SOCIOLOGY: GOING PUBLIC, GOING GLOBAL

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[Introduction to *Public Sociology against Market Fundamentalism and Global Inequality* in German]

The essays in this book were written in the decade between 2004 and 2014. The opening essay is my address to the American Sociological Association and the closing essay my address to the International Sociological Association. They represent a movement from public sociology to global sociology. In 2004 when I laid out an agenda for public sociology I did not anticipate the controversy it would generate, and therefore I did not appreciate its historical significance. What was significant about the moment and the context? The essays that follow are my attempt to situate public sociology in relation to the transformation of the university, and beyond that in relation to what I call third-wave marketization that has devastated so much of the planet. Such broader movements affecting sociology and other disciplines called for self-examination as to the meaning of our endeavors. These essays are part of such a reflection, pointing to new directions for sociology in particular.

Here sociology is defined by its standpoint, specifically the standpoint of civil society. It contrasts with economics that takes the standpoint of the market and political science that takes the standpoint of the state. Public sociology then is a critical engagement with civil society against the over-extension of market and state. It stands opposed to third-wave marketization whose differential impact across the world calls for a global sociology – one that has to recognize the continuing importance of the nation state and takes its point of departure in the social movements of our era. Global sociology reaches for the global while being grounded in the local – a challenging enterprise with many blind alleys.

The essays that follow are part of a process of development, so the details of their formulation are not always consistent. This introduction is designed to tease out an overall logic of development and present a consistent theoretical framework.

Genesis of "Public Sociology"

The last decade has seen a flourishing debate on public sociology. I count 35 symposia published in diverse journals and edited books in countries as far flung as China, Russia, Brazil, South Africa, France, Germany, Denmark, Italy, Iran, Canada, Poland, India, Hungary, Norway, Finland, Portugal, England as well as the United States. That does not include the numerous singular articles and translations that have appeared in many languages as well as debates in neighboring disciplines of criminology, anthropology, geography and political science. Why the fuss? What is the debate all about? Who could possibly object to bringing sociology into public debate? These are the questions I must address.

The idea of public sociology is not new. There have been a litany of calls for public engagement, starting with Marx's much quoted thesis about changing the world as well as understanding it and Durkheim's claim that sociology would not be worth an hour's labor if it were simply speculative. Max Weber spent much of his life in public engagement, whether defending the autonomy of the university against government interventions, writing articles in leading German newspapers, giving public lectures, authoring the best-selling *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, and even designing a new constitution for the Weimar Republic. In the US sociology grew up deeply imbricated with reformist theology from which it took many decades to extricate itself. In countries of Africa, Asia and particularly Latin America, public sociology has had long and well-developed tradition.

So what is new? Giving public sociology a name has real consequences. First, many have been doing public sociology all their lives but they never gave it a name. Giving a name to a taken-for-granted activity can redefine its meaning for the practitioners. In the case of public sociology it compels us to reflect on the meaning of our public engagement – its limits and its possibilities, its challenges and its dangers. It invites us to examine its conditions of existence, its dynamics and its consequences. We can begin to think of its allies but also its enemies. What was natural suddenly becomes problematic and contingent.

Second, giving a name to public sociology can give it legitimacy in the eyes of its practitioners but also its advocates. Those who were marginalized by their public engagement are suddenly recognized as doing meaningful sociology. Equally, naming public sociology can be used to dismiss and stereotype just as easily as affirm it. In some quarters, within the discipline, public sociologists are stigmatized as enemies of scientific objectivity. The more successful is public sociology, and the more it looks like a social movement among sociologists, often appealing to those in lower echelons of the profession, the more it can elicit hostility from its consecrated elders. Even those who might otherwise be identified as public sociologists may distance themselves from the identity, fearing the associations that engulf the term.

But naming public sociology has a third consequence. Recognizing it as a special type of sociology suggests there are other types and thus a classification of the field of sociology. Indeed, public sociology has a complex relation to three other types of sociology: professional, policy and critical. Let me illustrate this classification with examples from my own trajectory. I began my career as a sociologist in Zambia, some six years after the country's independence (1964). It was in Zambia that I began studying sociology for an MA degree in 1970. These were exciting times, full of optimism about the future. My first vision of sociology was of a social science inherently engaged with public issues. My first taste of public sociology involved releasing a four-year study of the copper industry and its racist personnel practices – the fraught issue of Zambianization and the color bar. It generated much discussion and debate in a country that inherited a dependence on expatriates to manage a copper industry that provided some 95% of its export revenues.

At the university we were all social scientists together struggling with the challenges of postcoloniality. The academic pursuit was intended for the light it shed on those issues. If it cast those issues in darkness as did modernization theory – as I thought at the time – then it would be better seen as ideology of a new dominant class or of an imperial power. Trying to understand that ideology better I packed my bags and went in search of its origins. I entered graduate school at the University of Chicago, renowned for the distinguished intellectuals that ran the Committee on New Nations – one source of so-called development theory. When I arrived, however, the New Committee on New Nations had been disbanded and sociologists were not interested in much outside the US. There in Chicago I learned the meaning of professional sociology – a concern with an abstract, formal sociology, or the study of the mundane, or an obsessive concern with technique and numbers. Even ethnographic work seemed determined to bracket off all that was important in shaping everyday life. The raison d'etre of sociology – as we were taught it – was to speak to other sociologists, a largely internal dialogue whose goal was academic distinction, marked by publications in the top academic journals, read only by sociologists and a limited number of those.

Playing the academic game as a Marxist I was fortunate to obtain a job at the University of California, Berkeley. Of all the major US departments of sociology Berkeley had the strongest record of public engagement, in part tied to the history of revolt that went back to the beginning of the 20th century but most widely known for the 1964 Free Speech Movement. Still, when I arrived in 1976, Berkeley's sociology was only a variation on the theme of professional sociology. To be recognized as a public sociologist required prior academic distinction. One had to earn one's right to be a public sociologist!

It was only when I returned to South Africa in 1990 after a 22 year absence that I discovered the possibilities of an alternative sociology. The academic boycott against the apartheid regime had been lifted and I was asked to address the Association of Sociologists of South Africa. What I discovered was a sociology deeply tied to the anti-apartheid movement – engaged with various civics, unions, community organizations, delving into topics that produced a distinctive critical engagement as well as distinctive theories of race and class, of social movements (especially labor movement), of capitalism, and so forth. One should not romanticize this public sociology – it was full of dilemmas and dangers. There were ferocious debates among sociologists and for some it meant making difficult decisions, even to the point of sacrificing their life. The apartheid state did not like sociological truths paraded in public. I returned to Berkeley excited by what I had seen, realizing that sociology didn't have to be confined to the academy.

How different this was from the sociology I encountered during my previous decade's research in socialist Hungary. There a different polarity revealed itself: not so much professional sociology vs. public sociology, but policy sociology vs. critical sociology. In the Soviet Union and its satellites sociology had had a checkered history, in which officially it had become –

insofar as it existed – an ideological machine for the party state. It had become the prototype of what I call policy sociology – sociology conducted at the behest of a client. Nevertheless, the dominance of policy sociology gave rise to its antithesis, namely critical sociology, a sociology that dissented from the warped empiricism of party ideology. In Poland and Hungary, in particular, sociology developed as a critique of the party state, first in terms of its failure to live up to its own ideology and how reforms might improve it, and subsequently in terms of the bankruptcy of state socialism as a pathological system that could not be reformed and, thus, the need to revert to capitalism. That indeed had been happening surreptitiously in Hungary.

As my research turned from Hungary to Russia and as I studied the transition from state socialism to market capitalism, I saw the way sociology that had received an energizing impetus in late perestroika became, in the post-Soviet era, increasingly a servant of corporate or political clients. The economic and political system may have changed but sociology remained largely policy sociology. As the notion of public sociology reached Russia in the early years of the new century so its opened up a debate as to its meaning with the old institutes of sociology claiming to represent public sociology through their surveys, while the Russian Orthodox Church claiming that its own sociology was the true public sociology, while the liberals, trained and influenced in the West were more likely to see public sociology as the public defense of the autonomy of professional sociology.

My research trajectory certainly illustrated these different types of sociology. It showed that the configuration of the four sociologies varied considerably from place to place and, indeed, from time to time, depending on both specific national histories and positioning in an international division of knowledge production.

A Contested Field

I needed to justify the types of sociology at a more general and abstract level. This is what I attempted in the ASA Address of 2004 by asking two fundamental questions: "Sociology for whom?" and "Sociology for What?" These are, I claim, universal questions – basic questions that sociologists must ask wherever they are located. The answers to these questions generated the four types of sociology. On the one hand, "sociology for whom?" implied a distinction between an audience that was academic and one that was extra-academic. This was relatively clear. On the other hand, "sociology for what?" implied a distinction between a sociology concerned with means for a given end, that is instrumental knowledge, and a sociology concerned with the discussion of ends themselves, what I called a reflexive sociology. Here I was borrowing from Weber's distinction between instrumental and value rationality that also lay at the heart of Frankfurt School theorizing. The result was a two-by-two table – Table 1 below – in which instrumental sociology was divided between professional sociology (whose reference was an academic audience) and policy sociology (whose reference was an extra-academic

audience), while reflexive sociology was divided between critical sociology (academic audience) and public sociology (extra-academic audience).

It was the distinction between instrumental and reflexive knowledge that created the greatest havoc. Professional sociologists objected to the characterization of their work as "instrumental". How could their pursuit of "knowledge for knowledge's sake" – this holiest of vocations – be regarded as instrumental? Let me be clear about my intention here. My view of science derives from the work of Thomas Kuhn (1962) and Imre Lakatos,(1978) which is to say that science proceeds through solving of puzzles as defined by paradigms (Kuhn) or anomalies as defined by research programs (Lakatos). As Weber (1917) said, in pursuing their vocation scientists have to be intoxicated by crucial details that often assume little or no significance outside a shared framework that is taken for granted, what Lakatos (1978) called the "negative heuristic". In this view the role of critical sociology is to question the taken-for-granted assumptions of research programs in the way that Alvin Gouldner (1970) and C Wright Mills (1959) did for structural functionialism or Pitirim Sorokin (1956) did for mainstream "quantophrenia" or feminism did for the gender bias of sociology, or as postcolonial theory does for the provincialism of Northern sociology. Critical sociology reveals and problematizes the unquestioned foundations – value, methodological, theoretical – of a professional sociology. The professional sociologists reply that their sociology is itself "critical" and "reflexive" – inevitably so. But this is an illusion – self-misunderstanding as Habermas (1971) might put it – for it is no more possible to pursue science and at the same time question the assumptions upon which it rests than it is to play chess while continually questioning the rules of the game. Science *requires* the suppression of consideration of its foundations – for that one needs theorists whose task it is to interrogate foundations.

TABLE 1: THE DIVISION OF SOCIOLOGICAL LABOR

	Academic Audience	Extra-Academic Audience
Instrumental Knowledge	PROFESSIONAL	POLICY
Reflexive Knowledge	CRITICAL	PUBLIC

No less misguided are those who would dismiss professional sociology as "mainstream" and "descriptive" or "positivist" and so embrace "critical theory" as the only true science. Again there is a misunderstanding of the nature of sociology and science and its central place in defining the discipline, without which there could not be a critical sociology because there would be nothing to criticize. There is a world of difference between dismissing and criticizing professional sociology – critical sociology takes professional sociology very seriously, and if done properly even more seriously than its own practitioners. Just think of the critiques of sociology undertaken by Alvin Gouldner (1970) in *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology* and Jurgen Habermas' (1984 and 1987) *Theory of Communicative Action*, a two volume engagement with sociology, broadly conceived.

Similar misconceptions can be found in the distinction between policy sociology and public sociology. The distinction is a simple one, at least in theory, between knowledge that is concerned with problems defined by a client (parallel to knowledge defined by anomalies of a research program) and knowledge that involves discussion between sociologists and publics about the ends of society (parallel to the discussion among sociologists about the values and assumptions of sociology). The policy sociologist protests at this "instrumental" interpretation of their trade and, indeed, it is the case that they do have a variable relation to the client, with more or less autonomy. Still the client sets the agenda just as the research program defines the anomalies to be tackled. Just as the professional sociologist resents the exposé of the critical sociologist, so the policy sociologist regards the public sociology as a rabble-rousing, politicizing activity that brings disrepute to sociology as a science, making it difficult for the policy sociologist to secure the trust of their clients.

Let's be clear what the public sociologist is up to. The purpose is to generate public debate about public issues, about the goals of society. In so doing the public sociologist is not a scientist producing knowledge but a publicist engendering debate and to that extent accountable to publics. But the public sociologist is also a sociologist and the visions presented for debate are based on and true to the science of sociology. The public sociologist translates professional sociology into readily understandable terms – a difficult practice if it is to avoid dumbing down – so as to enter into a conversation with publics and in that sense is accountable to both publics and the community of scientists. The public sociologist is, therefore, often critical of policy sociologists for ignoring or sacrificing the value foundations of their work.

While I have no desire to legislate the interpretations of these terms, my position is opposed to those who would simply dismiss instrumental knowledge – whether professional knowledge or policy science – as "bad" while embracing critical and public knowledge as "good". There is no normative value attached to instrumental knowledge or reflexive knowledge. There is policy science that is done on behalf of corporations or agencies of the state as well as for progressive trade unions. Equally, there is no specific value to public sociology – there is public sociology that engages with publics on behalf of subordinate groups just as there

is public sociology that advances the interests and values of dominant groups. There is nothing in the definition of public sociology to say that it should defend values of equality and freedom – although empirically that has usually been the case. After all, in the 19th century the US sported a public sociology that defended slavery. The only value that public sociology should consistently cling to is the value of public discussion, the defense of the public sphere and its substratum of civil society. This does suggest the importance of democracy, of freedom of speech, reason and perhaps even reducing inequality. Of course, it becomes complicated when these same terms are mobilized to close down public sphere and public discussion.

Furthermore, as should be clear, I am *not* arguing – as some do – that sociology should be just public sociology. Rather I believe that a thriving discipline requires all four sociologies. This is my second underlying assumption. We can think of the field of sociology as a division of knowledge production in which people specialize in one or more types of knowledge, and their careers move through the different types. Thus, public sociology, while in tension with professional sociology, is nevertheless necessary for a good professional sociology, and vice versa. Each contributes to the whole – the flourishing of all depends on the flourishing of each.

However, it is not a simple organic solidarity of interdependence based on shared values but a relationship of antagonistic interdependence that expresses itself in configurations of domination. Sociology, like any other field, is an arena of struggle among sociologists differently placed in the field. The constituency behind each type of sociology seeks to assert its domination. Against public sociologists, the professional sociologists claim either that public sociology is dangerous and infeasible or that public sociology is their prerogative as guardians of the discipline, and is simply a subordinate part of their own activities. At the same time professional sociologists seek to expel the public sociologists from the field by labeling them as populists who seek to advance their career by pandering to the lowest common denominator. In this view public sociologists bring the discipline into disrepute.

For their part the public sociologists claim that they undertake the most relevant pursuits and attack the professionals as conducting irrelevant research, caught up in self-referential schemes. The critical sociologists can be dismissive of professional sociology for its false foundations or of the policy sociologists for their "prostitution" of the discipline, sacrificing integrity of the discipline in the service of power. For their part the policy sociologists may look upon the critical sociologists as parasites and dogmatic, who refuse to take seriously evidenced-based research. In the struggle for domination, each reduces the others to pathologies or caricatures. In the eyes of the others the professional sociologist becomes irrelevant, the critical sociologist becomes dogmatic, the policy sociologist becomes servile and the public sociologist becomes faddish. I defend them all as essential to a thriving discipline, concerned that none fall into a pathological state!

Pathologizing the other is a strategy of asserting power, pointing to treachery, and thus grounds for expulsion. The self-referential professional sociologist, the servile policy sociologist, the dogmatic critical sociologist and the faddish public sociologist stand accused of catering to forces beyond the field, and thus betraying the discipline. Pathologizing is a strategy of power but also a real tendency. The challenge, then, is to remain within the field, true to its principles – its *nomos* as Bourdieu (2000) would say – and accountable to its different actors while also recognizing their divergent positionings and audiences. The struggle for domination within the field is, indeed, what holds the discipline together. When sociologists stop attacking one another then we no longer have a discipline, but disconnected projects captured by external forces. Policy sociologists would be captured by their client, populist sociologists would sell out to their publics, professional sociologists would become infatuated with their methodology, while critical sociologists would dismiss the whole enterprise as flawed. I would like to see them all, arguing with each other.

Universities in Crisis

The fact that the debate on public sociology continues, albeit in different permutations in different countries, does suggest that we do, indeed, still have a discipline of global dimensions and that these types of sociology capture meaningful distinctions and tensions. Those permutations are different – in some countries professional sociology lags behind public sociology whereas in other countries it is the opposite. The same applies to critical and policy sociology. Indeed, there appears to be an international division of labor in which professional sociology dominates in the North while public sociology (and in some places critical sociology and in other places policy sociology) prevails in the South. This has a lot to do with the resources available for sociology which, in turn, is contingent on the university that mediates (or fails to mediate) national and global pressures. In trying to understand the source of the interest in public sociology at this moment in history, it is necessary to consider the pressures universities are facing. I believe these pressures are similar across the world although they have very different repercussions.

The privatization and marketization of the university has forced the university to become its own profit center, making knowledge a private rather than a public good, turning it into a commodity that is sold on the market. Withdrawing state support for the university – and this has been a very uneven if nonetheless general process – has entailed the search for alternative funding from private sources. This can come from the proceeds of research through joint ventures or targeted donations from corporations, through charitable contributions from alumni and others, through patents and through state research funds. Just to mention these items makes it clear that such sources of income are the privilege of only elite universities which monopolize such private support. At the top of the world list is Harvard with its 36 billion dollar endowment while most universities are simply bankrupt because they cannot raise the necessary funding. All they can do is to raise income through student fees but even that capacity is heavily unequal,

again discriminating in favor of the richest universities that can offer the most to their students. Forced into bankruptcy universities start cutting costs, reducing the number and the pay of full time faculty, increasing teaching loads, hiring temporary lecturers who teach as much as is humanly possible at a barely living wage. The employment of non-academic staff is outsourced to reduce wage bills. At the same time the university as an organization comes to look ever more like a corporation and its administrators become highly paid managers, entrepreneurs, and branders. Faculty governance recedes in the face of corporate managers, backed up by boards of trustees, themselves closely tied to the rich and the powerful. Disciplines and schools are reorganized in terms of their profitability and working conditions and salaries diverge accordingly. Within disciplines there is pressure to raise funds both collectively and individually, driving them towards policy science. The privatization of the university has meant faculty devote more time to seeking income, working on consultancies at the cost of research and teaching. This hits universities in the Global South far harder than in the North – in the South salaries are so low and student numbers are so high that teaching and research become impossible. The best talent exits, seeking positions in Think Tanks, consultancies or migrates abroad. Even here there are exceptions: the Chinese, Indian and Brazilian states have invested heavily in their best universities where faculty received a living salary and student fees are manageable, especially as most students come from middle or upper classes.

There is, however, another dimension to the present conjuncture that accompanies commodification, and that is regulation. If commodification concerns "knowledge for whom" (who can afford it?), regulation concerns "knowledge for what" (who controls it?). If a given university has to sell its knowledge and its teaching, then it has to demonstrate its quality to potential buyers. The university has to be branded and that is the function of university rankings. Begun as an effort by China to evaluate its own universities against the supposedly best – defined as the Ivy League universities in the US – these rankings have created a hierarchy of "world class" universities and shaped the distribution of resources and the direction of research and teaching. Determined to raise their standing in both national and international leagues university administrations create incentive structures for their leading faculty to seek recognition in the North by publishing in the most "prestigious" ("high impact") journals, which means publishing in English, and in the social sciences often in accordance with alien research programs. This means, with but a few privately funded exceptions, the Global South is losing control of what little university education remains. Even in the North, the audit culture has swamped higher education with knowledge assessment geared to short run publications. Regulation not only affects research but also teaching as student satisfaction becomes an ever more important arbiter of the conduct of university administrators. As in other such matters Britain is leading the way, exporting its audit systems to the rest of the world – first the Research Assessment Exercise and now its replacement the Research Excellence Framework.

Disciplinary Boundaries

What does this mean for sociology? Commodification means that sociology has to sell itself, find clients for its insights, its research and its techniques. It means that it often migrates into business schools, public policy schools. In some national contexts it can still cling to a distinctive methodology – the survey instrument. It has to think about the careers for which it is training undergraduates, thus its embrace of criminology. What is sellable varies from context to context, but on the whole sociology is on the back foot, having difficulty persuading others that its social perspective has purchase in an individualistic environment. If commodification involves the domination of the extra-academic over the academic, then regulation leads to the domination of the instrumental over the reflexive, professional over critical, policy over public. Sociology is continually pulled in the direction of research that will not only render financial dividends but also symbolic dividends through publication in mainstream journals. This leads to distortions as sociology becomes oriented to writing in English and within research programs defined by professional sociologists in the US and UK. Local and national issues are displaced in favor of the false universality of US sociology or French sociology in the case of French speaking academics. The dilemma has been well expressed by Sari Hanafi (2011) as a choice between publishing globally and perishing locally, or publishing locally and perishing global.

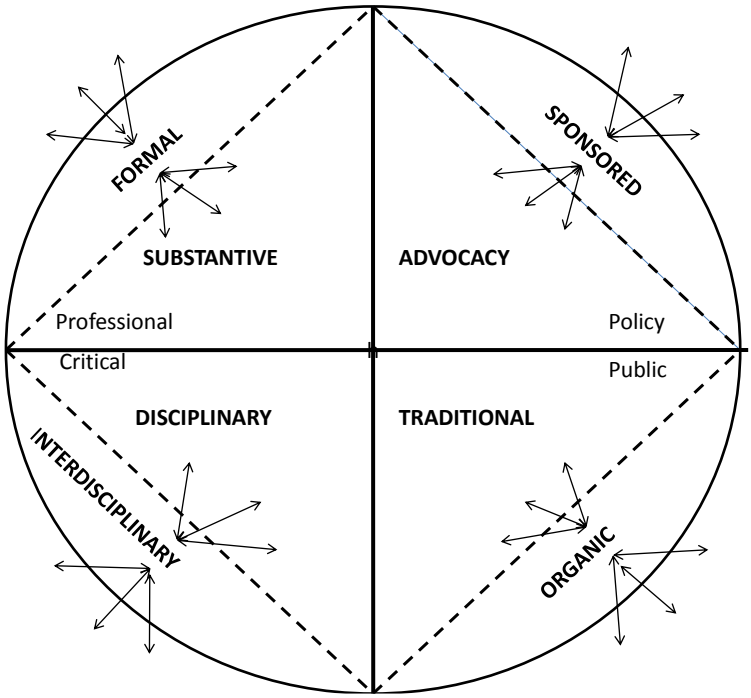
How can we respond to the dilemmas of the sociological field in this context of commodification and regulation? We have to develop a framework that recognizes that the field must develop its own "buffer" zones that mediate the relationship between national context and the drive for autonomy without simply retreating into a putative ivory tower. We have to build a framework that helps us understand the real pressures facing sociology and thus strategies of internal self-defense and external engagement. Figure 1 spells this out and one might argue that it applies to any academic discipline, albeit with different balance forces.

In the policy realm we have to recognize the place of negotiation between sociologist and client, the distinction between what I call *sponsored* policy science in which the client dictates terms to the sociologist and *advocacy* in which the sociologist presents a definition of the problem. If the first suggests a more pecuniary and privatized relation to the client, the second is one in which the sociologists retains autonomy and can remain accountable to the community of sociologists.

In the professional realm we distinguish between *formal rationalization* that concerns the way in which a discipline is regulated through peer review, standards of evaluation, incentive systems and so forth and *substantive rationalization* that concerns the development and autonomy of research programs. As external pressures of regulation and evaluation become stronger so formal rationalization from being a protective mechanisms becomes ever-more threatening to the integrity of research by orienting its production to alien standards and short

term achievements. The tantalizing and often frustrating pursuit of knowledge is turned into an exercise for maximizing productivity and gaming the incentive system.

FIGURE 1: THE MATRIX OF KNOWLEDGE IN ITS NATIONAL CONTEXT



As Weber already warned and as the Frankfurt School has thematized the danger lies in the domination of instrumental over reflexive knowledge, the "eclipse of reason" – that we become so focused on means-end rationality that we fail to discuss the ends themselves. The assertion, therefore, of critical and public knowledge is designed to rectify this balance. Still, here too, there are tensions and dilemmas to be negotiated. The purpose of critical knowledge is to problematize the foundations of disciplines but also the domination of formal rationality over substantive rationality, something that is affecting multiple disciplines. Like the other knowledges, critical knowledge looks inwards but also outwards, to build a "culture of critical discourse" (Gouldner 1982) across disciplines that contest the instrumentalization of the university. Yet the obstacles to such transdisciplinary conversation are becoming ever greater as they become ever more necessary. As the university becomes instrumentalized, it divides disciplines and schools against each other, developing new hierarchies of inequality, encouraging disciplines to seek outside support rather than building unity from within.

The building of an academic community engaged in broad reflective discussion of the goals and functions of the university is tied to a far broader public discussion about the fate of society. Here, too, sociology's diagnoses of inequality, community, democracy are pertinent to the elevation of public debate which can take place in two ways – traditional and organic public

sociology. Traditional public sociology is the broad engagement with publics through the media – whether this be conventional opinion pieces in newspapers, interviews on television and radio, writing of popular books or the use of social media such as blogs, on line magazines and so forth. Here the purpose is to generate debate about the big issues of the day whether they concern "terrorism", "racism", "immigration", "unemployment", "inequality", etc. It is a mediated public discussion as distinct from the unmediated relationship between the organic public sociologists and their more immediate publics – neighborhood associations, religious groups, social movements. For the organic public sociologist as compared to the traditional public sociologists, publics tend to be narrower, more active, thicker (more densely internally connected), and often counter-publics (left or right).

The trouble is that the public sphere is often a crowded place, one dominated by powerful corporate actors or one regulated by the state (Castells 2009) – any combination of these means that sociology will have great difficulty getting its message across, difficult because its message is often out of sync with the lived experience of publics. Sociology has an account that is at odds with overweening force of markets and states, it is more likely to resonate with social movements that become if not more scarce then more ephemeral. The public sphere is a realm of power that puts sociology at a disadvantage. Organic public sociology involving direct relations between sociologists and publics may be at an advantage in generating conversations. It may be more conducive to inter-disciplinary collaboration, but it has its own dilemmas. Publics are not necessarily keen on just understanding their situation, they want it improved, they want the public sociologist to become a policy sociologist, an advocate on their behalf with the state.

Whichever way one turns public sociology is a Sisyphean task in a climate where sociological ideas have limited traction and face much opposition. So then the question, why sociology? Should we simply abandon the discipline as an anachronism as Immanuel Wallerstein (1996) advocates, dissolving sociology into a general social science? Should we migrate into business schools and cultural studies for protection as has been happening in the United Kingdom?

Why Sociology?

It is precisely in these times when sociology is under attack, when its core assumptions are questioned that we should fight all the stronger for the defense of a sociological perspective. We can only do this in the business school, in the public policy school, if there is a core discipline nurtured outside these compromised units.

But what is this core perspective of sociology that should be defended at all costs? Sociology has historically defined itself as a body of knowledge that responded to particular historical events that it defined – industrialization, urbanization, modernization – or is it the study of something vaguely defined as "society". Unlike economists who first invented the

notion of the economy and then secured a monopoly of knowledge over that entity (conceived of as something real), sociology has never managed to establish the concept "society" let alone a monopoly of knowledge. Sociology has never successfully secured its insulation from all manner of public commentators and pretenders who pander to public opinion, what Bourdieu (1998) calls doxosophers. In a sense sociology has never been able to protect itself from public contestation, which is another reason why the embrace of public sociology has been so controversial, undermining the on-going attempt at building a true science of sociology, autonomous from public interference. It is, therefore, said that before it can go public it has first to become truly professional.

I propose to take a different approach, defining sociology not by its distinctive object ("society") but by its standpoint, not the standpoint of a particular group but the standpoint of a particular place, namely civil society. What do I mean by "civil society"? Here I refer to the organizations, institutions, movements that occupy a place that is neither part of the economy nor part of the state. It does presume that such a place can be defined. I follow Antonio Gramsci (1971) in claiming that the rise of civil society marks the transition to advanced capitalism and the simultaneous advent of sociology. Broadly speaking, one observes that where civil society is strong so is sociology, where it disappears so does sociology, where it reappears after despotic rule so does sociology. One can link the twists and turns of sociology to the twists and turns of civil society.

When I say that sociology is the standpoint of civil society this does not mean that sociologists only study civil society. Far from it. Rather they study other spheres of society – the economy and the polity but from the standpoint of their effects on or dependence on civil society. Political sociology, for example, has studied the social conditions of liberal democracy but also the way democracy impinges on civil society, economic sociology studies the social conditions of the market but also the way the market tends to destroy society, etc. Civil society – and here is another misconception – is by no means a harmonious and solidary entity, but riven by all manner of conflicts, divisions, marginalizations which is precisely why sociology is itself such a divided discipline with conflicting perspectives and research programs with their own specific values.

If sociology is the perspective from the standpoint of civil society with an interest in its expansion and collective self-organization, then economics becomes the standpoint of the economy with an interest in the expansion of the market while political science assumes the standpoint of the state with an interest in political order. The value stance that underpins the different social sciences are thereby revealed as potentially contradictory and placed in relation to one another. The present period of so-called neoliberalism is one in which market and state collude in the destruction or cooptation of civil society, on the one hand through the commodification of everyday life and on the other through new patterns of regulation. We have

already seen this in relation to the university and the way this puts sociology in particular on the back foot.

In this context for sociologists to advance the idea of social science is to abolish sociology in favor of economics. Given the balance forces in the world, economics is a far more powerful discipline than sociology. Political scientists have tended to adopt the strategy of joining economics whereas it is in the DNA for sociology to oppose the utilitarianism that underpins neoclassical economics. From Marx, Durkheim and Weber to Parsons, Habermas and Bourdieu to feminism and postcolonial theory, the history of sociology has demonstrated a stiff opposition to a reductive view of social action as well as society. To give up that tradition now is to abandon the project of sociology precisely when it is most necessary to support a beleaguered civil society. The significance of public sociology, therefore, is to forge alliances with organizations, institutions, communities and movements which are also facing an offensive from some combination of state and market, just as engineering and bio-sciences have forged alliances with industry. If there is not a move into civil society on the part of sociology and its neighboring disciplines – anthropology, geography, social history – then the university will be increasingly swallowed up by the interests of corporations and state. But our engagement has to be measured and deliberate without sacrificing the autonomy necessary for a serious professional sociology, and for this we require an active critical sociology.

Third-Wave Marketization

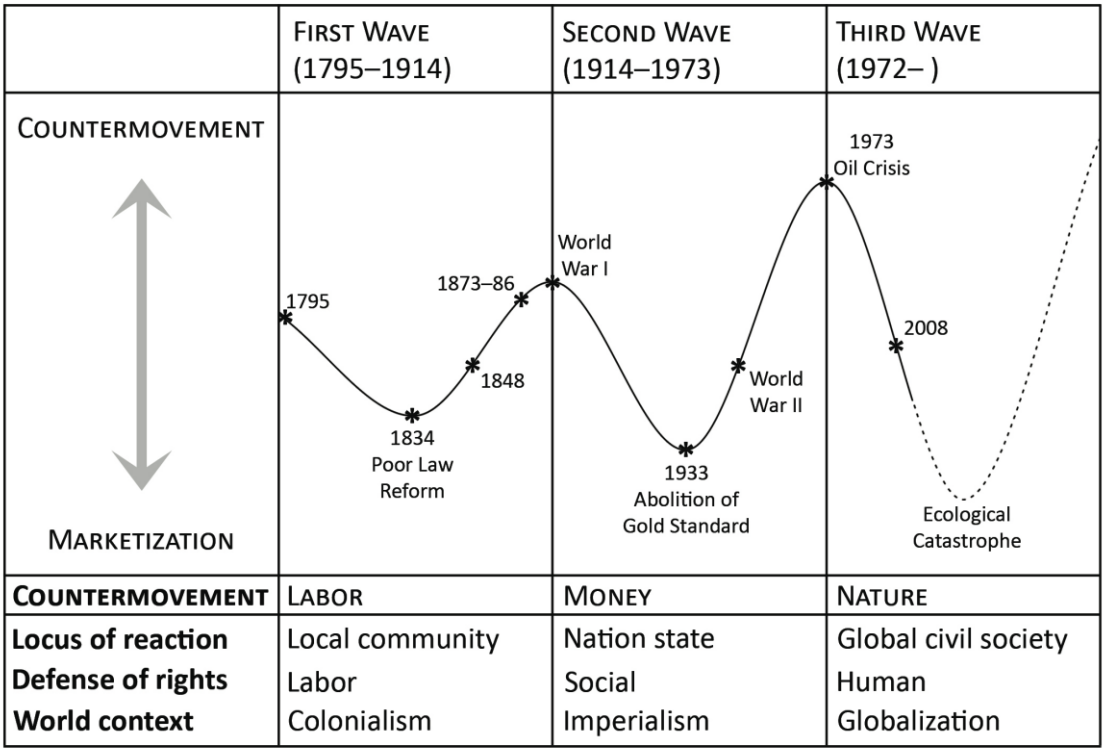
If my diagnosis of the state of sociology is correct then we need a theory of market expansion from the standpoint of civil society. With this end in mind I turned to the classic work of Karl Polanyi (1944), *The Great Transformation*. This work has of late become a canonical text in economic sociology because its focuses on the implications of the over-extension of markets for the destruction of society. It is sociology in the grand historical tradition, tracing the advance of the market from the end of the 18th century to the end of WWII, linking the experience of commodification to national and global developments without reducing the one to the other. The thesis of the book is that when markets are pushed too far then they can be so destructive that they sent in motion a counter-movement that is as likely to be reactionary (fascism or Stalinism) as progressive (social democracy or democratic socialism). Polanyi traces the rise of state regulated economies in North America and Europe to the unregulated expansion of the market whose home and origin was 19th England. He never contemplated the possibility of another wave of marketization, thinking that humanity would never again undertake such a dangerous experiment. He was wrong. The 1970s saw another wave of marketization that has not abated and that threatens human existence in many places on our planet, polarizing the divide between rich and poor.

The project of global sociology is thus to reconstruct *The Great Transformation* for our era and that is indeed what many are doing. One of the most useful but underdeveloped concepts

in Polanyi's armory is the idea of fictitious commodity – a factor of production that when subject to unregulated market exchange loses its use value. Polanyi has three fictitious commodities: labor, land and money. When labor is commodified without the protection of a limited working day, minimum wages, unemployment compensation its use value as the application of effort and skill rapidly diminish. We see this today in the rise of precarious of labor. When land and we might say, more broadly, nature is commodified, again in an unregulated fashion, then it too is devastated as we see all over the world in the extraction of natural resources and the consequence this has for communities and the environment. When money is commodified and becomes the object of profit-making at the expense of its utility as a means of exchange we get development of debt economies and financial crises. In the contemporary period a fourth fictitious commodity has arisen – knowledge. From being a public good it is increasingly a private good bought and sold in the market place. The analysis of the modern university exemplifies this process.

Fictitious commodities do not operate in isolation. They have to be seen in their inter-relationship – how, for example, the privatization of the university gives rise to a loan industry for students and intersects with a labor market of ever-increasing precarity. Commodification of nature displaces populations making them prey to money lenders and precarity. In many of these examples there is a close connection between commodification and *ex-commodification*, that is the expulsion of access to the market, the creation of waste whether of human life or material forms. It is important to recognize that ex-commodification often deepens commitments to the market rather than generating a counter-movement against the market. The notion of fictitious commodity offers a framework within which it is possible to analyze the different lived experiences of marketization across the world, while at the same time linking those experiences to the force of capitalism as a global phenomenon.

FIGURE 2: WAVES OF MARKETIZATION AND THEIR COUNTER-MOVEMENTS



Polanyi is a good starting point for a theory of global capitalism from the perspective of civil society, conceived of locally, national and globally. In his vision there is a long arc of marketization from the end of the 18th century to the 1930s and that this gave rise to a counter-movement that sought to insulate national economies from global markets through state regulation that could be repressive or democratic. But the recognition of another wave of marketization calls for a major reconstruction of Polanyi's ideas. First, if there are two waves of marketization, then why not three or more? Indeed, re-examining Polanyi analysis suggests that there was a first wave of marketization in the 19th century driven by the commodification of labor and a countermovement that emanated from local struggles, followed by a second wave of marketization in the 20th century driven by the (re)commodification of money and labor and a countermovement of state regulated economies, leading to a third wave of marketization driven by the commodification of labor, money, and knowledge with catastrophic consequences for the environment. There have been a variety of counter-movements to third-wave marketization at the national level, whether it be Islamic states and dictatorships in the Middle East or pink socialism in Latin America. In the final analysis, however, a successful counter-movement will have to be of a global dimension and this can by no means be taken for granted. There are Polyanna theorists who working with Polanyi can discern such a global countermovement but their arguments are far from convincing. The social movements of the period may be tied back to expanding markets and to the articulation of fictitious commodities but they are organized politically at a national level. Even if they are globally connected they are not politically organized at a global level.

Rather than speculate on the embryonic forms of a global counter-movement it is important to work out what are the forces behind "globalization," that is behind third-wave marketization. Polanyi can identify forces of the counter-movement but not of the movement itself. He simply took the rise of the market as given. If there is an explanation it has a certain contingency, driven by the reaction of British political economists to the Speenhamland System that obstructed the development of a national labor market. But if one sees marketization as a recurrent phenomenon then such contingent explanations become dubious. We need to turn to the driving force of marketization and here recourse to a Marxist theory of accumulation – that Polanyi had jettisoned because he regarded them as mechanical and deterministic – becomes important. Particularly relevant is the idea of "long waves" in which market expansion is a *necessary endogenous* response to the crises of capitalism that can only be reversed by *contingent exogenous* processes. The response to second-wave marketization was regulated capitalism, which ran into its own crises, whether in the Soviet Union or Keynesian capitalism, leading in turn to the expansion of the market. Whether there will be a countermovement to third-wave marketization and what form it will take is remains unclear – we may be heading for human extinction, we may be heading for reactionary world order, and we may even be heading toward Polanyi's new-fangled socialism that combines freedom and regulation. To discern what

may be possible and to project what may be impossible is indeed the task of global sociology! But there are pitfalls.

The Challenge of Global Sociology

The danger of global sociology is a false universalism, presenting the particular as the universal. Much sociology of today makes universal claims on the basis of particular national experiences. US sociology has often been guilty of this sin in spades, assuming that claims made about its politics, its economy, its social movements are universally relevant. The same is true of theories of cosmopolitanism that tend to universalize the European experience, looking for its presence in different parts of the world, but missing the overwhelming differences and specificities of the Global South. To be sure there is now a burgeoning comparative sociology, but even here it is often the case that these studies undertaken from the North take the North as point of departure and frame the investigation. What is perhaps more important is to go beyond an international comparative sociology to a global sociology that recognizes the connections and interdependence of the parts.

The Great Transformation has a decided Eurocentric perspective. In the one chapter that examines colonialism – 19th century colonialism in South Africa – becomes an extreme form of marketization, i.e. relentless destruction of society. Polanyi misses the ways in which colonial rule recreated subsistence economies in ways consistent with the reproduction of capitalism, so that he also misses how South Africa's economy is tied into a global market and, finally, how European capitalism is inextricably connected to production in the colonial periphery. The test of the reconstruction of *The Great Transformation* lies in the possibility of using the articulation of fictitious commodities (and ex-commodities) to illuminate the experiences and movements in different places, and whether a revamped Marxist theory of accumulation can actually explain the combined and uneven expansion of the market across the planet. It is an open question whether the reconstruction of Polanyi's sociology can attain the heights of a global sociology that can address issues across the world.

Any theory of global capitalism needs a critical theory that continually questions its claims to universality. Here one might refer to the Gulbenkian Commission, chaired by Immanuel Wallerstein's (1996) which advances the idea of "pluralistic universalism" or Raewyn Connell's (2007 "Southern theory" both of which remind us that Northern theory, born in the North, is an expression of Northern experience. Strange for the architect of world systems Wallerstein skirts round the issue of the northern domination of knowledge production. Connell, by contrast, takes this as her point of departure and promotes theorists, putatively from the South, to challenge the hegemony of the North, but these theorists are shaped by the North, often educated in the North and are inevitably weak by comparison with the resources that back Northern theory. There's too little attempt to situate these theorists in their own intellectual context. They are deployed as a "grand refusal" of the concentration of global knowledge in

Europe and North America. While Southern Theory contests the hegemony of Northern theory, it is a critique that lies outside that hegemony, removing theory not only from its local context but also from its global context – the unequal international division of knowledge production.

Global sociology has first and foremost to be a local sociology rather than one that floats above the ground that is easily trapped into a false universalism. Public sociology plays a critical role in guarding against such false universalism by virtue of its attention to publics, by being accountable to local circumstances. It thereby continually evaluates and grounds global sociology. Public sociology not only instigates a movement of sociology out of the quietude of the study and into the seething cauldron of precarity, debt and immiseration, but it is through such engagement that old theories are abandoned and new ones created. Public sociology is the necessary accomplice of any global sociology, playing a part in its evaluation and its constitution, while also depending on global sociology for the basis of its engagement. Polanyi can only take us so far, the development of global sociology requires us to build a network of public sociologies, strung out across the planet.

In these 10 years I have learned that global sociology and public sociology are not separate ventures, but tightly interwoven and interdependent. Public sociology guarantees the grounding of global sociology. It makes sure that global sociology does not veer off into the clouds, into some false universalism, just as global sociology draws public sociology out of its local commitments, showing how interconnected these are across the planet, connections that can bolster the power of public sociology. In this way we can publish locally and flourish globally or publish globally and flourish locally.

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