

THE WORLD NEEDS PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY¹

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Abstract

As political science and economics have provided ideologies to justify market tyranny and coercive states, sociology has a major role to play in defending humanity's interest in a civil society of national and global proportions. This accentuates sociology's public face, but which, in turn, cannot be separated from its professional, policy and critical dimensions. These four species of sociology potentially represent an organic division of labor of mutual enrichment. In practice, however, this division of labor is embedded in a field of disciplinary power that varies from one nation to the next. Given this context, I ask under what conditions public sociology flourishes and raise the possibility of a global sociology that might balance its four moments.

Keywords: Professional sociology, policy sociology, critical sociology, public sociology

Introduction

September 11, 2001 is represented as a watershed moment in world 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 consolidated changes in the world order that had begun a decade earlier when Soviet communism collapsed – unleashing a new faith in markets and the ascendancy of the unilateralist state.

Whatever the reason for the collapse of communism, it coincided with and accentuated a deepening skepticism of the administered economy and an equally firm embrace of private property and market exchange. It was the operation of the 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 the ever narrower circles who have been able to extract rents whether through direct looting, speculation, and other forms of adventure capitalism, or through windfalls derived from technological and product innovation, or simply the exploitation of scarce

resources or cheap labor. Certainly in countries, as far apart as Russia and South Africa, that have undergone market transition, there have been few signs of dynamic growth. 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 U.S. 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 states 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 Karl Polanyi's *The Great Transformation* (1944), which examines two waves of resistance to the market. The first was a *spontaneous societal resistance* to unchecked commodification of money, labor and land in 19th. century England. The second wave came in the middle of the 20th. century. It was the *planned reactions of states* – whether social democratic, fascist or Stalinist – to the crisis of the international market. In analyzing these new 20th. century politics, Polanyi warned against the Leviathan state subjugating the market along with society, but he also held out the possibility of a *democratic socialism*, in which a future «active society» would subordinate market and state to itself. He always thought in terms of national responses to the market, however, and not in terms of today's transnational civil society.

In this contestation among state, market and society, political science has generally identified itself with the state and political order, and economics with the economy and the expansion of the market, while sociology has taken the standpoint of civil society. If this was true of the 19th. century, it is becoming ever more true today. At least in the United States, political science and economics have hatched the ideological bombs of the neoliberal era, bombs that are coming home to roost. To be sure these disciplines are contested terrains and there is opposition to the dominant perspectives, such as the perestroika movement in U.S. political science and the movement for post-autistic economics. Still, these are oppositions to dominant tendencies. Nor has sociology a clear conscience. It too is divided: in particular over whether civil society is reactive, simply absorbing the shocks delivered by market and state, or whether it is proactive tending to subordinate state and economy to itself.

It is with sociology and its relation to civil society that I am largely con-

cerned here. Sociology, as we know it today, was born with European civil society at the end of the 19th. century. It was born with the rise of mass education, mass political parties, the print media, national police force, the postal service, and new means of transportation – all of which linked populations to their nation states. 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 both market and state. But this civil society – and here Polanyi is rather naïve – is no harmonious whole, no primordial communalism, no integrated associationalism. We cannot go on a shopping expedition, picking up what we like and leaving behind what we don't, we have to take the bad and the ugly with the good and the noble. Civil society is colonized and corroded by both market and state and yet, for all that, it is still a terrain of contest, from which can spring opposition to both state and market.

Sociology lives and dies with the existence of civil society. It withers away with totalitarianism and gains strength when totalitarianism teeters. Moreover, sociology is not only a mirror of civil society, it can also actively promote such civil society. Here surely lies sociology's distinctively public purpose: to represent humanity's interest in containing the unbridled tyranny of market and state. And this is the point of departure for a public sociology.

I begin this article from where I am, locked into American sociology, and from there I formulate the meanings of public sociology. I proceed by extending out, locating public sociology within a division of sociological labor and its corresponding disciplinary field of power. I continue my journey outwards by examining U.S. sociology's specificity with respect to other national sociologies, before considering the international formation of sociology and the possibilities for a global sociology.

I. The 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 – in the United States 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 family and gender studies. My purpose here is to recognize and promote such engagements, large and small, of sociology and its publics, and making them more self-conscious by giving them a name – public sociologies.

The idea of public sociology derives, at least in recent times, from C Wright Mills's, *The Sociological Imagination* (1959). In that inspirational work Mills famously defined sociology as turning *private troubles into public issues* – a mission that had been betrayed, Mills averred, by American sociology's tendency to insulate itself from social reality, whether this be through the grand theory of Parsonsian system building or through abstracted empiricism of survey research. He often referred to the classics as a shrine of public sociology. Certainly, in the United States, for example, public sociology would have to include Alexis De Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* (1850) the source of so much discussion about that country's peculiarities, Thorstein Veblen's, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899), W.E.B. Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), and, of course, Gunnar Myrdal's, *An American Dilemma* (1944). Today we conventionally cite David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* (1950) and Robert Bellah et al, *Habits of the Heart* (1985) as more contemporary versions of public sociology, 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 renewed lament that public sociology is in decline, that the sociologist who takes on the big issues of the day is extinct. In a 2002 *New York Times* opinion piece and obituary to David Riesman, Orlando Patterson wrote of Riesman as the «Last Sociologist.» After him professionalization detached American sociology from its originating moral impetus, from its engagement with those big issues of the day! The claim says more about Patterson's own alienation than about sociology in general. Alienation is a perennial condition of intellectuals – and sociologists are no different. They lament their declining power as if there were some golden past when they were truly influential – that is, when they are not dreaming of some radiant future in which they will rule again. Lament notwithstanding, Riesman's 1950s were no golden era for the public sociologist but rather years of repression and martyrdom. Perhaps, in the 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 such pontificators of decline – Russell Jacoby (1987), Orlando Patterson (2002), Peter Berger (2002), Richard Posner (2001) and others – the ascendancy of professional sociology has indeed been accompanied by a vigorous public sociology. As well as resonant books and opinion pieces for *The New York Times*, public sociology has burrowed into the interstices of civil society – sociologists talking to their neighborhood groups, environmental groups, sociologists engag-

ing 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. They are not a burden but an opportunity. 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 grassroots or *organic* public sociologies may not assume the prominence of the more elite or *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, our heritage, 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.

II. The Disciplinary Matrix

My endeavor here is to build multiple and thick ties between public sociologies and the rest of sociology, so that they are not simply something we do in our spare time (on the side) but part of our professional life. 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 generates a conversation: traditional public sociology is more a catalyst of discussion within and between publics whereas organic public sociology directly engages the sociologist in a dialogue with one or more publics. Policy sociology, by contrast, serves a specific end defined by a client with whom the sociologist has a real or fictitious contractual relation. Instances abound: sociologists have proposed sexual harassment policies, urban redevelopment, educational curricula, efficient work organization, etc. The contractual relation can be quite confining and sociologists can end up serving policy ends antithetical to their own values. Feminist Judy Stacey (2004), for example, has recently

described how being an expert witness on the side of gay marriage made it impossible to convey her defense of multiple family forms. She found herself defending conventional forms of marriage, a position she opposed. She was trapped by the legal context in which she gave her deposition. It speaks to the limitations of policy sociology not public sociology.

Nonetheless, it is possible for the sociologist to retain autonomy and creative input within a policy process if they bring genuine and needed expertise. After the Columbia disaster of 2003, Diane Vaughan was hotly sought after by the press and media, because of her 1996 book that examined the Challenger disaster. She won the recognition of the Columbia Accident Investigation Board for her critical analysis of NASA's (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) organizational culture. But such autonomous influence is rare and depends on a preexisting public debate. It also requires patient education of the policy maker. Thus, adding a dialogic moment to the instrumental relation can make policy sociology more effective, bringing it nearer to public sociology. Equally, failed policy initiatives can reverberate into public debates. William Julius Wilson intended his work in the area of race and poverty as a policy input but it proved to be too radical and turned into a more open public debate (as well as a debate internal to the sociology profession). Similarly, the work of James Coleman on school desegregation promoted public discussion even as it influenced educational policy.

Neither public nor policy sociology can exist without a *professional sociology*. These are not alternatives but necessary complements. To be sure some public sociologists seem to believe that the world would be a better place without professional sociology, but they are biting 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. Professional sociology has accumulated vast and diverse bodies of research findings. Thus, the American Sociological Association's (ASA) task force, which assembled an amicus brief submitted to the Supreme Court in its 2003 in support of the affirmative action practices of the University of Michigan's Law School, drew 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. Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* was firmly rooted in mountains of empirical research. The on-going partnership between the California labor movement and the University of California's, Institute of Labor and Employment is an excellent example of a synergy based on professional expertise in sociological research.

Nonetheless professional sociology does have tendencies toward self-referentiality, abstraction for abstraction's sake, and methodism. It is the nature of the profession to constitute itself as a monopolist of obscure knowledge. It, therefore, 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 its 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 *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology* (1970) interrogated the underlying assumptions of the then 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. Thus, Robert Bellah's (1957, 1975, 1985) 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 out of our four sociologies. Along one dimension we contrast different audiences, whether they be primarily *academic or non-academic*. Along the other dimension we contrast *instrumental and reflexive* forms of knowledge. Professional and policy sociology are both instrumental forms of knowledge inasmuch as they are concerned with orienting means to given ends, namely 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 reflexive forms of knowledge insofar as they are oriented to a dialogue about assumptions, values, premises – a dialogue among sociologists in the case of critical sociology and with publics in the case of public sociology.

TABLE 1: Division of Sociological Labor

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

Positioning and 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 dry as presented in the table: professional and critical sociologies often have subsidiary non-academic audiences just as policy and public sociologies usually have their academic versions. Indeed, each species of sociology can be further subdivided into a configuration of professional, policy, public and critical moments. It is important to recognize the internal complexity of each species of sociology, and not reduce them to their pathological forms.

Second, any individual sociologist may find himself or herself in more than one quadrant at any particular moment in time. Christopher Jenks, to take a prominent example, could be said to be working at all four types of sociology simultaneously. He is scholar in the morning, policy advocate in the afternoon, critic in the evening, and public sociologist after dinner, but then he has a light teaching load! Over time we may plot individual careers as trajectories through the categories and even out of the discipline altogether. Thus, quite a few Norwegians made their way into politics after traversing the world of sociology. At the other end, a typical American graduate student might enter a department inspired by the possibility of public sociology. When faced with the leaden weight of professional sociology he or she might become a critical sociologist, turning to professional sociology when material existence calls, and only after tenure find their way back to public sociology – if it is not too late! It's not surprising that the overall attrition rate among graduate students across departments is around 50%! It is quite possible, on the other hand, that many retain professional sociology as their primary identification throughout their careers.

Synergies and Pathologies

Our matrix underlines the interdependence of the four types of sociology. They form, potentially at least, 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, and as self-reflective as the impulses it receives from critical sociology. It would take me too far a field to work out the details of all these interdependencies and the common ethos that underpins them, but this is my normative model.

An interesting example of the interlinkages is given by the American Sociological Association's amicus brief on the affirmative action case at Michigan University that I mentioned above. The ASA set up a task force headed by Barbara Reskin, author of *The Realities of Affirmative Action in Employment* (1998) – 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 committed itself to the Supreme Court brief, the latter was tailored to the views of 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 the most efficient way to promote diversity and, thus, to enhance the educational experience of all. It was entered along with other briefs including one from General Motors and another from the military establishment, both arguing that affirmative action was necessary for the efficiency of their organizations.

Tailored to the Supreme Court, the ASA brief turned from an argument about affirmative action's contribution to social justice to an argument about its effectiveness for improving higher education. The strategy was successful in that Justice O'Connor proved to be the key vote in upholding the Michigan Law School admissions process. But 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 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 to 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 species of sociology is a condition for the vibrancy of all.

At the same time each species has its own tendency toward autonomy,

threatening the synergies they potentially create. Competing with other disciplines (mainly other social sciences) professional sociology tries to elevate itself by its abstract knowledge and its claims to scientificity, both of which feed its self-referentiality, fetishism of method, and other regressive propensities. Critical sociology often loses sight of its object and 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 is tempted to dictate or pander to its audiences. Such centrifugal tendencies, leading to pathologies of the different species of sociology, are fuelled by the hostility each holds toward one or more of the others. Moreover, these hostilities both create and, more importantly, are created by the patterns of institutional domination that shape the disciplinary field.

Antagonism and Domination

In our normative model the interdependencies among the four species of sociology are symmetrical and harmonious. In reality they are more likely to be hierarchical and antagonistic. The history of American sociology can be seen as a struggle between its scientific and moral impulses, and more broadly between its instrumental and reflexive tendencies. If the moral moment dominated the early history, professionalization and policy research asserted the instrumental moment, especially after World War II. In the 1960s and 1970s the critical moment took front stage, only later to subside as the environment beyond the university became less friendly to sociology. Today we may be seeing the renaissance of public sociology.

The antagonism between the forms of sociology has a real basis. Professional sociology has an interest in a monopoly of abstract knowledge, evaluated by peers, legitimated by its scientific truth, whereas public sociology has an interest in accessible knowledge, accountable to lay publics, legitimated by its relevance to social problems. Policy sociology is the application of technical expertise to problems defined by clients and legitimated by the efficiency of the solutions whereas critical sociology is concerned with normative questions, accountable to a community of critical discourse.

These are quite fundamental antagonisms that can be stably organized only through hierarchy, which in the United States is assured through the supremacy of professional sociology, often in collusion with policy sociology as the provider of funds. Critical and public sociologies are, therefore, often under threat of expulsion or colonization. Let's be clear, 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 only by creating space for the growth of subaltern species of sociology.

Ultimately this hegemony without colonization can only be guaranteed with institutional reform, such as readjusting the criteria of tenure and promotion, that would have to be stimulated by enlightenment from within and by pressure from without. Suffice to stay professional sociology wields enormous power in the United States, but as we shall now see the United States is a very peculiar place.

III. From The National to The Global Context

There is a temptation in the United States to treat the particular as the universal, to overlook its own provinciality, and, for sociologists in particular, to misunderstand the national specificity of their discipline. This becomes amply apparent with only a cursory glance at other countries. Comparative analysis of the disciplinary configuration of our four sociologies shows just how varied that configuration can be, and, thus, feeds an imagination of alternative arrangements. But comparative analysis is also important to understand the ways national sociologies influence one another, in particular how U.S. sociology shapes the terrain for other national sociologies. Only with this as context can we perhaps imagine a global sociology that departs, challenges or reconfigures U.S. sociology.

The Professional Model: United States

I've been talking at length about the United States. When looked at comparatively, one of the striking feature of U.S. civic life is the power and autonomy of its professional associations. Sociology is no exception. The American Sociological Association has 13,000 dues paying members, 24 paid staff and a 6 million dollar investment account. Its material basis lies in a university system with over 200 PhD granting departments that are systematically ranked every 3 years by *US News and World Report*. Some 25,000 BAs and 600 PhDs are awarded annually, numbers that have been increasing over the last decade, after falling in the 1980s from a peak in the 1970s. 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 11 official journals of its own, and there are reputed to be more than 200 U.S. sociology journals in all. There is a national 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. From the outside this appears as an incomprehensible and far flung network of hierarchies, replete with considerable resources. On that account alone U.S. sociology commands considerable power 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 – together with some reflections based on a brief visit to Norway.

The Policy Model: Soviet and PostSoviet 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 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 civil society. It was only after the 20th Party Congress in 1956, when Stalin's atrocities were exposed, that sociology enjoyed a new lease of life. It began cautiously with empirical surveys – always a liability in a party-state – 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, but using sociology to indict his predecessor. 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 sprung up all over USSR. Text books and methods books were published. Sociology was taught in universities and dissertations were written. A precarious professional sociology was taking root, only to be uprooted in the period of reaction after the Prague Spring of 1968.

Sociology did not disappear, but was strictly controlled through purges of the major institutes of sociology and through the regulation of 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 prac-

ticing sociologists by the middle eighties. Rather than suppress society, the regime used sociology to control its every capillary movement.

Like his predecessors, when Gorbachev assumed power he too released the critical moment of sociology as part of 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 their implementation. Sociology was flowering with civil society, sociological cooperatives were sprouting everywhere, aiding and abetting the formation of embryonic 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 marketing and management. Institutes turned themselves into polling centers for local politicians or centers for consumer research, financed by foreign corporations. 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 postSoviet 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, civil society was too weak to sustain a public sociology.

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

If the center of gravity of Russian sociology – Soviet and postSoviet – lies in the policy quadrant, South Africa sociology, or at least its most dynamic part, has been centered in the public quadrant. Of course, its history is more complex, if only because we are dealing with a colonial order, and, therefore, a bifurcated society. So long as the anti-colonial struggles were unthreatening, South African sociology assumed a policy orientation. The English speaking universities followed the social administration curricula of the metropolis while in the 1930s African sociology was laying the foundations of the nationalist ideology and practice of apartheid. Hendrik Verwoerd, apartheid's pioneering Prime Minister, was after all a sociologist at Stellenbosch University. Consonant with the stabilization of apartheid, 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, still dominated by white academics, take on a public persona. Influenced by the inflamed township communities, and a long history of working class struggles, but also by European theoretical currents transmitted via 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 African sociologists, always more insular and closer to the apartheid state, adopted a critical stance toward government policy. The 1980s saw a quite novel dialogue between the civic associations and the labor movement on the one side and sociologists of the university on the other, which in turn stimulated raging debates about the responsibilities of academics. It was all heavily criss-crossed by class and race. Still it was a vibrant public sociology, or, as it was sometimes 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 postcommunist Russian sociology? Certainly there have been similar pressures to move from a reflexive to a more instrumental sociology. The puncturing of civil society itself – whether because of deliberate state efforts at demobilization (now we have a government of the people there is no need for any mobilized opposition!) or simply decapitation of civil society by siphoning leaders into positions of power – removed a major prop for public sociology. Then, in addition, NGOs (non-governmental organizations), which had become homes to sociologists fleeing the resource poor and labor intensive university, took over some of the dialogue with communities. 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. In an interesting concordance of interests the ANC government (African National Congress), like other governments in sub-Saharan Africa, took a fancy to the arguments of the World Bank and other international agencies, that higher education was for vocational training not for critical dialogue. Accordingly, the government planned the centralization and restructuring of higher education to serve the needs of the new African student population, introducing new inter-disciplinary 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. The one national source of research funding, the National Research Foundation, began to evaluate social science researchers against international,

i.e. Western, standards. They had to publish in Western peer-reviewed journals and their research accomplishments were ranked by Western academics. As a result South African sociology was pulled away from critical and public forms and pushed toward training, and Western professionalism, all of which had the unfortunate consequence of deepening the divide between historically white and historically black universities.

The global pressure drawing sociology away from dialogue with local communities, away from responsiveness to regional issues is yet another force undermining what national synergy there was among the four sociologies. This is not a conspiracy of American or Western sociologists, who remain largely unaware of the effects of their institutional power. Or if it is a conspiracy, it is a conspiracy of silence. American sociologists are too ignorant of the ways sociology in the affluent countries, especially the United States, sets the terms for sociology in the Global South – models, theories, methods developed in and for the advanced world. We are too ignorant of the distorting consequences of the hegemony exercised over indigenous sociology.

The Welfare Model: Norway in a Nutshell!

Before turning to the global dimension of sociology, let me briefly consider a fourth model – the configuration of sociology in a welfare state such as Norway. Insofar as welfare states are premised on welfare guarantees and the defense of the social they valorize sociology. Even in the United States sociology fared much better under the war against poverty when the state recognized social problems as compared today when individualism is rampant.

One immediately notes the surprisingly large numbers of sociologists in Norway. Its national association has 600 members which gives a per capita density of sociologists three times greater than the United States! More noticeable is the ubiquity of sociology as a field of expertise. Sociologists are frequent contributors to newspapers, and make regular appearances on radio and television. They are recognized as experts on a wide range of social and economic issues. Perhaps it is because Norway is so small and so sociologists can only find intellectual community beyond the university, but it is also true that the prestige of sociology is simply higher than in other countries. Moreover, distinguished sociologists have moved through public and policy sociology and from there into local politics, the national parliament, and even into the highest circles of government. I'm thinking of such household names as Gudmund Hernes, Ottar Brox, and Johan Galtung. Sociologists, feminists in particular, have been incorporated into the legislative process as influential experts. Around each of the major departments there are institutes of social research that work on policy issues, often consultants for the government. Indeed, many

are ambivalent about the close relations between sociology and the government, fearing that this softens the critical edge. There is an implicit internal discussion about the relative merits of public as opposed to a policy sociology – a tension which is as important as the one between professional and public sociology in the United States.

Although Norway is not under the same development and budgetary pressures as Russia or South Africa, nevertheless there are reforms afoot to instrumentalize sociology, benchmarking national research to «international» standards, and evaluating researchers by their publications in reputable foreign language journals. This means publishing in English rather than Norwegian and, thereby making sociology less accessible to the broader Norwegian community, and less concerned with local, regional or even national issues. Public sociology will be the inevitably casualty of these processes.

It is interesting to contemplate changes that have taken place at the University of Tromsø, established in 1968 to aid development of the North. In the early years sociology was part of an interdisciplinary social science, inspired by action research and the defense of local communities against the state! Tromsø became the home of a critical and public social science. Indeed, it became known as the Red University. Today, the interdisciplinary programs have broken apart into separate disciplines. Sociology is less oriented to local communities – themselves enmeshed in internationally mandated fishing quotas, the influx of Russian sailors and traders, the politics of siting the Olympic Games among the mountains of the indigenous Saami people, and other global forces – than to international groups as far apart as Ethiopia, Argentina, Guatemala and Russia! Could there be a global division of labor here with Oslo connected to the United States, Bergen to Europe and Tromsø to the Global South! Indeed, Norway could play a pivotal role in forging a global sociology.

IV. Toward a Global Sociology?

We began with the aftermath of September 11th. We hear a lot about the threat of international terrorism and it is a threat, but very little about its underlying causes, in particular market tyranny and coercive states. We hear a lot about how states plan to combat terrorism and there's a lot to be concerned about here, but we should also take note of the emergence of a transnational civil society, organized against the unbridled power of states and markets. The World Social Forum and all the smaller Social Forums it has spawned have stimulated the imagination of such counter-hegemonic possibilities. The emergent transnational civil society would be the natural partner of a global public sociology. There are signs that social scientists, but particularly sociology, are

engaged in a deepening conversation with environmental, human rights, labor, and women's movements that transcend national borders.

But social science has also been engaged in the policy arena of the World Bank, IMF (International Monetary Fund), World Trade Organization, and the United Nations. A few sociologists and hoards of economists populate these international agencies as employees and as consultants. Sociologists have criticized these international agencies from the outside while others have tried to steer them into more socially responsible channels. But with a growing popular opposition to these supra-national states striding over the globe, the divide between policy and public social science becomes ever greater.

How might such policy and public sociologies, operating at a global level stimulate and call for revamping the questions, paradigms, research programs of professional sociology? We do have our World Systems theory and even the resurrection of modernization theory, our Immanuel Wallerstein, Manuel Castells, Anthony Giddens, Johan Galtung, John Meyer and Saskia Sassen, who have managed, to a greater or lesser extent, to transcend the conceptual scheme of nation states and grope toward notions of a transnational civil society, but they often lose a critical edge. Here we have to look elsewhere to geographers, such as David Harvey, to anthropologists, such as Arjun Appadurai, to historians such as the school of subaltern studies, or we could extend to the global level Karl Polanyi and Antonio Gramsci's theorization of civil society. Perhaps, the one critical sociologist who has made his mark on the world is Pierre Bourdieu and we would do well, as I have tried in this paper, to carry forward his vision.

The danger we face is that the global division of sociological labor maps onto a hierarchy of nations with advanced capitalism monopolizing professional and policy sociology, leaving public and critical sociology to the resource poor Global South. Here there is no nation better placed than Norway – simultaneously affluent, egalitarian and civic, well versed in all four traditions of sociology, and deeply embedded in transnational connections – to play a critical and progressive role in forging a global sociology, a global sociology that seeks an organic balance among its four constitutive moments, a global sociology that will advance sociology while defending humanity.

Notes

1 This article contains the essence of talks I gave at the departments of sociology at the Universities of Oslo, Bergen and Tromsø, May 24–June 2nd 2004.

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