



# **PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY**

**Third Annual Workshop of the  
Polson Institute for Global Development**

**Fall 2003**

**Cornell University  
Ithaca, NY 14853**

POLSON INSTITUTE FOR  
**GLOBAL**  
DEVELOPMENT

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# PUBLIC SOCIOLOGIES IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

## INTRODUCTION

The Polson Institute conducted its third annual workshop on November 1, 2003. This year's workshop focused on the issue of "public sociology." The workshop was part of a semester-long process to investigate how sociology might be more responsive to society's needs. Our examination of this issue began on October 3, 2003, with Michael Burawoy's Polson memorial lecture "Public Sociologies in a Global Context." The November 1 workshop sought to open up his issue by providing a social space where all Polson affiliates could participate in an open discussion of this critical issue.

Similar to last year, the Institute's five research working groups (RWG) played a central role in preparing and conducting the workshop. In addition, the workshop provided an opportunity for members of the various working groups to enter into dialog with each other. Hence, at the workshop we "shuffled the deck" so that participants could gain an appreciation of commonalities and differences in their respective positions.

Workshop discussions were organized around the following questions:

- To what extent does your RWG's intellectual project have public implications? How does a concern for public sociology affect the types of questions your RWG examines? (note the same question could be asked of each of us as individual scholars).

- How does location within an institution of higher learning enhance or constrain your RWG's opportunities to do public sociology? What might the "ideal" institutional context for doing public sociology look like?
- How does the particular historical context we are in affect your RWG's possibilities for doing public sociology, and for affecting debates at a variety of institutional levels?



### The Workshop's organization

Each RWG produced a written response to the above questions, and made brief oral reports on their responses at the beginning of the workshop. Workshop participants were then split into four discussion groups that contained at least one member from each of the 5 RWGs. The groups met for 2 hours, and reported on their deliberations at a final plenary

session. Each group had a moderator and a reporter who prepared a written summary of their discussions. The workshop concluded with a dinner that evening.

### Acknowledgments

Mary Wright made all logistic arrangements for the Polson Memorial Lecture and for the Public Sociology workshop. She also prepared this document. Photographs were taken by Florio Arguillas.



Introduction of Michael Burawoy  
By  
David L. Brown

**Third Annual Polson Memorial Lecture, October 3, 2003**

Today's speaker, Michael Burawoy, is one of America's most distinguished sociologists. He is professor of sociology at the University of California at Berkeley, and president of the American Sociological Association.

As many of you know, Michael has made fundamental contributions to our knowledge of the social organization of labor and production practices in capitalist, socialist, and post-socialist societies. In *The Radiant Past*, for example, he and his coauthor Janos Lukacs examined the conditions under which a state socialist plant might be as efficient as a capitalist enterprise, and conversely the conditions under which a capitalist plant might be as inefficient as a state socialist plant. This intriguing comparative analysis yielded important insights into the nature of socialism and capitalism. Industrial efficiency of the firm, it seems, is less closely associated with property relations than with organizational attributes. Whether an enterprise was state owned or privately owned was less important than the hierarchies and markets that shape and guide the production process. Hence, he and Lukacs concluded that the distinction between socialism and capitalism is less distinct than previously considered.

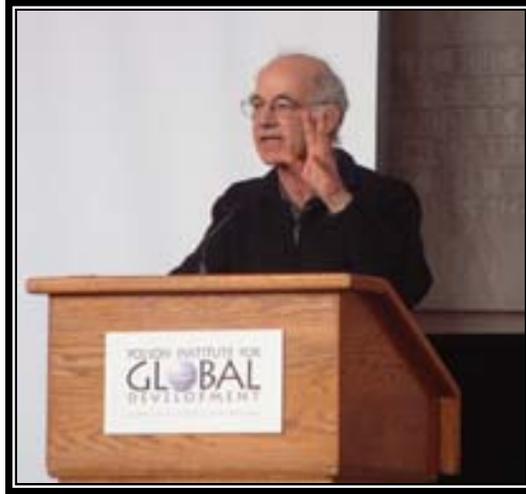
Michael is also well known as a proponent of the extended case method where he examines the social relations of production right from the shop floor. His recent edited volume, *Global Ethnography*,

deploys this methodology across a wide variety of national contexts to explore how global processes affect people's everyday lives in diverse social environments. This work points to a new form of social exclusion between persons and groups located within flows of crucial resources, and those who lack such access.

In recent years Michael has become increasingly concerned that sociology and other social sciences are not serving society well. Accordingly, he campaigned for the ASA presidency on a platform of advancing "public sociology." He challenges sociology to be a "mirror and a conscience" for society, and he believes that sociology should define, promote and inform public dialog and debate. He believes that sociologists can use their expertise to "act as a conscience of society" re-appropriating public values for public discussion. His lecture today is entitled *Public Sociologies in a Global Context*. His talk will be followed by a panel discussion and questions from the audience.

# PUBLIC SOCIOLOGIES IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

Michael Burawoy



## Address to Polson Institute for Global Development, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2003

September 11, 2001 is represented as a watershed moment in history, after which things would never be the same. It was as if, overnight, peace and harmony gave way to war and aggression. In reality 9/11 marked deeper changes in the world order that had begun a decade earlier when Soviet communism collapsed – unleashing a new global faith in markets and the ascendancy of the unilateralist state.<sup>i</sup>

Whatever the reason for the collapse of communism, it went along with a loss of faith in the administered economy and an equally firm embrace of private property and market exchange. It was the operation of nirvana principle – if state planning doesn't work then the opposite, in this case markets, will produce miracles. Markets have not produced miracles. Benefits there have been, but to ever narrower circles who have been able to appropriate rents from monopolistic exchange. Certainly in countries, as far

apart as Russia and South Africa, that have undergone market transition, there have been few signs of dynamic expansion. Where there are exceptions, such as China, market transition took place under close supervision of the state.

The collapse of communism not only marked the ascendancy of the market but also the preeminence of a single nation state, the US state, that no longer competes for world hegemony. It imposes its will without compromise or concession, without having to appeal for the support of other nations. As world policeman it can apply force, or so it seems, wherever it chooses. The old balance of world power has dissolved.

The forces resisting this twin tyranny of markets and state coercion are multiple and varied, running the gamut from on-the-ground terrorism, anti-globalization movements, labor and environmental

movements to human rights organizations and transnational feminism, in short the expansion of as yet inchoate global and national civil societies. Not surprisingly, it has become fashionable to invoke the work of Karl Polanyi who analyzed the spontaneous societal resistance to unhindered commodification in 19<sup>th</sup> century England and who treated 20<sup>th</sup> century social democratic, fascist and Stalinist state forms as alternative reactions to the global market. While he warned against the Leviathan state subjugating the market along with society, he also held out the possibility of socialism, a future “active society” holding market and state at bay. He thought in terms of national responses to the market, however, not in today’s terms of transnational agencies and a transnational civil society.

In this contestation among state, market and society, political science has generally identified itself with the state, economics with the market and sociology with society. Within each discipline, to be sure, there are dissident movements that borrow from the other disciplines, but they are dissident because they oppose the dominant perspective. Here I am concerned with sociology. As we know it today, sociology was born with civil society at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was born with the rise of mass education, mass parties, the expansion of media and transportation, the police and postal service, newspapers and new means of transportation, all of which linked populations to their nation state. The topics of sociology – family, organizations, political parties, culture, deviance and social control, etc. – presume a space for society alongside but also intimately connected to market and state. Polanyi’s active society, resisting the market, gives civil society too innocent and pristine a

form. It is colonized and corroded by both market and state and yet, for all that, still a terrain of contest, from which can spring opposition to and containment of state and market. Sociology lives and dies with the existence of civil society. More than any other science, it withers away with totalitarianism and gains strength with community.

But sociology is not merely a mirror of civil society, it can also actively promote such civil society. Here surely lies its distinctively public purpose to represent humanity’s opposition to the unbridled tyranny of market and state. But it is a purpose thwarted with dilemmas. To engage with publics may threaten its scientific credibility, and invite political assaults or reprisal. To engage in public action presupposes a common moral foundation that may not be shared by all sociologists. Moreover, intervention might be based on research findings that are not unambiguous or widely shared. All these issues came to the fore in the anti-(Iraq)war resolution adopted by two-thirds of the membership of the American Sociological Association, effectively acting as a political institution of civil society.

For now I want to shelve these important matters as to where to draw the limits of political participation and instead think through the conditions for engaging national and transnational society. I believe it means deprovincializing sociology in two ways. First, it requires us to promote sociology’s public face and engage with diverse publics in a self-conscious manner. Second it means that sociology, and American sociology in particular, should become more aware of its own place in national and global formations so that it can more effectively give voice to its public purpose. We begin with the first and end with the second.

## VARIETY OF PUBLIC SOCIOLOGIES

Sociology has never been insulated from audiences beyond the academy if only because it has directly engaged such publics in the very execution of research, and often brought back its research findings to those publics. Indeed, engagement with publics has often been the most fruitful source of innovation, imagination and challenge to sociology — one thinks of the civil rights movement and how it spurred the transformation of the study of collective action and invented the field of social movements, or the feminist movement whose impact has reverberated into virtually all fields of sociology, not just in the family and gender studies. My purpose here is to promote such engagements, large and small, more self-consciously by giving them a name — public sociology.

The idea of public sociology can perhaps be associated with C Wright Mills who famously viewed sociology as turning private troubles into public issues. Mills complained about the parochialism of American sociology — its tendency to insulate itself from social reality whether through grand theory of Parsonsian system building or through abstracted empiricism of survey research. Other frequently cited works of public sociology are David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* and Robert Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart*, both of which appeal to and examine the malaise of the American middle class. They are popular works widely read beyond the academy, among the professional middle classes. Of late there has been a lament of the decline of the public sociologist, qua intellectual, who takes on the big issues of the day. In a *New York Times* opinion piece and obituary to Riesman in 2002, Orlando Patterson spoke of the "Last Sociologist," following Russell Jacoby's *The Last Intellectuals: American Culture in the Age of Academe*.

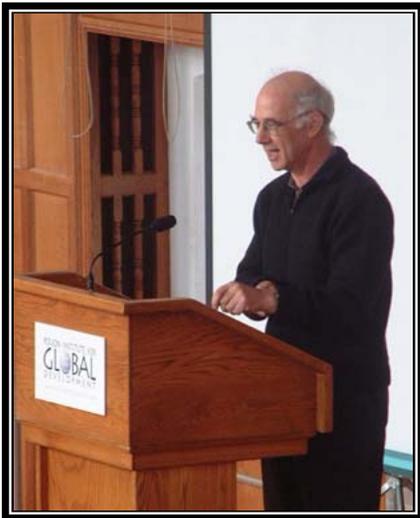
Professionalization has detached American sociology from its originating moral impetus, from its engagement with those big issues of the day!

Alienation is a perennial condition of intellectuals — and sociologists are presumably no different. They lament their declining power as if there were some golden past when they ran the world — that is, when they are not dreaming of some radiant future in which they will rule again. Lament notwithstanding, the 1950s were no golden era for the public sociologist but rather years of repression and martyrdom. Perhaps, in those years before the expansion of the American university, professional and public sociology were in open contestation for the soul of sociology, today we know which side won — the professionals. Today we have to think of public sociology not as an alternative to professional sociology but as a necessary and invigorating accompaniment.

Despite Jacoby, Patterson, Berger, Posner and others the ascendancy of professional sociology has been accompanied by a vigorous, if often hidden, public sociology. As long as we don't confine ourselves to best selling books or op-eds for *The New York Times*, public sociology is thriving — sociologists talking to their neighborhood groups, environmental groups, sociologists engaging communities of faith, the labor movement, human rights organizations, immigrant groups, sociologists on talk shows, interviewing with local journalists. There is a vibrant grassroots public sociology that engages publics directly. Nor should we forget that our first public is composed of students who, if we do our job properly, become more critical, more aware, more reflective citizens as a result of our teaching. Moreover, in as much as they carry

sociology beyond the academy, they become ambassadors of sociology. In this sense, all of us who take teaching seriously are public sociologists.

Such organic public sociologies may not assume the celebratory prominence of the more traditional public sociology that works through national media, but they are no less important. We might say that public sociologies are as divergent as the publics they seek to reach—thick as well as thin, visible as well as invisible, active as well as passive, counter-publics as well as hegemonic, local as well as national publics. Addressing thick, active, visible and local publics are often treated as private activities, unrecognized or illegitimate in the eyes of the profession. But they are no less a part of our sociological lives and inspire our teaching and research. They deserve a name and a place. We have given them a name—public sociologies—now we have to discover their place



### THE DISCIPLINARY MATRIX

My endeavor here is to build multiple and thick ties between public sociologies and the “real” sociology, so that they are not simply become

something we do in our spare time (on the side) when we have tenure. I wish to bring public sociology out of the cold and into the discipline of sociology by connecting it to policy, professional and critical sociologies.

### The Division of Sociological Labor

First, public sociology has to be distinguished from policy sociology. Public sociology involves a two way dialogue between sociologist and public in which each educates the other. The sociologist generates debate about issues of public importance, all the time learning from the experience. Within sociology we may think of the *The Lonely Crowd*, *Habits of the Heart*, *The Kinsey Report*, etc. Policy sociology, by contrast, serves a specific end defined by a client with whom often the sociologist has a contractual relation. In its pure form, the policy sociologist is a servant of power, abdicating his or her autonomy. Instances of this are multiple. Sociologists have advised corporate managers how best to organize work, sexual harassment policies, urban redevelopment, educational curricula, etc. The contractual relation can be quite confining and sociologists can end up serving policy ends antithetical to their own values. Judy Stacey, for example, has described how being expert witness in a law court made it impossible to transmit the nuances of her position on gay marriage, and she ended up defending conventional forms of marriage, a position she opposed.

On the other hand, it is possible for the sociologist to retain autonomy and creative input within a policy process if they bring genuine and needed expertise. Based on her book that treated the Challenger disaster, Diane Vaughan managed to win recognition from Columbia Accident Investigation Bureau

for her critical analysis of NASA's organization culture. But such autonomous influence is rare and depends, very often, on a preexisting public debate. It also requires patient education of the policy maker. Thus, adding a dialogic moment to the instrumental relation can bring policy sociology nearer to public sociology. Equally, failed policy initiatives, or when sociologists refuse to bend before agencies, can reverberate into public debates. William Julius Wilson intended his work in the area of race and poverty as policy input but it proved to be too radical and turned into a more open public debate. Similarly, the work of James Coleman on school desegregation promoted public debate even as it influenced educational policy.

Second, neither public nor policy sociology can exist without a professional sociology. These are not alternatives but necessary complements. To be sure public sociologists sometimes believe that the world would be a better place without professional sociology, but they are snapping at the hands that feed them. Professional sociology provides legitimacy for public sociologists to engage with publics, and provides expertise for policy sociologists to cater to their clients. Credentialing may contain much that is irrelevant and anachronistic but it is also more than mere certification. The American Sociological Association's task force that assembled the Amicus Brief it submitted to the Supreme Court in the *Grutter versus Bollinger* (Law School) case, was able to draw on an enormous wealth of research around the existence, causes and consequences of racial discrimination. Not just policy sociology but public sociology draws on expertise as well as legitimacy of the sociologist. Thus, Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* was firmly

rooted in empirical research. The new experiment in partnership between the California labor movement and the University of California, orchestrated by the Institute of Labor and Employment and dominated by sociologists, is a prime example of a synergy based on professional expertise in research.

Nonetheless professional sociology does have tendencies toward self-referentiality, abstraction for abstraction's sake, irrelevance. That is the nature of the profession to constitute itself as the monopolist of obscure knowledge. It requires continual monitoring, which is indeed the function of the fourth type of sociology – critical sociology – the conscience of professional sociology. Critical sociology reminds professional sociology of its *raison d'être*, of its value premises and guiding questions. It also proposes alternative foundations upon which to erect sociological research. In other words, critical sociology is critical in two senses, first in bringing professional sociology into alignment with its historical mission and second in shifting the direction of that mission. Alvin Gouldner's (1970) *Coming Crisis of Western Sociology* interrogated the underlying assumptions of the reigning structural functionalist theory, showing how they were out of sync with the world that theory sought to grasp. Even if he himself did not create a new paradigm he certainly created space for new ones to emerge, not least the Marxist and feminist sociology of the 1970s.

Critical sociology springs from a critique of professional sociology but it also infuses itself into public sociology. The foundational values and assumptions it uncovers often motivate the dialogue with various publics. Robert Bellah's critical engagement with De Tocqueville, Weber

and Durkheim ground the dialogue he has promoted with American and Japanese publics.

We can construct the following matrix of our four sociologies. Along one dimension we contrast audience, whether it be primarily academic or non-academic. Along the other dimension we contrast instrumental and reflexive forms of knowledge. Professional and policy sociology are both concerned with orienting means to given ends, that is to say puzzle solving in professional research that takes for granted the presuppositions of a given research program, and problem solving in the policy arena that takes for granted the goals and interests of the client. Critical and public sociology are more oriented to a dialogic unfolding of knowledge about assumptions, values, and premises. In the one case the dialogue is among sociologists while in the other case it is between sociologists and their publics.<sup>ii</sup>

**TABLE 1: THE DISCIPLINARY MATRIX**

	<b>Academic Audience</b>	<b>Extra-Academic Audience</b>
<b>Instrumental Knowledge</b>	<b>PROFESSIONAL</b>	<b>POLICY</b>
<b>Reflexive Knowledge</b>	<b>CRITICAL</b>	<b>PUBLIC</b>

**Multiple Positioning and Career Trajectories**

There are a number of cautionary remarks to be made about this table. First, the four types are abstract and ideal

typical. Any example of professional or policy sociology will have an admixture of reflexive knowledge, just as critical and public sociology have their instrumental ingredients. Similarly, audiences are not as cut and dried as presented in the table: professional and critical sociologies often have subsidiary non-academic audiences just as policy and public sociologies usually have their on academics. Indeed, each species of sociology could probably itself be subdivided into four components. This does not undermine the usefulness of the basic four types.

Second, any individual sociologist probably finds himself or herself in more than one quadrant at any particular moment in time. Some, say Christopher Jenks to take a prominent example, may even claim to be working at all four types of sociology simultaneously. And, of course, over time we may plot individual careers as trajectories through the categories and out of the discipline altogether. A typical graduate student might enter a department inspired by the possibility of public sociology, but when faced with the leaden weight of professional sociology become critical sociologist, and when it comes to getting a job turn more to professional sociology, and only after tenure find their way back to public sociology – if it is not too late. It’s not surprising that the attrition rate among graduate students in most departments is 50%! It is quite possible, on the other hand, that many retain professional sociology as their primary identification throughout their lives.

**Interdependence: Synergies and Pathologies**

Our matrix underlines the interdependence of the four types of sociology. They form, if you will, an organic division of sociological labor.

From the point of view of public sociology, vibrant professional, policy and critical sociologies are essential. Equally, professional sociology is as innovative and exciting as the stimuli it receives from public and policy sociology, as self-reflective as the impulses it receives from critical sociology. It would take me too far afield to work out the details of all these interdependencies and the common values that underpins them. But, an interesting example is American Sociological Association's submission of an Amicus Brief to the Supreme Court on the Affirmative Action case against Michigan University. The ASA was approached by the student interveners who were a third party in the suit, arguing that affirmative action should be upheld as a means to reverse discrimination. The ASA set up a task force headed by Barbara Reskin, author of *The Realities of Affirmative Action in Employment* – a summary of sociological research showing that affirmative action was an important way to reverse discrimination. Published as part of the ASA's Spivak Program in Applied Social Research and Social Policy her short monograph aimed for a non-academic public. It was an exemplary piece of public sociology. However, once the ASA had signed on to submitting a brief to the Supreme Court, the brief came to be tailored to persuading Justice O'Connor, the swing vote on the court. The argument shifted from affirmative action as means to reverse past and present discrimination to affirmative action as a way to promote diversity and thus to enhance the educational experience of all. It was entered along with many other briefs that including ones from General Motors and another from the leaders of the Defense establishment, all arguing that affirmative action was necessary for the efficiency of corporations, military, etc.

Tailored for the Supreme Court, the ASA brief became an instance of policy sociology in which the original argument for affirmative action as promoting social justice was replaced by an argument for efficiency, in this case improved higher education. The strategy was successful in that Justice O'Connor proved to be the key vote in upholding the Law School Admissions process. This left the door open for a critical sociology to ask who benefits from affirmative action and why the corporate and military establishment might support it. For a long time, William Julius Wilson has underscored the class interests behind affirmative action. His not unequivocal research aims to show how racially targeted policies help a black middle class but at the expense of the poor majority. My point here is not side with any particular position but to underscore the possible synergies among the four species of sociology – professional, public, policy and critical – despite and through disagreement. The vibrancy of each subspecies is a condition for the vibrancy of the others.

At the same time each species of sociology experiences centrifugal pressures, threatening the synergies they potentially create for each other. Competing with other disciplines (mainly other social sciences) professional sociology tries to elevate itself by its abstract knowledge and claims to scientificity, both of which feed its self-referentiality, fetishism of method, etc. Critical sociology often veers off into dogmatism and ideological pronouncement. Policy sociology is always in danger of becoming the instrument of the client it serves, whereas public sociology may pander to and thus become captured by its audiences. Such centrifugal tendencies, leading to pathologies of the different types of sociology, are fuelled by the hostilities

each species of sociology, consciously or not, holds toward the others. Moreover, these hostilities have a real foundation in the patterns of domination that exist among these different sociologies.

### **Domination: From Colonization to Enlightened Self-Interest.**

In our normative model the interdependencies among the four species of sociology are symmetrical and harmonious. In reality they are hierarchical and antagonistic. The history of American sociology can be seen as the triumph of science over morality. If the original impulse behind sociology was of a moral character, over time and particularly in the postWorld War II period, professional and scientific norms were ascendant, although it is true to say that the moral dimension often in the form of a critical sociology has never been eclipsed. Indeed, from time to time, as in the 1960s and 1970s, it has reasserted itself vigorously. The same is true about individual careers: the critical impulse may animate undergraduate years, only to be squeezed out by powerful disciplinary pressures of normalization and examination in graduate years, only to be further repressed by the evaluative process for tenure, which, at least in the research universities, is heavily weighted toward scholarly output in reputable places. Later, perhaps, public sociology may reemerge from the shadows of private life into the limelight, there to be articulated and defended as an essential moment of the sociological enterprise. Domination takes different forms. In the official realm, legitimacy and accountability are granted first and foremost by one's peers, themselves arrayed in a disciplinary hierarchy, and only secondarily, if at all, by various non-academic publics to which a public sociology is accountable. Reflexivity finds

itself colonized and repressed by the instrumentalism of professional sociology. Policy sociology can also be threatening to professional autonomy, but it is often seen to be a necessary evil, bringing the funds to create the space for research, rather than embraced as a challenge to academic assumptions and questions.<sup>iii</sup>

Often in collusion with policy sociology, to its own detriment professional sociology has tended to expel or colonize critical and public sociologies. I am not a revolutionary calling for the end of professional or policy sociology. Far from it, professional sociology is the defining core of the discipline, but a core whose vitality will be sustained by creating space for the growth of subaltern forms of sociology. Ultimately this will only come to pass with institutional reform, such as readjusting the criteria of tenure and promotion, itself stimulated by enlightenment from within but also pressure from without. This is not the place to explore specific reforms, but it leads into an examination of the embeddedness not only of sociology in the university but of the university in society. In this regard United States is a very peculiar place. Having located public sociology within American sociology we now have to locate American sociology within world sociology.

### **FROM THE NATIONAL TO THE GLOBAL CONTEXT**

There are many reasons to do comparative analysis, but here I emphasize two. The first is to appreciate and explain alternative configurations of the disciplinary matrix, so that we can begin to imagine alternatives. The second is to understand how different national sociologies may influence each other, in particular how US sociology shapes the

terrain for other national sociologies. Only with this comparative analysis as a foundation can we begin to think how global influences might reshape US sociology.

### **The Professional Model: United States**

Travel anywhere in the world as a sociologist and one can only be impressed at the power of American professional associations, not least the ASA with its 13,000 dues paying members, its 24 staff and its 6 million dollar investments. Its basis lies in the university system with its over 200 PhD granting departments, regularly ranked every 3 years by *US News and World Report*. Annually some 25,000 BAs and 600 PhDs are awarded, numbers that have been increasing over the last decade, after falling in 1980s from a peak in the 1970s.<sup>iv</sup> The four-day annual meeting of the ASA is attended by some 5,000 members, participating on over 500 panels. Within the association there are 43 different sections, serving specialized fields. The ASA sponsors 9 official journals of its own, and for every official journal there are probably at least 2 others that are run independently of the profession. There is a genuine labor market for sociologists moving between universities, and competing for jobs, mainly teaching jobs – although some 30% (?) of PhDs are now employed outside the university. We take all this for granted but from the outside it is a gargantuan machinery, replete with considerable resources, that should be self-conscious of the power it commands in the wider sociological world. How has sociology fared elsewhere? I will briefly allude to the checkered trajectory of sociology in two very different countries that I know best – Russia and South Africa.

### **The Policy Model: Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia**

In the United States we know of the early history of Russian sociology through one of its pioneers, Pitirim Sorokin, who entered Kerensky's transitional government between February and October, 1917, only to be thrown in jail after the Revolution for organizing resistance to Bolshevik rule. He was only in jail for two months but over the next four years his life became increasingly untenable. He left for exile in the United States, where he clambered to fame as the first head of Harvard's department of sociology. The Soviet 1920s, however, were by no means so repressive for all. Sociology, like society, took on a life of its own, even as a bourgeois science, in this period of experimentation.

Stalinism put pay to all that and sociology disappeared with society. It was only after the 20<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in 1956, when Stalin's atrocities were revealed, that sociology enjoyed a new lease of life. It began cautiously with empirical surveys, always a liability in a one party-dictatorship, of worker satisfaction and aspirations of youth, both of which challenged Soviet ideology. Tedious and amateurish though these surveys may be to the Western sociologist, they were political dynamite in the Soviet Union, inaugurating a critical sociology under the protective umbrella of the Economics Institute. As long as it revealed the shortcomings of the Stalin era, Khrushchev gave sociology some breathing space, even to the extent of fostering the creation of a Soviet Sociological Association in 1958. Brezhnev would do the same, using sociology to indict the Khrushchev period. But sociology was also deployed to more practical policy ends, tackling such problems as labor turnover, migration,

low productivity, and delinquency. During the golden years of Soviet sociology (1965-1972), institutes of sociological research were created, text books and methods books published. Sociology was taught in universities and even dissertations were written. A precarious professional sociology was taking root, only to be up-rooted in the period of reaction after the Prague Spring of 1968.

Sociology did not disappear, but was strictly controlled through the purging of the major institutes of sociology and regulating research. Public opinion was no longer made public but monopolized by party apparatuses, and particularly security apparatuses. All major institutions – enterprises, government offices, education – had their house sociologists. The best sociology was often done by the KGB. Tatyana Zaslavskaya, who became the doyen of Soviet sociology in the period of perestroika, claimed that there were 15-20,000 practicing sociologists by the middle eighties. Rather than suppress society, the regime used sociology to control its every movement.

Like his predecessors, when Gorbachev assumed power he too released the critical moment of sociology to inaugurate perestroika and glasnost. Reflecting the newly won favor of sociology, in 1987 Zaslavskaya penned a famous article in Pravda, entitled “Restructuring and Sociology,” where she declared the vanguard role of sociology in defining planning priorities and targets as well as in monitoring implementation. Sociology was flowering with civil society, sociological cooperatives were sprouting everywhere, aiding and abetting the formation of parties and associations. Sociology had gone public, accelerating

the formation of a rudimentary civil society!

The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the market mania that defined its aftermath devastated the fledgling public sociology. Sociology departments were closed down and sociologists migrated into business schools where they taught such subjects as market research. Institutes turned themselves into polling centers for local politicians intent on staying in power, or for foreign corporations trying to exploit the consumer markets. Except for one or two centers in Moscow and St. Petersburg, themselves often funded by Western foundations and staffed by Western trained academics, sociology disappeared as an autonomous enterprise. Soviet sociology was so effectively controlled by the state that professionalism never took root, with the result that sociology was defenseless against its commodification. In both Soviet and post-Soviet periods it could survive only in the form of policy sociology. Except for the interlude of perestroika and in the immediate aftermath of the Soviet collapse, there was no civil society that it could defend or, in turn, that could sustain it.

### **The Public Model: South Africa Before, During, and After Apartheid**

If the center of gravity of Russian sociology – Soviet and post-Soviet – lies in the policy quadrant, South Africa sociology, or at least its most dynamic part, is centered in the public quadrant. Of course, the history is more complex, if only because we are dealing with a colonial order, a bifurcated society. So long as the anti-colonial struggles were unthreatening, South African sociology assumed a more policy orientation. The English speaking universities followed the social administration curricula of the

metropolis while in the 1930s within the Afrikaner Universities there emerged an oppositional movement that designed the nationalist ideology and practice of apartheid. Hendrik Verwoerd, apartheid's dominant Prime Minister, was after all a sociologist at Stellenbosch University. The 1950s and 1960s saw the emergence of a professional sociology that drew on American theories of structural functionalism.

Only in the 1970s, first with the Durban strikes and then with the Black Consciousness Movement and the Soweto uprising, did South African sociology, dominated by white academics respond. Influenced by the inflamed township society, and a long history of working class struggles, but also by European theoretical currents transmitted through the South African liberation movement in exile, sociology took a decidedly Marxist turn. This was largely confined to the liberal English speaking universities, but even Afrikaner sociologists, always more insular and closer to the apartheid state, adopted critical stance toward government policy. The 1980s saw an extraordinary dialogue between the civic associations and the labor movement on the one side and sociologists of the academy on the other, but also among the academics themselves as to their place in the wider society. It was all heavily crisscrossed by class and race. Still it was a vibrant public sociology, or, as it was often called, a liberation sociology!

Just as the latter years of Soviet rule saw a burgeoning civil society and with it a public sociology, so the same was true in South Africa – although it must not be forgotten that in both countries there were always counter-trends, with sociologists also defending the old order. Did the same devastation await South African sociology

as post-communist Russian sociology? Certainly there were similar pressures to move from a reflexive to a more instrumental sociology. But these pressures faced greater resistance in South Africa from the more established professional sociology. The first pressure was the puncturing of civil society itself – whether because of deliberate state efforts at demobilization (now we have a government that represents the people there is no need for any mobilized opposition!) or simply decapitation of civil society by the draining of leaders into positions of power. An added factor was the NGOs which took over some of the dialogue between sociology and the community. At the same time, within the academy, the waning of Marxism and the rise of Afropessimism, drew off the powerful critical impulses that had inspired South African public sociology.

Pressures also came from beyond South African borders. The ANC government, like other governments in sub-Saharan Africa, was influenced by the World Bank and other international agencies, arguing that higher education should serve to credential and train rather than develop critical dialogue. Accordingly, the government demanded centralization and restructuring of higher education to serve the needs of the new African student population, introducing new interdisciplinary modules that divided and fragmented sociology. Along with new curricula came the pressure to shift research in an applied or policy direction. As in Russia, sociologists found themselves scrambling for research funding from policy networks. Combining both centralization and global influences, the National Research Foundation began evaluating researchers on the basis of their international; i.e., Western, publications and standing. As a result South African

sociology was pulled away from its historic critical and public forms and redirected toward training, local policy and Western professionalism, simultaneously deepening the divide between historically white and historically black universities.

The global pressures drawing sociology away from dialogue with local communities, away from responsiveness to regional issues, are transparent in semi-peripheral countries, at least where there are still cadres of social scientists. This is not a conspiracy of American or Western sociologists, who remain largely unaware of the effects of their institutional domination. Or if it is a conspiracy, it is a conspiracy of silence. We are all too ignorant of the ways US sociology sets the terms for sociology in the Global South—models, theories, methods developed in and for the advanced world. If we are ignorant of the way we set the terrain for national debates, for and against metropolitan social science, we are even more ignorant of the consequences of that hegemony. We need to think about developing a transnational sociology that would problematize the hegemony of US sociology.

### **Toward a Global Sociology?**

My voice in this paper is that of a critical sociologist, trying to connect American sociology to its broader contexts of production. I have argued that we need to rethink our relation to publics beyond sociology as well as to policy makers and that we must also consider the implications this would have for the way we organize our discipline. I used the division of sociological labor into professional, policy, public and critical sociologies to first recognize public sociology and then to locate it in relation to the rest of the discipline. I argued

further that American sociology should be more reflective about the specificity of its division of sociological labor by comparison with other countries, as well as the hegemonic role we play in defining the terrain of national sociologies all over the world.

Finally we need to briefly allude to the possibility of a global sociology that might transcend national boundaries. This brings me back to my introduction, where I spoke of the significance of September 11<sup>th</sup>, as marking the ascendant tyranny of markets and coercive states, some would call it a new empire, against which it is possible to detect an emergent opposition, perhaps a counter-hegemonic transnational civil society. Such a civil society might be the natural partner for a global public sociology. What evidence is there for such a global public sociology? To what extent are sociologists, or more generally social scientists and here indeed anthropology may be ahead of us, engaged in conversation with environmental, human rights, labor, and women's movements that transcend national borders. To what extent have social scientists, and sociologists in particular, helped to forge the transnational civil society that would be the basis of a global sociology from below.

And what relation would such a public social science have to the policy world of the World Bank, IMF, WTO, UN, etc.? A few sociologists and hoards of economists populate these international agencies. Michael Goldman has described the intended and unintended strictures the World Bank places on its consultants as well as its own researchers. Even as it redefines agendas in a progressive direction, it incorporates and domesticates indigenous interests and movements, in short how it instrumentalizes knowledge.

The expanding social movements protesting the destructive incursions of World Bank projects is one obvious field for public sociology.

Finally, we have to ask how such policy and public sociologies operating at a global level might stimulate and call for revamping the questions, paradigms, research programs of professional sociology. Of course, there are already the world systems framework initiated by Immanuel Wallerstein and the neo-

modernization institutionalist framework of John Meyer and his collaborators, but they still operate within a conceptual scheme of nation states and not yet within the context of a transnational civil society. Just as Polanyi and Gramsci were explicit in their focus on civil society as a reaction to the market and as the extension of the state, so now we have to project their formulations onto a global level and think through their significance for a global sociology.



**ENDNOTES:**

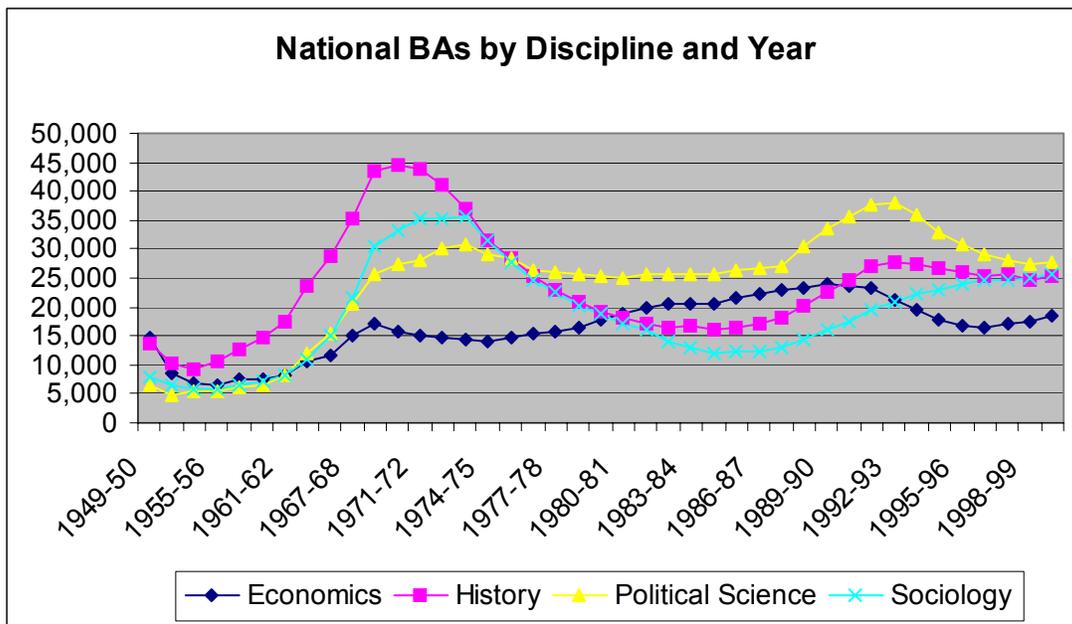
<sup>i</sup> Of course, following Arrighi and Silver, the reverse could be argued – communism was brought to its knees by market ideology and assertive unilateralism, itself the product of the crisis of US hegemony that began as early as the 1970s. Whatever the direction of causality, September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 was not the fundamental break it is represented to be but was rather an opportunity to further deepen these preexisting patterns.

<sup>ii</sup> The table is curiously reminiscent of other matrices: Talcott Parsons’ AGIL scheme and Habermas’ elucidation of the system and life-world.

<sup>iii</sup> In the following table I offer a preliminary assessment of the different dimensions of the four sociologies: type of knowledge, basis of legitimacy, mechanism of accountability, and pathology.

	<b>ACADEMIC</b>	<b>EXTRA-ACADEMIC</b>
<b>INSTRUMENTAL</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Knowledge</b></li> <li>• <b>Legitimacy</b></li> <li>• <b>Accountability</b></li> <li>• <b>Pathology</b></li> </ul>	<b>Professional Sociology</b> Theoretical/empirical Scientific Norms Peer Review Self-Referentiality	<b>Policy Sociology</b> Concrete Effectiveness Client Sanction Servility
<b>REFLEXIVE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Knowledge</b></li> <li>• <b>Legitimacy</b></li> <li>• <b>Accountability</b></li> <li>• <b>Pathology</b></li> </ul>	<b>Critical Sociology</b> Foundational Moral Vision Excommunication (CCD) Dogmatism	<b>Public Sociology</b> Communicative Relevance Audience Withdrawal Fadishness/Vanguardism

<sup>iv</sup> Annual figures for Bas show sociology recovering from its lowest levels in the mid-1980s, overtaking economics and today catching up with political science and history.



Data from U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS), “Degrees and Other Formal Awards Conferred” surveys, and Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), “Completions” surveys.

## DISCUSSANTS' COMMENTS



From left: Max Pfeffer, David Lewis, Davydd Greenwood, Lourdes Beneria, Michael Burawoy

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