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Special Issue: Precarious Engagements: Combat in the Realm of Public Sociology
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Articles

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Preface

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The last decade has seen a flourishing debate on public sociology. I count 35 symposia published in diverse journals and edited books in China, Russia, Brazil, South Africa, France, Germany, Denmark, Iran, Italy, Canada, Poland, 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. The idea of public sociology, however, 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. Indeed, in many countries of Latin America or South Africa public sociology has a well-developed tradition. So, why now the deluge of rancorous dispute?

First, and most obviously, the answer must lie with the historical conjuncture. We are living in an era of market fundamentalism in which markets are typically seen as the solution to all problems – from poverty to climate change, from economic decline to political instability. Sociology has a long tradition – from Marx, Weber and Durkheim to Parsons, Polanyi, Bourdieu and Wallerstein – of contesting market perspectives and the utilitarian theories of action upon which they rest. The tradition extends to feminism, subaltern studies, postcolonial theory and more generally sociology from the Global South. Sociology's critique of marketization is all the more pertinent at a time when the production of knowledge itself is being commodified through the privatization of the university. As the university becomes ever more dependent upon selling knowledge – both the dissemination of existing knowledge and the creation of new knowledge – the very existence of sociology, as well as other disciplines, becomes precarious.

In response sociology may be packaged to serve corporate clients who want to sell their products or to help state agencies discern networks of terrorism, what I call policy sociology. Alternatively, sociologists might seek to convince other communities, themselves suffering from marketization, of the critical perspectives that have defined sociology's traditions, what I call public sociology. This latter task, however, is far from easy as sociology has to compete with many other messages backed by powerful organizations – media conglomerates, states, corporations – equipped with enormous resources. Not only does sociology have puny resources compared with its competitors in the public sphere but its messages often go against deeply held common sense. Public sociology has a Sisyphean task. The temptation is either to retreat back into the university or sell its goods to the highest bidder rather than undertake public sociology. When the latter path is chosen there is a second temptation – to forsake sociology and pander to common sense, a populist distortion of public sociology.

Table 1. The academic division of labor.

	Academic audience	Extra-academic audience
Instrumental knowledge	Professional	Policy
Reflexive knowledge	Critical	Public

Apart from the historical conjuncture, it was also the framing of public sociology as one of four types of sociology that provoked discussion and debate. These were not simply four faces or four orientations to sociology, but four ways of practicing sociology: professional, critical, public and policy. As four different ways of doing sociology, they formed a division of labor, with specialization in one or more of these types. Academic careers can be seen as moving from one type to another. This division of disciplinary labor derived from two fundamental questions, all too easily repressed: *Knowledge for whom?* (whether for academic audiences or extra-academic audiences) and *Knowledge for what?* (whether instrumental knowledge concerned with means or reflexive knowledge concerned with the discussion of ends). Cross-tabulating the two dimensions gave rise to four quadrants: instrumental knowledge focused on puzzles in research programs (professional knowledge) or on problems defined by clients (policy knowledge) while reflexive knowledge focused on critical conversations about the foundations of knowledge organized in disciplines (critical knowledge) or public conversations about values to be pursued in society (public knowledge) (Table 1). Each type of knowledge had its own notion of truth, its own politics, its own basis of legitimacy, its own mode of accountability. Each type of knowledge suffered from its own pathology when it separated itself from the other types – professional knowledge becomes self-referential, critical knowledge becomes dogmatic, policy knowledge becomes a captive of power and public knowledge becomes populist or faddish.

As in any division of labor the different components do not form a harmonious whole but a hierarchy of relations of antagonistic interdependence. This provided a framework for understanding how sociology varied over time within a given national context but also how it varied between and among countries – variations marked by the balance among the four sociologies – so that in some countries public sociology might prevail while in others professional, critical or policy sociology might dominate. Moreover, any academic discipline could be understood in terms of the articulation of these four types of knowledge.

The framework generated intense disputes. Each combatant wanted to reduce the division of labor to their own particular type of sociology, taking the offensive against the other types by pathologizing them. Professional sociologists would attack public sociology for dumbing down sociology in order to make it publicly acceptable. Policy sociologists would accuse public sociology of 'politicizing' sociology and, thus, jeopardizing their influence which rested upon the scientific neutrality of sociology. Critical sociologists would criticize professional sociology for disguising the value foundations of its research and policy sociologists for being the servants of power. Public sociologists might criticize professional sociology for being irrelevant, devoted to the ritualization of scientific practice. As the defender of all four types of sociology as integral to the

discipline, I became the defender of everyone's enemy and bore the brunt of hostile attacks from all quarters. But this only seemed to vindicate the validity of the four-fold scheme as an underlying framework.

A different dispute emerged as the public sociology debate traveled to different countries. Was the above scheme another particularity parading as a universal? Was the very idea of a distinctive public sociology only appropriate to a context where the discipline was heavily weighted toward the professional? Did public sociology assume meaning only in a context where professional sociology was dominant? After all in many countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, sociology was viewed as inherently oriented to public issues – why else do sociology? Indeed, here the problem was often the underdevelopment of professional sociology, or, if not its underdevelopment, its domination by Northern sociology as evinced in the adoption of Northern text books for teaching and Northern theories for research – text books and research that made foreign assumptions, used foreign examples, rooted in foreign traditions. The need for a professional sociology infused with values, methodologies and findings from local public sociologies was not a critique but a vindication of the four-fold scheme.

While these debates did clarify the different foundations of sociology, they accentuated firmly held beliefs about the nature of our discipline, as they appeared in different places in the national or global division of labor. This may have been an important debate about the nature of sociology, of social science, and academic knowledge more generally, but it did not delve into the *practice* of the different types of knowledge, and in particular of public sociology. There might be moral opprobrium or celebration but not the dissection of its practice. This *Current Sociology* monograph, therefore, focuses on practitioners who discuss the challenges and pitfalls of doing public sociology in real time and in real places. There are compilations of case studies for the US, but there is nothing on a world scale. Just as the discipline of sociology as a whole looks very different in different countries, so the organization and execution of public sociology also varies widely.

Knowing something of these rich and diverse traditions of public sociology, I sought to bring them into conversation with each other, so that each could learn from the others. I sought to create a network of institutes of public sociology that would span the world, and give new vigor to its practice. I began by trying to connect just two of them – CREA in Barcelona with SWOP in Johannesburg. But it just didn't work. Everyone was so caught up in their own projects – and this publication will show just how intense that can be – there was no time to converse with others. So we proceeded in a different way, to connect different public sociologists, strung out across the world, through conversations conducted with Berkeley students over Skype. It was a complex and interesting pedagogical experiment which my co-teacher, Laleh Behbehanian, and I describe in the Appendix. These conversations proved to be so interesting that we decided to turn them into extended essays on their experiences as public sociologists in their different contexts, mindful of the issues that had been raised in the seminar.[1]

Our public sociologists are very special people. They had to be firmly rooted in their local context, capable of translating sociology into local vernacular and experience, but equally they would have to be able to translate that engagement into a more universal language of sociology, comprehensible to undergraduates at Berkeley as well as sociologists in different countries. They needed to be worldly-wise cosmopolitans but also

locally recognized intellectuals; they needed to circulate in two very different non-intersecting orbits, one governed by the local language and the other by cosmopolitan English, and they had to straddle these very different worlds. They needed to be participant observers at home but observant participants in the global milieu. These strikingly unusual social scientists had to live up to the dual challenge of both being public sociologists and able to render that experience intelligible to audiences across the world. They are the most inspiring sociologists I know.

The 10 essays, from Spain, France, Colombia, China, India, Russia, South Africa, the US, Lebanon and the Philippines, posed a challenge to the above framework not so much because it was born in the USA but because it set out from a *critique of academic knowledge* and remained caught up in academic concerns. When the focus, however, turned to the *practice of public sociology* the framing was less useful as it became obvious that the academic division of labor was important, but so too was the political context. Instead of knowledge for whom (academic vs. extra-academic audiences) it was necessary to foreground the relationship between science and politics. Public and policy sociology were political activities held accountable to professional and critical sociology. This was only possible if the academic and political fields intersected. It is important, therefore, to reconnoiter, case by case, the character and intersection of the political and academic fields in their different national contexts.

Once we think in terms of fields, then we must also think in terms of actors, so that instead of having instrumental and reflexive knowledge as a second dimension, we now have dominant and subordinate actors. The practitioners of professional sociology dominate the critical sociologists in the academic field whereas the policy sociologists attached to the powers in the political field dominate the public sociologists connected to civil society. In reconstructing the two dimensions, we have moved from the academic division of labor (or the division of knowledge production) to the analysis of the constitution and intersection of the academic and political fields. It brings into the open the divergent practices of public sociologists and the dilemmas they face as academics operating on a treacherous political terrain. The become combatants in precarious engagements, beholden to an academic constituency while abiding by the rules of the political arena.

Such precarious engagements can rarely be sustained on a permanent basis, tending over time to collapse back into the academic field or advance forward into the political one. Nevertheless as these case studies demonstrate, for all its hardship, public sociology is still meaningful both in the political and in the academic field. And, as I shall argue, if the academic field is to survive, then we will need academics to sally forward into the political field. Sociologists, in particular, have an especially important role to play as their profession ties them to the interests of civil society against the ever-encroaching political and economic fields.

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Michael Burawoy, 20 October 2013

Note

1.   The conversations are freely accessible on video at www.isa-sociology.org/public-sociology-live/. Manuel Castells dropped out and Anna Temkina and Elena Zdravomyslova joined the group.

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Introduction: Sociology as a combat sport

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Abstract
This introduction sets out from the unresolved paradox to be found in the writings of Bourdieu, namely the theoretical impossibility of public sociology and his own sustained practical engagement with publics. I appropriate and develop his concept of the 'field' to account for his success as a public sociologist. It requires us to understand that public sociology is only possible at the intersection of two distinct fields – the academic field and the political field. Public sociology proves to be a rather precarious pursuit, then; first, because of competing demands internal to the academic field; second, because of the difficulty in operating at the intersection of the academic and political fields; and third, because of the obduracy of common sense that cannot be easily dislodged, the very attempt often arousing open hostility. Difficult though it may be, the development of its public face will be necessary for the survival of sociology as well as an important ingredient in defending human existence from extinction by market fundamentalism.

> The sociologist's misfortune is that, most of the time, the people who have the technical means of appropriating what he says have no wish to appropriate it, no *interest* in appropriating it, and even have powerful interests in refusing it (so that some people who are very competent in other respects may reveal themselves to be quite obtuse as regards sociology), whereas those who would have an interest in appropriating it do not have the instruments for appropriation (theoretical culture, etc.). Sociological discourse arouses *resistances* that are quite analogous in their logic and their manifestations to those encountered by psychoanalytical discourse. (Bourdieu, 1993 [1984]: 23; italics in the original)

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The dominant classes, says Pierre Bourdieu, have no *interest* in sociological knowledge since it reveals their life strategies as the pursuit and justification of domination, whereas the dominated classes are so driven by material necessity they cannot afford the investment, either time or resources, necessary to develop an appreciation of sociology's scientific insights. In other words, the dominated classes may have the interest but they don't have the *capacity* to understand the conditions of their own subjugation. This does present a dilemma for 'public sociology' as it implies there is no obvious audience for sociology beyond the academy other than a few enlightened intellectuals.

It is one of the paradoxes of Bourdieu, however, that while his *theory* implied the *impossibility* of public sociology, in *practice* he was the most significant and effective public sociologist of our era. Especially after he became professor in Collège de France in 1981 his public profile expanded with books that became more accessible the more he became disenchanted with the French government and its neoliberal policies (Bourdieu, 2008 [2002]). His theory lagged behind his practice. It is our task to advance his theory by bringing it into line with his practice of public sociology. In doing so I will develop his notion of sociological practice as a form of combat that takes place in a rule-bound field of relations.

Sociology as a combat sport

Pierre Bourdieu famously claimed that sociology is a combat sport in a film of that title (Carles, 2001), euphemized in English as 'Sociology is a Martial Art'. Curiously, in this film, everything is quite harmonious until the last scene where Bourdieu enters a hall in the banlieue to engage with its disaffected youth. They reject him, the outside intellectual, as well as his sociological conceit that claims to know them better than they know themselves. They send him packing back to Paris. He comes out of this unnerving encounter sweating, relieved to return to his circle of admirers. It is, indeed, a brave encounter, demonstrating that bringing sociology to publics can be a precarious endeavor.

Bourdieu never spelled out what exactly was entailed in the notion of 'sociology as a combat sport.' Examining his writings as a whole I can discern three significant types of combat. First, there is the ideological combat, the struggle between sociology and common sense. Bourdieu's engagement with the banlieue was such a combat. His sociology of symbolic domination, with its claims that the dominated don't understand their domination, confronts the self-understandings and experiences of marginalized inhabitants. Sociology's account of the way social practices are shaped by social structures clashes with the deeply entrenched common sense that suppresses its own social determinants, a common sense that characterizes virtually all strata of society. Thus, Bourdieu caused much outrage when he exposed the interests and strategies of intellectuals in *Homo Academicus* (1988 [1984]), when he showed how the Grand Écoles serve to reproduce the dominant class in *State Nobility* (1996 [1989]), or how artists misconceive their own creativity as sui generis in *Rules of Art* (1996 [1992]).

In Bourdieu's view, therefore, sociology should be seen as a socio-analysis that faces the resistance of the deeply embedded interests concealed in the collective unconscious – resistance that can turn against the sociologist, endangering career and even life. The psycho-analyst faces the resistance of the individual, but the socio-analyst, i.e.

sociologist, faces the wrath of society. However, it is not just an ideological combat between the sociologist and the sociologized but includes combat between the sociologist and all those pretend-sociologists – the doxosophers of journalism, television, advertising, think tanks, pollsters and so on – with whom sociologists compete as they try to disseminate their unwanted message. Beyond the doxosophers lies the state with its monopoly of symbolic violence that defines the very categories through which we apprehend the world. This is the second meaning of combat – a 'classification struggle' with the consecrated classifiers taking place on the political terrain (Bourdieu, 1991, 1999 [1996]).

In the light of the combat that awaits them in the ideological and political realms, it is not surprising that sociologists often prefer to throw a protective cordon around their operations in the name of science and objectivity. Rather than venture forth onto the more hazardous terrains of ideology and politics they are tempted to retreat into the cloisters of the university. But there is no escape from combat since science itself, as Bourdieu is at pains to point out, is far from being a consensual, harmonious affair. In *Pascalian Meditations* (2000 [1997]), science is a terrain of 'armed struggle,' and elsewhere Bourdieu (1975, 2004) refers to it as an intense but rule-bound competition for the accumulation of academic capital.

In short, sociology enters combat on, at least, three terrains: academic, political and ideological. We need to explore these terrains as fields of combat.

From combat to field

Bourdieu developed his notion of scientific field as early as 1975 and returned to the idea for the last time in his lectures of 2001. Throughout he was concerned with the autonomy of the scientific field, which, he claimed, rested on three pillars: the producers are simultaneously the consumers of scientific products, the accumulation of research technology which makes interference from without difficult, and the need to submit ideas to the adjudication of the real which also limited extraneous influences. In the case of sociology, however, he was concerned that the autonomy was too easily subverted: first, because sociology dealt with important public issues about which all had an opinion; second, because the lower ranks of sociologists might appeal to temporal powers over the heads of the elite; and third, because sociology was an easy target of external pressures upon which it depended. With such skewed perspective, Bourdieu never developed an adequate conception of the sociological field – a clear limit to his reflexivity – as he did for the academic field as a whole, for the bureaucratic field, the legal field, the field of power, of education and of art and literature. To develop a conception of the sociological field we would do well to borrow from his analysis of these other fields.

When writing about the emergence of the field of literature in 19th century, for example, Bourdieu (1996 [1992]) describes the way bourgeois literature (sponsored by the wealthy) gave rise to social realism (aimed at broader publics) that led to a movement of art for art's sake (pure art), which in turn generated critique from within the art world by the avant-garde. On the one side the field is caught between an autonomous and a heteronomous pole and on the other side between dominant or consecrated forms of art as opposed to subordinate or insurgent forms of art (Table 1). The tensions and dynamics

Table 1. The field of art.

	Autonomy	Heteronomy
Dominant	Pure art	Bourgeois art
Subordinate	Avant-garde	Social realism

Table 2. The field of sociology.

	Autonomy	Heteronomy
Dominant	Professional	Policy
Subordinate	Critical	Public

within the field derive from these antagonistic but interdependent forces that create the terrain of combat.

This representation of the field of art can be mapped onto the field of sociology (Table 2). While the historical genesis of different types of sociology varies from context to context, there is a correspondence between (a) bourgeois art and policy sociology serving the dominant classes; (b) social realism and public sociology, which, as a reaction to policy sociology, engages broader dominated publics; (c) pure art and professional sociology, which involves a relatively autonomous community, defined by its research programs; and, finally, (d) avant-garde and critical sociology, which is first a critique of professional sociology but also of policy sociology while infusing its values into a public sociology.

We can see how the variety of Bourdieu's own practices fit into this conception of the sociological field. He began as an amateur ethnographer in Algeria (1962 [1958]), gathering data about the Kabyle, conducting surveys among workers (1979 [1963]). He was an aspirant sociologist-as-scientist. His recovery of the life and culture of the colonized had political implications but it was not yet public. That would come when he returned to France and wrote damning critiques of French colonialism. Here he did become a *public sociologist*. It was at this time that he also developed as a *critical sociologist*, criticizing the project of social reformism in French sociology and undertaking an offensive against the dominant US sociology of the time (Bourdieu et al., 1991 [1968]). His work on education, taste and art, and his development of the ideas of field, capital and habitus represented the construction of a new way of approaching the social world (Bourdieu, 1984 [1979], 1996 [1992]; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977 [1970]), a research program that defined his *professional sociology*. It was constructed in a steady cumulative and above all scientific manner, organized within the context of the academy with an emerging theoretical framework (Bourdieu, 1977 [1972], 1990 [1980], 2000 [1997]). These works may have had policy implications but they only became *policy sociology* when he participated in government commissions on education. His role as *public sociologist* intensified through the 1980s and 1990s with a series of projects, starting with the popular, *The Weight of the World* (1999 [1993]), but including many public pronouncements, petitions, editorials, books and so forth.

By applying a field analysis to Bourdieu's practice as a sociologist one can make sociological sense of his public sociology, and better understand the pressures he faced when he took his ideas into the public realm. We can then understand in what ways those pressures were specific to France and how they would differ in other places and times.

Dilemmas at the intersection of academic and political fields

If one paradox of Bourdieu's analysis of fields lies in the omission of sociology itself, a second paradox lies in the omission of a treatment of the relations among fields. For all the focus on relational analysis *within* fields, Bourdieu offers no such analysis of relations *between and among* fields. Bourdieu has much to say about the homology between fields, that is the correspondence between fields in the patterning of their internal relations but he has very little to say about the way fields are connected to one another and how they are interrelated to form a totality. In addressing this issue Gil Eyal (2013) has written about the network that occupies spaces between fields, but here I am concerned with the *intersection* of fields.

When Bourdieu writes of the heteronomy of a field he is concerned with the threat to its autonomy, the invasion of external forces that have to be repelled. But heteronomy can also refer to the outward-oriented attempt to influence other fields. Indeed, that outward move is often designed to protect the autonomy of the field. Thus, without policy science and public engagement sociology's existence becomes more precarious, not just in its wider legitimacy but also in its competitive relation with other social science disciplines. The heteronomous pole is Janus faced because it lies at the intersection of, at least, two fields, the academic and the political. Thus, policy and public sociologies are simultaneously accountable to professional and critical sociologies while also seeking to be effective in the world of politics, attentive to the logic and structure of the political field – a most challenging form of combat, as we shall see.

Just as Weber demarcated science from politics, showing how they operate in separate fields with homologous logics, so Bourdieu does the same. Both, thereby, miss the intersection of the two fields, and the very real tensions this creates. Professional and critical sociology are accountable to the community of scholars with its peer evaluation while policy and public sociology are caught between the academic community and a wide range of different forces from within the political field, forces that include, on the one hand, powerful corporate actors and, on the other, much weaker publics.

Inasmuch as public sociology is a sociology that is accessible and accountable to publics and thus necessarily relates to and builds on common sense so it is at odds with professional sociology that is accountable to the scientific community of peers. Some of Bourdieu's writing is barely intelligible to fellow sociologists let alone lay publics, while other writings, particularly in his later years, are far more lucid, aiming to bring his critique of neoliberalism to wider audiences (Bourdieu, 1998, 2003 [2001]). And, indeed, he was very successful in doing just that. The question is, in those later writings, what concessions did he make to common sense, veering toward the pathology of populist sociology. But to make no such attempt to reach out, and to stick with professional science is not simply irresponsible as Bourdieu would say, but it endangers the very science

he sought to protect. Self-referentiality is the enemy of sociology that ultimately draws its impetus from engaging with publics and public issues.

Continuing the tension at the intersection of the two fields, Bourdieu was very critical of policy sociology as it too easily becomes a servant of power and loses its critical function. Yet, just as he would become a very effective public sociologist so he also engaged with the policy world, especially around educational reform. The question is how much room for maneuver did he have and to what extent was he responsive to the findings of sociology as a science? Here the function of critical sociology is to ensure the accountability of policy sociology to professional sociology. Yet critical sociology suffers from its own pathologies as it becomes imprisoned in its own world, an incomprehensible world to which it retreats in despair, losing sight not just of the dangers of policy sociology, but of the dangers of professional isolationism and public sociology's temptation of populism. In its retreat its critical powers evaporate.

The intersection of the two fields also affects the hierarchical conflict within the field of sociology, so that the consecrated seek alliances through policy work with rich and powerful figures in the political (and economic) realm, while the subjugated sectors make appeals to publics who share their subjugation. Indeed, this tension flows into public sociology itself, divided between the *traditional* mode of intervention through various media – writing for newspapers, interviewing on television, authoring blogs or writing best-selling books – and the building of organic ties to communities, that is an *un*mediated direct relation between sociologists and their publics. The consecrated sociologist, such as Bourdieu, holding an elite position in the academic field seeks to monopolize access to the media and disparage *organic* connections of less prominent or less favored sociologists to subjugated interest groups. Bourdieu mobilizes the interests of the entire academic community against those of the doxosophers, the pretenders from within as well as outside.

Once again it is the intersection of fields that sheds light on just how difficult public sociology can be. Bourdieu's (1999 [1996]) critique of television points to combat in a field of journalism that is dominated by powers answerable to the very dominant actors whose domination sociology exposes and whose constricted modes of communication favor dilettantes and pretenders rather than academic scholars. Still, Bourdieu was successful in writing for national newspapers, creating his own publicly accessible book series, and even undertaking a critique of television on television. Bourdieu is no less critical of organic public sociology, writing contemptuously of the mythology of the organic intellectual whose habitus is so much at odds with the habitus of the dominated that either the sociologist panders to their common sense or dictates to that common sense. A reciprocal conversation is as illusory as it is impossible. And yet he embraces this very idea in *The Weight of the World* (1999 [1993]) where carefully chosen sociologists become organic intellectuals, intellectuals with a background that unites them to their interviewees.

The final dilemma to which I want to draw attention concerns the relation between public and policy sociology. When engaging in public sociology of close encounters – organic public sociology – one is likely to be drawn into policy sociology. Publics all too easily become interest groups less concerned with a conversation than in having the sociologist deliver something tangible by addressing the policy makers. Bourdieu (1999

[1993]: 390) himself describes how his close relations with the farmers of the Béarn led him to try to persuade government of necessary policy changes. Policy sociologists are not always keen to collaborate with public sociologists as the latter can endanger the legitimacy of the former, especially when they engage in sustained and open critique of the limitations of policy interventions and deny the neutrality of science upon which policy research depends.

These are general dilemmas that assume concreteness depending on the character of sociology and politics. In different countries the field of sociology assumes a different structure, as defined by the articulation of the four practices, just as the political field is more or less receptive to the intervention of sociologists. Moreover, the intersection itself will vary between a thin slice in countries where the academic world has more autonomy, such as the US, and the subsumption of sociology under the direct rule of the political field, denying the development of an open and autonomous science as happened, for example, in the Soviet Union under Stalin or in fascist Germany. Today we have to entertain a range of other intersections, apart from sociology and politics, such as the one between sociology and the economic field, bent on turning the university into a commercial enterprise. Equally important is the way any given national discipline becomes subjugated to an emergent global discipline dominated by resource-rich Northern countries. The 10 case studies that follow reflect these divergent pressures, making simultaneous participation in politics and sociology a risky venture. I have somewhat arbitrarily chosen to divide them according to how they look upon the competing pressures of academic scholarship and public engagement, the precariousness of political interventions, and the durability of common sense.

The sociological windmill

One of the most recurrent questions raised by the original scheme based on the division of labor was its ontological status. Are these four real practices of knowledge or only analytical types of sociology that are always found in combination? To be sure, in its original conception the idea was, indeed, to recognize an emergent division of labor, reflecting the specialization of US sociologists in one or other of these practices: professional, policy, public and critical (Burawoy, 2005). Moreover, the argument was that the different practices of knowledge were organized in a complex hierarchy that created antagonistic and interdependent relations among the different practices. Sociologists might try to accomplish two or even three of these practices at the same time and their careers can be seen as moving among them, but I focused on these as distinct specializations with their own form of knowledge, their own truth, their own mode of legitimation, their own accountability, their own politics and their own pathologies.

As soon as one shifts to the intersection of fields, one has to refer to the challenges of the simultaneous participation in different fields, what César Rodríguez-Garavito calls an 'amphibious sociology' – a sociology that lives in different worlds and that has the advantage of seeing the world from different vantage points, of being relevant to different audiences, of having access to different actors and of providing a constant source of motivation. These advantages have their down-side as public sociologists feel themselves to be a windmill, caught up in a ferocious storm that drives their different

activities. They find their activities dispersed as they relentlessly leap from task to task. Their independence and, thus, their analytic distance are jeopardized as they become accountable to multiple audiences. Their relevance can endanger their life as they challenge the claims of violent actors. Finally, their emotional engagement can easily lead to burn-out. All this is amply illustrated from his own experience in Colombia: defending the rights of indigenous peoples in the face of paramilitary and guerrilla violence, working with human rights groups against multinational mining corporations, inserting himself into national but also international legal orders, he finds himself in a veritable social minefield. In this context, amphibious sociology calls for the use of hybrid modes of communication – sophisticated journalism, analytical videos and ethnographic policy papers. There's no time for specialization.

Nandini Sundar further underlines just how difficult 'amphibious sociology' can be. Drawn into a vortex of political forces – defending indigenous groups victimized by state-sponsored vigilante groups and left-wing Maoist guerrillas – she finds it difficult to sustain the full extent of her academic life. Instead of a windmill with all blades turning at once, she points to an alternation between professional and public sociology, leading to a *schizophrenic sociology*, as the commitment to each pulls against the other. The very distinction between professional and public sociology becomes less important than the institutional division between academic and political fields. In a country such as India with a colonial legacy to combat, facing the domination of metropolitan evaluations, poorly resourced universities working in a colonial language (English), serious research and committed teaching take on the character of a public mission. To dedicate oneself to professional sociology is a form of public sociology.

On the other hand, like Rodríguez-Garavito, Sundar finds herself unavoidably accountable to the people she studies, and like them she is caught in the cross-fire between state violence and Naxalite guerrilla activity. Like Rodríguez-Garavito, she finds herself in a social minefield, pursuing a petition in the Supreme Court to condemn the violence perpetrated by the Chhattisgarh government. In such a politicized environment serious research becomes impossible, but she feels it is part of her professional responsibility to publicize the activities of the vigilante group, Salwa Judum. While she is caught up in this demanding political struggle her links to the university and its ethos are weakened not just because of competing time commitments but also because of incompatible ethical demands.

Beyond amphibious or schizophrenic sociology, Karl von Holdt describes 'cycles of engagement' that define his participation in a 10-year project to transform Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital – an enormous hospital in Soweto, indeed, one of the biggest hospitals in the southern hemisphere. A showcase for apartheid health services for the black population, the project was to create a post-apartheid hospital that would improve and broaden the service to the community and, at the same time, improve the working conditions of its employees. Working with the main union, Von Holdt and his colleagues investigated the source of the hospital's many dysfunctions and proposed to reorganize management by giving more influence to the professionals – clinicians and nurses – and decentralizing power away from government. Resistance by the regional government was overcome by public protest that brought community and employees out onto the streets. Von Holdt's team managed to introduce these changes in the surgical ward with

clear-cut improvements in both service delivery and working conditions. In the face of concerted resistance, however, from the political administration and senior management the reorganization could not be sustained even in this one ward, let alone disseminated to other parts of the hospital. Despite the obvious success of the experiment it was aborted. Returning to the university to reflect on this seemingly irrational resistance to change, Von Holdt points to the interests of a new black administrative elite that is suspicious of the expertise of largely white professionals. He writes several papers which find their way to the president's office whereupon he is invited to undertake a much broader study of the dynamics of the post-apartheid state and to sit on the National Planning Commission.

At a superficial level this is a move from public sociology to policy sociology to professional and critical sociology, and finally back to policy sociology. But more profoundly, Von Holdt shows how policy and public sociology are inextricably bound up with one another as is professional and critical sociology. If there is a bifurcation, it is between the academic and political fields, and within each field there is a continuum between dominant and subordinate interests, between professional and critical sociology, and between policy and public sociology. This cycling in and out of different sociologies is held together, he says, by 'critical engagement' that infuses political struggles whether in the realm of policy work or public sociology. Here Von Holdt converges with César Rodríguez-Garavito and Nandini Sundar since critical engagement is a combination of opposites, endowing sociology with an amphibious and schizophrenic character.

The political minefield

For the politician, politics is politics, but for the sociologist politics is a minefield so different from the customary academic life. For César Rodríguez-Garavito politics is a minefield in three senses: it is imbricated in the extraction of natural resources through the exploitation of labor and the expropriation of land; it is characterized by volatile and violent social relations; moreover, it is a treacherous arena in which real land mines are planted as a strategy of war. Nandini Sundar describes something very similar in Chhattisgarh. But the metaphor of the social minefield can be extended more broadly to capture the element of danger and surprise, especially for the academic who, as Weber said, is simply not prepared for politics. Karl von Holdt describes the attempt to reorganize Baragwanath Hospital that came up against resistance from many quarters, namely the playing out of class and race interests that have little to do with the delivery of medical services. The weaving back and forth between policy and public sociology reflect the ambushes that lay in wait for what seemed to be a simple intervention.

Whether we speak of amphibious, schizophrenic sociology or critical engagement, these are the experiences of sociologists at the intersection of two fields: the academic and the political, the one holding the sociologists to professional norms of independent inquiry while the other demands accountability to the very different rules of the political game. Let us see how different sociologist enter, negotiate and leave this place of contention.

Sari Hanafi, a Palestinian reared in a Syrian refugee camp, describes his trajectory of public engagement in Lebanon and Palestine. He began as a cautious professional

sociologist, reluctant to enter the public sphere. Concerned that his research speak to the issues facing Palestine, he dived into policy research that would help build connections between Palestine and its diaspora. Turning to the place of NGOs within Palestine, he became critical of their refusal to be drawn into politics, that is, their limited horizons. Hanafi, however, entered a political minefield when he took a position at the American University of Beirut and began to address civil society directly, or particularly, when he turned from writing in English for the policy and academic world, to writing in Arabic for broader publics.

He found himself stepping on a Lebanese land mine when he condemned international humanitarian organizations for working within the framework of existing rights for Palestinian refugees. When he began defending the Palestinian right to work, he not only came up against Lebanese authorities but also Palestinian leaders who saw integration as threatening the right of return. His research into the governance of camps – a form of organic public sociology – accused Palestinian leaders of being removed from their people and the Lebanese government of policing without representation. Writing articles on these matters in the Lebanese media Hanafi was subject a barrage of public attacks for taking positions that recognized the interests of oppressed groups, and later when he insisted on his right to collaborate with dissident Israeli academics on the nature of the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

This was precarious combat, indeed, because he never found himself, definitively, on any one side. Rather, as an academic insisting on critical and analytical distance, he was caught between political forces, sometimes even criticizing those with whom he sympathized. It is this critical engagement that got him into trouble with everyone, including some of his colleagues who resented his political involvement that was bringing trouble to the university.

Clearly, the possibilities of public and policy sociology are dependent on the character of the political field and its relation to the university. As compared to China the polity in Lebanon is still quite open and, in the final analysis, the American University of Beirut provided protective covering. In China the political field is far more treacherous and university far from being a safe haven, but this did not stop Pun Ngai and her colleagues embarking on an organic public sociology designed to expose the appalling working conditions at Foxconn, the Taiwanese company that produces over 50% of the world's electronic products, and most specifically Apple products, in Chinese factories which employ up to 400,000 workers. Sparked by a spate of suicide attempts in 2010, sociologists from universities across China, Taiwan and Hong Kong undertook a series of research projects, based on interviewing Foxconn workers and covert participant observation. Their goal was to produce a general awareness of conditions at Foxconn, and to mount a global campaign against Foxconn and Apple. To this end they produced reports and videos that they distributed internationally through such organizations as SACOM, a Hong-Kong-based labor group formed by scholars and students concerned about the violation of labor rights in mainland China. The media coverage was astonishingly broad but the response of Apple and Foxconn was more token than real, since the real bite – a consumer boycott of Apple products – could not threaten the popularity of the products. At the same time the campaign was designed to encourage Chinese workers to organize in their own defense.

Perhaps, because they were targeting a foreign company rather than the Chinese state there was no retribution against the teams of sociologists, but this was never assured in the uncertain political terrain of China. Unlike Hanafi, who insisted on keeping a critical distance from his political actors, Pun Ngai and her colleagues were unequivocal in defending what they conceived to be the interests of workers, forging 'intellectual–worker unity.' Sociology should serve workers, bringing 'about new understanding of relation between global production and worker resistance in China, about university education, and about the goals of researchers.' For them 'social science should never be separated from politics.' Indeed, in the Chinese context of state regulation of all spheres of life, including the university, critical sociology is immediately political and marginal as compared to an introverted professional sociology and a policy sociology serving the interests of power.

But such a radical political stance toward public sociology is, of course, not unique to the Chinese situation. Frances Piven describes a very similar militant sociology, designed to advance the strategies of social movements. Her research into the history of social movements and politics in the United States has led her to conceptualize what she calls 'interdependent power,' the idea that the power of subordinate groups lies not in their resources but in the leverage they exercise over the dominant groups dependent upon them. In her view, then, social movements must first recognize that they have such power, they must be prepared to break the rules that secure their subjugation, they must organize themselves to coordinate their insurgency and, then, be prepared to withstand reprisals from those whose power they challenge. This is the sociology she applies to the Occupy Movement and its strategy of 'Strike Debt,' that is a collective and deliberate default on loan payments and debt obligations, aimed at banks and other financial powers. What she offers, then, is a sociological analysis of strategy in the service of a social movement, a potential organic public sociology.

The dilemmas Piven refers to are the ones that arise from trying to forge a movement in the particular political context of the US where debt is normalized, where debtors do not see themselves as a group, where the Occupy Movement is fragile, radical but without sustained relations with the wider society, where repression can be ruthless. She herself, however, has had a long career of combat, fighting publicly for the voting rights and welfare rights of poor people. This public engagement has not been without its challenges. Branded by Glenn Beck of Fox Television as an extremist and 'enemy of the constitution' who has contributed to the economic crisis and threatened the stability of the American government, Piven is no stranger to the power of the media and the difficult terrain for public sociology in the US.

Whereas Piven's dilemmas revolve around the realization of 'interdependent power' in a given political context, Ramón Flecha and Marta Soler focus on the dilemmas of engaging with subaltern communities who are suspicious of all outside interventions, especially from academics. The Institute for Overcoming Inequality (CREA) at the University of Barcelona has developed its own distinctive 'communicative methodology' that involves building trust through dialogue between sociologists and community. In this vision of organic public sociology each side contributes its own expertise – the public contributes the experience of marginality while the sociologist contributes specific ways of overcoming that marginality.

In the example they describe, the community creates its own Citizens Council (based on ideas offered by the sociologist) which considers the ways in which successful actions elsewhere (also provided by the sociologist) can be adapted to their community. Specifically, the sociologists import the 'successful action' of the Mondragon Cooperative into a barrio of Romani to create jobs that were previously outsourced. From beginning to end the sociologists are in constant conversation with the Citizens Council which itself launched a new form of community democracy based on what Flecha and Soler call a 'Dialogic Inclusion Contract.' This model of public sociology presumes the sociologist does have distinctive expertise in providing solutions for community problems and that these solutions or 'successful actions' can be adapted only through dialogue necessary to understand what is possible and what is not.

What does this methodology presume about the political field? It appears to be a harmonious world of reciprocal deliberation and constructive intervention. It is far from the social minefields of Colombia, India and South Africa. There are none of the conflicts that entangle Hanafi's public sociology, conflicts between the sociologist representing the camp dwellers and their leaders, or the sociologist caught between the Lebanese government, Hezbola, NGOs and UNRWA (the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East). Yet, of course, Flecha and Soler know that conflict swirls around the Roma people. A popular television documentary series on the Roma aired a filming of a prenuptial virginity test, portraying them as a backward, even barbaric people. At the press conference there were competing interests – a politician who had built his career as a representative of the Roma, independent media, representatives from Roma women's groups as well as a church leader who had collaborated with the filming crew. CREA had its own interest in papering over these divisions within the Roma community in order to present a successful action to the European Parliament. Policy sociology, here, requires the presentation of public sociology as a smooth dialogic process. Equally, Catalonia's academic field is divided between the exploitative professional sociologists pursuing their own career and CREA immersed in a dialogic relation of mutual accountability with the community. The moralizing view obscures the deep struggles about which Soler has written elsewhere within what is still a semi-feudal university system, dominated by competing barons or *catedraticos*. As the economic pressures on the university intensify and positions become ever more scarce, so, too, do the conflicts deepen.

Communicative methodology has to negotiate the dynamics of both political and academic fields. It has to determine with whom to communicate and against whom to struggle. An effective public sociology has to function on two terrains – a political and an academic field – and it is their composition and intersection that sets the limits and possibilities of precarious engagements.

Inconvenient truths

So far we have examined the windmill experience at the intersection of political and academic fields, and then the challenges of acting as a sociologist with and against other actors in the political field. We now turn to the capacity of sociologists to affect changes in the common sense of the publics they address.

Michel Wieviorka's public sociology is especially daunting as he is concerned to weaken or unseat deeply held prejudices such as racism and anti-Semitism. His engagements are rooted in an original perspective on sociological intervention based on a clear distinction between the production and dissemination of knowledge. But the distinction quickly blurs when the production of knowledge becomes collaboration with the subjects and thus the dissemination of sociology, while dissemination itself becomes a vehicle for validating and producing new sociology. Indeed, effective dissemination must have a practical moment – it must be a sociological intervention – otherwise it won't dislodge deeply held common sense.

Sociological intervention, says Wieviorka, involves the co-production of knowledge, often with a few militants in a social movement. The very act of partaking in sociological research can shift a movement's self-understanding. The activists come to believe in the new knowledge when they appropriate it as their own, and apply it to the world around them. Conversion, however, can be skin deep if the subjects are given no way of implementing their new found understanding, if there is no way of remedying the situation that produces the prejudices in the first place. Thus, Wieviorka learned how the transformation of common sense is more likely to be embraced if it comes about through democratic participation in which participants choose alternative policies or strategies. At the same time, to avoid being drawn onto the terrain of common sense, sociologists have to retain a critical distance and cling to their scientific protocols that also give their knowledge added credibility – all the more important when the research involves close encounters with their subjects.

Wieviorka takes it as an article of faith that the expansion of knowledge and creation of truth will work for the good, while recognizing that others see sociology as harnessed for evil as well as for good. This is his enlightenment bias that in part may reflect the relative openness of the French public sphere. Anna Temkina and Elena Zdravomyslova's account of the trajectory of gender studies and feminism, operating in a more restricted public sphere and repressive political order, draws more mixed conclusions. They describe how they discover 'gender' in the early years of the post-Soviet transition when they came in contact with Western feminists. In this period the Russian government reacted against the Soviet past, pushing the political field in a Westerly direction, embracing human rights, and encouraging international agencies who were keen to fund 'gender studies.' Given the essentialism and nationalism that informs the common sense about patriarchal relations between men and women, 'gender studies' had a difficult terrain to conquer both outside and inside the academy. Still, a more critical approach to gender did grow within academic and intellectual circles so long as it received support from outside. As this support dried up and turned into hostility, during the Putin years, the survival of 'gender studies' became more difficult. The very notion of gender that it had exported into the public sphere was appropriated by conservative groups – the Russian Orthodox Church being the dominant player – to demonize feminists as dangerous upstarts, agents of Western influence. Always hard to advance, public sociology around gender became ever more difficult and its carriers were vilified in public and marginalized in the academy. Ironically, sociology's view of gender relations and patriarchy as socially constructed rather than natural and inevitable was appropriated and turned against its originators by conservative forces. Yet, in a final twist, this reaction against gender

studies also excited support from a broad range of human rights groups, suffering from a similar constriction of liberties.

Russian feminists fight courageously and against overwhelming odds to defend its truths, in the same way that Walden Bello pursues his sociological truths – inconvenient truths – against their public enemies. Thus, his account of the fall of Allende focuses on 'counter-revolutionary' forces within Chile, arguing against the reigning leftist orthodoxy that claimed Allende was brought down by US support for the Chilean military. Moving deeper into the public sphere in his homeland Bello investigated the disappearance of members of the Philippine Communist Party only to find that they had been executed on suspicion of being agents of the military. He dared to present his findings and suffered the consequences. The more powerful the political actor the greater is its interest but also its ability to suppress inconvenient truths. The collusion of the World Bank and the Marcos dictatorship was outside any critical investigation until Bello and his colleagues broke into the World Bank to steal crucial documents, which became the basis of a book that contributed to the downfall of the regime.

More generally, and in parallel with Wieviorka's emphasis on practice, Bello argues that inconvenient truths become accepted as 'true' only through political action. Even though there had been much research to show that markets were neither efficient nor just, neoliberal beliefs reigned supreme, until protests against the WTO in Seattle and beyond effectively called those beliefs into question. As long as inconvenient truths are bottled up in the academic arena, they are innocuous. They may seep out quietly to the dominant forces in society, but when they enter the public sphere, they can become more subversive, and, for those who carry them, rather more dangerous.

Today sociology as a whole is an inconvenient truth. It is an embattled field, defending civil society against the collusive relation of state and market, reflected in the academy by attempted mergers of economics and political science. Just as sociology arose with civil society in the 19th century to oppose market anarchy and political tyranny, so once again the mission of sociology lies in opposing the rise of utilitarian and economistic thought. Against neoliberal orthodoxy, sociology poses as an inconvenient truth, along with its neighboring disciplines such as anthropology and geography, and along with dissident economists and political scientists. Sociology's survival becomes coterminous with the survival of civil society that is the last defense against the war waged by the agents of the market economy against human existence. Sociology's future as a discipline will depend on making its inconvenient truths everyday reality, which it can only do by entering the public sphere and becoming a social movement itself, while simultaneously holding on to its scientific basis.

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Résumé

Ce chapitre a pour point de départ le paradoxe non résolu qui se dégage des œuvres de Bourdieu, à savoir l'impossibilité théorique d'une sociologie publique et son propre engagement soutenu en pratique envers divers publics. Je me suis approprié son concept de 'champ' et je l'ai développé pour expliquer son succès en tant que sociologue public. À ces fins, il faut que nous comprenions que la sociologie publique est possible uniquement à l'intersection de deux champs distincts – le champ académique et le champ politique. La sociologie publique se révèle alors une poursuite plutôt précaire pour diverses raisons: tout d'abord les demandes contradictoires qui existent dans le champ académique; ensuite les difficultés rencontrées pour opérer à l'intersection entre les champs académique et politique; et enfin l'obstination du bon sens, qui n'est

pas aisément chassée, si ce n'est souvent face à une hostilité ouverte. Aussi difficile que ce soit, le développement d'une 'face publique' sera essentiel à la survie de la sociologie et un composant important dans la défense de la survie humaine face au fondamentalisme de marché.

Mots-clés
Bourdieu, champs, engagement, sociologie publique

Resumen

Este capítulo parte de la paradoja sin resolver que encontramos en los escritos de Bourdieu, a saber, la imposibilidad teórica de la sociología pública, y su sostenido compromiso práctico con el ámbito público. Asigno y desarrollo su concepto de 'campo' para referirme a su éxito como sociólogo público. Para ello necesitamos comprender que la sociología pública solo es posible en la intersección de dos campos diferentes: el campo académico y el campo político. La sociología pública resulta ser una actividad bastante precaria, en primer lugar, debido a las exigencias propias del campo académico; en segundo lugar, por la dificultad de operación en la intersección de ambos campos; y en tercer lugar, a causa de la obstinación del sentido común, difícil de desplazar, cuyo intento a menudo despierta una hostilidad abierta. Aunque difícil, para la supervivencia de la sociología será necesario el desarrollo de su imagen pública, siendo también un ingrediente importante en la defensa de la supervivencia humana contra el fundamentalismo de mercado.

Palabras clave
Bourdieu, campos, compromiso, sociología pública

Amphibious sociology: Dilemmas and possibilities of public sociology in a multimedia world

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Abstract
Public sociologists' deep engagement with non-academic publics tends to give research findings greater empirical accuracy, relevance and influence, as well as provide a powerful source of motivation. However, it also creates constant risks of dispersion, loss of independence, lack of analytical distance and burnout. Based on the author's experience with research and advocacy about socio-environmental conflicts in Latin America, this article dwells on these opportunities and risks. To take advantage of the former and tackle the latter, it makes a case for 'amphibious sociology,' an approach that embraces hybrid styles of writing and uses advances in multimedia technology to engage several audiences, while keeping the enterprise of public sociology afloat.

To do public sociology is to lead a double life. It is experiencing, in a matter of hours, the transition from the introverted world of classrooms to the extroverted world of media and meetings with activists and public officials. The contrast can be felt on the skin: the humidity and heat of fieldwork is a far cry from the climate-controlled air of university offices, courts or philanthropic foundations.

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The contrast is even more marked when the public sociologist works in highly dangerous and unequal contexts such as those that I have visited in the course of a research-action project about the socio-environmental conflicts that have exploded throughout Latin America in the past decade, as one country after another has turned toward the exploitation of natural resources to satisfy a growing global demand for minerals, oil and energy.

Elsewhere, I have referred to these sites and the spheres of social interaction that they produce as 'minefields' (Rodríguez-Garavito, 2011). They are minefields in both a sociological and economic sense. In sociological terms, these are actual social *fields* (Bourdieu, 1977), characteristic of enclaves of extractive industries, and therefore typified by profoundly unequal power relations between mining companies and local communities and by the scarce presence of the state. They are *mine*fields in that they are highly dangerous: within these fields, violent and untrusting social relations dominate, in which one wrong step could be fatal.

I also designate these areas as minefields in an economic sense: on many occasions they revolve around the exploitation of gold, silver, coltan or other valuable minerals. In some cases, as in several natural resource exploitation projects I have studied in Colombia, these spaces are minefields in a more literal sense as well: the territories in conflict are plagued with antipersonnel mines, sown by leftist guerrillas and right-wing paramilitaries as a strategy of war and territorial control.

In this article I reflect on the nature and challenges of public sociology based on my experience of practicing it in these minefields. Specifically, I draw on the information and experiences of three case studies regarding socio-environmental conflicts in indigenous territories that have received national and international attention: the dispute over the construction of the Belo Monte dam in the Brazilian Amazon, the conflict regarding oil drilling in the Sarayaku people's land in the Ecuadorian Amazon and the struggle surrounding the construction of the Urrá dam in northern Colombia.

The article is divided into three sections. In the first, I characterize the practice of public sociology within these contexts and highlight what I consider to be its four main scientific and political strengths. In the second, I discuss the dilemmas of public sociology, underlining the four challenges that are the flipside of the advantages mentioned in the first part. I close the article with a proposal to solve some of these dilemmas, through strategies that form an approach I refer to as 'amphibious sociology': sociology capable of breathing in the two worlds of academia and the public sphere, of synthesizing the two lives of the sociologist into one, without drowning in the process. In making the case for amphibious sociology, I single out the need to increase the types of texts and forms of diffusion of sociological work in order to take advantage of a world that is increasingly multimedia and, thereby, advance the project of public sociology.

The sociological windmill in action

The best characterization that I know of the practice of public sociology is the beautiful article by Michael Burawoy (2010) about Edward Webster, the well-known South African labor sociologist who founded the SWOP (Society, Work and Occupations Institute) of the University of the Witwatersrand. Burawoy describes the daily work of

Webster with the apt metaphor of the windmill. Like a windmill, Webster, the public sociologist, is in constant movement, propelled by the many arms that make up his professional activity: research and teaching; participation in the public sphere (media, social movements, etc.); public policy advocacy; and the construction of institutions that embody and promote public sociology (for example, research centers and NGOs). Thanks to the rotation and interaction of these four arms, sociological imagination becomes political imagination, in the same way that the incessant turning of a windmill turns air into energy.

Thousands of miles away, in the heart of the Amazon, the South African windmill resonated during my empirical work on minefields. I had arrived there propelled by the forces of various arms that had brought me from academic research and public debate regarding indigenous rights in Colombia to human rights advocacy work in Washington, and from there to new rounds of research and activism in Brazil and Ecuador, all as part of the process of consolidating two institutions I helped to found: the Center for the Study of Law, Justice and Society (Dejusticia, a Bogota-based research center and NGO) and the University of Los Andes Program for Global Justice and Human Rights (a university-based legal clinic, also in Bogota). I started the project with a study on the Urrá dam, located in northern Colombia in the same place where the bloody paramilitary movement had its headquarters and where control over the territory and business of drug-trafficking has been disputed between paramilitaries in shadowy alliances with the armed forces and the traditional political class on one side, and the equally violent leftist guerrillas, particularly the Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia (FARC), on the other. The Embera-Katío indigenous people are trapped in the crossfire and have lost at least 21 leaders, assassinated by one side or the other. Today, after 20 years of forced displacement and human and environmental loss for the catastrophic effects of the dam, they are at risk of cultural and physical extinction (Rodríguez-Garavito and Orduz Salinas, 2012).

Allowing myself to follow the unpredictable path of public sociology, I arrived at the second location of the project: the Belo Monte dam in the Brazilian Amazon. The study on the Urrá dam led me to get involved in the legal defense of indigenous groups that, like the Embera-Katío, had not been consulted prior to the construction of development projects in their lands, in spite of the fact that practically every Latin American country has ratified Convention 169 of the International Labor Organization (ILO), which establishes the obligation to conduct prior consultations. By donning my second professional hat (I had been trained as a lawyer before becoming a sociologist) in a hearing on this topic before the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights in 2010, I learned that a complaint regarding a similar case had just arrived at the Commission, submitted by indigenous communities and environmental organizations that accused the Brazilian government of not consulting Amazonian indigenous groups before authorizing the construction of Belo Monte, which would be the third largest dam in the world. The case immediately attracted international attention, given that the Brazilian government had declared the dam to be of national interest – as it played a crucial role in their plans to convert Brazil into an economic power – and that celebrities (such as Sting and James Cameron) had traveled to the region to express their solidarity with the indigenous peoples. When the Brazilian government refused to obey the Inter-American Commission's order to halt construction of the dam while it reviewed the complaint, various human

rights organizations and academics traveled to the region to document the situation and express their condemnation of the government's decision.

Having been involved in the Urrá case as an academic researcher and in Belo Monte as an attorney, my comparative sociologist's intuition led me to look for a third case of legal and political mobilization which, in contrast to the previous cases, had ended with a favorable legal decision for the indigenous communities. The opportunity to complete the study sample presented itself in mid-2012, when the Inter-American Court of Human Rights held a hearing in the territory of the Sarayaku people in the Ecuadorian Amazon, which led to a ruling in favor of the indigenous communities. When I traveled to the Sarayaku territory for fieldwork, the attorneys and the community were expecting the Court's decision, which was published a day after my visit ended. In a historic decision, the Court ordered the Ecuadorian state to indemnify the indigenous community for having authorized oil exploration without having previously consulted the community and to conduct such a consultation should Ecuador consider oil exploration within the Sarayaku's territory in the future.

With this case study, my route had come full circle in the windmill: from the research of a professional sociologist to intervention in courts and media, including participation in debates regarding indigenous rights in each of the three countries, and ending again with the professional sociologist. As tends to happen, at the end of the project I did not know which was my identity or exact role in the story. I was all roles at once and none in particular.

Elsewhere, I offer a detailed account of the results of the study (Rodríguez-Garavito, 2011). For the purposes of this article, I will limit myself to outlining the four strengths of public sociology that I believe are illustrated by the type of process I have described. First, the rapid change of roles and identities allows one to see the same social reality from distinct angles (the scientist, the activist, the judge and the public official). The result, I believe, is a greater *empirical thickness and accuracy* than is possible in other types of sociology.

Second, the design, the questions and the results of the research project are directly informed by interactions with actors from the reality under study and planned with various audiences in mind. The result is a greater *relevance* of the research for multiple audiences, which could translate into influence in the fate of the issues under study.

Third, in allowing herself to be carried with the rhythm of events, the public sociologist tends to have *immediate and continued access* to the places and actors of her studies, who see her more as just another actor rather than an intruder interested in extracting information. Intervention through multiple formats (such as opinion columns and other media appearances) also grants an immediacy to the research products that conventional academic production does not have, as the latter takes several years to come to fruition. In contrast to the conventional researcher – for whom social practice is a laboratory she enters with rubber gloves, dissects with the cold analytic scalpel of the professional scientist and leaves, untouched, never to return – public scientists tend to continue the dialogue with the people and collectivities for whom these practices are not a laboratory but their lives.

Fourth, public sociology has an emotional strength that has been little analyzed in the growing literature devoted to it. Having been made in direct contact with events and a

multitude of people (actors in the cases, diverse audiences, etc.) and having an explicit inspiration in normative commitments (the defense of a social justice cause in which one firmly believes, the construction of a supportive research/action institution and community, etc.), public sociology is a constant source of *motivation.* The adrenaline rush that courses through one's veins while between the blades of the windmill is a powerful stimulant to continue working, one that tends to be lacking in the solitary work of the professional sociologist, from whom it is expected that he leave the moral convictions of his life outside the academia. As Burawoy eloquently wrote in connection with the sociological windmill, 'When the winds are gale force it is impossible to get close [to it] without being drawn into its vortex' (Burawoy, 2010: 5). It is an exhilarating experience indeed. It is made even more stimulating by the fact that it is always a *collaborative* enterprise, as the myriad activities and commitments cannot be tackled without teams of highly motivated researcher-activists.[1]

To my mind, these are the strengths of the process of practicing public sociology and of the results that it generates. However, each of these also has its dark side, which creates steep dilemmas. To them I now turn.

Don Quixote versus the windmill: The dilemmas of public sociology

In a famous passage of *Don Quixote*, the novel's protagonist, accompanied by his faithful squire Sancho Panza, spars with windmills that he mistakes for dangerous giants. As in Miguel de Cervantes' story of the celebrated knight, there is much that is quixotic in public sociology. It is a very ambitious undertaking, even dangerous in contexts such as minefields. As in the novel, there is a high risk that something will go wrong in the story of the sociological windmill.

The main risks can be viewed as the opposites of the four aforementioned qualities. In the first place, the same changes in roles and activities that allow a more rich and complete version of the facts have as their inevitable cost *dispersion*. The public sociologist leaps from one task to another, from one meeting to the next, from one place to another very different one. For example, I remember writing my opinion pieces for a Colombian newspaper in the middle of fieldwork in the Brazilian or Ecuadorian jungle, later searching anxiously for an internet cafe in a small town on the return route in order to submit it before the deadline. This risk of dispersion becomes permanent and makes concentration impossible, which is indispensable to convert empirical richness into quality academic products. In other words: the speed and immediacy of public interventions wind up replacing the slower and more patient work of a social scientist. The result can be academic dilettantism.

Second, with relevance and influence comes the risk of a *loss of independence.* By interacting with multiple audiences, public sociologists can be captured by one of them, for example, a state agency or company that hires them as a consultant, or a social movement that demands unconditional loyalty. I have personally lived this dilemma: a state agency that requested a concept paper legislation about prior consultation in Colombia was so uncomfortable with my position of guaranteeing indigenous rights that it decided to shelve the report; I rejected several offers from mining companies to work as an

'indigenous community relations consultant'; and several times I had to explain to the indigenous movement why I was not signing their political statements, even though I agreed with them. The reason was the same in all of the cases: the need to maintain my professional role of public sociologist, or – to put it in the terms I learned from Boaventura de Sousa Santos, a master public sociologist – to remain objective while not being neutral. But this was not always well received by the above audiences.

In violent places and countries, relevance has an additional high cost: public sociologists not only risk their independence but also their physical safety and lives. Precisely because they are relevant, they are a problem for powerful, violent actors – from state armed forces to leftist guerrillas, paramilitary squads of the right, local mafias or private armies serving companies.

In fact, the connection between relevance and personal danger is so close that I believe it is characteristic of public sociology in countries with a legacy of recent political violence (such as Colombia, South Africa and many other countries of the Global South) or volatile places such as minefields. Put more clearly: those who practice public sociology in these contexts can do so only because other public sociologists who came before us gave their lives, tranquility or personal safety to the cause.

This was the moving revelation of a conversation that I had in Johannesburg with the new generation of SWOP researchers, the center founded by Eddie Webster, our 'sociological windmill,' who was also present. The youngest members were the ones who remembered that several of Webster's colleagues were murdered by state forces for their anti-apartheid academic and political work. Without such extreme commitment and persistence on the part of Webster and his surviving colleagues, SWOP may have disappeared at the hands of the apartheid regime.

The same could be said of public sociology and, in fact, of sociology in general in Latin America. Indeed, some of the pioneering centers of Latin American sociology (such as CEBRAP in Brazil, co-founded by Fernando Henrique Cardoso) were refuges for academics persecuted for their studies and their militant critiques of the dictatorships of the 1960 and 1970s. Therefore, from the beginning, the human rights movement and public sociology were intimately tied, and some foundations (such as the Ford Foundation) that tended to only support academic programs in the region inaugurated programs to finance the then emerging human rights NGOs when it came to light that the academics that supported these NGOs were being killed, threatened or exiled (Keck and Sikkink, 1998).

In the most violent countries, such as Colombia, many sociologists have paid with their lives or exile for having raised their voices against the various armed groups. In fact, what was the most influential academic center for the study of violence in the 1990s (the National University's Institute for Political and International Relations Studies, IEPRI) was persecuted in a manner so systematic and bloody that a large part of its researchers wound up in exile. Some were targets of the FARC (such as Eduardo Pizarro), while others were targets of paramilitary groups (such as Álvaro Camacho and Iván Orozco) and received fellowships to escape the violence for several years at the University of Notre Dame and other places. With the caustic humor which Colombians have developed to endure this savagery, some called these sponsorships 'Carlos Castaño Fellowships,' a reference to the name of the commander of the powerful paramilitary armies that forced many public intellectuals into exile at the end of the 1990s. Others did

not manage to flee in time: in 2004, Alfredo Correa de Andreis, a well-known sociologist from the Caribbean coast, was assassinated in a plot involving paramilitaries and the intelligence agency of the Colombian state. Although those of us who practice public sociology in Colombia today face personal risks that we must anticipate and manage with extreme prudence – for example, by carefully coordinating fieldwork with local NGOs and communities – fortunately, we do not face the prohibitive level or risk of our predecessors. We owe them the spaces we now have in universities, civil society, the state, and the media.

Third, the cost of immediate access to the actors and facts is *difficulty in taking the analytic distance* that is essential for academic work. Precisely because they are not intruders in a social 'laboratory' from which they want to extract information, public sociologists wind up in a tangle of events, unable to leave in order to think and write. The problem with the windmill is that it never stops turning. And the vertigo of this perpetual movement can inhibit the tranquility and distance necessary to theorize and unravel the patterns that connect the facts.

Finally, the flipside of emotional adrenaline is *burnout.* Motivated by their moral and personal commitment to their audiences and institutions, public sociologists end up in the vortex about which Burawoy writes. Before reading his account of the sociological windmill, I had used the same word – vortex – in describing my sensation of doing public sociology, interacting with so many different people in so many diverse places at such a dizzying speed. The experience is as exultant as it is exhausting. Going from minefields to classrooms and then the hearings of the Human Rights Commission in Washington is fascinating. But it requires a work pace that can be inadvisable and even unsustainable.

Amphibious sociology: Public sociology in a multimedia world

How to negotiate such difficulties? I do not believe that there are simple solutions. In the end they are existential dilemmas, the kind that go hand in hand with the job itself. Those who enjoy the benefits of public sociology also accept its costs.

The focus of this issue is the dilemmas of public sociology. However, I do not want to end the article with this tragic tone, in part because a characteristic feature of public sociology is optimism. Or, to paraphrase Gramsci, its combination of scientific and moral commitments means that pessimism of the intellect is mixed with optimism of the will. Thus, an appropriate way to conclude this text is to mention, at least briefly, professional strategies that could mitigate the dilemmas and take advantage of the strengths of public sociology.

My argument is the following: to navigate the winds of the windmill, it is necessary to become amphibious. In the same way that amphibious animals or vehicles move from the air to the water or ground, the public sociologist should be able to move through various media without surrendering. In violent contexts, in addition to navigating air, water and earth, the public sociologist must be able to face the fire.

This type of practice is what I refer to as amphibious sociology. Etymologically, 'amphibian' means 'one that lives a double life.' And, as we saw, this is precisely the defining characteristic of the public sociologist.

Two strategies seem especially promising to spread amphibious sociology, one related to the texts that it produces and the other to additional formats of diffusion. I believe that one of the principal reasons for which public sociologists suffer from dispersion and burnout is that the valid formats for the academic world (indexed journal articles and books in university presses) have a language and communication codes that differ markedly from those that their other audiences expect (such as readers of newspapers, social movement leaders, marginalized communities, television viewers or the anonymous public of social media). The distance between these formats is so great that to be relevant in different worlds one must live two (or more) parallel lives.

In the face of this dilemma, one solution is to cultivate intermediate genres of writing and diversify the formats in which the results of public sociology are disseminated. The first implies producing texts that are legible for a wider audience, without losing academic rigor. The second means that public sociology must be a *multimedia sociology*. As an amphibious animal moves from one natural medium to another, so the amphibious sociologist translates his or her work products to different publication media, from books and articles to videos, podcasts, blogs and online classes. In both cases, the goal is to synthesize his or her efforts in products that can be circulated in both academic audiences and the public sphere.

If public sociologists decide to experiment with these strategies, they will find a spectrum of fascinating opportunities. For example, if they want to attempt a hybrid writing style between academic and journalistic, they would find support in the growing literature of journalists who write with the fluidity of their trade but do so by incorporating theories and empirical findings from the social sciences. Following this approach, they have addressed topics as diverse as African dictatorships (Kapuściński, 2002a), urban life in contemporary India (Mehta, 2005), drug-trafficking and slum culture in Latin America (Alarcón, 2012), job insecurity in the United States (Ehrenreich, 2008) or the future of the Arab Spring and other social movements that use social media (Gladwell, 2010).

Academics who borrow narrative tools from journalism and literature are also aiming at this middle point. The results are ethnographies, chronicles and essays written for broad audiences on topics such as the politics of clientelism in Argentina (Auyero, 2001) or forced displacement in Colombia (Molano, 2005). Nonetheless, hybrid literature produced from the academic shore continues to be relatively scarce and timid in comparison with what is produced outside universities.

I believe that this encounter is fundamental for public sociology, both because it can mitigate the sociologist's dispersion and burnout and because there is a profound elective affinity between the latter and the investigative journalist who produces in-depth social analysis. Both use a combination of deep empirical work, creative reflection and empathy and solidarity with the subjects with whom they dialogue. This is evident, for instance, in the description of 'immersion journalism' offered by the legendary chronicler Ryszard Kapuściński in a book whose title, *A Cynic Wouldn't Suit This Profession* already reveals the affinity with public sociology. Kapuściński describes his chronicles on Africa as an effort to portray and think about society 'from inside and below' (Kapuściński, 2002b: 31), based on a lifetime of dialoguing and living with the subjects of his writings. When asked about the relationship between theory and experience in

intellectual work, the Polish journalist maintained that 'in the community of writers, there can be a very simple division between those that find their inspiration in themselves and those that must be inspired by external motivations. There are reflexive characters and characters that reflect the world' (2002b: 120). Speaking of his own work, he said something that could describe many public sociologists: 'In my case … I reflect the world: I have to go to the place of the facts to be able to write. Staying in one place, I die' (2002b: 120). Like amphibians, I would add.

I have tried to advance my own work on minefields in this direction. After publishing an academic article that formulated the framework of the project and illustrated it with the case study of the Urrá dam in Colombia (Rodríguez-Garavito, 2011), I concluded that the empirical richness of this story could not be told within the trappings of conventional academic writing. The 20 years of the case spanned the core processes underlying civil war and the disputes over land and natural resources in contemporary Colombia: the rise of right-wing paramilitary squads and their penetration into politics; the involvement of the FARC in drug-trafficking and the struggle to control areas of cultivation and transport; forced displacement and land encroachment; the complicity of wide sectors of rural business people in the displacement and violence; the race for natural resources in a country turning toward a mining- and oil-based economy; and the tragic impact of all of this on indigenous peoples, whose lands, culture and life are endangered by being caught in the crossfire. This is why I decided to co-author a book that weaves together the threads of this story, which had not been told in a systematic form (Rodríguez-Garavito and Orduz Salinas, 2012). Thus, although we did the research with sociological tools, we wrote it in the language of literary journalism, with the hope of reaching a wider public, including indigenous peoples who today suffer similar cases in Colombia and other countries. The experience was as challenging as it was gratifying and led me to write journalistic chronicles for the Colombian press regarding the other two cases of the study, before completing the more academic book that compares and theorizes the three.

But all of this refers to the written format, which is only one of the possible channels of expression for the amphibious sociologist. I suggest that an equally useful strategy to address some of the dilemmas of public sociology is to take advantage of its strengths in order to generate products in diverse formats. The dominance of texts in academic life means that public sociologists exclude a large part of their work from their publications. What is left out are many of the most interesting experiences and information from participation in meetings, events, fieldwork or court proceedings, but that remain confined to academic books or newspaper articles to which many potential audiences do not have access – from grassroots organizations and social movements to university professors and students in marginalized areas.

The opportunities to fill this gap are multiple. For example, the fact that internet users spend more than 80% of their time online watching videos creates a valuable opportunity for amphibious sociology. Given that public sociologists have access to situations and people that are interesting for broad audiences, all they need to do is incorporate a video camera into their toolbox, along with the tape recorder and notebook. In this way they can generate valuable images that can be used in classes, training courses for marginalized communities, evidence in legal proceedings, or as accompaniments to texts that result from the research. The same can be done with pictures, podcasts and documents

that they collect during their work and which can be easily disseminated through blogs, websites and social media.

I have experimented with these formats in the project on minefields, with the help of other researchers and of a professional film crew that accompanied us on our fieldwork. The interviews and shots have been made into documentaries that we disseminate for free over the internet, together with academic and journalistic texts on the project.[2] We have also written policy papers and educational booklets regarding the right to prior consultation. In this way, we hope that different audiences will find these diverse formats useful. While indigenous peoples' organizations tend to use the videos and booklets in the training courses that they run, university students prefer videos, public officials opt for policy papers, academics prefer analytic texts and the wider public reads newspaper chronicles.

Of course, all this sounds easier than it is in reality. There is a long way to go before hybrid genres of writing and multimedia formats are formally recognized as a valid form of knowledge within academic communities. Moving from one medium to another creates new risks of dispersion, burnout, dependency and dilettantism. In my case, I am in the midst of experimenting with multimedia and have reached only incomplete and temporary solutions. But that is exactly the challenge of amphibious sociology.

Funding

Notes

1. For instance, the project on environmental conflicts and indigenous rights that I have been using as an illustration in this article involved no fewer than a dozen people throughout the years, including outstanding young researchers, human rights advocates, film makers, designers and web masters, without whom the project and its various products would simply have not been possible.
2. See, for instance, the documentary video we produced on the Sarayaku case at www.canaljusticia.org

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Résumé

En plus de représenter une importance source de motivation, le profond engagement des sociologues publics envers les publics non académiques tend à donner aux résultats de recherches une exactitude empirique, pertinence et influence accrues. Toutefois, cet engagement va aussi constamment de pair avec des risques de dispersion, de perte d'indépendance, de manque de distance analytique et d'épuisement. Dans cet article, l'auteur exploite son expérience en matière de recherche et plaidoyer sur les conflits socio-environnementaux en Amérique latine pour examiner en détails ces opportunités et risques. Pour tirer avantage de ces opportunités et faire face à ces risques, l'auteur fait valoir un argument en faveur de la 'sociologie amphibie', une approche qui englobe des styles d'écriture hybrides et utilise les avancées de la technologie multimédia pour toucher plusieurs auditoires tout en maintenant à flot l'entreprise de la sociologie publique.

Mots-clés

Action-recherche, conflits socio-environnementaux, multimédias, populations indigènes, sociologie publique

Resumen

El compromiso de los sociólogos públicos con los públicos no académicos tiende a darles a los resultados de las investigaciones mayor precisión empírica, importancia e influencia, y proporciona una poderosa fuente de motivación. No obstante, también crea constantes riesgos de dispersión, pérdida de la independencia, falta de distancia analítica y agotamiento. Basado en la experiencia del autor en la investigación y el

activismo sobre conflictos socio-ambientales en América Latina, este artículo se ocupa de dichas oportunidades y riesgos. Para aprovechar las ventajas de las primeras y hacer frente a los últimos, aboga por la 'sociología anfibia', un enfoque que abarca los estilos híbridos de escritura y usa los avances en la tecnología multimedia para llegar a diversas audiencias, manteniendo a flote la empresa de la sociología pública.

Palabras clave

Comunidades indígenas, conflictos socio-ambientales, investigación-acción, multimedia, sociología pública

In times of civil war: On being a schizophrenic (public) sociologist

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Abstract

This article addresses some of the dilemmas that sociologists in the Global South face – how does one choose between the demands of the public moment, the university as a space of work and struggle, and our duty to our 'disciplines'? How do we engage in practically extending the democracy and equality that we routinely learn and teach about and yet seize the time and space required for reflecting and producing research that is valued to the extent that it is seen to be 'disinterested'? And how do those of us who live and work in the global academic periphery validate our sociology in a world where the standards are often set by scholars abroad?

In his book, *Knowledge for What?*, the American sociologist Robert Lynd (1939a) raised the question of academic responsibility. Were scholars accountable to the state, to private corporations, to publics at large, or to the service of higher values like equality and justice? This question becomes even more acute in times of war, when there appear to be potentially different ways of serving these values. In a speech delivered at Columbia University, Lynd (1939b) argued that the university must keep its identity even through war, neither retreating into a space of pure thought nor moving forward into an arena of pure action. Instead, the task of the university was to keep alive the tradition of critical enquiry in order to fashion a better world after the war.

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A decade earlier and a continent away but faced with an equally existential war, for freedom from colonial rule, the Indian anthropologist Nirmal Kumar Bose was also grappling with the question of the academic's responsibility. In 1921, during Gandhi's non-cooperation movement, Bose wrote in his diary, 'In our national life we feel the arrival of a great period! … I do not know whether we are going to attain *swaraj* (independence) within a year only on account of leaving schools and colleges. But it appears to me that these movements are going to arouse our national consciousness and life and many of us would wake up and start thinking' (cited in Bose, 2007: 291–292). Bose quit graduate studies to set up a night school and a khadi cooperative in a slum and was arrested twice. In 1946, he accompanied Gandhi on a tour of Noahkali, which had seen some of the worst pre-partition violence, on Gandhi's condition that 'you sever your connection with the University and … risk death, starvation etc' (Bose, 1974: 44, cited in Bose, 2007). But Bose saw his political work as temporary and distinct from his anthropological work, an 'emergency duty'. He explained, 'I told him [Mahatma Gandhi] how scientific research was my true vocation (*swadharma*), while serving in the political campaign, even when it was by intellect, was no more than an emergency duty (*apadharma*)' (Bose, 2007). In between, Bose wrote on the structure of Hindu society, the relationship between anthropology and architecture, associational life in cities and a variety of other subjects. Like Bose, EP Thompson, who also combined exemplary research and activism throughout his life, did only one at a time.

The choice between activism and research, especially at times of national crises, has troubled generations of students across the world. In India in the late 1960s, many college students became 'Naxalites' or Maoist guerrillas, going underground and suffering huge privations for their politics. In the mid-1970s, others joined Jai Prakash Narayan's Sarvodaya movement for rural reconstruction work. Student idealism faded with the years and the absence of any stirring ideological politics. Now, with the efflorescence of NGOs and the media, students with a conscience (and many without) are more likely to join the 'voluntary sector' or journalism and seek satisfaction in work that addresses social issues or covers fast-paced public events, as against a seemingly sterile academic life.

Unlike students, for most faculty – including myself – staying or leaving is hardly a choice given the comfort of academic salaries, especially if we can convince ourselves that what we say as scholars is important, public and engaged. In fact, few of us are able to have the kind of public impact we desire or produce sociological texts that change the way people see the world. But, as I argue later, given the challenges facing large public universities in India, professional sociology can itself be a public cause. This was perhaps much more so a few generations ago when sociology was being institutionalized in the university, but remains an issue today given the needs of Indian higher education and its poor showing in global rankings of higher education. Whatever one thinks of such audit systems, the patriotic scholar is made to feel the psychological pressure to publish, lest the nation perish.

Those of us interested in social engagement face multiple dilemmas: how does one choose between the demands of the public moment, the university as a space of work and struggle and our duty to the 'disciplines' which have produced us as individuals and which have become our chief identity? To whom does our primary responsibility lie in a

country like India where our incomes come from a state that draws on the resources of the poor to subsidize a salaried elite? How do we engage in practically extending the democracy and equality that we routinely learn and teach about and yet seize the time and space required to reflect and produce research that is valued to the extent that it is seen to be 'disinterested' (cf. Gramsci, in Forgacs, 1998)? And how do those of us who live and work in the global academic periphery validate our sociology in a world where, in Sari Hanafi's (2011) wonderful phrase, to publish globally is to perish locally, and vice versa (see also Uberoi, 1968).

As pointed out earlier, these dilemmas and the particular shape they take in the Indian context are scarcely new: since the early 20th century and the beginnings of professional sociology/anthropology in India, scholars have debated between nationalism, policy relevance and basic research; between science in English and humanist expression in the vernacular; between the desire to be current with western theory and publish in 'international journals' and the desire to be independent from academic colonialism (where the standards of what is important and relevant are derived from western academic traditions and national contexts) (see Deshpande et al., 2000; Uberoi et al., 2007). Different paths stem from a clearing in which colonialism and its Other contended to create a particular society and its sociological self-understanding. Which one do we choose?

The shape of professional sociology in India

Michael Burawoy's distinction between professional, critical, policy and public sociology assumes a university structure where professional sociology is well established and in which sociology needs to reach out to a public domain to revitalize itself with issues and concerns drawn from 'life' rather than from texts or professional debates (Burawoy, 2005). With 651 departments of sociology in the United States,[1] it is not difficult for a sociologist to find a 'public' within the North American profession itself.

In India, according to a University Grants Commission (UGC) report on the status of sociology, as of 2000 there were some 100 departments and 77 'specialized research institutions', with an estimated 10,000 teachers of sociology.[2] There were at the same time 33 departments of anthropology (Srivastava, 2000). In the Indian context, the choice of identifying with the disciplinary nomenclature 'sociology' versus 'anthropology' is itself a dilemma. Labelling ourselves involves determining whom we call our ancestors, what and whom we teach and how we do research. Should we insist on the uniqueness and value of our own twinned discipline or give in to the divisions of the international system and attempt to find our own individual place within it?[3]

Across departments of sociology the quality is uneven, and overall, as the UGC report says, 'There does not appear to be an adequate correspondence between the changing social reality and the content and orientation of existing courses in sociology. As a consequence, the subject seems to have lost its practical value for state policy, employment market and the wider society' (p. 3). Even as there is a small core group of sociologists familiar with each other's work, the profession as a whole does not constitute a sufficiently large audience. Academic press print runs are small, many colleges in the *mofussils* have no access to good libraries, teaching is limited by unchanging syllabi and students rely on class notes or 'guides' (see also Shah, 2000: 48). As is the case globally

with audit systems, efforts by the UGC to incentivize publishing through a points system have also resulted in much work that should never have been put to paper.

Problems of differentiation within a university system are common to many countries, though the particular form of this differentiation varies (in France, between the *grandes écoles* and universities; in the US between Ivy League and state schools; and in India between metropolitan centrally funded and *mofussil* state-funded universities), as does the relative position of professional (medical/law school) versus general degrees (see Wacquant, 1996: xiv).

What makes the Indian situation particularly problematic is the colonial context in which university disciplines were instituted and in which they continue to function, where English is the language of learning and knowledge, and everything else is secondary. For the pioneers of Indian sociology/anthropology, many of whom wrote in both English and their own vernaculars, sociology was what they did in English with 'scientific tools'. In fact, what they wrote in their own languages, which they themselves regarded as popular literary writing, would be more readily accepted as ethnography by today's standards (Bose, 2007; Sundar, 2007). On the other hand, much that is relevant and contemporary in society and that should be incorporated by sociology/anthropology is written in other forms, notably literature or journalistic essays. Thus for example the essayist Anil Awachat writing about ecological problems in Marathi, dalit writers on their experience as 'untouchables', Maoist guerrillas debating with the government, or activists engaged in dealing with questions of environmental and nuclear safety often bring out contemporary social issues more sharply than scholarly debates about caste, class or ecology, especially when the latter are framed in the language that grand theory demands. One answer is that Indian sociologists – and scholars from other disciplines as well – should train themselves to write in vernacular languages and incorporate this range of materials into their teaching and research. Equally importantly, we need many more scholars from adivasi, dalit and other communities to validate their work within the academy, in much the same way as the growing numbers of women from the 1960s onwards put feminist theory on the academic map.

The question of language becomes especially acute when teaching. In Delhi University, for instance, students in the MA History and Political Science streams have rebelled because of the lack of Hindi texts. The sociology department has thus far evaded the problem by adopting an 'English only' policy, on the grounds that students who want to be professional sociologists must learn English. While Hindi textbooks and classes in Hindi would help a large number of students, it does not solve the problem of lack of intelligibility for students from the south or the northeast; furthermore, many of the faculty are not native Hindi speakers. Public universities like Delhi University and Jawaharlal Nehru University have students ranging from the most elite to those from very poor rural backgrounds, of hugely varying castes, linguistic backgrounds and high school marks; it is like Harvard and community college rolled into one. (Indeed, one source from which the feeling of academic colonialism stems is that several of our best students go abroad for graduate studies.) Remedial English language courses and translation programmes are, of course, one solution, but these are seen as stigmatizing. Also, because it is not a need that elites have faced it has never been a priority for university

administrations. In the meantime, individual teachers are faced with dilemmas over how and what to teach.

   If language is a dilemma we face on an everyday basis, the choice of citations and academic reference points is another. A study of Cambridge theses revealed that 70% of the footnotes were to books published by Cambridge scholars (Vincent, 1990). A randomly selected but quite representative recently published volume, *Companion to the Anthropology of India* (Clark-Deces, 2011), does not have a single author located in India. By contrast, if Indian scholars were to only cite other Indian scholars located in India, their work would be seen as provincial. As editors of *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, one of our major concerns was to have articles by scholars from different parts of the world in order to capture different academic traditions. But this, it often seemed to many, was at the expense of native scholars, with *CIS* cast as elitist. And it truly hurt me – as I know it hurt previous editors – to reject articles from some small town Indian scholar who had a brilliant idea but neither the linguistic nor the theoretical skills to frame it (and for which affirmative action editing could not compensate), in favour of a competent, heavily referenced article written by a recent PhD from the US or UK, for whom publication in *CIS* was just a routine step to tenure and not a particular engagement with Indian sociology. How do we avoid simply recreating structures of class or national privilege in the name of maintaining 'standards' in scholarship (cf. Bourdieu, 1996)? Unlike in the French context with its self-confident academic traditions, here 'standards' are not just a means of reproducing internal hierarchies but also of battling with external condescension.

Sociological engagements with the public

In India, sociology/anthropology has long existed in arenas outside the university, particularly the government, and continue to be at home in the Anthropological Survey of India. Several early anthropologists like Patrick Geddes, SC Roy and Verrier Elwin came to their studies through their involvement with urgent social issues. Geddes, for instance, who set up the Bombay department, was a town planner; SC Roy, who started *Man in India*, became interested in adivasi issues by fighting legal cases for them, and his work is still used by courts in Jharkhand as the primary text for accessing customary law; and Elwin, who wrote numerous monographs on different adivasi communities, started off as a missionary, Gandhian and social worker. These were self-trained scholars who believed that their research could make a difference to the way that society, and particularly a society struggling for independence, could constitute itself. What was missing in this early period was not the engagement with the wider world, much beyond a narrow applied sense, but the professionalism of a university discipline.

   It is in this context that sociology/anthropology as a 'discipline' itself became a 'cause'. For instance, Irawati Karve (1905–1970), India's first woman sociologist, decided early on that her best contribution to society was through the practice and institutionalization of her discipline: 'I will pay my debt to society through research in my subject. And beyond this, I owe no other debt to society' (cited in Pundalik, 1970). Married to the son of one of India's most famous social reformers at a time when independence and social change were in the air, this was by no means as easy a decision as it

seems. For scholars like Karve, who were self-conscious pioneers in the establishment of the disciplines in university departments in India, the question of what 'public scholarship' might mean revolved centrally around the contributions that 'science' could make to Indian society and the emergent Indian nation. This did not necessarily mean promoting policy relevant research, though they did some of that, but promoting basic research as an activity of social value. Over the 31 years she taught at the University of Pune, Karve published some 100 papers on a variety of different topics, most notably kinship and the family, but also caste, urbanization and displacement. Of course, Karve did not confine herself to academic writing, and her literary account of women in the *Mahabharata*, which won her the national Sahitya Akademi Prize, was hugely influential in her native Maharashtra as were her radio talk shows and other public writings (on Karve, see Sundar, 2007).

In terms of their impact on the wider public (at least on the English-speaking middle classes), contemporary sociologists have not done too badly either. MN Srinivas's concepts like Sanskritization, westernization or the vote bank have become common currency. Andre Beteille's writings on equality and inequality have been influential in promoting a particular public image of sociology, and Ramachandra Guha, sociologist-historian, has done pioneering work in several fields – particularly the environment, the sociological understanding of cricket and post-1947 history. In C Wright Mills's words, they all use a style that eschews both 'grand theory' and 'abstracted empiricism' in favour of an active intellectual intervention in the public issues of the day (Mills, 2000 [1959]; see also Gitlin, 2006).

The problem in India is not the lack of 'public sociology' – in terms of public engagement – as much as how we define professional sociology in the face of pressures from above (international – read: US/European sociology) and below (vernacular access and acceptability). The *practice* of professional sociology – addressing questions of funding, libraries, availability of literature in the vernacular, outdated syllabi, recruitment practices, historically inherited nomenclatures, disciplinary traditions and the imbalances of academic power between the Global North and South – is itself a form of public engagement, which brings one into contact with diverse publics. These include disadvantaged students looking to the university system for social mobility; different caste/ethnic/religious groups, some worthy and some not but each of which wants to censor university or school syllabi in the name of hurt community feelings;[4] and patriarchal/casteist structures which need to be challenged as much within the university as outside. To be a conscientious practitioner as well as a conscientious objector within the university system may itself be a full-time form of public sociology.

The demands of the public moment: Time, location and 'publics'

While everyday involvement in the life of the university can be politically taxing enough, there are also times when sociologists seem required to go beyond. I return in this section to the question I raised at the beginning of the article. What is the sociologist's responsibility in times of war – whether external or internal/civil war?

In 2005, the Indian government sponsored a vigilante movement called Salwa Judum ('Purification Hunt') in the southern portion of the state of Chhattisgarh in order to defeat Maoist guerrillas who had been active there since the early 1980s. It was described as a self-initiated 'peaceful people's' movement' but involved hundreds of people being forced to go on processions, accompanied by security forces, to 'persuade' recalcitrant Maoist supporters to join. Hundreds of villages were burned, sometimes more than once; thousands of people were killed; and some 50,000 were forced into roadside camps controlled by the vigilantes, while others fled into the forest or across the border into neighbouring states. Many young men who participated in the Salwa Judum were then absorbed as special police officers (SPOs), and – armed with guns and official authority – became a law unto themselves, terrorizing the villages.

In November 2005 I accompanied a fact-finding team of civil liberties groups to investigate what was happening. This was an area with which I was familiar. Some 20 years earlier while doing research for my PhD I had spent a year and a half living in a village just north of the affected area, albeit in a community speaking a different language. What I saw in 2005 caused me sleepless nights: the people who had always exploited the adivasis – like traders and local elites, whom they were now resisting – had been armed by the state to attack them. (The state is constitutionally mandated to protect the adivasis.) The report of this visit came out only four months later (PUCL-PUDR et al., 2006) and – because these groups are often seen as fronts of the Maoists – was easily dismissed. It became prominent only much later when Binayak Sen, the secretary of the Chhattisgarh People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL), which had anchored the fact-finding, was arrested, and his release became a cause celebre.

In the meantime, I initiated another fact-finding effort by eminent citizens, whose views would have to be taken more seriously by the establishment: two newspaper editors (one retired and one serving), a retired civil servant, a well-known sociologist/historian and a feminist journalist. This report, which was published in July 2006 (ICI, 2006), was important in several ways, not just because of the respectability of those who endorsed it but also because their contacts enabled us to meet people in power: the Prime Minister, the Home Minister, the National Security Advisor, a full bench of the National Human Rights Commission, the Planning Commission, editors and Members of Parliament. If the establishment did nothing about it, by the end of 2006, no one responsible could use the excuse that they did not know. Subsequently, three of us – the historian Ramachandra Guha, the former civil servant EAS Sarma and I – filed public interest litigation in the Supreme Court. A companion petition was filed on behalf of three residents of Dantewada; Manish Kunjam, the local leader of the parliamentary Communist Party; and two local government councillors, Kartam Joga and Dudhi Joga. In July 2011, we got a spectacular judgement, which directed the state to stop supporting vigilantism and disband and disarm the SPOs. However, the state promptly responded by regularizing them all under a different name. The litigation is still going on, including contempt charges we have filed against the state.

For years I was obsessed with Salwa Judum. My family and friends were sympathetic and supportive, but their patience had its limits. Apart from these large fact-finding efforts and several subsequent field trips on my own or with a couple of others at the most, I helped to organize conferences to bring both sides together (such as a seminar at

the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, in January 2007); co-founded a campaign group called Campaign for Peace and Justice in Chhattisgarh, which held public meetings on the issue; wrote for the newspapers; appeared on TV debates whenever I could; met politicians, civil servants and newspaper editors; spoke to the staff of humanitarian organizations like the United Nation's Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Medécin Sans Frontières (MSF); wrote briefs to send to international organizations; and so on. In the first year of its existence, virtually no one in the wider public knew about Salwa Judum. One could count the newspaper articles about it on the fingers of one hand. Part of the horror I felt was also simply that such a war could be happening in the heart of the country and yet be off the media's radar.

By 2012, however – after the civil war escalated with some spectacular Maoist counterattacks and the government's Operation Green Hunt spread the war across several states; the Supreme Court case; the attention brought to the issue by the Binayak Sen campaign; and writer Arundhati Roy's (2010) travelogue with the Maoists – it is now de rigueur for young journalists to cover the Maoist issue. While the situation continues to be grim for ordinary villagers, I no longer feel so necessary. In particular, I can afford to turn down requests to appear on TV; since the format of these shows is aimed at having either a pro- or anti-Maoist stand, there is little room for nuanced debates.

Consequences for research

What did this all mean for my teaching and research? Since these were years when I was also editing *Contributions to Indian Sociology* (2007–2011) and chairing my department (2010–2012), time was always short. While I never missed classes, I did not do justice to teaching. I also resigned as chair half way through my term. I did even less justice to research, turning down conference requests and reneging on deadlines. Court appearances and the work they require (drafting the briefs under guidance from the lawyers) are simply unpredictable. The matter has been scheduled for hearings more than 40 times in the last six years, but when hearings actually take place is a matter of chance. Many hearings have been delayed by requests for adjournments from the opposing counsels, who have used every strategy possible to tire us out. The case has been sustained only because our lawyers have been arguing pro bono, bringing considerable dedication and legal acumen to the case. The other litigants – like Ramachandra Guha and EAS Sarma – are based outside Delhi, and while they readily provide moral, monetary and intellectual support when asked, are not expected to be intimately involved in running the case.

In general, combining research with litigation and activism poses a long-term ethical dilemma. Activism often jeopardizes research; it also makes other academics take you less seriously. Personally, I value both choices: the choice to do silent research in difficult conflict situations and the choice to speak out. In 2002 after the Gujarat genocide, while I felt terrible for a while, I eventually went back to normal life. Here, my 'normal life' included frequent visits to Chhattisgarh and meetings with former informants turned friends. I had, therefore, almost no choice but to get involved – no more than one does if a member of one's family is attacked.

While I have been threatened and surrounded by police personnel and vigilantes on a couple of visits, this is nothing compared to what my co-petitioners from Dantewada

have had to face: Kartam Joga was in jail for more than two years on trumped up charges before being acquitted. Likewise, Manish Kunjam, who has led a remarkable fight against Salwa Judum on the ground, has received death threats and in 2010 the court had to order protection for him. My main angst has been feeling silenced as a sociologist. Various avenues of information have been closed off by my activist engagement, and the book I have long wanted to write on Salwa Judum has been put on hold because of the sensitivity of whatever I might say.

I cannot interview government perpetrators and travel as freely as I might wish in my 'field area'. Long-term relationships with locals have been disrupted by the fear that my presence might be a danger to them. Conversely, I have not been able to do fieldwork with the Maoists either. The state's only defence in court has been to call us Maoist fronts, for instance: 'The tribal felt that the Petitioner No. 1 was keen sympathizer of Naxalite movements [*sic*]' (State of Chhattisgarh, 2007); or 'It is reiterated that the petition is to eulogize the Naxalite activity and not to combat Naxalite violence or to alleviate sufferings of people [*sic*]' (State of Chhattisgarh, 2009). Our strategic response has been to establish our liberal bonafides by repeatedly distancing ourselves from the Naxalites, condemning them both in the writ petitions and in public statements whenever they carried out a major attack.[5] This has not endeared us to the Maoists, who accuse us of equating state and Maoist violence.

If the pressure of proving that I was not a 'Maoist' has dictated a particular public voice[6] that speaks 'as if' the state can be reformed by reason, conversely, the sharply drawn battle lines between the government and the victims has silenced my ability to critique activist campaigns with which I was not entirely comfortable. Speaking truth to the powerless or the 'counterpowers' is often much harder than shouting to the powerful, because it alienates us from people who are otherwise our allies (see also Gitlin, 2006: 152; Habib, 2008).

Institutional context

In India, being an activist academic is not unusual, just as within anthropology there is a long tradition of 'engaged anthropology' (see *Current Anthropology*, 1968; Huizer and Mannheim, 1979; Sanford and Angel-Ajani, 2006). Thus by both discipline and location, I am merely following tradition. In the first hearing of our litigation, Mukul Rohatgi, Chhattisgarh's lawyer, shouted (he always shouts), 'Why is a Delhi University professor taking up this case?' When our counsel Ashok Desai pointed out that the well-known public interest litigation (PIL) in the Agra Asylum case was also taken up by a Delhi University professor, the famous legal scholar Upendra Baxi, there was an understanding laugh from the bench.

The university and my colleagues have never hindered my activism or public writing, for which I am grateful. Through the horror of the period in which I counted the number of dead by night, the everyday routines of teaching and endless faculty meetings felt like a safe haven. However, the Delhi University Sociology Department is known for its institutional conservatism; there, activism has traditionally been looked down upon and high theory exalted (creating a class system among students, between the theorists and the empiricists, quite apart from all those that already exist). A case like this was treated

as strictly personal, not to be mentioned in any departmental setting, which is perhaps as it should be.

As Michael Burawoy has repeatedly pointed out (see Burawoy, 2005), public sociology requires more than individual will; it needs a professional setting in which its legitimacy can be recognized on the same terms as professional or policy sociology. How this is to be done in today's fraught political times is a difficult question. The Institute of Economic Growth in Delhi, where I worked for a few years and which was set up in the 'socialistic' 1950s, states in its memorandum of association that one of the objects of the institution is to 'conduct ad-hoc investigation at the request of governments, organizations of employers, workers and peasants or of other bodies or persons interested in promoting a study of economic questions' (IEG, 1952). Fifty years on, no one seems to remember this clause, and most research is done at the behest of the government, the World Bank or other funding organizations. While it would be legitimate to mention a Bank-funded report advocating large dams or structural adjustment as part of one's work in annual reports, bringing out a research pamphlet for an anti-dam peasant's group or a worker's union showing the problems of retrenchment would be dismissed as 'mere activism', showing how much academic respectability follows the pockets of the funder. But it is not clear that either type of contracted research should be a substitute for peer-reviewed academic research or professional sociology.

It is important to stop assuming, first, that the default political position of university scholars is left or liberal and, second, that the communities they engage with are always worthy and needy subaltern groups rather than right-wing, racist or xenophobic organizations. If public sociology involves using the prestige of professional sociology to make public interventions, this can work for people of all political persuasions. For instance, when the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was ruling at the centre between 1999 and 2004, they positioned their own ideologues in national educational bodies, such as the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), the University Grants Commission (UGC), the Indian Council for Social Science Research and the Indian Council for Historical Research. And even as I write this article, *The New York Times* has an article about the economist Glen Hubbard's deployment of his professional standing as Dean of Columbia Business School for the Republican campaign and for the mutual fund industry, which has paid him honoraria in the hundreds of thousands (Segal, 2012).

To summarize, academics have often been overtaken – if temporarily – by the demands of citizenship. Yet, how do we decide when 'emergency duty' is required that would involve giving up research and what a suitable response is, as a citizen and as a sociologist? Does external involvement limit our ability to give time to students and address issues of class and affirmative action inside the classroom? Unlike scientists, the issues that we engage in as activists are also the issues that we research, and vice versa. If speaking to a wider public inhibits our ability to write and think as sociologists, is it still worth attempting to be 'public' sociologists? And if we do not want to end up as simply schizophrenic sociologists, one foot in either camp, how do we fashion a new sociological self?

Funding

Notes

1. www.sociolog.com/us_links/
2. www.ugc.ac.in/oldpdf/modelcurriculum/socio.pdf
3. Internationally, this choice between sociology and anthropology, usually in favour of the latter, is made for us by the separation of the two disciplines in the institutional framework of the US and UK academies. But there is much more to it. Like westerners, when Indians studied themselves, they called the discipline by which they did it 'sociology'. In some ways the colonial distinction between anthropology and sociology is mirrored by internal colonialism with respect to certain subjects, with anthropologists tending to study 'indigenous peoples' or marginal groups and sociologists studying kinship, religion and caste in the rest of society; though as the work of MN Srinivas and others shows, it was often concerned with the transformation of these institutions by colonialism and 'modernization'. In the Delhi University Department of Sociology, what we teach has much in common with the subject matter of sociology departments elsewhere in the world (e.g. stratification, the sociology of work and leisure, industrial conflict, theories of organization), and also with that of anthropology departments (kinship, symbolism). Our readings are as likely to be drawn from anthropology journals as sociology ones. Because all the metropolitan departments of sociology – Delhi, Bombay, Hyderabad, Pune – tend to do ethnographic research rather than use quantitative methods, Indian sociology is usually identified with anthropology. However, this comes at the cost of writing out the survey research done by earlier generations as well as the kind of work done in many provincial universities. Of late, some of us have been feeling that were we to be more quantitative and comparative, i.e. more 'sociological' in our choice of subjects and methods, we would address ourselves better to contemporary issues like inequality, discrimination or globalization. It is not clear whether this is a challenge that might be classified as doing 'public sociology' or just a different way of doing our discipline (by whatever name it is called).
4. In 2011, right-wing groups succeeded in having AK Ramanujam's essay on the multiple Ramayanas removed from the history syllabus on the grounds that it hurt Hindu sentiments. In 2012, dalit objections to cartoons in high school political science textbooks – on the grounds that it demeaned Ambedkar and scheduled castes – resulted in those cartoons being removed.
5. I must emphasize that our response is not just strategic. At the same time, my co-petitioners and I have somewhat different views on the Maoists, and I do not speak for them when I argue that the Maoists have mass support.
6. This also became my private voice, since I was always speaking to the snoop I imagined at the other end of my tapped phone.

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Author biography

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Résumé

Cet article examine certains des dilemmes auxquels sont confrontés les sociologistes dans les pays défavorisés – comment choisir entre les demandes du moment public, l'université en tant que milieu de travail et de lutte et notre devoir envers nos 'disciplines'? Comment pouvons-nous parvenir dans la pratique à étendre les principes de démocratie et d'égalité qui nous sont enseignés et que nous enseignons en routine tout en saisissant toute occasion, en termes du temps et de l'espace requis, pour la réflexion et la réalisation de recherches qui sont prisées au point de sembler 'désintéressées'? Et comment ceux d'entre nous qui vivent et travaillent dans la périphérie académique internationale valident notre sociologie dans un monde dans lequel les normes sont souvent établies par des savants à l'étranger?

Mots-clés

Colonialisme académique, contre-insurrection, Maoïstes de l'Inde, sociologie publique, sociologie savante

Resumen

Este artículo aborda algunos de los dilemas a los que se enfrentan los sociólogos de los países en vías de desarrollo: ¿cómo elegir entre las demandas del momento público, la universidad como espacio de trabajo y de lucha, y el deber para con nuestras 'disciplinas'? ¿Cómo comprometernos en prolongar de forma práctica la democracia y la igualdad que aprendemos y enseñamos a diario, y aun así aprovechar el tiempo y el espacio necesarios para la reflexión y para producir investigación que se valora en la medida en que se ve que es 'desinteresada'? y ¿cómo validamos nuestra sociología los que vivimos y trabajamos en la periferia académica mundial en un mundo donde a menudo quienes establecen las normas son académicos del exterior?

Palabras clave

Colonialismo académico, contrainsurgencia, maoístas indios, sociología profesional, sociología pública

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Critical engagement in fields of power: Cycles of sociological activism in post-apartheid South Africa

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Abstract
In this article, the author argues that socially engaged sociology cannot be understood as a practice isolated in the quadrant of 'public sociology' as suggested by Michael Burawoy's organization of sociology into four distinct quadrants but that it is closely associated with critical policy sociology as well as critical professional sociology. The author uses a case study of hospital transformation in post-apartheid South Africa to demonstrate the way sociological activism cycles through public, policy and professional sociological fields and to explore the nature of each of these fields as contested fields of power characterized by dominant and subordinate sociologies. The author resurrects Eddie Webster's concept of *critical engagement* and expands its scope to suggest that the stance of the progressive – or radical – sociologist, who is engaged and committed to subaltern publics but retains a critical independence, is reproduced in the field of professional sociology in the form of what Burawoy calls critical sociology and in the field of policy sociology as critical policy sociology. The latter is a possibility that cannot be entertained in the Burawoy model, where policy sociology occupies a quadrant constituted by instrumentality and a lack of reflexivity. The practice of critical engagement, then, has to be understood as combining public sociology, policy sociology and critical sociology in a practice that may produce new knowledge that enables a more complex comprehension of domination across these fields, the better to challenge it.

Keywords
Critical engagement, hospital transformation, policy sociology, public sociology, sociological field

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Introduction: Public sociology in a period of post-transition reconstruction

Public sociology is a socially engaged practice. It entails engaging in fields of power characterized by domination and subordination, and it requires that the public sociologist be a partisan for the dominated (Burawoy, 2007: 55). But it requires that the public sociologist do this in a particular way: not just as an activist but also as sociologist, bringing critical sociological knowledge to bear.

As a social practice, public sociology is shaped by its social and political context. What does socially engaged sociology mean in South Africa, in a time of transition from apartheid to democracy? I argue in this article that for us it necessarily means coming to grips with problems of the transformation of society, grappling with the legacy of apartheid and unequal social structures and rebuilding institutions and strengthening democracy. In such a time, public sociology necessarily has to go beyond the stance of critique and engage with the field of policy formation and intervention if it wishes to have any impact on society.

In the article, I draw from my experience over a period of 10 years working on a project to transform the functioning of a public hospital in South Africa. I start my account using Burawoy's model for thinking about the field of sociology by dividing it into four quadrants – professional sociology, critical sociology, policy sociology and public sociology (Burawoy, 2004, 2007). I show how our mode of work entailed a movement over time from public sociology to policy sociology to critical sociology and back to policy and public sociology again. This cycle between different kinds of sociology seems to be central to the practice of a socially engaged sociology in a society such as ours, which is undergoing complex and fractious processes of change and contestation in many sites at the same time.

This experience suggests that conceiving of socially engaged sociology as a practice isolated in the quadrant of 'public sociology' fails to capture the complex relation between the social or political arena on the one hand and engaged sociology on the other, as well as the complex relations between the different modes of sociological practice in the different quadrants. Indeed, my case study demonstrates that each of these quadrants is a contested terrain characterized by dominant sociologies and subordinate sociologies. I draw on the concept of 'critical engagement,' which was elaborated by Eddie Webster[1] (1995) as a way of thinking about the tensions in socially engaged sociology, which he practiced over many years under apartheid and after. Such a conception, I suggest, better enables us to think about critical sociology as a practice across several different fields of power, including the field of sociology itself, the field of policy formation and the public sphere.

This notion of critical engagement across several sites, including the different modes of sociological practice, allows us also to think about the relationship between social engagement and theoretical innovation. Keim (2011) makes use of the South African case to argue that socially engaged knowledge-formation creates the possibility for the development of southern sociological perspectives – which she terms 'counterhegemonic sociology' – and which may make discipline-shaping interventions on the international sociological terrain. Thus, public sociology should be thought of not merely as a kind of 'outreach' through which sociological wisdom is made accessible to the public

but also as a practice of knowledge formation that may have far-reaching implications for the discipline of sociology itself.

Transition and transformation

The democratic breakthrough in the period from 1990 to 1994 posed the task of overcoming the legacies of apartheid – encompassing not only racial segregation and racial discrimination but also spatial injustice and great inequality and poverty – in order to build a democratic society. The health sector was among many that required deep restructuring. The public health sector was fragmented into several racially segregated government departments, each with its own governance structures and budgets, and there was also a growing gap between public and private healthcare, contributing to the deep disparities in the services available to blacks and whites, rural and urban dwellers, those on private medical aid schemes and those who had to make use of public healthcare provision. For example, in 1986, there were 8.2 hospital beds per thousand white people and 4.2 beds per thousand black people (Heunis, 2004: 465). By 2000, the difference in infant mortality rates was still 49 per 100,000 for blacks, versus 11 per 100,000 for whites (Dudley, 2006).

In the context of the transition, public hospitals became increasingly stressed institutions. The redirection of resources to primary healthcare and to the poorer provinces, within a conservative fiscal framework, meant that many hospitals were subjected to diminishing budgets. The pressures for transformation – deracializing access to the health system, redistributing resources, integrating the various health departments including under-resourced and dysfunctional departments for blacks, and deracializing management structures – led to the loss of technical skills, the weakening of management systems and the breakdown of managerial authority (Schneider et al., 2007; Von Holdt and Murphy, 2007).

Baragwanath hospital, located in Soweto, had always been a showcase hospital which the apartheid regime tried to use to demonstrate the quality of health services provided for blacks, with the result that high-tech academic medicine coexisted with overcrowding and a lack of resources (Von Holdt and Maseramule, 2005). With 2800 beds, Baragwanath epitomized a mass production version of hospital services, making it the biggest hospital in the southern hemisphere and almost impossible to manage in a coherent fashion. The new democratic government renamed it the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital, in honor of the leading figure in the South African Communist Party (SACP) and African National Congress (ANC) who was assassinated by right-wing dissidents during the transitional period.

In 2000, the National Health, Education and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU) approached the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) research institute, NALEDI, where I was working at the time. The union asked us to assist in the transformation of the hospital into a 'people's hospital,' by which they meant improving the quality of clinical and healthcare services for the community, at the same time as improving the quality of working life for union members.

Thus began a 10-year project to transform the functioning of Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital. The project started with intensive research and discussions with staff and

managers across different units, and it ended with the implementation of a project to transform the management structures and practices of the surgical division, consisting of some 750 beds.

Phase 1: Public sociology: research and mobilization

My colleagues and I started investigating conditions in the hospital through a series of discussions with shop stewards from NEHAWU and the other trade unions, as well as with the CEO. We then concentrated our research on a series of interviews and focus group discussions with workers and staff, who are at the heart of providing clinical care to patients, running wards and providing services such as laundry and kitchens that enable wards to function. Thus, we listened at length to ward cleaners and ward clerks, to nursing assistants and nursing sisters, to doctors and matrons, to drivers and kitchen workers and laundry workers, to physiotherapists and pharmacy assistants and professors. While we interviewed managers as well, the emphasis was on developing an analysis of hospital functioning from below.

According to the doctors and nurses we interviewed, the hospital was experiencing poor clinical outcomes and higher levels of morbidity and mortality than ought to be the case. We found (Von Holdt, 2010: 9–10) that:

> Over-centralization, fragmentation into silo structures, low management capacity and understaffing were the primary causes of institutional stress and poor health care outcomes. … These issues constitute a systemic dysfunctionality that affects all aspects of hospital functioning. Poor maintenance, failure to repair or fix equipment, lack of linen, dirty linen, procurement failures, the breakdown of lifts, dirty wards, budget overruns, poor labour relations, unfilled posts, inability to budget or control costs, failure to supply drugs or medical sundries, ill discipline, lost records – there is no end to the list of frustrations and problems that staff experience.

This research, which took place in several different phases over a period of about three years, was synthesized into an analysis of the problems in the institution and their causes, and a series of proposals for altering the structures and management practices of the institution. The problem analysis and proposals were presented back to union shop stewards, as well as the wider range of constituencies in the hospital, and finally synthesized into a hospital transformation plan on which agreement was reached at a hospital-wide, two-day strategic forum, in which all stakeholder groups and levels of staff were represented.

The process was unique for the institution, in the sense that it was a bottom-up analysis of the experiences and suggestions of the rank and file workers, both menial and professional, who experienced the dysfunctionality and frustrations of the work environment – and the way this compromised patient care and recovery – every day. In almost every interview we heard expressions of anger, outrage, pain and hopelessness about the way clinical processes and patient care were undermined by the deep dysfunctionality of the institution and the seemingly uncaring attitudes of senior managers and officials in the Department of Health.

The research process gave voice to those who were disempowered and rendered voiceless by the system of management in the hospital and the health system more broadly, and it transformed their anger into a plan for change. It is important to note here that the voiceless consisted not only of less-skilled workers at the bottom of the medical hierarchy but also of the highly skilled professional nurses and clinicians, including powerful professors. Apartheid had elaborated a management structure – particularly in black hospitals – which ensured that professionals were subordinated to the managers and administrators and thus to the political requirements of maintaining apartheid. Post-apartheid, the displacement of professionals from managerial decision-making continued with the formation of a new administrative stratum.

This process corresponds to Burawoy's concept of organic public sociology as a process of giving voice to and empowering those who are dominated and disempowered by structures of power and in this sense contributing to the *formation of a public*. Of course, both the trade unions in the hospital and the professionals already had voices and sources of power in the institution prior to our arrival, but they were confined to immediate technical or collective bargaining issues and fragmented into different interests. What sociological analysis brought to this process were *research skills* and the ability to synthesize a range of views into a *systematic analysis* of the problem. Proposals for change could be developed from this analysis and provide the basis for a further mobilization of the newly constituted public, in order to alter the field of power in which they were embedded.

The proposals were presented to officials at the Department of Health, which promised to provide the necessary resources to implement the plan, promises which were repeatedly broken. In 2005, when a new MEC for Health (effectively, a provincial minister of health) was appointed in Gauteng province, and the only result was further inaction, unions and clinicians planned a public demonstration and mobilized constituencies in the hospital and beyond. This culminated in a big march bringing together professors and cleaners, nurses and clerks, shop stewards and matrons, community organizations and local churches, through Soweto to the hospital, where a petition was handed over to the MEC. The result was that the provincial government allocated 5 million rand (US$500,000) towards the transformation project at the hospital.

Throughout this process, sociology played a role in constituting a public with a strong base among those who worked in the hospital and allied to publics in the community with a stake in the hospital. Sociology also helped that public mobilize around *an alternative plan* for efficiency and transformation in the hospital. This plan drew on the problems experienced from below – by those who actually provided healthcare and the support services it requires – as well as on consultations with experienced health system managers with an interest in transformation.

Although this most closely resembles what Burawoy calls 'organic' public sociology – that is, a sociological practice closely involved with grassroots constituencies (Burawoy, 2007: 28) – from its inception it entailed a strong *policy sociology* dimension, in that it was concerned with producing an alternative plan for transformation.

The practice of public sociology is not exclusively defined by partisanship in the contestation between subordinated social groups and dominant authorities. Of course, the public arena is shaped by such contestation, but also by tensions and contestations between subordinated groups with different interests and complex relations. For

example, relations between nurses and cleaners or nurses and clinicians, as well as between the various unions representing different occupational categories, involved contestations over the meaning of work, discipline and authority, which had to be mediated through the analytical and interlocutory practices of public sociology if a coherent transformation plan with broad support was to be developed.

More important for the purposes of this article, however, is the tension between the position of the public sociologist and that of the subordinated publics with whom he or she engages. For example, the analysis that emerged out of our research made it clear that one of the reasons the hospital was unable to function effectively was that managers had not been delegated sufficient authority to manage its operations. We therefore proposed greater power for the hospital CEOs. NEHAWU, the biggest and most active of the unions we were working with, opposed this proposal. Practically, much of their power derived from both political and administrative bargaining at central level, and they were anxious about the devolution of power to the hospital – particularly because their shop stewards were frequently involved in intractable conflict with managers at different hospitals. There was tension between concerns about immediate industrial relations and a longer-term transformative vision. After vigorous debate, over time, the union came to adopt our proposal.

A similar problem was presented by the pervasive breakdown of authority and discipline in the hospital. Workers and shop stewards had taken advantage of this lack of structure to challenge any attempt to improve discipline. Our research indicated that most workers resented the ill-disciplined minority, thought it was unfair that they were never punished, and believed that the quality of healthcare could not be improved under such conditions. As sociologists, we had to stand by our analysis of the problem of discipline and conduct complex discussions, through which it was agreed that discipline had to be restored but also that good performance should be recognized and that management should be responsive to workers' grievances.

Webster's concept of *critical engagement* was developed precisely to understand such tensions. Unlike a trade union activist, the sociologist remains independent, refusing to subordinate critical analysis to the political demands of organic publics. This is not to say that tension and compromise can be avoided – or that the authority of the sociologist and their knowledge is uncontested. The public sociologist has to be prepared to listen to, learn from and be criticized by subaltern publics. At times, the public sociologist is forced to recognize the limits and biases of his or her knowledge and accept that just as research involves appropriating the practices and knowledges of research subjects, so the sociologist may be appropriated by publics in unanticipated ways.[2] The public sociologist, like the activist, is working with the 'art of the possible,' in a public terrain shaped by pre-existing discourses and symbolic structures. Thus, she or he may feel compelled to compromise in a way that the professional sociologist seldom does.[3]

Phase 2: From public sociology to policy sociology

The COSATU policy institute, NALEDI, put in a bid and won the contract to implement the transformation plan. We were now in a position to hire professionals in the fields of hospital management, information systems, nursing management and human resources,

who could begin the process of implementation. At this point, in terms of Burawoy's model, policy sociology became our team's dominant practice: we were paid consultants of the government, hired to transform the functioning of the hospital.

However, this would be a simplistic way of understanding the process that took place over the next three years. We were paid consultants, it is true, but we were also implementing a plan that had been developed through a process of public sociology research and mobilization, and that was supported by a mass constituency. Moreover, while the plan was supported by certain officials, including the CEO of the hospital and others in the provincial office of the government, the majority of government officials as well as a layer of senior managers in the hospital were opposed to the empowerment of the CEO, the clinicians, the nurses and the unions that the plan entailed.

In the face of this resistance from powerful forces within both the hospital and the central offices of the health department, the plan could only be implemented because it had strong support from the trade unions and from clinicians in the surgical division where it was first to be rolled out. The chain of accountability to government officials, through which the plan could have been diluted or neutralized, was weakened by the fact that it was rooted in the base of the trade unions. The power of the trade unions to play this role was linked not only to their organization in the workplace but also to their political alliance with the ANC, through which they had direct access to the MEC (provincial minister of health).

To the extent that this phase of the project involved a contract with the government and the employment of professional experts to implement the plan, it was a form of *policy sociology*. But to the extent that it was closely related to the formation and empowerment of a public that lacked voice in the system, and involved implementing the plan developed with that public, it was a *continuation of public sociology on a new front*. At the same time, the contestation over the content of the plan – and the resistance from department officials as well as from senior managers in the hospital – demonstrated that the terrain of policy sociology is itself a contested one, characterized by relations of domination and subordination.

Here, Burawoy's model seems to lose its coherence. According to his four-quadrant schema, the policy sociologist is paid by a client to investigate a problem defined by the client. Therefore, such a sociological practice lacks reflexivity; in other words, it fails to develop a critique of the problem and the discourse that defines it. A further implicit assumption is that the client is in a position of power and that such a research program necessarily furthers the project of domination.

However, in reality, there is policy and there is policy; the domain of policy-making and policy research is itself a contested one. A critical policy sociology – starting from a position of critiquing the dominant policy discourses and allied to organizations of subordinated publics – is indeed possible. It should be added here that in SWOP's experience, certain clients – and these may include government or trade unions – do require that the policy sociology they commission be relatively independent. It may therefore present them with unpleasant truths that redefine the problems they want investigated.

The quadrant of policy sociology turns out not to be homogeneous but presents, instead, a field of power in which policy is contested. In our case, as an example, the policy field was contested from two directions: first, there was a prevailing view in the

government, linked to a global discourse, that clinicians make bad managers and that administrators should manage the provision of clinical services, while the role of clinicians remained restricted to direct patient care. Second, there was the view put forward forcefully by the proponents of marketization, that private provision of healthcare is more efficient and effective than public provision and that rather than trying to fix the hospital within a public health paradigm, it should be privatized.

In Burawoy's scheme, policy sociology is distinguished from public sociology by its lack of reflexivity. If critical policy sociology can itself be reflexive, then either Burawoy's vertical axis (reflexivity) is no longer coherent – with fundamental implications for his analysis of the field of sociology – or critical policy sociology is not in fact a form of policy sociology but instead a form of public sociology, by virtue of its reflexivity. Intuitively, developing and implementing the concrete and practical details of hospital transformation is a form of policy work. However, if it is reflexive and critical in relation to dominant powers, then it may be appropriately classified as public sociology. This dilemma of classification is an important one. Concrete research into the nuances of public and policy sociology might help to clarify distinctions and what is at stake in making them.

Let me return to our intervention. Our critique of the public hospital's functioning had to counter both this market vision of health services and the bureaucrats' policy perspective that clinicians not only made poor managers but were also a troublesome category of employees because of their self-confidence and independence – and, generally, whiteness.[4] In our policy proposals we argued for clinician-led services and demonstrated their effectiveness, yet we have still not been able to win this struggle within the public health system, as will become clear.

Over a period of two years, with the support of the CEO, trade unions, staff and clinical leadership, the transformation plan was implemented in the surgical division. The plan was based on the principles of decentralization of authority and accountability to and within the hospital, the integration of management functions under clinical leadership, adequate resourcing and training of management, consultations with staff and unions, and the training and upgrading of workers.

This transformation had a remarkable impact, improving clinical organization, functioning, administrative efficiency, staff morale, teamwork and patient care (Doherty, 2011; Von Holdt et al., 2010). However, there was considerable indifference and resistance from senior administrators in the hospital and officials in the Department of Health.

This phase of the project ended in 2009, when the forces opposed to the plan were able to remove the CEO and, over a period of about a year, paralyze and dismantle all of the changes that had been introduced in the surgical division. One of the reasons was that the unions and some of the key constituencies in the hospital had become exhausted by the constant process of bureaucratic attrition through which the project was eroded and blocked. In addition, the pressures and detailed work of implementing the plan in the surgical division meant that insufficient attention was paid to sustaining the mobilization and active involvement of these constituencies and organizations.

This reveals the ways that the terrain of policy sociology itself, with its emphasis on technical expertise and detailed project management, may weaken some of the dynamics that are integral to a transformational project on the terrain of organic public sociology,

where the connection to grassroots constituencies is the central feature. However, I want to stress that in the complex processes of transformation in the surgical division, constant attention was paid to empowering health workers – such as nurses, clerks and cleaners – to take charge of their domains and tasks and to innovate in order to improve the quality of healthcare.

Phase 3: From the terrain of public to professional/critical sociology

By the time the project was dismantled, I had already moved from NALEDI to the University. The project had been exhausting, largely because of the constant war of attrition between us and the officials who opposed it, with the final demoralization coming when the CEO was removed and it became clear that the project would be dismantled. This move signified a shift from the domain of public to the domain of professional sociology.

Being in the University – and somewhat detached from the exigencies of public and policy sociology – gave me the space to reflect critically on the experience and begin attempting to understand it sociologically. This could be described as a process of *critical sociology*, as the 'normal' categories of analysis that we use in everyday life and that are current in much public and policy sociology seemed unable to provide a path into the problem – a path of explanation for why, despite its successes, the project had failed. I refer here to categories such as the state, bureaucracy, neoliberalism and even healthcare.

The result of this reflection was a paper in which I identified informal rationales that clash with the formal rationales of the state bureaucracy and serve to displace or subvert the ostensible purposes of the health department and its institutions, namely, providing healthcare to the public (Von Holdt, 2010). In practice, healthcare was a secondary goal of these state institutions; the primary dynamic was the formation of a black elite within and alongside the state. This entailed rapid upward mobility, a profound ambivalence towards the racially contested notion of expertise, fragile authority and repeated attempts to 'save face;' through these informal dynamics, the more formal structures and processes of the state became increasingly dislocated from the ostensible purposes of state institutions, and those tasked with actually providing health services – particularly nurses and doctors – became increasingly marginalized.

This process of critical sociological reflection on the data generated through practices of public and policy sociology, provided the basis for conceptual breakthroughs in the field of professional sociology and a rethinking of its dominant categories, forged in the historical crucible of western modernity. Such reflection may, with further intellectual endeavors, ultimately constitute a 'counterhegemonic sociology,' forged in Southern experience, with the potential to reshape disciplinary boundaries. Such a sociological project, however, demands the investment of considerable time and intellectual focus.

It so happened that the paper I produced through critical sociological practices circulated among progressive intellectual circles, which overlapped with intellectual circles within the state. The result was a call from the presidency to coordinate a large-scale research project into such dynamics across a range of different state institutions.

Phase 4: Back to 'policy' sociology

Again, on the face of it, this was a return to the quadrant in Burawoy's box labeled policy sociology, for a paying and powerful client. However, the inspiration for this policy research was a set of insights that had been generated by organic public sociology, which brought the voices and experiences of subordinated publics to the surface. Despite the dismantling of the project, its recycling in the field of critical sociology and its circulation in policy circles can be seen as the outcome of an activist public sociology project that came to influence perspectives high up in the state – in the Presidency – and led to a renewed bout of research.

In this new round of research, involving a team of some six consultants and policy analysts, we were guided by the questions I posed in my sociological analysis and were regarded as critically independent researchers who could provide senior state officials with fresh insights into the problems of institutional functioning in the state. As a further result of this work, I was appointed to the National Planning Commission, located in the Presidency. I am at the same time a member of the NEHAWU health policy committee, which is also a policy structure but is located in one of the organizational bases through which an alternative public asserts its right to contribute to health policy debates in South Africa. For example, this union has been a critical force in putting National Health Insurance (NHI) on the agenda of the ANC and the state. If this is policy sociology, it is closely related to public sociology in its assertion of a grassroots perspective on institutional transformation and health delivery to the public. These roles are performed at the same time as I direct an academic institute in the University.

Public sociology and critical engagement

This case study describes a process through which a project to transform public health institutions moved through a cycle of organic public sociology, policy sociology, critical sociology in the professional field and back to policy/public sociology. There is both a simultaneity and a sequence to this process of circulation backwards and forwards through the four quadrants in Burawoy's model.

While each quadrant imposed its own discourse and its own dynamics on sociological practice, at the same time, the sociological practice in each quadrant was linked to the practices in the other quadrants. It is worth paying some attention to each of these dimensions of sociological practice: the *internal dynamics of each quadrant* of sociology on the one hand, and, on the other, the relations between *interlinked practice across different quadrants*.

To start with the first dimension – the internal dynamics of each quadrant – analysis of the different phases revealed that each quadrant presents a field of power with both dominant and subordinated sociological practices and ongoing contestation over the validity, truth or authority of competing accounts of social reality. As argued above, the field of public sociology is necessarily a contested one because of its intersection with the public domain, itself a site of symbolic struggle over the meaning, hierarchies and directions of the social world. Likewise, the field of policy sociology intersects with the public domain and dominant policy discourses and may be challenged or subverted by

critical policy sociology linked to subaltern publics. The client–sociologist relationship that is held to define this field does not necessarily subordinate the sociologist to pragmatic ends. Indeed, the client itself may be a subaltern organization or an organization such as an NGO with a stake in subaltern worldviews.

Professional sociology, too, is a contested field, with authoritative versions of sanctified knowledge challenged by counter-narratives emanating from the practices of critical sociology. Sociologists working in countries of the Global South may experience professional sociology as the dominant sociological categories and paradigms of western social science, and a critical sociology may be founded on critiques of this dominant sociology and attempts to constitute alternative perspectives.

I now turn to the second dimension of the practice of sociological activism – *the relationship between practices in different quadrants*. As I commented above, over time, our work on public hospital transformation moved between different quadrants of the sociological field – from public, to policy, to critical and professional sociology. What I want to stress, though, is that these varied sociological practices in different sociological fields *constituted different facets of the same overall project* – a project to understand and transform state institutions in a democratizing society – in such a way that it would empower those who work there and improve public services.

Thus, the move from public sociology to policy sociology did not constitute an abandonment of the project of implementing the transformation plan developed by workers and staff. Rather, it was an essential moment in the implementation of that plan. Indeed, the formation of the plan was simultaneously a public and policy project. Likewise, the move to the field of professional sociology in the University provided a space for critical reflection on the nature of the post-apartheid state, followed by a return to policy and public sociology informed by the insights of critical sociology. Thus, there was a single vision and an interlinked set of practices directed towards the transformation of the state – but located at different times and phases, in different sociological fields.

Public sociology – the engagement with nurses, cleaners, clerks and doctors – provided the inspiration and foundation for the project, but all the other sociologies were necessary to it as well. A public sociology that remained at the level of critique would have been unable to provide a path forward for union members and other staff. In South Africa's context of post-apartheid reconstruction, public sociology has necessarily to go beyond critique and provide policy proposals around which subaltern publics can mobilize.

On the other hand, the impasse that resulted from the resistance and inertia of the bureaucracy presented an obscure puzzle in the fields of public and policy sociology. It was only the move into the University – and the sustained reflection and writing that the field of professional sociology provides – that allowed a new analysis to emerge. Thus, public sociology was dependent on the analytical insights provided by professional sociology.

However, the critique of the state was a moment not only of professional sociology, but also of critical sociology. That is, it provided the basis for a critique of conventional sociological understandings of the state, with at least the potential for a larger critique of the sociology of modernity from a postcolonial perspective. Thus, not only does public sociology depend on critical sociology, but critical sociology also depends on public sociology.

It becomes clear, then, that a common feature of the different sociological practices across the quadrants of sociology is the critique of the dominant discourses and categories in that field. Each of the four quadrants of sociology is itself *a field of power*, characterized by domination and contestation. In the public sociology field, there is a critique of the power and practices of the government bureaucracy and, to a lesser extent, of the union leadership. In the policy field, there is a critique of dominant policy discourses. In the field of professional sociology, there is a critique of the dominant strands of sociology and the formation of critical sociology. In all four quadrants, the stance of critique is founded on the perspectives of subaltern publics – those who are not served by the dominant structures of power and knowledge but instead are rendered voiceless by them.

This is where Eddie Webster's concept of *critical engagement* can expand its scope. Originally used to think about the tensions integral to a socially engaged practice, it may be elaborated to draw connections between critical sociological practices across the four quadrants. Through the concept of critical engagement, Webster (1995) stressed that the sociologist retains her or his critical independence in the public field – working with the trade unions but never subordinated to them, and differing with them when necessary:

> Pressure exists on scholars to make a clear declaration that their research and teaching should be constructed as support for, and on behalf of, particular organizations. To prevent this subordination of intellectual work to the immediate interests of these organizations, I prefer the stance of critical engagement. Squaring the circle is never easy, as it involves a difficult combination of commitment to the goals of these movements while being faithful to evidence, data and your own judgment and conscience. (Webster, 1995: 18)

It seems to me that this stance, which implies reflexivity, is the one adopted by the sociologist committed to subaltern publics in his or her engagement in all sociological fields – public, policy, critical and professional.

This account of an attempt to transform a state institution also suggests a blurring of two distinctions in Burawoy's model: that between professional and critical sociology and that between policy and public sociology. Professional and critical sociology take place on very similar terrain, marked by the protocols of social scientific practices such as peer review, and they are entwined with each other in the sense that the latter is a critical response to the former. Likewise, policy and public sociology both engage with the public terrain, and practitioners of either may align themselves with dominant or subaltern publics or projects. As I argue above, the two were entangled with each other from the inception of the hospital transformation project, with one being dominant in the first phase and the other becoming dominant in the second phase. Public sociology without policy implications is difficult to imagine.

It may be more useful to think about the relations between each of these two binaries as a continuum in a single field rather than sharply distinguished fields. Thus the policy/public sociology field would range between the critically independent sociologist aligned with subaltern publics at one pole and the subordinated commercially motivated sociologist aligned with dominant powers at the other pole. The professional sociological field would range from the dominant, sanctified sociology at the one pole to the critical

counter-sociology at the other. It may even be argued that the position of the dominant, sanctified sociology in the professional sociological field tends to be aligned with the domination of existing corporate and political powers in the public terrain and thus with the position of the subordinated and commercially motivated sociologist in the public/policy field.

Finally, there is something further to be said about the relationships between the different sociologies in the context of the Global South. It can be argued, as Keim does, that this critical engagement in the public sphere as well as in the policy field – the grappling with complex and intractable problems of domination, subordination and social change – produces *new knowledge*. Engagement with the practice of social change reorients the sociologist towards his or her own social reality, particularly subaltern experience, and away from the narratives and categories of the dominant sociology – which is to say, the sociology that is produced and organized in the West. In practice, such engagement becomes a site of conceptual innovation, a place where we have to think afresh about our theories and our understandings. Out of this may emerge a reconstructed sociology, what Keim calls a 'counterhegemonic sociology,' which challenges or re-fashions the dominant sociology. But it can only do this with a strong base in the field of critical sociology in the university, where the space and time and resources for such a project can be mobilized.

I want to argue, then, that the idea of 'public sociology' as an independent practice in its own field does not provide a sufficient interpretive framework for understanding the active engagement of sociologists in South Africa and perhaps other countries of the Global South. Critical engagement has to be understood as combining public sociology, policy sociology and critical sociology in a practice that may produce new knowledge, enabling a more complex comprehension of domination across these fields, the better to challenge it.

Funding

Notes

1. Eddie Webster has been my colleague for many years and was the founding director of the Institute I now direct.
2. An example of this is afforded by my earlier research on unionization in a steel factory. Shop stewards smuggled me into a meeting in the heart of the steelworks, against the injunctions of the management, at which point it became uncomfortably clear that my presence was a way for shop stewards to demonstrate their rejection of the management's authority. The result was an angry letter from the management to the University, a nasty incident for my supervisor to deal with.
3. Although, as Burawoy points out, professional sociologists make other compromises.
4. In post-apartheid South Africa, state institutions are key sites for redressing the inequities of apartheid, where blacks were excluded from the ranks of senior professionals and managers. The result is a racially charged environment, where the persistent preponderance of experienced whites in senior professional positions can exacerbate tensions.

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Author biography

Karl von Holdt is Associate Professor and the Director of the Society Work and Development Institute, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, where he has been a senior researcher since 2007. Prior to that he was at the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)-linked policy institute, NALEDI, served as coordinator of COSATU's September Commission on the Future of Trade Unions (1996–1997), and before that was editor of the *South African Labour Bulletin*. He has published *Transition from Below: Forging Trade Unionism and Workplace Change in South Africa* (2003); *Beyond the Apartheid Workplace: Studies in Transition* (2005), co-edited with Eddie Webster; and co-authored with Michael Burawoy, *Conversations with Bourdieu: The Johannesburg Moment* (2012). His current research interests include the functioning of state institutions, collective violence and associational life, violent democracy, citizenship and civil society. He serves on the National Planning Commission of South Africa.

Résumé

Dans cet article, j'explique pourquoi la sociologie socialement engagée ne peut pas représenter une pratique isolée dans celui des quatre quadrants distincts proposés par Michael Burawoy pour organiser la sociologie qui correspond à la 'sociologie publique', mais qu'elle est étroitement associée aux formes appliquée et savante de la sociologie critique. J'utilise une étude du cas de la transformation d'un hôpital de l'Afrique du Sud postapartheid pour démontrer que l'activisme sociologique est cyclique dans les champs de la sociologie publique, appliquée et savante et pour explorer la nature de chacun en tant que champs de pouvoir contestés caractérisés par des sociologies dominantes et subordonnées. Je reprends le concept d'*engagement critique* d'Eddie Webster et j'étends sa portée en suggérant que la position du sociologue progressiste – ou radical – qui a des engagements et des responsabilités envers des publics subalternes mais conserve une indépendance critique est reproduite, dans les champs de la sociologie savante et de la sociologie appliquée, sous les formes que Burawoy appelle sociologie critique et sociologie critique appliquée, respectivement. C'est une possibilité qui ne peut pas être envisagée dans le modèle de Burawoy, dans lequel la sociologie savante occupe un quadrant constitué par une instrumentalité et une absence de réflexivité. Il faut donc comprendre la pratique de l'engagement critique comme l'utilisation d'une combinaison de sociologie publique, de sociologie appliquée et de sociologie critique d'une manière susceptible d'élargir les connaissances. Ceci offre une compréhension plus complexe de la domination au sein de ces champs et de meilleures possibilités de la contester.

Mots-clés

Champ sociologique, engagement critique, sociologie appliquée, sociologie publique, transformation d'un hôpital

Resumen

En este artículo, argumento que la sociología comprometida con lo social no puede entenderse como una práctica aislada en el cuadrante de la 'sociología pública', como lo sugirió Michael Burawoy en su organización de la sociología en cuatro cuadrantes distintos, sino que está estrechamente asociada con una sociología política crítica y una sociología profesional crítica. Utilizo un caso de estudio sobre la transformación de un hospital en la Sudáfrica post-apartheid para demostrar la manera en que el activismo sociológico se desarrolla cíclicamente a través de los campos sociológicos público, político y profesional, y para explorar la naturaleza de cada uno de estos campos como campos contestatarios de poder caracterizados por sociologías dominantes y subordinadas. Resucito el concepto de Eddie Webster del *compromiso crítico* y amplió su alcance para sugerir que la postura del sociólogo progresista, o radical, involucrado y comprometido con los públicos subalternos, pero que conserva una independencia crítica, se reproduce en el campo de la sociología profesional en la forma de lo que Burawoy llama sociología crítica y en el campo de la sociología política como sociología política crítica. Esta última es una posibilidad que no se puede contemplar en el modelo de Burawoy, donde la sociología política ocupa un cuadrante constituido por la funcionalidad y la falta de reflexividad. La práctica del compromiso crítico debe

entenderse entonces como la combinación de la sociología pública, la política y la crítica en una práctica que puede producir conocimiento nuevo que permita una comprensión más compleja de la dominación a través de esos campos, lo mejor para desafiarla.

Palabras clave

Campo sociológico, compromiso crítico, sociología política, sociología pública, transformación de hospital

Complex entanglements: Moving from policy to public sociology in the Arab world

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Abstract
In this article, the author surveys his own career to illustrate some of the dilemmas of research, especially when it assumes a critical and public face. He shows how his work on Palestinian refugees, their socioeconomic rights, their right of return and their camps evolved toward complex forms of traditional and organic public sociology. The article concludes with reflections on one of the major dilemmas researchers face: conducting public research without losing its critical edge, even toward the deprived groups it seeks to protect. The moral of the story: good scientists are not always popular.

In the Arab world, the profile of the intellectual is well known: typically, he or she is a theorist who talks about tradition, modernity, authoritarianism, democracy, identity, Arab unity, globalization and so on but avoids stepping into society to conduct empirical research. Even social scientists are often guilty of pontificating like philosophers, raising questions rather than offering concrete answers (Hanafi, 2012).

It is even rarer to hear professional social researchers speak in the public sphere.[1] This is due not only to the absence of their products in the mass media or newspapers but also to the difficulty of conducting fieldwork in the Arab world, given the authoritarian regimes and the lack of research capacity. Social research agendas in the Arab region – the choice

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of topics and sometimes the methodology – are often driven by donor interests or by the urgency of immediate social problems. There are important exceptions to this rule, and it is to some of them that I have turned for guidance and inspiration. In this article, I survey my own research trajectory to illustrate some of the dilemmas researchers face while doing research, especially when it assumes a critical and public face.

Damascus, Cairo and Ramallah: Crawling toward public sociology

In 1994, I finished my PhD in France. It examined engineers as a socioprofessional group in Syria and Egypt. My first inclination was to extend my investigations to other middle-class occupations in these same countries, but as a Palestinian and former president of the General Union of Palestinian Students in France, I became involved in many debates concerning the emerging peace process, known as the Madrid Process. As prospects for a new Palestinian entity improved, I decided to study the contribution of the Palestinian diaspora to the construction of this entity.

Clearly, my choice of topic was related to how I saw my engagement in the public sphere. I discussed the project with Philippe Fargues, the director of the French Centre d'études et de documentation économique juridique et sociale in Cairo (CEDEJ). Together we wrote a research proposal dealing with two features of the diaspora: its demography and its economy. It is worth noting that the European Union was only interested in the economic aspect of this research, while the French Foreign Ministry was attracted by the demographic question. The upshot was two fascinating projects. Since I was most interested in the economy, I dealt with this aspect, publishing two academic books and many articles.

At that time, I was not aware of the importance of writing for a large public. At most, I talked to journalists from time to time. I was afraid to give out information that was not grounded in scientific research. I had little experience in presenting my research, but I quickly learned to draw policy implications from my findings. I was approached by a Palestinian deputy minister in the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation in Ramallah, who had read my 1997 book, *The Role of Business People in the Diaspora in the Construction of the Palestinian Entity*. He wanted me to help him establish a Directorate of Expatriate Affairs in his Ministry. I found myself in a dilemma: should I accept a grant from the Ford Foundation to pursue my research or should I suspend my career as a researcher in order to work as a policy advisor, applying the knowledge I had accumulated. I opted for the latter, at that time believing that the Oslo Peace Process would result in the termination of the occupation. This project lasted one year. The Directorate was successfully established, and two conferences were organized, each bringing roughly 150 Palestinian business people from all over the world to the Palestinian territories.

However, I found the relationship between the domineering prince and the dependent researcher to be tumultuous, so I returned to CEDEJ for three more years to pursue research on two fronts: to continue my analysis of the question of Palestinian refugees in the diaspora and to investigate the relationships among donors, international organizations and local NGOs in the Palestinian territories. Again, I was motivated by a deep

desire to conduct research that would be useful for the emerging Palestinian entity. Much to my chagrin, I discovered that donors were mainly interested in funding NGOs and were reluctant to support unions and political parties. Moreover, the donors were keen on NGO style research centers outside and disconnected from universities. Here I found myself with another dilemma: conducting research funded by NGOs, through a research center that not only has NGO status but is one of the leading organizations in the Palestinian NGO Network (PNGOs).

The result of my research was a manuscript (written with Linda Tabar) that criticized both the donor community and local NGOs. It was sent to two reviewers: one an academic and one an NGO leader from PNGOs. The former was very positive, but the latter was not. The director of the research center was also unhappy since he feared that my research might reinforce 'the general climate of criticism of NGOs waged by the Palestinian National Authority.' The manuscript was sent out again to three new reviewers. All reports recommended publication, and it became my first real encounter with public sociology. I was invited to many places to present our research. I learned how to be careful with my lectures, tailoring them to audiences with a balance of criticism and provocation. I found myself in the middle of a milieu where small NGOs appreciated my research while the bigger ones were unhappy with my results. I learned how to interpret the audience's smiles and scattered laughter and not to be easily intimidated. I learned a lot from these talks on the basis of which I revised my analysis.

After three years conducting professional and public research at CEDEJ, I was hired to be the director of a research and advocacy center called the Palestinian Center for Diaspora and Refugees (Shaml) in Ramallah. At this center, I conducted research on subjects such as the living conditions of the Palestinian refugees, the debate over their right of return and the political negotiations with Israelis over this matter.

Most of my critical research was not published in Arabic but in English. This gave me international and regional visibility but at the expense of visibility in the locality in which I was working. I was also actively experimenting with creative and rights-based solutions to the Palestinian refugee problem. I developed concepts such as the extra-territorial nation-state, the distinction between the right of return and the possibility of return, and between right of return and rites of return. My main audience was academic and policy circles. Only subsequently did I realize that writing in Arabic more than likely would have got me into a lot of trouble.

It was very difficult to continue living in Ramallah with a tourist visa, as in early 2004 the Israeli authorities started to limit my visa to one month at a time, which meant I had to leave and return every month. I felt I had exhausted my time in Palestine, so I sought a new location. I left Palestine to assume a teaching position at the American University of Beirut. It was here that I discovered the problem of researchers who publish globally but perish locally (Hanafi, 2011). From then on I vowed to translate all that I produced into Arabic so as to help generate debate with the broader public as well as with policy makers.

Beirut: Time for confrontations

Worn out by the intensity of the Second Intifada (2000–2005), I moved to the American University of Beirut where I founded the monthly Sociology Café, which aims at

creating a forum for informal discussions between students, professors and the public on critical issues of life in Lebanon and the region. An invited speaker usually initiates the discussion. Since 2006, I have co-organized 52 sessions with Ray Jureidini and then Nabil Dajani. Lebanese newspapers often report on the debates produced in these monthly encounters.

In terms of research, I decided to move into urban sociology and work in the slums of Beirut. I wrote a proposal to study Hay al-Sulom in the southern suburbs with a small component to compare it with Beirut's infamous Shatila refugee camp. Alas, one donor agency offered me funding but only to study the Shatila camp. At first I was disappointed, but it wasn't long before I found myself again in the middle of a debate about Palestinian socioeconomic and civil rights. The context is important. In Lebanon, Palestinian refugees do not have some basic rights such as the right to work or to own property, even though they have been living there for 65 years.

In 2005 there were two important issues: first, the liberation of Lebanon from Syrian tutelage and, second, the establishment of the Lebanese–Palestinian Dialogue Committee (LPDC). The latter functioned as an agency attached to the Prime Minister's cabinet and was heavily funded by many donors seeking to improve the situation of Palestinians in Lebanon. In this vein, the Swiss embassy mobilized a Swiss humanitarian agency to fund a workshop composed of Palestinian and Lebanese experts to assess the need for Palestinians to receive more vocational training. In this way, the agency argued, refugees would be able to work as qualified workers without changing the existing legal framework that bars them from work, denying them access to any profession and even to the formal labor market. I was a participant in this workshop and spoke vehemently against its rationale and against working within the framework of existing rights. Tensions rose, and there were many clashes between the Palestinian and the Lebanese participants. The Swiss agency then called for two ad hoc meetings: one with Palestinian experts and another with Lebanese experts. In the meeting, the representative of the Swiss agency told me that I was politicizing the process and she argued that her agency is a humanitarian one and therefore cannot address the right to work for the Palestinian refugees. After heated arguments, she threatened to withdraw the funding. I replied cynically that there were many refugee communities in Africa that deserve more attention than the Palestinian refugees, and we would be glad to divert the funding to them. One member of the Palestinian delegation was unhappy with what I had said and asked me to use 'I' instead of 'we.' My comments criticized the donor community for their dichotomous thinking: relief vs. development and humanitarianism vs. politics.

Humanitarian organizations deprive refugees of their political existence by treating them as bodies to be fed and sheltered. Humanitarian law refers to 'protected people,' but current humanitarian practices focus mainly on 'victims' or at times, to appear more positive, they refer to them as 'survivors.' By classifying people as victims or even as survivors, the basis of humanitarian action is shifted from rights to welfare. In disaster areas – the spaces of exception – values of generosity and pragmatism obscure the rights and responsibilities of refugees, which would endow them with their own agency.

I have been very interested in demystifying the depoliticization of humanitarianism since the beginning of the Second Intifada. In 2003 in Jerusalem Adi Ophir and I

co-organized a two-day workshop on 'The Politics of Humanitarianism in the Occupied Territories' for international, Palestinian and Israeli human rights and humanitarian organizations. Scholars and practitioners presented their different visions, generating much discussion and even some tension. The debate was so absorbing that Peter Hansen, the Commissioner General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestine Refugees, who came just to present a paper, stayed for the whole workshop. When I became research director of the program 'Policy and Governance in Palestinian Refugee Camps' at the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs (IFI), I helped to organize lectures with practitioners from international and local organizations, further contributing to the debate on humanitarianism. When Karen Abu Zeid, the successor Commissioner General of the UNRWA, was invited as an IFI guest, she, too, recognized the tension between the political and the humanitarian. For her, 'This tension is manifested in a variety of ways. One of its most striking manifestations is the contrast between the readiness of states to fund emergency responses, compared to their failure to address the questions of international law and politics that cause these emergencies. That tension is clear in the way in which the urgency to resolve underlying questions of justice and peace for Palestinians is somehow divorced from the challenge of providing for their human needs.'[2]

So far I have described my advance toward public sociology, but I was now keen to undertake a more organic public sociology on two fronts: contributing to the Right to Work Campaign for the Palestinian refugees and engaging with the governance system in the refugee camps, based on research in the Nahr el-Bared refugee camp in northern Lebanon.

Right to work campaign

I was writing a lot in right-wing and left-wing newspapers in Arabic and in English to reach different audiences and to understand the opposition to Palestinians having rights to work and property. I wanted to demonstrate that the issue is not only a sectarian one. Yes in Lebanon there are many sectarian divides in politics but there is almost a consensus that opposes extending these rights to Palestinians, including among both Sunnis and Shiites. All are more than happy to exploit Palestinian laborers in the black market. Religion does not tell us everything. Indeed, social stratification might reveal more than religion.

I was invited to give a talk by the Hezbollah think tank, and I had many meetings with members of its Political Bureau to persuade them to take a real stance to change the discriminatory laws. The Palestinian ambassador charged me, along with Sakher Abu Fakher, with negotiating on his behalf with the governmental coalition (March 14 Coalition) for changing the labor laws. The grim result of this experience was increased disillusionment with the politicians' double language.

In January 2011, I proposed the march as a form of protest. It had been used effectively in 1983 in France by second generation immigrants of Algerian origin demanding better integration, both socially and in the labor market. I initiated the first contact with a group of associations (from various political tendencies) to organize a March for the Socio-economic and Civil Rights of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. We met every

week and, by the end, we had gathered support from 102 associations, unions and representatives of youth movements of Palestinian and Lebanese political parties and factions. The June 2010 march brought around 6000 Palestinian and Lebanese from all over Lebanon to Beirut.

This civil society initiative was received with a lot of suspicion from several Palestinian political factions. For many, civil society organizations should conduct advocacy campaigns or provide services, but they should not mobilize constituencies, because that is the exclusive function of political parties. As one said, cynically, 'Civil society organizations can be coopted easily by foreign powers; they should not take the lead in mobilizing demonstrations.' Hamas and the pro-Syrian coalition withdrew suddenly from the organization of the march. Subsequently, Osama Hamdan, one of the leaders of Hamas, added that their withdrawal was in part due to a newspaper interview where I referred positively to the 1983 *Marche des beurs* in France. They considered this a call for the integration of Palestinian refugees into Lebanon, which would undermine the right of return.

Here one can see how social science in the Arab world is doubly delegitimized – from above by the political leaders and from below by religious leaders (among others). Hamas leadership was simply opposed to the linking of the Palestinian march to an historical one in France. I was also surprised how many right-wing Lebanese politicians used the term 'integration' in a pejorative way. In an interview, Amin al-Jamyel, the head of Phalange Party, declared that 'issuing a new law in favor of easing the entrance of Palestinian refugees into Lebanon is one step toward their integration which I denounce.'

In short, it was very challenging to engage a public that is not used to dialogue with social science scholars. This does not mean abandoning the project but rather investing time and energy into being subtle and careful in transmitting social science. Intermingling with the public inspires a deeper understanding of reality. It would have never occurred to me to theorize the Israeli colonial project as a 'spacio-cidal' project had I not constantly felt claustrophobic in the West Bank as Israel reduced it to many small Bantustans all divided from one another. I learned how to use the term 'integration of Palestinian refugees' without implying any antagonism to the right of return. I learned to avoid using the term 'governance' in Arabic as people would confuse it with 'government.' A high ranking officer of the Internal Security Forces threatened to arrest me for using 'governance' in the title of an IFI workshop. For him, the governance of camps is the business of the state only.

I also learned to be patient with practitioners who were not accustomed to postponing normative claims until they were empirically supported. Thus, I invited three members from the popular committees of the camp to discuss a working paper I produced for IFI: 'Governance of the Palestinian Refugee Camps in the Arab East: Governmentalities in Quest of Legitimacy.' Two of them said it was the first time they had been invited to such a seminar and they were especially grateful. However, they were very defensive when I suggested that the popular committees had lost legitimacy with the general camp population. The chair of the session, a faculty member at the American University of Beirut, told me how difficult it was to organize a discussion between practitioners and academics. It required a strong chair to keep the session on track.

Negotiating the reconstruction of Nahr el-Bared refugee camp

While I was doing my research on the governance system in the refugee camps of Lebanon and beyond, Fatah al-Islam, a radical militarized group, gained control of the Nahr el-Bared camp (NBC) in the north of Lebanon. The Lebanese Army responded with armed intervention, expelled the militia, destroyed two-thirds of the camp and brought the remaining part under total military control. There was fierce controversy over the reconstruction of the camp and its administration. Prime Minister Siniora declared that 'Nahr el-Bared would be a model for other camps,' and very soon foreign intelligence services became consultants to the Lebanese political and military authorities.

The government's plan for a new, modern and secure camp left no place for traditional social fabric and living patterns. When the plan was reported in the press, it provoked resistance from the community, which had not been consulted. In Baddawi camp, where most of the NBC residents had taken refuge, a spontaneous grassroots initiative emerged with the goal of formulating a counter-plan. It was energized by the widespread conviction that NBC's destruction and the government's reconstruction plans were politically motivated. Named the Nahr el-Bared Reconstruction Commission for Civil Action and Studies (NBRC), the group immediately attracted activist academics and technicians from beyond Nahr el-Bared with prior reconstruction experience in Lebanon. The result was an expanded and diverse network that included architects and planners who contributed their diverse knowledge and experience to the local committee, empowering the community to oppose the state's project.

The real dynamo of this initiative was Ismael Sheikh Hassan, an urban planner and community activist. We both wanted urban planning from below with full community participation, but we differed over the role of the urban planners. I drew on my knowledge of Jenin camp, where the political commissars exercised a heavy influence. I wanted urban planners to play a more proactive role by informing public discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of different options. Sheikh Hassan favored community voices over urban planners. However, we shared the view that urban planners should counter-balance the power of the political commissars. In addition, Sheikh Hassan, like other Palestinian activists, had a historically rooted mistrust of UNRWA and was reluctant to cooperate with the agency. Based on my knowledge of the reconstruction of Jenin in 2002, I, on the other hand, thought that UNRWA could make a great contribution to community participation. After a long discussion, a delegation of the NBRC did meet UNRWA, and the latter was delighted with the NBRC's progress in planning the reconstruction.

However, persuading the Lebanese authorities to accept the NBRC/UNRWA as an interlocutor was a painful process. Here I used my cultural and social capital as a professor at AUB. Initially, the Lebanese–Palestinian Dialogue Committee (LPDC) refused any Palestinian interlocutor under the pretext that if we called on the PLO Hamas would be upset, and vice versa. We asked the LPDC to accept the NBRC as a civil society initiative, but they refused. I called the head of UNRWA, Richard Cook, to report that we would not cooperate with UNRWA unless the NBRC was present. Cook called the LPDC, but they continued to refuse our incorporation. They said that they would accept me alone as an individual but not as representative of the NBRC. I refused to go under

this label. UNRWA threatened to withdraw from the process. Finally, I was invited as a representative of the NBRC, and after the first meeting a more technical delegation from the NBRC continued to meet with the Lebanese authority in charge of the reconstruction. After the battle, protracted negotiations began between the various Lebanese actors and the NBRC/UNRWA. Security-related issues raised by the military dictated all spatial and design considerations. Nonetheless, thanks to the UNRWA–NBRC partnership, the planning process did incorporate some of the interests of the Palestinians.

The Vienna Document: A model of exclusion

From the start of the battle, UNRWA had shouldered the burden of the NBC residents' immediate relief, but the reconstruction anticipated from the outset would inevitably require massive international funding. On 7 June 2007, scarcely two weeks after the military incursion was launched, the Lebanese government held its first meeting with UNRWA representatives to plan an international donor conference to rebuild the camp. The conference was ultimately set for June 2008 in Vienna under the sponsorship of Austria, Lebanon, the Arab League, UNRWA and the EU. In preparation for the event, the Lebanese government drew up what came to be known as the Vienna Document, a comprehensive recovery and reconstruction plan including cost estimates, for presentation to the donor-participants prior to the conference.

The camp's physical reconstruction was only one aspect of the Lebanese government's vision and in fact took second place to 'Establishing clear and effective governance in NBC.' This included 'enforcing security and rule of law inside NBC through community and proximity policing' (Government of Lebanon, 2008: 46). To this end, the document requested US$5 million in donor funds for 'Capacity building and technical assistance to the (Lebanese) Internal Security Forces (ISF) aimed at introducing community and proximity policing into NBC' (Government of Lebanon, 2008: 48).

A major flaw in the document's proposal for 'transparent and effective' camp governance is its problematic reading of the latter as purely a security issue, which flies in the face of the widely accepted contemporary discourse on good governance and its necessary components of administration, community representation and economic development. By proposing policing as the main component of governance, the plan reduces the Palestinian refugees to the status of 'security subjects' and frames the camp as an 'insecurity island.' The document uses the attractive term 'community policing,' with its connotations of community empowerment and citizenship action, but the policing it describes is performed exclusively by the police.

This one-sided decision making was reinforced by the PLO's exclusion from the formulation of the Vienna Document's security-related sections. The document makes a point of stating that the 'above security arrangements for NBC were agreed upon with the Palestinian Liberation Organization' (Government of Lebanon, 2008: 51), but Abbas Zaki, PLO ambassador to Lebanon, told me that he had not been consulted about the security issue in the camp. I informed Ismael Sheikh Hassan, who joined Zaki to protest to the LPDC, but the document was not altered.

Without doubt, the PLO's weakness makes this kind of exclusion possible, but it is risky to pursue and secure funding for a one-sided vision of governance in a Palestinian

camp, which moreover is planned as a prototype for all the Palestinian camps in the country. This is especially the case when the solutions proposed are not based on a critical review either of NBC's pre-conflict situation or on the failures of the Palestinian and Lebanese sides that precipitated the rise of Fatah al-Islam in the first place.

Sheikh Hassan and I wrote a piece called 'Constructing and governing Nahr el-Bared camp: An "ideal" model of exclusion' for the *Journal of Palestine Studies* (in Arabic). We wanted to explain the whole story of NBC: its destruction, looting, reconstruction and the plan to establish a mode of governance based exclusively on security. Even though the journal is based in Beirut, the piece did not generate debate. I called a friend at *al-nahar* newspaper, which is very widely read by supporters of the government coalition. After its publication there, the LPDC replied to me in a very harsh and impolite way. Several journalists wrote to criticize my writings, and I responded with other articles. However, debate was not without intimidation. The head of the LPDC, who is also the president of the American University of Beirut Alumni Association, talked with the administration of my university, the chair of my department and other colleagues. He tried to convince them to denounce my writing, arguing that it might harm the relationship between the University and the Lebanese authority. I was supported by my university, but my friend Ismael Sheikh Hassan was arrested because of his writing about Nahr el-Bared, which suggests that critical public social science can be a dangerous proposition.

Between critical and public social science

One of the major dilemmas researchers face is to conduct public research without losing their critical edge even toward the deprived groups that they seek to protect. Good scientists are not always popular. Louis Pasteur, who saved many through his invention of vaccines, failed to be elected to the Senate in France. I do believe that sociologists' commitments should be expressed by their choice of topics and how they disseminate their knowledge beyond writing for academic journals. But as regards the research process, once a topic is chosen, fieldwork is fieldwork and should follow its path in the most objective way possible. Of Bertolt Brecht's committed art, Adorno (1980) said that Brecht ended by doing bad art and bad politics. Criticisms addressed to the community being studied should be considered a way of strengthening it, rather than weakening it; knowledge of weaknesses should be empowering.

I should confess here that sometimes things are very complex. There have been occasions when I have not published the results of fieldwork because they violate the immediate interests of international solidarity groups who have come to Palestine to support people under siege. I am not an advocate of activist research (Hale, 2006) that is politically aligned to the cause of its object, but I do align myself with subjects when their rights are violated. This alignment can become political in the sense of making political compromises. For instance, when defending the Palestinian right of return to their place of origin, I found myself advising people on tactical matters of the more immediate survival of Palestinian refugees. 'Surrendering,' to use Wolff's (1992) term, to the group you are studying can be generative of a deeper scholarly understanding and beneficial to the research, on condition that the researcher does not lose sight of their primary

commitment to critical thinking. Researchers may be loyal to a political party or to an ideology, but this should be seen as different from loyalty to the academic sphere.

My choice to work on *The Power of Inclusive Exclusion: Anatomy of Israeli Rule in the Occupied Palestinian Territories* (2009) with anti-colonial Israelis Adi Ophir and Michal Givoni was unpopular in Lebanon, and I faced a smear campaign from some leftists. At the time, I thought that constructing a healthy conception of the conflict and collaborating with anti-colonial Israelis was more important than my popularity. I hoped that working with dissident Israelis would send a strong message that the Arab–Israeli conflict has nothing to do with religion but revolved around a classical colonial project waged by Zionist ideology, which we could collectively oppose, whether we were Arab or Israeli.

I had imagined that writing about my research trajectory would be easy, but it has not been, especially because I don't want to fall into the trap of heroism, celebration or victimhood. Engaging in public sociology and dealing with critical issues is like crossing a minefield, even as it offers a sense of commitment to the society (through the choice of a topic which is relevant to society) and a sense of justice (helping victims to resist their oppressors). At the heart of this precarious engagement is Pierre Bourdieu's idea of sociology as a martial art, in which sociology disarms people of their common sense, their ideologies, their folk understandings – in short, their self-deceptions. The question, then, is whether scholars should be in front of the people or behind them, whether they should comfort them (a sort of populism) or remind them of the complexity of social phenomena. In this biographical essay, I have shown how I dealt with the complexity of the Palestinian right of return, their socioeconomic rights and their rights to the city, at the same time that political factions and commissars (including leaders of civil society organizations) were focusing almost exclusively on the right of return. To forge ahead of the people when the overwhelming political and social pressures are holding them back is a hazardous operation indeed.

Funding

Notes

1. Here I am using Michael Burawoy's (2005) typology of knowledge: professional, critical, public and policy.
2. From her speech for the Host and Donors Meeting, held in Amman on 11 December 2006.

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Author biography

Sari Hanafi is currently a Professor of Sociology at the American University of Beirut and editor of *Idafat: the Arab Journal of Sociology* (Arabic). He is also a member of the Executive Committee of the International Association of Sociology and the Arab Council of the Social Sciences. He is the author of numerous journal articles and book chapters on the political and economic sociology of the Palestinian diaspora and refugees; sociology of migration; politics of scientific research; and transitional justice. Among his recent books are: *The Power of Inclusive Exclusion: Anatomy of Israeli Rule in the Occupied Palestinian Territories* (edited with A Ophir and M Givoni, 2009) (English and Arabic), *The Emergence of a Palestinian Globalized Elite: Donors, International Organizations and Local NGOs* (edited with L Taber, 2005) (Arabic and English) and the forthcoming, *Knowledge Production in the Arab World* (with R Arvanitis)

Résumé

Dans cet article, je passe en revue ma propre carrière pour illustrer certains des dilemmes de la recherche, notamment si elle a une face critique et publique. Je montre comment mon travail avec des réfugiés palestiniens, leurs droits socio-économiques, leur droit au retour et leurs camps ont évolué vers des formes complexes de sociologie publique traditionnelle et organique. Je conclus avec quelques réflexions sur l'un des autres dilemmes majeurs auxquels les chercheurs sont confrontés: comment mener une recherche publique tout en conservant une approche critique, même envers les groupes défavorisés que cette recherche vise à protéger. La morale de l'histoire: les bons scientifiques ne sont pas toujours populaires.

Mots-clés

Recherche appliquée, recherche critique, recherche publique, réfugiés palestiniens, sciences sociales arabes

Resumen

En este artículo, repaso mi propia carrera para ilustrar algunos de los dilemas de investigar, en especial cuando la investigación asume una imagen crítica y pública. Muestro cómo mi trabajo sobre los refugiados palestinos, sus derechos socioeconómicos, su derecho a regresar y sus campamentos evolucionó hacia formas complejas de la sociología pública tradicional y orgánica. Concluyo con reflexiones sobre uno de los principales dilemas

que enfrentan los investigadores: llevar adelante una investigación pública sin perder su lado crítico, aun hacia los grupos desfavorecidos que busca proteger. La moraleja es: los buenos científicos no siempre son populares.

Palabras clave
Ciencias sociales árabes, investigación crítica, investigación política, investigación pública, refugiados palestinos

Worker–intellectual unity: Trans-border sociological intervention in Foxconn

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Abstract
What are the implications for global public sociology and labor studies when more than a score of Foxconn workers jump to their death and when a wave of protests, riots and strikes occur in their wake? This article documents the formation of a cross-border sociological intervention project and illustrates how sociological research fueled regional campaigns that gradually developed into a global campaign. This experience confirms the premise that 'social science' should never be separated from 'politics.' The

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authors also shed light on how social and economic injustice was creatively challenged by combining the strengths of workers, researchers and transnational movement activists. The study uses both quantitative (semi-structured questionnaires) and qualitative (in-depth interviews and participation observation) methods to gain insights concerning the experiences, world views and collective agency of Chinese workers who are struggling to make sense of the global production regime they inhabit and to contest the forces that shape their working and social lives.

Keywords
China, Foxconn workers, global public sociology, labor studies, transnational movement

At about 8 a.m. on 17 March 2010, a 17-year-old worker, Tian Yu, went to the window of her fourth story dorm room at the Foxconn factory in Shenzhen and jumped. Tian Yu survived. Yet many more have followed Tian Yu's attempt to end her life even as global consumers race to consume new generation electronic products like no tomorrow. Within 12 months, 18 young rural migrant workers attempted suicide at Foxconn facilities. The workers who attempted suicide ranged in age between 17 and 25 – the prime of youth. The responsibility for this tragedy and the larger tragedy of China's workers is not Foxconn's alone, although, as the manufacturer of more than 50% of the world's electronic products, it is an enormous player. The problems extend far beyond the factory floor to the profit squeeze that Foxconn and other multinational producers have to face from the world's leading giants such as Apple, Samsung and Microsoft. This article introduces a three-year experiment in a critical approach to public sociology in China involving researchers and activists from China, Hong Kong and Taiwan that was sparked by the spate of suicides of Foxconn workers in 2010 and subsequent worker struggles. This experimental project attempted to understand the lives and struggles of China's new working class comprised overwhelmingly of young rural migrants through the lens of Foxconn and its relationship to Apple and the Chinese state.

It is useful to cast contemporary struggles in light of the linkages forged between workers and intellectuals in the course of China's revolution. China has a modern history of worker- and peasant bonds to organic intellectuals. In the May Fourth era of 1919–1927, students and teachers played active roles in the worker, peasant and anti-imperialist upsurge that led to a surge of strikes and boycotts that coincided with the rapid growth of Communist movements. In 1921, revolutionary students including Deng Zhongxia, a student of Peking University, and his classmates set up a workers' evening school in Changxindian, a suburban area of Beijing that was near a French-owned railway company and where workers suffered from extreme exploitation. Half a year later, the students joined a historic strike at Changxindian (Cheng and So, 1983; Kwan, 1997). At that time, many progressive students became workers, playing key roles in the formation of trade unions throughout the 1920s and 1930s.

Students and intellectuals played important roles in conducting labor surveys, collecting worker's oral histories, providing education programs for workers and participating in organizing strikes and protests. The newly formed sociology department at Shanghai University in 1922 focused on labor studies and the labor movement in China's great industrial city. At that time, there was no room for 'politics' divorced from 'science,' as Burawoy argues in his article, 'Making public sociology: Its pitfalls and its possibilities' (Burawoy, 2011).

Chinese sociologists in Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, Guangzhou and other cities conducted detailed surveys on workers' incomes, work hours, daily expenditures, rental costs, family consumption, children's education and other subjects of importance to the nascent labor movement (Minguo Shiqi Shehuidiaocha Congbian, 2005). Factors including the workers' industrial sector, place of origin, place of work, gender, age and household members were all documented and analyzed, resulting in detailed labor studies and surveys on the conditions of Chinese workers in the 1920s and 1930s. They are classics of Chinese labor sociology.

The era in which Chinese intellectuals and workers lived and worked closely together has long past. Sociology as a discipline was officially abolished in 1952, condemned as a 'bourgeois' social science. Despite an abortive effort to revive it in 1957, its resurrection on new foundations did not begin until 1979 – this time in the service of the reform and internationalization, the foundations for a 'harmonious' modern society as envisaged by Deng Xiaoping (Cheng and So, 1983; Yan, 2004). Under the banner of modernization, globalization and professionalism, Fei Xiaotong, China's most renowned sociologist, led sociology on a new trajectory in the 1980s. In mainland China, within these parameters, sociological voices today are more visible in media and in public debates than their counterparts in the West. In this light, sociology in China is inherently imbued with a public nature – but not always in a progressive direction, due to its close linkage with the state.

In light of modernization and globalization and the shift from revolution to reform in the post-Mao era, most Chinese sociologists, in ways familiar to contemporary American sociology, have prioritized 'science' over 'politics,' promoted the discipline as 'value-neutral,' and replaced Marx's class analysis with Weber's stratification lens. Michael Burawoy has drawn attention to the global commodification of education and knowledge within which sociology as a social 'science' prioritizes quantitative research over qualitative studies, claiming the former are more 'scientific' and marketable and, for example, offering market surveys to corporations, if not to the state. In China, this type of sociology is known as 'professional sociology.' Training elites, providing corporations with market surveys and providing the state with data on income, consumption and stratification characterize the discipline of sociology in China as elsewhere. Within the contemporary Chinese state capitalism – with deepening links between private and international capital and the state – scant space remains for practicing reflexive and critical sociology.

Could *global public sociology* find a place and contribute to a progressive rebirth, placing the interests of Chinese workers and farmers at the center of the discipline? What is certain is that China, like others, will not escape the implacable logic of capital accumulation and commodification and the subordination of labor to capital and the state. China, now the workshop of the world and an economy heavily dependent on

international trade, will not be spared the impact of the contemporary global crisis. Disruptive power, as described by Frances Fox Piven (this issue) could emerge when the time is ripe. In mainland China, due to the link between sociology and state, it is imperative that public sociology be reborn as critical sociology or critical sociological intervention, as a few Chinese sociologists at Tsinghua University and elsewhere advocate. If that is to happen, the links to state and capital have to be lessened and those to workers, farmers and grassroots groups strengthened. Autonomous, reflexive and critical approaches have to be developed. These pose huge challenges, of course. Will it require a social crisis for these developments, or can we discern the possibilities of a public sociology in embryonic form? Consider the case of Foxconn, Apple and China's rural migrant workers.

The public statement

When 'the ninth Foxconn worker' committed suicide on 11 May 2010 (attempted suicides at two major facilities of Foxconn in Shenzhen had apparently increased since January), a number of Chinese sociologists and students called a meeting to discuss possible actions. In response to the tragedy, some of us suggested immediate action; over many years we had been talking about critical sociological interventions. But when, and how? We made two decisions: first, we issued a public letter calling on Foxconn and the Chinese government to act decisively to end this series of tragedies and to protect the rights and lives of the younger generation of migrant workers. Second, we prepared to conduct thorough research on Foxconn in various regions in order to understand the root causes of worker suicides and their relation to the global supply chain and production system. In mid-May, the semester had not yet ended and students were busy taking examinations or writing theses. Nine sociologists decided to issue a preliminary statement,[1] and once the semester ended we would immediately launch a sociological survey and field studies. On 18 May 2010 the public statement was released. It reads, painfully:

> From the moment they [the new generation of migrant workers] step beyond the doors of their houses, they never think of going back to farming like their parents. In this sense, they see no other option when they enter the city to work. The moment they see there is little possibility of building a home in the city through hard work, the very meaning of their work collapses. The path ahead is blocked, and the road to retreat is closed. Trapped in this situation, the new generation of migrant workers faces a serious identity crisis and, in effect, this magnifies psychological and emotional problems. Digging into this deeper level of our societal and structural conditions, we come closer to understanding the 'no way back' mentality of these Foxconn employees.

The sociologists had many considerations in drafting the statement, but among them two were particularly significant. The first was whether the statement could be reported and quoted by mainland Chinese media and whether it could navigate through the control and censorship of the press and electronic media by the Chinese government. This concern affected the wording and the presentation of the statement. The other consideration was how to effectively react to Foxconn, whose public responses to workers' suicides were uniform:

the nine young workers who attempted suicides (seven had passed away by mid-May) suffered from individual psychological problems such as poor mental health, depression, distress over heavy debts or family and other personal problems. Foxconn hired western and Chinese psychologists and psychiatrists to defend it in the wake of the plague of worker suicides at the company. They chose statistics as their first line of defense: nine jumps or attempted suicides in five months among a population of more than 500,000 was still far lower than the national suicide rate, they responded, ignoring the fact that the suicides took place at a single company in a single city, and the victims were in the prime of youth.

The statement was a first reaction to Foxconn, in hopes of bring structural – rather than 'personal' or psychological – factors to the forefront of the public agenda. Many of the nine petitioners had done solid research on migrant labor issues in China in an attempt to highlight the social injustices experienced by migrant workers. We argued that with the process of incomplete proletarianization that shaped the migrant labor force that had become the core of China's new working class, the root of the worker suicides lay in the combination of exploitation in a global production system and an uncaring society which denies rural migrants urban citizenship rights and does not allow migrant workers to organize. Hundreds of millions of migrant workers like the Foxconn employees are being thrown into a state of deep contradiction. They reject the regimented hardships their predecessors silently endured as cheap laborers and second-class citizens. They rebel against their marginalized status and meaningless life. Hence, we argued that 'throwing bodies through the dormitory building' is an act of frustration – and of defiance. In their defiant deaths, the workers call on the Chinese nation – and international society – to wake up before more lives are sacrificed. We argued:

> In the absence of effective channels of expression and association, the suicide jumpers chose to sacrifice their lives as a means of accusation. Neither in China nor internationally should anyone have to make sacrifices of this kind. Was it suicide or murder? In this case, the evidence suggests that suicide was tantamount to murder.

Together with this open letter, mainland students and labor non-governmental organizations (NGOs) created blogs dedicated to the Foxconn worker victims and their families, with the theme song 'Grief' spreading quickly through the web. Across the straits, more than 300 Taiwanese issued another open statement and on 13 June 2010 they held a press conference to condemn Foxconn management and its brutality toward mainland workers.[2] A few Taiwanese sociologists pointed out that this was the first time that Taiwanese scholars from two different political camps, the pro-unification and independence forces, joined together to issue a public statement. Benefiting from a more open and democratic society, Taiwan scholars issued a set of demands to Foxconn, Apple, the Chinese government and consumers:

> To Foxconn [its parent company, Hon Hai], we ask for an end to military discipline in the factory as well as the dormitory, the improvement of working and living conditions of the workers and the establishment of a humane production line process. …

> We urge the Chinese government to raise the statutory minimum wage to a level that meets the basic needs of urban living, to abolish [the] household registration system under which people

are segregated into 'the local' and the 'the outsiders.' We also ask for a labor union reform which could guarantee shop floor labor representation and the establishment of a rational mechanism for collective bargaining.

Third, multinational companies especially Apple should take responsibility for the tragedies [that have] occurred at Foxconn. Poor conditions, low wage levels and [the] inhumane mode of labor discipline of Taiwanese companies have much to do with the price competition of global brands such as Apple, HP and Dell. …

Finally, we urge consumers to boycott iPhone 4G until the working conditions of its manufacturing factories have genuinely been improved.

On the basis of these two open statements linking scholars and students from mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, a large-scale collective investigation of Foxconn was set up in the summer of 2010. This critical or public sociological research on Apple and Foxconn was a trans-border project. The tragic suicides – emblematic of myriad labor problems at the workplaces that produce the world's most sought after products, as well as the strength of a survivor like Tian Yu – prompt us to dip into the Chinese and global context of international electronic capital. The focus of our attention is a new generation of Chinese workers, their lives, their struggles, their hopes and dreams. It is also the American and global electronic giants who design and market the products we cherish and their responsibility to protect the workers who produce them.

The meteoric rise of Foxconn as the world's largest electronics manufacturer has been hailed as a model of East Asian manufacturing prowess that is illustrative of China's dynamic export-oriented industry. Foxconn indeed stands out as a new form of global industrial capital because of its speed of capital accumulation and its scale of expansion to all regions of China. Today, Foxconn has a workforce of more than 1.4 million, and at its biggest production facility at Shenzhen Longhua in south China it has more than 400,000 young workers assigned to day and night shifts on the assembly lines. It is a key node in the global production network where assembly and shipment of finished products to global consumers continues around the clock, 365 days a year.

The political context

At the peak of the suicide cluster in the spring of 2010, Chinese governments at provincial and lower levels communicated their concerns. On 26 May 2010, after the '12th jump,' a Shenzhen municipal government spokesperson announced that the government would take steps to improve 'laborers' living conditions and enterprise management,' and, soon after one more attempted suicide on 27 May, Guangdong provincial party secretary Wang Yang stated that 'the Party, government organizations and Foxconn must work together and take effective measures to prevent similar tragedies from happening again' (Li, 2010). However, the specifics of the joint measures – if any – were never disclosed.

Our research reveals that rather than analyzing and taking actions to overcome the root causes of suicides, Chinese officials moved to ban 'negative' reporting about Foxconn (*China Digital Times*, 30 May 2010).

28 May 2010: 'About the Foxconn incident, on the Internet, other than *Xinhua*'s domestic general information, there should be no other reporting. … All related content before the 12th jump should be locked up. … All websites must complete the cleanup task tonight. Do not have any dead corners.'

29 May 2010: 'For the front pages of news websites and news center pages, blogs, micro-blogs, there should be no news related to "Foxconn" except from official sources.'

While sociologists in Hong Kong and Taiwan face few constraints in exposing the issues related to the Foxconn suicides, mainland Chinese sociologists and students face censorship and media control. The banning of news about the suicides by the Chinese government created intense anxiety, if not anger, among Chinese sociologists and students. The need to conduct in-depth field research on Foxconn workers' conditions was pressing. Despite the risks, sociologists and students launched a large-scale investigation in June 2010.

A collective investigation

Since mid-July 2010, faculty and students from 20 universities in mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong have joined to form a University Research Group on Foxconn. The universities include Peking University, Tsinghua University, Renmin University, Sun Yat-sen University, Taiwan National University, Taiwan Tsinghua University, Tunghai University, Chinese University of Hong Kong and Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Together with SACOM (Students and Scholars against Corporate Misbehavior), a Hong Kong-based transnational campaign group, more than 60 researchers joined forces to conduct independent investigations of Foxconn's labor practices and production system. This is the first time that sociologists and students from the three Chinese societies have come together to conduct a joint research, sharing common concerns on the labor rights issues driven by Apple and Foxconn (see Pun and Chan, 2012; Pun et al., 2012).

We were worried about the political sensitivity and the risks. When 40 of us arrived at Shenzhen Longhua from different parts of the country and abroad, after a basic training on the company profile, interview skills, research ethics and personal safety, we divided into smaller teams, settling at different hostels and carrying out interviews and surveys in the Longhua and Guanlan industrial communities. In the early stages, before we were assured of our safety and had become familiar with the industrial community and its environment, we dared not pair up mainland students with Taiwanese students in a small group. The research was mainly done as Foxconn workers – easily identified by their uniforms and staff cards – left their workplaces for lunch and dinner and during their rest days. During meal times, thousands of workers poured out to the streetside food stalls. We also targeted workers changing shifts from day to night or night to day, the gap hours between shifts providing more time to conduct in-depth interviews. And, we visited nearby clinics and hospitals to interview injured workers, who told us about how they had been injured and their grievances. Every day for two consecutive weeks, our study started around 11 a.m. and lasted until 10 p.m. Group meetings and discussions on the findings of the investigation began at 10:30 p.m. With heated debates, these meetings

lasted until midnight or early morning, though they were conducted separately among Taiwanese, Hong Kong and mainland Chinese groups. In between, we had two general meetings to discuss the progress and difficulties we faced, in which all the scholars and students from the three areas joined together.

Surprisingly, throughout the summer we encountered no direct intervention from Foxconn or the local state. To supplement survey and in-depth interviews, 14 mainland Chinese students entered Foxconn for one month to work as frontline workers and collect first-hand information about conditions in the plants and workers' lives. Altogether, in the first phase between June and December 2010 we interviewed and surveyed workers and managers at major Foxconn factory complexes in nine coastal and inland cities where the company's factories were then concentrated: Shenzhen, Shanghai, Kunshan, Hangzhou, Nanjing, Tianjin, Langfang, Taiyuan and Wuhan. This resulted in a University Research Report on Foxconn, released in a press conference at Peking University on 9–10 October 2010. A copy of the report was sent to Foxconn, Apple, the State Council of the People's Republic of China and the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU).

Apple's corporate image: 'Care and commitment'

How has Apple responded to the Foxconn workers' suicides and subsequent worker actions including protests and strikes? Can Apple and/or the consumers of its products contribute toward a global labor movement supportive of workers' rights?

In February 2011, Apple released its Supplier Responsibility Progress Report to show the remedial measures taken by Foxconn, its largest supplier, in the aftermath of the suicides. Apple's (2011) auditing team was quick to applaud Foxconn's emergency responses:

> The team commended Foxconn for taking quick action on several fronts simultaneously, including hiring a large number of psychological counselors, establishing a 24-hour care center and even attaching large nets to the factory buildings to prevent impulsive suicides. (2011: 19)

None of the 'remedial measures' addressed such core issues as speedup, illegal levels of compulsory overtime work, dangerous conditions in Foxconn factories, humiliation of workers and illegal practices associated with the use of student interns as workers. In this self-policing – or more accurately public relations – mode of corporate social responsibility, Apple failed to address the issues that arose from its own high pressure ordering practices, which contributed directly to blatant rights violations by supplier factories. In short, Apple distanced itself from all responsibility.

Apple and other leading corporate members of the global electronics industry association moved swiftly to resolve the public relations crisis in a quick fix while ignoring the structural problems of labor relations and the fundamental production conditions that gave rise to the epidemic of worker suicide. Indeed, the fundamental problems have remained intractable not least because Apple's public calls for reform have been accompanied by continued private pressure from Apple on Foxconn to meet high production quotas and to accept lower payments for its products.

Apple's success is predicated on its ability to provide innovative products to meet ever-changing consumer demand. Tracking demand worldwide, Apple adjusts its production forecasts daily. As Apple CEO Tim Cook puts it, 'Nobody wants to buy sour milk' (Satariano and Burrows, 2011). Streamlining and controlling the global supply chain on the principle of 'competition against time' is Apple's supply-chain management's goal. Our studies show that compressed delivery time of new products has repeatedly taken precedence over protecting workers' health, safety and rights, at times with tragic consequences. As a result, whatever the stepped-up audits, the tremendous pressure for suppliers such as Foxconn to cut corners continued and intensified.

Foxconn's 'new' promise

In the more than two years since the suicide wave, have Foxconn managers taken meaningful actions to assure the welfare of workers? The 2010 company report touted high corporate ideals framed in terms of a 'people-oriented leadership style that promotes sustainability, stability, development, technology, internationality and responsibility for the advancement of social welfare and the human good' (Foxconn Technology Group, 2011: 6).

The statement of the Foxconn Global Social and Environmental Responsibility Committee reads (Foxconn Technology Group, 2011):

> Foxconn renewed its commitment to 'respect employees, ensure continuous improvement, contribute to the well-being of society and achieve sustainability.' In pursuing transformation of its management style, Foxconn has raised its standards in employee fringe benefits, provided additional recreational activities and assisted employees in coping with workplace stress. (2011: 1)

From 1 June 2010, facing dual pressures from the international criticism following the suicides and the tight labor market in Shenzhen, Foxconn raised the basic wage of its production operators in Shenzhen to 1200 yuan (US$190) a month, that is, 9% above the statutory local minimum wage. This still meant that if a Foxconn worker wished to buy Apple's lowest-priced iPad at US$499, it would cost about two months' total income, including overtime premiums. As of mid-2011, the basic monthly wage of assembly-line workers was 1350 yuan (US$213) in Chengdu and 1550 yuan (US$245) in Shenzhen, the other 10 surveyed Foxconn factories falling within this range. The regional variations reflect differences in China's minimum wage by locality. In February 2013, Foxconn announced a wage increase to 1800 yuan a month (US$285) for entry-level workers in Shenzhen, but at the same time Foxconn started to relocate to Zhengzhou and Chengdu where the minimum wage was lower and it was possible to recruit student interns as cheap labor.

Over these two years, Foxconn also declared that it would reduce excessive overtime from some 100 hours per month, close to three times the 36-hour legal limit for overtime, to 80 extra hours a month; in other words, close to a 60-hour work week (i.e., a normal 40-hour work week plus nearly 20 hours of overtime). In late March 2012, following the release of the Apple-funded Fair Labor Association (FLA) investigation report based on

survey data provided by more than 35,000 workers at three Foxconn facilities, Foxconn stated that it would rectify the most serious abuses noted. Specifically, it pledged to cut excessive compulsory overtime and raise wages. By July 2013, Foxconn promised to move toward full compliance with Chinese labor law, which stipulates that no worker will labor for more than 49 hours per week (i.e., a 40-hour week plus nine hours of overtime, or 36 hours per month of overtime). This is an important benchmark. But will it really be honored in the face of pressures from Apple and other electronic giants to meet quotas on demand?

Trans-border practice and the global campaign

In order to check on fulfillment of the promises made by Apple and Foxconn and generate continuous pressure on them, the University Research Group conducted a second phase of research from March to December 2011. In addition to revisits to Foxconn factory complexes in Shenzhen and Kunshan, we investigated conditions in three new Foxconn complexes in the central and southwestern provinces, into which it was expanding in the search for increasingly scarce labor.

In the third phase, from January 2012 to the present, we have worked closely with local scholars and done in-depth studies of Foxconn plants in Shenzhen, Chengdu (exclusive production of iPads) and Zhengzhou (exclusive production of iPhones). In all, we collected 2409 questionnaires through snowball sampling and conducted 500 interviews with former and current Foxconn workers and managers about their working and living conditions. The University Research Group on Foxconn released two more reports upon the completion of each phase of investigation. The second and third reports squarely targeted the use of student interns as a new, cheap and expendable form of labor in Foxconn in the process of rapid expansion and called for the legally mandated protection of student laborers (Pun et al., 2012)

Given the work and study pressures that most sociology faculty and students face during the semester, a trans-border campaign – which gradually evolved into a global one – could hardly be achieved without the involvement of SACOM, the Hong Kong-based labor group formed by students and scholars concerned about labor rights issues in mainland China. Since its formation in 2005, SACOM has been tracking Foxconn's labor practices. SACOM suggests that Foxconn is not the only company to be blamed. The dire plight of the workers could not be sustained at Foxconn without the connivance of its major client, Apple. Within two years, SACOM released six investigative reports on Apple and Foxconn.

In response to the spate of suicides at Foxconn, SACOM organized a Global Day of Remembrance for Victims of Foxconn on 8 June 2010, the date of Foxconn International Holdings' (a wholly-owned subsidiary of Foxconn Technology Group) shareholder meeting in Hong Kong. GoodElectronics and makeITfair joined the IT campaign. Both GoodElectronics and makeITfair mobilized their partners in the network to protest against Foxconn. At that time, labor groups in Mexico, Germany and Taiwan organized actions to demand that Foxconn reform its military-style management method. Other SACOM partners in the United States also held protests in San Francisco, Boston and New York to demand justice for the Foxconn victims. In addition, the US-based United

Students Against Sweatshops (USAS) and Labour Start launched petitions calling on Apple and Foxconn to end the abuses at Foxconn. Thousands of people supported these actions.

The media coverage of the poor working conditions at Foxconn was remarkable, especially in Europe. The plight of Foxconn workers was reported by AFP, *The Guardian*, Al Jazeera, *Daily Mail, The Age, Spiegel Online, The Huffington Post* and dozens of international media outlets. Throughout 2011, many more labor NGOs based in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Europe and the US took concerted action to organize a global campaign.

The explosions at Foxconn (Chengdu) and Pegatron (Shanghai), the abuse of student interns as operators, the excessive working hours during peak seasons, the militarized training of new workers and above all workers' strikes and riots have fuelled the campaign on a transnational scale. A comprehensive report by *The New York Times* triggered a movement by consumers in the United States. Online petition groups such as Change.org and SumOfUs initiated petitions targeting Apple's unethical labor practices. In addition to traditional online petitions, the groups called on supporters to present the 250,000 signatures to Apple stores in different cities in early 2012. A civil society network in the United States was built for the Apple campaign.

Concluding remarks

What are the implications for global public sociology and labor studies when more than a score of Foxconn workers jump to their death and when a wave of protests, riots and strikes occur in their wake? This article documents the formation of a cross-border sociological intervention project and illustrates how, through the mobilization of SACOM, sociological research could fuel regional campaigns that gradually developed into a global campaign. This experience confirms the premise that 'social science' should never be separated from 'politics.' We challenge the conventional idea that social studies can or should be divorced from the researchers' core values and political vision. We attempt to bring about new understanding of the relationship between global production and worker resistance in China, about university education and about the goals of researchers. We also shed light on how social and economic injustice can be creatively challenged by combining the strengths of workers, researchers and transnational movement activists. We use both quantitative (semi-structured questionnaires) and qualitative (in-depth interviews and participation observation) methods to gain insights concerning the experiences, world views and collective agency of Chinese workers, who are struggling to make sense of the global production regime they inhabit and to contest the forces that shape their working and social lives.

In the course of our research, we documented labor strikes, protests and riots in various Foxconn facilities and dormitories. These collective labor actions are now challenging the Foxconn and Apple managements. These labor struggles, while thus far dispersed and short-lived, are spreading across China. With new factory operations in west and central China, a substantial portion of rural workers are being recruited from within their home provinces and even their home towns or prefectures. We anticipate that the form of labor resistance for rural migrants will change as they work closer to their native places

and have the opportunity to draw on local social networks. The sociocultural politics of place can be important. There is potential for Chinese worker activism to grow to a regional or national level. Neither 'pessimism of the intellect' nor 'optimism of the will' offer insight into possibilities of this kind.

At the time of this writing, the movement is continuing. Workers go out on strike, SACOM and other labor groups build solidarity networks to support the workers' struggle, and sociologists are writing a book for the general public as well as carrying out comparative research across regions in China. Reigniting the tradition of intellectual–worker unity, more mainland Chinese university students are working on production lines during their summer vacations to understand and document the life-world of workers' hardships and struggles. A number of sociology students have departed from their elite career paths by moving to live in local industrial communities, offering education programs and organizing cultural activities for Foxconn workers. These engagements on the ground aim to facilitate the formation of an emergent worker community organization. A critical approach to public sociology is slowly taking root in China. If it flourishes, its implications will extend far beyond China to the world.

Funding

Notes

1. The nine signatories of the open statement dated 18 May 2010 are: Shen Yuan (Tsinghua University), Guo Yuhua (Tsinghua University), Lu Huilin (Peking University), Pun Ngai (Hong Kong Polytechnic University), Dai Jianzhong (Beijing Academy of Social Sciences), Tan Shen (China Academy of Social Sciences), Shen Hong (China Academy of Social Sciences), Ren Yan (Sun Yat-sen University) and Zhang Dunfu (Shanghai University). See the full webtext at *Sina Tech* [in Chinese]: tech.sina.com.cn/it/2010-05-19/13214206671.shtml.
2. The petition was initiated by Thung-Hong Lin (Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica) and You-ren Yang (Department of Sociology, Tunghai University). It is available (in English) at: sites.google.com/site/laborgogo2010eng/

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Jenny Chan and Mark Selden are co-authors with Pun Ngai of the forthcoming book, provisionally entitled, *Inside Foxconn* (Cambridge: Polity Press).

Résumé

Plus d'une vingtaine de travailleurs de Foxconn ont mis fin à leurs jours en sautant du haut de leur logement, entraînant une vague de protestations, d'émeutes et de

grèves. Quelles sont les implications de tels événements pour la sociologie publique globale et les études sur les ressources humaines? Ce chapitre décrit la création d'un projet d'intervention sociologique transfrontalier et illustre comment la recherche sociologique a attisé les campagnes régionales et conduit progressivement à leur transformation en une campagne mondiale. Cette expérience confirme le principe selon lequel la 'science sociale' ne devrait jamais être séparée de la 'politique'. Nous mettons également en lumière comment l'injustice sociale et économique a été mise au défi d'une manière créative par une combinaison de la force des travailleurs, des chercheurs et des activistes d'un mouvement transnational. Nous utilisons à la fois des méthodes quantitatives (questionnaires semi-structurés) et qualitatives (entretiens en profondeur et observation de la participation) pour obtenir un aperçu des expériences, des opinions mondiales et du système d'organisation collective des travailleurs chinois, qui ont du mal à donner sens au régime de production mondiale dans lequel ils vivent et contestent les forces qui façonnent leurs vies professionnelle et sociale.

Mots-clés
Chine, études sur les ressources humaines, mouvement transnational, sociologie publique globale, travailleurs de Foxconn

Resumen
¿Cuáles son las implicancias para la sociología pública mundial y los estudios laborales cuando más de una veintena de trabajadores de Foxconn salta hacia su muerte, dejando una ola de protestas, disturbios y huelgas a su paso? Este capítulo documenta la formación de un proyecto de intervención sociológica transfronteriza e ilustra cómo la investigación sociológica impulsó las campañas regionales que se transformaron gradualmente en una campaña global. Esta experiencia confirma la premisa que 'las ciencias sociales' nunca deben separarse de la 'política'. Asimismo, aclaramos cómo se desafió con creatividad a la injusticia social y económica al combinar las fuerzas de los trabajadores, los investigadores y los activistas de movimientos transnacionales. Empleamos métodos cuantitativos (cuestionarios semi-estructurados) y cualitativos (entrevistas exhaustivas y observación de la participación) para obtener percepciones respecto de las experiencias, las visiones del mundo y la capacidad para actuar en forma colectiva de los trabajadores chinos, quienes luchan para encontrar el sentido al régimen de producción global en el que habitan y para responder a las fuerzas que dan forma a sus vidas laborales y sociales.

Palabras clave
China, estudios laborales, movimiento transnacional, sociología pública global, trabajadores de Foxconn

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Abstract
Protest movement from the lower reaches of society cannot deploy the resources to which we usually attribute the effective exercise of power. This article argues that when such movements do succeed, it is because the protestors have activated a distinctive kind of power. This power is rooted in their ability to disrupt the cooperative arrangements that constitute societies. 'Occupy Wall Street's' contemplation of a debtors' strike is an example of such a strategy and the formidable obstacles to its actuation.

I study American protest movements. I write about them, sometimes critically, and I also participate in some of these movements. When I am a participant, I try to bring what I have learned from my research on historical movements and my close observation of contemporary movements into my discussions with movement activists and into my writing as well. So, maybe what I do is a kind of public sociology. My own preoccupation is not so much with questions about the origins and biography of movements that have dominated much of the academic literature. I am more interested in movement strategy, in the question of how people at the bottom sometimes exercise power. Inevitably, this is a question that has also preoccupied many movement activists.

It is also the right question for our historical moment. Across much of the world, societies caught in the grip of the aggressive form of capitalism that we call neoliberalism

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have witnessed large and strident protests by masses of people. These people are reacting to so-called austerity policies that mean rising inequality, lowered earnings, higher unemployment, cutbacks in funding for education and the gutting of the welfare state programs that were the great achievement of the movements of the last century. Taken together, these policies mean that the promises of prosperity and upward mobility that characterized capitalist democracies have been broken, or in the language of sociology, expectations frustrated, and the result is often characterized as a lost decade, even a lost generation. Moreover, the broken promises' deep roots in the dynamics of neoliberal capitalism suggest that there will be no quick remedies.

In the United States, the more riveting of the resulting protests were called Occupy. They began in the fall of 2011 with an encampment in a small park in downtown Manhattan that the activists named Occupy Wall Street (OWS)! The crowds of largely young people announced their slogan, 'We are the ninety-nine percent; They are the one percent!' The encampment idea and the slogan caught fire, and encampments spread to perhaps 300 cities across the country, attracting not only the young but also some unionists and some poor people as well. For two months, the Occupations were in the news, and their issue, extreme inequality caused by the excesses of the financial sector, actually made its way into mainstream political discussion. Then local authorities ordered the police to clear away the tents, along with the sleeping bags and the makeshift kitchens and libraries, and it seemed to be over. The protestors had succeeded in doing what protest movements usually try to do: they had used street drama, bravado and clamor to bring their issue of extreme inequality into the limelight. Even the speakers at the Republican convention endlessly repeated the mantra of jobs and economic recovery. Of course, those were just words (and words intended to mislead by promoting pro-business policies as the solution to unemployment and economic slowdown). Obviously, neither the protest messaging nor the political rhetoric that responds to messaging was enough to advance the goals of the movement.

I should try to characterize the motley crowds of the Occupy Movement, because they did not fit entirely comfortably into our usual movement descriptors based on class or gender or race, for example. Its participants tended to be young, which made sense if only because this moment in capitalist development has hit the young hard. In the United States, young people now finish school with high debts and narrowed employment prospects. So maybe it was a youth movement. But young people are generally in the forefront of protest movements, if only because the advantages of biology and fewer social responsibilities make them more mobile and maybe more hopeful as well. This movement surely seemed intent on portraying itself as new and different. 'Occupy everything; demand nothing,' they proclaimed in an effort to show themselves as the agents of total and uncompromising transformation. While the tactic of occupation was not exactly new – the labor movement in the 1930s had occupied factories, and squatting on land or in houses is a familiar form of collective action in the United States and elsewhere – it was a break with the usual movement repertoire of marches and demonstrations, tactics that have the disadvantage of posing only very short-term inconvenience to the authorities and seem mainly aimed at affecting public opinion and electoral politics. In this respect, Occupy was different, partly because it was less familiar and partly because the protestors were not going to board the buses and go away at sundown.

While they lasted, the occupations marked a physical space, a place where you could find the movement.

All this contributed to the movement's attention-getting in its early weeks and its media splash. The phrase 'we are the 99 percent' became familiar. The Occupiers had succeeded in thrusting their issue, extreme inequality, into the political limelight. Republican contenders denounced the 'growing mobs occupying Wall Street and other cities' and condemned President Obama and the Democrats for sympathizing with Occupy (Friedman, 2011). But across the country the conversation changed. For example, the rather staid journal of the American Federation of Teachers now featured articles about 'Watching inequality grow' (Neuman and Celano, 2012). So I think Occupy should be counted as a communication success. This is the first hurdle a new political movement must surmount: it must command attention in the midst of all the chatter and static. It must communicate its issue to a wide audience, including its potential constituents. Notice, after all, that this is what movement marches and rallies and banners are all about.

But communication is not enough. Successful movements have to go beyond raising issues to exercising power; in particular, they have to summon the distinctive form of power that belongs to movements: the power of disruption or the threat of disruption. Elsewhere I have sometimes called this interdependent power, and I will explain what I mean by that in a moment. But back to Occupy, because I want to use the strategic dilemmas of that movement to illustrate my argument about interdependent power.

In the months after the encampments were cleared, the Occupy protestors ruminated and discussed, convening in their working groups to decide what they should do next. Then in the late summer of 2012 they announced a new campaign they called 'Strike Debt' that built on an earlier 'Occupy Student Debt' campaign and announced itself with the now familiar Occupy antics. A New York City Debtors' Assembly formed, meeting in Washington Square Park, and protestors marched in the 'Night of the Living Debt.'

Antics aside, at root, the idea behind the campaign was simple but awesome. The financial system ('Wall Street') had entangled tens of millions of Americans in debts, often on usurious and deceptive terms. These debts were carried on the books of the banks and other creditors as assets, of course. But what if people mounted a challenge to predatory lending and refused to pay? This could be a powerful blow to the financial sector. Student debt had reached the trillion-dollar mark that summer, while millions of homeowners held mortgages worth more than the market value of their houses, and credit card debt was rising sharply, reaching US$700 billion. 'Debt is the tie that binds the 99 percent, the Occupiers chanted' (McKee, 2012). And in numerous working groups and the assemblies, the idea of a debtors' strike began to take hold.

Of course, there are lots of problems that have to be confronted for a debtors' strike to grow and wield real power over the financial sector. I will turn to some of these strategy problems in a moment. But first I want to argue that OWS has identified a distinctive kind of power. It is a form of power that is rooted not in the control of coercive force, wealth, prestige or formal authority, but in the webs of economic, political and social cooperation that constitute social life. It is a kind of power that is often summoned by dominant groups in social relationships, as, for example, when employers threaten to move a plant overseas, but it is sometimes mobilized by subservient groups as well.

Moreover, it is a kind of power that increases and spreads as the division of labor increases and spreads; as societies become more complex and more intertwined; and as patterns of cooperation become more extended and fragile. I call this interdependent power.

Usually when sociologists consider power abstractly they assume it is rooted in the control of resources, especially control of wealth and force or control of the institutional positions through which wealth and force can be deployed.[1] The sorts of understandings that result from this perspective are familiar. The factory owner controls investment and jobs and so dominates the workers; the general deploys troops, and civilians cower and run; the large landholder squeezes the peasants; the rich dominate the poor, and so on. Moreover, wealth and force are typically used together, as when the general's troops are deployed to aid the factory owner or the landholder, or more generally to defend the institutional bastions of wealth against challenges from below.

This is the usual view, and it explains most of our historical experience. But it does not explain all of our experience. Sometimes peasants rise up against landlords, workers rise against factory owners, the poor rise against the rich. Sometimes people with little wealth or institutional authority and minimal control over coercive force do exercise some power, at least for a time, against those who have ample wealth, authority and the means of force. Merely to list the resources of the contending parties in the customary fashion gives us little understanding of these episodes, because the power sometimes wielded by subordinate groups does not arise from wealth or control of the militia or the army. Rather, their power is rooted in the occasional ability of people at the bottom end of economic or political or social relationships to refuse, to strike, to withdraw or threaten to withdraw from systems of institutionalized cooperation.

In fact, while the familiar lists of power resources grounded in wealth, force, prestige or institutional authority seem to be consistent with the accelerating inequality of power in the United States and elsewhere, other features of neoliberal capitalism may have increased the *potential* of interdependent power. Distinctive features of contemporary capitalist economies make them exceptionally vulnerable to the withdrawal of cooperation; in other words, to the strike power in its many forms. These features include extended chains of production, reliance on the Internet to mesh elaborate schedules of transportation and production, and just-in-time production doing away with the inventories that once shielded corporations from the impact of the production strike. Contemporary economies rely on dense and fragile interactions, often over long distances. Many groups have appointed roles in these interactions. Therefore, many of them also have the potential capacity to disrupt the interactions by exercising interdependent power.

This is what Strike Debt intended to do. Of course, the resistance would have been enormous and the obstacles formidable. Strike Debt might not have succeeded; indeed, so worrisome were the obstacles that, so far at least, there has been no debtors' strike on a scale that generates enough power to test its underlying proposition about potential power. But the idea nevertheless deserves our attention. The OWS activists were asserting that just as industrialists depend on workers for production and profit, so do the financial titans who have extended vast sums of credit – to homeowners and students and credit card holders and government agencies that float bonds – depend on these borrowers, whose loans constitute a good portion of the capital of the financial industry.

In some ways, it is a hard to get your mind around a debtors' strike. We are used to the idea that workers can exercise power through the strike, or at least they once could. Workers refuse to play their normal roles in the factories or the fast food restaurants, they walk off the job, and the assembly line ceases, the food service stops. But the idea of the striking worker conjures up in our minds the image of a muscled and belligerent fellow, while the debtor is a shrinking and shamefaced little guy. The images are of course cultural constructions. Striking workers are often beaten, muscled or not, and the bizarrely ridiculous Donald Trump was in fact a debtor, indeed a big time debtor, while he made his fortune.

This in fact brings me to the first of a series of problems in actually realizing interdependent power. Before people can try to exercise power by refusal, by ceasing or threatening to cease playing their customary cooperative roles, they have to recognize the importance of what they normally do to those above them whom they want to bend to their will. And they have to see this in the face of ruling class definitions that privilege the contributions of dominant groups. So, a kind of redefinition of the nature and value of social contributions is crucial to the emergence of protest. It was what the Wobblies were trying to do when they sang, 'It is we who plowed the prairies, built the cities where they trade; dug the mines and built the workshops, endless miles of railroad laid.' Their words were intended to show workers, all kinds of workers, that their bosses needed them. Note that the message is the opposite of what employers try to communicate when they demean or trivialize work and workers, when they exert themselves to preach to workers about the uselessness of the strike, or when they advertise the ease with which workers can be replaced in a global economy. The recognition of interdependent power is always the initial problem in activating interdependent power. Before people can try to exercise power by using the leverage inherent in social cooperation, they have to see that their cooperation is necessary to those who ordinarily are in charge.

Occupy was trying to tackle this problem, in Yates McKee's (2012) words, to break 'with the zombie-like servitude to Wall Street … [and with] debt shame.' The Debtors' Assembly was conceived as an occasion for debtors to find each other, to speak as debtors, to make indebtedness the focus of a political movement. 'Millions already do not and cannot pay their debt and are in effect on strike. These de facto strikers constitute … an invisible army of defaulters with massive political potential …' Or, in the words of Occupier Christopher Casuccio, 'Refusal … is an empowering, collective challenge to an illegitimate and predatory debt system.'[2]

There are other important obstacles to the realization of interdependent power that help explain why it is not actualized more often and more widely. Cooperative economic and social relations are institutionalized, which means they are rule-governed. Some of those rules are embedded in custom and others are matters of law, which means their enforcement involves the majesty and coercive power of the state. Even when people recognize the importance of their contributions to their antagonists, it is hard to break rules. After all, rules and rule-abiding behavior is a basic postulate of social life, ordering human activities according to the wisdom born of accumulated experience and securing us against the unexpected and unknown. People need rules, and they share an antipathy to the rule-breaker.

But rules are also the vehicle for the play of power in human affairs, for people's efforts to pursue their interests by subordinating others. The rules governing economic

and social cooperation are important in this process, because they specify the behaviors that are permissible by the different parties to interdependent relations. Thus, there are few rules that limit how capital can be deployed but strict rules governing worker strikes. Indeed, strikes and worker 'combinations' were outlawed for most of American history, and even after those broad prohibitions were eliminated, job actions were closely prescribed and, consequently, their disruptive effects were limited by the laws governing strikes. Many public sector workers in the United States are still denied the right to strike by state laws.

Strike Debt is perhaps especially difficult, because it proposed to break both with the strong age-old customs and with the laws that shield the lender from defaults by the debtor. True, the lenders in this case are the banks and financial companies that have been charged in the press with immoral and maybe criminal manipulations. Even so, the cultural norms and legal sanctions that are wielded against those who default on their debts remain strong. Note that the familiar argument against writing down the principle of inflated mortgages is that this would create the 'moral hazard' of easing the burden on debtors. So, although lenders are obviously dependent on debtors, most of the time, the rules impede and may even prevent debtors from turning that dependence into power.

Another problem that must be overcome to actualize interdependent power is that the numerous contributors to interdependent relations must in some sense be organized, at least to the extent of being able to coordinate their action. This is usually more difficult from the bottom than from the top of interdependent relations, partly because the contributors on the bottom are both more numerous and have fewer of the usual resources that facilitate collective action. This problem always preoccupies activists, and it is reflected in the familiar movement injunction that people must be organized. But what it means to be organized is different in different contexts. To labor organizers trying to win a union recognition election, it means winning the votes of a majority of workers in the bargaining unit. For a community organizer, it may mean simply bringing together enough people in the community to create at least the appearance of community-wide sentiment about an issue, as the Occupiers who are working with Hurricane Sandy victims are trying to do. For the operatives of a political party, it means organizing, however fleetingly, a majority of voters in a political district on Election Day. From the point of view that I am delineating here, it means organizing the subordinate groups who are tied to the target in cooperative relations and whose refusal or withdrawal will disrupt that cooperation.

From this point of view, the Strike Debt idea cast its net over an exceptionally wide range of potential constituents, just because the financial industry casts a wide net of credit and indebtedness, including underwater homeowners, credit card borrowers, student debtors and the families who have co-signed their loans. Moreover, at only one degree of separation, municipalities and local special districts also carry huge debts to the banks, some part of which may even be of questionable legality, as the result of dubious fees or the fixing of interest rates exposed by the LIBOR scandal. These local government agencies would be toughened in their dealings with the banks if local community organizations hard hit by austerity policies mobilized to demand the agencies resist banker terms.

The vast scale of the organizing task that Occupy set for itself would be daunting if not prohibitive to most 'vertical' organizations. So would the formidable power of the financial industry that the Strike Debt campaign idea targeted. To be sure, Occupy is part of what may well be an entirely different kind of organizing, sometimes called horizontal organizing. 'Horizontalism,' says Immanuel Wallerstein, 'is the view that there are multiple kinds of justice movements, and these movements should speak to each other, deal with each other, without any one movement on top. They should be legitimating each other, rather than denouncing each other'. Such horizontalism is what Occupy espoused (Wallerstein, 2012: 110).

Both the scale of organizing or mobilizing demanded by a Strike Debt campaign and the power of the targeted financial industry suggest that the campaign was well beyond the capacity of relatively small Occupy groups. Occupy could only muster the large numbers needed for a multifaceted Strike Debt campaign if the campaign spread far beyond those at the center of the fledgling effort. If the economic downturn continues, those campaign partners may well emerge, and Occupy is unlikely to stand in the way, given its unusually relaxed stance regarding questions of organizational turf and its commitment to horizontal rather than vertical organizing. There are already student groups forming to fight student debt, and they may gain momentum from the stunning example of the successful Quebec student strike. Homeowners with underwater mortgages are mobilizing in a 'Home Defenders League' pioneered by former Acorn organizers. And the script of local campaigns to put pressure on government agencies to demand better terms from the banks that hold their bonds has virtually been written by the history of community organizing.

The biggest strategy problem of a Strike Debt campaign is also familiar from the history of movements. Defiant debtors have to be able to withstand reprisals, and the reprisals against a Strike Debt campaign are likely to be serious. True, some of the debts with which people have been saddled are probably illegal, and more of them are surely immoral. This may matter if the Democratic Party feels forced to choose between its financial backers and insurgent debtor-voters. Still, the movement would have to be large and threatening before Democratic politicians would interfere with the lowering of credit ratings, wage garnishments, the entrapment of movement organizers, the forced evictions of foreclosed families and the jailing of eviction resisters, all of which are reprisals now available to the financial industry. And a movement cannot become big and threatening unless it survives the early exemplary protests that show people what is possible.

Some Occupiers tried to solve that problem by creating funds capable of buying up written-down debts. I was skeptical. But that isn't because I rule out less-than-defiant strategies. It may well be that the debtor strike can survive and grow by combining the sort of advocacy work that entangles creditors in legal procedures and slows down foreclosures and other forms of debt collection with more openly defiant action. Some groups, like City Lights in Boston, are doing this sort of advocacy now, with some success. Moreover, local activism to put real pressure on local governments and special districts to bargain hard with the banks is risk-free. Meanwhile – and there will be a meanwhile because a debtor strike is unlikely to reach its peak quickly – local campaigns to put pressure on congress people to rewrite bankruptcy laws, or to amend the Community Reinvestment Act to loosen credit terms when banks forgive local loans, could also be part of a debtors' movement.

Still, there is probably no way a debtors' movement can avoid risk. We should not be cavalier about those risks but assess them as best we can, adding to the usual movement analysis of the concentration of people and grievances and political opportunities an analysis of the capacity of local law enforcement and the movement's capacity to restrain local law enforcement. Those who brave the authorities should be willing and prepared. And we should also remember that protest movements have always taken risks. The consequences can be tragic. But sometimes people win something, and sometimes they even change history.

Funding

Note

1. The sociological literature on power resources is large. See for example Collins (1975: 60–61); or see my review of that literature as part of a more developed version of the argument I am making here, in Piven and Cloward (2004).
2. Quote from Yates McKee, 'With September 17 Anniversary on the Horizon, Debt Emerges as Connective Thread for OWS', July 13, 2012, WAGING NONVIOLENCE Website.

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Résumé

Tout mouvement de protestation émanent des couches les plus basses de la société est dans l'incapacité de déployer les ressources que nous attribuons généralement à

un instrument de pouvoir efficace. Mon argument est que l'éventuel succès de tels mouvements dépend de l'activation, par les protestataires, d'une forme de pouvoir caractéristique. Ce pouvoir prend racine dans leur capacité à perturber les arrangements coopératifs qui constituent les sociétés. Une 'occupation de Wall Street' envisagée dans le cadre d'une grève de la dette est un exemple de ce type de stratégie et des terribles obstacles à sa mise en place.

Mots-clés
Communication, interdépendance, perturbation, pouvoir, règles

Resumen
El movimiento de protesta de los sectores más bajos de la sociedad no puede hacer uso de los recursos a los que solemos atribuir el ejercicio efectivo del poder. Sostengo que cuando triunfan dichos movimientos, es porque los manifestantes han activado un tipo de poder peculiar. Este poder se basa en su capacidad para alterar los acuerdos de cooperación que constituyen las sociedades. La contemplación de la huelga de deudores 'Ocupa Wall Street' es un ejemplo de dicha estrategia y de los formidables obstáculos a su actuación.

Palabras clave
Alteración, comunicación, interdependencia, normas, poder

Communicative Methodology: Successful actions and dialogic democracy

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Abstract

Framed in a context of questioning of the social sciences by European institutions, this article offers an example of a way of doing organic public sociology for and with civil society. The authors employ the Communicative Methodology, which goes beyond oppositions between descriptive and normative sociology. It does so by using the concept of 'successful actions,' which brings scientific knowledge into dialogue with the knowledge of people from the communities and institutions involved. Thanks to Communicative Methodology, the European Parliament approved the successful actions from a study of a Roma neighborhood in extreme poverty, leading to the creation of a successful cooperative with sustainable employment. In sum, this public sociology calls for a dialogic democracy accountable to all voices, in which the successful actions that researchers analyze then get recreated in collaboration with the publics, so that society can implement them to improve people's living conditions.

Keywords

Communicative methodology, dialogic democracy, organic public sociology, Roma research

In April 2005, the European Parliament unanimously voted to support the main conclusion of the research project *Workaló*, carried out by CREA (the Institute for Research on Overcoming Inequality) as a form of organic public sociology. The approved resolution called on the Council, the Commission, the member states and the candidate countries to

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consider recognizing the Roma as a European minority. After that, the Spanish Parliament recognized the Roma, leading to institutional changes that seek to guarantee the inclusion of Roma voices in any policy-making that concerns the Roma people. This was a unique achievement, as hitherto the European Parliament had recognized only states and not peoples. At the same time, these political achievements and research outcomes were limited, as can be seen in the increased racism against the Roma during the current economic crisis and in policies introduced by particular member states. Nonetheless, the recognition of the Roma as a minority has diminished such backlash and helped both individual societies and the European Union to combat racism.

The project's final conference took place at the European Parliament, and it was attended by members of the EU, representatives from the parliaments of the member states, Roma leaders and many representatives from civil society. Lívia Járóka – one of the main Romani leaders in Europe and among the parliamentarians who would later present the proposed resolution to the European Parliament – recognized that *Workaló* had been the most important achievement for the Roma people in the last decade.

Throughout the 20th century, the Roma rejected professional and academic sociological research that they considered to be exclusionary. They argued that behind the appearance of scientific neutrality, these studies promoted social exclusion, disguising racist prejudices as scientific concepts. This Roma hostility has been expressed by many Roma scholars and activists. Ian Hancock (1988: 14), for instance, argues that researchers frequently promote the idea that the Roma 'must be kept in a time capsule if we are to remain as real gypsies – illiterate, nomadic and primitive, the way Himmler wanted us.' Under the veil of neutrality and objectivism, such conclusions reinforce rather than diminish social prejudice. In other cases, researchers tended to emphasize cultural differences or attribute particular behaviors to Roma culture when they were in fact the result of social exclusion.

Increasingly, the Roma people have rejected professional sociology because researchers would come distributing their questionnaires and asking for information but then disappear. Later on, community members would discover that the information had been published, and they had not even received a copy. The same procedure – 'ask and disappear' – can be found in qualitative studies, but here the effects were worse, as the researchers spend much more time with informants who sometimes share very personal and intimate feelings, experiences and insights. Many Romani families have often felt betrayed by 'best-seller seekers' who, after obtaining the necessary information for their novels, have forgotten about them. Roma hospitality, therefore, turns into a reluctance and refusal to be exploited in this way, again and again.

In contrast, Roma people became enthusiastic about our Communicative Methodology (CM), which placed them at the center of the discussions, from the formulation of the project until the elaboration of the conclusions. This entailed a dialogic collaboration from beginning of the research process to the end. Community members actively participated in every aspect of the research process but especially when it came to interpreting and making meaning of the information they provided.

In this methodology, the researchers do not embed themselves and become like any other participant, as occurs in some kinds of participatory and action research. Researchers

are university professors with salaries dedicated to the creation of scientific knowledge, while many Roma participating in the study had their own jobs as street vendors and the like. The researchers have the obligation to bring existing scientific knowledge – especially knowledge of interventions and institutions that work or do not work in given contexts – into dialogue with the experiences of the community. Through such dialogue, new knowledge is created.

The debates between academics, policy-makers and civil society about this new step toward a more inclusive Europe led to new developments in sociological theory. Habermas had proposed for Europe what he called *constitutional patriotism.* He did so after abandoning Parsons' concept of a single *societal community* because he could not understand how such a subsystem 'sets itself off from the others' (Habermas, 1987: 427) as a result of the expressive revolution. We at CREA, however, argued that Parsons had made perfectly clear in his last books (not quoted by Habermas) that the expressive revolution does not require any subsystem to be set off from the others but, on the contrary, reintegrates them all into a renewed societal community, exemplified in the new common moral ground built by the US Civil Rights movement in the 1960s (Parsons and Kenneth, 1966). So, we argued that what we need in Europe is not a constitutional patriotism but a dialogic turn around the idea of societal community, a European societal community developed jointly and dialogically by politicians and civil society, including the recognition of minorities like the Roma. Some social scientists subscribe to the false assumption that doing sociology with publics cannot be theoretical, while making sociology inaccessible to the public *ipso facto* means being theoretical. Many examples demonstrate just how wrong this assumption is (Puigvert, 2012). For instance, Louis Althusser wrote *Reading Capital* without having himself read *Capital*[1] and invented a Marxist structuralism by distinguishing between a young, idealistic Marx and a mature, scientific Marx that justified the sociologist's distance from actual workers' movements. Althusser's theoretical imposture unfortunately had many followers. On the contrary, doing organic public sociology pushes researchers to delve deeply into theoretical work from multiple disciplines, in search of insights that will advance their dialogue with subjects.

Therefore, CM brings together the expert system on the one hand and the lifeworld and human agency on the other, without imposing or eliminating one at the expense of the other. For instance, the Roma asked the researchers what the scientific literature said about actions that had been successful in addressing problems they faced related to housing or employment. They needed the researchers to share this knowledge about actions and the evidence for their success. Then, both researchers and community members could engage in a critical dialogue, reflecting on the successful actions and how they could be recreated in the Roma's context.

This type of organic public sociology, therefore, has an impact on society, even causing social transformation, but it also demonstrates the relevance of sociology to other social and natural sciences. Successful and even unsuccessful actions do not diminish but rather increase the contributions of public sociology to academia. In public sociology research projects, researchers not only collaborate with social and political agents but also with researchers in other social and natural sciences, thereby increasing the prestige of sociology in science as a whole.

Dialogic democracy and the Communicative Methodology of research

In May 2011, the 'Spanish Revolution,' as *The Washington Post* called it, used its social networks to spread recent developments in dialogic democracy. Since the 19th century, Spain has had a tradition of dialogic democracy. Many groups, including the Roma, have organized themselves in order to make their voices heard in the corridors of policy-making. In the present economic crisis, the hostility toward state politicians led in two very different directions. On the one hand, it led to the rejection of politicians in general, even to the rejection of parliaments, but also of different kinds of populism. On the other hand, the 'Spanish Revolution' created its own forms of participation, in an attempt to transform the relationship between the state and civil society through a renewed dialogic democracy accountable to all voices. Sulkunen (2012: 6) clarifies: 'Representative democracy is based on the principle that subjects of a political system, e.g., a nation, naturally have what Rousseau called a general will, *volunté générale*, which can be articulated in agreements and compromises through debates and votes, ideally in town meetings of small societies.' The Spanish Revolution developed this kind of town meetings, and, through the Internet, it has sought to universalize them.

Many public sociologists had an important role in this Spanish Revolution (Sordé and Santos, 2011). Some have integrated this tradition of dialogic democracy into their research methodologies. After the impact of the *Workaló* project, the CREA team started to prepare for the next project that covered all vulnerable groups in Europe. In 2006, CREA was selected to lead the INCLUD-ED Integrated Project, dedicated to identifying strategies that contributed to the reduction of social inequalities.

At the European Commission, the Directorate-General of Research is in charge of the Research Framework Programs (FPs). These FPs include small and large projects. INCLUD-ED was a large project, the only one coordinated by Spanish social scientists (with the participation of 15 European universities). In 2012, during the development of the new FP (Horizon 2020), the Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) were put in jeopardy. The Commission wanted to eliminate this specific area. Many supporters of this position claimed to have evidence that most research projects had not had any impact on society; meanwhile, other social sectors of civil society (i.e. minorities, women, migrants) had also rejected the studies because they had failed to take their voices into account. In the end, the European Parliament decided to maintain this specific area thanks to successful studies like INCLUD-ED and to the support of scientific associations like the International Sociological Association (ISA). The Spanish tradition of dialogic democracy, found in CM, has been extremely useful for promoting relations between the members of the European Parliament and the sociological research community, as well as relations between states, civil society and the academy. The European Commission recently published a document outlining 10 successful studies, and INCLUD-ED was the only one from the area of the SSH (European Commission, 2011).

CM stems from various theoretical traditions. For instance, Habermas (1984: 118) argues in the theory of communicative action that 'the agent possesses just as rich an interpretive competence as the observer himself.' Thus, the dialogic creation of meaning

is based on the arguments each side provides and not on their social or academic position. A researcher's point of view has no more weight than an illiterate participant, but each should be judged according to the arguments they contribute to the conversation. John Searle has criticized Habermas's misunderstanding of his concept of speech acts, and we agree with him. We do not base the dialogue between researchers and subjects on Habermas's understanding of speech acts and his concepts of power and validity claims, but on the notion of communicative acts that promote dialogic interactions and reduce power interactions (Searle and Soler, 2004).

The relevance of the subjects' interpretations is also based on Schütz and Luckmann's (1974) phenomenology, which explains that our sociological ideal types are grounded in people's typifications, developed from the common sense of their daily lives. However, CM also draws on Mead's (1934) symbolic interactionism, which shows how interpretations depend on interaction and not just on the individual subject. CM requires conditions that enable intersubjective dialogue among participants that establishes clear criteria and consensus in order to identify emerging categories and contrasting interpretations. Along these lines, Garfinkel's (1986) ethnomethodology offers a better framework to understand subjects in their contexts, demonstrating that people are not 'cultural dopes.'

We can illustrate these processes with a case study conducted at the beginning of the economic crisis in one of the most marginalized and dangerous *barrios* (neighborhoods) in Spain. Evidence from previous research, conducted with CM, has helped to diminish exclusion in areas such as education, drugs, health and employment, and thus made important steps toward the reduction of economic inequality. This *barrio* emerged as a result of a local plan to eradicate the shanty towns in the 1980s. The neighborhood was already marginalized even before the plan to house families there, mostly Roma, who had no access to housing in any other area of the city.

The emerging narratives mixed fiction and reality. It was widely believed, with a basis in reality, that the police did not dare to enter the *barrio*, either during the day or at night. However, CREA researchers went where the police did not dare to go, chatting and sharing time with community members from diverse cultures and living in all sorts of situations. Other stories had emerged from the tellers' ignorance and their social and geographical distance from the people living in the *barrio*. Some professionals working with the people from the *barrio* (e.g. social workers, community organizers and doctors) held beliefs about what could and could not be done. For instance, a myth spread that it was impossible to work with the people living there, suggesting that they were not interested in changing their lives or their community. There was also a widespread belief that people did not dare to be in the streets at night, because crime pervaded the community and people stayed in their homes, terrified. The gap between these beliefs and reality was revealed when one of the authors spent the night there, in an ex-prisoner's home with his family, and walked around the squares and streets at night. All of what he had heard was false. Some people did stay in their homes at night, but others were in the streets; children were playing in the squares, and groups of people were chatting. Furthermore, they were discussing and dreaming about how to change the *barrio* by creating new opportunities. One cannot dismiss these discoveries of the public sociologist – the discovery of a people with potentials and dreams.

This potential was the basis for creating an institution of dialogic democracy, the Citizens' Council, made up of real representatives of the people from the streets, who really knew the community. Until that moment, all public funds for tackling the *barrio*'s problems had been distributed among organizations that provided programs or projects. The community itself was not consulted about their needs or how they could be addressed. On the contrary, European structural funds went to programs that – because of their distance from the community itself – had no effect on school dropout rates, unemployment or drug addiction. If people had been consulted they would have been able to offer much insight into such problems, although they might not have had the expertise to formulate precise ways of tackling them.

The public sociologists highlighted the need to integrate people's views and opinions into decision-making processes. Generally, the community did not have the expertise to propose remedies; rather, this was the responsibility of the public sociologists – to share the knowledge accumulated in the scientific community, including the outcomes from public research that had been funded with these citizens' taxes. Researchers had already explored various ways of solving similar problems, so they could share this knowledge with the community, which was more familiar with its own specific challenges and particularities. Working with these two types of knowledge, it was possible to re-fashion old solutions for new situations. One such initiative was the Citizens' Council. The scientific literature indicated that randomly chosen citizens or grassroots groups can play an important role in community decision-making, as for example, in British Columbia's Citizens' Assembly. Following this path, the Citizens' Council was created as a decision-making body that would monitor the transformation process. It was from this Council that the *Dialogic Inclusion Contract* (DIC) was launched.

The Citizens' Council convened a series of discussions and group reflections that led to a contract to hold the Roma representatives, social workers and other professionals working in the *barrio* (such as teachers, city council representatives, state government officials and university researchers) accountable for supporting all those strategies that have been scientifically proven to promote social inclusion and re-creating them in this particular context. Through the DIC, everyone's role was defined and agreed upon. The university researchers had the responsibility to provide the list of successful actions that the international scientific community had shown to be effective. They were also in charge of training the professionals, the community and politicians to understand and implement these actions. From their end, the Roma families provided the criteria through which each of these actions would fit into their own identities and aspirations. One of the most important problems affecting the majority of families in the *barrio* was unemployment; therefore, the Council made the creation of new job opportunities a priority. In the following section, we examine the attempt to create employment launched by public sociologists in dialogue with the unemployed themselves.

Organizing consensus among academy, civil society, the public and the state

The recent worldwide financial crisis has had devastating consequences for the everyday life of many families who have seen their standards of living drastically reduced.

Descriptive sociology analyzes these social effects, providing a useful and necessary account of the social processes involved, but it does not help to prevent them from happening again – or at least contribute to reducing them – in a future crisis. We will better understand who is most vulnerable to such a crisis, but not how to reverse, stop or diminish the devastation. The task of normative sociology, on the other hand, is to determine what can be done to withstand a future financial crisis. On the basis of expert knowledge, normative sociology should propose ways of avoiding future crises and their effects. However, this normative approach should not be confused with the particular values of the people doing professional sociology, values developed without experiencing or participating in civil society.

CM seeks to go beyond the opposition between descriptive and normative social science by defining and elaborating the idea of 'successful actions.' When it was time for people from the *barrio* to propose actions that would lead to the creation of new and sustainable jobs, the public sociologists from CREA brought up the example of the Mondragon Cooperatives, which are managed through a complex process of dialogic democracy (Redondo et al., 2011). While 24% of Spanish capitalist companies were not able to survive the financial crisis, this unique example of a non-capitalist economy, which is the seventh largest industrial group in Spain in terms of asset turnover, only closed one of its 112 cooperatives. Moreover, the 35 workers at this one cooperative were reallocated to other cooperatives in the group, thereby avoiding unemployment. The Basque Country has half the rate of unemployment of the rest of Spain, in part because the Mondragon cooperatives are located there and they have almost no unemployment. CM undertakes a reflexive and critical analysis of the specific actions that make such success not only possible but also institutionally resilient. The goal is to look for what has already shown itself to be effective in overcoming or reducing inequalities and to then try to identify the universal principles that can be adopted in and adapted to other communities facing similar challenges.

After discussing the idea in depth with the researchers, the Citizens' Council decided to attempt to recreate the 'successful action' of Mondragon in their own community. Unemployed people, some of them ex-prisoners, were put in contact with Mondragon with the result that several cooperatives have now been launched in the *barrio*. The critique of capitalism and individualism has a more solid foundation when it finds expression in such a 'successful action' that not only contributes to economic sustainability or stands on higher principles of equity but is also more efficient than comparable capitalist companies.

In June 2010, the first assembly to constitute the cooperative took place. Evidence-based, dialogically created knowledge, combined with real democracy, defined the initial process. The meetings to decide on the creation of the cooperative and on its functioning took the form of community assemblies, as part of the DIC. The idea to recreate Mondragon's successful actions was launched as the *barrio* institutions were outsourcing many services to outside companies, even as within the community there were people who had been unemployed long-term and were experiencing social exclusion. So the initial idea was to reverse these two processes: to train and then hire the local unemployed so that they could provide these services. Another idea that was extensively discussed was the creation of a workers' cooperative to formalize economic activities that

had developed informally, such as the collection of a very special species of snail called *serranillas*, native to the area.

At the beginning, a series of workshops were organized for people who were interested in becoming coop members in the areas of entrepreneurship, sports instruction, school cafeterias, professional services and management. A partnership with the University of Castilla-La Mancha, among others, was launched to support and advise the creation of service cooperatives, and the cooperative provided sports instructors, cleaning services, auxiliary services (such as school cafeterias and care), construction (remodeling and repair) and services to companies subcontracted for particular jobs. After a while, members realized that the model could be expanded to other areas in order to employ more people, as more community members became interested in being involved. In seeking new strategic areas, the cooperative entered the sphere of agricultural services, which involved labor market mediation between farmers and seasonal workers. The cooperative reached an agreement with the UPA (Association of Small Farmers) and the ASAJA (Agricultural Association of Young Farmers) in order to provide them with personnel (cooperative members) who were willing to work for them. Through this program, the cooperative has already hired 80 people, but the plan is to expand these services to the province of Albacete and to other countries in Europe. The client agricultural organizations which have signed the agreement estimate that in the province of Albacete alone, there is a demand for 10,000 seasonal workers per year. Besides all this, the cooperative is developing a business incubator in the *barrio* and promoting self-employment. The cooperative not only seeks to expand and grow but also to promote new entrepreneurial experiences, preferably in the form of cooperatives.

The management of cooperative labor follows the principles of dialogic democracy. This includes worker-members' participation in the distribution of benefits, equity and management. Within the cooperative, the democratic principle of one member, one vote is applied. In this way, everyone participates in the decision-making processes, promoting solidarity among all the members of the cooperative. The innovative social character of the cooperative gives a special quality to the provision of services, not just in the way they are delivered but also in the personal relations that develop with clients.

The newly created cooperative has had a transformative effect in reducing inequality and poverty. In the short time since their implementation, the services offered by the cooperative have achieved impressive results. The cooperative currently provides stable employment for 11 people, all of whom had previously been in a situation of social exclusion. The cooperative is facing today's crisis successfully in one of the poorest *barrios* in Southern Europe. It has improved living conditions of many families in the *barrio*. Furthermore, 80 people have been hired in seasonal jobs in the fields and other agricultural sectors. It has also developed novel strategies for increasing income, securing funding to conduct training workshops and for facilitating social inclusion.

Identifying successful actions by reviewing the scientific literature and analyzing existing cases that have overcome barriers to social justice and human emancipation provides the basis for the further dialogic engagement with the public and civil society. Different from normative sociology, the public sociology of successful actions establishes dialogic exchanges between expert knowledge on what works and the experiences and views of the end-users. However, it is the responsibility of the citizens and the

politicians they have elected democratically to decide what should be done; that is not decided by social scientists drawing from the data they collect or by any exclusive interpretation by the researchers. The dialogue between civil society, politicians and academia serves as the basis for developing successful actions in each particular context. It becomes public sociology when the successful actions are debated and recreated with the public and when their implementation is designed to improve the conditions of public life. It is a process of decolonization of the lifeworld; the voice of the people is located at the very center of social action. In this way, the successful cooperative action drawn from the Mondragon case is presented to and recreated in different communities.

The successful action methodology also challenges the often-heard argument that what works in one context does not necessarily work in another, on the assumption that each context possesses a uniqueness of its own. Successful action research shows how international research teams can identify common elements found in different actions that explain their success in very different contexts. Recreating Mondragon in different settings offers concrete examples of how it is possible to reduce inequalities and create a better world for everybody.

There are those who say that only people with academic credentials are useful in the new information economy. If this were true, the *barrios* would not be able to create new jobs or businesses. Public sociology has demonstrated the falsity of this conventional wisdom by pointing to such social arrangements such as the Citizens' Council, which reduces social exclusion and creates employment. Suddenly, the people that society had condemned as only knowing about crime become active citizens in multiple fields, developing collective capacities for deliberation and innovation that had previously lain dormant.

Funding

Note

1. Millions of people thought that they knew Marxism by reading Althusser's book or the 'versions' written by his disciples like Marta Harnecker. Years later, in *The Future Lasts a Long Time*, Althusser recognized that Raymond Aron was right when he qualified Althusser's work – as well as that of Sartre – as 'imaginary' Marxisms (Althusser, 1992: 214).

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Author biographies

Ramon Flecha is Professor of Sociology at the University of Barcelona. He has been the leading researcher in three important social science studies in Europe. The first, *Workaló*, was approved by the European Parliament and became the basis of successful policies and social actions. It received the Prize of the Catalan Federation of Roma. The second, INCLUD-ED, was the only study in the social sciences recognized among 10 success stories of scientific research in Europe. The third, IMPACT-EV, elaborates criteria of evaluation of social science research so that it not only has scientific and political impact but also social impact, improving the lives of citizens.

Marta Soler is Professor of Sociology at the University of Barcelona with a PhD from Harvard University. She is currently the Director of CREA, a research center focused on the analysis of how to overcome inequalities in different domains. With John Searle she is co-author of the book *Language and Social Science* (in Spanish), and has been the main researcher in a number of studies of inequality, including one entitled 'Communicative Acts and Social Inequalities in Gender Relations,' funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science. She is an Executive Committee member of the Catalan Association of Sociology and Vice-chair of the Social Theory Research Network of the European Sociological Association.

Résumé

Intégré dans un contexte de mise en question des sciences sociales par les institutions européennes, cet article offre un exemple de la manière de pratiquer la sociologie publique organique pour et avec la société civile. Nous employons une méthodologie de recherche communicative, qui va plus loin que les simples oppositions entre la sociologie descriptive et normative. Nous appliquons à ces fins le concept d''actions fructueuses', qui permet de rapprocher dans le dialogue le savoir scientifique et les connaissances des individus des communautés et des institutions. Grâce à la méthodologie communicative, le Parlement européen a approuvé les actions fructueuses d'une étude sur la communauté Rom et un quartier extrêmement pauvre de celle-ci, étude qui a abouti à la création d'une coopérative profitable offrant des opportunités d'emploi durables. En résumé, cette sociologie publique exige une démocratie dialogique qui est responsable devant chaque voix et dans le cadre de laquelle les actions fructueuses analysées par les chercheurs peuvent être recréées avec les publics pour que la société puissent les mettre en pratique et améliorer ainsi les conditions de vie des gens.

Mots-clés
Démocratie dialogique, methodologie communicative, recherche sur la communauté Rom, sociologie publique organique

Resumen
En el contexto de cuestionamiento de las ciencias sociales por parte de las instituciones europeas, este artículo ofrece un ejemplo de una forma de hacer sociología pública orgánica para y con la sociedad civil. Los autores utilizan la metodología comunicativa de investigación, que va más allá de las oposiciones entre la sociología descriptiva y la normativa. Lo hacen a través del concepto de 'actuaciones de éxito', el cual pone en diálogo el conocimiento científico con el conocimiento de las personas de base. Gracias a la metodología comunicativa, el Parlamento Europeo aprobó las actuaciones de éxito derivadas de una investigación sobre la comunidad gitana en un barrio en situación de extrema pobreza, lo que llevó a la creación de una cooperativa exitosa en la creación de empleo sostenible. En definitiva, esta sociología pública aboga por una democracia dialógica que considere todas las voces y en la cual las actuaciones de éxito que analizan los investigadores se recreen en colaboración con el público. De esta forma la sociedad podrá implementarlas y mejorar así las condiciones de vida de las personas.

Palabras clave
Democracia dialógica, investigación sobre Roma, metodología comunicativa, sociología pública

Sociology's interventions: Engaging the media and politics while remaining a social scientist

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Abstract
Public sociology implies not simply a general orientation to social research but also a methodology that connects the sociologist to a 'public.' This is the case, with some provisos, for the method of sociological intervention, invented by Alain Touraine, that I have pursued in studies of racism, anti-Semitism and terrorism, as well as of anti-nuclear and labor movements. The approach has led to complicated relations with the media and with politics. In this article I give a series of examples of such engagement and the dilemmas it creates for the sociologist who wants to maintain a critical distance. Ultimately, the question and the challenge of public sociology boil down to how one can intervene in social life and, at the same time, remain a social scientist.

Keywords
Media, politics, public, sociological intervention

It is true that I conceive of my work as a sociologist as something that cannot be restricted to academic life alone. More specifically, my starting point, like that of many of my colleagues, is a basic divide; there are two dimensions to my activities. The first, and for me personally the most important, consists of producing knowledge. This activity is not public; if not private, it is at least personal. There is nothing public about choosing an

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object, a question, then a method, and working out hypotheses. It is very frequently even a solitary task, or it takes place in a very small group with a research team.

The second dimension that characterizes the profession of sociologist, in my opinion, consists of the diffusion of knowledge, specifically the knowledge that I have produced. The most 'professional' sociologists believe that this diffusion should be carried out within a strictly limited and controlled world: students, colleagues, professional circles – one should, for example, only write in academic journals or participate in colloquia, congresses and the life of academic societies. One should not intervene in public discussions as a sociologist. In my opinion, diffusion should go much further and be based on a totally different conception from that of the academic who discusses with his or her peers and teaches his or her students. While this is an absolute necessity, of course, it is not enough. Indeed, my constant concern is to diffuse sociological knowledge in such a way as to make it useful to a maximum number of people, starting with the social actors concerned.

This is a truly optimistic point of view, the source of which may well date back to the spirit of the Enlightenment: the idea that knowledge raises our capacity for action – be it the action of individuals, of social actors or of society as a whole, on itself. The idea that knowledge brings progress deserves to be discussed, but as far as I am concerned, this idea is the cornerstone of my choice to do sociology – a decision I made 40 years ago now. I have sometimes heard it said, for example, that there is no point in trying to understand terrorism or racism. To do so would be to excuse evil and admit that one should confine oneself to combating them. I disagree. On the contrary, I believe that better understanding and diffusion of this knowledge is essential to combat the evil and to promote good.

Sociological intervention

The research I have done in the field has often employed the method of the sociological intervention, which I think is worth mentioning here. The sociological intervention was invented by Alain Touraine in the mid-1970s. This method aimed to create the conditions that would enable researchers and actors to analyze their action together, by adopting the hypothesis that while this action may have several meanings, there is one that is on a higher sociological level than the others. For example, militant workers may be interested in wages, in working conditions or in the state of the relevant legislation, but they may also – and this is on a higher sociological level – claim to adhere to a social movement that believes it is the workers who should run collective life, manage collective resources and control the general orientations of collective life. This sociological method is not in itself public sociology. It is a method whose principle is to co-produce knowledge, since the researchers and the actors analyze an action together. Numerous publications describe the method and especially its applications; I leave this point aside. Still, I insist: a sociological analysis is done with a very small number of people, whether researchers or groups studied, with an average of 10 members per group. The joint work is done without an audience, and the golden rule is confidentiality: what is said in an intervention group, between members or during the meetings that may occasionally include invited guests, is not intended to be public in any way.

Sociology becomes public later, when the research is finished, or at least when the results are obtained. Then, the researchers endeavor to broadcast the fruits of their labor, first and foremost to those with whom the research is primarily concerned. To continue the same example, if working class action has been studied by conducting five intervention groups for a period of one or two years, each comprising some 10 militants (roughly 50 activists in all), it will now be a question of expanding the contacts and meetings to a great number of trade unionists in various places, in order to offer them the opportunity to appropriate – through discussion with the research teams – the findings of the research.

We have here something much more than a mere attempt to broadcast findings; this is an important test. What other actors – and not only those with whom the research group worked – do with the findings obtained either validates or invalidates them. If the findings are in any way relevant, the public concerned must do something with them, say in one way or another that they are of use to them, that, for example, they improve their understanding of a strike which ended badly, a negotiation which took a surprising turn, etc. Or, again, that these findings shed a useful light on the capacity of the working class movement to maintain strong pressure on those in power or to constitute itself as a political actor. In this example, public sociology consists of creating an intellectual relationship with a wider public, of discussing the findings of the research to enrich its results and not only to diffuse knowledge. And, of course, the research can be extended to others besides the social actors most directly concerned. For instance, in the same example of the research on working class action, this extension may be a question of meeting not only trade unionists but also political actors, economists or leaders of associations, etc. From the point of view of this method, the main priority is the meetings with the people who are most directly concerned.

An interesting question deserves to be asked: when I worked with trade unions, or when I did research with *Solidarnosc* militants in Poland in 1980–1981, I was dealing with actors whom I respected and whose action I respected. There is nothing at all scandalous about contributing alongside the working class movement, or *Solidarnosc*, to raising the capacity for knowledge and action not only of the militants but also for many others beyond; quite the contrary. However, I have also used the same approach in studying racism, anti-Semitism and terrorism. How could I wish to raise the capacity for action of racists, anti-Semites or terrorists? In fact, co-producing knowledge with actors of this type cannot have an aim of this sort but, on the contrary, must aim to help them, through knowledge, to distance themselves from racism, anti-Semitism and terrorism. Moreover, the mere fact that they accept to sit down and think with a sociologist and his or her team indicates an opening, a vaguely recognized desire to evolve and move away from evil. Thus, it will be possible to spread knowledge primarily among those who wish to reduce these scourges – anti-racist militants, for example – rather than among racists.

I do take part in public discussion in France and internationally – both based on my own work and on the work of colleagues, if I consider it useful. I try to intervene only if I have some specific sociological contribution to bring to the debate. French sociologists, or at least some of them, wish to be considered intellectuals, that is, lay people who participate in public life. What differentiates them from the classical figure of the intellectual – like Jean-Paul Sartre, if you will – is that they do not wish to voice an opinion in areas in which they have no particular expertise. Though this is an oversimplification, in

the United States it tends to be the contrary. There, a good sociologist is a professional. He or she is not considered to be an intellectual, and he or she does not voice an opinion as a sociologist in the media, for example. I write in the French national press, usually the left-wing or center-left press. My favorite dailies are *Le Monde* and *Libération*, but I also like the regional press; the daily paper *Ouest-France*, in which I publish five or six articles a year, has the highest circulation in France. I like writing in this paper, because the public is not the one I am used to. I also publish online in France, on *Rue 89* and on *Books*, where I have blogs. Online newspapers have a huge advantage over the classical press, because articles there are published immediately, without having to wait one or two weeks and without being asked to cut your text for lack of space. I also fairly frequently speak on the radio or appear on television, particularly in an excellent program entitled *C dans l'air* where there is time to say what you think and the possibility of having a real discussion with the presenter and the three other guests.

Yes, I do indeed belong to the world of the intellectuals. Sometimes people criticize me for it, describing me somewhat contemptuously – and jealously – as a 'media' sociologist. The critique is unfair. I do not spend my time in editorial offices; I only speak about things I know – or of which I at least have some knowledge – even if I sometimes have fits of anxiety and wonder whether I am not a bit of a sham.

In 1999, a few friends and I launched *Le Monde des Débats*, a monthly publication of ideas and opinions that I had designed with the aim of getting a handful of journalists and social science researchers to work together. It was a wonderful experience; we published articles, discussions and fascinating interviews. But after two or three years, the money ran out. Thus, my friends and I turned to the owner of *Le Nouvel Observateur*, the big left-wing magazine. He was willing to fund us, but he insisted on having Jean Daniel, the editor of the *Le Nouvel Observateur*, be the director instead of me. Therefore, I accepted to become number 2. But, I resigned after six months, as Jean Daniel was very difficult and narcissistic. So the paper disappeared. Let me add that I also participate outside France; I write once a month in a Spanish daily called *La Vanguardia*, one a month in the Ukrainian version of *The Economist and* frequently in the French language daily in Canada called *La Presse*. But do not assume that I spend my time writing articles for the press; Raymond Aron once said, 'No more than two hours' for a newspaper article, and I systematically observe this rule. To avoid any misunderstandings: it is also important for me to publish in peer-reviewed academic journals, and after having edited one of these journals with Georges Balandier, called *Les Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie* (which is no longer in existence uniquely at the behest of Balandier), I am now preparing to launch a new social science journal called *Socio*.

Relating to politics

Max Weber wrote somewhere that the sociologist is a failed politician, and this remark may apply to me. I am very interested in politics, both national (French) and international. I try to be coherent, and I frequently wonder how well my analyses or my sociological choices remain true to my political orientations: I am a center-left person. Thus, my most recent book in French, entitled *Pour la prochaine gauche* (Robert Laffont, 2011), endeavors to move between sociological analyses and political recommendations.

Indeed, the title was suggested to me by my friend Martine Aubry, who at the time was the First Secretary of the *Parti Socialiste*.

I know a lot of politicians, and I must say that the well-known lectures in which Max Weber discusses the requisite distance between analysis and action, the ethic of responsibility and that of conviction, the scientist and the politician, are still totally relevant. Though a sociologist may very well be listened to by political actors, understood by them, intellectually and personally appreciated by them, the fact remains that the constraints governing political choices and decisions are rather different from those that shape sociological reasoning.

I am friendly with numerous political leaders and am on a first name basis with most of the current French ministers. Let me remind you that François Hollande was elected President of the Republic in 2012 and that shortly afterwards, in June 2012, the Socialist Party won the parliamentary elections. I am not a member of the Socialist Party and have never been a card-carrying member of any party. I am more of a fellow traveler, as we used to say of the intellectuals who were close to but not part of the Communist Party. And, I am watchful of my freedom and careful never to lose the critical spirit that is, I believe, the core characteristic of the sociologist.

When Martine Aubry was elected head of the Socialist Party, she followed my advice (and undoubtedly that of many others) and decided to create a *Laboratoire des Idées*, 'the LAB.' The LAB was a sort of think tank within her party, directed by a socialist member of parliament. In line with the approach I've described, I promoted a formula for the LAB that worked well: on a certain number of major issues that were likely to be decisive in the upcoming political battles, I set up working groups that were required to include three types of participants: intellectuals, specifically researchers in the social sciences, economics or politics; political leaders in the Socialist Party; and trade unionists or association leaders who could contribute a civil society viewpoint. If there had been only intellectuals, only politicians or only association leaders and trade unionists, such groups would have been useless. The main point was that these three types of perspectives meet. The LAB worked very well in the lead-up to the 2012 elections; since the Socialist Party won, it is now on hold. Apparently, they no longer need such fresh ideas.

The Left is now in charge, and the role of public sociology as I understand it could face a delicate balance. I think that the sociologist should produce knowledge and do research. The temptation to go into politics would be negate this imperative, despite being perfectly respectable. I also believe that the sociologist must be critical, which can only encourage him or her to maintain a certain distance from the powers that be. But if those in power generally have orientations that one finds acceptable or reasonable, should one not also play a contributing role? My answer is to maintain the link with this 'opposition' that has now acceded to power but not to abandon my role as sociologist. Thus, I have recently accepted to set up an analysis and reflection group for the Minister for Urban Affairs, which I will direct. The group will be composed of researchers capable of assisting the minister, not to make decisions but at times to give him a bit of distance from his everyday responsibilities.

Finally, I would like to say something about my present professional involvement, because it does have an aspect of public sociology. From the 1960s until the mid-1970s, France was a global center of intellectual life, a beacon that shone all over the world. It

was the country where discussion ranged par excellence, about the Revolution, Marx, communism, the Third World, decolonization, etc. Then, the Berlin Wall fell, globalization replaced the Cold War, and it became necessary to move away not only from discussions about colonialism but also from those about post-colonialism. In a world that was becoming increasingly multi-polar and subject to the linguistic hegemony of English, France lost its predominance. Today, French social sciences no longer fascinate as they used to yesterday. I was lucky enough to be President of the International Sociological Association from 2006 to 2010, and today I am chairing an important panel in the European Research Council. These positions have enabled me to evaluate the contemporary debates within our subject. I see that my country is not sufficiently present. Without the slightest chauvinism, I am endeavoring to contribute to the re-internationalization of French social science, including by expressing myself publicly on this topic.

Dilemmas of public sociology

However, it would be a mistake to think that public sociology as I understand and practice it is an easy road to tread. Each actor with whom a discussion is organized has his or her own sense of time, distinct from that of the sociologist, whose work spans a considerable period since the research may take several years. Politicians live in the here and now – journalists even more so. There may be a fairly long gap between when the research is done and when it is used in the public space. Here is an example. In 2005, I published the findings of a major survey on anti-Semitism in France. This survey shows that classical anti-Semitism is declining and that the new themes that sustain it, in particular among immigrant origin populations, do not make it a major threat. Seven years later, an important incident occurred in Toulouse, in which a young man of immigrant origin murdered three Jewish children and one teacher at the entrance to a Jewish school. The newspaper *Le Monde* interviewed me, and in the course of our conversation I explained that, contrary to the dominant opinion, an incident of this sort does not mean that we should speak of the return of anti-Semitism in France. Even though it was not recent, my research provided me with the requisite arguments, enabling me to take the opposite view and to have an impact on public discussion. Furthermore, I participate very frequently in France in discussions on communitarianism and minorities. I am among those who have demonstrated that there are in fact two dangers in my country and not simply one; of course there is communitarianism, but there is also the abstract universalism that leads to the rejection of any cultural or ethnic visibility in the public sphere.

Now, in the context of the killings in Toulouse, Nicholas Sarkozy, the Head of State, who was campaigning for the presidential election at the time, expressed not only his indignation but also his support for the Jewish community that had suffered so much. His electoral campaign was dominated by references to the Republican model and the rejection of communitarianism. Nevertheless, he made a point of paying homage to a community, even if a rather special one, going as far as to accompany victims' coffins – which were to be buried in Israel – to the airport. I then published an article that attracted a lot of attention, denouncing the incoherence of the Head of State who supports one community while presenting himself as being strongly anti-communitarian. As a result, I had an impact on the electoral discussion – the reader will have guessed that I was in the

camp opposed to Nicholas Sarkozy. Once again, had I not carried out research on these questions, I would not have been able to intervene in this dramatic, political situation with a degree of competence and therefore of intellectual legitimacy. Moreover, I could take this example further: after an interview in *Le Monde* and the article in *Libération* I was invited to participate in an important television broadcast during which a journalist from *Le Figaro* challenged me, saying, 'It's because of sociologists like you that the ideas that explain the odious act in Toulouse, circulate.' So I had contributed to creating the problem! In short, the involvement of sociologists in the public sphere does not mean that they create a consensus based on their analyses; on the contrary, they have to fight against intellectual opponents who are sometimes powerful and influential.

Finally, one question that deserves to be asked is whether, by making their findings public and endeavoring to make them widely available, sociologists do not run the risk of playing into the hands of forces that can appropriate them negatively? My answer will be cautious. It is true that the most barbarous actors are capable of rationality and that they know how to develop intelligent strategies. But I also think that those who wish to advance the cause of the good have everything to gain by appropriating sociological knowledge, which becomes common property anyway, beyond the control of those who produce it.

The very fact of participating in public discussion forces sociologists to develop teaching skills, to express themselves clearly and to simplify their discourse to make it accessible to non-specialists. As a result, they run the risk of departing from the scientific norms specific to their profession. From that point on they may cut themselves off from their professional environment, which will not find them sufficiently rigorous or scientifically demanding. The 'public sociologist' is thus torn between the approach of diffusion and communication that demands the talent of the expert, the teacher or the journalist – and that of scientific exchange.

Globalization further complicates the task of those who wish to do public sociology, as the categories can vary from one national culture to another, whether it be general political culture or even scientific culture. I experienced this at an early stage, when I wanted to study racism from a general, global perspective and develop an international comparison on the basis of my research carried out in France. In my country, it is racist to valorize ethnic differences. One must be 'Republican' and only consider people as individuals who are free and equal before the law. On the contrary, in the United Kingdom, it would be racist not to take ethnic differences into consideration!

For those who work as sociologists in societies other than their own, the idea of being a 'public sociologist' implies consideration of another difficulty: how can the findings of the research be made available in their own society and therefore to an audience with which the research is not concerned – or at least not directly? I encountered this problem for the first time when Alain Touraine, a team of Polish sociologists and I studied *Solidarnosc*. This research was of prime importance in Poland, while in France it seemed far from everyday life. However, this was not entirely true. The rise of *Solidarnosc* meant the end of real communism. Likewise, in France, we were also living through the end of communism, and our work had a real impact particularly in the world of trade unions. Thus the CFDT,[1] one of the three major French trade unions, identified profoundly with the Polish movement, and our research provided material for their considerations.

Targeting audiences

Frequently, the sociologist who wishes to act as a 'public sociologist' is disappointed; there is little or no reaction from actors whom the sociologist hopes will be interested in his or her research. An exceptional case, in which the research had a direct impact on action, emerged when Alain Touraine and I publicized the findings of our research on the anti-nuclear movement, and the militants of the movement took up those findings. The main contribution of our research was that the power of the anti-nuclear movement increases in proportion to its appeal to democracy and its opposition to technocratic structures that impose nuclear energy without permitting the people to voice their opinions. This also meant that it was not good, from the movement's point of view, to appeal to fear or to focus on the danger of nuclear power. Now, we were beginning to circulate our findings when an incident took place at Three Mile Island, a nuclear power station in the United States. The anti-nuclear militants had mobilized in considerable numbers at this point, after discussions with our research team and with those among them who had participated therein. Then, contrary to their original thinking, they decided to launch a big campaign to say not that nuclear power was dangerous, but that it was time to democratize decision-making on energy policy. The research had a very strong impact here, but I insist that this case is something of an exception, rather than a typical experience.

This example confirms a fundamental point: public sociology has everything to gain by addressing audiences that are relatively well targeted, rather than addressing public opinion in general. Even then, these audiences have to exist and express their desire to have a discussion with the researchers, which is never easy and may sometimes prove impossible. And, the fact that an audience seems to accept the conclusions of research does not necessarily mean the research has really become 'public.' For example, during a meeting, those present may say that they accept the findings presented. But in fact this acceptance is not firmly established and in no way constitutes a test of the relevance of what the researchers say. Relevance is achieved if the actors do something with the findings presented to them, for example, if they use them to improve their understandings of their own experiences.

Here is an example. Throughout our research on the working class movement, we worked with trade unionists based on a comprehensive set of arguments that we had worked out together, organized around six major points. We used these arguments so frequently, including in the form of schemas, that our research groups became accustomed to referring to these six points by numbers: point number one, point number two, etc. We were in the phase of circulating the findings of this research when I was invited to a CFDT Congress. During this Congress, the leader of the CFDT, Edmond Maire, made an important speech. Throughout his speech, the militants who were sitting beside me constantly made comments such as: 'he is going to try to go from point two to four and avoid point three'; 'inevitably he will fail' (the groups who tried this inevitably failed); or 'he is going to endeavor to articulate points four and five.' The militants had appropriated the research and were beginning to try to do something with it and to make this known to others around them. In sum, public sociology is a success when the actors take over the findings and use them – in this example to read and criticize the approach put forward by a leader.

The sociology I practice often leaves a bitter taste and is sometimes even painful. The most extreme case I can remember is that of research I carried out in Roubaix with very poor people living in a working class area with few resources. I had contacted them with the help of social workers, with a view to discussing not issues of racism *per se* but a wider set of problems that concerned them: immigrants, exclusion, life in the local area, etc. Very rapidly, they accepted to co-produce with my team an analysis of the social processes that had made them racist. In a way, they had produced the theory of their misfortunes and of the way racism provided a false solution. The research was coming to an end, and the researchers were pleased: racism had ceased to be the obsession of members of this group; they had moved away from it. There remained one last session together lasting two or three hours. Suddenly, a woman in this group started to utter incredibly racist remarks, followed by other members of the group. The researchers were horrified. We did not understand what was happening; the group was entirely beyond our control. The following morning, I returned home ill – with a temperature of 40°!

On reflection, I think that this group made us pay for what was going to happen at the end of the research: the researchers, in their cars, were going back to Paris, to their protected and comfortable environment. Meanwhile, these people, who did not have the means to own cars, were going back to exile in their relegated area. The research had enabled them to elaborate a theory of their difficulties, but it had not provided any resources to deal with those difficulties. This experience convinced me of the importance of a return to action at the end of this type of research. Here, public sociology consists of not abandoning those with whom the knowledge about themselves has been co-produced and in examining with them the conditions for a material change in their situation. In this respect, it is not absurd for researchers to ask the question – and to ask themselves the question: What are the social and political modalities for change?

Thus, we return to the theme of involvement, whether of the social worker or the trade unionist, association leader or political militant. What is true at the level of the small research group must also be true at the level of a society as a whole. Circulating the findings of research, for example, involves confronting the difficulties I have just described and appealing to the concerns of public opinion, journalists and political leaders.

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Notes

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Author biography

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Résumé

La sociologie publique implique non seulement une orientation générale vers la recherche sociale mais aussi une méthodologie qui connecte le sociologue à un 'public'. Tel est le cas, sous réserves de certaines conditions, de la méthode de l'intervention sociologique inventée par Alain Touraine et que j'ai appliquée dans des études sur le racisme, l'antisémitisme et le terrorisme et dans d'autres sur les mouvements antinucléaires et ouvriers. L'approche a abouti à des relations complexes avec les médias et le milieu politique. Dans ce chapitre, je fournis une série d'exemples sur ces formes d'engagement et les dilemmes qu'elles créent pour le sociologue désireux de conserver une distance critique. En définitive, la question et la gageure de la sociologie publique peuvent se résumer ainsi: comment peut-on intervenir dans la vie sociale et en même temps demeurer un scientifique social.

Mots-clés

Interventions en sociologie, médias, politique, public

Resumen

La sociología pública implica no solo una orientación general a la investigación social, sino también una metodología que conecta al sociólogo a un 'público'. Este es el caso, con algunas salvedades, del método de intervención sociológica, inventado por Alain Touraine, que he seguido en los estudios acerca de racismo, antisemitismo y terrorismo, y en los estudios acerca de los movimientos anti-nucleares y laborales. El enfoque ha dado lugar a relaciones complicadas con los medios de comunicación y la política. En este capítulo, doy una serie de ejemplos de dicho compromiso y de los dilemas que crea para el sociólogo que quiere mantener una distancia crítica. Finalmente, la pregunta y el desafío de la sociología pública se remiten a cómo puede alguien intervenir en la vida social y, al mismo tiempo, seguir siendo un científico social.

Palabras clave

Intervención sociológica, medios de comunicación, política, público

Gender's crooked path: Feminism confronts Russian patriarchy

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Abstract

In this article we discuss the uneasy development of gender studies in Russia as one example of public sociology. For empirical evidence we concentrate mainly on our own experience in the Gender Studies Program at the European University in St. Petersburg, but we also refer to the other cases. We observe how the political and academic context of the 1990s created opportunities for academic innovations that ideologically challenged Soviet patriarchy and invoked gendered criticisms of post-Soviet changes. We discuss the effects of the rapid but partial institutionalization of gender studies in the Russian academic context and how gender became the umbrella term for both feminist and anti-feminist standpoints. We claim that since international support for the gender studies diminished in the 2000s, the fashion and economic benefit of doing gender studies has declined, with only a small group of researchers maintaining their commitment to the feminist approach to gender. We focus on the politicization of gender in the last decade of Putin's Russia and the role of feminist researchers in the analysis of the new conservatism, expressed in gender ideology. We examine the problems of combining public expertise and academic work in the particular realm of gender politics.

Keywords

Gender studies, patriarchy, politics, public sociology, Russia

We started conducting gender studies in the 1990s. Our interest resulted from the confluence of our professional careers and the political and institutional environment. In

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this article, we explain what 'doing gender studies' means in the Russian context, highlighting the dilemmas we faced. In an earlier publication (Temkina and Zdravomyslova, 2002) we presented a comprehensive overview of gender studies undertaken by the Russian Academy of Sciences. Here we will focus on our own professional and public experience.

We treat gender studies as feminist social studies, recognizing its interdisciplinary character and political orientation. It is social knowledge driven by an agenda and closely related to public sociology as we understand it (Burawoy, 2008). The public meaning of gender sociology is bound up with the category of gender, which entails an analysis of the social organization of gender differences, focused on issues of power and inequality.

The 'discovery' of gender and professional identity

Prior to our engagement with feminist studies we were already well into our professional careers. In Russia, the career of a sociologist – and not only of a sociologist – is heavily dependent on the political context. We entered sociology during the Soviet period, when the discipline was a servant of power and therefore not an autonomous academic discipline. It was controlled by the ideological apparatuses of the party-state (Firsov, 2012).

In the late Soviet period, the initial reformist impulse within sociology – similar to that which had motivated sociologists during the period of the thaw in the 1960s – was repressed. Sociology was still only partially institutionalized. Courses in sociology were taught as electives in various social science departments, and sociology did not have its own PhD program. On the other hand, the Soviet Sociological Association already existed as a collective member of the International Sociological Association; the Institute of Applied Social Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences carried out various government projects; and the Institute of Social and Economic Problems of the USSR Academy of Sciences was established in 1975 in Leningrad with its own department of sociology. It was here that we began our careers.

Perestroika created all sorts of opportunities for Russian sociology. All of a sudden, from justifying the regime, sociology began to play an indispensable and meaningful role in criticizing the regime and supporting democratic reforms. It became clear to us that sociology and democratic reforms would advance hand in hand. The possibilities of institutionalizing sociology were directly related to the political regime. Without the consolidation of democracy and civil society, empirical sociology as a professional enterprise could not survive.

At the end of 1980s, both of us began to study social movements. This was an area in which field studies and action methodologies, both novel for the Russian academic scene, played an important role. Anna Temkina studied the workers movement; she participated in Leonid Gordon's project in the Donbass, exploring how and why miners strike. Elena Zdravomyslova studied theories of social movements. This was a time when western researchers took advantage of opportunities to study Russia in transition, while Russian scholars were able to advance their academic knowledge through international contacts made through exchange programs and joint research. During the early 1990s, both of us participated in the US exchange programs of IREX; the subject

of our advanced training was the sociology of social movements. We had the opportunity to discuss many issues with our foreign colleagues both at home and abroad, but one issue in particular kept rearing its head, namely: the issue of gender relations in Russia – everyday sexism and feminism.

Almost every western researcher whom we met abroad or in Russia, irrespective of gender, was curious about Russian gender practices with their mix of formal equality, female emancipation and women managing the family, on the one hand – and sexism, the absence of male responsibilities in the household and a symbolic patriarchy, on the other. It was this 'perspective from outside' that forced us to question our own gender stereotypes, which we had imbibed in the course of socialization. Apart from that, through our contacts with the international academy, we discovered institutionalized feminist research, centers for women and gender studies and academic feminists – feminists who studied gender inequalities based on philosophical premises that were virtually unknown to us.

To a large degree, the literature on social movements – to the extent that it deals with women's movements – focuses on second-wave feminism. While trying to grasp the Russian transformation through the lens of social movements, time and again we asked the challenging question: why was democratic mobilization in Eastern Europe and the post-Soviet space not accompanied by a feminist mobilization? Why had sexual harassment, domestic violence, gender discrimination in job-hiring policies and poor representation of women in politics – themes that were legitimate in other academic areas – been ignored and even treated as irrelevant by Russian researchers? Did it mean that such phenomena did not exist? No, this was not true. Why, then, would the very term 'feminism' be thought of as abusive? The answers to these questions did not emerge immediately or with any clear finality. However, it was in this context that we began to identify ourselves as feminists and became ready to make a commitment to gender studies as a new agenda for academic research. In other words, it was an academic interest that led us down the path of feminist theory and gender studies.

However, we – and our colleagues – considered gender studies not only an academic field but also a platform for feminist education. We wanted our studies to have an effect on public consciousness and contribute to a feminist agenda, relevant to Russian society with its unique gender order influenced by the Soviet policies of repression and gender mobilization (see also Zdravomyslova, 2013).

To summarize: we were led to gender studies through our sociological background, our professional interest in collective mobilization, our participation in social movements and our increased reflexivity as it intersected with our western experience. This led to the discovery of gender studies as a new field of knowledge and our attempt to apply it to the Russian context.

Dilemmas of the 'gender-flavored' 1990s[1]

Upon returning from our brief but intense academic exchange program abroad, our attention was drawn to the fragmented feminist mobilization that had appeared in what was still a weak – but nonetheless significant – civil society. New feminist initiatives had emerged in the twilight of Perestroika's mobilization. Some of those initiatives were

born in academia, but they also embraced civic activism. For example, the Moscow feminist group LOTOS included several feminist researchers. Gender emergency centers and groups organized against domestic violence were established. These were small-scale and hardly noticeable, but we were aware of them, shared their agenda and joined their actions when we could. One of the authors of this article attended the Second All-Russia Forum of Women's NGOs in 1992.[2] It was organized by Russian activists and supported by international feminist organizations, which were investing in the development of the gender agenda in Eastern Europe and post-Soviet countries. In all these events, gender and feministic education had an important role.

The rise of gender studies

As international assistance increased, the membership of research institutes and NGOs began to overlap, reflecting a habitus shared by academic feminists and their partners in civil society. We were educated women oriented to developing our professional careers; we had experience of democratic civic activism during the Perestroika period; we had experience in international academic and activist networks; we had experienced gender discrimination ourselves or had observed it, but earlier had not viewed it as discriminatory; we had liberal and pro-western values; and we believed in the importance of public intellectuals in the democratization of society.

Academic feminists in the CIS became more active in the 1990s. Some of them initiated new educational programs and seminars; others launched new gender centers in colleges and registered them as NGOs. To name a few that were important for us: the Moscow Center for Gender Studies in the Institute of Demography of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Rimashevskaya, Posadskaya, Voronina, Kochkina), Centers for Gender Studies at Tver' (Uspenskaya, Kozlova), Samara (Popkova, Tartakovskaya), Kharkov (Ukraine: Irina and Sergei Zherebkins) and Minsk (Belarus: Gapova, Usmanova). To this day we have been collaborating with them.

The Russian academic authorities looked favorably on these innovations. But, why? There were two sets of reasons, one to do with politics and the other to do with the economy.

During the Yeltsin period, Russia was seeking integration into international politics. In 1995, the Russian Federation signed a Declaration against all forms of sexual violence and against discrimination against women. In this context, there was support for education and research as well as corresponding organizations that complied with this agenda. The second set of reasons for the favorable disposition toward gender studies was the sorry state of the budget in the Russian academy, which had lost a substantial share of its government support. This encouraged the administrations of universities and academic institutes to support new internal projects that promised to bring in grants. In this way, they hoped to salvage their entire institutions. By complying with international standards, the creation of centers for gender studies gave their institutions a renovated look. So, the new gender centers led to an influx of international funding for projects and thereby helped the academy to survive. In these ways, the political and economic situation encouraged entrepreneurship in academia, including gender studies, and feminists researchers, although very few at the time, used it for their benefit.

Hence, an academic innovation that had developed in the context of civic mobilization, in the form of gender studies, created a window of institutional opportunity. Crafty entrepreneurial imitators and amateur researchers snuck in through the window behind the academic feminists. However, the key gender objectives that we set for ourselves were not purely academic but included goals that were openly political – to facilitate gender equality and gender freedoms and to fight against sexism. A significant part of our agenda was gender education both for academics and for wider publics.

The gender perspective was totally novel for the Russian academy, so everything had to be done from scratch. It was an unplowed field with no division of labor. Therefore, during the 1990s we had to do a little of everything, including translations, interpretations of theoretical writings that were new to us, elaboration of the conceptual apparatus and research directives, public education and linking empirical research with activism. Research in this new field required a lot of skill and knowledge and, of course, required active collaboration with the international research community.

This is the story of how one of us was drawn into the feminist tide. In 1993, four of Elena Zdravomyslova's sociology students at St. Petersburg University asked her to teach an extra-curricular course on feminist theory. They were eager to obtain this new knowledge, having heard about it somehow somewhere, but the department's course offerings included nothing even close to this topic. Elena took up the challenge, and every two or three weeks she and her students met in her kitchen. It was feminist self-education in the form of a kitchen seminar outside any institutional arrangement.

Discussions among St. Petersburg's feminists also contributed to the development of gender studies. Olga Lipovskaya and a group of colleagues opened St. Petersburg's Center for Gender Issues. Feminist education was an essential part of its activity: seminars, consciousness-raising groups and research projects (on topics such as women without jobs and sexual harassment at work). We academics were needed as lecturers, researchers, commentators and participants in their events outside the academy.

At this time, there emerged a movement of summer schools devoted to gender, sponsored by international foundations. These schools took place in Russia and other post-Soviet countries such as Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Lithuania and became the platform for gender education and the consolidation of an interdisciplinary gender community consisting of a small number of academic feminists. In this connection, new universities, specifically the Central European University and later the European Humanities University that initially operated in Minsk, but because of Lukashenko's political regime had to move to Vilnius, played a major role.

It was out of this broth that our feminist commitment was born and our feminist theory and gender research developed. At that time, we wrote a lot about the specifics of the emerging field of women's studies in Russia as compared with the West and about the role of the women's movement in the development of feminist theory and sociology. First and foremost, we were interested in the sociological branch of gender studies. Analyzing Russian gender relations, we developed our own understanding of terms such as 'gender order,' 'gender regime,' 'gender approach,' and later the idea of ' intersectionality' in gender studies.

International collaborations

Meanwhile, the academy was going through institutional changes. The 1990s created a demand for new knowledge, resulting in new research and educational entities, such as the Center for Independent Social Research (1992) and later the European University in St. Petersburg (1996). At the Center for Independent Social Research, we regularly participated in international projects. Due to the geographic proximity between St. Petersburg and Finland, we developed a close collaboration with Finnish sociologists. Initially, these projects were aimed at studying only social movements. The entire world was interested in the post-Soviet transformations, but participation in international projects was the only reliable way of discovering what was really happening. It became an open field. Anna Rotkirch, a sociologist and feminist, became the key figure in this collaboration. Together, we conducted a number of projects related to gender relations in Russia. In collaboration with Rotkirch and her colleagues Elina Haavio-Mannila and JP Roos, we undertook studies of sexual biographies and the 'new household,' both framed from a gender perspective. These joint projects with Finnish sociologists were very successful thanks to our convergent worldviews, our friendly relations and the collegiality that emerged as we carried out the projects.

It was important that from the very beginning we worked together. Our 'academic duo' was and still is expressed in co-authorship of publications as well as in collaboration on projects, teaching and educational outreach. This mutual support, including human relations, helped to promote the new field that, despite many obstacles, found its place in the academy.

It was important that we were not alone. The networks of cooperation linked the gender centers in Tver', Samara, Moscow, Minsk and Kharkov as well as individual researchers who did not belong to these centers but worked from the same perspective. We regularly organized conferences and meetings, participated in summer schools and conducted joint projects. If we were to respond to the needs and requests of the community of academic feminists and civic activists, it was imperative that we held similar views, pursued common interests and goals and continually supported each other.

One of the most significant academic innovations was the opening of the European University in St. Petersburg in 1996. Its first rector, sociologist Boris Firsov, offered us jobs there. Gender studies found a supportive home in this fast developing university that was committed to the advance of modern academic knowledge. For several years, we gave courses on feminist theory and the specifics of Russian gender relations. Although these courses were optional, they always appealed to the interests of students – and not just women. At the time, interest in the subject grew among young researchers, first, because this was a new, progressive subject and, second, because this subject resonated with the many existential problems young people faced.

During the 1990s, international foundations were very active in Russia, providing grants to explore new academic areas including gender studies. In the beginning, grants from international foundations were the only source of funding at the European University. Since we had a record of academic initiatives that stretched over several years, we qualified for institutional grants from the MacArthur and Ford Foundations to develop the program of gender studies in the Departments of Political Science and

Sociology. This funding continued until 2009. These foundations also supported the gender studies networks. In addition, we received individual grants from the Open Society Foundation and the Heinrich Böll Foundation.

Thus, the resources of feminist camaraderie, solidarity with western and Russian colleagues, institutional support from the European University and financial support from foundations made it possible for us to introduce gender studies into the European University in St. Petersburg.

Public sociology in the context of patriarchy

What has this brief overview of how we 'discovered gender' to do with public sociology? We repeat our earlier claim that public sociology is contextual. During the 1990s, a fragile academic feminism became a civic initiative. Gender researchers worked with NGOs, created networks and promoted institutional and ideological innovations in academia and beyond. In truth, gender research was public sociology in the 1990s, or more precisely, public interdisciplinary transnational studies. Gender studies did, indeed, cross borders, and later they would be attacked for being divorced from their context, being alien to Russia and having a western orientation. Although they would later be accused of being separated from activism, academic feminists interacted with publics, recruiting young people, activists and representatives of various disciplines and professions (for example, during summer schools) as well as appearing in the mass media.

Gender researchers were able to project gender categories and feminist themes into public discourse. Having been previously treated as a foreign word, now, slowly but surely, feminism – and with it the feminist agenda – reached the public. In a fragmentary way, it also appeared in the Russian media. All this took place due to pressure from the international community, local academic feminists and civic activists.

Here is a list of issues that our colleagues and we studied: the balance between work and family, discrimination in the workplace, sexual harassment, under-representation of women in politics, the gender profile of employment, the prevalence of abortion, the lack of sexual education, problems of sexual minorities, the lack of care and the shortage of care workers. We tried to analyze all these issues by paying attention to the specific gender dynamics of Russia, the consequences of Soviet gender policies and the impact of post-Soviet transformations on the gender order. We introduced such terms as 'state patriarchy,' 'etacratic gender order'[3] and the contract of the 'working mother.' The term 'patriarchal renaissance' was discussed by Posadskaya, Rimashevskaya and others (see Posadskaya, 1993; Zakharova et al., 1989). However, the broad public was not very interested in these issues. The reaction to the Soviet legacy and its patriarchal model turned traditional patriarchy, with its naturalization of gender roles, into an appealing alternative to the Soviet notions of masculinity and femininity and its hypocritical policy of gender equality. Ideologies of gender equality and gender freedom seemed ever more out of place as the rhetoric of getting back to national traditions infiltrated public discourse and set the terms of choice.

It is a challenge to cultivate gender studies in an atmosphere of patriarchal discourse, which rightly considered gender studies a threat to gender hierarchies. Gender sensitivity in the public remained very limited. It required nurturing, which we did as much as we

could. Gender education in various contexts and formats became part of our professional activity. Indeed, our two main public roles were as educators and experts, although there was not a great deal of public interest in our approach to gender. Still, we used every opportunity to deliver lectures and seminars; we never refused an interview with the media; and, most important, we continued to work with our students.

It has to be said that the interests of the Russian media were largely driven by superficial, calendar-related reasons. Usually, gender campaigns explode on 8 March and 23 February, that is, respectively, International Women's Day and Russian Army Day. On these dates, journalists interview the same few experts – whose number one can count on the fingers of one hand – over and over again, asking them to comment on the status of women in Russia. We readily agreed simply out of civic duty, but also to let people know that we exist and to give an account of the gender problems facing society. However, deep down, we regarded such public sociology activities as thankless tasks. Moreover, our lack of practice in communicating with the media led to constant mishaps, misunderstandings and misleading information. Making things even worse, we often did not have control over the final reports that were broadcast.

The growing hostility to feminism and our response

Gender studies had successfully established a niche for itself during the 1990s. Furthermore, our careers were advancing in a healthy way. However, in the background, behind these positive developments, there were ominous signs. There was a growing hostility to gender studies and feminism from the left and the right. Critiques mixed together with academic and political arguments. Those who favored democratization in Russian society according to the liberal paradigm represented a critique from the left. They claimed that the gender perspective was an implant; that it was a fashion and a brand imposed by an academic imperialism; that gender problems either do not exist or were so insignificant in Russia that there was no reason to talk about them; that we live in a society where women dominate, as a result of the Soviet regime having destroyed the normal, i.e. liberal-patriarchal, gender order. They also argued that gender researchers simply exploited an inflated interest to deliver a poor quality product. These arguments appeared to be a strategy to exclude gender studies from the academic mainstream. Often, these critics had only a very superficial knowledge of feminism and gender studies, defining the entire field exclusively by its worst examples, which, in truth, did exist. Critics from the right, on the other hand, rightfully asserted that feminism and gender studies would destroy the foundations of patriarchy, promote multiple sexualities, question gender roles and demand equal opportunities for women.

Our voices were weak, and only a few were willing to listen to us. Friendly journalists were few and far between, limited to two or three individuals. However, we cannot say that we suffered in such an environment. After all, we had our niche in the European University, where we could continue to do our academic work and were part of a group, albeit a small group, of academic feminists.

At that time, during the 1990s, the academic gender community actively discussed two issues in particular: first, the loss of the critical impulse in Russian gender studies and the rise of a fake gender studies; and second, strategies for the institutionalization of

gender studies. With regard to the first, the 1990s saw all sorts of people and organizations gather under the gender banner. As soon as gender issues received international interest and funding, they attracted a lot of attention in Russia, including from those who, under the cover of gender studies, published anti-feminist texts that glorified traditional gender regimes. Under the brand name of 'gender,' the critical drive of feminism was transformed into a toothless reproduction of role theory, at best.

We took the following positions in these discussions (Barchunova, 2000; Brandt, 2003; Doing Gender na russkom pole, 2004; Gurko, 1998; Kletsin, 1998; Kletsina, 2002; Ushakin, 2000; Voronina, 2001; Zvereva, 2003). First, gender studies in Russia had developed into an umbrella category that contained both critical and opportunistic positions. Second, we tried to pursue our own path in gender research rather than sinking our energies into internal quarrels and purges. We sought to strengthen contacts with friendly researchers in Russia and abroad and to support the feminist wing of gender studies. Third, we believed that the crowding of gender studies was the result of fashion and innovation and that over time the ballast would disappear. In our view this is indeed what has happened, but we will discuss this below. Fourth, we positioned ourselves as experts emphasizing the need for a scientific approach to gender issues, and we tried our best to demonstrate this in our publications.

In the course of the discussion over the second issue, we formulated a dual strategy for institutionalizing gender studies in Russia (Zdravomyslova and Temkina, 2001). We realized that gender studies was marginal within the Russian academy for reasons that went beyond the backwardness of Russian social science, the lack of institutionalization and the effects of the political and economic conjuncture. The marginality of gender studies was supported by the entire cultural context of patriarchy that viewed gender studies as feminism and regarded feminism in any form (liberal or radical) as opposing essentialist traditions of Russian culture. The balance of forces was heavily weighted against feminism. In order to prevent gender studies from sliding into a ghetto, it was necessary to bring gender sensitivity into mainstream social science. In this way, we hoped that academic audiences would hear the feminist voice and join discussions on the subject, something they had so far avoided. This would mean recognizing scholars who were unknown to mainstream scholarship. We called this the strategy of academic integration. The second strategy of 'autonomization,' on the other hand, implied building an interdisciplinary, transnational gender community where everyone would find support from either local colleagues or the international community. This was an ambitious program that could not be realized in the short run.

Gender backlash and the demand for gender expertise

Thus, by the beginning of the year 2000 the community of gender researchers was weak and fragmented. Gender issues had a low public resonance; the demand for gender education and expertise was slight. Only a small number of NGOs and feminists supported us, while media interest was driven by the two calendar dates. Although we worked hard to communicate with various audiences, it did not have much of an effect. Gender studies, which were being torn apart by the dilemmas of their own contradictions, remained on the periphery of the Russian academy. Strategies to incorporate gender perspectives

into traditional institutions contributed to the withering away of the critical stance, which led to tense relations between activists and academic feminists. As Popkova and Tartakovskaya (2010: 14) write, 'Feminism disappeared from academic gender studies rather quickly. The pursuit of an academic career usually leads to compromises. As soon one secures a position at a university, it turns out that one has something to lose.' Furthermore, the appearance of gender 'window-dressing' – an imitation of gender studies – and limited gender awareness in the public sphere made us wary of traditional forms of public sociology based on interacting with the mass media.

By the beginning of the 2000s, the political and economic environment around gender studies had changed. With the decline in international funding, gender studies found itself in a difficult economic situation. Many centers closed down. The political fashion for gender was over. On the contrary, gender studies were now perceived as 'politicized' and a threat to authentic Russian discourse. Those who only saw gender studies as a source of grants started to leave the field. Academic feminists remained but with very little support and in shrinking numbers. Yet, they became more experienced and more confident than they had been in the 1990s. Soon, however, the picture began to change. Politics started talking gender. But how!

Gender issues in Putin's Russia

Initially, in Vladimir Putin's Russia, gender issues were raised in connection with family and demographic policies. During his second presidential term, Putin came forward with a proposal to overcome Russia's demographic crisis by stimulating the birth rate. Reproductive decisions would be shaped by a 'mother's capital' – a single but financially substantial payment to women who gave birth to two or more children. Feminist researchers criticized this program, stressing its gender insensitivity, its inefficiency and the consequences of drawing women out of the labor market. The critique had little impact, but the discussion continues. The entry of such gender issues into the political arena led to the demand for studies of family patterns, the balance between family chores and paid work, the efficiency of family policies, the gender component of family policies and reproductive health.

As part of the study of the effects of family policies, we interviewed parents, primarily mothers with two or more children, who were beneficiaries of the assistance. We voiced their concerns about the underdeveloped and limited measures for supporting families and the insensitivity toward parents and their distrust of the government and bureaucrats. We presented the results not just in academic publications but also in public forums (both real and virtual). The regional authorities in St. Petersburg supported our study of the gender dimensions of social policy. Our conclusions were included in the recommendations of the city committee for gender equality, a committee that exists to this day (Borozdina et al., 2012).

At the end of 2000s, gender issues started to be intensively pursued in the legal sphere. Conservatives (law-makers and civic organizations) blocked the Law on Gender Equality, pushed through bills that would limit women's reproductive rights and proposed bills against the rights of sexual minorities. As a result, gender issues became politicized, and they entered public debate. In the course of those debates, various ideological positions

emerged, inaugurating the fight between different gender ideologies and between different values. In these confrontations, the conservative discourse was particularly powerful, entailing a mobilization against gender equality and demanding a return to traditional national Orthodox values – to the 'normal' family, with a corresponding conventional role for women. We can now see the results of our gender education. Now we have opponents, who have finally realized what we meant. We see that our opponents learned the lesson rather well. Now, they understand the meaning of gender studies and gender ideology.

Therefore, paradoxically, the conservative political atmosphere created a demand for our knowledge, our intellectual abilities and our expertise – all of which is now directed against the conservatives and in support of the ideology of gender equality and sexual and reproductive freedom. Now, let's have a look at how gender issues have been expressed in the political and public arenas.

First, the very term 'gender' triggered protest from the conservatives. Interestingly, they had the correct interpretation of the term, matching its definition in gender theory, as a social construction of gender differences and sexuality. The conservatives made their position very clear during the 2012 Duma debates on the Law on Gender Equality, which they saw as a threat to Russian society.[4] In its press release, the organization Family, Love and Fatherland (2012) declared, 'After examining this law, representatives of families and parents joined Orthodox and patriotic organizations to conclude that the law poses a threat to the demographic security of Russia and endangers family institutions and fundamental cultural and moral values.' This quotation shows how nationalistic rhetoric combined with gender conservatism.

Second, at the end of 2011 Russian 'pro-lifers' submitted the Duma amendments to the Health Protection Law, which would have substantially reduced women's reproductive rights by limiting access to abortions. This led to protests by some feminist organizations over the Internet and even on the streets. While most of these amendments were ultimately rejected, politicians, doctors, religious leaders, demographers, sociologists, representatives of NGOs and activists of various civic initiatives from both sides joined the debate. Both sides promoted their views in the public media. They used different forms of propaganda to present their perspectives: pickets, demonstrations, participation in talk shows and the distribution of petitions. Activist feminist groups organized a public campaign to 'fight against abortions, not against women!' This took place in 2011, and at the same time anti-abortion organizations (such as Warriors for Life or Resistance to Killing Children) continued to participate in public debates and in Russia-wide protests to ban abortion. Each side drew on their own experts.

Third, some regions of the Russian Federation adopted a law prohibiting 'propaganda' on behalf of homosexuals and pedophiles (St. Petersburg, Archangelsk, Krasnodar, Novosibirsk and other regions). There is a similar federal law that was passed in the Duma on 25 January 2013. The new law suffers from inconsistencies and terminological ambiguity – the term 'propaganda' is not defined, and pedophiles are mixed up with homosexuals. The law restricts freedom of speech and criminalizes the gay/lesbian community. It has powerful repressive potential, symbolic significance and practical implications as a tool to suppress political opposition. Moreover, it makes it more difficult to deal with the real, complex problems of pedophilia, violence and the vulnerability of

children. Although milder, nevertheless it is reminiscent of the laws of the Stalinist period.

Fourth, the Law on Juvenile Justice was blocked. As in previous cases, it was opposed by conservative mobilization that included the so-called 'community of parents' and organizations that act as the transmission belts of the Russian Orthodox Church. All these legislative moves are part of a broad conservative mobilization against gender equality, reproductive health and sexual education.

Fifth, in February 2012, against the backdrop of protests organized under the banner of 'Free Elections,' Pussy Riot arrived on the political stage, exciting public debate about many issues, including gender. The punk group called itself feminist. They held a protest performance in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, calling it a punk prayer with the title 'Our Lady, Kick Putin Out!' The court sentenced two of the participants to two years in prison. Another participant was given a two-year suspended sentence. The trial caused a major stir not only in Russia but also abroad. There were actions in defense of Pussy Riot and collective appeals to Putin calling for the release of the participants. However, the Orthodox community and Russian Orthodox Church remained unmoved. They demanded heavy punishment for offending the feelings of their believers. Pussy Riot's protest defined Putin's regime as patriarchal and broadened the agenda for Russian feminism to include the fight for political democracy and against authoritarianism.

Sixth, on 9 April 2013, Patriarch Kirill declared, 'I consider very dangerous the phenomenon known as "feminism," because its organizations declare that the pseudo-freedom of women will be realized primarily outside marriage and family' (Pravmir. com, 2013). All these events are symptoms of the strength of conservative ideology in Russia, which goes beyond official authorities to include segments of civil society that exist through the support of the Russian Orthodox Church, itself allied to the ruling powers. The conservatives are fighting for ideological hegemony, decrying gender and feminism as their adversaries and as threats to the moral foundations and security of Russian society. Democratic and liberal resistance is fragmented, but it exists, nonetheless, and opposes the conservative offensive.

Political context and the growth of traditionalism

The public discussion of gender issues takes place in a particular political context. In order to understand the possibility of gender researchers becoming public sociologists, we need to identify its key features.

Researchers who study political processes in Russia have concluded that during the 2000s there was a 'recentralization of state government and institutionalization of the authoritarian regime in the country' (Gelman and Ryzhenkov, 2010: 132). Although *de jure* Russia has a multi-party political system, *de facto*, political competition does not exist (Golosov, 2012: 54). In this regard, Russia has an open political system only in name, that is, only in the formal sense: a formal multi-party system and formal elections. The latter do not provide for a change in government, and the mechanism for political decision-making is not transparent. Accordingly, the government adopted a strategy of repression against democratic protests that were escalating during the parliamentary and presidential elections of 2011–2012. Mass rallies led to clashes with the police and mass

arrests, followed by charges under Part 3 of Article 212 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (concerning mass disturbances) and Part 1 of Article 318 of the Criminal Code (concerning violence against representative authorities).

At the same time, the ruling authorities and the leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church have supported the conservative mobilization. In the context of the authoritarian political tendencies of the 2000s, there has been a move in public discussion toward de-secularization, including growing attention to issues of religion in the mass media and an increase in the activity of religious organizations and their leaders (Verkhovsky, 2009).

The conservative turn of official ideology, with its demands for a return to traditional values and its criticism of any signs of westernization, was especially apparent in the debates concerning gender values and gender ideologies. Society is severely split on these issues, with the result that the conservative party has been consolidated while liberals are weak and scattered. Both parties have influential representatives in the structures of power. Both seek expertise from their own segments of the Russian academy.

The growing demand for gender expertise

In such political contexts, there is a need for our gender expertise. The clients with whom we collaborate most frequently include the democratic gender-sensitive community; NGOs whose status is threatened by charges of being foreign agents; sexual minorities that are in danger of repression; feminist human rights activists who are advocates of equal opportunities and reproductive rights for women; and officials from the Regional Committee for Social Policy, who support gender equality. We provide verbal advice, write expert reviews of bills, participate in Internet forums, sign petitions against conservative laws and conduct empirical research.

Our educational activities also continue for students, NGOs and the general public. In addition, we help to develop gender-sensitive networks and civil society by contributing expertise, research and direct participation. Our studies carry a civic significance. Together with our students, we investigate the mechanisms of conservative mobilization and identify their alliances, resources and support strategies; we also study family and sexual policies and their gendered effects. There are emerging friendly media that are not afraid of feminism and realize that democrats must form a common bloc against authoritarianism and support the gender agenda.

When discussing the dilemmas of combining professional and public activities, we admit that we would rather spend time on the computer or doing research than to be talking on live broadcasts. Perhaps we do not have enough of the activist drive. Besides, in addition to needing experience in public debates, one has to have a thick skin to tolerate the open abusiveness of our ideological opponents. When debating reproductive rights, civil unions, sexual education or the rights of sexual minorities, some opponents accuse gender experts of debauchery, political trickery, moral degeneracy, conspiracy against Russia and national security and collaboration with world imperialism and Zionism. Their language is, to say the least, offensive. But these are the terms of public debate in the Russian media. Currently, in addition to verbal threats, to which feminists have become accustomed, we face the risk of political and criminal charges. In the context of authoritarian tendencies, this is not pleasant, to put it mildly. You are publicly charged

with being a western agent, endangering national security, threatening the Russian gene pool and, most generally, with a lack of patriotism.

We have to admit that public sociology is very costly in terms of time and energy. We appeal to diverse audiences and therefore have to reach beyond our academic style. Since there are very few gender researchers, we are stretched very thin. We have to pursue a multiplicity of roles, which under a shortage of resources, creates problems of balance and professional burnout.

Conclusion

When gender studies were launched, public interest was very limited. This was the case even though, during the 1990s, gender studies had both an academic and a political mission to promote democracy (with respect to gender equality) and civil society (supporting initiatives against sexism and violence). Public interest in gender was so modest because Russians thought gender differences were natural and feminism was alien to the Russian context. Gradually, under the influence of academic and activist feminism and with the support of an international community, gender infiltrated the public sphere. This process was accompanied by frequent misunderstandings and reformulations of gender research, reducing it to the study of the conventional gender roles in society.

Our public role as gender researchers was to educate and to offer our expertise. NGOs, university students, students of summer schools and researchers and social science lecturers who wanted to advance their knowledge and skills were our audiences. We relied on interdisciplinary and transnational networks of gender studies. We also exercised *traditional* public sociology by conversing with journalists. However, we were wary of this activity, because such conversations about gender were often not sincere but fabricated.

During the first decade of the twenty-first century, the umbrella phase of gender studies ended. Gender studies became narrower and more critical, since today it does not bring money or compliments, but, on the contrary, it can bring disgrace and humiliation. At the same time, gender issues have become the focus of intense political debates. The authorities developed powerful new technologies of public manipulation as they pursued the gendering of politics. In these conditions, researchers face an open dismissal of their gender and feminist approaches. This is due to the competition for ideological hegemony, in which the conservatives are the most active, forming a united front with a section of the political elite, the Russian Orthodox Church and part of civil society. Gender backlash is taking place in the context of authoritarian trends in Russian politics, the growth of nationalism and anti-western attitudes that promote traditional values and traditional gender roles, oppose the Law on Gender Equality, protest sexual education and repress sexual minorities.

At the same time, there has also been an opposing trend – the development of a democratic community that shares liberal and leftist ideas. Ideas of gender equality and gender freedom are common among educated young people. We work for them. Our expertise and our educational efforts on any given local agenda are addressed to them.

We consider gender studies to be one of the most promising and important directions for public sociology. The anti-patriarchal potential of gender studies in the context of authoritarian tendencies can help the democratic opposition to authoritarianism. Thus, as public sociologists, gender researchers are obligated to participate in debates where the

gender obscurantism and political authoritarianism of our opponents dominate the conversation. At the same time, we feel support from a growing radical minority of the new generation. After all, we did succeed in recognizing gender and in creating a community of fellow thinkers. There are now people that follow feminism. We find supportive sectors of the academy that include scholars of disability, youth subcultures, the sociology of health, social movements and ethnicity.

That is why we want to be more than *traditional* public sociologists; we see our mission as also pursuing an organic public sociology. Here, we aspire to fulfill three roles simultaneously: experts; researchers who, in giving voice to public discontent, become vulnerable to reprisals; and builders of civil society, developing social networks of feminists and a gender-sensitive public.

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Notes

1. This is taken from Zherebkina (2003), a book whose title signified the development of gender studies in the 1990s.
2. The first forum of the Russian women's organizations took place in 1991 under the slogan 'Democracy minus women is not democracy!'
3. Gender order, governed by the authoritarian state.
4. As stated in Article 1, this bill is intended to regulate 'relations regarding the protection of citizens' rights and freedoms with respect to discrimination by gender and/or by reasons associated with the presence of children.' The key terms used in the bill are 'gender equality,' 'gender discrimination,' 'gender balance' and 'positive discrimination.' In particular, gender equality is defined as 'the equal judicial status of men and women, including the provision of equal access to resources, and eliminating gender discrimination.' The bill prohibits gender discrimination against pregnant women or against men and women more generally 'for reasons associated with the presence of children.' The draft law defines the objectives of state policy as providing for gender equality in political and professional spheres of society. In addition, the law requires 'the support of families and people with family responsibilities and the formation of responsible motherhood and fatherhood.' As a mechanism to guarantee gender equality, the bill proposes the creation of a Commission for Issues of Gender Equality within the Government of the Russian Federation and the introduction of a Commissioner for Issues of Gender Equality. The bill sanctions monetary compensations for the victims of discrimination according to 'the nature, degree and duration of gender discrimination.'

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Résumé

Dans cet article, nous examinons le difficile développement des études des genres en Russie en tant qu'exemple de la sociologie publique. En ce qui concerne les données empiriques, nous nous concentrons principalement sur l'expérience que nous avons

acquise dans le cadre du programme d'études des genres mené à l'Université européenne de St. Petersburg, mais nous faisons également référence à d'autres cas. Nous observons comment le contexte politique et académique des années 1990 a créé des possibilités en matière d'innovations académiques qui, sur le plan idéologique, mettent au défi la patriarchie soviétique; nous évoquons également des critiques sexuées des changements introduits à l'ère post-soviétique. Nous discutons les effets de l'institutionnalisation rapide, mais partielle, des études des genres dans le contexte académique russe et comment 'genre' est devenu le terme générique pour à la fois les points de vue féministes et antiféministes. Nous estimons qu'avec la diminution du support international pour les études des genres dans les années 2000, la coutume d'effectuer des études de ce type et leur avantage économique ont décliné, et seul un petit groupe de chercheurs conservent un engagement envers l'approche féministe du genre. Nous mettons l'accent sur la politisation du genre dans la Russie de Putin au cours de la dernière décennie et sur le rôle des chercheurs féministes dans l'analyse du nouveau conservatisme exprimé dans l'idéologie du genre. Nous examinons les problèmes rencontrés quand l'expertise publique est combinée aux travaux académiques dans le domaine particulier de la politique des genres.

Mots-clés

Études des genres, patriarchie, politique, Russie, sociologie publique

Resumen

En este artículo se analiza el precario desarrollo de los estudios sobre género en Rusia como un ejemplo de sociología pública. Para la evidencia empírica, nos concentramos principalmente en nuestra propia experiencia en el programa de estudios de género de la Universidad europea en San Petersburgo, pero también hacemos referencia a otros casos. Observamos cómo el contexto político y económico de los años '90 creó oportunidades para las innovaciones académicas que desafiaron ideológicamente el patriarcado soviético y convocaron críticas de género de los cambios post-soviéticos. Analizamos los efectos de la rápida pero parcial institucionalización de los estudios de género en el contexto académico ruso y cómo el género se convirtió en un término abarcativo para las posturas feministas y antifeministas. Decimos que como el apoyo internacional para estudios sobre género disminuyó en los años 2000, disminuyó la moda y el beneficio económico de realizar estudios sobre el tema, y solo un pequeño grupo de investigadores mantienen su compromiso con el enfoque feminista del género. Nos centramos en la politización del género en la última década de la Rusia de Putin y en el rol de las investigadoras feministas en el análisis del nuevo conservadurismo, expresado en la ideología de género. Examinamos los problemas de combinar la experiencia pública y el trabajo académico en el ámbito específico de la política de género.

Palabras clave

Estudios de género, patriarcado, política, Rusia, sociología pública

Inconvenient truths: A public intellectual's pursuit of truth, justice and power

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Abstract

Public sociology involves challenging received wisdoms. Thus, it requires unusual fortitude, as these wisdoms are embedded in common sense, itself backed up by interests and sometimes force. To change what is taken to be common sense, such as neoliberal orthodoxy, therefore, can be accomplished most effectively through a social movement. To challenge conventional wisdom requires the discovery of truth and that can call for unorthodox methods, such as breaking into powerful agencies that hold official secrets. To challenge deeply held truths, whether they are deeply held by the powerful or the weak, can earn one long-lasting hostility, such as when I investigated the killings by the Philippine Communist Party. This is because there is an inherent and inescapable conflict between truth and power that will never disappear.

Keywords

Justice, Philippines, public intellectual, truth, World Bank

I was fascinated by social analysis from the very beginning, when I came into contact with it during my freshman year in college. I found that by rooting human behavior in socialization, social processes and social structure, it provided an explanatory power that was unmatched by any other approach. At the same time, there was always this side of me that saw value in doing theoretical analysis not for its own sake but to provide a guide to shaping social arrangements for the better. This was way before I encountered Marx's 11th thesis on Feuerbach.

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Activism was never far from my academic work. While doing my graduate work in sociology at Princeton, I led the takeover of the Woodrow Wilson School as an anti-Vietnam War activist. While writing up my dissertation on the counter-revolution in Chile, I was also fully engaged in organizing the anti-Marcos movement in the United States as a cadre of the Communist Party of the Philippines. Upon getting my PhD, I left the university to plunge into work as a full-time underground activist and did not rejoin the academy until nearly 20 years later. It was also during those years as a full-time activist that I think I did my best analytical work.

There are three key lessons I have learned from my experience as a public intellectual or public sociologist. The first is that truths only become true through action. The second is that to get at the truth, one must sometimes resort to unorthodox research methods. And the third is that one must accept that there is an inevitable and permanent tension between theory and practice, between thought and action, between truth and power. Thinking that this tension can be eliminated is one of the most dangerous illusions of the public intellectual.

Truths only become true through action

Let us take up the first lesson, that truths need action to become true. This was perhaps brought home decisively to me by the events in Seattle in late November and early December 1999. In the decade prior to Seattle, there were a lot of studies, including UN reports, that questioned the claim that globalization and free market policies were leading to sustained growth and prosperity. Instead, the data showed that globalization and pro-market policies were promoting more inequality and more poverty and consolidating economic stagnation, especially in the Global South. However, these figures remained 'factoids' rather than facts in the eyes of academics, the press and policymakers, who dutifully repeated the neoliberal mantra that economic liberalization promoted growth and prosperity. The orthodox view, repeated ad nauseam in the classroom, the media and policy circles, was that the critics of globalization were Luddites.

Then we had the massive anti-globalization demonstrations in Seattle that led to the collapse of the Third Ministerial of the World Trade Organization. It was not just a ministerial that collapsed but also a creed that had been believed to be true. After Seattle, the press began to talk about the 'dark side of globalization,' about the inequalities and poverty being created by globalization. After that, we had the spectacular defections from the globalist camp, such as those of the financier George Soros, the Nobel laureate Joseph Stiglitz and the star economist Jeffrey Sachs. Then came the widely publicized findings of two independent studies – one by American University Professor Robin Broad published in the *Review of International Political Economy* and the other a report by a panel of neoclassical economists headed by Princeton's Angus Deaton and former IMF chief economist Ken Rogoff – showing that the World Bank Research Department, the source of most assertions that globalization and trade liberalization were leading to lower rates of poverty and inequality, had been deliberately distorting its data and making unwarranted claims (Banerjee et al., 2006; Broad, 2006). Way before the financial crisis broke out in 2008, the credibility of neoliberalism and the promise of globalization had been severely eroded.

What made the difference? Not so much research or debate but action. It took the militant anti-globalization actions of masses of people and the spectacular collapse of a WTO ministerial to translate factoids into facts – into truth. What proved decisive was the conjunction of the massive protest of thousands of protesters in the streets of Seattle and the refusal of developing country delegates at the Sheraton Convention Center to accept any more liberalization of their economies. Truth is not just 'there.' Truth is completed, made real and ratified by action. Like Columbus's voyage in relation to the theory of the earth as a sphere, Seattle was a world-historic event that made the truth 'true.'

Unorthodox methods

My second vital lesson of public scholarship has to do with research methods. One of the conclusions I have reached is that often, when it comes to analyzing really big issues, our normal research methods in the social sciences, like qualitative analysis or quantitative analysis, are not applicable. They don't work because power is often involved, and the powerful want things to be non-transparent. This became very clear to me when it came to studying the World Bank.

Let me take you back to 1975, when I had just finished my PhD at Princeton. At that time, an academic career was something that I had no intention of pursuing. The task at that time was quite clear to me: to overthrow the Marcos dictatorship. I became part of an international network connected to the Philippine underground and a full-time activist. I went to Washington and helped set up an office that lobbied the US Congress to cut aid to the Marcos regime. Soon we realized that in order to do any effective work, we had to look at all the dimensions of US support for the dictatorship. For example, the largest part of US aid to Marcos was channeled through multilateral institutions such as the World Bank, and the problem was that the lack of transparency of the Bank meant that we couldn't get any information about the Bank programs. The only information that we got came from sanitized press releases. It became clear that to show what the Bank was doing and expose it, we had to get the documents from within the Bank itself. At first, we slowly formed a network of informants within the Bank. These were acquaintances, 'liberals with a conscience.' Our work was part of a process of building what was effectively a counter-intelligence network not only within the Bank but also within the State Department and other agencies of the US government.

Well, these people started to occasionally bring us some documents, but this was a tedious – although necessary – process. The information was not enough, so we thought that it was necessary to resort to more radical means. So, my associates and I investigated the patterns of behavior of Bank people, and we realized that there were some times in the year when there was nobody in the Bank: Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Day, July 4, Memorial Day, etc. On those days and over a period of three years, we went to the Bank pretending that we were returning from a mission, with our ties askew and said that we were just coming from Africa, India, etc. The security guards always asked for our IDs. When we pretended to fumble for them, since we looked so tired, they said, 'OK, just go inside.' It always worked. As you can imagine, security was quite lax in those days.

Once we were inside, we were like kids let loose in a candy store. We took as many documents as we could – and not just reports on the Philippines – and photocopied them using the Bank facilities. This happened over three years! The documents – some 3000 pages of them on practically every Bank-supported project and program in the Philippines – provided an unparalleled look at the workings of a close relationship between two non-transparent authoritarian institutions, the World Bank and the Marcos regime. First, we held press conferences to expose the documents piece by piece, to the embarrassment of both the Bank and the Marcos regime. Eventually, we came out with a book, published in 1982 by Food First, entitled *Development Debacle: The World Bank in the Philippines.* According to many people, this book contributed to the unraveling of the Marcos regime. I hope they were right.

As for what I learned, well, it was that accepted or orthodox methods have their limitations and that to do really effective research sometimes you need to break the law. But you have to be utterly professional in the process. We were quite careful in going about it, and we were not able to tell the real story about how we got the documents until 10 years later (1992), when the statute of limitations for criminal prosecution in the US had lapsed. My associates and I could have gotten 25 years in jail had we been caught breaking into the Bank, though of course good behavior would have shortened that jail stint with an early parole.

But on a less lighthearted note, the decision we had to make was not easy. It is never easy to decide to break the law, not only because of the penalties involved but because we all are so deeply socialized to follow the law. But we felt that we had no choice. Otherwise, the truth would have been buried for a long, long time, in the vaults of the World Bank.

Theory and practice

The third lesson concerns the tension between analysis and action, between truth and politics. Managing this relationship is not easy, since our moral side is very demanding, especially when it comes to dealing with unpleasant truths. I first experienced being caught between the divergent demands of truth and politics when I was doing my PhD dissertation.

In 1972, I started my doctoral research on the topic of political organizing in shanty-towns in Santiago, Chile, during a revolutionary period. At that moment, I felt a great deal of sympathy for Salvador Allende's government and its so-called 'peaceful road to socialism.' In fact, I think that this was the moment when I became a progressive. However, after three months in the shantytowns, I realized that the country was experiencing not a profound revolution but a rising counter-revolution. Allende's revolution was already beleaguered.

At that point, I felt that if I was to do relevant research, both politically and intellectually, then it was important to study the counter-revolution. So, I shifted my dissertation topic to the dynamics of counter-revolution and ended up interviewing middle-class right-wing people who couldn't understand why a brown skinned person like me was asking them questions about Allende and his government. Often, they were really hostile; I was nearly beaten up twice. Some thought that I was a Cuban agent, and they

pointed to the left-wing newspapers that I was foolishly carrying with me along with the more conservative newspapers. They laughed angrily and told me to get lost when I explained I needed to follow what both sides were thinking.

By mid-1972, it was clear that these people, many of them young people affiliated with the youth wing of the Christian Democratic Party, controlled the streets of Santiago, something that I thought was similar to what had happened earlier in fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. Eventually, I finished my research and returned to Princeton and got involved in solidarity work against the Pinochet dictatorship after the September 1973 coup. By then, I was both an activist and an engaged intellectual trying to understand class conflict in revolutionary times. The thesis, titled *The Roots and Dynamics of Revolution and Counterrevolution in Chile*, ended up as a comparison of the counter-revolutionary role of the middle class in Chile in 1971–1973 and in Italy and Germany in the 1920s.

Two politically inconvenient truths, to borrow Al Gore's words, became quite clear to me while doing this dissertation. First, contrary to the prevailing explanations on the coup, which attributed Pinochet's success to US intervention and the CIA, I found that the counter-revolution was already there prior to the US destabilization efforts; that it was largely determined by internal class dynamics; and that the Chilean elites were able to connect with middle-class sectors terrified by the prospect of poor sectors rising up with their agenda of justice and equality.

In short, the US intervention was successful, because it was inserted into an ongoing counter-revolutionary process. CIA destabilization was just one of the factors, not the decisive one. This was not something that progressives wanted to hear then, since many wanted a simple black and white picture, that is, that the overthrow of Allende was orchestrated from the outside by the United States.

The second, related but equally politically inconvenient truth that came out in the thesis was the role of the middle class. Among both liberals and progressives at that time, it was common to portray the middle class as an ally of the working class and the lower classes generally and to consider that it was by and large a force for democratization. Seymour Martin Lipset's *Political Man* had a great deal to do with this, as did the politics of the united front that was so dear to Marxism–Leninism. My thesis showed that contrary to this assumption, the middle classes were not necessarily forces for democratization in developing countries. In fact, when the poorer classes were being mobilized with a revolutionary agenda, the middle classes could become a mass base for counter-revolution, as in Germany and Italy in the 1920s when the middle class provided the foot soldiers of the fascist movements.

But progressives really have a hard time accepting this characterization of the middle class, and part of the subliminal reason is that this is often the class they come from. In fact, years later, I had to restate my position in a review of Naomi Klein's bestselling book *The Shock Doctrine* (Bello, 2008a). Klein's portrayal of the overthrow of Allende as the product of a plot between the military and the Chicago Boys, an alliance without a mass base, is not only simplistic but wrong. It would be like saying that the overthrow of Thaksin Shinawatra in Thailand in September 2006 was solely the product of a conspiracy between the military and some people in the Royal Privy Council, without reference to the role of the Bangkok middle classes in creating the political conditions for the

coup. Like the Thai middle class in the case of Thaksin, the Chilean middle class was instrumental to the overthrow of Allende. It is the role of the public intellectual to point out such truths – truths that are not convenient from the point of view of one's politics.

The tension between truth and politics becomes greatest when the public intellectual is part of a political organization. What happens when the demands of truth and the demands of the organization begin to diverge? This has been the greatest fear of intellectuals of the left, for, as I said, our moral or political side is very demanding. In the interest of the bigger battle against the right, against reaction and against imperialism, it is a very great temptation to ignore, rationalize and defend abuses committed by our side and to close ranks.

In the late 1980s, news started filtering out from the Philippine countryside that the Communist Party, to which I then belonged, had carried out a wide-ranging purge of cadres that involved wholesale executions. I was so perturbed that I investigated the matter after I returned to the Philippines in the late 1980s. What I found was truly disturbing. The party had undergone a process of self-immolation that involved the execution of some 2000 cadres on suspicion of being agents of the military. I interviewed both victims and executioners. The study that I came out with was for a long time the only work done on the episode (Bello, 1992). It was intended to be a part of a process of internal reform within the party that would include the internalization of individual human rights and the institutionalization of a system of impartial, objective justice. Instead, I was labeled a 'Gorbachevite,' (what ever that means) and, later, a 'counter-revolutionary.' That I continued to view and struggle against US hegemony and neoliberal policies as the main obstacles to the Philippines' economic and political development was of no account. I was now, 'objectively,' an agent of US imperialism. I felt I was in good company, though, since one of the figures I have most admired, Nikolai Bukharin, was, during the Moscow Trials in 1937, also judged as being 'objectively' an agent of Nazi Germany. I eventually left the party, for it turned out to be different from the organization that I had joined in 1974.

Now, my experience is not unique. Engaged intellectuals at other periods and in other circumstances have found themselves coming to the same juncture, when they have to make their decision on whether to toe the line or break with an organization or even a movement. They often come to the point when they realize that they must either stick with a movement despite its abuses because its ends are worthy or break with it because they believe that the objective of change cannot be divorced from the process of achieving it. That is the moment of truth – when finally they have to decide whether to be faithful to the party – or remain faithful to their role as critical and engaged intellectuals. It is not an easy choice, and one is never certain one has made the right decision. And certainly, one finds it difficult to be judgmental of those who have gone the other way.

Intellectual work and political work are complementary. But they also exist in tension with each other. Living this tension is the grand challenge, and, in my view, one of the engaged intellectual's worst mistakes is to subordinate truth to power in the belief that this is the best route to justice. One needs power to realize truth and to bring about a more just order, but one cannot allow truth to be ensnared by power in the process.

I do not have 100% certainty that I have made the right choices. Indeed, my enemies – and unfortunately I have quite a few, ranging from the World Bank and the WTO to the

Philippine military and the Communist Party of the Philippines – are betting that I have not and that I will have my come-uppance, hopefully in the near future. In this regard, someone once said that one of the certainties about being an engaged intellectual is that you create more enemies than friends, and, may I add, what few new acquaintances you do make, such as Hugo Chávez, Hamas and the Hezbollah, are precisely the ones calculated to create even more enemies.

The demand for public scholarship is great today, given the accumulating problems of climate change, globalization, financial meltdown and the universal crisis of democracy. These are times when everywhere – in the United States, the Philippines, Thailand, China – it is getting to be impossible to do orthodox research, in which there is a comfortable distance between the observer and the object of study. As we all become more engaged, it is useful for us to remember that the public intellectual faces the multiple and contradictory tasks of marrying truth to power, speaking truth to power and opposing truth to power. How to balance these conflicting demands is the challenge and the dilemma he or she faces.

Let me end this article by repeating what I said when I was awarded the Outstanding Public Scholar Award by the International Studies Association in 2008. The award was, in my view, a tribute to all public intellectuals. As I said then, 'It represents a recognition of the path that not a few have taken, one that does not have the security and rewards of academic life and all the pitfalls of a radical political trajectory, but which is just as critical for the public interest as the work of the professor and the analyst. I do not think that I have been a better public scholar than others. Indeed, I think that in a world filled with contingency, I have merely been more lucky, having been spared the really, really rough situations and really, really tough choices' (Bello, 2008b).

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Résumé

La sociologie publique fait intervenir des idées reçues problématiques. À ce titre, elle requiert un courage inhabituel, car ces idées sont enchâssées dans le 'bon sens', lui-même soutenu par les intérêts de certains et parfois par la force. La manière la plus efficace de parvenir à un changement de ce qui est considéré comme étant le 'bon sens', par exemple de l'orthodoxie néolibérale, sera donc par le biais d'un mouvement social. Mettre au défi les idées conventionnelles requiert la découverte de la vérité, et ceci peut exiger des méthodes peu orthodoxes comme une entrée par effraction dans des organisations puissantes qui détiennent des secrets officiels. Celui qui met au défi des convictions profondément ancrées, que ce soit chez les puissants ou les faibles, peut s'exposer à une hostilité prolongée. Tel a été mon cas quand j'ai fait des recherches sur les massacres commis par le Parti communiste des Philippines, car le conflit inhérent et inévitable qui existe entre la vérité et le pouvoir ne disparaîtra jamais.

Mots-clés

Banque mondiale, justice, Philippines, recherche intellectuelle publique, vérité

Resumen

La sociología pública implica desafiar los saberes recibidos. Por lo tanto, requiere de una fortaleza inusual, ya que estos saberes están incorporados al sentido común, respaldado por intereses y a veces, por la fuerza. Por lo tanto, lo que se conoce como sentido común, como por ejemplo la ortodoxia neoliberal, se puede cambiar en forma eficaz a través de un movimiento social. Desafiar la sabiduría convencional requiere descubrir la verdad, y para eso tal vez se necesiten métodos poco ortodoxos, como irrumpir en agencias poderosas que guardan secretos oficiales. Desafiar las verdades muy ocultas, ya sea que quienes las oculten sean los poderosos o los débiles, puede dar lugar a una hostilidad de larga duración, como cuando investigué los asesinatos cometidos por el Partido comunista de Filipinas. Esto es así porque existe un conflicto intrínseco e ineludible entre la verdad y el poder, que nunca desaparecerá.

Palabras clave

Banco Mundial, Filipinas, intelectual público, justicia, verdad

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Sociology as a vocation: Moral commitment and scientific imagination

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Abstract
Public sociology and the sacrifices it entails, richly described in the case studies in this monograph, are driven by moral commitment. This is one element of sociology as a vocation. The other element is sociology as a science. The case studies are built on an embryonic sociology of commodification, understood in its historical dimensions and its global consequences. This sociology of commodification examines the disasters created by third-wave marketization and the bleak future for human existence, thereby, fueling the original moral commitment of public sociology.

If there is one lesson we have learnt, it is that public sociology is not easy; it is a discipline in its own right, requiring fortitude, flexibility, persistence and above all commitment. It is, indeed, a precarious engagement. It is precarious because of the time it requires, the sacrifices it demands and the professional hostility it can arouse, all of which can jeopardize an academic career. It is precarious because on entering the political field, the academic faces a game with very different rules and sometimes no rules at all. It is playing with dynamite. Finally, it is precarious because in disturbing common sense it can incite vicious attacks, public humiliation and even death threats. So why do people risk so much for such uncertain and limited outcomes?

Sociology as a vocation and, perhaps, scholarly life more generally, is not simply the pursuit of an instrumental career. It is infused with moral purpose, which can

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be temporarily repressed, but never disappears. How else can one explain César Rodríguez-Garavito's and Nandini Sundar's resolute defense of the rights of indigenous people, their right to have rights, their rights to consultation about the fate of their land and their right to government protection? How else can one understand Karl von Holdt's and Sari Hanafi's challenge to vested interests, withstanding reprisals in order to improve health care for blacks in post-apartheid South Africa or the conditions of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon? How else can one regard the uncompromising commitment of Frances Fox Piven and Pun Ngai and her colleagues, in taking on the most powerful economic actors – corporate banks and transnational corporations – condemning the powers that create life-long debt peonage and unbearable deprivation? How else does one interpret the risky and painstaking interventions of Ramón Flecha, Marta Soler and Michel Wieviorka, seeking to reverse stigma and counter deep-seated prejudices? How else can one comprehend the bold pursuits of Elena Zdravomyslova, Anna Temkina and Walden Bello in the face of hostile publics – pursuits that bring calumny upon their heads, and endanger their safety?

At its core, sociology recognizes and defends the humanity of others as it must also recognize the humanity of its practitioners. Sociologists are social actors, something they share with the people they study. Pursuing their sense of vocation, sociologists feel bound up with the fate of the people they study. As Bourdieu (1998: vii) himself writes, almost surprised by his own public interventions, 'So I would not have engaged in public position-taking if I had not, each time, had the – perhaps illusory – sense of being forced into it by a kind of legitimate rage, sometimes close to something like a sense of duty.' This ethical moment is part and parcel of being a sociologist, even touching those, like Bourdieu, who had once felt inoculated against such temptations.

But sociology is also a science. Moral commitment without science is blind, just as science without moral commitment is empty. What is this science? For Marx it was a theory of capitalism built on the critique of alienation; for Durkheim it was a theory of the division of labor based on the idea of solidarity; for Weber it was a theory of rationalization that threatened individual freedom. Today, I believe we need a theory of the market built on the idea of commodification and dispossession.[1]

If we look behind the public issues that define the projects analyzed in this monograph we find manifold ties to the expanded encroachment of the market into everyday life. We can deploy Karl Polanyi's (1944) idea of fictitious commodities to capture these developments. Fictitious commodities are factors of production – labor, nature and money – whose commodification destroys their use value. Thus, today, the commodification of labor makes life precarious for ever-larger populations; the commodification of nature is making the planet less inhabitable for more people; and the commodification of money has led to the accumulation of debt that paralyzes human life. These processes are at the heart of the precarious engagements examined here.

Pun Ngai and her colleagues describe new strategies of the commodification of labor – from migrant labor to student labor – that leave them without access either to rural support or to urban services. As commodities without protection suicide is a mark of their desperation and entrapment. Karl von Holdt describes the post-apartheid hospital as a double commodification, both of labor and of health care, draining life away. Anna Temkina and Elena Zdravomyslova give centrality to the changing character of male

domination under the commodification of women's labor, found in their limited access to the labor market and the commercialization of care.

Sari Hanafi writes of the Palestinians' right of access to the labor market and to education in Lebanon, just as Ramón Flecha and Marta Soler are concerned with similar rights of the Roma people in Europe. The problem here is not so much commodification but ex-commodifiction, that is, the expulsion of people from the market and the creation of a surplus population. César Rodríguez-Garavito and Nandini Sundar are dealing with the double consequences of the commodification of land and water: the displacement of human beings on the one side and the concentration of speculative landholding on the other. Frances Fox Piven dwells on the commodification of money, the way money is made to produce more money through credit and thus the extension of debt.

Commodification does not exist in a vacuum; it is a process that has antecedents and consequences. On the one hand, a factor of production can be subject to market exchange only after it has been forcibly removed from the social relations in which it is embedded; this is a process of dispossession that often involves violence. This ex-commodification is very different from de-commodification that protects the commodity from unregulated exchange. On the other hand, the operation of the market leads to a variety of inequalities. The commodity labor power is created by denying people access to their land and forcing them into a labor market, which then, through the productive process, generates inequality. But often land dispossession not only creates a dependent and impoverished surplus population but becomes a valuable commodity in its own right. When money moves from a medium of exchange to a source of profit through the extension of credit, in the context of an ever-more precarious labor market, it generates defaults and dispossession and thus great inequality. For any given commodity, there is a dynamic between dispossession, commodification and inequality. These processes become far more complex once we introduce relations among fictitious commodities, that is, the articulation of modes of commodification. On this as a foundation we can develop theories of state intervention and cultural domination. Only such a political and cultural sociology can explain how and why people put up with the destruction of their existence.

This is not the first time that markets have invaded everyday life, destroying the fabric of human existence. Indeed, we may say that this is the third wave of marketization since the beginning of the industrial revolution. Each wave digs deeper and spreads more widely than the previous one. While the commodification of labor dominated the first wave of marketization in the first half of the 19th century, the commodification of money and the recommodification of labor dominated the second wave of marketization after World War I. In the third wave of marketization that began in the 1970s and shows no sign of abating, the commodification of nature combines with the commodification of labor and money to produce devastating results. These waves of commodification not only call for a theory of accumulation that explains these cyclical dynamics of capitalism on a world scale, and a theory of politics and culture that contain or dissipate discontent, but also a theory of social movements that addresses the question of whether and how these waves are reversed, or what Polanyi called a counter-movement. The counter-movement to the first wave of marketization in the 19th century revolved around the labor struggles whereas the counter-movement to the second wave of marketization centered on state regulation of the economy. The question we now need to pose is the

possibility of a third counter-movement that would reverse the wave of marketization that began in the 1970s.

We might inquire into the relationship between the possibility of a counter-movement and the social movements that began at the end of 2010: the Arab Spring, Occupy, Indignados, land struggles and student protest against privatization. Certainly, these movements are very different from the movements of the 1960s and 1970s that appeared at the tail end of the second counter-movement and had expansive visions of emancipation, still with the state as their object. Today's movements are defensive, concerned with human survival and in retreat from the state. Can they be the harbinger of a counter-movement against third-wave marketization? To contribute to such a counter-movement, they will have to assume a global scale – to counter the global character of finance, environmental degradation and the precarity of labor. Transnational movements, however, cannot be built from nothing. They are only likely to be built on the shoulders of local and national movements whose existence is often antithetical to transnationalism.

If this is not frightening enough, we have to recognize with Polanyi that even if counter-movements are successful, then they are as likely to assume a reactionary as a progressive form, contracting rather than expanding freedom. We have seen evidence enough of such reactionary movements in the case studies presented in this monograph. Such a threatening view – one that is consonant with the studies in this monograph and defines a scientific research program – sheds light on why sociologists might want to make the sacrifices they do and enter such precarious engagements.

The outlook is far bleaker than Karl Polanyi ever anticipated. He not only missed the possibility of multiple waves of marketization, thinking that humanity would never play with fire again, he not only missed the importance of ex-commodification, that is the production of waste, alongside commodification and de-commodification, but he also did not reckon with a fourth fictitious commodity – knowledge. As institution after institution caved into the forces of commodification, one institution sustained its autonomy: the university. Now we see that the university has succumbed to the assault, turning the production and dissemination of knowledge into a commercial proposition. This has inexorably led to the competitive search for funding from donors, from research entities and especially from increases in student fees. It has involved the institutional transformation of the university into a corporation, subject to national and global ranking systems. Alongside the search for revenue there is widespread cost cutting through reduction of the number of permanent faculty, increased employment of casual labor (adjuncts, part-time lecturers, etc.), online education and outsourcing of low-paid service work. The university is effectively instrumentalized with professional and policy work emphasized, because they pay, at the expense of critical discourse and public engagement.

In these circumstances, which find their expression all over the world, the vision of public sociology is at once threatened and made more urgent. On the one hand, the sort of projects described in this monograph become even more out of favor than before, as social science is supposed to serve the immediate needs of credentials and corporations and as social science, in danger of losing its legitimacy, becomes ever-more concerned with distance and a spurious objectivity. Public sociology and inconvenient truths have an ever-steeper mountain to climb. On the other hand, the situation is so dire that precarious engagements have a new *raison d'être* – to build closer ties with other communities

and organizations suffering the same fate from the collusion of market and states. Only in this way can the university retain its public and critical functions, by becoming a political player in civil society. Only in this way can the university begin to tackle the problems that it has in part produced and continues to produce – not least in the form of neoliberal ideology. Here, sociology has a leading role to play, as it has always taken the standpoint of civil society against market and state encroachments. More than ever, the world needs sociology.

Today, sociology shows us that humanity is destroying itself by unleashing waves of marketization, waves of wanton destruction. This provides the rational basis for the extraordinary moral courage of public sociologists, such as the ones presented in this monograph. Theirs is no blind commitment but one informed by sociology as science. Today as never before, sociology as a vocation means walking on two legs – science and engagement. This is not easy, as we see in such phrases as amphibious sociology, schizophrenic sociology and critical engagement. Learning to walk on two legs takes time; it is a process of mutual education that requires discipline, persistence and above all, collaboration. Once we learn, however, we will be so much more agile and effective, better equipped to meet the challenges of third-wave marketization – if it's not too late.

Funding

Note

1. I have learnt much from Berkeley graduate students who have explored these issues in their dissertations, especially Mike Levien (India), Julia Chuang (China), Alex Barnard and Siri Colom (US), Gabe Hetland (Venezuela and Bolivia), Zach Levenson (South Africa) and Herbert Docena (climate change).

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Author biography

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Résumé

La sociologie publique et les sacrifices qu'elle occasionne, richement illustrés par les études de cas dans ce volume, sont motivés par un engagement moral. C'est une dimension de la sociologie en tant que vocation. L'autre dimension est la sociologie en tant que science. Les études de cas présentées dans ce volume sont élaborées sur

une forme embryonnaire de sociologie de réification, considérée et comprise dans son contexte historique, et sur ses conséquences mondiales. Cette sociologie de réification examine les désastres créés par la troisième vague de marchandisation et les menaces pour l'existence humaine, alimentant ainsi l'engagement moral originel de la sociologie publique.

Mots-clés
Engagement moral, marchandisation, réification, sociologie publique

Resumen
La sociología pública y el sacrificio que conlleva, extensamente descriptos en los casos de estudio de este volumen, son impulsados por el compromiso moral. Esta es una dimensión de la sociología como vocación. La otra dimensión es la sociología como ciencia. Los casos de estudio de este volumen están construidos en base a una sociología embrionaria de comodificación, entendida en su contexto histórico y sus consecuencias globales. Esta sociología de comodificación estudia los desastres creados por la mercantilización de la tercera ola y las amenazas a la existencia humana, alimentando así el compromiso moral original de la sociología pública.

Palabras clave
Comodificación, compromiso moral, mercantilización, sociología pública

Appendix: Global pedagogy in a digital age

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Abstract

In this appendix we describe two successive efforts in the use of digital media to develop courses that brought together distinguished sociologists from around the world. In the first course, we put together a vision of global sociology that revolved around issues of marketization while in the second we were more attentive to the public engagement of sociologists, facing very different political contexts and social issues. In the first course we faced the problem of building a global sociology that was attentive to local contexts while the second was beset by the contradictory demands of local pedagogy and global dialogue. If nothing else our use of digital media clarified some of the problems of building a global sociology.

Keywords

Global sociology, online education, public sociology

2013 was declared the year of the MOOC – massive open online course – when new techniques of online education rapidly expanded and caught the imagination of educators across the world. They were propagated by a series of US consortia – coursera, edX and Udacity – that collaborated with major universities to produce courses that students can take for credit, either fully online or with classroom sessions. In effect, these MOOCs constitute a new video form of the textbook, making brilliant lectures by leading scholars at elite universities available to much wider student populations and even the general public. Who could object to open access to the greatest minds our universities can offer?

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Who could refuse the potential of MOOCs for expanding access to quality education? Furthermore, wouldn't anyone committed to public sociology want to make their sociology accessible the world over? While the potential of this new form of online education seems undeniable, let us examine its implications.

There are precursors to MOOCs, and the one that most readily springs to mind is the British Open University that has its own staff of professors and lecturers who prepare their own courses with lectures delivered on BBC television. Those who could ill afford the money and time to pursue university education, often those firmly ensconced in jobs, could take courses and eventually obtain a degree. They would meet with academic staff for several weeks each year but most of the learning was done independently at home. With the internet widely accessible and no monopoly over transmission, US universities now compete with one another to offer their best courses online. While this dramatically expands access to quality instruction from elite institutions, there clearly remains an educational gap between the privileged students engaged directly with faculty at their home universities (often in the form of small seminars) and the thousands of students at less elite institutions who follow the course online.

Unlike elite universities with their handsome endowments, poorer public universities now strapped for cash with declining public funds and, ultimately, facing a limit to the increase in the fees they can charge, are tempted to use online courses to deskill and, thereby, cheapen their lecturing staff. There have been cases of permanent faculty being required to use online courses developed at elite universities, courses that will then be handed over to armies of part-time, adjunct faculty to administer. Their numbers will grow at the expense of permanent tenured faculty whose autonomy will also be reduced. The struggles that are now taking place below the top flight research universities are precisely over the adoption of online pre-packaged courses, leading to fierce battles over faculty autonomy. What room for maneuver will they have to use the online course as a supplement to their own courses as opposed to having the latter defined by the former? Moreover, to the extent that these online courses are adopted, deskilling will be accompanied by the domination of the visions of faculty from elite universities. While this may be less problematic in fields like physics, it poses significant implications for a discipline like sociology. Given that the background of students is a crucial ingredient in designing sociology courses, this threatens to limit the possibilities for pedagogical approaches that may work with different communities of students. Teaching sociology to Princeton students is very different from teaching sociology to students at a public university like Berkeley, and pedagogical approaches cannot simply be transferred from one context to the other.

The pedagogical implications of MOOCs have broader ramifications when they are adopted globally. To be sure, the educational impoverishment of many countries in the Global South, reflected in overcrowded courses, unprepared and underpaid teachers as well as the poor state of and limited access to textbooks, could mean that online education would improve and indeed set new standards for teaching. But the presence of such online courses, available to all, could provide the excuse to further disinvest in national higher education. It could spell the end of universities – already in retreat – in many countries of the Global South. Inevitably, lectures from elite Western institutions, so-called 'world class' universities, would command a symbolic power, intensifying the

domination of Western ideas – unless, that is, alternative centers could grasp the technology to develop their own courses. This is what we tried to do with two undergraduate courses organized from Berkeley.

The goal was to develop an alternative approach to online education that aimed: to disperse participation to include a global community of sociologists (rather than limited to faculty at elite Western universities); to increase autonomy and active participation (of both educators and educated); and to nurture alternative approaches to sociology (beyond the confines of dominant Western approaches). Our first attempt was a course called *Global Sociology, Live!* The idea was to develop a notion of global sociology through a global dialogue among sociologists located throughout the world. Working with the ideas of Antonio Gramsci and Karl Polanyi, we developed a conception of sociology as being rooted in civil society and emerging as a response to expanding capitalist markets. Following Polanyi we sought to develop the notion of 'marketization' as a description of the contemporary world capitalist economy, paying attention to its destructive powers, whether in the realm of labor, finance or the environment. We followed this with an examination of the way political entities, both nation-states and multilateral agencies, have channeled, contained or deepened the expansion of capitalist markets. Insofar as contemporary capitalism is increasingly global in nature, we posed the question: does a *global* civil society emerge in response, bringing with it the possibility of a new global sociology? We explored examples of civil society being organized on a transnational basis, whether in the form of struggles around the commodification of labor and the environment, the crafting of international legal orders that seek to protect the interests of indigenous peoples, or through the pursuit of 'real utopias' that transcend national boundaries.

The course aimed to scale up from prevailing local and national approaches and seek out the contours of a global sociology. We pursued this by organizing an international discussion that drew upon the expertise of social scientists located in different places throughout the world (Lebanon, India, China, Colombia, Philippines, South Africa as well as the US).[1] Every week (after students had first read and discussed some of their work), we connected to different scholars via Skype or video-conferencing for a short lecture. This was followed by giving students the opportunity to directly pose questions to the lecturer, enabling more open-ended conversations that often took surprising turns. The picture of global sociology emerged week by week from these discussions and in ways we could never anticipate – it was indeed an unfolding and unnerving process!

The course hinged on the active participation of students who directly engaged and often challenged the distant lecturers. They played a central role in shaping the vision of global sociology that emerged through these discussions. Students in the course had been carefully selected for their international backgrounds and interests, resulting in an extraordinary group that brought with them a wide diversity of experiences and perspectives. In other words, in addition to aiming for a global array of weekly lecturers, we also aimed to globalize the classroom as much as possible. Finally, we sought to make these lectures and discussions available to a global audience by video, recording them and posting them on the website of the International Sociological Association. Anyone could watch the series if they had access to the internet and indeed the course received thousands of hits from all over the world.

Although we found the course very stimulating, we knew that there were many problems that needed to be thought through. So we asked students to evaluate the course as part of their final papers. This not only served to reaffirm their central role in shaping the course, but it also provided us with invaluable feedback and criticism. Many students expressed frustration with the overly simplistic theoretical framework we had adopted and felt that it failed to do justice to the diversity of experiences and perspectives being shared by different scholars every week. In designing the course we had felt that a broad theoretical approach would provide an overall coherence and a shared global framework for discussion. The result, however, was that this inclined some of the conversations towards abstraction rather than being grounded in concrete realities and localities. So while we began with the assumption that a broad all-encompassing theoretical framework was the best means of facilitating a global dialogue among sociologists, we came to see that without being grounded global sociology was in danger of becoming another spuriously universal sociology. Our approach tended to turn the 'global' into a universalizing gesture – one that both obscures a world of diverse perspectives and the specificity of its own standpoint – a tradition of Western domination that we sought to challenge.

We concluded that a true global sociology had to be built from the ground up, drawing upon the work of sociologists directly engaged with local publics. For the second iteration of the course, therefore, we took a more inductive approach in which a vision of global sociology emerged through engagement with concretely anchored public sociologies. We called it *Public Sociology, Live!* Much of the format for the course remained the same – weekly conversations over Skype with scholars in different locations, in which a short opening lecture was followed by questions and discussion with Berkeley students, all of which was recorded and made publicly available online. We made some significant adjustments, however, to address the weaknesses that surfaced in our first course. We carefully chose scholars on the basis of their deep engagement with publics in their own societies, and we asked them to be as concrete as possible in their lectures, encouraging them to share specific examples of how they approached their work as public sociologists. The resulting discussions avoided the lofty theorization that was more characteristic of the first course, being much more firmly rooted in the distinct specificities of each case.

A second criticism that students emphasized in their evaluations of the first course was its separation from potential audiences. Even though the scholars came from all corners of the earth, they engaged exclusively with Berkeley students in recorded sessions that were then posted for global audiences who were positioned as passive recipients with little opportunity to participate in the discussion (beyond posting occasional comments online). In their criticisms of the course, our students pushed us to think about ways we might actually facilitate a more open and participatory global discussion. Therefore we added a new component to the second course that involved actively incorporating six seminars in different locations – Barcelona, Kiev, Sao Paulo, Tehran, Oslo and Johannesburg. These parallel seminars viewed and discussed the weekly lectures once they were posted online and each group appointed one member to summarize their discussions. These summaries were then posted on a Facebook page created for this purpose. This provided a virtual space for students dispersed throughout the world to share their ideas and engage directly with each other. Individual Berkeley students were

assigned to liaise with other groups and help facilitate these online exchanges. The ultimate goal was to generate discussion of the issues being raised within these different locations throughout the world, as well as between them – in effect, establishing multiple 'centers' in the production of this global dialogue.[2]

Inevitably some groups were more engaged than others. The group of students in Tehran were especially enthusiastic, going to great lengths to overcome censorship that made viewing videos or accessing Facebook a complicated and politically risky endeavor. The South Africans were also well organized and generated a lively discussion, not least around the contribution of their own Karl von Holdt. The team in Barcelona sent in regular summaries of their discussions, which reflected the communicative methodology they advocated, and after Ramón Flecha and Marta Soler gave their presentation, Marta was especially conscientious in responding to the critical comments of the groups around the world. The other seminars contributed comments more erratically as it proved to be more work than anticipated, especially as communication was in English. But, as we discuss below, there were other reasons why their participation might have lacked enthusiasm.

Once again we solicited the feedback of Berkeley students by incorporating an evaluation of the course into their final papers. And once again they highlighted for us many of the weaknesses and ways in which the course fell short of our objectives. In contrast to the first course, students now expressed the opposite frustration – overwhelmed by exposure to vastly different topics, approaches and national contexts every week with little more than a loose conceptual framework to connect them. Students struggled to make sense of and connect the different forms of public sociology in such disparate places as Colombia, India, Philippines, Spain, France, India, Lebanon and South Africa. The seminar with Pun Ngai from Hong Kong was the exception that proved the rule. She spoke about the conditions and meaning of work in the Foxconn enterprises that employed some 200,000 workers in one physical location in South China. She described the appalling working conditions that go into the production of the i-Pads, i-Phones and Mac computers that Berkeley students were using, all clearly visible on the video screen to Pun Ngai and anyone watching the discussion. Inevitably, this brought home the connection between themselves and the Foxconn workers who were committing suicide, leading to an especially lively conversation. Here students were brought into direct connection to the engaged research of sociologists on the other side of the world. But, for the most part it was difficult for students to grapple with issues that were so foreign to them.

While students in our first class were critical (and rightly so) of our imposition of an overly simplified theoretical framework, students in the second course found the lack of theoretical grounding to be equally frustrating. This dilemma gets to the heart of one of the main challenges of building a truly global sociology – the need for a conceptual framework that can serve to facilitate and orient dialogue among sociologists from vastly different locations and perspectives, *without* reverting to forms of universalism that simply reproduce patterns of thought dominant in the West.

Students in the second course also remained skeptical of how far we had actually come in terms of decentering our pedagogy. While parallel seminars in other locations had been incorporated into the structure of the course, their role remained responsive rather than constitutive – the course had been designed by us without their input, their

role was limited to discussing or responding to issues that we introduced, and unlike their privileged Berkeley counterparts, they had no opportunity to directly participate in discussions with lecturers. In short, though the course was intended to create a vision of public sociology on the basis of inputs from all over the world, it undoubtedly relied upon and reproduced the privileges of the central Berkeley node. As a pedagogic exercise, the next step was to encourage the autonomous creation of similar experiments in different places in the world, but so far this has only taken place in Bogotá, Colombia where María José Álvarez Rivadulla organized a public seminar along similar lines at Rosario University.

Far from solving the problems of a global pedagogy in which all contribute to a vision of global sociology, these experimental courses taught us that digital technology only brings the problems into relief. But bringing the problems into relief is important in itself not only because it is necessary for tackling them, but also because we too easily forget the ramifications of global inequalities for the growth of knowledge. Above all else, what remains in our minds are the courageous and inspiring exploits of sociologists around the world, exploits that enable us to appreciate the possibilities as well as the limits of public sociology.

Funding

Notes

1. Our guests were: David Harvey on the history of neoliberalism; Michael Watts on oil, dispossession and violence in Nigeria; Ananya Roy on poverty capitalism and micro-finance in the Global South; Walden Bello on global institutions and civil society; Ching Kwan Lee on the enigma of Chinese capitalism; Sari Hanafi on the politics of spacio-cide in Palestine; Laleh Behbehanian on state counter-terrorism as a global project; Peter Evans on counter-hegemonic globalization; Eddie Webster on global labor from a Southern perspective; Amita Baviskar on the politics of environmentalism in India; Erik Wright on real utopias in and beyond capitalism; and César Rodríguez-Garavito on social minefields in Latin America.
2. These discussions can be viewed on the course's blog (http://isapublicsociology.wordpress.com/).

Author biographies

Laleh Behbehanian is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Sociology at the University of California, Berkeley. Her research focuses on state pre-emptive policing strategies, ranging from those utilized to police the tourism industry in Sinai, Egypt to the US counter-terrorism practices undertaken as part of the 'War on Terror.' Her current research focuses on local and federal policing of political protest in the case of Occupy Oakland, as an example of a larger shift towards pre-emptive forms of policing and criminalization. This research supplements her activism and advocacy efforts, particularly through her work with the Bay Area Anti-Repression Committee which provides arrest, bail and legal support for those facing state repression for their political activism. Behbehanian teaches undergraduate classes in political sociology, as well as creating and developing courses on global sociology and public sociology with Michael Burawoy.

Michael Burawoy is President of the International Sociological Association and Associate of the Society, Work, and Development Institute (SWOP) at the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa. He also teaches sociology at the University of California, Berkeley.

Résumé

Dans cette annexe, nous décrivons deux efforts successifs d'utilisation de médias électroniques pour développer des cours qui rassemblent des sociologues de renom du monde entier. Pour le premier cours, nous avons forgé une vision de la sociologie globale qui tourne autour des problèmes de marchandisation; pour le second, nous avons prêté davantage attention à l'engagement public des sociologues, qui sont confrontés à des contextes politiques et des difficultés sociales très différents. Élaborer une sociologie globale soucieuse des contextes locaux a représenté un problème lors du premier cours, tandis que le second a été semé d'obstacles dus aux demandes contradictoires de la pédagogie locale et du dialogue global. Tout au moins l'utilisation de médias sociaux a-t-elle clarifié certains des problèmes rencontrés pour élaborer une sociologie globale.

Mots-clés

Éducation en ligne, sociologie globale, sociologie publique

Resumen

En este apéndice se describen dos esfuerzos sucesivos en el uso de medios electrónicos para desarrollar cursos que reunieron a distinguidos sociólogos de todo el mundo. En el primer curso, tuvimos que crear una visión de la sociología global que giraba en torno a temas de mercantilización, mientras que en el segundo, estuvimos más atentos al compromiso público de los sociólogos, enfrentando contextos políticos y temas sociales muy diferentes. En el primer curso nos enfrentamos con el problema de construir una sociología global atenta a los contextos locales, mientras que el segundo estaba plagado por las demandas contradictorias de la pedagogía local y el diálogo global. Por lo menos, el uso de las redes sociales clarificó algunos de los problemas de construir una sociología global.

Palabras clave

Educación en línea, sociología global, sociología pública