, Veiled Empire: Gender and Power in Stalinist Central Asia. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004.

⁴⁶ Kandiyoti, Deniz, "The politics of gender and the Soviet paradox: neither colonized nor modern?" Central Asian Survey 2007 (26) 4: 601-623.

⁴⁷ Simpson, Meghan, "Local strategies in globalizing gender politics: women's organizing in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan," Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs, 2006, 26 (1): 9-31.

⁴⁸ Marianne Kamp, "Between Women and the State: Mahalla Committees and Social Welfare in Uzbekistan," in The Transformation of Central Asia: states and societies from Soviet rule to independence, ed. Pauline Jones Luong, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004, 29-58.