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Periphery and Metropole in the History of Sociology

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1. Launching and defining sociology

All societies have ways of identifying social groups and representing social relations. There is some archaeological evidence that social symbolism became identifiable about 50–40 000 years ago, appearing in the record about the time anatomically modern humans (*homo sapiens sapiens*) spread around the world. This is, arguably, part of the process of creating the divisions of labour (such as gender) and the sustained forms of social cooperation (such as food sharing) that underpin the societies we know in history (Balme and Bowdler 2006).

In more recent history, a growing division of labour allows specialized artisans and then, in urban societies, intellectuals and writing (Childe 1960). It becomes possible to formalize a language for talking about social order, and speculate about the shapes social relations might or should take. Thus we get the visions of the good society from Plato and Kong Fuzi; the political and cultural observations of Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah* and Christine de Pizan's *City of Women*; the cycles of Vico and the constitutions of Montesquieu. In every direction, a glorious field of historical investigation opens when we ask how different societies have represented themselves and imagined others.

Within this domain of social symbolism, something happened in nineteenth century CE Europe and eastern North America, mainly among the men of the liberal bourgeoisie, that yielded "sociology" as an organized cultural practice. This was a collective enterprise, as writers of textbooks at the end of the century emphasised, involving the labour of many hands. Such labour required means of communication and coordination, among which the textbooks themselves were important; newly founded periodicals and conferences also helped. The rhetoric of "social science" devised by Comte was taken up soon after his death by a broad spectrum of reformers, and put to work in multi-purpose organizations such as the Associations for the Promotion of Social Science based in London and Boston. A generation later, more specialized or academic bodies such as the *Institut International de Sociologie* and the American Sociological Society were created (Yeo 1996, Connell 1997).

Claiming the title of "science" implied, to Victorian minds, speculative generaliza-

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tions supported by a large body of information; so the recording and classification of social knowledge became a major part of the enterprise. The most influential writings in sociological science, such as Spencer's *Principles of Sociology*, took the form of huge accumulations of little descriptions of social institutions, customs and events. These were roughly sorted according to an overall schema, almost always based on a concept of historical progress (sometimes, but not always, called "social evolution").

In the foundation story that became popular much later (in the 1960s–70s), the emergence of sociology was a response to the new, class-ridden, industrial society that had emerged in Europe. This internalist narrative is at most half a truth. Undoubtedly investigations of social conditions in the metropole went into the brew that was labelled "social science". But the gaze of Spencer, Ward, Letourneau, Tönnies, Durkheim, Sumner, Giddings, Hobhouse and their colleagues ranged far beyond the metropole. (Not to mention Engels, whose *Origin of the Family* is Comtean sociology, even in its name.) In Durkheim's *L'année sociologique*, just over a quarter of the reviews concerned modern metropolitan societies; many more than that concerned colonized, remote or ancient societies or ranged across human history. Sociology not only addressed class; it equally addressed those issues vital to empire: race and gender.

The relationship with the periphery was *intellectually* crucial to the formation of sociology, though the making was mainly the work of intellectuals in the metropole. The relationship with the periphery gave sociology most of its data, and yielded the concept of global difference – the distinction of primitive from advanced – that governed the new science for its first two generations. It was universal scope that defined sociology, in the Comtean universe, as the "mother science" (Anderson 1912), of which specific sciences such as economics were the children. And it was this body of data that allowed the claim to rigorous scientificity, which by the 1890s was marking "sociology" off from the moral discourse of social improvement so widespread in the generation before. In substance and in framing, then, sociology was global from the start.

2. The making of professional sociology: transformations of the metropole/periphery relationship

To acknowledge that sociology was always global does not imply that the character of its global-ness was fixed. Since the structures of global society have changed markedly, there is every reason to expect that the metropole/periphery relationship within sociology would also change. I see this relationship developing through three main phases.

Sociology came into existence at the high tide of European imperialism and offered a synthesis of the liberal bourgeoisie's consciousness of worldwide empire. This did not require a relationship of direct rule, though that did play a part – examples being Durkheim's use of data from the French colony of Algeria, and Spencer's and Maine's (among many British writers') use of data from India. Information from the frontier of colonial conquest circulated much more widely in the North Atlantic metropole.

Thus Durkheim famously used data from the British colonies in Australia, and Engels famously used data from the British/ United States colonization of North America. Data from many frontiers percolated to Germany, which had only limited experience of overseas colonial rule (though we should not forget Hapsburg and Hohenzollern rule in eastern Europe).

The pattern in imperial sociology precisely follows Hountondji's (1995) observation on the global structure of scientific knowledge in general, arguing from African experience. (The pattern has also recently been traced in colonial higher education in India: Baber 2003.) The distinction of metropole from colony is also a distinction of function in the making of scientific knowledge. Theory-making was located in the metropole; data-gathering, and some applications of science at the end of the process, occurred in the colonies. This was highly visible in fields like biology and geology, where collectors from the imperial powers roamed the world, sending back the products of their labours to centres like Kew Gardens and the Royal Society in London. Charles Darwin himself performed this role, as a young man.

The same happened in sociology, the data initially being collected by travellers, missionaries, military conquerors, and colonial administrators and savants. The footnotes and bibliographies of sociology texts, from the 1870s to the Great War, overflowed with references to their reports. However the process of data collection in the periphery became gradually professionalized. Ethnography, as a fieldwork and writing genre, was born, installing in the human sciences the natural-science model of full-time remote data-collector. Census-taking became more systematic in the colonies; social-scientific data archives were created – private, official and academic. (Spencer compiled one of the first.) The colonial state, in the 19th-century reform and regularization of colonial rule that occurred in most of the empires, had a growing appetite for intelligence about its subject populations. At this time the alliance between colonial administration and anthropology was born, though its full flowering came a little later (Asad 1973).

The relationship between colony and metropole was thus written into the process of assembling the factual basis of the new science. It was also written into sociological theory, which centered at this time on concepts of progress. This concept certainly drew on the Hegel/Comte vision of European and Mediterranean history, which overthrew cyclical and eschatological concepts of time. In the construction of sociological theory from the 1870s, however, the ancient Mediterranean world was blurred into the colonized and the remote by the concept of the "primitive" or "elementary".

To this generation, the main proof of progress was the abjection of the colonized world. Colonial domination was generally seen as a demonstration of the more advanced character of the society of the metropole. Theorists of progress shared the imperial vision of a hierarchy of colonized races – often conceptualizing Australia and Africa as the realm of the most primitive – though they differed among themselves about the basis of the hierarchy, especially whether it was innate.

The theory of progress, and the science called sociology that embodied it, could be exported from the metropole to the periphery. It is well known that Spencer's soc-

iology was read, and by some enthusiastically adopted, in Meiji Japan and colonized Bengal. Comte's positivism was taken up, notably, in Brazil – where Comtean temples of humanity were built and a Comtean sociological slogan is still emblazoned on the Republic's national flag. It was therefore possible for intellectuals in the colonies to share in the writing of sociology, participating in the metropolitan attempt to characterize progress.

Early in the new century the cultural crisis that was undermining the rationale of empire spread to sociology. By the 1920s Comtean sociology was in full retreat and by the end of that decade it was gone; I think we are entitled to speak, in Althusser's terminology, of an epistemological break occurring in metropolitan social science. I don't think it is an accident that this happened at the time of the political crisis of North Atlantic/ European imperialism, the collapse of three empires, the re-constitution of one of them as the USSR, and the shift of economic power (though not yet cultural hegemony) to the newest empire, the USA. With war in the metropole, political collapse and social revolution, the concept of progress lost its power to frame the thought of the metropolitan intelligentsia.

In the debris of Comtean sociology, a magma of possible successors bubbled. Among them were the sociology of knowledge; various syntheses of Freud with Marx (e.g. Mannheim 1935); the cultural-relativist speculations of Sorokin and Spengler who took over the global vision of the Comteans but deleted the concept of progress; and the first full-scale social theory of gender (Vaerting 1921). Not the least interesting in this magma was the "system of sociology" proposed by the Bolshevik theorist Bukharin (1925), who adopted a practically Comtean definition of sociology but gave it a materialist content. He proposed an early version of social systems theory, and among his themes was equilibrium and disequilibrium between society and nature, giving some of his writing a strikingly contemporary ring.

But Bukharin went the way of all Stalin's opponents; and many of his contemporaries, including Mannheim and Vaerting, lost their jobs or their homes. By about 1940 the main institutional base left for sociology in the metropole was the US university system; though the developing welfare states of Britain and Scandinavia offered new possibilities. In the United States, sociology found an identity, no longer as the mother science, but as one sibling among others. It survived in an academic division of labour alongside departments of political science, economics, history and anthropology, the last two of which took over Comtean sociology's main data sources about the "primitive". Conflict and differentiation within the society of the metropole became the main themes of the new sociology. A connection, both institutional and intellectual, developed with the welfare state and its compromise with corporate capital. Mannheim's career, culminating in the Keynesian sociology of *Freedom, Power and Democratic Planning* (1951), epitomises the focus on the internal problems of metropolitan states.

Empirical sociology now became a key part of the research apparatus that sought solutions to social tension and turbulence, funded by corporations, corporate foundations, and the state. This was a highly creative moment, purely in terms of method.

Urban ethnography, life-history method, social analysis of census data, sample surveys, attitude scaling, all were invented or strongly developed, especially in the United States. Statistical analysis of survey data reached a new level of sophistication in the media and voter research of the 1940s and 1950s. In these developments, I think, we see the crystallization of what Burawoy (2005) has recently defined as “professional” and “policy” sociology, with figures like Ogburn and Lazarsfeld as leaders.

Almost all these methods were focussed inwards on the society of the metropole, and the statistical methods in particular assumed a strictly bounded population. This methodological tendency to define the society of the metropole as a world unto itself was reinforced by the shift in theory toward the idea of a social system. Bukharin was prescient; soon other systems models, especially Parsonian functionalism, formed the major paradigm in metropolitan sociology and the boundedness of a social order was a taken-for-granted assumption. By the mid 20th century, then, metropolitan sociology had turned decisively away from the periphery. *Now* it was true that sociology was substantially the science of (no-longer-new) industrial society, and sociologists settled into the myth-making that created “classical theory” and the tale of the Founding Fathers.

Yet metropolitan sociology continued to be haunted by the periphery. A sociology of colonies *had* been written (Maunier 1932), attempting to theorize a fundamentally divided society, though it attracted little attention in the English-speaking world. Systems theory laid some foundations for what was to become modernization theory; and strange to tell, even Parsons, at the end of his career, re-discovered social evolution. When, in the second half of the 20th century CE, the discipline grew institutionally to an unprecedented scale, a limited turn back towards the periphery was possible for metropolitan sociology.

In the context of the cold war, the US state and corporate leadership from the 1950s on undertook a systematic implantation of “western” social science in developing countries. Students were brought to US universities, departments were funded and research grants provided in their home countries, exchange programs were set up, and books were sent. For a time, the Ford Foundation became the largest financial supporter of social science research in Latin America, and the Rockefeller Foundation was also involved in setting up social science in sub-Saharan Africa (Berman 1983). Much as Britain and France had done, and continued to do, for their colonies, but now on a larger scale, an attempt was made to shape the thinking of post-colonial elites. The USSR made a similar attempt to implant marxism-leninism, and had some success for the generation involved in decolonization struggles from the 1950s to the 1970s. But this effort was on a smaller scale (the economy of the Soviet bloc was only one-fifth the size of the economy of the capitalist bloc), and faded over time.

Renewed contact with the periphery made “international students” familiar faces in metropolitan universities, but did not affect the intellectual agendas of the metropole very much – and in terms of method, hardly at all. Social research methods continued to develop, in response to demand from corporations, media, the welfare state, and university classes. An unprecedented technologization of social research occur-

red, including automated factor analysis, computer-assisted telephone interviewing, survey data banks, qualitative analysis programs, and Web-based research. Organized sociological research therefore increasingly depended on institutional wealth. This did not, on the face of it, refer to global issues; but the sheer scale of global inequalities in wealth meant that methodological innovation in the new directions would mainly occur in the metropole.

The old pattern of data being collected in the periphery and shipped to the metropole – though it still exists and is important – was supplemented by a new pattern. An increasing proportion of sociology consisted of data being collected in the periphery and processed for audiences in the periphery, using research technologies imported from the metropole. Survey research in the Soviet bloc, before 1989, developed in this way. With the neoliberal triumph and the growing ascendancy of transnational corporations, market research was increasingly organized on a transnational basis. A market research firm in India, for instance, would do consumer studies using scales and analytic methods franchised from the USA or France. Academic and policy research has taken the same path, with huge international studies (the IEA studies of school students among the early ones) using standardized methods, coordinated from the metropole.

Sociological theory in the metropole, meanwhile, developed as a genre mainly attempting to provide universalized frameworks for understanding social action, social structure or social system. In this respect theorists like Bourdieu, Luhmann and Coleman, in constructing theories of practice, system and rational choice, carried forward the enterprise of Parsons' heyday, including the functionalists' indifference to time and place. Yet a close examination of their work shows that it is actually built on the historical experience of the metropole, without reference to the experience of the colonized (Connell 2006). When metropolitan theory did locate its claims in time – for instance in theories of post-industrialism, risk society, reflexive modernity, pan-opticism, postmodernity, associated with names like Touraine, Bell, Beck, Foucault, Bauman – this was usually presented as a sequence of development within the society of the metropole, again without reference to the experience of the colonized.

When a sociology marked by these methodological and theoretical trends was implanted in the periphery, the result was an apparatus of knowledge with inbuilt tensions. Sociologists in the periphery were tied to the metropole as the source of their main methods and concepts, and often by their personal trajectories – PhDs from metropolitan universities, publications in journals from the metropole, sabbaticals spent in the metropole, candidature for jobs in the metropole, membership of informal networks (or ISA research committees) centred in the metropole; and more recently, collaborative research projects mainly funded from the metropole. Yet their data were local, their students were local, their policy and public audiences were local, and in the richer parts of the periphery most of their funding was local. As neoliberal managers gained power in universities, from the 1980s on, the personnel management systems they introduced sharpened these tensions. The metrics of “achievement” pressed scholars from the periphery to conform more closely to metropolitan

professional norms, so as to get published in the most prestigious (which almost always means metropolitan) journals.

The hegemony of the sociology of the metropole thus produced a hybrid or bifurcated sociology in the periphery. This could mean no more than an exaggerated separation of method and theory, on the one hand, from data and application, on the other. But I think the effects are more substantial than that. They include a kind of epistemological drift where the society of the periphery, read through categories from the metropole, comes to be understood as an extension of metropolitan modernity. (That is, precisely, the main structure of sociological theories of globalization. For a comprehensive argument about the continuing importance of the metropole/periphery division see Slater 2004.)

The effects also include a difficulty in connecting our discipline with the distinctive social experiences of the colonized and post-colonial world (note that theories of globalization often deny a metropole/periphery distinction). To grasp the significance of these problems, however, we must move outside the realm of institutionalized sociology, to cultural arenas in which that distinction has been of the essence.

3. Theorising global domination: the public sociology of the periphery

As empires expanded, an upsurge of social analysis followed – provided conquest allowed any intellectual work to continue, which was not always the case. Where it was possible, colonized people began to generate analyses of the invasion and its consequences. The intellectuals of post-colonial or neo-colonial societies have continued the discussion.

This did not normally take the form of “sociology”, or social science more broadly, as defined in the metropole. Jolly (2008) has called attention to the importance of genres like genealogy, visual art and textiles in articulating indigenous social experience in the Pacific islands. There were powerful reasons why the intellectual production of the periphery would take forms other than those of metropolitan sociology, and I think it is worth taking a moment to note them. The intellectual structure of sociology in the metropole is one reason, especially its defining colonized people as primitive: this was not an invitation to participate. Intellectuals in the metropole did not generally expect to learn from the intellectuals of the periphery (except in the stylized situations discussed by research on “orientalism”). On the evidence of the texts of metropolitan sociology up to the present, not many of them did.

Conditions within the colonized world also shaped the forms of knowledge. A colonized society, as Balandier (1955) points out, is a society in crisis, facing desperate situations. Among them – familiar experiences across the colonized world – are epidemic disease, the destruction of institutions (ranging from governments to families), the seizure of land, the destruction of habitats and food supplies, the remaking of labour forces, the forced movement of populations, the re-structuring of gender relations and sexuality, the disruption of education, and powerful attacks on local religion. A

social catastrophe of that order is not likely to lead to a contemplative social science among indigenous people. Nor did colonies of settlement produce a settled intellectual life for the first century or two; indeed some (including Australia) became famously anti-intellectual.

Yet many intellectuals of the colonized world were dealing with the issues that sociologists addressed. As a notable example, I call attention to Sun Yat-sen's *Three Principles of the People* (*San Min Chu I*) (1927), a set of lectures that are, in a sense, Sun's final message to the Chinese people. They offer a brilliant overview of the world of imperialism – population movements, interventionist states, economic domination, imperial rivalry and war, and the disintegrating effect of all this on culture and politics in China. In developing his analysis and his proposals for the future, Sun deals with such sociological themes as social hierarchy, bureaucracy, cultural change, education, industrial organization, embodiment, and relations between society and the natural environment. On some issues, Sun seems ahead of sociological thought in the metropole at the time. The genre, however, is not that of a sociological treatise, but an urgent argument about the direction for nationalist politics.

Or consider the analysis of gender relations offered by Kartini in Java in the Dutch East Indies in 1899–1903 (Kartini 2005). Kartini also reflected on the relation between European and local culture, criticized the racism of the colonizers, and sought local reform and modernization. Her argument, unlike Sun's, focussed on the position of women. She developed a critique of the situation of women in Javanese Muslim society, and an agenda of change, centering on new educational institutions. The main genre of Kartini's writing was correspondence. Her letters were collected and published (and became famous) after her premature death.

As these two examples suggest, many intellectuals of the colonized world were actively engaged with the culture of the colonizers. Sun, for one, read metropolitan Marxist literature and offered an interesting critique of it; Kartini's correspondence (at least the published part of it) was exchanged with progressive intellectuals in the Netherlands. Others, however, did not, and tension developed around this. Al-Afghani, one of the most influential of modern Islamic thinkers, was sharply critical of the *ulama* in the 1880s for remaining stuck in traditional pedagogy and failing to adopt the colonizers' knowledge (al-Afghani 1968). That particular debate continued for the next hundred and thirty years.

One of the main tasks undertaken by intellectuals of the colonized world was to study why their societies had succumbed to invasion or economic domination. This was not an easy thing to do, unless one adopted the colonizer's point of view (where all too many explanations were available, from moral weakness to institutional primitivism). Al-Afghani understood religious culture as the key battlefield. The colonizers were bent on undermining Islam, and Islam was the necessary basis of resistance, yet religion had decayed. Al-Afghani saw the path to revival in recovering the rationalist and scientific tradition within Islam, and this too has proved an influential move.

In other parts of the world, the analysis might take a different shape. In colonies of settlement, the land was strategic. Accordingly, land rights for indigenous people

have become a political focus, and the struggle for land has long been an intellectual focus. It was, for instance, the centre of Plaatje's *Native Life in South Africa* (1916), in which religion hardly figured except as a subject for irony about the faith of the colonizers. This was a mixed-genre book that included the results of embattled fieldwork with displaced families, and in my view should be regarded as one of the true classics of world sociology.

Though the focus of analysis might differ from one part of the world to another (since the forms of imperialism varied), everywhere intellectuals had the task of contesting the abjection of colonized peoples. It is sometimes hard in the metropole to appreciate the ferocious and sustained condemnation of colonized peoples under imperialism, though this has been documented by historians (Kiernan 1969, 1982) – and was famously analyzed by Fanon, even before that. The racial hierarchies in Latin America after the wars of independence indicate how deeply entrenched such hierarchies became.

Cultural movements, such as *négritude* in literature, and “African philosophy”, have developed in response. Gandhi's strategy of resistance to the British empire in India re-validated Indian popular culture, especially popular religion, as no previous nationalism had managed to do (Nandy 1983). Kenyatta, astonishingly, contested abjection by adopting the strict method of ethnography: writing a book, *Facing Mount Kenya* (1938), that was both a fine anthropological monograph and a nationalist tract. Kenyatta criticized the colonizers' land grab and disruption of local culture, which was partially broken down by “the Western individualistic way of life”. He noted the imperialists' own inability to preserve the peace in Europe, and exhibited in his text a well-functioning traditional Gikuyu social order, as an answer to British disdain.

After decolonization, or in countries which had not been formally colonized, imperial rule was not at issue but cultural domination was. In Al-e Ahmad's (1962) account of “westoxication” in Iran, there is no formal sociology, but a good deal of acute observation, some of it based on fieldwork in the countryside, and all of it reflecting a long experience of writing social-realist literature. Al-e Ahmad works his observations up into a subtle social psychology of individual alienation and collective malaise. Though the religious context is very different, this seems to me to be written in a similar register to Paz's *Labyrinth of Solitude* (first edition 1950). In this famous text Paz meditates on the limits of the Mexican revolution, the imperfect incorporation of indigenous peasantry into the national culture, the difference from European and US culture, and, again, alienation in personal life. In Paz's later essay “The Other Mexico”, written after the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre, there is an angry critique of the ruling party, of development ideology, and of the corruption of language in the interest of the dominant class.

Paz's writing presupposes the situation of economic dependence which became the subject of Latin America's most celebrated contribution to social science. Prebisch's analysis of capitalism in the periphery, Cardoso and Faletto's *Dependency and Development in Latin America*, and the Marxist theorists of underdevelopment, are perhaps so well known that they do not need description here (for a lucid English-language re-

view see Kay 1989). Everything Burawoy could wish for in public sociology was here: debates carried out in a blaze of publicity, with intellectuals interacting with social movements and political forces, and the highest possible stakes in the world of practice. Looking back on this era, Garretón (2000) observes that sociology had the highest hopes, thinking it had found a unification of knowledge and the practice of social change. But this did not last; it was destroyed by the dictatorships (with US support), and by the triumph of neoliberalism. By the 1990s there was great difficulty in re-establishing a critical discourse about society.

Garretón's argument shows – as Cardoso and Faletto had done in different terms thirty years before – that there is no fixed status of postcolonial, dependent or peripheral society; rather, a complex and evolving social history. That the changes set up by colonization do not stop with independence is recently confirmed in the Pacific. Hau'ofa's *We Are the Ocean* (2008) is another demonstration of the way public sociology in the periphery crosses genres, since in his work it is mixed not only with literature but also with visual art. In his essay "The New South Pacific Society" Hau'ofa traces the gradual formation, across the inter-island distances, of an increasingly unified regional society. In this formation, the privileged groups of the different island countries, clustered around the postcolonial state, corporate businesses, and aid agencies, are coming together as a regional ruling class sharing a modernized international culture. Meanwhile indigenous culture is increasingly the preserve of the poor and powerless.

How to respond to these transformations is the issue everywhere, and there is no more agreement now than there was in al-Afghani's day. Broadly, the more optimistic are those who see the postcolonial subordination of the periphery in cultural or social-psychological terms. Al-e Ahmad sought an alliance of secular and religious oppositions; Hau'ofa responded by setting up an arts centre; Freire responded with an educational programme; and there are a great many others who have put their energy into educational, scientific or cultural development programmes. Those who have focussed on the material exploitation or backwardness of the periphery have had a harder time, since the CEPAL strategy of import replacement industrialization came to grief in the 1970s. Perhaps this debate too is opening again, around the industrial development of China and India; though so far it is economists rather than sociologists who have made the running (Sen 1999).

4. Towards polycentric sociology

The most obvious alternative to the global hegemony of metropolitan sociology is to assert the autonomy of local alternatives, yielding what might be called a mosaic epistemology. With this approach, sociological knowledge would consist of an array of distinct systems of concepts and data, grounded in local cultural traditions and local experience; in the best case, able to speak to each other through translations and epitomes. This is, more or less, the epistemology implied in the discussion about "indigenous sociology" launched by the ISA in the 1980s. Akiwowo's (1980, 1986)

argument for African perspectives in sociology, and his attempt to provide social theory generated from Yoruba oral poetry, is a notable example – one of the few attempts to show how indigenous sociology might work at the level of theory.

It is notable that few of the people who developed a public sociology around resistance to colonialism or postcolonial domination have adopted a mosaic epistemology. Arguments for connecting with, and using, the knowledge of the colonizers were made by figures as prominent as al-Afghani, Sun, Fanon, Shariati and, to the best of my knowledge, the whole of the Latin American debate about dependency. Al-Afghani, to take just one example, argued urgently for Muslims to learn from the West, criticising the rigid clerics who would not, and al-Afghani led the way himself into the use of new communication technologies.

Reasons why a mosaic epistemology cannot work have been explored particularly in the African debates around indigenous philosophy, from the 1940s to the 1980s. Without going into the detail of a complex and heated conflict, I am persuaded by Hountondji's argument that the idea of an autochthonous "African philosophy", retrieved from folk wisdom, is neither fully autochthonous nor philosophy (or at any rate, good philosophy). It is a representation by intellectuals that actually reproduces the colonizers' gaze on indigenous culture. It functions in the post-colonial world as ideology, often justifying the dominance of local elites, and offering a "philosophy in the third person" rather than accepting direct intellectual responsibility (Hountondji 1983, 2002).

It seems to me, in the light of these debates, that we cannot imagine a future for sociology on a mosaic model. But we cannot fall back on the default option of an endless extension of metropolitan hegemony, in the name of universal science. Many of those who have grappled with questions about the shape of world sociology seem to have arrived at this conclusion (e.g. Martin and Beittel 1998, Alatas 2006). Where do we go from it?

Central to the work of all of the intellectuals discussed in the previous section was something that has remained marginal in metropolitan sociology – the colonial conquest itself, and the cultural and intellectual encounters it has created. The responsibility accepted by those intellectuals was to make, out of these encounters, a response to colonialism and post-colonial domination. In the history of these responses, I believe, we will find the key resources for a polycentric world sociology that is not only culturally richer than metropolitan sociology, but can play a unique democratic role in a neoliberal world.

The field of sociology where this process has gone furthest, as far as I know, is gender research. Gender was an important theme in Comtean sociology, as well as in other cultural formations involved in imperialism (e.g. missionary ideology). It remained an issue in internalist sociology in the metropole (no less a figure than Parsons published papers on the subject in the 1940s and a book in 1956); and became a burning issue with the impact of Women's Liberation in the 1970s. The new feminism politicized sex role theory and generated theories of patriarchy, and rapidly became an international movement. The United Nations, declaring 1975 International

Women's Year and running world conferences through the International Decade for Women, created a very public arena for cross-cultural encounters; while feminist theory was also subjected to rigorous critique from Black women within the metropole and diasporic feminists from the periphery. The result, as Bulbeck (1998) and Mohanty (2003) show, has been an intense multi-centered debate in which the concepts of gender and patriarchy have been scrutinized and the ethnocentric assumptions of much metropolitan theorizing laid bare.

This debate has been an uncomfortable, even painful, process; but it is worth observing that it has not stopped gender analysis. As Mohanty emphasises, it has been possible to combine a strong recognition of difference with an emphasis on solidarity and common struggle. New lines of analysis, which have studied globalization as a gendered process, have been emerging. New forms of transnational feminist organizing do seem to be built around such understandings (Moghadam 2005). Gender analysis is still an intellectual force in the periphery. This was formally acknowledged by CODESRIA (Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa), which published *Engendering African Social Sciences* (Imam, Mama and Sow 1997), and continues to sponsor discussions of gender research, for instance launching a Gender Series in 2004, and publishing special issues of the *CODESRIA Bulletin* on gender themes (see no. 1, 2003; no. 1/2, 2006). Gender analysis has been one of social science's main contributions to understanding, and contesting, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, with its devastating impact in Africa and south Asia.

Moghadam's observation about emerging responses to globalization signals an issue of general importance to sociology. Sociologists in the metropole have recognized how neoliberal market ideology undermines, or even denies, recognition of the social (Smart 2003). Since we now live in a world where neoliberal agendas frame the policies of all major states, and where corporate control of the global economy has reached an unprecedented level, sociology as an intellectual project is at risk of severe marginalization. It is already, I believe, marginalized in policy discourses and in mass media, compared with the situation a generation ago. It is particularly under-represented in transnational policymaking arenas such as the OECD and the World Bank.

If this argument is broadly correct, then the "public sociology" advocated by Burawoy is not an option within the metropole, as assumed by many of Burawoy's US interlocutors (Clawson et al. 2007) – it is a necessity on a world scale. Neoliberal globalization itself pushes sociology into an oppositional position, since the very act of theorizing and researching social structures is an obstacle to the triumph of market ideology. If sociology is not to fade into a residual science researching those who sadly fail to "achieve" in a neoliberal world, it must connect with the energies of resistance and the intellectual critique of global domination.

Sociology has, I consider, something important to offer democratic movements and processes, both conceptually and in methods of collective self-understanding. If Comtean sociology classically embodied the colonial gaze on the colonized, contemporary sociology is in a position to gaze straight back, to articulate a democratic perspective on global power. And as Robinson (2006) argues for urban sociology, the di-

verse experience and multiple social forms of the periphery are a stronger base for social science than generalization from the metropole.

To do these jobs, sociology needs to speak internationally and cross-culturally. What Martin and Beittel (1998) call a “world-historical orientation” within a global sociological community, what Bulbeck (1998) calls a “world-traveller perspective”, are required. Mosaic epistemologies are simply not up to the job; yet a plurality of voices is needed. At such a time, debate within the metropole is not enough. Sociology from the periphery is strategic for the whole discipline, and it is essential to recognize the importance of the global periphery in the history of sociology.

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Författarpresentation

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