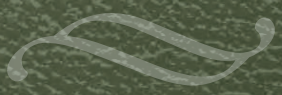
Research Handbook on Public Sociology



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RESEARCH HANDBOOK ON PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY

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Research Handbook on Public Sociology

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RESEARCH HANDBOOKS IN SOCIOLOGY

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Contents

List of tables viii
List of contributors ix

PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY: EXPLORING AN APPROACH – AN INTRODUCTION

1 Public sociology, a perspective on the move 2
Lavinia Bifulco and Vando Borghi

2 Why public sociology? 19
Michael Burawoy

PART I CONNECTIONS AND CONVERSATIONS: AUTHORS AND RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES IN DIALOGUE WITH PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY

3 Public inquiry in social sciences: a pragmatist outlook 23
Daniel Cefaï

4 Public sociology and the capability approach: exploring the potential of a fruitful combination 42
Jean-Michel Bonvin and Francesco Laruffa

5 Sociology and quantification: economics of convention as an approach to link quantification and public sociology 58
Rainer Diaz-Bone

PART II FORTH AND BACK ACROSS (DISCIPLINARY) BORDERS: WAYS OF THINKING AND PRACTICING PUBLIC RESEARCH

6 What is at stake when social science goes public? 74
Didier Fassin

7 Public history 86
Serge Noiret

8 Public geography 104
Salvo Torre

9 Urban planning 114
Marco Cremaschi

10 Legitimacy of law and the expertise of public sociology 129
Supriya Routh

11 The foundational economy approach: a public social science of socio-economic life 142
Julie Froud, Angelo Salento and Karel Williams

PART III THEMES AND RESEARCH ISSUES: DEEPENING PS POTENTIALITIES DEALING WITH DIFFERENT FIELDS

12 Science, the environment and the public 158
Luigi Pellizzoni

13 Public sociology in disaster situations: critical engagement and prefiguration against defuturing processes 174
Laura Centemeri and Davide Olori

14 Public sociology and populism 188
Paul Blokker

15 Borders and migrants in Europe 202
Tatjana Sekulić

16 Local/urban democracy and citizenship 218
Marisol Garcia

17 Associationalism: the past, present, and future of public sociology 234
Bruno Frère and Jean-Louis Laville

18 *Public*, *policy* or *politicized* sociology? Notes from the field of welfare and poverty research 250
Sandro Busso

19 Critical sociologies of work in the cultural industries: pathways to 'creative justice'? 264
Mark Banks

20 Sociologies of education in an era of new critique: getting out of methodological nationalism and reconsidering education through a global perspective 279
Romuald Normand

21 Sociology of expertise as public sociology 294
Gil Eyal

22 Poverty, the battle against stigmatization and the role of public sociology 310
Enrica Morlicchio and Dario Tuorto

23 Health 323
Magdalena Chiara

PART IV FOR A PUBLIC ACADEMIA: PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY AND PUBLIC ACADEMIES

24 Paradoxes, contradictions, and deep feelings of ambivalence, or, academia still appeals 336
Eeva Berglund

25 Publicness and teaching: public knowledge as collective process of repoliticization of daily life 350
Vincenza Pellegrino

26 Postcolonialism and sociology 367
Manuela Boatcă, Sina Farzin and Julian Go

Index 381

Tables

1.1	Public sociology and its possible entanglements	8
5.1	Division of sociological labor	60
5.2	Comparison of quality conventions	62
5.3	The state, the market, and statistics	63
5.4	Ways to evaluate measurements	65
5.5	Data worlds	67
11.1	Simplified zonal scheme of the economy	144
22.1	Representations of poor people, type of policy and the underlying orientation	312

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PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY: EXPLORING AN APPROACH – AN INTRODUCTION

1. Public sociology, a perspective on the move

Lavinia Bifulco and Vando Borghi

the world's problems require a sociological imagination for their solution, but that imagination is losing ground as an academic discipline and as public knowledge.
M. Burawoy, Chapter 2 in this *Handbook*

More than 15 years have passed since the opening speech by Michael Burawoy to the American Sociological Association that discussed the meaning and perspective of (organic) public sociology. According to Burawoy's by now classic definition, public sociology is 'an alternative type of public sociology … in which the sociologist has direct access to publics, in which the sociologist and public enter into an unmediated face-to-face relation. Instead of a broad, thin, passive, and mainstream public, organic public sociology encounters or creates narrow, thick, active counter-publics' (Burawoy, 2021, p. 18; see also Burawoy, 2005). That speech triggered a debate which has grown steadily over time, fuelled by dozens of articles, books, websites and forums in which favourable and critical positions jointly confirm the extraordinary interest aroused by the theme.

The aim of this *Handbook* is to provide an overview of public sociology by focusing on four main points:

- the reasons for the enduring importance of public sociology in the current context and in light of ongoing changes in the social world;
- the connections between public sociology and other approaches which, in the social sciences, develop dialogues and conversations of different kinds and levels;
- the construction of a thematic agenda consistent with the scientific programme underlying public sociology; and
- the applications of public sociology in empirical research and teaching.

Therefore, our intention in this *Handbook*, as well as in this chapter, is not explanatory; nor is it to systematically develop an already-established analytical programme. Rather, we assemble some features of public sociology that appear most promising, and we explore its potential for collaboration and hybridization with research paths that move at its borders and/or traverse some of its directions of development.

POSSIBLE AND IMPOSSIBLE

In his latest book, Burawoy (2021) traces the scientific, academic and personal trajectory along which his theory of a public sociology has developed since 2004. In what follows, we mainly refer to the reflections proposed in his book, and to some of the focuses and issues that it addresses.

We begin by pointing out that a good part of Burawoy's reasoning is centred on sociology *tout court*, in a manner that is broader and more detailed than elsewhere. His intention is to

clarify as much as possible the general framework in which to locate public sociology. The key feature chosen to discuss the origins and purposes of sociology is its relationship with values. Burawoy declines this relationship in light of the concept of utopian thinking, identifying three phases. The first phase is simply the desire for a better world: 'We become sociologists not to become rich but to make a better world, whatever better might mean – more equal, more free, more cooperative' (Burawoy, 2021, p. 2). Sociology is therefore imbued with values which generate the impulse that impels people to become sociologists. The second phase, which Buroway terms 'anti-utopian', centres on the analysis of society in regard to how 'the realization of values are [*sic*] systematically obstructed – how inequality, domination, egoism are reproduced by the social institutions we inhabit' (ibid., p. 3). This analysis leads to the third phase, that of the elaboration of values into visions of an alternative world (ibid., p. 3).

In order for alternative worldviews to gain strength, it is therefore necessary to consider the real conditions and limitations that they encounter. In this regard, Burawoy recalls the notion of 'real utopia' developed by Eric Wright, who was Burawoy's colleague and lifelong friend, emphasizing the tension between imaginations and real practices that underlies the concept. On the one hand, utopian ideals are not an abstract design but are grounded in the real potentials of humanity. On the other hand, 'what is pragmatically possible is not fixed independently of our imaginations' (Wright, 2010, p. 6).

The tension between utopia and anti-utopia from which sociology originates is equivalent to the tension between the possible and the impossible:

> Sociology excavates the often-repressed desire for a different world, a better world, and explores the conditions of and obstacles to its realization. Sociology is caught between the possible and the impossible: between the utopian imagination reaching beyond the constraints their existence and power and the anti-utopian science that reveals their existence and power. By 'anti-utopian' I don't mean 'dystopian,' which refers to an undesirable or 'bad' society, but the limits on the realization of a 'good' society. (Burawoy, 2021, p. 2)

Placing the tension between possible and impossible at the centre means that the desire to change the world must take the limits of the possible into account. It must identify and understand them so that it can modify them and discover alternative worlds without utopia turning into dystopia. This, then, is the founding core of sociology: 'the realization of the possible is through the pursuit of the impossible. Or to put it slightly differently, the pursuit of the impossible shifts the limits of the possible' (ibid., p. 4).

From this derives the idea that sociology is an archaeology of social reality: 'Suspended between their utopian aspirations and anti-utopian constraints, sociologists become archeologists excavating the world for emancipatory possibilities, now and in the past, here and there. The sociologist is impelled to discover the embryos of alternative worlds by an incessant lament directed at the existing world' (ibid., p. 3).

Burawoy's account of the relationship between sociology and utopia should be discussed much more extensively than is possible here, given the questions that it raises in regard to the foundations and status of knowledge. Certainly, it lends itself to being criticized; for example, in regard to the meanings attributed to Weberian ideal-types or because it too hastily has the reasons of sociology linked to a precise historical and institutional context coincide with the reasons of sociology *tout court*. It goes without saying that Burawoy's position reflects many of the arguments and approaches to knowledge that invite us to overcome the most reductive approaches of a scientistic matrix: consider, for example, civic epistemologies (Jasanoff,

2005), post-normal science (Funtowicz and Ravetz, 1993), the debate on post-colonial theory and epistemologies of the South (de Sousa Santos, 2018; for a discussion see Pellizzoni, Chapter 12 in this *Handbook*). This does not only concern sociology, of course. In various disciplines, this cluster of issues – which has to do with the relationship between knowledge and empirical reality even more than the relationship between knowledge and engagement – has given rise to discussions of great breadth and richness. Here it is obligatory to refer to Hirschman (1971), and his notion of possibilism. The chapters in Part II of this *Handbook* show how these issues traverse numerous bodies of knowledge.

Whatever the case may be, Burawoy's clearly stated position has the merit of reviving the debate – in recent times rather feeble – on how sociology should or can refer to the parameters of objectivity at the basis of scientific knowledge in modernity. Incidentally, it should be recalled that even Max Weber, who also clearly supported the principle of value-freedom of sociological knowledge, never believed that the problem of how to achieve it could be completely resolved, at least in practice. Furthermore, as Abbott (2007) points out, the relationship between facts and values is much less linear than a large part of sociology seems to believe, because 'sociology is at one and the same time a cognitive and a normative enterprise. When we pretend that it is not, our work becomes arbitrarily deformed'[1] (ibid., p. 209).

That said, we are not interested here in problems of an epistemological kind. Rather, our concern is to point out that, in order to understand the meaning of Burawoy's notion of public sociology correctly, it is necessary to consider the more general framework that gives it meaning: that is, the tension between possible and impossible that underlies sociology itself. Outside this framework, there is the risk of corroborating trivialized agendas of public sociology, which range from a pinch of extra engagement to approximations of participated science.

We can only agree with Burawoy that sociology has to do with 'expanding the limits of the possible'. But we are sure that many of our colleagues do not agree at all. At a time of the irresistible rise of abstract empiricism – as Wright Mills called it – such a view tends to be rejected out of hand as ideological, naïve and unscientific. However, it is a known fact that sociology has been driven since its origins by an emancipatory thrust towards social change. And it is also known that this is not the only thrust to consider. In fact, the entire history of the discipline is based on the coexistence of, and tension between, a progressive soul and a conservative one, both of which occupied a great deal of space in the way in which the precursors and founders of sociology sought to account for the characteristics, problems and dynamics of change in modern societies. Certainly, Buroway cannot be reproached for ignoring these matters, since the alternation between progressive and regressive phases forms the core of his descriptions of events in American sociology over recent decades. Instead, what should be considered the distinctive features of his treatment are these: (1) the choice to align clearly with one side – that of the possible, in the form outlined above – conceived as the core of the discipline; and (2) the related choice of highlighting the role of public sociology in this regard. These choices are obviously questionable.

At this point, it is important to describe the specific ways in which public sociology deals with the tension between possible and impossible that Burawoy associates with sociology in general. In the first place, and very briefly, we can state that they consist in the modes whereby the relationship between sociologists and their research domains, between observers and observed, is built; modes in which the public dimension of sociological knowledge and research takes concrete form. 'Public' in what sense?

PUBLIC AS PUBLICNESS: A PROCESS MORE THAN AN OBJECT

In Burawoy's approach, an 'organic public sociology' basically means interaction with counter-publics: that is, active publics that participate in the knowledge process in different, even conflicting ways. Burawoy is keen to draw distinctions with respect to traditional public sociology which, from his point of view, has the merit of promoting discussion on issues of collective importance, but has the shortcoming of addressing publics that are 'generally invisible in that they cannot be seen, thin in that they do not generate much internal interaction, passive in that they do not constitute a movement or organization, and they are usually mainstream' (Burawoy, 2005, p. 5). In organic public sociology, instead, knowledge is built by interacting with a 'visible', 'dense', 'local' and often 'antagonistic' public. This is a public that does not pre-exist the process of sociological knowledge but, if anything, develops thanks to the process itself and the interactions that take place therein.

Several scholars have criticised Burawoy's notion of the public as vague. It should be said that it is the concept of 'public' as such that has numerous indeterminate features, starting with the fact that 'public' does not mean 'state' (Clarke, 2004; de Leonardis, 1998), and the public and the private are not two clearly distinguished spheres of action (Fraser, 1997).

Burawoy has developed his approach in the wake of the theories that brought the public dimension of knowledge to the fore. Charles Wright Mills (1959), a central reference in Burawoy's intellectual biography, conceived social science as a kind of apparatus of public intelligence. Even more evident is the link to John Dewey's (1927) pragmatism (see also Cefaï, Chapter 3 in this *Handbook*), according to which a public 'consists of all those who are affected by the indirect consequences of transactions to such an extent that is deemed necessary to have those consequences systematically cared for' (Dewey, 1927, p. 69).

As in Dewey, so in Burawoy: public sociology conceives 'public' as a process and as a (possible) result of this process, rather than as a substance. The goal of public sociology is 'to make the invisible visible and to make the private public' (Burawoy, 2005, p. 8) . Resonating in this process-based setting are the classic theories on the public sphere and space. Consider, in particular, the centrality that the processes of visibilization have in these theories, through which problems and viewpoints leave the private, or hidden sphere, leading to arenas of discussion and critical examination (Arendt, 1958; Habermas, 1989). According to French pragmatic sociology, visibilization is made significant by the processes of 'generalization' through which particular viewpoints and claims activate a framework of references, making them accessible to the judgment of others and acceptable as legitimate (Boltanski and Thénevot, 1991; Cefaï, 2002).

Therefore, the public is not taken as an entity given in advance; and the consequent logic of audience, based on supposed given preferences, for structuring (also) the relationship between research and its publics, is abandoned. The emphasis on the process-based dimension of the public stresses the importance of how learning dynamics are achieved, which is even more important than what is the final content of these learning dynamics. What matters, therefore, is the specific quality of the relationship that binds the sociologist to their audience: for both of them, the relationship is a learning process – a process of shared discovery (Cefaï, Chapter 3 in this *Handbook*).

This idea of 'public' is to a certain extent also oriented towards the politicization or repoliticization of everyday life. Public sociology introduces a perspective glance that seeks to highlight the links between, on the one hand, situated and specific experiences (needs, prob-

lems) as they take shape in the daily lives of individuals; and on the other, the public sphere in which the specificity of those issues and experiences is interpreted and transformed into public issues. In this perspective, public sociology counters the many processes of depoliticization that transform collective problems and issues into technical matters which only expert languages are authorized to deal with. Public sociology (also) endeavours to show how those technical definitions of social problems incorporate assessments and representations also linked to worldviews and conceptions.

POSSIBLE CONVERGENCES? PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY AND BOTTOM-UP COSMOPOLITANISM

The orientation towards expanding the limits of the possible; the public dimension as a process and as a (possible) result and not as an entity given *a priori*; the repoliticization of everyday life: these are all elements that can be potentially intertwined and, at least partially, merged with other investigative approaches. Among the various interpretative keys that can help provide insights into these intertwinings and mergers, the general stance identifiable in terms of 'bottom-up cosmopolitanism' seems to be a useful framework. From our point of view, in fact, it is possible to trace various points of contact between the public sociology approach and various others that here we try to circumscribe through the concept of 'bottom-up cosmopolitanism'.

It is first necessary to clarify what we refer to by means of this concept. 'Cosmopolitanism' is a term with a long history and to which many possible meanings have been given. Our interpretation of this concept shares with the more conventional and widespread form of it as 'the urge to expand one's current horizons of self and cultural identity' and a universalistic inspiration (Appadurai, 2013, p. 198). However, our interpretation strengthens its critical potential by stressing 'the mutual implication of centre and periphery and local and global levels as a transformative process' (Delanty, 2006, p. 38). Already apparent at this very general level is a consonance with the public sociology approach. More specifically, we conceive 'bottom-up cosmopolitanism' as a (scientific, cultural) perspective based on a critical appraisal of the public sphere as a space of emancipation that resumes and revises Polanyi's concept of 'countermovement'. Assumed as a key dimension of this revision is a third social move (beyond the first one, disembedding as marketization, and the second one, embedding as reaction in terms of social protection): that is, emancipation.

The notion of emancipation plays an important role in the perspective that we propose here. By identifying the exploitation caused by disembedded markets and commodification, without ignoring forms of domination produced in non-market social practices (that is, embedded) – patriarchalism, for instance – emancipation introduces more complexity into a dualistic interpretation of (negative) movement (due to the market dynamic) and (positive) countermovement (social protection). 'Avoiding both wholesale condemnation of disembedding and wholesale approbation of reembedding' – as Nancy Fraser (2011, p. 145) wrote – 'we must open both marketization and social protection to critical scrutiny. Exposing the normative deficits of society, as well as those of economy, we must validate struggles against domination *wherever* it roots'. In this sense, struggles for emancipation challenge 'oppressive forms of social protection, while neither wholly condemning nor simply celebrating marketization' (ibid., p. 145). Emancipation as a key component of a critical appraisal of social reality enables

us to introduce a specific realm otherwise indistinctly conflated with society in a dualistic market/social protection scheme. This realm is the public sphere, in which both society's *doxa* and the market's claims of efficient modernization can be scrutinized, discussed, criticized and revised. Once again, we stress this yet another point of contact between the theme of the centrality of the public sphere and the public sociology approach.

It is in the public sphere that bottom-up cosmopolitanism must be developed and exercised, on the assumption that it is a form of 'deep democracy' intended to transform the 'constitutional bourgeois ideals into daily forms of consciousness and behaviour, in which debate can be respectfully conducted; in which the voices of the weak, the very poor, and particularly women are accorded full regard'; and in which these voices can fully take part in the social production of knowledge and information, framing the policy-making mechanisms (Appadurai, 2013, p. 212). This is terrain for social research as a 'conversation among many voices' (Connell, 2006, p. 262), in which different forms of knowledge and experience of social problems can interact according to that dialogic logic on which public sociology is also based.

In this framework – which, as said, is only one among those able to make possible intertwinings and convergences intelligible – there take shape bases for collaboration among research approaches aimed at promoting emancipation, capability (Sen, 1999), and development of the voice (Bonvin and Laruffa, 2018) of the most vulnerable individuals.

Accordingly, bottom-up cosmopolitanism is a promising perspective from which to profoundly reconceive the 'interpretative space' which is, according to Wagner (2001), our modernity. More in particular, it is an interesting perspective because it contributes to a critique of the historically hegemonic capitalist translation of that 'space' without substituting it with an already structured monological theoretical system. A theoretical system, in fact, is monological in the sense that it is based on a single point of view, which assumes itself as the centre, whereas all the other possible points of view are peripheral. The cosmopolitan approach that we advocate instead tries to combine its own conventional effort to escape sociocultural parochialism with an emphasis on the programmatic conversation among different voices, in particular the peripheral and weakest ones. Here again we can see similarities with Burawoy's proposal. Experiences of social injustices are many and diverse. They range from cases of exploitation linked to working conditions, to the living conditions of people completely excluded from wage labour, and to those facing 'land expulsions, water privatization, and more broadly, degradation of the environment' (Burawoy, 2008, p. 384). Herein lies, as said, a promising terrain for convergence that consists in a relationship between sociology and critique that 'should be about pertinent questions and not about correct answers' (Schuurman, 2009, p. 841), giving space to research efforts that try to bridge and mutually transform scientific knowledge and people's knowledge based on their own experiences of exploitation and inequality. In this role, to use Bauman's terms (as Burawoy himself does; Burawoy, 2008, p. 385), sociologists should act more as sensitive interpreters than as omniscient legislators. A sensitive interpreter is interested in the coevolution between their own scientific vocabulary and the heterogeneous knowledge resulting from social actors' experiences of different issues. Table 1.1 illustrates the terrain of possible convergence that we are talking about. A major source of our table is Luc Boltanski's (2011) exploration of terrain that we have already identified with the relationship between sociology and critique. Boltanski draws a seminal map of possible sociological postures of observation, presenting some possible configurations of the ways in which our key relationship can be conceived. He discusses two possibilities of dealing with the social reality as a (critical) researcher (Boltanski, 2011, pp. 75–76).

Table 1.1 Public sociology and its possible entanglements

Framework	Social world definition	Researchers' practice
Critical sociology	Narrative of a world already made	A description, from the top, of objective social structures; critique as expertise
Sociology of critical capacities	Narrative of a world in the process of being made	A bottom-up description of actors' (critical) competences; critique as a structural part of social life
Bottom-up cosmopolitanism	Enacting a world of coevolving (scholars/publics) practices (possible worlds)	A mutual education (scholars/publics) aiming at possible worlds-making

Sources: Based on Boltanski (2011) and Burawoy (2005).

The first possibility consists in describing 'a social world already there'. The description, in this case, works as a cartography of structures strictly structuring and conditioning actors' behaviour. This is what the historian Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000, p. 71) terms 'History 1, a narrative resulting from the unfolding of the abstract logic of capitalist development. It is a history already made, in which all places and persons are "exchangeable with one another"'. Here, descriptions are drawn from the top, 'more or less bracketing human persons envisaged insofar as they act (as actors)' (Boltanski, 2011, pp. 43–44). A second possibility refers to a description according to which reality is a social world in the process of being made. Again borrowing Chakrabarty's vocabulary, we can see here what he terms 'History 2': that is, a narrative approach beckoning us 'to more affective narratives of human belonging', in which life forms cannot be exhaustively subsumed in the abstract categories of History 1. In other words, by taking seriously into account the ways individuals enact and perform their reality, and pointing out their 'moral economy' (Thompson, 1967; Fourcade, 2017), according to this second possibility descriptions are 'bottom-up' made and their privileged objects are situations, prioritizing 'actors' interactive and interpretative competence' (Boltanski, 2011, p. 44).

Of course, it is easy to recognize two sociological traditions where the first strategy corresponds to a so-to-speak more 'Bourdieusian' critical sociological perspective, and the second to a pragmatic sociological approach to social actors' critical capacities (Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006).

However, more than in emphasizing the specificities of these two perspectives, we are interested in highlighting the aspects more useful for strengthening the possible convergence explored in this section. In this sense, the perspective developed by Burawoy (2005, p. 264) and, more specifically, his oft-mentioned insistence on the distinctly dialogic, mutually educational, and transformative relationship between the sociologist and their audience, enables us to discern a third possibility. In this case, the sociologist refuses to confine their role to a technical problem-solving (even if 'engaged') sociological expertise, and is involved in all the phases that a public goes through when dealing with a problematic situation, from the problem-setting to the problem-solving ones. This is an involvement in which the sociologist has to combine their specific competence, which ranges from 'top-down' to 'bottom-up' description, through a third kind of (critical) effort that is the 'reflection-in-action', which develops and grows through, in Burawoy's (2005, p.8) words, a 'process of mutual education' between the sociologist and their public.

On the one hand, the objective nature of the social world has to be recognized as, in a way, already 'made' and of which it is necessary to point out the rules and mechanisms; a history to be narrated as 'History(/sociology) 1'. However, it is possible to point out social actors'

critical capacities and to develop a 'public sociology' through which scholars (scientific communities and languages) and their publics (with their own critical capacities, competences, interpretations, and so on) mutually change each other. What we here identify in terms of bottom-up cosmopolitanism represents a broader framework in which public sociology efforts can find helpful alliances with which to move towards objectives of 'cognitive justice' (de Sousa et al., 2007) and emancipation.

PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY TODAY: POLITICS OF UNCERTAINTY AND HUMAN RIGHT TO RESEARCH

Marketization, Uncertainty and Pandemic

On several occasions, Burawoy has illustrated the fading of the transformative dimension (utopian thinking) of sociology by linking it to two sets of related issues: the marketization of contemporary societies, and the neo-managerialization of academic institutions. Both fuel the need for public sociology and at the same time strongly restrict the possibility to practise it:

> Public sociology, in particular, lies suspended between two intersecting fields. On the one hand, it battles for expression within an external field shaped by the forces of capitalism – forces that simultaneously inspire the need for but also circumscribe the possibility of sociological engagement. On the other hand, public sociology is produced within an academic field that is itself shaped by the same capitalism. (Burawoy, 2021, p. 170)

The forces of capitalism are, concretely, those which have driven the third wave of marketization, for the analysis of which Burawoy employs the Polanyian concept of the 'double movement'. Besides dealing critically with some limitations of Polanyi's reasoning, Buroway insists on the need for sociology to conceive worlds alternative to those profoundly shaped by the mechanisms of commodification. In accordance with a broad debate, he attributes these mechanisms to financialization and the crisis processes that derive from it in a multiplicity of interconnected fields: the environment and climate change, work, migrants and refugees, healthcare and the Covid-19 pandemic, and so on. This is why today more than ever it is important to engage in public sociology.

Albeit in a pluralist vision, which takes into account the different possible ways to practise sociology, Burawoy's thesis is, as said, that fundamental for expanding the limits of the possible is the activation of 'mutual education' relationships between the researcher and their audience able to enhance multiple forms of knowledge (expert and non-expert; internal and external to scientific circuits, and so on), and to involve those who experience the problems being researched. Indeed, Burawoy's position raises more questions than it provides answers to. The issues concerning the commodification of knowledge and the managerialization of universities are obviously central to the theme of the 'public' and are treated with extraordinary acuity. However, some issues persist. Several chapters of this *Handbook* deal with a highly contradictory picture in which both the reasons for doing public sociology and the problems that limit its development increase.

Unfortunately, we do not have much to add on how these issues can be resolved, but we certainly agree that it is urgent for sociology to return to the archaeology of social reality, to 'wake

up and take a grip on itself' (Burawoy, 2021, p. 214). And, to conclude, we would like to add a few more reasons for doing so, focusing briefly on the relevance of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The case of Covid-19 shows all too well how the marketization of healthcare services has greatly reduced the adequacy of the response to the pandemic (Bifulco and Neri, 2022). Moreover, the debate on the 'syndemic', launched by Richard Horton, editor-in-chief of *The Lancet*, has highlighted the relationship between damage caused by Covid-19 and social stratification, and especially conditions of poverty and inequality (Horton, 2020). This helps to understand why strategies to manage the emergency have proved insufficient in several countries. Certainly, apparent is a problem of 'preparedness'; a term that denotes the timely reaction to emergencies and potentially disastrous situations in order to deal with their destructive aspects.[2] Regardless of the techniques foreseen, the concept underlines the need to manage an increase in uncertainty of a fundamental or radical nature without the traditional methods based on risk and its predictability.

The pandemic is only the most recent in a series of events that highlight the ubiquity of uncertainty as a condition that permeates the contemporary world (Beck, 1992) and induces people to find new ways to cope with it (Scoones and Sterling, 2020). The fact is that concrete strategies tend to favour interpretative and operational frameworks that naturalize issues and have a large technological component. As the critical debate on the post-Covid prospects (Madden, 2021) has highlighted, there prevail pure problem-solving logics that do not help to understand the set of factors underlying the social and health crisis of the pandemic, nor to address them in a structural way. The tendency towards the naturalization of problems, and the prevalence of a technocratic form of action strategies, therefore proceed hand in hand, fuelling each other.

By insisting on the importance of incremental learning and pluralism, public sociology is one of the approaches to knowledge able to foster a different type of preparedness, and to redefine problems such as the pandemic by bringing systemic crisis and long-lasting factors to the fore. This is what Scoones and Stirling (2020, p. 6) have called a new politics of uncertainty, centred on inclusive engagement across diverse knowledges and experiences, negotiation of outcomes along complex, plural pathways – an opening up to options and knowledges.

Beyond Scalability: Alliances and Strategies of Public Sociology?

At the core of the new politics of uncertainty lies the nexus between knowledge and planning. With respect to this node, the public sociology approach can make a synergistic contribution to the various interpretative approaches framed by the notion of 'bottom-up cosmopolitanism'; more specifically, a contribution to the development of strategies alternative to the configuration of the relationship between knowledge and project (not surprisingly, a theme explored in several chapters of this *Handbook*). We find here, on the terrain where the ways in which knowledge, experience and voice configure the ability of social actors to change their living conditions, a significant porosity among different critical perspectives, especially in relation to the horizon of renewed uncertainty discussed above. The public sociology, in fact, intervenes precisely in the transition from knowledge about and experience of problems to the formulation of policies. It transforms the former (knowledge, experience) into the 'informational basis' of policies. This concept of 'informational basis' comes from Amartya Sen's theory of capability (see also Bonvin and Laruffa, Chapter 4 in this *Handbook*) which, despite its very promising potential (Borghi, 2018), 'has remained largely unnoticed by sociologists' (Kremakova, 2013,

p. 394). Every collectively important decision and action is based on what Sen terms the 'informational basis of judgement for justice'. More precisely, the informational basis 'determines the factual territory over which considerations of justice would directly apply', and for this reason 'the real "bite" of a theory of justice can, to a great extent, be understood from its informational base: what information is – or is not – taken to be directly relevant' (Sen, 1999, pp. 56–57). Any 'convention' (Borghi and Vitale, 2006; Diaz-Bone and Thévenot, 2010; Diaz-Bone, 2017) through which the external world is categorized in order to be addressed is rooted in an 'evaluative structure' establishing that 'some types of factual matters are taken to be important in themselves' (Sen, 1991, p. 16), whereas 'the truth or falsehood of any other type of information cannot directly influence the correctness of the judgement' (Sen, 1990, p. 111). Hence, the definition of what and whose knowledge is taken into account as the 'informational basis', and the decision about what kind of cognitive and knowledge gaps can be assumed (usually through technical devices) as legitimate areas of social indifference, have crucial effects. Informational basis is particularly important because it embodies 'definitions of problems and targets, categorizations of individuals and social groups, as well as complex systems for assessing actions against objectives' (de Leonardis and Negrelli, 2012, 17).

The historically dominant conception of the relationship among experience, knowledge and world-making is based on the approach to the 'informational basis' that Anna Tsing (2012) defines as the progressive expansion and naturalization of 'scalability'. The key aspect of the scalability mode of interpreting the relationship among experience, knowledge and world-making is 'the ability to expand – and expand, and expand – without rethinking basic elements' (ibid., p. 505): scalable projects 'are those that can expand without changing … Scalability projects banish meaningful diversity, which is to say, diversity that might change things' (ibid., p. 507; see also Mukerji, 1983); and this concerns both the material and immaterial dimensions of our forms of life. In general, the 'efficiency of the capitalistic process ... presupposes capitalizing on, intervening in, or meticulously planning, certain kinds of moral orders, including imaginaries and hierarchies of worth' (Fourcade, 2017, p. 668); and, also due to increasingly controlled synchronization of the sociotechnical systems characterizing the contemporary capitalism of infrastructures (Borghi, 2021), social actors' experience and knowledge are more and more structurally engaged in this process.

Public sociology, together with the various approaches that we have tried to connect through the notion of bottom-up cosmopolitanism, is a fundamental opportunity to counter the project of a 'social physics' that this capitalistic mode of capturing experience renews (Adolf and Stehr, 2018) in order to extract formatted information, coherently with the 'scalability' framework. Whilst this project hinges on a paradigm of modernity as a programme of constant expansion of the controllability of the world, in which the experience–knowledge–information relationship is driven by the 'desire to make the world engineerable, predictable, available, accessible, disposable in all its aspects' (Rosa, 2020, p. viii), the perspective we are trying to define here leads to a transformative-oriented interpretation of that relationship. Hence, to assemble the various threads woven so far, a social research grounded on a 'process of mutual education' (Burawoy, 2005, p. 8) between the sociologist and their public, constructed through a 'conversation among many voices' (Connell, 2006, p. 262), and aimed at recognizing 'meaningful diversities' (Tsing, 2012), provides an effective opportunity to scrutinize how 'informational basis' building is conceptualized. It is an opportunity to give space to the possible (Tarantino and Pizzo, 2015; Borghi, 2019), as something always embedded in the real, on which a heterogeneous range of sources converge. From the perspective of capability for voice

(Bifulco, 2013) and of capacity to aspire (Appadurai, 2013), through Benjamin's 'opening-up of history', to the '*contre-fatalité*' that always survives even in the darkest times (Lowy, 2005; Didi-Huberman, 2018), there are many conceptual tools that we can consider. Possibilism, in this sense, looks at the social world and stresses 'the unique rather than the general, the unexpected rather than the expected, and the possible rather than the probable', widening 'the limits of what is or what is perceived to be possible, be it at the cost of lowering our ability, real or imaginary, to discern the probable' (Hirschman, 1971, p. 28).

In other words, a matter of human rights, the human right to research (Appadurai, 2013), is at stake here. This right pertains both to researchers and their publics, as a shared, collective and public responsibility. At stake is the right to access research, redesigned as 'not only the production of original ideas and new knowledge (as it is normally defined in academia and other knowledge-based institutions)', but also as 'the capacity to systematically increase the horizons of one's current knowledge, in relation to some task, goal, or aspiration' (Appadurai, 2013, p. 282). Because without aspiration 'there is no pressure to know more', and because 'without systematic tools for gaining relevant new knowledge, aspiration degenerates into fantasy or despair' (ibid., p. 283), the importance of an approach 'bottom-up' to the knowledge-making process is evident. More than re-proposing an updated role of the 'engaged intellectual', it is a perspective aimed at a 'reflexive practitioner' (Schön, 1983), who refuses to be limited to a technical, problem-solution-based sociological expertise and who participates in the frequently mentioned 'process of mutual education' between the sociologist and their publics, in which both are transformed and coevolve. In this sense, public sociology (together with the many different approaches that we here organize within the frame of bottom-up cosmopolitanism) can help to pave the way 'towards creative care rather than calculative control' (Scoones and Stirling, 2020, p. 11) as demanded by a politics of uncertainty.

PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY: CONVERSATIONS AND ITINERARIES IN THIS *HANDBOOK*

The *Handbook* is organized into four parts. Part I, 'Connections and Conversations: Authors and Research Perspectives in Dialogue with Public Sociology', is devoted to authors and research perspectives in dialogue with public sociology. Here Daniel Cefaï (Chapter 3) re-examines Michael Burawoy's project of a public sociology with a pragmatist outlook. The chapter refers in particular to the work of John Dewey, who developed a philosophy of the public as a political community. This perspective is also linked to the progressive movement of the 1890s and 1920s, in which the following issues were particularly useful in relation to the perspective of public sociology: the relationship between experts and citizens; the involvement of citizens in public affairs; conceptions of participatory democracy based on power-with and common learning; the possibility of reformulating the notions of the 'public' as 'recipient' and as 'counter-public'.

In Chapter 4, Jean-Michel Bonvin and Francesco Laruffa explore the contribution of Amartya Sen's capability approach to a public sociology. Starting from a theoretical discussion of the capability approach and its epistemological and political implications, the two authors use the concepts of 'positional objectivity', 'informational basis of judgment in justice' and 'reason to value' to show how the integration of experiential knowledge into the scientific process is justified from this perspective. The discussion is reinforced by reference

to the empirical terrain – a research study on a community-based programme for NEET (not in education, employment or training) young people – to show the importance of such considerations for public policy.

Part I is closed by Rainer Diaz-Bone (Chapter 5), who introduces the economics of convention as an approach to linking quantification and public sociology. The processes of quantification of knowledge and evaluation are an emerging field in which sociology interacts with numerous other disciplines. Quantification and measurement, according to the economics of conventions, are based on measurement conventions that link numbers, but also categories and data in general, to a common good; a sociology that focuses on this connection, between quantification (and categorization) and public issues, debates and concerns, can thus make an important contribution to public sociology.

In Part II, 'Forth and Back Across (Disciplinary) Borders: Ways of Thinking and Practicing Public Research', several scholars debate how to design and conduct public research in different scientific fields. Didier Fassin (Chapter 6) proposes adopting a non-normative approach and addressing the stakes and implications of the public presence of social research in a descriptive and analytical manner. Of significance is reference to the figure of Claude Levi Strauss, who while shunning all the main arenas of public debate of his time, was long considered the most influential intellectual in his country. Fassin identifies and discusses two dimensions of popularization: popularization, which consists of making research sympathetic and accessible; and politicization, which includes involvement in the public sphere and contribution to policy-making. The chapter closes with a discussion of the crucial role of criticism in the encounter with publics and counter-publics, and the complexity of popularization and the role that the researcher plays in such contexts. Then, in Chapter 7, Serge Noiret focuses on public history. The chapter examines the definition of the discipline, its historical roots and main transdisciplinary features. In this regard, Noiret provides a definition of public history according to which history is brought into direct contact with the evolution of the mentality and collective sense of belonging of different communities around the world. Thus, it is not only a popularizing mode through which to engage a wide audience in the discussion of issues related to the past: the study of collective identities and memories also becomes a process that complements historical research.

In Chapter 8, Salvo Torre reflects on some trends in public geography. The chapter deals with the development of geographical thought in the past two decades, the emergence of a demand for change in research methodologies in the context of, for example, the debate on decolonial epistemologies, or the critique of patriarchal systems of hierarchy and classification of the world. In the internal discussion about the redefinition of geographical knowledge, the reference to the category of public geography is increasingly asserting itself as an innovative space for reflection and action in public contexts. Marco Cremaschi, in Chapter 9, explores some critical points and crucial issues that public sociology shares with urbanism. On the one hand, the applied field of planning involves specialized aspects (technical aspects, spatial ecologies of groups and societies, regulatory constraints) that are far from the interests of public sociology. On the other hand, some planning practices address issues at the heart of public sociology, such as collective action, the focus on the practices and normative role of imagination and social justice, and the political dimension that dissatisfaction with colonial imprinting and the strategic turn of the 1990s helped to emphasize. Supriya Routh (Chapter 10) analyses the relationship between the legitimacy of law and the expertise of public sociology. His analysis refers to a dual idea of legislative legitimacy, in which both the freedom of

a community to represent its interests and legal standards play a central role. Public sociology can play a significant role in overcoming the risk that such interest representation may reproduce community biases. It can provide an epistemological basis for developing independent narratives, while at the same time not producing a conclusive 'expert opinion'.

Part II then closes with the debate developed by Julie Froud, Angelo Salento and Karel Williams on the foundational economy (Chapter 11). The chapter emphasises that the innovative approach of foundational economy constitutes a scientific perspective that has significant assonances with public sociology. It combines multiple forms of knowledge, insisting on the importance of repoliticizing everyday life, and adopting an experimental and open approach in which an analytical capacity coexists with a pluralist and non-ideological normativity. The ensuing analysis shows how the well-being of citizens, based on collectively provided, high-quality and affordable basic goods and services, has been strongly compromised by the logic of extractive and short-term private business and a dramatic reduction of public investment in the basic economy. It is thus a question of profoundly rethinking the rules and operations of the latter.

Part III is devoted to 'Themes and Research Issues: Deepening PS Potentialities Dealing With Different Fields', in which public sociology encounters other approaches and perspectives. In Chapter 12, Luigi Pellizzoni interprets public sociology in relation to science and the environment. He investigates the link among public, science and environmental policies; a link that has been profoundly transformed. Indeed, both the authority of experts and trust in technoscientific progress have been significantly weakened by the conflict between depoliticization and politicization that has (also) involved science. This has led to the paradoxical outcome whereby, despite the demise of the dualisms characterizing knowledge in the West, the 'neo-liberalization' of science and nature have further increased exploitation instead of limiting it. Laura Centemeri and Davide Olori (Chapter 13) focus on the sociology of disasters as a field of application for public sociology. Also on the basis of a public sociology case study conducted by the Emidio di Treviri research group on issues of land recovery in the aftermath of the 2016 earthquake in the central Italian Apennines, Olori and Centemeri show how, in a more general context of worsening ecosystemic crises, a critical and 'reconstructive' sociology of disasters – actively engaged in both denouncing structural inequalities and collaborating with social movements, affected citizens, and reflexive practitioners in prefigurative experiments – can be particularly helpful. Paul Blokker's Chapter 14 focuses on the relationship between public sociology and populism. The author introduces the most common meaning of the term 'populism' and its origins are critically discussed. Blokker then deepens the call for a 'populist sociology' and explores the critical and emancipatory forms of left-wing populism. The result of this analysis consists in the proposal of a 'democratic' or 'civic' populism that can be understood as a social basis for a public sociology able to resist a governmentality that treats individuals as mere objects.

Tatjana Sekulić's Chapter 15 investigates the new history of migration that began with the fall of the Berlin Wall. The author adopts three different scales of analysis: that of the nation state, the transnational scale within Europe, and the global scale. Several themes are considered in terms of each of these analytical levels: from the 'failure of multiculturalism', through the dialectic between the residence and labour mobility regime of European Union citizens, to the dramatic 'refugee crisis'. The scientific and public combating of the symbolic and actual violence that these dynamics have generated is a fundamental task for the 'public face of sociology' and its social justice goals.

Marisol Garcia's Chapter 16 is about the connection between the institutionalization of citizenship and local democratization. The chapter describes the way in which, during different historical phases, the civic capacity of people has played a decisive role in the democratization of European cities. Moreover, the forms of citizen participation that go beyond representative democracy express a demand for involvement that also extends to local social welfare policies and governance. This context sees two specific perspectives being compared: one that emphasizes a performative conception based on 'acts of citizenship', and one that emphasizes a collaboration between social innovation actors and local governments based on 'bottom-linked governance'.

Bruno Frère and Jean-Louis Laville's proposal (Chapter 17) is that of a sociology which, instead of dissolving all ties with the political dimension, is oriented towards supporting and helping to shape the critical representations and instituting practices that exist among the actors of civil society and that can be linked to the dominated collectives. The author contextualizes public sociology as a set of different currents of thought and methodological approaches (participatory inquiry, socio-analysis and intervention collectives). They can be summarized in what he calls an 'associationist' perspective, which can be traced back to the conception of common sense and working-class and popular knowledge to be found in sociological approaches of which Proudhon was an important precursor. Sandro Busso's Chapter 18 considers the field of social policy and poverty research. According to Busso, the 'four souls' of sociology have become progressively more distant and less able to interact with each other. In particular, it is the increasing contact between research on those topics and the policy system that heavily conditions the development of a public sociology of social policies. However, in order to pave the way for 'unthinkable politics', a significant repoliticization of the subjects and issues at stake is indispensable.

In Chapter 19, Mark Banks reflects on how work and employment in the cultural industries can become fairer and more just. He refers to the concept of 'creative justice': that is, a fully realized opportunity for all publics to participate in the process of professional culture-making. His analysis explores three kinds of sociological approach, evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of each as a foundation for theorizing 'creative justice': an 'objectivist' critical sociology informed by political economy and cultural studies; the work of Pierre Bourdieu; and the pragmatic sociological theory. Then, in Chapter 20, Romuald Normand focuses on how the development of the public sociology of education has profoundly renewed its perspective to consider transformations in education beyond national spaces and to study globalizing and Europeanizing effects on education systems and policies. He argues that the inadequacies of national statism and methodological nationalism have induced this new public sociology of education to better analyse the role of transnational networks and actors, as well as political assemblages that govern numbers worldwide, but also the limitations of neo-liberalism. Gil Eyal (Chapter 21) compares three versions of public sociology of expertise to evaluate how they respond to the current crisis of mistrust in experts: Collins and Evans's proposal in which public sociologists of expertise essentially police the boundaries of public debate; his 'networks of expertise' approach, in which the public sociological task is to open up public discourse; and an emergent approach wherein the public sociologist focuses on the triangulation of relations of trust and mistrust at the access points of expert systems, and seeks to intervene in these relations to increase the possibilities for dialogue. Eyal explains why these approaches should be considered as complementary rather than alternative. In Chapter 22, Enrica Morlicchio and Dario Tuorto review some of the most common social representations of the

poor and of poverty, and they explore the link between such categories and the corresponding policies. Their analysis shows that new forms of blame and moral condemnation of the poor have emerged. It sheds light on one aspect of poverty that is less commonly investigated (even by sociologists), but which is of great importance for public sociology, namely the lack of recognition, or the misrecognition, of the poor. Part III of the *Handbook* closes with Magdalena Chiara's Chapter 23 on some of the problems in health policy analysis that were exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. It focuses on the relationship between state agencies and society; the area in which the health system's problems and the difficulties faced by reforms attempting to resolve them become evident. The chapter concludes with a provisional agenda for research into these phenomena using the public sociology approach.

Part IV, 'For a Public Academia: Public Sociology and Public Academies', is focused on the applications of public sociology in empirical research and teaching. Eeva Berglund (Chapter 24) discusses relational issues that arise between academia and public concerns, as they appear in the Anthropocene discourse. This is a prominent part of teaching and research in a sustainability-focused Master's programme at a Finnish university. The institution has a very corporate style, bringing with it many of the problems that critical commentators have identified with the contemporary university; yet it offers opportunities to develop rather than undermine the learning that public life now needs. Then Vincenza Pellegrino (Chapter 25) presents a particular type of public sociology, which she calls 'teaching-as-research': a sociological enterprise which is both 'professional' since it is carried out by teachers in the classrooms of public universities, and 'critical' since it is carried out through a cognitive process that involves both students and social groups. The chapter seeks to overcome the epistemological and operational division between sociological research and teaching in academia, and to rethink the division between the 'first' (teaching), 'second' (research) and 'third' (knowledge positioning) university 'missions'. In the last chapter, Chapter 26, Manuela Boatcă, Sina Farzin and Julian Go discuss the relation between post-colonialism and sociology, and its impact on engagement with public causes and current policies. The authors argue that, while post- and decolonial approaches have had a significant impact on the humanities, their reception in sociology has been more reluctant. The reasons for this difference are discussed against the background of the perceived opposition between scientific objectivity and political activism.

NOTES

1. As Abbott (2007, p, 208) acutely points out:

   > The aim of social science is to explain or understand social life. But the social process is constituted – among other things – of values; human life as an activity consists of assigning values to social things and then pursuing them. This means that even an arbitrary choice of explanandum will involve taking something as natural, as not needing explanation; the act of explanation categorizes social phenomena into things needing explanation and things not. Since the things so categorized themselves involve values (because values permeate the social process), the act of explanation entails implicit value-choices even if investigators are magically universalist. Indeed, even if explananda were selected arbitrarily, that selection would still impose values … There is, therefore, literally no such thing as 'professional sociology' – a sociology without any values in it. Even the most apparently objective categories of analysis are just so many congealed social values … by coding people into reified categories, positivism contributes in turn to the reification of those categories – racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, occupational, and so on. By ignoring values, that is, it hides them, transforms them, presents ideology as fact, and so on.

2. Preparedness is today central to the guidelines issued by the World Health Organization on health threats and pandemics. It entails the ability to deal with surprise, hidden development and sudden outbreak (Lakoff, 2017).

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2. Why public sociology?

Michael Burawoy

As sociologists we find ourselves in a paradoxical situation: the world's problems require a sociological imagination for their solution, but that imagination is losing ground as an academic discipline and as public knowledge. The struggle for public sociology is both an expression and an answer to this paradox.

What are the issues of today? Simply put, the survival of the human race. As we plunder nature – whether it be land, water or air – for profit, so we not only jeopardize long-term planetary existence (global warming, toxic waste, pollution of every sort), but also displace enormous populations, dispossessing them of access to their means of existence, and thereby creating enormous reservoirs of labor. Wage labor becomes the privilege of ever fewer, themselves subject to ever greater insecurity. Instead of a proletariat we create an expanding, frightened precariat, rising into ever higher rungs of the socio-economic ladder. Unable to find consumers for the goods and services it produces, capitalism extends credit to all and sundry – individuals (mortgages, credit), communities (micro-finance), nations (structural adjustment loans) – but when payments can no longer be postponed, the bubble bursts, bankruptcy follows upon bankruptcy and financial crises ensue, and ever more people are expelled onto the streets.

The commodifications of nature, labor, and money are intimately related to one another, but in different ways in different countries. As sociologists we need to map out the interwoven patterns of market intensification and expansion. But each commodification is also connected to a more recent commodification: the commodification of knowledge. The extension of the market turns the university into a commercial enterprise, turning a public good into a private good. To finance itself the university sells the knowledge it produces, building close ties to corporations (cheap research) and the state (propaganda), charging for the dissemination and certification of knowledge (student fees), begging for funds from the rich and super-rich in exchange for symbolic capital. In some places the university becomes a shadow of its former self or simply withers away. The survival of disciplines within the university increasingly depends on their market value, whether they render useful research for industry, ideology for the state, or jobs for students. As the membrane separating the university and society becomes thinner, academics can no longer assume autonomy, so we have to decide whose side we are on, whose values we support.

Within the social sciences, economics – conventionally neoclassical, but with notable dissenters – develops the technologies for new markets while providing the ideology that justifies the destruction of the planet. Political science, again with notable dissenters, is its accomplice, establishing the conditions of market expansion while contracting the meaning of politics, separating it from power, dispossessing people of control over their own lives. These are the social sciences that can make claims to pay their way; unlike sociology, whose long-standing defense of civil society against market fundamentalism and state despotism is increasingly out of favor with the dominant forces in society.

There are states – fewer and fewer – that seek to contain the destructiveness of the economic tsunami; and even fewer that are successful. They include the welfare states of Northern

Europe which still recognize the social dimension of problems and policies. Here sociological perspectives have legitimacy, particularly as a form of policy science. There are other states that erect barricades against the market, holding it at bay through authoritarian means. Here sociology's defense of an open civil society is seen as politically threatening, and sociology's existence is precarious, as it is easily labeled an enemy of the state. Whether sociology survives at the national level will determine its survival at the global level, the level most critical to saving the planet for human habitation. A global sociology, not a false universalism, not a hegemonic projection of a singular, particular sociology, has to be our goal.

What is to be done? Sociology cannot insulate itself within the academy, watching its support dwindle, but must advance into the public sphere and there excite debate about the direction of society, educate citizenry about the dangers of market commodification and political rationalization. This can be done in two ways. The first is as a traditional public sociology which uses various media – print, audio, and visual – to stimulate conversation. This is never easy. Often, journalists have neither the patience nor the interest in critical commentary. Independent opinion pages are limited in space and readership. Television and radio are either carefully monitored or subject to arbitrary market criteria. Occasionally, a sociology text that links personal troubles to social issues captures the public imagination. Social media do provide an alternative outlet, but the competition is relentless, and so we have to be innovative in attracting attention. Whatever the challenges, even as a professional discipline, we cannot abandon the public sphere to conglomerate sponsors or to political propaganda.

There is a second way forward: organic public sociology. Here there is an unmediated relation between sociologists and their publics, that can be social movements, social organizations, local communities. The publics concerned are active rather than passive, thick rather than thin, narrow rather than broad, counter rather than mainstream. Like traditional public sociology, organic public sociology requires enormous patience, eliciting the trust of others, resisting pressures to sacrifice intellectual autonomy, but also refusing a vanguardist role that condemns the subaltern voice to oblivion. Organic and traditional public sociologies are not mutually exclusive, but complementary.

Public sociology has perhaps its greatest and most enduring potential in the classroom where most of us spend most of our professional lives. Indeed, just as public sociology is a form of teaching – in which the teachers are also the taught – so teaching can be a form of public sociology. It calls upon us to see students as a public with whom we can engage traditionally or organically, raising to a sociological plane their understanding of themselves and their connection to others.

Public sociology cannot be carried out in isolation. It has to be a conversation among sociologists about their conversation with publics, which are themselves involved in their own conversation. The lone public sociologist quickly gives up the mission, and retreats into cynicism or martyrdom. A collective *esprit de corps* is all the more necessary where public sociology is a matter of life and death, as it has been in countries of Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and even under the bygone Soviet order. It requires collective support, collective imagination, and collective organization. It cannot be a marginal moment of our discipline, but must be integral to its very being, especially as the university is decisively inside society, buffeted by social, political, and economic forces.

Very different from political activism, public sociology is accountable to the field of professional sociology, to its scientific norms and its accumulating body of research. As a discipline, sociology takes the standpoint of civil society (warts and all), locating lived experience within

its broader macro determinations, specifically state and economy; and to this scientific body of knowledge public sociology must be accountable. This is the body of knowledge that has to be translated into a language accessible for broader publics. Critical sociology is important in steering professional knowledge toward engagement with public issues, and its independence, therefore, has to be ferociously guarded.

Political activism, on the other hand, is accountable to the political field, to the logic of its institutions: legislatures, assemblies, parties, laws, and so on. The trouble begins when the fields of the academic discipline and of politics overlap, or in the worst case scenario when the latter envelopes the former. Here, independent of the will of the sociologist, public sociology becomes political activism or is defined as such by the state. Here the struggle becomes one of carving out an arena of professional and critical sociology independent of the political field, perhaps an underworld of dissidents, or daring the state to politicize scientific activity and thereby risking its own legitimacy. Without connection to a thriving professional sociology, public sociology is a lame duck.

Public sociology draws strength and inspiration from social movements. They are an expression of and a demand for a new sociology, propelled by an enduring commitment to values of freedom, equality, justice, but increasingly concerned with human survival in the face of the Third World War declared by markets and states on society.

PART I

CONNECTIONS AND CONVERSATIONS: AUTHORS AND RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES IN DIALOGUE WITH PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY

3. Public inquiry in social sciences: a pragmatist outlook

Daniel Cefaï

Although the project of a public sociology was not formulated as such by reformist and pragmatist authors at the beginning of the 20th century, it clearly stems from there. This project, which Michael Burawoy should be credited with formulating anew, has accompanied sociology throughout its history. As mentioned by Burawoy (2007) in "The Field of Sociology," the first wave in the United States of America was that of the Progressive Era, which lasted until World War I and led to the formation of many public issues which until then had never been considered, as such housing, schooling, nutrition, health, immigration, labor laws, infant mortality, juvenile crime, and organized crime. At the time, scholars would carry out "social surveys" and "social investigations" commissioned by philanthropic foundations (for example, the Pittsburgh Survey; Kellogg, 1914) as well as social settlements (Joyce and MacLean, 2015), widely considered to be one key moment of the emergence of American sociology. These pioneering times also saw the rise of pragmatist questioning by the likes of John Dewey, George Herbert Mead, but also Jane Addams and Mary P. Follett, or even, on a slightly different note but no less crucially for social sciences, W.E.B. Du Bois and Robert E. Park. In a way, contemplating a public sociology amounts to reconnecting with these "activists of social inquiry" and rekindling the relation they entertained with a pragmatist philosophy of discussion, inquiry, and experimentation as applied to this kind of political community that Dewey (1927) called "the public."

AN ECOLOGY OF PUBLIC EXPERIENCE: ARENA-BUILDING, POWER-WITH, AND CO-LEARNING

The struggle against unbridled capitalism was already one of the Progressive Era's warhorses. More recently, Burawoy linked the renaissance of public sociology to the necessity of countering a fundamentalist belief in market forces that is perceived to have been steadily gaining ground ever since the neo-con turn of the 1980s, as global capitalism was deregulated following several decades of public order stabilization based on the wage society and the welfare state in Western Europe and North America. One could even travel further back in time and associate thinking on the public sphere with the emergence of new social movements and the creation of new relations between the state and civil society starting in the 1960s. It is in this context that pragmatism found renewed relevance. Interest in Dewey's *The Public and Its Problems* (Dewey, 1927) and its progressive background surged alongside the work of Jürgen Habermas and the considerable body of social and political science research that came in its wake. The Deweyan conception of the "public" appeared as an alternative to think the "public sphere" differently, just as it helps us to imagine social sciences today, concerned with the public and its problems (Gross et al., 2022). It reasserts the existence of public interest under-

stood as neither the sum of individual interests, nor the interest of state institutions. It tries to understand how the multiplicity of publics itself may contribute to the emergence of a body of knowledge and rights, beliefs and habits, laws and policies, in touch with public issues.

How and why can pragmatism be leveraged to make sense of a public inquiry in social sciences? Everything starts with a problem: democracy is issue-focused or problem-centered. Publics are created around a collective dynamic aiming to define and control problematic situations. Experiencing these problematic situations leads these publics to try to identify what is wrong, to shape and formulate hypotheses that are subsequently tested, either by being confronted by a corpus of information gathered over the course of the inquiry, or by being implemented in experimental attempts at actually changing the course of events (Mead, 1899). The social scientist is not alone on board. Prior to any intervention of social sciences, ordinary people express concerns. Discussions ensue to identify and name them, investigations and experiments are carried out to improve understanding and offer explanations. Conflicts and arguments appear about the existence and nature of the issues, as well as the methods used to identify, measure, assess, qualify, and potentially regulate or solve them. The first question, then, becomes: how do social sciences manage to get to know and reformulate these experiences so that they can be made available to a wider public? Also, possibly expanding the question: to what extent and in what ways do social sciences contribute to informing these experiences, fueling them with their results, and organizing them with their concepts? Public sociology starts with noting the pre-existence of publics that are engaged in a collective effort of discussion, inquiry, and experimentation that cannot be harnessed. It is entangled in a process of forming of a public experience, which goes beyond its scope.

Moving on: according to Dewey, "The public consists of all those who are affected by the indirect consequences of transactions to such an extent that is deemed necessary to have those consequences systematically cared for" (Dewey, 1927 [2008]: 245–246). Researchers cannot control issues any more than citizens can. Problems simply happen, challenging our beliefs and disrupting our habits, affecting our lives or the lives of people we feel compassion for, upsetting the world order we are used to. This part of public experience is passive: we are affected by situations and prompted to valuate what we feel as ugly, false, unfair, repressive, unethical, intolerable, unacceptable in these situations. Initially, this being-affected translates into perceptions, emotions, and valuations (Dewey, 1939) that do not yet assume the density and reality of a problem. Only then do we attempt to give these vague, indeterminate troubles some clear representation by way of describing, narrating, explaining, modeling them. By means of inquiries and experimentations, we tentatively attribute to them bundles of causes, linking them to cascading responsibilities, assessing the actual damage done—what type, what extent, to whom, because of whom or what, how, when, where—as well as the type of reparation, rehabilitation, reform, restoration, or regeneration that may address it. This is the active part of the public experience, which gives the public some control over the problematic situation but which, paradoxically, may lead to the public being dispossessed of its power to act, if and when specialized authorities (elected officials, experts, civil servants, doctors, judges, social scientists, and so on) are called upon to solve the problem, on their behalf or in their stead.

The public emerges from the confrontation of points of view in order to define and solve problematic situations. Taking the public into account implies an understanding of what is "political." Politics hinges on but cannot be reduced to such pairs as domination versus protest, exclusion versus demands, government versus resistance: politics is played out in communi-

ties shaken by disputes, but working toward maintaining and recreating a common ground through discussions, inquiries, and experiments. To pragmatists, power is not only power over, but also power-with (Follett, 1924: 187–189, 199–200): not just a way of enslaving or subjugating, or a negotiation technique aimed at reaching a compromise, but something that implies a moment of recognition and consent between minorities and majorities living together and, more radically, a moment of public debate, co-inquiry, and co-experimentation. The formation of a public experience is a process of shared discovery and learning, not without dissent. Navigating through divisions, asymmetry, and inequalities, power-with makes it possible to jointly explore the hidden potential of any problematic situation and design solutions combining the perspectives, interests, and feelings of all the stakeholders. Follett (1925/1942) refers to this process of aiming at a "collective synthesis," always dogged by the risk of failure, as "constructive conflict." Conflict is at the core of a politicization process. Politics is the art of arranging conflictual issues in such a way that, around them, groups may coalesce, fresh facts be examined, knowledge and know-how be tested, ideas and ideals be asserted, legal and ethical standards emerge, concrete material investments be made, organizations and professions be established, public agencies and policies be implemented, and so on. Power-with is a vector of empowerment, enhancing the stakeholders' power to act.

These disputes have often been treated as controversies, understood as an exchange of arguments. This sparked a number of studies on participative and deliberative democracy, often anchored in Habermas's pragmatics of communication and his reading of Mead and Peirce (Habermas, 1981/1984). Social scientists have for instance endeavored to organize consensus conferences, practical devices that ensure ideal conditions for public debate: decent information, fair exchanges, and collective thinking. In such public debates, social scientists may operate as mediators and translators, facilitators or instigators, but also participate directly by submitting their research results to these micro-publics. Indeed, some conceptions, such as those by John S. Dryzek (2004) and James Bohman (2004), have complemented the dialogic or rhetorical conception of public reason by opening up on inquiry and experimentation. The contribution of science and technology studies (STSs) (Latour and Weibel, 2005), as well as the analysis of public policies (Ansell, 2011), have made it possible to go further. In addition, turning the clock back to classical pragmatism has allowed for a re-examination of these disputes via an "ecology of public experience" (Cefaï, 2022). Ecology here should be understood as the configuration of institutional universes, social worlds, legal arrangements, political blocks that emerge as the resultant of the forces at work in the dynamics of problematization and publicization. All these elements combine to create "public arenas" (Cefaï, 2022) that far exceed the boundaries of deliberative/participative fora. A public arena revolves around scenes of conflict, crossed by front lines. Collectives—whose interests, identities, and prospects crystallize in the dynamic of problematization and publicization—clash. These front lines run through pre-existing organizational worlds, rearranging them around scientific, judicial, media, administrative, legislative, govermental issues. Periodically, they emerge from behind the scenes to become visible on the public stage: via a highly publicized trial, a scientific controversy, a political battle, an intellectual argument, a media polemic, and so on. The issues, the identities, the passions, the interests, the arguments, the prospects, and often the scales of the conflict change while the publics involved grow wider and more diverse. Social scientists play a part in this process not only as researchers in the strictest of senses, but also, not infrequently, as opinion leaders in the media, committee rapporteurs, advisors to the high-and-mighty, or advocates of social movement organizations.

A case in point is juvenile delinquency, which became an object of study for sociologists, philosophers, and psychiatrists in the early 20th century, when women's societies in Chicago—especially those linked to the Juvenile Protective Association (founded in Hull House in 1901)—were organized, looking after children in their respective neighborhoods, raising awareness with municipal authorities, and funding the creation of the first Juvenile Court (in 1901). Taking children and teenagers out of adult jails and poorhouses, they created new reform and correction schemes. While unprecedented inquiries dealing with the subject cropped up; while Mead, Dewey, and Addams wrote on the topic of educating the youth; while Edith Abbott and Sophonisba Breckinridge studied the connected problems of truancy, housing conditions, or family disorganization; the settlement movement created the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy (in 1908). Its training curriculum established standards for the burgeoning profession of social work; while judges, probation officers, settlement workers, by accumulating practical field experience, gradually invented their own professional know-how and created the institutional frameworks for their interventions. The media, of course, happily adopting this new controversial topic, promptly jumped on the bandwagon and started churning out articles for or against social reform. Conservative politicians railed against the waste of public money, while progressives legitimated the cause, until the city of Chicago and Cook County assumed control of the new institutions. They became part of municipal or state public policies. Participants in the National Conferences of Social Work clashed, some arguing in favor of supporting the youth and their families individually, while others insisted that street work should be connected to a political project. William Healy was hired to head the first child guidance clinic, the Chicago Juvenile Psychopathic Institute (in 1909); his published case studies served as a template for the life stories later developed at the University of Chicago Department of Sociology.

A public arena had appeared, with an entirely new landscape of charities, schools, courts, penitentiaries, and clinics, and a whole range of novel career paths, even for delinquents. This public arena rearranged living environments and sometimes redirected life stories. It brought to life entire publics made up of private persons switching to civic commitment, reformer activists, and institutional agents who implemented their collective creativity in their work of discussion, inquiry, and experimentation. Arguments on the scenes of social work, psychiatry and sociology, municipal policing, state legislation, general or specialized media, law, education, and prison gradually led to the public problem of juvenile delinquency being invented, defined, and controlled. A profusion of publics were thus born from each other, became entwined, started echoing, got busy regulating and pacifying the conflicts that ran through them, were equipped, organized, institutionalized. Social scientists—a nascent, controversial category at the time—played their part, both in their own field and by cooperating with other actors on just about every stage of the conflict where the public issue of juvenile delinquency appeared and crystallized. Social scientists did not have to step into the shoes of the revolutionary guide or the organic intellectual, the headmistress of the masses or the great awakener. Their contribution consisted in telling life stories, carrying out ethnographic or biographic inquiries, mapping and performing statistical analysis on the "causes of crime", writing reports for various institutions. They enabled audiences alien to these social worlds to hear the voices of delinquent children and teenagers, overcoming a number of spatial and social boundaries. They reported complaints, grievances, denunciations, and dissatisfactions that would otherwise have remained invisible and inaudible; and they formulated hypotheses on the transition toward deviance, contextualized interpersonal relations, spaces of constraint and

opportunity, the dynamics of deviant life stories and the consequences of reward and blame. In a nutshell, they provided access to fields of experience, tried to explain them through personal documents, maps, and numbers, and hinted at how to transform these children's trajectories. Certainly, they were not alone in doing that, and competition was rife with other witnesses, observers, investigators, analysts, therapists, politicians, opinion writers, theologians. This competition with other professions is the price the social scientists have to pay for taking part in public life.

While publics mobilize, social science studies help to raise awareness and concern, mobilize public opinion, appeal to the authorities; publics use them to build arguments about causes and responsibilities, to grant their causes scientific backing, to denounce hitherto unknown intolerable, unbearable facts.

A FIRST KIND OF PUBLIC: THE PUBLIC AS A RECIPIENT

In "For Public Sociology," Burawoy (2005) gave a first, minimalist definition of the public, as "people who are involved in conversation" (ibid.: 7). These audiences are often invisible and, one might add, inaudible to the ears of the elites, except through quantitative survey research. Burawoy, a little summarily maybe, considered them "passive in that they do not constitute a movement or organization," and are "usually mainstream," which means "conventional." This vision of the masses and their culture might need to be qualified. Gabriel Tarde (1901) had shown how audiences, who are the addressees of books, op-eds, and news items written by others, may turn into "vehicles of public discussion." While publics certainly do tend to sit at the receiving end, their purported passivity—also assumed by critical sociologists who consider them as consumers of the industry of culture and the manufacturers of ideology—has been challenged. One should remember the situations of mobilization, polarization, and conflict sparked as early as Tarde's time by the Dreyfus affair; the passionate conversations that were taking place upon reading the press. Today, social movements such as #MeToo or Black Lives Matter spring to mind, not to mention the multiplicity of reorganizations of civic organizations by means of the Internet, in the spirit of Todd Gitlin's (1980) work on the Students for a Democratic Society, but also, as early as the 1950s, research by Elihu Katz and Paul Lazarfeld, as well as Kurt and Gladys Lang, or even earlier still, Robert E. Park.

Elihu Katz (Katz et al., 1995) recognized, albeit belatedly, how much the concept of "two-step flow of communication," put forward in *Personal Influence* (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955) to account for the influence of opinion leaders on smaller groups, resembled the dynamics of public opinion described by Tarde. This vision, prior to being Columbia's trademark, had been developed in Chicago through the conceptualization of publics by one of Dewey and James's former students, Robert E. Park (1972/1904, 1922). Park described the retroactive loops between the work of journalists, the press medium, and the reaction of the publics. The press was manufacturing its own audience of customers and citizens, sometimes actively contributing to community life—the way today's ethnic or niche media do. In return, it was expected to meet the expectations and demands of not only its readership but also the companies buying advertising space, not to mention the moral and civic institution of the community. Readers had their say in the newspapers' orientation. Park considered the public to be able to switch from being a mere recipient to becoming active. Such activity could take many forms, ranging from almost invisible and inaudible (to the elites) discontent, to panicky, even riotous

behavior triggered by viral news. The public of readers, listeners, or spectators may become a "crowd," behave in a sheep-like matter, blindly yet passionately following a charismatic leader, but it can also behave like a "public" in Dewey's sense: weighing facts and arguments, relying on social science inquiries, possibly relayed by the media, as an empowering tool for information, thought, and action.

Today, the view of authors, books, journal articles offered by publishers and peddled by means of the radio and television to indistinct "masses"—which Burawoy (2007: 253) connects with "traditional public sociology"—has to be enriched. Certainly social scientists ought to take a closer look at the rising economic and political broadcasting powers—the likes of Fox News and Al Jazeera, televangelical conglomerates, foundations promoting intelligent design—whose stated objective, pursued with unprecedented financial and technological means, is to "reframe the public mind." This type of inquiry follows in the footsteps of early works on political propaganda and commercial advertising, such as Walter Lippmann (1922: 248) on the "manufacture of consent," and Harold Lasswell (1927) on the "management of collective attitudes by the manipulation of significant symbols." Both maintained a close, though troubled, relationship with James's writings on psychology, as well as Park's and Dewey's questionings. Social scientists should also be concerned with the proliferation of spheres of influence, sources of information, opinion-makers, niche audiences. R.E. Park's distinction between "general public" and "specific publics" anticipated this diversification, which has become studied empirically today by means of network analysis and computational sciences. In the era of the World Wide Web and the smartphone, segmentation and competition are two essential aspects characterizing these publics: depending on the issue at stake, dynamics of disjunction, contamination, and sometimes hybridization will be observed. Cooperation in Wikipedia communities, algorithm-induced filter bubbles, platform-induced fragmentation and polarization processes, are some of the topics being studied these days. Public sociology needs to examine these novel tools and formats of publicization that are the blogs, tutorials, news aggregators; have a closer look at the clusters of followers crystallizing around TikTok influencers and the small groups forming on WhatsApp and Instagram; subscribe to counterinformation and fake news debunking platforms—not only to develop an awareness of novel ways to mediate toward the publics, but also to diagnose the perversions of these new information and communication practices, get a grasp of the transformations undergone by the democratic experience, and figure out how relevant social science knowledge remains in this context.

Within this new ecology of information and opinion, where do social science researchers fit if their function is to produce a public critique in Burawoy's sense? Analyst-activists? Well-connected, highly informed observers? Decoders of the torrent of fake news? Website producers? Who should they ask? To achieve what? What are the mechanisms of reception, appropriation, application, diffusion, imitation, inflection, empowerment, liberation of speech, dissemination of practices? While still mobilized to enlighten the public, to provide critical tools, and to assume a democratic commitment, should public sociology not continue to conduct investigations according to professional standards? How does the ongoing web revolution change the work of publicizing, disseminating, and popularizing a public sociology? And how, on certain topics, should this public sociology move to a collaborative and participatory science format that challenges the production–dissemination–reception scheme, a format being already in use in STS, history or geography? Pragmatism has anticipated the emergence

of such citizen sciences: Dewey's and Park's concept of public is best suited to describe the current situation.

A SECOND KIND OF PUBLIC: THE COUNTERPUBLIC

The second figure invoked by Burawoy is the counterpublic. This popular notion launched by Nancy Fraser (1990) tends to divide and subdivide the social world into subgroups of subalterns who protest against the established order of the "dominant public sphere." Counterpublics appear to be social movements composed by members of subgroups fighting for their own interests, "including nationalist publics, popular peasant publics, elite women's publics, and working-class publics." The danger here is to lose the ferment of the notion of publicity, reducing the "public experience" to the "social conscience" of a particular interest group. Counterpublics came to be mistaken as class, generation, race, or gender groups, which amounts to recycling the well-known Marxist pattern of the class struggle by merely attaching or substituting other categories. The point of the pragmatist notion of the public is that it shifts the focus from the reproduction of social properties which the sociologists are usually most interested in, to an inquiry on emergent publics. Publics are relational and performative beings, "located 'in between' more segmented networks marked by homophily, hierarchy, and specialization" (Mische and Chandler, 2019). They struggle against economic, social, and power structures, and the experiences, habits, beliefs, interests, and identities attached to them. They display a provisional equality and horizontal solidarity. They build commonalities, experience mutual learning and collective thinking, shape new public experiences, and transgress social boundaries, establishing a new kind of public order. To observe, describe, analyze the public, one needs to start from the issues that mobilize people who are directly impacted by, or feel indirectly concerned by, the consequences of an action or event, and to follow the collective dynamics.

The pragmatist inquiry on counterpublics is somewhat at odds with the identity politics of some of the subaltern studies. From a pragmatist perspective, discussing proletarian, women's, or black public spheres as if any counterpublic were obviously bound to a specific class, race, or gender group is problematic. Supposing social scientists are still needed in such an "organic public sociology" (Burawoy, 2007: 254), they ought to be spitting images: only women or nonbinary transgender persons may study their peers, only an African American woman may write on African American women, transracials on transracials, only a "colonized" person may account for the problems of the colonized, and only a homeless person can possibly grant meaningful access to the experience of the homeless. In contrast to some extreme readings of standpoint epistemology, pragmatist authors defend a brand of perspectivism or pluralism that does not consider communication between different perspectives and comprehension between different ways of life to be impossible. William James (1899) was the first to emphasize our blindness and deafness to other ways of seeing, saying, and doing. James's attention to the plurality of perspectives found an immediate translation in W.E.B. Du Bois's (1903) notion of "double consciousness," and later, R.E. Park's (1929) "marginal man." The double consciousness, which can turn into a "hybrid intelligence," is the condition of the members of counterpublics. What is interesting in the pragmatist take on the (counter)public is precisely that pluralist experiences coexist, mix, and are transformed there. These experiences may be highly asymmetrical; they are sometimes branded as promoting domination, imposition, dis-

crimination, exclusion, to the point that certain groups start by creating "spaces of withdrawal and regroupment" (Fraser, 1990: 68), retreat in free and "safe spaces" and then—only then—leverage these spaces as "bases and training grounds for agitational activities directed toward wider publics" (ibid.). Counterpublicity is played out in this double movement.

This tension between in-group and out-group experiences, straddling social worlds, this distortion between inner and outer perspectives, painful though it might feel, is first and foremost a creative one. Whether from the perspective of Booker T. Washington or that of Du Bois, the Black Problem has never been restricted to black folks only: it is also that of non-Blacks about Blacks, and of what Blackness means. From the onset, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in the United States has rallied activists and supporters of different colors. The main characteristic of public experience is precisely the decoupling of individuals from their statuses, beliefs, and opinions: engaging in a public means occupying a liminal position that makes it possible to denaturalize the existing situations and trigger the emergence of alternative fields of possibility. Another example from the early 20th century is the settlements, which attracted many educated, upper-class women who were hitting what was not yet called a glass ceiling in their university, business, or civil servant careers, and refused the subordinate rank assigned to them by marriage and social conventions at the time. However, despite all their limitations, the settlements acted as incubators for novel ideas, as talent hothouses generating fresh energy and power by mixing the diverse classes, genders, and ethnicities involved in their activities. The strength of the publics lies in their capacity to organize plurality.

Therefore, the pragmatist perspective is not limited to a structural analysis of social properties. In fact, it reverses the whole line of thought. The weight of social, economic, geographic morphologies and of institutional, judicial, political ecologies in the production of communities of experience, far from being denied, is in fact one of the issues at stake. Fraser stated how difficult it is to "insulate special discursive arenas from the effects of societal inequality," and how these inequalities create distorsions in the "deliberative processes in the public sphere" that tend "to operate to the advantage of dominant groups and to the disadvantage of subordinates" (Fraser, 1990: 66). Affinities, compatibilities, shared experiences—including sensibilities, beliefs, memories, imagination—have to do with our having a place in a family, a group, a network, and organization. However, the ecology of public experience is not structural in a reductive sense. We are not born black, woman, nongender, ethnic, working class: it is a process of becoming, a matter of emerging experiences in collective dynamics. Shared destinies, social solidarities, and cultural configurations, as they are established, are an integral part of public experience, providing its building blocks, frameworks, and resources. At the same time, they do not determine essential identities and are not sufficient to explain the mobilization of counterpublics. The "causes" to be defended are not what "cause" the mobilization. Fighting the temptation to provide an essentialist definition of counterpublics, pragmatism investigates how gender or race conditions are subverted, how the attitudes of racism and sexism are fought, and how new ways of being and relating to others are invented.

PUBLIC, EXPERTISE, AND SOCIAL SCIENCES: THE POWERS OF INQUIRY AND EXPERIMENTATION

Burawoy insists that the four formulas of his typology—policy sociology, professional sociology, critical sociology, and public sociology—often thought of as antithetical to one another, are in fact complementary and overlap to a certain extent. While any topology has its limitations, we may follow Andrew Abbott (2007), in the footsteps of Dewey (1939), in considering that neither policy expertise nor higher education can renounce the moments of critical thinking or public commitment, if they are to ask the truly interesting, relevant questions. Similarly, so-called critical and public sociologies promptly turn into moralistic bellyaching, or political manifestos, if not supported by rigorous inquiry:

> Serious social troubles tend to be interpreted in moral terms. That the situations themselves are profoundly moral in their causes and consequences, in the genuine sense of moral, need not be denied. But conversion of the situations investigated into definite problems, that can be intelligently dealt with, demands objective intellectual formulation of conditions; and such a formulation demands in turn complete abstraction from the qualities of sin and righteousness, of vicious and virtuous motives, that are so readily attributed to individuals, groups, classes, nations. (Dewey, 1938: 494–495)

Social scientists belong just as much as elected officials and experts do in the formation process of a public, with its problems and experiences. They are among many intermediaries contributing to the constitution of collective causes and public issues (Gusfield, 1981). This is a significantly more complex model than the one that pitted "experts" against "laypersons," asserting the epistemological rift between common sense and academic knowledge, and putting the almighty sociologist on the throne; or, on the contrary, the one that dismissed this opposition entirely, pretending that "experts" and "laypersons" were on a par after science had been knocked off its pedestal by the assaults of STS. Here too the history of pragmatism is enlightening. Everyone remembers Lippmann's (1925) "phantom public," according to which this political fiction has no existence at all. The world is too complex to be left to amateurs. Experts are there to produce some intelligibility and to provide elected officials and entrepreneurs with the information they need to pursue their private and public endeavors. The public is a constituent myth of democracy, but in practice, citizens as a mass display little more than ignorance, irrationality, disinterest, and apathy. Some have thought it wise to pit this technocratic vision of the power of experts against a populist praise of direct democracy involving a devolution of power to the citizenry. Public reason is within their remit. Here is a translation of this antinomy for social scientists: you should now become experts as well, asserting the soundness of science against the common man's obscurantism; take up the role of the Prince's adviser, whether the Prince is the president of the Republic, the mayor, the entrepreneur, or the organization leader; otherwise, become activists, fight the establishment, side with the little ones against the big ones, become public agitators, join social movements, speak up and act in the name of the people. Those are the standard figures of the social scientists posing as an engineer or a doctor aiming to repair or cure society; or, on the contrary, as the militant hero of counterpowers, a voice for the Wretched of the Earth.

Things are actually slightly more complex than this caricatural dichotomy. What the pragmatists have imagined is observing and deliberating at the same time, making inquiry and experimentation cooperate. Follett was critical of the intensifying grip of specialists on public life, at a time when she noticed a "tendency towards efficient government by the employment

of experts and the concentration of administrative authority" (Follett, 1918: 174–175). The constant cropping up of bureaus and technical agencies, the increasing professionalization of functions, the scientific organization of labor by Taylorists—soon to be followed by the multiplication of industrial and urban management techniques—were already threatening democracy in her eyes. She repudiated the "specialists" taking undue advantage of their being accredited by scientific institutions to monopolize knowledge and power, and to decide what was legal or fair (Follett, 1924: Ch. 1). Still, neither the experts nor the elected officials or civil servants are enemies of the people by default; on the contrary, they are instrumental in the processes that constitute public experiences and make them viable. What the pragmatists reject is domineering expertise coming from above, the seizure of power by political machines and their bosses as much as the diktat of professions that set themselves up as the owners of public interest. At the time, this is exactly what was happening at the municipal level, where technical boards and committees bypassed people's experience of schooling, urban equipment, and healthcare policies. Conversely, experts are not necessarily attuned to public opinion trends. They may exercise their right to criticize, regard such or such official document suspiciously, contrast the criticisms offered by the actors about each other, work around the communication facades erected by organizations and institutions, and put forward diagnoses that may not be agreed with by all their inquirees. Talking about joint and cooperative activities did not necessarily involve "consensus," whether in terms of co-producing knowledge or of co-designing norms. The relation between experts and laypersons has its contentious side. However, laden though it may be with tension and disappointment as well as misunderstandings and misinterpretations, it should also involve enough mutual understanding and trust to make such confrontations "constructive conflicts."

The bet is an optimistic one. The public is supposed to be able to develop forms of collective intelligence and collective ethics with the support of public or quasi-public institutions, especially higher education and teaching institutions. Social sciences have a public function here, which is to produce and disseminate informed, tested, certified, well-thought-out knowledge, while maintaining an interplay of transactions, discussions, inquiries, and experimentation between scholars and laypersons. They cannot allow knowledge to be reduced to a mere product appropriated by private investigation bureaus and private education companies to be neatly packaged and sold for a profit: a privatization and commodification of knowledge that leads to aggravated forms of exclusion and marginalization. Similarly, in an increasingly neo-authoritarian context, social sciences must fight ideological indoctrination and any ban on free forms of discussion, inquiry, and experimentation in schools and universities, just as they need to combat those forms of perversion of public reason that stand at the confluence of the broadcast loops that are online social media, and the torrents of propaganda spread by companies, institutions, and states. This battle against the instrumentalization of social sciences by commercial businesses or political regimes is in fact being waged over the entire arena of social sciences, whenever they start wondering about their own purpose, as is the case in the arena opened by Burawoy's "For Public Sociology." The democracy of publics is a regime of power, knowledge, and law that incorporates a moment of collective discussion, inquiry, and experiment; it is being built by means of the organization, instrumentation, and institutionalization of the publics. Instead of entrusting politics exclusively to elected officials, experts, and civil servants, this regime trusts the political capacity of the publics, who in turn summon the specialists to enlighten them with up-to-date scientific knowledge, point out relevant experiments, teach certain skills, and carry out social inquiries (Dewey, 1938: Ch. 24).

These embryonic publics connect with institutions—which, depending on the issue at stake, might be companies, charities, churches, schools, laboratories, media outlets, but first and foremost city councils, parliaments, and governments—to have laws voted in and decisions made. In the times of Dewey and Follett, Addams or Mead, the point was to create "reflective communities"—later called "publics"—and allow them to gather actual knowledge on the problematic situations they were feeling affected by, thereby enabling them to collectively determine what their interests, preferences, feelings, aspirations, and plans were. As processes connecting the members of "vital groups"—neighbors, colleagues, workers, consumers, mothers, teachers—these publics forge new links while assessing which goods are most desirable, which evils most detestable, and what means should be used to reach the desired ends. The logic of scientific reasoning and demonstration finally reaches out to the transactions and experiences of ordinary citizens. Those citizens might be faithfuls—whether they attend the church, the synagogue, or the mosque—wanting to act charitably; or they might be parents concerned with the health and education of their children; or residents outraged by the corruption of elected officials, the state of uncleanliness of their streets, the well-being of their families; or employees willing to enjoy the combined benefits of rational functioning and democratic decision-making at the workplace. By harnessing the language and reasoning of experts and acquiring skills, they become full-fledged partners, co-inquirers, and co-experimenters, they turn into "expert laypersons," to use an oxymoron, and acquire the capacity to reorganize the public experience, to trigger the emergence of new political issues, to impose actors, ideas, and norms, to rearrange living environments and realign life stories.

Social sciences, in the mind of reformists and pragmatists, were supposed to act as vectors for social, urban, and industrial democracy. Relying on observation and data, they allowed for the collection of actual knowledge on these new forms of collective life, laid the groundwork for a science of organizations and institutions, and empirically studied economic, institutional, and political processes. Simultaneously, social sciences made it possible to access ways of life, to offer insights into their practical rationality, to cast some light on bodies of experiential knowledge that were often invisible and inaudible to the elites. But they also helped to criticize prejudices and opinions that did not pass the test of science. While this science was able to formulate general, abstract propositions, its *in vivo* and *in situ* experiments were first and foremost practical: "social reform hypotheses" (Mead, 1899) were being tested in "laboratories in the open" (Park, 1929) with a view to solving ethical and civic problems. This applied science involved in public affairs was concerned with incorporating collective intelligence and ethics stemming from transactions between citizens and scholars. This is what has been called more recently "unlocked" or "deconfined" science (Callon et al., 2001) and "epistemic justice" (Serrano, 2021). Defining problematic situations, attributing causes and ascribing responsibilities, looking for solutions and evaluating the consequences thereof, are some of the benefits produced. Conversely, "experts," just like social scientists, see their point of view transformed when they seriously take into account the demands, needs, aspirations, wishes of laypersons, and help them to describe and formulate the plurality of their perspectives. This democratic vision, defended in particular by progressive women in the 1890–1920 period, led Follett (1918) to conceive of what she called the politics of "daily life": democracy is not only a system of government, but a "way of life" (Dewey, 1939). It is the calling of social sciences to fuel urban industrial democracy by helping city dwellers, voters, workers, consumers, mothers, teachers, and so on, to carry out their own inquiries and experimentations on the sites of their own daily life. Follett joined Addams (1910) in trying to make politics deal

with concerns hitherto considered private (boss–worker, producer–consumer relationships) or domestic (the household's diet; whether the children should attend school or work at the factory). Social sciences, understood as serving the publics, became a factor in the project of inventing the science, ethics, and politics of daily life (childcare, gender relations, nutrition and birth control, local urban development, workplace management, and so on).

THE TRIPLE HELIX OF PUBLIC EXPERIENCE

This pragmatist vision of the public leads us to wonder more precisely where exactly social scientists might fit in the dynamics of the public and its problems. Research involves re-elaborating the work done on problematizing and publicizing knowledge and norms that the inquirers acquire from the actors, and subsequently restitute to them. The Moebius strip analogy (Cefaï, 2010) is helpful to account for how three moments of co-production/co-reception may cascade and recalibrate one another. "The public" gets played out in how these three moments hinge upon another. It needs to be thought about as a verb or an adjective rather than a substantive. It is a mistake to make the "public" a "collective subjectivity," to query its "moral and legal personality," and to attempt to classify it as a "real entity" or a "community ghost." The public is a set of converging collective dynamics of problematization and publicization whose channels, operations, actors—with their constraints and resources, inquiries and experimentations—must be described. It keeps branching out through its temporal consequences. The point is to imagine a topographic model that temporalizes that of the public arena: here, the "triple helix" analogy will be used to convey this temporal dynamic of the social inquiry and the resulting three intertwined spirals that make up the public experience. This model finds inspiration in what Paul Ricœur (1983) identified as moments of prefiguration, configuration and refiguration of the historical narrative in *Time and Narrative*.

Spiral 1—The Stream of Actors' Experience

In the first spiral of the helix, the researcher must pay close attention to the experience of laypersons. They are the ones who will point to whatever they consider to be a problem. They share their feelings and motivations, their ways of classifying and judging, their attempts at identifying and solving the problem. Researchers must immerse themselves in the actors' field of experience in order to become familiar with their emotional, cognitive, and normative coordinate systems; render their many voices, often dissonant and contradictory; accompany them in their discussions, inquiries, and experimentations; and get involved by monitoring their attempts at associating and creating new modes of being, talking, judging, thinking. Researchers then become vectors for expressing, mediating, synthesizing new experiences, and may intervene as long-term ethnographers in a natural community, moderators and facilitators in focus groups, interviewers conducting a series of non-structured interviews, or the pillars of processes of action research or citizen science. While serving the experience of the actors is key, social scientists should avoid the trap of "going native" or acting as representatives. Even though what is being asserted here is a principle of reciprocity and symmetry of knowledge, the place of the inquirer and analyst is and should remain that of a third party.

Social scientists collect experiences. They track the everyday operations of discussion, inquiry, and experimentation of the actors themselves. They recombine the routes whereby

these experiences were elaborated, as well as the technical and symbolic devices that shape them. Taking the example of sexual harassment, many gender studies researchers happen to be women who have been personally involved in the actions that triggered the emergence of this category. This could be traced as far back as the private experience of women sharing their story in consciousness-raising group meetings, where harassment on the street or at the workplace gradually appeared as a fact, and a condemnable one, a common experience shared with other women. The awkwardness of some situations involving pick-up attempts, groping or insults in the public space, the humiliation brought about by implicit sextortion from bosses at work, the suffering endured at the hands of a violent partner or spouse, find a channel of expression. Emotions reveal the existence of disgust, fear, shame, which are then converted into indignation, anger, and revolt, with a normative dimension (Dewey, 1939). Instead of being restricted to a single person, they get to be voiced in the safety of a discussion among peers, in spaces of associative sociability, collective therapy, or feminist and lesbian activism. Once they are shared, these emotions help to shape a community of moral condemnation and denunciation. They blow open the partitions separating the intimate, domestic, professional, civic, and political domains; they end by mobilizing as grounds for action in public, that go beyond feminist communities and must concern everybody in the general public, composed of men and women. Interestingly, the *Consciousness-Raising Guidelines*, a pamphlet published by the Women's Action Alliance in 1975, reinvented pragmatist statements about group thinking, connected with group experience and group action (Follett, 1924; Dewey, 1927; Coyle, 1930).

The personal experience, first restricted to the private sphere on the sites of daily life, and then expressed in smaller communities, is then ripe for becoming a public experience. The enclosure of the safe space is the melting pot where a shared experience makes its way, and the prelude to a coming out in the public arena. For sexual harassment to become a scientific and legal object (spiral 2), problematic situations must be turned into public narratives, women's first-hand experiences need to be reflected upon, testimonies must be expressed, and facts established.

Spiral 2—Inquiry and Analysis: Research in the Making

Even though any research methodology should include a dose of immersion, social scientists cannot mingle to the point of becoming unnoticeable. Nor are they entitled to behave as some scientific avant-garde dictating their own truth. They simply accompany the people under study in a co-inquiry on their own fields of experience. This inquiry actually works like a co-experiment: hypotheses on usual and problematic situations are formulated and then checked. The inquiry on public issues starts with this experience-to-experience contact between inquirers and inquirees, and goes back full circle. The plausibility of testimonies and validity of facts are assessed. Meanwhile, the social scientists carry out further inquiries, formulating alternative hypotheses, putting forward analyses which, though relevant to the specific situation of the inquirees, do test fresh explanations and interpretations. They strive to find the causes and weight the responsibilities that led to the problematic situation. One of the social scientists' advantages over the actors is that they are in no practical hurry to get things done. They have time to examine the various perspectives. They show that the reason why the issue is an issue is because undesirable consequences can be apprehended or anticipated. They can bring visibility to interests or strategies that had hitherto remained off-camera, reframe

what they have observed so that it fits other space and time scales, compare with other national territories or historical eras. Most importantly, they are tasked with organizing the various elements of the inquiry, which have become data, into a coherent narrative. This second spiral of the helix is often referred to as "construction," although it is a reconstruction (of the materials of spiral 1)—a reconstruction that is far from free, since narrative and analytical imagination is bound by operations of fact-checking, and hypotheses validation.

Coming back to sexual harassment, researchers inquire on what has emerged in contexts of daily life and what has been thought about in activists' contexts. Some resort to a microsociology of situations of interaction to provide firsthand accounts, while others prefer to collect interviews until they have amassed a range of harassment narratives. Some comb the literature for occurrences, trying to figure out how what has become unbearable today was experienced in other eras, and still is in other social frameworks. Drawing from both facts and values, another, more normative form of reflection, focusing on ethics, examines and systematizes the evaluations that have emerged in this social movement, establishing a link with such themes as male domination and the patriarchal society; while law research focuses on the reprehensible aspects of practices that will be legally framed as abuse of power, sexual violence, or marital rape.

Thanks to abundant scholarly research, eventually a significant body of literature emerges. However, with the institutionalization of this array of public issues—together with the intervention of networks, initiatives, and institutions, outside the scientific domain, which care for and support the victims—moral condemnation gets translated into legislation, activist rhetoric into teaching topics and research budgets. Politicians are compelled to take a stance, and news media to tackle this fresh topic. Reflection campaigns, prevention campaigns, awareness campaigns, are launched by ministries and parliamentary committees. A public arena grows up. In other words, social scientists—mostly women in this instance, although not exclusively—actively contribute to the configuration of the public issue they are studying, and find themselves involved in public roles in which activism, scientific expertise, legal elaboration, and civic education are intricately mixed (spirals 1, 2, and 3 intertwined).

In this way social scientists establish both cooperative and competitive relationships with members of other professions and organizations, and are at the same time able to study how these specialists tasked with producing information, knowledge, laws, rules, and instruments operate. They find themselves inquiring both on a public issue and on how this issue is identified, defined, taught, repaired by other, more or less specialized actors (thus impinging on spiral 3). They formulate and test hypotheses, transmit and popularize knowledge, debate and sometimes clash with other researchers on how to collect, explain, and interpret data. However, they also examine the way sexual harassment is presented, narrated, and commented upon in the media; the writing, photography, and editing used to perform it in documentaries; how this category is being dealt with by legal commissions, union and political formations; and the debates it generates in the feminist/LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) movement.

Spiral 3—Back to the Stream of Actors' Experience: Dissemination, Reception, Application

Further down the road, social scientists do not write exclusively for the scientific community, rigorously handling concepts, hypotheses, and methods; similarly, their questioning is not restricted to issues that have only a knowledge interest. Outside the academic community,

what they write or film or say comes from the actual experience of actual persons in their daily lives, and returns there. Therefore, the third spiral of the helix consists in feeding social science knowledge back to the actors, now in a position to interpret and comment, to actively receive (*Rezeption*) and practically apply (*Anwendung*).

Pragmatism certainly does not neglect this moment—an increasingly important one in the social world, given the current boom in information and education media for various publics. Who is being exposed to the scientific process of inquiry and experimentation? Who is not? Which channels is public sociology being mediated through—increasingly in cooperation with journalists, videomakers, ethicists, jurists, theologians, STS specialists, and so on—and what are the consequences? Who is being given access to the scientific process of inquiry and experimentation? In what context: actively reading the news, or randomly surfing the web? Through science outreach programs, or magazines and books aimed at the general public? By reading investigation reports or watching documentary movies—but who reads those reports and who watches these movies, and what for? Straight from the mouth of researchers invited in talk shows, or via such platforms as WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter? Sticking to Tarde's and Katz-Lazarsfeld's perspective, one might consider an initial moment of reception—reading, listening, watching—followed by a second moment made of conversations, also consisting of "clicks," "likes", "tweets and retweets," email contact lists, web comments. Conversations involving who; where and when? Who is the figure of authority in a group? Who are the opinion leaders, who prescribe ideas and ideals and set the agenda? Who is in and who is out, in face-to-face, possibly idle talk, in focused groups, on discussion websites? What for?

However, the writing–reading–speaking cycle, muddled as it is by a proliferation of feedback loops, can be eschewed in favor of the most radical form of the Deweyan public, that is, co-inquirers and co-experimenters in arrangements that cater to scientific, professional, and citizen engagement alike. Social scientists are involved in such publics, for instance peasant seed networks, hybrid forums on genetically modified organisms (GMOs), consensus conferences on extreme poverty, or participatory action research groups on disability. They bring their perspective, agree to leave their own regimen of scientific knowledge aside for a moment and possibly get contradicted, rubbing shoulders, cooperating, and communicating with non-specialists, activists, scholars, and institutional actors. They may validate bodies of knowledge and know-how typically neglected by normal science with its forms of economic exploitation, and regimes of attention. And they may voice alternative perspectives on ecoagriculture, new poverty, disability, and so on; topics that social scientists had so far been turning a rather deaf ear to. Social sciences are now in competition with many news platforms, documentary production companies, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and social movements, which in turn attract growing numbers of researchers who can no longer seem to find a place in academia. There is an increasingly frequent profile of public sociologists who leave the university behind to invent new formats of web platforms, podcasts, artistic endeavors; betting on web broadcasting and crowdfunding. At that point, public sociology and agitprop coalesce. Activism takes precedence over science.

The ecologies of this moment of reception and application are thus varied, and sometimes closely linked to the moments when knowledge is co-produced. Regarding sexual harassment, for instance, it took collective mobilizations to make it possible to speak openly about this and to shape new, shared, public experiences, which in turn allowed the now public issue to leave the arenas of research, law, journalism, politics to become a personal and interpersonal matter. Migrating through a variety of social worlds, it provided new standards (Dewey, 1939)

for interaction habits in social settings as well as at home or at work. Good versus bad, desirable versus undesirable, appropriate versus inappropriate, legal versus illegal: the meaning of these categories is constantly being requalified as they circulate and are being appropriated and interpreted in practical contexts. The #MeToo wave, followed by campaigns of testimony–inquiry–action on sexual and sexist violence such as (in France) #BalanceTonPorc, #NousToutes, #JaiPasDitOui, #PrendsMaPlainte, has raised awareness, made people talk, sparked a cascade of denunciations, and moved many women and men who until then had been indifferent to the cause. A great many young people have rallied, well beyond the group of women who have been abused; the Catholic Church has certainly suffered collateral damage; and "public consciousness" (Gusfield, 1981) has been totally transformed. The dissemination of the category of "sexual harassment"—reworked as the broader "sexual and sexist violences"—to many audiences, through a multiplicity of channels, has reshaped relations between boys and girls. It has become an issue of education for parents, and raised awareness on hitherto unnoticed but henceforth unacceptable conducts within couples. Peer groups, from childhood to teenage years, took ownership of it in classrooms and schoolyards; companies and organizations have been compelled to amend their internal rules and regulations, sanctioning inappropriate conduct; behavior in public places, as far as gender relations are concerned, is gradually changing. Public experiences and personal experiences mix and cross-pollinate in what can be called a "moral revolution."

Public sociology, and more broadly public social sciences, therefore have an emancipatory dimension in that they strengthen the capacities of actors and boost their power to act; they are factors of enhancement of capabilities. Research on harassment, and more generally on gender inequality and discrimination at the workplace, at school, or on the street, have consequences on the shaping of interaction orders in everyday life and on the moral sensitivities involved in them. Exposition to academic knowledge by means of media broadcasting or dissemination by social movements raises awareness. Over and beyond their function of "public intellectual," these research studies, at the confluence of the academic, political, media, and activist arenas, transform our living environments by tooling them up with statistical weapons, repertoires of arguments, social vigilance networks, bills and courts of law, police training programs, and domestic violence shelters.

CONCLUSION

The public is entirely contained in this complex dynamic of problematization and publicization, spread and layered on many different stages, and branching out as far and deep as the interplay of interactions and identities; this is how the personal becomes political, and the political personal. A social science that focuses on the public will be caught in inextricable paradoxes. Social scientists must use their own tools for administering evidence and formulating the truth, which should lead them to inquire, collect sufficient data, reason methodically, and check their hypotheses in line with the rules prevalent in their profession (spiral 2). However, they must also abide by a principle of meaning adequacy, to speak as Weber and Schutz, to the people's contexts of experience (link from spiral 2 to spiral 1), and they should anticipate what the actors are going to do when they receive the research, what they will pick up, understand, and do with it (link between spiral 2 and spiral 3). They cannot merely address the smaller public of fellow social scientists, but must address much broader publics, with an increased

participation to extra-academic communication, inquiry, and experimentation channels. They are responsible for avoiding misunderstandings, valuing little-known or silent experiences, bringing their readers, viewers, or listeners to raise questions, giving them keys for explanation and interpretation.

This is of course no reason to forge data, to fake results, or to distort hypotheses in the name of objectives or ideals, commendable though these might be. These epistemological and ethical paradoxes are at the core of the research experience, especially as far as public sociology is concerned. Public sociology conceives of itself as an attempt at mediating the collective experience "of the public, by the public, for the public." It must be reframed in the context of an ecology of public experience which combines with a study of the networks, professions, and institutions dealing with inquiry, and research on activities of reception, appropriation, and application by audiences. It must be mindful of the many ways of "doing collective" and "making public," depending on national histories, grammars of individual freedom and civic life, and the many settings of laws, organizations, and institutions in which they are embodied. Most importantly, it must keep in mind the demand for discussion, inquiry, and experimentation formulated at the time of Addams, Follett, Mead, and Dewey.

Finally, if public sociology truly has ambitions to contribute to emancipatory goals beyond the boundaries of its own domain of validity, it must identify the sensitive or critical areas in the "triple helix of public experience," where its own interventions are likely to make a difference. Still, it should not attempt to substitute for or impose itself upon the actors: as engaged as it might be, public sociology ought to remain lucid with regard to its limitations. Though social scientists do have the potential to be a factor of collective intelligence, they are not immune to collective imbecility. Just like anybody else, they may very well spread it, actively contributing to conformism, propagating false ideas, peddling ideological prejudices. The only—fragile—guarantees against this risk are the given by inquiry and experimentation, and the power of reflexivity in fair cooperation with others: academics, experts, and laypersons. Bearing this in mind, the pragmatist conception of the public may well shed new light on Michael Burawoy's project of a public sociology.

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4. Public sociology and the capability approach: exploring the potential of a fruitful combination

Jean-Michel Bonvin and Francesco Laruffa

INTRODUCTION

How sociology connects with its various publics, and to what extent it integrates them in the process of creating knowledge, have been debated issues for decades, with some insisting that genuine science should take place behind closed doors so as not to be polluted by private interests or normative viewpoints, others underlining the existence and relevance of multiple sources of knowledge, thus contesting the monopoly of scientists over the creation and elaboration of knowledge. A plurality of issues is at stake in this debate: who is legitimized to produce knowledge? Is it a prerogative of expert or academic groups or a much more encompassing matter of citizens' debates where the value of non-expert and experiential knowledge is recognized in the direction of creating so-called 'knowledge alliances' (Novy 2012)? How and along what methodologies is knowledge produced? Does it require following complex procedures that only very skilled specialists can fulfil, or is it possible to include non-expert knowledge in the scientific processes?

Burawoy's presidential address at the 2004 American Sociological Association annual Congress (Burawoy 2005) marked an important stepping stone in this debate. It emphasized the necessity of developing a sociology of publics and how publics are created within the sociological activity itself, with a process of mutual knowledge elaboration taking place in such processes. It showed how public sociology, especially organic public sociology engaging with its publics in a process of mutual education, could complement rather than contradict professional sociology, where knowledge elaboration mainly takes place within the academic sphere and according to very precise methodological standards. It also underlined how public sociology, focusing on creating reflexive knowledge, distinguishes itself from policy sociology and its elaboration of instrumental knowledge within commissioned research, and from critical sociology and its emphasis on an internal criticism of sociological knowledge. Thus, Burawoy underlined the relevance of a plurality of sociologies talking to diverse publics, both within and outside the academia, in a twofold way (instrumental or reflexive), insisting on the complementarity of such forms in the creation of sociological knowledge. His contribution has not put an end to this debate. On the contrary, it gave rise to a heated debate about the scientific value of public sociology (e.g. Holmwood and Scott 2007; Jeffries 2009), which is also echoed in recent debates among French sociologists about how militantism affects sociological knowledge (following the positions expressed in Heinich 2021). To be sure, public sociology does not coincide with militantism, but calls for a specific relationship to its publics, going beyond the externality of the academic ivory tower and the mere endorsement of internal experiential knowledge that may be the feature of some forms of militant science.

Our claim in this chapter is that Amartya Sen's capability approach can shed some light on some points of this debate. Through notions such as 'positional objectivity', 'informational basis of judgment in justice' and 'reason to value', it suggests a specific view of the relationship between facts and values, and how this can justify the relevance of integrating experiential knowledge within the scientific process. The importance of 'public reasoning' and 'capability for voice' in this respect is emphasized. The chapter is organized in four main sections. The first section briefly presents the capability approach, while the second and third sections focus on its epistemological and political implications for public sociology. The fourth section offers an empirical illustration of how these concerns can be concretely implemented in empirical research, based on a research project conducted within the frame of the Re-InVEST project between 2015 and 2019. We insist on the added value of such an approach in terms of creating knowledge through mutual education, shedding light on its assets and challenges. The focus is on a local-level programme implemented for young NEETs (not in education, employment or training) and explicitly inspired by the capability approach. The conclusion synthesizes the main findings of the chapter and suggests that they are also relevant for public policies at the macro level and not only for micro-experiments such as the one considered here.

THE CAPABILITY APPROACH (CA) IN A NUTSHELL

The CA is a normative framework for the evaluation of individual wellbeing and the design of policies, theorized initially by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum for conceiving development beyond economic growth (e.g. Sen 1999; Nussbaum 2000). In particular, Sen introduced the concept of 'informational basis', which designates all pieces of information that are considered relevant to design public action to promote wellbeing, development and justice. According to Sen, 'capability', defined as the real freedom to lead the kind of life people have reason to value (Sen 1999: 18), should constitute the informational basis for assessing people's quality of life and formulating public policies. Focusing on capability provides better information on wellbeing than focusing on material resources. On the one hand, resources are only means rather than ends in themselves, so that treating resources as ends involves an issue of 'commodity fetishism'. Policies should focus on what intrinsically matters – that is, quality of life – rather than on what is only instrumentally important. Second, focusing on resources implies ignoring those inequalities that emerge in the presence of equality of resources, and that originate from the varying capacities of individuals to transform resources into actual freedom to lead a valuable life. For instance, disabled person A and able-bodied person B may have control of the same amount of resources, but they will still enjoy different levels of, say, the real freedom to move around the town. In this context, one of the crucial concepts in the capability approach framework is that of conversion factors, which are those factors that help – or hinder – the process of converting resources into real freedom. Conversion factors may be individual (in the example above: the disability of person A and health of person B) or social (an efficient and affordable public transportation service accessible to disabled people may equalize the freedom to move around in the town for persons A and B).

Crucially, the focus on people's real freedom to lead a valuable life cannot be reduced only to an individual issue of being able to freely pursue one's aims. It calls for an approach based on equitable social choice procedures whereby people's reasons to value are taken seriously. Thus, in the capability approach, deliberative democracy is considered both as a fundamental

means and one of the most important aims of development (Sen 1999). Democracy is central not only for its intrinsic value, but also for its constructive and instrumental roles, that is, the fact that it allows people to deliberate among priorities and values in society and to make governments accountable so that they promote these priorities and not others. Thus, democracy is appreciated for its epistemological quality; that is, its capacity to gather and elaborate information dispersed in society and to use it to formulate appropriate public policies (Sen 2009; Anderson 2003; Bonvin and Laruffa 2018a). It is precisely with regard to this twofold epistemological and political objective that public sociology has a significant contribution to make.

In order to schematize the normative vision for human development implicit in the CA, one could refer to a specific 'anthropological conception', which informs the public policy process and the role of public sociology in it (Bonvin and Laruffa 2018b). The first characteristic of this anthropological conception is that human beings are seen as the final ends of social policies: adopting the CA requires rejecting instrumental views of human beings, whereby policies treat them as means for pursuing other goals, such as economic growth. The second feature involves its inherent multidimensionality. Thus, in this anthropological understanding, human beings are not conceived as self-interested utility-maximizing entities (Sen 1977), nor as self-sufficient and isolated atoms, but as vulnerable and interdependent beings (Nussbaum 2000), who are cared for and provide care for others, and as citizens, that is, members of a larger political community whereby interdependency extends beyond the sphere of interpersonal relationships (see also Sen 1985; Giovanola 2005; Wolff and De-Shalit 2007). Hence, when promoting human development, human beings should be conceived as 'receivers', 'doers' and 'judges' (Bonvin and Laruffa 2018b). The receiver dimension includes not only the human need to receive material goods but also the need for relational support and the need to belong. Furthermore, the receiver dimension also points to vulnerability as a fundamental and inherent characteristic of human beings. The doer dimension includes the issue of participation in the labour market but goes beyond it, also comprising the aspects of care work and political participation. Crucially, concerning the labour market, the promotion of people's 'capability for work' (Bonvin 2012) should not be confused with the maximization of employment rates, as this capability implies that individuals are free to work in jobs that they value, but also to refuse non-valuable jobs – such as exploitative and alienating ones – as well as to flourish through other activities beyond employment, such as care work and civic engagement (see also Laruffa 2020).

Finally, the judge dimension refers to the fact that human beings are able to say what has value in their eyes, and that this should be taken into account when designing policies aimed at enhancing their capabilities. Indeed, human beings hold different values and worldviews, so they should be entitled to develop both their 'capacity to aspire', that is, the ability to develop their own aspirations and projects (Appadurai 2004), and their 'capability for voice', that is, the ability to express their opinions and to make them count in the course of public discussion (Bonvin and Farvaque 2006). The connection between participation, aspiration and voice (Bifulco 2013) implies going against paternalistic views of public policies that dictate what people should do and do not allow them space to express their demands. The judge dimension also involves the ability to participate in public debate, both bringing in one's own viewpoints (thereby enriching the informational basis on which political decisions are made), and having the opportunity to learn from one another and thus reflect on the nature of the 'good life', that is, one's own priorities and values in life. In this perspective, the 'judge' is crucial; in other words, the pitfalls of a paternalistic policy leaving no space for the voice of beneficiaries –

thus denying the judge dimension – cannot be compensated by generous benefits paid to the receiver.

EPISTEMOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY

Public sociology is especially relevant in connection with this third dimension. Beneficiaries of public policies are not naturally judges able to form their own preferences, voice them and make them count in the public policy process. Public sociology is aimed to support the constitution of beneficiaries as a public able to build their preferences and defend them in the public sphere. Besides, it plays a crucial role in promoting a process of mutual education between scientists and its publics. Such processes can be fruitfully inspired by CA notions such as 'positional objectivity' and 'reason to value'.

In Sen's words (1993), positional objectivity designates the fact that individual rationality is to be envisaged as a positional notion, which implies that objective knowledge is produced from a specific position, and that collective rationality and knowledge emerge from the aggregation of positional objectivities. This holds in the field of physical objects that can be observed from various positions: it is trivial to say that a person from Chile does not have the same view of the moon as a person from Germany. Both, from their positions, capture a valid part of knowledge that can legitimately be included in the objective knowledge of the physical phenomenon observed. Sen's claim is that positional objectivity also applies to social scientific knowledge. When studying a social phenomenon, such as gender inequalities or youth violence, all stakeholders detain a specific positional knowledge, which implies that the adequate knowledge of such phenomena needs to include all relevant positional objectivities in order to get closer to what could be considered an objective and full knowledge of this phenomenon. This has two crucial implications.

First, knowledge has multiple sources, it is not the prerogative of experts or specialists working in isolation from other positional objectivities. In other words, the knowledge produced in the academic ivory tower is but one positional objectivity; it provides valid knowledge, no doubt about it, but it is partial as it reflects just one part of the overall objectivity. There is thus the recognition of the relevance of a multiplicity of sources of knowledge, and one task of public sociology is to let such positional objectivities emerge and be heard in the process of creating sociological knowledge.

Second, the term 'positional objectivity' also requires moving beyond mere preferences expressed by single stakeholders: to be considered as knowledge, such preferences need to be distilled and transformed into positional objectivity. Following many authors (e.g. Nussbaum 2000), preferences cannot be assimilated to objective knowledge, as they are strongly inspired by dominant normative values, which can be unreflectively endorsed by people and result, for example, in 'expensive tastes' or 'adaptive preferences'. In the former case, people may feel despised because they do not have access to consumerist life styles, while they have not reflected on the relevance of such tastes. In the latter case, people may become resigned to poor life circumstances, since they cannot imagine how a better life could be available to them. For instance, young people whose parents have a lower socio-economic status may consider that tertiary education is not accessible to them, and lower their preferences as a consequence. In all such cases, 'positional objectivity' calls for the deconstruction of such (expensive or adaptive) preferences so that people confirm or reject them reflectively. Thus, preferences are

not to be confused with positional objectivity, but need to pass the test of public confrontation or debate, so that their legitimacy may be questioned. In the same way, scientists do not have the monopoly of valid knowledge, and they need to be confronted with other sources of knowledge. It is in this twofold meaning that the CA calls for mutual education: on the one hand, scientists have to give up their monopolist claims over the production of knowledge and include other sources of knowledge, in the direction of the 'bottom-up cosmopolitanism' described in Chapter 1 of this *Handbook*; on the other hand, all individual preferences have to be confronted within a public debate in order to let positional objectivity emerge.

The issue of capability for voice is crucial in this mutual education process. Indeed, if all actors do not enjoy equal capability for voice, that is, the real freedom to express their views and make them count, then the risk exists that some views may prevail not because they are more convincing but because they are expressed by the most powerful or the most skilful participants in the debate. This is one of the main challenges of public sociology: enhance the capability for voice of its publics while refraining from (ab)using one's position and imposing one's views on its publics. Science can be paternalistic too, in which case experiential knowledge risks being instrumentalized to confirm the researchers' views. To avoid such a bias, public sociology is called to promote people's capacity to develop their own aspirations, together with their capability for voice, so that no positional objectivity has precedence over the others. In other words, the researcher cannot postulate beforehand what the meaning of positional objectivity will be for the 'public' they engage with. The positional objectivity needs to be empirically investigated. To this purpose, public sociology is called to act as a conversion factor of a democratic construction of knowledge, integrating all positional objectivities without giving precedence to one over another.

POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE CA FOR PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY

This also has wide-ranging political implications. Sen (1980) envisages the description of social phenomena as an issue of choice. For instance, describing youth violence as a matter of bad education or as the outcome of socio-economic circumstances leads to very different combinations in terms of the positional objectivities that are integrated in (or excluded from) the elaboration of such description. Crucially, it also leads to very different outcomes in policy terms, as programmes will take a differentiated shape according to what description of youth violence is retained as valid. This illustrates the importance of questioning the scope of the 'evidence' that is used to defined so-called 'evidence-based policies' (Bonvin and Rosenstein 2009, 2020). The CA suggests including experiential knowledge into the socially relevant description of social phenomena, thus purporting an encompassing view of public sociology, where mutual education also applies to policy processes. The way that knowledge and the informational basis of policies is produced has implications not only for science, but also for the degree of politicization and democratization of public action as a whole: to put it bluntly, the more experiential knowledge is included in the scientific process creating the evidence base of public policies, the more such situated experiences will be taken seriously in the public policy process. This does not say anything about how such issues will tackled in the end, but requires that they are not discarded altogether from the policy process. Thus, capacity to aspire and capability for voice point to more democratic science and enhanced politicization of daily

life issues (Bonvin et al. 2018). In this perspective, public sociology pursues a twofold objective: democratizing the production of science and politicizing public action, considering it not as a prerogative of experts or governments (in which case their specific positional objectivities will prevail).

To take an illustration from welfare policies and how public sociology could make a difference in this field: in a capability perspective, human beings would not be conceived as 'human capital' to be activated (that is, an object of social policies, which are conceived outside them and imposed on them), but also as political beings willing to engage in democratic deliberation (Borghi 2011; Rogowski et al. 2011; De Leonardis et al. 2012; Bifulco 2017). Hence, public sociology invites beneficiaries to participate in the public debate on welfare reform, which is framed as a political matter rather than a technical one. In this context, the role of the social scientist is different from that of the policy sociologist. Indeed, while policy sociologists play the role of 'experts' who provide the scientific evidence called for by policy-makers in developing 'evidence-based policies', thus playing an instrumental role, Sen (1980) insists on the necessity of reflective knowledge. Indeed, there is not one single objective description of social reality: each description involves a choice concerning what information should be considered relevant and what should not. In the same way, social reality can be described from different 'positional objectivities' so that there may be no agreement on a single description made from a single position (Sen 1993). In this context, the role of social scientist may be less that of acting as an 'expert' producing instrumental knowledge commissioned by policy-makers, than that of promoting the 'capability for voice' and positional objectivity of those who are often excluded from public discussion, especially the most disadvantaged, as 'socio-economic inequalities often translate into participative inequalities' (Bonvin 2014: 240). Thus, the epistemological goal is to include the positional objectivities of these people into the public debate, while the political goal is to increase their influence in the choice of the 'informational basis' of public action. Sen's conception indeed requires to democratize the production of knowledge itself (Borghi 2018), stressing the fact that people get knowledge from their experiences and daily lives, and that this knowledge should be taken seriously (Salais 2009). To use Borghi's words, there should a human right to research, that is, a right for all humans, including the most vulnerable, to take part in the production of knowledge and inform the policy process. From this perspective, social scientists are called to improve the 'democratic character of collective decision-making via pushing the positional objectivity of the voiceless to the forefront' (Bonvin 2014: 240). They do not act primarily as experts, but rather as conversion factors of democracy. The attempt is precisely that of going beyond a technocratic approach, putting democratic deliberation among concerned actors at the core of the process of creating knowledge and formulating welfare reform proposals. The trouble with both professional and policy sociology is that they claim to impose a specific positional objectivity (their own, or the one of policy-makers commissioning the research) as the objective truth about the beneficiaries' situation and what should be done about it.

As mentioned above, one of the main challenges faced by the public sociologist is to let people build their own aspirations and their voice, and not to impose the researcher's views, or rather the researcher's expectations about what the beneficiaries' views and aspirations should be. To be sure, such objectives are extremely hard to implement in concrete empirical research, as will be illustrated in the next section.

THE RE-INVEST PROJECT: AN ATTEMPT TO OPERATIONALIZE PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY IN A CAPABILITY PERSPECTIVE

This section exemplifies the attempt to operationalize public sociology in a capability perspective, drawing from our experience in the European Union-funded research project Re-InVEST, which aimed at rethinking the social investment strategy, grounding it in the CA and the human rights framework (see Bonvin and Laruffa 2018b, 2019, 2021; Laruffa 2019). The project involved 12 countries and included not only academics but also civil society actors, such as trade unions and non-governmental organizations. Moreover, through a participatory methodology (Hearne and Murphy 2019), the project also involved marginalized social groups, such as unemployed and homeless people, vulnerable young people, immigrants and people with mental health issues.

Elements of Context

In the specific case of Switzerland, we conducted our investigation on a programme targeted at young school drop-outs: Scène Active, which is funded mostly by a local philanthropic association. Funding was quite generous and not conditional upon reaching predetermined quantitative targets. There was a lot of margin of manoeuvre to design and implement the programme. The director of the programme was very attracted by the capability approach and designed the programme with this notion in mind, conceiving Scène Active as a way to restore self-confidence and self-esteem, and to prepare for apprenticeship and professional integration, but also, and even more importantly, as a tool to educate for citizenship. In his words, Scène Active aims to form not only economic actors, but also and above all democratic citizens. The programme is very much based on the full recognition of beneficiaries' capability for voice, that is, their ability to express their wishes and aspirations and make them count within the programme (and possibly beyond it). Young people's voice, then, is not only encouraged but also used as a basis to define the actual content of the programme, which aims at creating a play and performing it in front of a 400-person audience in a renowned theatre in Geneva. The main originality is that the play is fully co-written and co-constructed together with the beneficiaries, from the script and the music to the costumes, decor, choreography, and so on. Thus, it mobilizes participative methodologies throughout in order to make vulnerable young people the co-authors of the main output of the programme, that is, the play. In this context, art is also used to prepare for apprenticeship and/or professional integration on the one hand; educating for full citizenship and participation in the economy, the society and the polity on the other hand. The programme lasts nine months all in all, public representations take place after seven and a half months, the last 45 to 50 days being devoted to prepare the 'after Scène-Active'.

Despite the ambition of the programme, selection remains very limited: applicants have to pass an interview with the director, after which they are enrolled. At the time of our study, all applicants were enrolled, except for one who proved not to have a real appetite for artistic activities and finally decided not to apply. Thus, nobody was excluded by the people in charge of implementing the programme. In the same way, participants were not excluded from the programme, whatever their behaviour was. For instance, long-term absenteeism, or repeated delays or refusal to participate in the making of the play, were not considered as motives for exclusion: in such circumstances, young people were allowed to remain in the programme,

progress and contribute to it at their own pace. Those who chose to leave the programme did so on their own. The programme included professional experts of artistic activities and social workers (5–6 full-time equivalent for 40–45 young people). Our research team was included as a part of the programme; that is, our activity was presented as part of the 'education for citizenship' dimension of the programme. Our inclusion into the programme was discussed and accepted by the whole team of artistic and social work professionals.

All in all, this can be considered an ideal setting for implementing public sociology in a capability perspective, as this context already insists on the beneficiaries' ability to build their preferences and aspirations, voice them and make them count.

Public Sociologists at Work

We worked with a group of 11 young participants in Scène Active, drawing methodologically from 'participatory action research' and from Touraine's 'sociological intervention'. Participatory action research views participants as co-researchers who have specific knowledge about their situation. It aims at involving participants from the beginning of the research process (for example, the formulation of the research questions) and at empowering them, rather than treating them simply as sources of information. Along this line, the research resulted in a concrete action in which participants were the protagonists (Hearne and Murphy 2019).

In a similar vein, the aim of sociological intervention is to support the research participants in their struggle to become actors, where an actor is 'a participant in the production of society' (Touraine 2000: 906). The role of the public sociologist is that of encouraging and helping the research participants to increase their awareness and capacity for action. Sociological intervention is based on three research phases: preparation, confrontation and finalization. The aim of the preparation phase is threefold. First, research participants are invited to reflect on their personal experiences and develop collective claims. Second, the sociologist helps them to refine their arguments, for instance providing empirical evidence supporting their claims or challenging them with scientific findings going in a different direction. Third, research participants are invited to identify an interlocutor with whom to confront their thoughts and opinions. The purpose of the confrontation is that 'social actors do not construct narratives in relation to researchers, but in relation to other social actors' (McDonald 2002: 258). In fact, the strength of sociological intervention derives 'from the way it locates narrative within relationships': in contrast to conventional models of narratives 'focused on telling stories to sociologists', in the sociological intervention 'actors become engaged in a struggle to give an account of themselves to other social actors' (ibid.). In this process, research participants are not simply telling their stories and personal experiences, but they are struggling for their recognition and their subjectivity. Hence, public sociology aims at creating a public able to voice its concerns and defend them in the public sphere. As such, sociological intervention can be seen as a democratic practice, quite close to Dewey's conception of a 'social inquiry' (Dewey 1927), whereby not only common knowledge is produced through a process of mutual education involving researchers, fieldwork actors and the beneficiaries, but also actors or publics are created who are able to use this knowledge in a public setting. The final phase (finalization) constitutes mainly an arena of feedback to take stock of the whole process. In our case, it also resulted in the decision to organize a follow-up public event one year later.

The 11 young participants in our research were selected on a voluntary basis, that is, they declared their willingness to attend our meetings. In total we had eight collective meetings with the whole group of young people, 11 individual discussions, as well as three 'confrontation sessions'. Most young people actively participated in all group discussions (nine out of 11); six of them actively engaged in the participation in the confrontation sessions; and four participated in the follow-up event one year after the programme.

In order to stimulate reflection on their individual experience and a collective debate on common subjects, visual and interactive methods were used. Young people were asked to talk about their personal experience, and made their own decisions on the subjects they wanted to discuss. We brought various pieces of information on these topics – for example, statistical data, summary of academic papers, newspaper articles or headlines – always paying attention that such information could not only converge with the youngsters' views but also express conflicting viewpoints in a provocative way so as to stimulate the discussion. The aim was to challenge young people and push them to consolidate their argumentation and enhance their own understanding of their common situation. Through such tools and methodologies, our aim was to allow young people o build their own understanding of their situation and form their own aspirations. Throughout, the challenge was to refrain from interfering in the process and to remain in the role of facilitators.

In the confrontation phase, youngsters had the opportunity to confront their views with other relevant actors. The interlocutors were selected on the basis of an initial discussion between the youngsters and the research team. For the first confrontation, two high-level civil servants were invited, one responsible for the local public service for professional guidance, and the other for the information office for young people on social assistance. The second confrontation was organized as a public event at the University of Geneva. It consisted of a public debate between six young people representing the group, the minister of public education in the Canton of Geneva, and a high-level civil servant of the local employment service. The group of young people presented their experiences at school and their difficulties in finding a job or an apprenticeship; they also formulated some concrete proposals and submitted them to the politician and the high-level civil servant. The proposals developed by the young people included, among others, the reform of the school system towards a more inclusive and difference-sensitive school; the establishment of a guaranteed apprenticeship for all young people in search of training; the reduction of the importance attached to school grades both within and after the school; and the improvement of the supporting services in terms of psychological support and of taking care of extra-school problems such as family or migration-related legal issues. Their interlocutors were impressed by the maturity of their proposals and their ability to sustain a public confrontation of ideas.

Another public event took place one year later as part of a conference on vulnerable young people organized by the research team. In this case, four young people participated, bringing their own elements for evaluating the project Scène Active and its consequences for young people's capabilities. The added value of their participation was significant. An audience of 200 persons, including high-level academics from Switzerland, France and Italy, civil servants working in the field of young people's inclusion, and representatives of civil society organizations attended the event. The two public confrontations also constituted the 'action' in our participatory action research design.

The Added Value of Public Sociology in the Re-InVEST Project

The group discussions with the young people allowed bringing about a process of mutual education whereby academic knowledge was deeply enriched. For instance, young people insisted forcefully on the fact that their rights to equal respect were not recognized at school. They gave many illustrations of how marginalization and discrimination took place at school and impeded the realization of equal opportunities. They did not receive the support they needed, and were instead pressured, even more than their better-performing peers, to give an early orientation to their professional career. This often resulted in drop-out situations. A specific point of attention was the use of grades for classifying pupils, which made them feel 'judged and categorized'. Many concrete examples were given, showing how once you are classified as a bad student, it is very difficult to improve your position later on. Such exchanges with young people allowed a deeper understanding of why and how a school system that is inspired by the ideal of equalizing opportunities and chances, ends up in reinforcing discriminatory mechanisms and even excluding those whose opportunities were to be equalized in the first place.

At first, young people emphasized their own responsibility in the process and tended to exacerbate it via self-blaming assessments. Discussion and confrontation with their peers, as well as with findings from academic research, progressively resulted in a more balanced perception, where the focus on their own responsibility did not disappear (many indeed indicated that, had they known the consequences of leaving school or of having bad grades, they would have worked more seriously and in a disciplined manner), but went hand in hand with the denunciation of systemic inequalities. Their discourse combined a strong critique of the system and the dominant values of competition and individual merit, together with a strong desire to be part of such a system, via finding a job or an apprenticeship. Such a tension between a sharp critique of the system and the will to be part of it raised a real challenge for academic researchers, who were called to make sense of such an apparent contradiction, both for young people and for themselves, rather than consider it as an example of 'false consciousness' or adaptive preference. Solving this puzzle, where experiential knowledge pushes academic knowledge to its limits, allows a process of mutual education to take place, whereby academic knowledge takes serious account of experiential knowledge, rather than strives to impose and educate young beneficiaries in the direction of the already available knowledge or the knowledge that researchers consider as relevant. Thus a process of mutual education took place, where both academic and experiential knowledge were considerably enriched.

The issue of employability also illustrates how such a confrontation between experiential and academic knowledge is fruitful. Young people felt pressured to become 'employable'. However, they did not want simply to become employable, they also wanted to remain autonomous, faithful to their values, interests and goals. In line with these apparently contradictory aspirations, many of the participants stressed that they wanted a job, which allowed a certain degree of self-realization. From this viewpoint, an issue hotly debated during our empirical investigation was whether the school should aim at adapting people to the 'system' (especially the labour market) or at making them capable to participate in the transformation of the 'system' itself. We, as sociologists, envisaged both solutions as mutually exclusive, while most members of the group were successively endorsing both conceptions: at times emphasizing the necessity for the school to educate competent workers able to find their place in the labour market; at other times insisting that education should train democratic citizens to take part in debates about how society, the economy and the polity should be shaped. Thus, their

experiential knowledge brought additional positional objectivity to our academic knowledge, showing how the education system combines both adaptive and transformative functions, rather than chooses between them. Many other examples of such mutual education processes between young beneficiaries and researchers could be mentioned on issues such as inclusiveness and pedagogical modalities.

Discussions also allowed a notable change in the way youngsters considered their capacity for agency: during the initial meetings, the group was characterized by political apathy, distrust towards institutions, and a kind of resigned pessimism about the possibility of any positive change or progress in their personal as well collective situation; at later stages, the youngsters were able to envisage concrete transformative proposals and identify where there was space for developing such agency. This more political component of public sociology was implemented throughout the process and culminated in the confrontation sessions. During these, the educational system was criticized for not being inclusive enough, and for not taking into account pupils' extra-school problems, for example, the family or legal issues connected with residence permits. Special schools for disabled pupils were strongly criticized, and the young people intensely argued for an inclusive school with special and individual support whenever necessary. In doing this, they proved able to use the academic knowledge and the collective discussions implemented during the preparation phase to support their arguments. It has to be emphasized that their perception of their own situations evolved throughout the process, thus showing how an enhanced understanding contributes in turn to the enhancement of their capacity to aspire and their capability for voice. This made them gain self-confidence when it came to developing their own arguments and defending them in front of public authorities.

During these confrontations, youngsters also tackled the issue of the long-term enhancement of their capabilities. They contrasted their negative school experiences to the positive one of Scène Active, where they could have different experiences, going at their own 'rhythm'. In Scène Active, they felt that they were respected, recognized and welcomed as they are; they were listened to and given a voice. Also, with regard to the problem of classification, Scène Active was perceived as different. For instance, while they were divided into four different ateliers, they were free to choose what they wanted to do (that is, which one of the proposed ateliers they wanted to attend). Moreover, this classification involved no hierarchy or judgement: it was not about being better, but rather about differences in personal goals, competencies and interests. Hence, Scène Active was perceived as a kind of 'laboratory of aspirations' aimed at strengthening young people's 'capacity to aspire'. The issue remained: what will happen after the end of the programme? This challenge also holds for public sociology and its ability to create long-term publics.

Difficulties and Challenges Faced in Implementing Public Sociology

Obviously, implementing public sociology raises a lot of difficulties and challenges, and the experience of the Re-InVEST project illustrates these. On the epistemological side, two such difficulties are worth mentioning. First, there may have been a selection bias in our research, meaning that only certain young people remained in our project from the beginning to the end. It is indeed possible that only the most prepared for this kind of reflective exercise, and presumably not the most vulnerable among the programme participants, persevered until the end. If such was the case, we would have succeeded in creating a certain type of public, but not one that would properly reflect the positional objectivities of the most vulnerable youth.

Second, the whole exercise called for non-interference from the researchers, as the enhancement of the youngsters' capacity to aspire and capability for voice needed to avoid all forms of paternalism. Our purpose was not to educate them in the sense of teaching them the 'right' way to think or to behave, but to help them build their own preferences and aspirations, also by confronting and challenging these aspirations with contradictory arguments in order to prepare them for contradictory public debates. A constant concern of ours was not to intrude within the process of forming their own aspirations (that is, to avoid any form of paternalistic interventions, where adult researchers are tempted to impose their own way of thinking), but rather to support this process. At the same time, our purpose was not to be too 'respectful' of their positions: challenging them in order to prepare them to defend themselves when confronted with opposite viewpoints (we, as researchers, were not the only ones to challenge young people's viewpoints, as they were themselves keen to challenge one another, which created an atmosphere of public debate and collective deliberation). We were very careful about this, but the frontier between confronting someone's positions and trying to convince them is quite thin and it may be the case that we sometimes crossed it. To avoid this, we often presented academic views that were not ours in order to confront young people with all forms of academic knowledge; at other times, we invited people holding non-academic positions and, at times, different views from those held by the young people. Often, our meetings were transformed into small deliberative arenas, where arguments were confronted and preferences were shaped and reshaped all along. This was not easy to implement, however, as our meetings were rather irregular (once a month or so) and continuity always had to be rebuilt at the beginning of every meeting. That may be the reason why we lost some youngsters on the way. This also illustrates how such a conception of public sociology is demanding and time-consuming, and difficult to implement on a large scale.

Difficulties may also emerge with regard to the political component of public sociology. In this respect, the most important challenge relates to how to maintain the momentum and keep it alive beyond the research project. We organized a conference one year later, where we asked our team of young people to be participants and presenters, side by side with experienced academics and policy-makers. All accepted and, even one year after, were still able to mobilize their acquired citizenship competencies. This tends to suggest that our work as public sociologists had a long-lasting impact, at least in terms of increased self-confidence and self-esteem. This also suggests that vulnerability is rooted in a lack of recognition and respect, and that enhancing capacity to aspire and giving genuine capability for voice to vulnerable people may well be a prerequisite for lifting them out of their vulnerable situation and into fuller citizenship. Still, the creation of long-term publics remains an ongoing challenge for public sociologists.

In this experiment, we as public sociologists have strived to play less the role of 'experts' that we all too often endorse, and to act instead as 'conversion factors of democracy', promoting the voices of marginalized groups in the public sphere. In so doing, we did not contest the relevance of professional sociology (actually, knowledge produced by professional sociologists was used during the group discussions); rather, we emphasized the necessity to also take due account of experiential knowledge and its positional objectivity when it comes to describing and understanding a social phenomenon. Theoretical understandings of youth vulnerability do not emerge only from academic work completed according to established professional standards and methodologies, be they quantitative or qualitative, but also need to include knowledge derived from the exchange with the voices and the 'positional objectivities' of

vulnerable people and marginalized groups as well civil society actors. By implementing their rights to produce knowledge (or their human right to research, to use Borghi's expression), beneficiaries gain increased recognition and respect, which in turn contributes to enhance their capability for voice and their ability to act as democratic citizens in the public sphere. Thus, the participatory work done in Re-InVEST sheds light on important aspects that a professional or policy approach to sociology tends to overlook.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has focused on the potential of a CA-inspired conception of public sociology, in terms of both enhancing the quality of knowledge and creating publics able to build their own aspirations, as well as to voice and defend them in public spheres. In a first step, it has shown the relevance for sociological knowledge of recognizing the plurality of available positional objectivities and the ensuing necessity to include all such sources of knowledge, be they experiential or scientific, in the understanding of social phenomena. This calls for moving beyond the view of academic and scientific experts as the exclusive holders of valid objective knowledge, thus departing from the Luhmannian self-referential view of science where scientific legitimacy has to be gained through peer-review procedures. In so doing, CA-inspired public sociology does not abandon scientific rigour and methodological requirements, but it strives to apply them in a way that allows taking into account all relevant positional objectivities, rather than emphasizing only the positional objectivity of professional sociologists at the expense of all other sources of knowledge. We have also underlined how such a view of the knowledge process has significant political implications. In a second step, we have highlighted, through the example of a European research project aimed at rethinking from a capability perspective the notion of social investment, how researchers and social policy scholars are called to become 'conversion factors of democracy' in the process of developing knowledge and creating publics. This means that rather than acting as experts elaborating in isolation the relevant scientific evidence, they need to engage in dialogue with the publics targeted by social policy, co-constructing with them the definition of the problems they face and the solutions to be envisioned. The main assumption is that scientific expertise alone is not enough to fully understand social phenomena; experiential knowledge needs to be included, and such extended knowledge, in turn, calls for a democratization and politicization of what should be done in policy terms. Thus, scholars need to engage in processes of mutual education in which the knowledge of the citizens targeted by public policy and derived by their life experience is recognized as equally valuable. We have also identified the difficulties and challenges raised by such a conception of public sociology.

In this context, the individuals forming the 'public' are conceived not only as objects in the scientific process, but also as subjects with their own positional objectivities that need to be properly included. In this chapter, we focused on a micro-level example, but this also holds for meso- and macro-level issues discussed in national and international arenas. We have, for instance, shown elsewhere (Bonvin and Laruffa 2018b, 2021) how such a CA-inspired notion of public sociology calls for revising the conception of social investment in the direction of a less technocratic and more participative view, where the issue is not only to modernize social protection and adapt it to the necessities of the knowledge economy, but also to include all relevant positional objectivities in the democratic construction of social problems and collec-

tive solutions to tackle them. In this respect, it is essential to emphasize that people's voice – especially that of vulnerable groups – does not simply exist out there: it needs to be created, and public sociology has a crucial role to play in this respect. Promoting the voice of marginalized groups is a way of nourishing their capacity to aspire, that is, their capability to imagine alternative worlds. And it is precisely at this point where we see a crucial role for the public sociologist, who can work as a conversion factor of this capability. Thus, if a CA-inspired public sociology can be considered at all as militant, it is not because it defends a partisan view about the content or substance of social policies, but because it seeks to promote the effective inclusion of all stakeholders in knowledge production and democratic decision-making in the public policy process.

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5. Sociology and quantification: economics of convention as an approach to link quantification and public sociology

Rainer Diaz-Bone

> The fact of quantifying a phenomenon in a given way is already a social choice … no study of the issue of the quality of statistics can avoid explicit analysis of the relative tension between two points of view, one realist, metrological in nature, and the other convention-based and focused on the social, negotiated and practically useful aspect of all measured data … Statistics both *reflect* and *institute* reality.
> (Desrosières 2000, 178, 185, 186)

> Simply put, our economic and social data system should be democratised in terms of measurement, collection and interpretation … People and institutions at all levels should collect and use the massive amounts of new data that are now available in ways that were not imagined a century ago.
> (Lane 2020a, 42)

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, numbers have become the most influential and ubiquitous cognitive format in Western societies. Societal trends such as economization, scientification, and computerization of almost all aspects of everyday life and social fields have contributed to the increasing volume of numerical data. In many scientific disciplines, such as natural sciences, in engineering, and also in big parts of the social sciences, quantification is a foundational and everyday practice, because quantification is essentially linked to measurement and data production.

But quantification is also employed for purposes of governance and control in society. Quantification is used to evaluate and rank events, performances, and also human beings, groups, and other social entities. In public spheres such as mass media and the Internet, the demand for numerical information is increasing. Contemporary societies represent social issues, public opinion, and also society itself by numbers and charts. Therefore, statistics has developed as a science to analyze, govern, and represent society. But statistics is more and more engaged as a dispositive (*dispositif*) to critically approach social problems by public actors, to exercise social critique publicly, and to empower social movements. Quantification itself is also contested among the public: citizens deny the accuracy of data or resist policies based on statistics (Desrosières 2015).

The sociology of quantification is an emerging field, in which different disciplines are engaged to study the quantification processes in different social realms, their effects and usages, but also the plurality of underlying principles and logics of quantification.[1] Of highest relevance for the sociology of quantification is the relationship between science, quantification, and society. Science can be a driving force for quantification processes in the public, for their legitimization, but also for their critique. Also, more and more citizens apply critique against the negative effects of quantification, when they have to suffer from politicians'

decisions. Alain Desrosières (2015) has coined the notion of "retroaction" for this opposition against quantification and its negative effects. The French approach of "economics of convention" (EC) has a long tradition in both the analysis of quantification and the analysis of public disputes, applying the notion of conventions as principles which actors refer to for critique and justification. In sociology, the work of Michael Burawoy can be applied as another approach to frame the societal impact of quantification, but also its justification and critique. Both approaches therefore share similar positions.

The next section presents Burawoy's model. As Burawoy did, EC studied the interrelation of science and society, but – differently to Burawoy – has strongly focused on quantification, and can be regarded as one of the most influential approaches in the field of sociology of quantification. Here, the contribution of Alain Desrosières has been seminal for EC. The institutional approach of EC and its origins in the analysis of statistics are briefly introduced. EC's main contributions to the sociology of quantification are presented, and more recent developments reviewed, where the recognition of a plurality of data worlds and the critique of neoliberalism is of most importance.

SOCIOLOGICAL WORLDS

Quantification is a fundamental process in modern societies. Numbers as a collective cognitive format and medium for coordination (Porter 1995) enhance the capacities for actors, groups, organizations, whole societies, and international organizations to conceive, evaluate, represent, and act on social issues. Therefore, quantification cannot be avoided or dispensed with. Instead it has to be considered as an important social phenomenon and, evidently, it has to be conceived as a core mechanism to be analyzed by public sociology. As Porter (1995) has argued, objectivity can be understood as the public form of knowledge, and the perceived objectivity of numbers in most public situations has contributed to the impact of numbers on the public:

> Quantification and objectivity are consequently strictly associated, since historically objectivity emerged in our societies as a fundamental category in the construction and organization of modern politics, to qualify a knowledge produced according to conventions (rules and procedures) supposed to guarantee impersonality, impartiality and fairness. Among them, conventions of quantification have progressively become highly valued. In fact, quantification permits us not only radically to limit the distortions produced when knowledge is transferred across time and space, but it also makes reasoning "more uniform" (Porter 1995, 5) through the recourse to formalization (especially mathematical formalization). This aspect shows a link existing between the quest for objectivity and the quest for transparency in public decision-making procedures. Following this line of reasoning, in order to understand the increasing centrality in our societies of quantified knowledge, it is necessary, first of all, to clarify the link existing between objectivity and public action in the public space. A consequence that follows, once objectivity is analysed as the result of a process of "investment in forms" (Thévenot 1984, 1986) supporting public action, is that quantified knowledge cannot be considered as normatively neutral. (Centemeri 2012, 110)

Public sociology in general, and sociology of quantification in particular, address these questions as the impact of quantification on the public, public action, the conventional foundations of quantification, and the link between quantification and the common good. It has been the seminal work of Michael Burawoy (2005), who presented an integrating theoretical model of

Table 5.1 Division of sociological labor

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

Source: Burawoy (2005, 11).

how to model four different sociological types of knowledge, that constitute four types of sociology or sociological worlds. These worlds differ in how they understand the division of labor, sociology's standing, and its way of interrelation with the wider context of society. Burawoy introduced an important cleavage between instrumental knowledge and reflexive knowledge:

> I call the one type of knowledge instrumental knowledge, whether it be the puzzle solving of professional sociology or the problem solving of policy sociology. I call the other reflexive knowledge because it is concerned with a dialogue about ends, whether the dialogue takes place within the academic community about the foundations of its research programs or between academics and various publics about the direction of society. Reflexive knowledge interrogates the value premises of society as well as our profession. (Burawoy 2005, 11)

Although Burawoy did not theorize the importance of norms and values to instrumental knowledge, it is also necessary to highlight the pervasive existence of epistemic values and methodological norms (Putnam 2002) in "positivist" science, and in what Burawoy calls instrumental knowledge. Instrumental knowledge would be misunderstood if it was regarded as free of values and norms. Burawoy identified two sociological worlds in regard to the scientific labor of sociologists working on instrumental knowledge, which differ in their orientation. The "professional world" is oriented towards the academic audience, while the "policy world" is oriented towards an extra-academic audience. Two other worlds refuse to contribute mainly to instrumental knowledge: the "critical world" and the "public world" in sociology claim to represent a reflexive position in knowledge production. Burawoy does not explicitly use the notion of "world" for all four different forms of sociology (Table 5.1): he only uses the notion of "policy world." To apply this notion to all four types aims to clarify the link to the United States pragmatist tradition in sociology, where Howard S. Becker has used the notion of "world," for example, in his study "Art worlds" (Becker 1982), and opens up the comparison to EC, which also uses the notion of "world."

These worlds can be considered as ideal types (in the sense of Max Weber), because they can be combined or changed into another in social reality. Empirically, many sociologists and many sociological paradigms combine these ideal types in their professional self-positioning. Burawoy's sociological perspective is close to classical pragmatist pluralism (such as that of William James), because he offers a view on sociology as a discipline entailing a pluralist epistemology, and a plurality of opinions on how to relate sociology and scientific practices to norms and values, as well as how to relate to the public. All of these four worlds entail an explicit or implicit position on how to consider sociologists' engagement as relevant or adequate to public engagements and public issues. Therefore, every world will offer discursive resources to justify the value of science and the way in which sociologists engage in society. Here the affinity of public sociology to EC comes to the fore.

ECONOMICS OF CONVENTION

EC has been developed in France since the 1980s. One of its foundational moments was the analysis of statistics, socio-economic categories, and socio-economic institutions. This approach can be characterized as a complex pragmatist institutionalism.[2] In EC, conventions are not conceived of as traditions or customs. Instead, conventions are "logics of coordination," of evaluation and of valuation, that actors rely on in situations when they have to pursue a common goal. Based on these conventions, the worth, value, correctness, and legitimacy of objects, persons, or events is ascribed and collectively recognized. In most situations, conventions will be unnoticed as deeper structures, patterning coordination latently. Although situations are dominated by only one or a few established conventions, in any situation there is a plurality of conventions virtually present as cultural resources. Actors can refer to them as possible alternative frames to exercise critique in situations. As in the approach of Burawoy, EC assumes the existence of a plurality of conventions. Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot (2006) have identified a set of culturally established conventions (at least in Western societies), which actors can refer to in cases where they are forced to exert public critique or justification. In these cases, disputes and discussions arise and actors finally have to make their reliance on conventions explicit. Therefore, conventions are also named as orders of justification, and conventions can be seen as the blueprints that structure "worlds" as ways of coordination, evaluation, and valuation.

Scholars in the field of EC have identified many conventions, but there is agreement about eight (quality) conventions, which are established in (Western) societies and serve as institutional logics. Boltanski and Thévenot (2006) presented the domestic convention, the market convention, the industrial convention, the convention of inspiration, the civic convention, and the convention of opinion. Lamont and Thévenot (2000) identified and analyzed the green convention. Boltanski and Chiapello (2005) worked on the network convention. Table 5.2 presents a selection of important conventions.

Differently to Burawoy, Boltanski and Thévenot (1999, 2006) present their sociological work not as a contribution to critical sociology as an exercise of sociologists, but as a contribution to the study of "ordinary" actors' competences, that is, actors' critical capacities to mobilize and refer to conventions in situations. Critical competencies are grasped as part of pragmatists' concept of actors. One consequence is that public issues and their critique have to be evaluated not only from the standpoint of sociologists. Disputes, tensions, critiques are already ubiquitous in society; sociologists have no privileged position in this regard. Instead, seen from EC, public sociology has to start from empirical situations in which actors exert critique or justification, and then apply social analysis and engage public sociology as a way that sociologists can participate in social disputes.

Laurent Thévenot and François Eymard-Duvernay have introduced the notion of "investment in forms" (Thévenot 1983, 1984). Actors have to implement cognitive formats which correspond to conventions and enable actors' coordination. Quantification – that is, the numerical cognitive format – is the medium of the industrial world and the market world. Empirical situations in social fields are mainly governed by compromises of different conventions; here the industrial convention is one of the most influential conventions in contemporary societies, and therefore it is involved in many situations. From a pragmatist point of view, practices such as planning, standardizing, predicting, comparing, ranking, or controlling rely on numbers; that is, they depend upon and incite strategies of quantification. The market convention is another

Table 5.2 Comparison of quality conventions

	Industrial	Market	Opinion	Inspiration	Civic	Network
Mode of evaluation	Productivity, efficiency	Price	Renown	Grace, creativeness, non-conformity	Collective interest	Successful project outcome
Cognitive format of relevant information	Numerical measures, certificates	Monetary	Semiotic	Emotional	Formal, official	Oral, events, presentations
Basic relation	Functional link	Exchange	Recognition	Passion	Solidarity	Project-related coordination
Product quality	Produced for mass consumption, scientifically controlled	Unstable, depending on demand	Prestigious	Innovative and unique	Produced while respecting claims and rights of third parties	Depends on individuals' engagement
Human qualification	Professional competency, expertise	Desire, purchase	Celebrity	Ingenuity	Equality	Capacities, relevant to project

Sources: Based on Diaz-Bone (2017a, 2017b, 2018).

driving force for quantification, because it expresses worth and value in terms of money units. However, coordination which pursues a common good in terms of the civic convention or the green convention tends to be combined with the industrial convention, to engage numerical standards (Thévenot 2009; Busch 2011) as dispositives for the governance of situations.

EC'S PERSPECTIVE ON QUANTIFICATION

It was Alain Desrosières who laid the groundwork to EC's analysis of the relation between state and quantification. Quantification in social sciences and the realm of politics cannot be conceived of as a measurement of a foregoing reality. Instead, quantification has to be conceived of as the generation of a social representation which has its own effects and impact on governance and collective action (Desrosières 2008a, 2008b, 2014). Quantification, seen this way, is not restricted to separate scientific, technical, or administrative procedures. It is to be conceived as a foundational practice, linking state, economy, and society. Social institutions such as state organizations, economic and social institutions, should be interpreted as forms of coordination and valorization which rely on numbers and categories as cognitive forms. The numbers and categories are generated in embedded societal coordination, which contribute to the co-construction of societal institutions and, vice versa, are co-constructed in this societal embeddedness. Governing and mobilizing collective action therefore cannot be restricted to the design and legitimation of institutions, but has to engage in quantification. It is statistics (as the result of quantification and categorization), which serves as an interface between different societal realms and the state. From a convention theorist standpoint, one can therefore speak of a political economy of quantification.

Table 5.3 The state, the market, and statistics

	Conceptualization of society and of the economy	Mode of action	Forms of statistics
Engineer state Production and people (since the 17th century)	Hierarchically structured institution, rationally organized	Optimization under constraint, reduction of costs, planning, technocracy	Demography, production in physical quantity, input–output table, material balance
Liberal state Trade and prices (since the 18th century)	Physiocracy, an extensive market, free competition	Fight against corporatism, free-trade philosophy, anti-trust law	Statistics promoting market transparency
Welfare state Waged work and its protection (since the end of 19th century)	The labor market has to be protected	Laws on working hours, accidents, unemployment, compulsory social insurance systems	Labor statistics, surveys of working households' budgets, consumer price indexes
Keynesian state Global demand and its components (since the 1940s)	The market cannot function on its own and must be regulated at a global level	Managing the occasional gap between global supply and demand through state policies	National accounting, economic budgets
Neoliberal state Polycentrism, incentives, benchmarking (since the 1990s)	An extensive market, free and undistorted competition	Moving from rights to incentives, turning administrations into agencies	Construction and use of indicators to evaluate and classify performance, benchmarking

Source: Based on Desrosières (2011b, 45).

Desrosières related this process of the development of statistics and measurements to the process of state formation itself, which he called "adunation" (Desrosières 1998, 31). To bring modern states into existence it is not only necessary to have the unification, centralization, and enforcement of law; states also have to implement central banks which provide national currencies, and national statistical institutes for national accounting and the collection of data for different governmental and public purposes. And also – more fundamentally –institutions for the unification of the measurement conventions have to be established, which are the basis of metrics such as units of length, weight, and time (Desrosières 1998). As a consequence, metrology developed as a state-founding scientific discipline in many countries, and statist metrological institutions were authorized to develop nationwide standards and to cooperate in the harmonization of international standards. All these state-run institutions build up the infrastructure for numerical representations in state-related realms such as the economy, politics, and society. Governance is to be conceived not only as governance by law, but also as governance by numbers and standards (Busch 2011; Rottenburg et al. 2015; Thévenot 2009, 2015, 2019; Bartl et al. 2019; Cheyns and Thévenot 2019). To implement this, state power has to control the conventions which underly the generation of numbers and standards.

Alain Desrosières has worked on the historical contingencies of the link between social institutions, and modes of state-run and collective civic actions and quantification. Different conceptions of society and how to govern it are linked to different demands and needs of quantification. Table 5.3 compares different socio-economic "epochs" and constellations of state conceptions, economic institutions, and statistics.

For Desrosières the starting point for quantification is a convention. To quantify is to invent a convention, and then to measure (Desrosières 2008a, 10; see also Centemeri 2012;

Jany-Catrice 2020). This perspective includes metric measurement and was also (and earlier) applied to classifications and categories by Desrosières and Thévenot (1979). (The notion of quantification can also be applied to the procedure of inventing categories and classification, because categories and "classes" are coded, and frequencies open the way to statistical representation, such as tables, and the statistical modeling of categorical data.)

Measurements are not mere representations of the empirical world, but the result of collective investments and agreements on how to generate numbers. The figures do not represent a foregoing reality (which would be the positivist request), and do not entail complete statistical information. To interpret data therefore requires knowledge of the involved measurement conventions, methods, and procedures:

> As Alain Desrosières has shown, quantification is a social process of knowledge production. On the one hand, it requires an immense amount of historically and socially rooted work, whose methods and products differ between different countries. On the other hand, to understand the produced figures, they should be accompanied by an explanation of how they were produced. Without this, the comparison is misleading. (Salais 2013, 351, translated by RDB)

Any critique of the impact of quantification (and categorization), which starts by "given" numbers (and given categories) to study its power effects, loses the possibility to achieve full understanding of the meaning of data which is produced in the convention-based measurement processes. Instead, to "open up the black box" of quantification and categorization requires the examination of: (1) the entangled measurement conventions; (2) the involved practices of different actors, starting from the definition of categories, measurement practices, and the interpretation of data; and (3) the link between the resulting quantification, public action, and the common good (Centemeri 2012; Diaz-Bone 2017b, 2019a). Alain Desrosières and Laurent Thévenot have invented the concept of the statistical chain, to model the different steps and involved actors in the chain of the generation of data. In their analysis of the production of official data of the French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE), Desrosières and Thévenot (1979, 2002) included the professionals who were in charge of the development of measurement instruments (such as questionnaires and the wording of questions); the representatives of social groups and scientists, engaged in the definition and establishment of social categories; the staff employed to take measurements (that is, performing the interviews with different kinds of interviewees). In their contributions, Desrosières and Thévenot demonstrate how different practices of actors in different situations (along the statistical chain) can undermine a coherent and adequate measurement. The integrity of measurement depends on the consequent and coherent application of practices and conventions all along the statistical chain.

Building on these insights, Desrosières (2009) has argued that different actors and social groups demand "realist" information, for example about the unemployment rate. But for statisticians and employees in national statistical institutions it is evident that this statistical information is based on definitions, measurement procedures, and institutional routines, which are convention-based. From the perspective of EC, quantification therefore is both conventional and real; the generation of data is impossible without conventions as foundations, but data has to serve in real situations as an informational basis (Salais 2008, 2016), and actors have to rely on the "real" character of quantified objects (Desrosières 2009; Centemeri 2012) to achieve collective evaluations and decisions, and to pursue a common good – statistics becomes a social reality. But different actors in society (placed in different parts or situations

Table 5.4 Ways to evaluate measurements

Involved conventions in the statistical chain are:	Quantification/categorization is:	
	Deliberated	Not deliberated
Coherent	Presumably evaluated as reliable and valid (legitimate)	Unquestioned, unconscious, self-evident
Incoherent	Evaluated and criticized as not reliable and as not valid	Experienced as troubling, as not transparent, as "not intelligible"

Source: Diaz-Bone (2017b, 246).

of the statistical chain) differ in their interpretation of the ontological and epistemic status of "data." Actors who insist on the epistemic value of data (to be just an immediate representation of society and to recognize the convention-based origin of statistics), tend to criticize the value of data as "social construction" only, and criticize data as invalid numerical information.

For EC, and also for public sociology, the answer to this kind of criticism is to point to the inevitable convention-based nature of quantification, and to the need for deliberation by the concerned social actors, groups, and institutions who will be affected by the resulting quantification, and who have to rely on the coherence, adequacy, and legitimacy of the generated statistics (Desrosières 2000; Salais 2006). Table 5.4 presents different ways in which measurements can be evaluated, depending on the coherence of the statistical chain and the deliberation of quantification.

Quantification that is both deliberated and based on coherent statistical chains will presumably be accepted as adequate (legitimate) informational bases for collective decisions and actions. Quantification that is undermined by incoherent statistical chains, or not based on deliberation, will be the target of public criticism. As Centemeri has argued, as long as quantification is experienced as "normal" and coherent (first row in Table 5.4), numbers are perceived as objective and the underlying measurement conventions can stay publicly unaware and unquestioned. But when numbers turn out to be dysfunctional, or incoherent (second row in Table 5.4) for public action, numbers themselves will be the object of scrutiny and critique:

> In fact, once procedures for quantification are settled, an effect of reification takes place, turning quantified economic objects into entities that are assumed as naturally measurable. At the same time, these objects can become dysfunctional in guiding decision-making during periods of social and economic transformations that radically challenge existing forms of regulation. It is during times of crisis that conventions of quantification usually return to the spotlight, revealing the artificial nature of quantified economic objects. (Centemeri 2012, 111)

DATA WORLDS, NEOLIBERALISM, AND PERSPECTIVES FOR PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY

Michel Foucault has provided the most influential analysis of neoliberalism, in his lectures on the impact of economics on (Western) societies in the last centuries (Foucault 2007, 2008; Laval 2018). Foucault identified the core mechanism of neoliberalism, which is to transform citizens' life worlds into market-like and market-conforming milieus (Foucault 2008). Many scholars have related contemporary strategies of quantification to this neoliberal impact on individuals' milieus, and pointed to the influence of private companies, such as the big Internet enterprises, in gathering data on individual behavior and and using it to influence individual

behavior (Berns 2009; Davies 2014; Diaz-Bone 2016, 2019b; Zuboff 2019). From a convention theorist point of view, it is important to become aware of this new state of affairs, whereby data production and analysis now mainly take place in the realm of private enterprises. Because nowadays, the deliberation and implementation of conventions for categorization and quantification have mainly been passed on to private actors, and are decided upon and proceeded with in a manner that is invisible and opaque to the public, and detached from public deliberation.

The buzzword of "big data" has been applied to depict its positive promises (Mayer-Schönberger and Cukier 2013) as well as its negative threats (Zuboff 2019). But it has become evident that with the Internet and the interconnected apps and technical sensors in millions of everyday devices (such as cellphones, cars, household appliances, TV sets) there is a steady stream of data gathered by private companies. Over several decades a new data world has emerged, which can be called "big data world." This world has gained more and more influence over everyday life. This world is completed by private companies which offer data sets and trade them on data markets. Since the Second World War, private companies have gathered data and offered services in fields such as social research, market research, and counselling, especially in the United States. But with the Internet and the network of data-generating devices, the big data world has also advanced the privatization of data-based services for public administrations and governments. In this case, the link between quantification and the common good is opaque or missing. This new data world challenges the data worlds of official statistics and academic social research.

Official statistics is the most legitimate because of its foundation in law and its function for state institutions. But it has always been biased by its state-centrism, which is why its categories and quantification are oriented towards governmental needs instead of serving specific and current public debates, or serving academic research interests more in depth. The common good aimed for in this world is to inform and rationalize governmental planning, as well as to offer a publicly available representation of society in the long-term perspective. Official statistics is criticized for its delayed and restricted publications of societal knowledge. But still no other data world can claim the same level of data quality (in regard of criteria such as representativeness and accuracy) as this world of official statistics.

The data world of academic science claims to be leading in setting standards and methods for quantification, because in this world, actors are requested to base their considerations on general scientific principles. Academic sciences have mainly developed from the epoch of the Enlightenment onwards to provide knowledge to understand, modernize, and improve not only technology but also society (as a now scientifically conceived object under study), which can be considered as its contribution to a common good. Nowadays, academic science has become highly specialized and the greater part of scientific research is generated for single scientific communities.

But since the 1960s most (Western) societies have experienced a massive expansion of the higher education system, which accustomed growing proportions of their populations to scientific ways of thinking. Popular science has pervaded mass media, and access to scientific publications has been facilitated for decades now with the Internet and strategies such as open access publishing. Keywords such as "civic science" or "open data" characterize aspects of public actors engaged in the generation of data and knowledge. Also, more and more social movements and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been established and engaged in reporting and publishing about public issues based on data. The civic data world is the

Table 5.5 Data worlds

	Influential quality conventions	Infrastructure and data	Common good
Academic science	Industrial, inspiration, civic, network	Universities and research institutes, oriented primarily to the (internal and specific) standards and research topics of scientific communities	Gaining and testing knowledge about the world based on data as scientific evidence to advance knowledge for humanity
Official statistics	Industrial, civic	State-centered, financed by taxpayers, but independent (on the basis of law), providing data on state-related and demographic categories	Democratizing knowledge about societal "facts," enhancing effectiveness and transparency of governance by providing objective data about society
Big data	Market, inspiration, industrial	Mainly owned by private companies, non-transparent and driven by private interest, analyzing mass data about consumers' and citizens' behavior	No reason for an engagement for a common good
Civic society	Civic, industrial, network	NGOs, citizens, social movements, media; generating data fit for public action; "owned" by the public and accessible to engaged civilians	Empowering civic agencies, countervailing governmental or entrepreneurial representation of "social facts", bringing civic participation into political decisions

Sources: Based on Diaz-Bone (2020), Diaz-Bone and Horvath (2021).

newest of the four data worlds presented here, and its contribution to the common good is to empower citizens, their standing and their concerns for the public.

The four worlds can be related to the conventions introduced by Boltanski and Thévenot (and others), who regard conventions as logics of coordination, valorization, and evaluation (such as those presented in Table 5.2). Table 5.5 compares these four data worlds. The presentation sketches these data worlds as ideal types.

In reality, these worlds intermingle, influence each other, and build up compromises. Because they co-exist and differ in their conventions, tensions arise. Some examples can be presented. Florence Jany-Catrice reports about the situation of France in the 1970s, where the rise in wages was linked to increased prices. Therefore, INSEE constructed a consumer price index which became the benchmark in wage negotiations in France. But this index was criticized by the French union CGT as underestimating the costs of living for manual workers:

> In 1970, the CGT's executive committee commissioned a price index from its experts. … Trade unionists at INSEE actively supported the CGT in its efforts to produce statistics without the agreement of the general management. A statistics manual for the use of negotiators was compiled and circulated among the advocates of this counter-index … The CGT relied on students, supervised by trade unionists, who were sufficiently persuaded of the cause to complete the price survey in the Paris region each month. The index was computed by the central purchasing cooperative of the mining regions, a CGT cooperative, which made available the necessary computing resources. (Jany-Catrice 2020, 38–39)

In this example the civic data world mobilized actors not only to criticize the INSEE index (the official statistics world), but also to establish an alternative strategy to quantify consumer prices, and the CTG price index became a dispositive for the union in wage negotiations until

the beginning of the 1980s. Julia Lane has also pointed to the problems of official statistics, but from the perspective of the academic data world:

> Our current statistical system is under stress, too often based on old technology and with too little room for innovation. Our public statistical institutions often are not structurally capable of taking advantage of massive changes in the availability of data and the public need for new and better data to make decisions. And without breakthroughs in public measurement, we're not going to get intelligent public decision-making. (Lane 2020b, 2)

Lane is claiming for the need to build up new and flexible data infrastructures as projects to serve public needs. She reports on an infrastructure project, that was aligned in some years, and in which academics from universities and federal agencies cooperated to gather data and to construct measures that represent the impact of research on innovation and the economy (Lane 2020b, Ch. 4). In the academic data world, data infrastructures have a long tradition as data set repositories which offer access to social survey data (Kleiner et al. 2013) or to genomic databases (Leonelli 2016). But the work of Lane made evident that the public and actors from different data worlds have to cooperate in new and flexible ways to implement new data infrastructures for their needs and in the time of new big data technologies. The core issue is the control over these data infrastructures, over the deliberation of measurement conventions, the data access, and its interpretation by public actors and scientists.

Only publicly controlled and accessible data infrastructures can be a basis for a countervailing power against the big data infrastructures of big companies. These companies exploit the data which is generated by technological devices and the Internet usages of consumers. As Shoshana Zuboff (2019) has argued, private companies use big data to predict and to influence individuals' behavior without individuals' realizing this. The public is not aware of this growing data-based power which is accumulated by private enterprises. Citizens in their roles as consumers, patients, social media users, are tracked and analyzed in an asymmetric manner, because they may have a sense that they are being surveyed, but they have only limited possibilities to evade this asymmetric form of surveillance. One can name this new situation as "statistical panopticism," which is a reference to Michel Foucault's concept of the panopticism as a dispositive (Diaz-Bone 2019b).

Algorithms are an important device in this asymmetric power-relation, but they determine the chances of individuals in many situations, such as being hired for a job, or the way individuals' insurance costs are calculated (Fourcade and Healy 2017). Public sociology could engage in the critical study of the algorithms as black boxes, which are part of the data analytical tools of companies. Algorithms are devices of artificial intelligence (AI), and form the basis for categorizations and decisions. Ismael Al-Amoudi and John Latsis have identified the normative problem of algorithms:

> The fact that AI operates as a normative black box generates a puzzle: how can AI reach normatively binding decisions if the latter cannot be discussed, justified, criticised and compromised upon by the people affected by its decisions? … We encounter a problem, however, when the decisions entrusted to AI involve normative considerations. Whenever AI operates as a normative black box, its decisions cannot be evaluated purely in terms of achieved efficiencies. AI's normative decisions must also be evaluated, through public discussion, on the face of its congruence with principles and values shared within the human community affected by its decisions. (Al-Amoudi and Latsis 2019, 120, 124)

In times of neoliberalism and opaque data processing, the consequence is simply the need for public deliberation of algorithms that are applied to individuals' situations and life chances.[3]

CONCLUSION

In this chapter the link between quantification and collective action aiming for a common good has been presented as an important aspect for public sociology. The (neo)pragmatist and institutionalist approach of economics of convention has been introduced as an important contribution to public sociology. EC was developed to study the pluralities of institutional logics and worlds which are the foundations for different ways how quantification is proceeded. It is important to conclude that the sociology of quantification has not only analyzed quantification, but also approaches quantifications (as well as classifications) in society as an issue at stake for public engagement of social sciences and social scientists. In this regard, economics of convention is close not only to the position of reflexive sociology but also to public sociology as sketched by Burawoy (see Table 5.1). Convention theory and the works of Michael Burawoy share (neo)pragmatism as a theoretical basis which refuses to separate the analytical practice of social sciences from social situations and societies as "objects under study." Instead, social research is conceived of as being part of social worlds, exerting an impact on and being influenced by society. As Burawoy has sketched a sociology of social research in regard to ethnographic research (Burawoy 2021), this chapter can also be conceived of as a contribution to a reflexive sociology of social research applied to scientific quantifications and classifications. This is another aspect of why economics of convention and the approach of public sociology should be considered as allies.

NOTES

1. See Desrosières (2008a, 2008b, 2011a, 2014), Espeland and Stevens (2008), Centemeri (2012), Salais (2012), Rottenburg et al. (2015), Bruno et al. (2016), Diaz-Bone and Didier (2016), Bartl et al. (2019), Mennicken and Espeland (2019).
2. See the English-language monographs by Storper and Salais (1997), Boltanski and Chiapello (2005) and Boltanski and Thévenot (2006). For a French-language collection of chapters see Eymard-Dvernay (2006a, 2006b).
3. A promising perspective for public sociology to engage in the field of quantification is developed by the French movement of "*statactivisme*" (Bruno et al. 2014). In this movement, scientists engage in the public critique of the illegitimate and non-intended effects of statistics, statistical tools, and neoliberal strategies applied in the public sphere or in public institutions (Didier 2018).

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PART II

FORTH AND BACK ACROSS (DISCIPLINARY) BORDERS: WAYS OF THINKING AND PRACTICING PUBLIC RESEARCH

6. What is at stake when social science goes public?

Didier Fassin

Sociology and anthropology are worlds apart in the academia of most of the American continent. The former is the study of what makes a society, of social structures and social change, of organizations and movements, of class, race, and gender. The latter is the study of what makes humans, of the unity and diversity of mankind, of singularities and differences, of cultures and religions. Sociology tends to be increasingly closer to political science and even economics. Anthropology comprises four subfields, which are archeology, linguistics, and biological and cultural anthropology. By contrast, in Europe, and particularly in France, sociology and anthropology are with history the foundational triptych of the social science in the Maussian tradition. Although each of these disciplines claims its autonomy, a circulation between them is possible both intellectually and institutionally. This tradition therefore allows me to offer a text using anthropological material in a sociological book. There are indeed many commonalities between public sociology and public anthropology, which have both been coined and debated in the United States. However, I have to distance myself at the outset from the meaning their promoters gave them. When they speak of public sociology or public anthropology, they advocate for a certain practice of sociology or anthropology that is more connected to publics and their problems. My stand is different here. I want to understand what is at stake in such practice, what are the implications of such publicization. In other words, I do not plead for public sociology or public anthropology—although I find this plea legitimate—but I am interested in the sociology of public sociology and the anthropology of public anthropology. More precisely, I will focus here on a method that is common to both sociology and anthropology—ethnography—and explore the challenges and predicaments it faces when it goes public. But let me start with a case that will show the complexity and ambivalence of publicization.

AN ATYPICAL PUBLIC FIGURE

In October 1989, France paid tribute to its most famous anthropologist, Claude Lévi-Strauss, by organizing a sumptuous exhibition at the Musée de l'Homme, of which he had been the deputy director 40 years earlier. The masterpiece on display was a superb canoe brought by a delegation of Haida Indians from British Columbia, who had rowed up the Seine River in the weeks before the opening of the event. Notwithstanding the fact that the French anthropologist was known for his work in Brazilian Amazonia more than the Canadian Northwest, he and his third wife joined their guests with good grace in the final stretch in Paris, between the Bridge of Iéna and the City Hall, accompanied by the Natives' ritual chanting (Casajus 1996). This public apotheosis in the most conventionally exotic representation of the discipline consecrated a man who had been elected eight years prior by 448 journalists, writers, artists,

and scholars, the most influential living francophone intellectual, before Raymond Aron and Michel Foucault, a ranking which Pierre Bourdieu ironically called a chart show; in fact, he himself occupied the 36th position far behind the media personality Bernard-Henri Lévy (Bourdieu 1984). This exhibition was only one of the numerous homages that the author of *The Savage Mind* would receive in the last two decades of his life, the publication in 2008 of his works in the prestigious series *La Pléiade* usually reserved for dead greats not being the least of these. Yet, conspicuously, the anthropologist thus honored by his country was a discreet man known for staying away from the major debates of a time with which he declared having little affinity, preferring the silence of his office in the library of the Collège de France to the clamor of the public sphere. One of his colleagues wrote that "to the members of his team in Paris, the image he evoked above all was the nearly permanently closed doors of his study" (Bloch 2009). He himself confessed: "For twenty years, I would get up at dawn, drunk with myths—truly I lived in another world" (Lévi-Strauss, in Éribon 1988: 4). How to account, then, for his formidable public recognition?

Interestingly, the intellectual retreat that he cherished at the Collège de France, where he was elected in 1959 after two failed attempts, had not always been typical of his relation to the world, and during the 1930s he had even been tempted by a political career, dreaming of becoming the philosopher of the Socialist Party and joining a ministry of the Popular Front (Bertholet 2008). It is in New York, where he spent seven years at the New School for Social Research after having escaped from Vichy France in 1941, that he definitely turned to anthropology, writing *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, which would gain him the esteem of his colleagues in the United States. But as soon as he returned to France, he agreed to participate in a panel of social scientists that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) tasked with a reflection on the "race question," which haunted the organization in the aftermath of World War II. The result was the publication in 1952 of *Race and History*, a short essay that remains more than half a century later a reference manifesto for cultural relativism and anti-racism. Even the "fairly pretty scandal," as he called it, caused by the sequel, *Race and Culture*, two decades later, again at the request of UNESCO, did not suffice to taint the original piece, despite its Malthusian affirmation that racial prejudices and hostility between groups were the ineluctable consequence of the uncontrolled global demographic growth (Stoczkowski 2008). However, the book that would bring him fame was a memoir published in 1955, *Tristes Tropiques*, which received generous praise and sold 55,000 copies in the following decade. The judges of the famous Goncourt Prize even expressed regret to be unable to grant the travelogue their accolade, which could only be awarded to fiction. In fact, more than its literary audacity or its scientific boldness, it was its humanism, longing for a lost world and critical of the modern one, that seduced its readership, regardless of the problematically derogatory comments on India and on Islam scattered throughout the pages (Debaene 2008). Widely acclaimed, these two works nevertheless had their opponents. The thesis of *Race and History* had deeply irritated Roger Caillois, the influential founding editor of the journal of UNESCO, who claimed the superiority of Western civilization (Wendling 2010). The publication of *Tristes Tropiques* alienated Paul Rivet, the director of the Musée de l'Homme, who considered it of no academic value and consequently refused to receive its author (MacClancy 1996). But each time he was attacked, Lévi-Strauss retorted virulently, more at ease with academic jousts than with public debates.

Why evoke, in a volume on public sociology, an anthropologist whose engagement with contemporary issues, at least in the last five decades of his long life, seems so foreign to what

happens in the world? Beyond the plausible nostalgia for a past when a social scientist could be cited as the most influential living intellectual and even called, after the publication of *Structural Anthropology*, "A Hero of Our Time" by Susan Sontag (1963), there are two main reasons for this. First, Lévi-Strauss's glorious epic life complicates the common image of the public intellectual. Rather than epitomizing this classic French figure, illustrated by Émile Zola and Jean-Paul Sartre, it is disconcertingly at the moment when he reached his academic pinnacle that he superbly retired to his office and even his country house, refused to get involved in the issues and movements of his time, and occasionally proclaimed theses in defense of cultural identities that received laudation from the far right. Provocatively, he affirmed that he "does not care" about the "utility for the present world" of his "interest in things that do not exist anymore," and even described himself as an "old right-wing anarchist" while insisting on his intellectual "debt" to Marx (Lévi-Strauss 1986). His uncompromising independence of mind is therefore of interest as such. Second, the celebration of Lévi-Strauss is an invitation to reflect on the sociological conditions of possibility of becoming a public intellectual. In his case, it is the rare combination of institutional legitimacy, with the Collège de France and later the Académie française, and popular recognition, through his travelogue; two elements which he certainly craved but which were somewhat in tension as, in the scholarly world, fame does not always enthuse one's peers. But perhaps more importantly, two general historical conditions have to be taken into account. One concerns the structure of the media world: it was then undergoing a major transition, but the written press and its journalists still carried weight in the public sphere and, although media-friendly personalities were increasingly visible, the image of the intellectual remained vivid, with Lévi-Strauss outliving Foucault, Roland Barthes, and Jacques Lacan. It is unlikely that any social scientist could occupy the same space in today's world of social media and cable television. The other historical condition entails his very positioning away from major public engagements: by not having signed the Manifesto of the 121 against the Algerian War in 1960, by not having participated in the effervescence of the May 1968 Movement, and by dedicating his life to the erudite study of vanishing cultures, he could appear in the last years of the twentieth century as a sage situated above the fray (Keck 2008). Paradoxically, his assumed distance from the media and politics was his best asset for much of the public. In a period of growing anxieties regarding the globalization of a postcolonial world and the transformation of the moral order, Lévi-Strauss offered the reassuring image of a reclusive scholar occasionally leaving his study to deliver profound reflections on exotic beliefs and practices that elevated the debate on contemporary issues to the level of the history of humankind, with a zest of wistful conservatism. It was what the public, in France, expected from anthropology.

By taking this major, albeit atypical, figure—the most American of French anthropologists and the most secretive of France's intellectuals—to exemplify the public presence of the social science, I therefore want to emphasize the diversity and ambiguities, the serendipity and determinants of this public presence that most of its advocates tend to minimize or ignore. There is no doubt for me that making the social science enter the public sphere and participate in democratic conversations is desirable and even crucial, especially in the hard times that contemporary societies are experiencing. To be clear, I consider that the threat which they face comes less from crime, terrorist attacks, the influx of refugees and migrants, or other real issues with which they are confronted, and which I certainly do not want to lessen, than from the responses they offer to these issues, as they are dictated by both fear and the political exploitation of fear; which serve to justify the mass incarceration of African Americans in

the United States, the oppression of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, the persecution of Shias in Saudi Arabia, the pogroms against Zimbabweans in South Africa, the repression of Muslim minorities in East Asia, and the rejection of migrants and refugees in Europe. "A scholar can hardly be better employed than in destroying a fear," wrote Clifford Geertz (1984: 263). The aphorism is especially relevant if we substitute "fear" with "politics of fear"; although to destroy it unreasonably exceeds the anthropologists' power.

However, my intention is not to advocate for a public social science. Others have done so. My aim is instead to reflect on and account for what is at stake when the work of social scientists is made public (Fassin 2015). From this perspective, I prefer to be analytic rather than programmatic, to study cases rather than promote a model, to adopt a critical stance rather than assert a normative posture.

THE PROCESSES OF PUBLICIZATION

There have been, in the past decade, various calls for a public social science. On the one hand, Rob Borofsky (2000: 9–10) has pleaded for a "public anthropology," creating a book series and a research center dedicated to the mission of engaging "issues and audiences beyond today's self-imposed disciplinary boundaries." Both words—"issues" and "audiences"—are important in this project, since its promoter considers that it is necessary to address "critical concerns" and invigorate "public conversations." Deploring "our general intellectual isolation and insulation from the world's problems," he contrasts it with what had been the earlier engagement of anthropology: "to intellectually explore where and how it wanted" for the benefit of more than "professional colleagues." For him, "objectivity lies less in the pronouncement of authorities than in conversations among concerned parties." On the other hand, Michael Burawoy (2005: 5–6) argues for a "public sociology," observing that "the original passion for social justice, economic equality, human rights, sustainable development, political freedom, and simply a better world that drew so many of us to sociology is channeled in the pursuit of academic credentials," but admitting that in recent years "the aspiration for public sociology has become stronger." Public sociology, which is one of the four modes of practicing his discipline, along with policy, professional, and critical sociology, comprises two sorts of public sociology: one, "traditional," refers to the readers, listeners, and viewers of social scientists' lectures, books, articles, opinion papers, radio programs, and documentary films, who constitute a largely "invisible" public; the other, "organic," concerns the people with whom social scientists work, be they non-governmental organizations, neighborhood associations, labor movements, trade unions, who often represent a "counter-public." For both authors, then, the issue is the mobilization of their discipline beyond what they describe as an academic enclosure, with the idea of reviving a lost continent of public engagement on public issues. Theirs is a normative stance.

By speaking instead of public ethnography, I do not intend to coin a new phrase or delimit a new domain; I simply want to open a different perspective. My project is to apprehend some of the stakes and implications relative to the public presence of the social sciences, and more specifically of ethnographic work. Ethnography is often purely conceived of as a method, in line with Bronislaw Malinowski's (2014 [1922]) famously enthusiastic account of his fieldwork among the Trobriand. It has also been thought of as writing in accordance with the etymology of the word, especially after the collection edited by James Clifford and George

Marcus (2010 [1986]). The dual dimension of fieldwork and writing, which typically follows an almost linear chronological development from the former to the latter, implies that the ethnographic work ends with the sending of a final manuscript to a publisher.

The point I want to make is that the story continues afterward. The encounter with publics—which has in fact begun earlier in the research—is part and parcel of the endeavor of the social science. Public ethnography involves two distinct but complementary ideas. First, it questions the specificity of the publicization of ethnography, as opposed to other empirical ways of producing knowledge in the social sciences. Second, it resorts to the ethnographic approach to study this publicization, making it an object of inquiry. Having developed its various expressions in a previous edited volume (Fassin 2017a), I will limit my discussion to some of the operations involved in the process via which ethnography comes to be public. Two are of particular relevance: popularization and politicization. They are independent from each other but are often combined since the former facilitates the latter.

Popularization means making one's intellectual production both accessible and likeable. Conversely, as Philippe Descola (1996: 210) observes in an essay in which he recounts his decision to write a travelogue *à la* Lévi-Strauss, the conventions of anthropological writing lead to "a certain standardization of the forms of description, the more or less exclusive use of the analytical categories recognized by the profession, and the self-imposed avoidance of the expression of too obviously subjective opinions." Indeed, the hermeticism of many anthropological works, which probably contributes to their near disappearance from general bookstores, is often associated with a dual process through which the discipline claims its academic place as a science, while its members constitute themselves as a professional group. On the one hand, the complexity of the phenomena analyzed and the sophistication of the thinking involved call for a specialized language, as is the case for physics or biology, with the difference that anthropologists combine it with philosophical components. On the other hand, the building of a scholarly community requires both the reproduction of a normalized habitus and the establishment of an exclusive communication among peers, keeping laypersons at a distance, an attitude rendered all the more indispensable since the topics studied, when they are not exotic, may seem familiar enough to let anyone believe that they have an expertise on them.

Against these two trends, popularization supposes a double reaction. First, it asserts an affinity of anthropology with literature, without reducing it to a literary exercise. Such recognition implies taking seriously "the anthropologist as writer," in Helena Wulff's (2016) words. Second, it means that addressing a broad readership should not be, for the anthropological community, an embarrassment, and for the author, a definitive renouncement of an academic career and the respect of one's colleagues. The impossibility for Margaret Mead, the most popular anthropologist of her time, to obtain her peers' recognition and find a university position suggests, indeed, that the exercise is not entirely devoid of risk. Having worked with an illustrator to translate my ethnography of the police titled *Enforcing Order* into a comic book, which I have suggested to call an ethno-graphic, I still have to see how criminologists will react to this experimental genre. As I reveal in the epilogue of *Prison Worlds* (Fassin 2017b), the book in which I found my inspiration while writing the ethnography of a French correctional facility was neither Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* nor Erving Goffman's *Asylums*, both of which I hold in high esteem and discuss at some length in the conclusion, but Dostoyevsky's *Memoirs from the House of the Dead*—not because of possible similarities between penal institutions in nineteenth century Siberia and twenty-first century France, but

because of the unique way in which the author combines a faithful account of prison life and a broader reflection on the human plight. The fascinating conversations which I have had with prisoners, guards, and wardens, as well as with journalists, activists, and politicians, who had read the book, have convinced me that it is possible to render, through the work of writing, something of the carceral condition, even if one inmate rightly told me that I could not understand their experience for not having been myself incarcerated. Through these exchanges, I realized that the effort to reach out for broader audiences opened new avenues for public debates on punishment. I was thus invited to give lectures for the Ministry of Justice, at the National Law School, to lawyers' organizations, even to prisoners, but also to participate in local initiatives aiming at rethinking the punitive moment. This leads me to the second operation involved in publicization.

"Politicization" is a polysemous and even ambiguous word. I do not use it here in the restricted sense of the political arena and its politicians, but more broadly in relation with both *polis* and policy. The former is associated with discussion, the latter with action. The reference to *polis* suggests multiple forums where issues are debated with all concerned and willing individuals. Some of these forums are constituted as such, for example a meeting with a local organization; while others are indefinite, for example the audience of a radio program. This perspective is in line with Jürgen Habermas's (1985) theory of communicative action, although it recognizes the unequal access of many to the public sphere and the existence of subaltern counter-publics, as Nancy Fraser (1990) argues. A potential contribution of anthropologists to such forums consists in making their work, their material, and their reflection available to such open discussion, while trying to identify those who are not easily accessed, and acknowledging the legitimacy of alternative publics; two tasks for which their ethnography may prepare them. Under these circumstances, their intellectual production can be appropriated, contested, or diverted by the agents who receive it. The argument of academic authority can have no place here, although the actuality of the authoritative voice of the ethnographer should not be denied or minimized either. The first opinion paper I published in *Le Monde* in 1996, at the time of the *sans-papiers* movement, was aimed at correcting the false representation of undocumented migrants in the media as well as in political discourses. Whereas they were commonly described as illegal workers who had clandestinely entered the country, this depiction being reinforced by images of migrants found in the holds of ships or the back of trucks, the research I was conducting at the time showed that the majority of them had previously possessed residency permits and only became undocumented after changes in the law or in its enforcement. Reflecting my argument that the government itself produced most of the irregularity it combated, the newspaper entitled the piece: "The state and the illegals."

The interactions with the world of policy involve a different space, which is more directly related to action. However, it is not limited, as is often assumed, to so-called decision-makers to whom social scientists serve as experts, but includes various counter-powers, such as non-governmental organizations, social movements, and political parties, which may also use their expertise. These interactions are often deemed scientifically impure and ethically dangerous. Indeed, the knowledge shared with the agents can be manipulated or instrumentalized for questionable purposes. Yet, there is no reason why such practices should not be considered a legitimate form of the public presence of social scientists, to the extent that they exercise a critical approach. Thus, they may contribute to the growing domain of critical policy studies advocated by Cris Shore and Susan Wright (1997). However, there are limits to such collaboration, as politicians and, for that matter, activists may try to exploit the authority of scholars

for their own benefit. Having earlier conducted some research on mental health issues, I was solicited in 2008 by the Health Minister, Roselyne Bachelot, to chair the national committee on suicide; but having observed how academics had served as "spoils of war"—the term in use—in the right-wing government of the time to legitimize its policies, I politely declined the proposal. The cabinet had no difficulty in finding an alternative who readily accepted.

Popularization and politicization do not exhaust the multiple operations potentially involved in the encounter with publics. I will mention three more: education, estheticization, and judicialization. First, transmission of anthropological knowledge seems generally limited to academic audiences, whether students or colleagues, but there are exceptions, and it is said that the television programs hosted by Fredrik Barth have significantly contributed to making Norway an improbable pocket of prosperity for public anthropology, although he stated in a 2001 interview that France was the country where this tradition was the liveliest (Howell 2010). This pedagogic process sometimes takes singular forms. I once attended a talk given by a commissioner in charge of the public relations of her law enforcement agency and was surprised to learn that police academies now had anthropology classes. When I asked who taught them, she answered that it was officers of the intelligence services. Second, museums offer to their visitors an estheticized version of anthropology, and Benoît De L'Estoile (2007) has devoted a study to their history in France from the 1931 Exposition Coloniale to the 2007 Museum of First Arts on the Quai Branly. Unexpectedly, after the publication of my ethnography of policing, the curator of an exhibition titled "Others. Being Savages from Rousseau to the Present," contacted me a few weeks before its opening after having read in the book the way in which the police regarded the youths of the housing projects as savages in their jungle, and even wore badges representing ferocious animals which attacked supposedly hostile neighborhoods. He showed in his catalogue reproductions of these ominous insignia. Finally, anthropologists are sometimes requested to testify in court to shed light on a context or a problem related to the case being adjudicated, and Anthony Good (2007) often served as an expert in the British asylum court to describe for immigration judges the cultural and political contexts of the countries from which the claimants came. Similarly, at the first lawsuit brought in France by young men belonging to minorities against the Ministry of the Interior for racial discrimination in stop and search, the lawyers asked me to write, as *amicus curiae*, a report based on my study. This testimony was probably marginal in the case, but for the first time, racial profiling in policing was acknowledged in court and the government was condemned.

Each of the modalities of public intervention I have evoked requires negotiation skills (how to interact with people belonging to other social worlds), supposes translation competences (how to be understood beyond the circles of the social scientists), generates intellectual issues (how to avoid the simplification of complex issues), and raises ethical questions (how not to betray the subjects of one's research). Often overlooked by the promoters of public social science, these problems and the dilemmas that accompany them deserve to be examined as such and incorporated in the research process. They represent the life of knowledge, with its transformations, misunderstandings, and questionings.

THE CHALLENGES OF PUBLICIZATION

Such an enterprise supposes inquiring about the publics. This is a difficult task. "Publics are queer creatures. You cannot point to them, count them, or look them in the eye. You also

cannot easily avoid them," writes Michael Warner (2002: 49), who compares publics to "corporate ghosts." Indeed, publics are elusive. In a seminar room or a conference hall, the auditors are physically identifiable, although often not individually known. But for a book or a film, a newspaper column or a radio interview, one generally does not have the slightest idea of the size, the composition, and the opinions of the audiences that have access to them. Commentators, when they exist, whether on paper, on the airwaves, or increasingly online, are not representative or even indicative of the public, although they can be influential. In fact, the audience may expand considerably with what one could name vicarious publics: all those who have heard from someone who has heard about the work, or read someone who has read it, and who may still have strong opinions about it. For instance, I doubt that Claude Guéant, a right-wing Minister of the Interior, had read my ethnography of the police when, in a press conference, he replied dismissively to the question of a journalist who asked him what he thought about the book; but his collaborators had perhaps passed him notes about the reviews and interviews that had come out in the media since its publication one month earlier, and he could not have missed the full front page of the newspaper *Libération* dedicated to the book, with a headline provocatively playing with its title: "Les forces du désordre." His disparagement gave me, moreover, the opportunity to expand the audience of my research, since I was granted a "right to reply" on the national television evening news and via a column in *Le Monde*.

However limited the knowledge about these publics may be, one needs to be curious about them and attentive to their reactions to what social scientists produce. There are at least three reasons for this. First, one can adapt one's interventions to render them more relevant and effective. Second, one can respond to queries or criticisms in order to clarify and defend one's position, thus enriching the debate. Third, one can make them the matter of further analysis and an opportunity for a deeper comprehension of the stakes involved. Encounters with publics definitely imply a certain degree of alienation, in the etymological sense of being estranged from one's work. But this alienation is generative.

Having arrived at this point, one could legitimately ask whether it is really important for the social sciences and the humanities to have a public presence. And if so, why? For disciplines such as physics or biology, publicization mostly entails popularizing a highly sophisticated scientific production with a dual objective of educating their audience and legitimizing their domain. Both objectives are intimately linked and crucial to their material reproduction—through laboratories, gigantic telescopes, powerful particle colliders, bioinformatical computer networks, and so on—which relies on the eternal promise of a soon-to-come theory of everything for physicists, and of a definitive breakthrough in the cure of maladies for biologists. For their part, social scientists can certainly popularize their knowledge—which they probably do not do enough—but they cannot offer promises to change the world; or rather, most of them would not regard such promises as serious and sincere. Moreover, they are confronted with a major challenge: the increasing competition of positivism on the market of the interpretation of human societies. Such competition is certainly not new, and students of the social sciences, such as George Steinmetz (2005), have analyzed historical parallels in the twentieth century, but the current technological advances and the fascination they arouse, combined with the triumphant illusion of a possible rational neoliberal government of the world, make the present time particularly vulnerable to the sirens of positivism and neo-positivism. On the one hand, the mimetic convergence of economics, political science, social psychology, and quantitative sociology leads to an evidence-based approach increasingly mobilizing so-called

big data whose results give them a symbolic hold on decision-making, quite independently of the factual validation of their predictions. On the other hand, the strategic alliance between the philosophy of mind, experimental psychology, evolutionary biology, artificial intelligence, and neuroscience proposes a seductive universalizing paradigm for both the history of humankind and the functioning of the brain, which claim to explain cultural selection as well as social behavior. Furthermore, these two sides—quantitative positivism and cognitive neo-positivism—have substantial overlaps and reinforce each other. In this context, which social scientists should not ignore or dismiss but resolutely engage with, what do they have to offer to legitimize their public presence?

The short answer to that question is critique. By "critique," two things are meant. The first one, a legacy of the Enlightenment according to Michel Foucault's (1984: 45) reading of Kant, is the aptitude to question "what is given to us as universal, necessary, obligatory"; in other words, what is taken for granted in the common sense as well as the scholarly domain. I consider that this intellectual operation is never as difficult and indispensable to achieve as in the moral realm: values, in particular when they are associated with affects, are so deeply entrenched in our intimate conviction and collective self-assurance that they seem to become indisputable. In consequence, they should all the more be examined critically, that is, genealogically. This is what Talal Asad (2003) has done with secularism. This is what I have tried to do with humanitarianism: not to criticize it, as some have assumed, but to distance oneself from its moral evidence so as to pose ethical and political questions that were too often eluded. Anthropology is, if not by essence, at least by practice, the discipline that has—together with history—the most natural inclination toward this questioning. Indeed, knowing that what we consider as self-evident in our society is not so in other cultures, and has not been so in the past, forces us to acknowledge that the present order of things, whether local or global, near or remote, is the realization of one potentiality among many others that could have happened. Such recognition has important implications for the public sphere. If anthropology is, as Michael Carrithers (2005) phrases it, a "science of possibilities" (I wittingly delete the problematic adjective "moral")—in other words, if other worlds are possible—then its epistemological openness can also be a source of political inspiration. The world as we know it could be different, and may therefore be changed.

This leads to the other dimension of critique, the one that singularizes anthropology—and perhaps sociology this time—among the social sciences and humanities. This second aspect is a sort of empirical test. It consists in determining the consequences of the current state of affairs as it has turned out, and the more general stakes that it raises. It is not enough to demonstrate that what we deem taken for granted is the result of historical circumstances and power relations: one must inquire which transformation this specific configuration entails. What is at play when one invokes women's rights to legitimize moral crusades in the Muslim world, as Lila Abu-Lughod (2013) has analyzed? To name a few cases that I have studied: what is gained and what is lost when one invokes the right to live rather than social justice in the politics of AIDS in South Africa; when one speaks the language of trauma and resilience rather than of oppression and resistance in the Israel–Palestine conflict; or when in France the public sphere is saturated with discourses about insecurity at the expense of inequality, leading to the increasing incarceration of young men from disadvantaged neighborhoods belonging to ethno-racial minorities? To these questions, the patient work of ethnography provides invaluable answers. Far from merely being a way of producing empirical material, it is a way to access theory, as João Biehl (2013) demonstrates. In this sense, critical anthropology is inseparably

theoretical and empirical. It provides alternative modes of understanding—more complex, more informed, more attentive to unheard voices—and thus reopens the public debate on contemporary issues that are so often analyzed with ready-made thinking.

Going public, especially with a critical perspective on such issues, means taking some risk. Speaking truth to power, as the saying goes—whether this power is academic or political—may be a perilous exercise. It implies being ready "to raise embarrassing questions" and "to confront orthodoxy and dogma," in Edward Said's (1996: 11) words in his lectures on intellectuals. It occasionally leads to unpleasant moments when those who feel threatened by this truthfulness try to delegitimize the social scientist, discredit their work, block their career, prosecute them, or prevent the continuation of their program, especially when it is conducted in a foreign country from which they can be banned, or even worse, under an authoritarian regime under which they incur torture and imprisonment. But risks often take more subtle and ambivalent forms. They reside in the compromises accepted, sometimes not so honorable ones, when the researcher becomes the official expert for public authorities or private corporations. They lie in the challenges of translating complex issues into simple and potentially simplistic ideas as the ethnographer interacts with the media or general audiences. They ultimately originate in the suspicion existing within the scholarly domain toward the publicization of scientific work, whatever form it takes: popularization or politicization, collaboration with journalists or lawyers. This wide range of risks—some of them stemming from external forces, others coming from social scientists and their professional community—has frequently in consequence a form of intellectual prudence that amounts to renouncement. Indeed, self-censorship is probably more common than censorship, at least in democratic contexts. Certain topics are avoided, certain issues are ignored, as many are not willing to take risks. The "courage of truth," as Michel Foucault (2011 [2008]) phrases it, is primarily a struggle against one's own reluctance to go public for fear of being attacked or, more often, of losing some of one's legitimacy or authority. There can be a cost to publicization, and one has to decide whether one is ready to bear it.

But there is also a form of social obligation to it: a responsibility, to use a word that stems from the Latin *respondere*, which means both to give a reply and to promise in return (Fassin 2008). By going public, anthropologists thus repay society for the knowledge and comprehension they have acquired while posing questions that may have been explicitly formulated or merely surfacing. This settlement of their debt is their ultimate political and ethical commitment.

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7. Public history[1]

Serge Noiret

INTRODUCTION

Making public history (PH) is about historians engaging with the past in public and taking care of citizens' knowledge in ways that are different but complementary to traditional academic history.[2] In most cases, when engaging in historical research within universities, one is not looking at its societal impact. "Making history" remains an individual research practice with the purpose of producing a written manuscript based on original sources, narrating a past event exclusively for the peers. The public impact and the civic usefulness of such a research and collective process of knowledge production are not contemplated.

PH methods should be shared within communities as useful critical instruments of an interactive process of knowledge-building and cultural and social reappropriation of identities. Analytical depth, complexity, ethical approaches, and contextualization are part of a process of mutual education between public historians and their targeted communities potentially improving social cohesion.

In one of his *Dialogues*, Plato showcases this kind of mutual education process, describing how Socrates engaged with his interlocutors in a collaborative process of questioning. Through asking targeted questions, Socrates allowed his interlocutors to reveal a deeply hidden away knowledge. This process of revealing and delivering knowledge, memories, or experiences has been called maieutic. This refers to the capacity of giving birth to what individuals were not aware of knowing, a method used by Socrates to offer more concrete definitions to theoretical and normative concepts. Such a process was dual, and Socrates used his authority to drive interlocutors in the collaborative creation of an applied social knowledge.

The PH process of knowledge production, hermeneutics, and diffusion of such a knowledge in the public sphere, is akin to how public sociology (PS), specifically "organic sociology," engages with different audiences that must be clearly identified (Burawoy, 2005, pp. 7–8). PS and PH apply common methods when professional sociologists or historians work in the public sphere with specific social groups. They both study social needs, memories, and identities, and develop forms of social activism within communities. PS and PH also identify social goods and civic knowledges (such as the knowledge of the past), built and shared with the public, and aim at the social and cultural self-improvement of minorities (sexual, ethnical, political, religious, and so on). They develop a critical and self-understanding approach to their present reality that goes together with the improvement of democratic practices from below. The process of dialoguing and the sharing of authority between practitioners and communities foster the production of original sources. These include data and multiple forms of expert and non-expert knowledge, narratives, and memories that allow for a better understanding and interpretation of the present. Oral history and ethnographical methods are crucial in such an interactive and applied process of knowledge creation within communities in the case of PH.

When a public sociologist such as Michael Burawoy (2016) decided to become a steel worker to study the workplace chain of production, he intended to understand and study the

social, political, and cultural identity of his fellow co-workers. Through ethnographic methods and interactive dialogues with the workers belonging to such a social group, he built a mutual trust and shared his own authority. The methods he used were very similar to how public historians work within their communities. Burawoy went deeply into the analysis of social behaviours and social consciousness within this specific community, through an intimate and self-experienced understanding of the working process in the steel industry.

Likewise, Italian filmmaker Roberto Minervini in 2018 documented a forsaken United States, telling the story of marginal communities through direct sensitive contacts and shared experiences. The documentary, *What You Gonna Do When the World's on Fire*, tells the story of members of the survived group of the Black Panthers. Only after living within the community for a year, forming close connections with its members, was he able to start filming a powerful "out of the box" social and historical narrative of the Black Panthers' community. This "slow-release" process showed the community that Minervini was trustworthy and genuinely trying to understand their complex cultural and social context:

> I am a guide for the characters in their own story. By listening to them, I help them and put them in a position to tell their stories … I did ease the conditions of a story that was already there to play out … Standing aside does not mean disappearing but implies a degree of trust. (Stellino, 2018, p. 77)

Such an "immersive" maieutical dialoguing method with members of the Black Panthers community is similar to how Burawoy studied his fellow steel workers. It is also akin to what activist public historians built in many countries worldwide: a network of "sites of conscience" based on the history of specific communities with violent dictatorial and genocidal pasts.[3] Knowing the truth about violent pasts and being able to inform the civil society of what happened can heal community memories and influence the present.

Methods that imply the sharing of an authority between social scientists and communities are thus commonly used in PS and PH practices when working with and for specific communities. Many PH practices focus on the enhancement of the public dimension of historical knowledge and the improvement of the public sense of the past through methods favoring bottom-up of accompanied forms of citizens' history. The result of a mediation between community knowledge and public historians produces new forms of narratives, adds educational and cultural values within these communities, improving social integration. Above all, it brings a critical awareness of the present time, based on a better public and collective understanding of historical processes.

The above practices thus characterize the development of applied and activist projects in PH in the same way that they do in PS. Vincent Jeffries described "Burawoy's holistic model of sociological practice," capable of mobilizing four forms of sociology for a better society (Jeffries, 2009, pp. 1–2). Indeed, in his famous 2005 address to the *American Sociological Association*, Michael Burawoy described 11 proposals to foster PS as the public arm used by sociologists to engage with the civil society. He imagined forms of applied sociology within communities in which sociologists became "partisans" and professionally sympathetic to the needs of their publics (Burawoy, 2005, p. 24). Burawoy wanted to privilege what he called "the original passion for social justice, economic equality, human rights, sustainable environment, political freedom or simply a better world" (Burawory, 2005, p. 5). Shaping society and serving the public good for a better world was his empirical vision of PS. Applying professional knowledge in dialogues with communities is also what activist historian Raphael

Samuel used in his History Workshops in 1984–85. He invited miners and their families to the Ruskin College in Oxford, during the strike against Margaret Thatcher's neo-liberal policies, to properly capture the anthropological and historical profile of this social group.

Although this chapter focuses on PH, readers with a background in PS will realize how their PS methods are similar to the nature and epistemological tradition of activist public historians' practices. Born in the United States of America (USA) 40 years ago, these practices focus on the need to first design the goals of a project strictly connected to a targeted public; a critical and collective approach to sources and contexts that are to be built and shared with the publics involved; and an ethical tension that is present when engaging in bottom-up activist projects serving communities and their history.

This chapter privileges "activism" as one of the most important PH practices, based on a direct and active interaction with different social communities. It starts by discussing the complex definition of PH throughout different countries and periods. It then moves on to a brief history of the internationalization of the discipline, starting from the two main countries that gave birth to PH in the 1960s and 1970s: the United Kingdom and the USA. It then studies how collective memories and identities often restricted to the local sphere, can become "glocal" issues and consolidate a better sense of the past in the public sphere. Additionally, this chapter tackles how forms of citizens' history are built through user-generated content, the sharing of professional authority methods and the consolidation of a mutual trust. Lastly, it examines the more recent impact of digital technologies on PH methods, practices and projects.

HISTORY OF PUBLIC HISTORY: THE PUBLICNESS OF THE PAST

Institutionalizing PH in the USA

The National Council on Public History (NCPH) founded in 1978, is the North American association around which the most qualified initiatives in the discipline were and still are organized. The association promoted discussions about the field with all kind of PH practitioners: "museum professionals, government and business historians, historical consultants, archivists, teachers, cultural resource managers, curators, film and media producers, policy advisors, oral historians, professors and students with PH interests, and many others"[4] (NCPH, 1979, pp. 41–58). The NCPH, during its first national congress in 1979, took stock of some defining problems of what PH had been up to then. Forty-five historians from different academic and non-academic backgrounds (public and private institutions) (NCPH, 1979, pp. 73–74) joined the conference and explored what future was in store for PH (NCPH, 1979, pp. 58–59). One of the main reasons for the foundation of a new field had been the deep crisis of history as a discipline, including the dramatic shortage of university positions (Hoff Wilson, 1980), and more generally, the fate of history in American society at the time.

According to Lydia Bronte, then Associated Director for the Humanities of the Rockefeller Foundation, organizer of the conference on behalf of the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB), it was a question of making "applied" history (Conard, 2002),[5] that is, no longer just a speculative and reflective history in academic settings. For Joel A. Tarr, Professor of Urban History at Carnegie-Mellon, public historians had to promote the knowledge of history and historical methods as an asset in the job market. Others thought that the birth of PH

was not only the result of a crisis in the university job market, but also responded to new social and popular needs for history expressed in the media and in local communities, and supported by the work of museum curators, historical parks civil servants, archivists, and librarians, all specialized in history. Indeed, at the end of the 1970s, the very term "public history" had already made its way into the discussions of the federal Association of American historians. The Organization of American Historians (OAH), the American Historical Association (AHA) and the American Association of State and Local History (AASLH)[6] today support scientifically the specific vocational training, the role and activities of public historians in the country.[7] Arnita Jones, on behalf of the AHA, pointed out for the National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History that PH was "history that is done anywhere outside the classroom by anybody who's not employed in a university" (Jones, 1979, p. 11). Jones was not legitimizing a "history made by everyone," but instead, the use of historians' professional skills outside universities with the ability to interact professionally in interdisciplinary ways with their publics.

PH academic programs in American universities introduced new skills and prepared their students for new jobs in public and private settings. We have no recent social and professional survey of who the public historians are in North America today. Nevertheless, in 2004, the AHA ended a four-year study by a Task Force on Public History (AHA, 2004a) created to understand how to better integrate public historians within the AHA, and to scientifically evaluate the necessary skills requirements for carrying out their professional tasks (AHA, 2021). The new discipline accounted for 17 percent of the total of the 14 048 members of the AHA, that is, those not working in the university, who were automatically classified as "public historians"; while nearly 85 percent of AHA members said they also occasionally practice PH, according to the same 2004 report. Finally, the areas of historical research of the public historians were substantially similar to those of academic historians (AHA, 2004b). In 2008, another survey by the AHA looked at where the public historians were employed, acknowledging that a quarter of them had been hired by museums (AHA, 2008). A 2015 survey, with added comments in 2017, was carried out on behalf of all US historical associations. It looked at what skills and knowledge were most valued by employers, to identify trends in public historians' hiring practices (Scarpino and Vivian, 2017).

In various forms, therefore, PH in the USA has become a vital sector of historiography to bring history to American society at large, which has very poor knowledge of its national history. PH was also born because historians wanted to bring history to heritage institutions and public and private businesses, which have their own history, but which do not treasure history—and their own history—for understanding the present and helping to solve economic, political, social, urban, environmental, and ethnic problems thanks to an active and participated reflection on the past. In fact, Wesley Johnson and John Kelley, the fathers of the PH movement initiated at the University of Santa Barbara in California, thought that history had a public purpose and should serve the government of the United States, federal administrations, states and local administrations and businesses, and different types of cultural and heritage institutions such as museums, local history associations, historical parks, and historical societies (Wesley Johnson, 1978).

The United Kingdom: Raphael Samuel's History Workshops

In the United Kingdom (UK), PH projects and activities have sprung up, slightly before those in the USA, and even without using the term "public history" until the 1990s. PH initiatives in the post-1968 cultural climate, and bourgeoning influence of social historians such as Eric Hobsbawm and Edward Palmer Thompson, attempted to make history from below, involving communities and marginalized categories of citizens and unionized workers, a form of people's history. In the 1970s, public debates, seminars, lectures, mutual training dialogues were used with the public, at the same time as the discipline was institutionalized in American universities. UK PH (Kean et al. 2000; Hook 2010) had developed, since the end of the 1960s, with groups of professional and non-professional historians, who gathered to talk about history serving forms of social and political activism. They cultivated oral history testimonies and built original sources collecting the memories of marginalized communities during their political confrontations with the government.

Founded in 1976, even before the journal *The Public Historian*, the *History Workshop Journal* (*HWJ*) promoted a "British style" of politically committed and activist forms of PH influenced by socialist historians. They gravitated around Ruskin College in Oxford where, since 1967, "workshops," lectures open to a wider audience, were organized to engage history as a way to debate social and political problems (Selbourne, 1980; Samuel, 1980). Raphael Samuel dragged this "spontaneous" movement bringing history out of its academic "ghetto," to perform grassroots history and build community archives. Samuel's workshops were used for bringing history closer to popular audiences with the "desire to lessen the authority of academic history and thereby further a democratization of the study and use of history." Samuel intended to place the study of history and history itself in relation to the problems of the present, national politics, and contemporary ideologies. He intended to "draw lessons from the study of the past" (Jensen, 2009, p. 46) for the present, and to promote the making of history from below, history in public, by the public and for the public.

Since the first *HWJ* issue in 1976, the journal explored the themes that would have influenced the diffusion of PH worldwide: feminist studies rather than gender history; the relationship to sociology and the history of present times; oral history; history in museums and in the media; the creation of oral sources; social and family history through photography, cinema, literature, and theater. The *HWJ* brought history to academics and also to wider audiences, even relying on those who were not historians: the "Enthusiasm" column was entrusted to some even outside the profession (Mason, 1985). Returning to the program of the *HWJ*, it should be noted that although oriented towards a socialist political agenda, historians at Ruskin College anticipated some of the goals of American public historians and were close to the people's history of Howard Zinn in the USA (Duberman, 2012). The *HJW* experiment tended to make history available to other audiences, and often preferred to cultivate the memories of the past—closer to individual and collective experiences—in today's society, rather than being locked away without direct contact with the public, in an esoteric vision of history. For Samuel, historians were actors committed to analyzing social and political problems and capable of spreading their ideas "coming out" of the university, and sharing their analyses among ordinary people (Samuel and Thompson, 1990).

PH was recognized in the Uk only in 1985 with a first international conference held at Ruskin College by Samuel. Ten years later, in 1996, the year of his death, Ruskin College launched the first Master's degree dedicated to PH in the UK. The activities carried out in the

two-year period of the Master's highlighted the highly spontaneous way of bringing the public closer to history, and sought to include everyone in reflections on British society that included analyzing the past. In fact, the course leveraged the traditional cornerstones of a British path to PH. When teaching or interacting with communities, Samuel adopted the Socratic method, to help his interlocutors articulate knowledge they were not aware they possessed. Students of Ruskin reflected on their personal relationship to history. This form of ego-history, consolidated with the use of specific techniques (Nora, 1987; Passerini and Geppert, 2002), was capable of focusing on and explaining the relationship between the self and history, the intersection between individual memory and history: Samuel's particular conception of the relationship between history and memory. In this, Samuel, and his academic legacy, clearly distinguished himself from Roy Rosenzweig's vision in the USA, which did not give collective memories an epistemological status such as that of history. Samuel tried to diversify ways of transmitting historical discourses on contemporary social issues. This venture was similar to the methods of a movie director such as Ken Loach, with his historic and committed cinema (Papadopoulos, 1999); or in the field of popular music, with his lyrics about the injustices of history, the storytelling of a musician such as Robert Wyatt (1985).

International Public History: Local Practices with Global Methods

It was in the UK that the movement was born, with its own methods for sharing knowledge and authority between the actors of the bottom-up process to making history with lower social classes, before blossoming so consistently through a great diversity of practices, not only dedicated to social activism, in the United States at the end of the 1970s. Outside these two countries, different conceptions of public/applied history through different paths made their way worldwide within Anglophone countries such as Canada and Australia, but also in South Africa (Ashton and Kean, 2009; Ashton and Trapeznik, 2019).

From the start of the PH movement in the USA, the question of an internationalization of PH has been raised. In 1980, the founder of PH in California, John Wesley Johnson, was invited to the first PH conference held in continental Europe, in Rotterdam. This was an Anglo-Dutch seminar of "applied historical studies" organized by the Economic and Social History Committee, Social Science Research Council (SSRC) of the UK, together with the new University of Rotterdam (Wesley Johnson, 1982; Sutcliffe, 1984, p. 7). The organizers were the urban historian Anthony Sutcliffe from the University of Sheffield, and historian and journalist Henk Van Dijk of the University of Rotterdam. They invited some historians from other countries to the seminar, including François Bedarida, Director of the newly born Institut d'Histoire du Temps Present in Paris (Torres, 2020).

We had to wait after 2010 for PH to really become a global phenomenon, spreading to all continents with greater or lesser success, and in various forms. In this, the birth in 2011 of the International Federation for Public History (IFPH) has been an asset (Adamek, 2010). After the birth of the IFPH, the IFPH Steering Committee worked to foster PH presence worldwide, in organizing international conferences. PH developed outside of English-speaking countries in the last ten years in continental Europe, South America and Asia. It has been supported by the birth of national associations: in Brazil in 2012,[8] in Italy in 2016,[9] and more recently in Japan (2019),[10] Spain (2020),[11] and Australia (2021).[12]

International PH influenced the way in which history developed as a profession globally and in specific countries (Cauvin and Noiret, 2017; Gardner and Hamilton, 2017; Cauvin, 2018;

Dean and Etges, 2018; Ashton and Trapeznik, 2019). Also, specific journals took an essential role in developing the field worldwide. *The Public Historian* founded in 1979 at the UCSB, was the only PH academic journal until the foundation in 2007 of an open access journal with an international scope, the *Public History Review*, at the University of Technology in Sidney. In 2013, *Public History Weekly*, the first international PH BlogJournal, also open access, was founded in Switzerland. Finally, in 2018 appeared *International Public History*, the official organ of the IFPH.

What has to be stressed is that the name of the field varies worldwide. When the usage of history has a policy-oriented and political purpose, the term "applied history" is often used in the UK and elsewhere (Green, 2016). "Applied history" is translated in German as *Angewandte Geschichte* (Niesser and Tomann, 2014), with the idea that history serves policy-oriented activities. Based at the University of Jena, there is also an Applied European Contemporary History association which promotes the field. In 2002, a group of historians, belonging to the universities of London and Cambridge, founded an association called History and Policy with the purpose of "connecting historians, policymakers and the media."[13] They, in a way, took over the policy-oriented part of Raphael Samuel's mission in a less radical and actively committed social and political framework, and also without the participation of interested communities. They pointed at the value of past experiences—the usability of different pasts—for solving contemporary questions.

In addition, in some countries such as Germany, the politics of history education, how history is used and transmitted in schools and their manuals, has become a relevant part of the PH field of activities and is called "public history of education" (Demantowsky, 2018; Carretero et al., 2017; Bandini and Oliviero, 2019). Sometimes the English terms are retained in other languages, such as in Italy, the Netherlands,[14] and partially in Germany, because of the intellectual affiliation with the North American model of institutionalization. In Italy, the two words in English differentiate the study of the instrumental use of the past in the present to sustain political purposes, from the discipline of PH as a fieldwork of practices and methods. The English name was maintained with the intention of connecting with the field taught in American universities and to indicate a clear difference with the "public use of history" (*uso pubblico della storia*) for political-ideological purposes, a term introduced in Italy in 1993 (Gallerano, 1995).

More often the words are not translated into English. This happens in Hispanic countries and in Brazil (*história pública*) or in francophone countries (*histoire publique*). In Brazil in 2012 and in Japan in 2019, the intention is to avoid using English, sometimes seen as a "colonial language," and to translate the canonical words to indicate the specific path of the discipline in these countries. Michihiro Okamoto, at the University of Tokyo, describes a specific path for the birth of the discipline in Japan, based on several conferences and projects organized in the country which opened the making of history to other actors, not only professional historians, influenced by the linguistic and visual turns that proposed not only written historical narratives (Okamoto, 2018).

TASK OR MISSION? IS IT POSSIBLE TO DEFINE PUBLIC HISTORY?

The need to define PH is constantly reiterated (Conard, 2018) and regularly debated (Cauvin, 2016, pp. 10–11; Nießer and Tomann, 2018). Jim Gardner and Paula Hamilton speak of the politics of defining PH. They focus on "doing" history. Working with the past is the principal task of PH that informs its definition: "The concept of practice is its central *raison d'être*. The verbs relating to history are what matter: the activity of doing, presenting, or making history in a range of forms for many different purposes and communicating it to multiple audiences or "publics" is the main characteristic" (Gardner and Hamilton, 2017, p. 1). The path to a definition of the field varied over time and in different continents depending on specific national contexts and journeys (Frisch, 2009, pp. 720–721). In Australia, in 2005, Paul Ashton and Paula Hamilton wrote that "public history … is an elastic term that can mean different things to different people, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally."[15]

Making PH means history in direct contact with the evolution of the mentality and sense of collective belonging of the different communities that coexist within the national space, and enhances the study of their identities and collective memories. PH is history made in the field, among people who produce testimonies of their own past. History is a way to reconstruct and make sense of something that is gone, and which is called "past," using evidences that are still accessible or that can be reconstructed in our present. The difference between history and PH lies in the context of the kind of representation of the past chosen. Historians reconstruct the past in essays and books written mainly for their peers; public historians do so with the intention to interact and engage with their audience about it. To behave as a public historian means adding a public purpose to the reconstruction of the past. This process contributes to offering usable meanings and interpretations of past events in the present for doing history with different media within communities, which enhance their tangible and intangible heritages, and question their collective identities between history and memory.

PH consists of multidisciplinary collaborations and integrations between different professional languages. The product of a PH project—in other words, what emerges at the end of the working process—is very rarely to be traced back to a single historian. It covers many different forms of communication of the past: in a public park, a historical reconstruction (re-enactment), an urban restoration, a material or virtual exhibition, an archaeological site, even the creation of a website, a television product, a theatrical representation, or a documentary film. Processing the past in all these different contexts presupposes that historians engage and share their professional authority in collective behaviors with other disciplines and other professionals, and in interdisciplinary settings. Indeed, a PH project should credit all participants, as happens with the closing credits of a movie, when the public are already leaving the still dark theater. All this information would often be useful precisely to offer recognition to the various professionals who contributed to a PH project.

Nevertheless, defining PH is a very difficult task. PH has often been identified as transdisciplinary, as a "big tent" discipline. Knowing the past better is not enough: history must be delivered publicly, and with direct participation of the public. The adjective "public" attracts all the questioning. Therefore, this sub-field of history could be compared to the digital humanities field, often called by its practitioners an "umbrella field" which includes different sub-fields such as, for instance, digital history or digital PH. The international dimension of PH is about applying universal methods locally. Today PH is a glocal practice and discipline

(Cauvin and Noiret, 2017, pp. 26–27). As a result, local case studies have become comparable in their methods and practices globally.

A glocal definition of PH and of the social role of public historians could be the following: the discipline of PH aims at sharing a "public sense" of history for a better society, publicly aware of its past. PH implies that analyzing the past with and for different publics is an asset for the understanding of the present. Public historians aim at becoming important experts in interpreting the role of the past and of collective memories in our societies.

IDENTITY AND MEMORY AT THE CORE OF PUBLIC HISTORY

The influential American PH movement asserted that history should be alive and publicly useful within different communities that reflect on themselves and seek their own cultural and anthropological identity. In this sense, PH becomes a civic value and a public good in a plural society.

Building forms of history-telling within migrant communities, capturing their memories based on the social experience of migration, serve as instruments to negotiate individual and collective meanings and shape plural identities belonging to countries of origin and arrival. Such life story research and narrative is based on a transdisciplinary analytical perspective, with an overall focus on the mutable cultural role of past experiences in molding new identities and social categorizations (Lucchesi, 2019; Passerini, 2018; on South Africa, Escobedo and Kurzwelly, 2021). Oral history interviews played a central role in contributing to the ethnographic methods used by public historians in fieldwork activities with migrants. As a consequence, it is not a euphemism to say that oral history practices well described by Brazilian public historians (Almeida and Rovai, 2011; Mauad et al., 2016; Rodrigues and Trindade Borges, 2021), influenced PH methods from its origin (Woods, 1989; Hamilton and Shopes, 2008).

The reconstruction within concerned communities of their individual and collective memories is a core PH practice. It is often part of a cosmopolitan approach to marginalized communities and ethnic/gender groups with whom history and memory is dealt with on a local scale. Access to all peoples' history, be they migrants, first nations, religious or linguistic minorities and local ethnicities in all continents is a basic human right worldwide. The role of PH is to help rediscover and cultivate collective memories enlightened by the knowledge of history. It implies the capacity to rewrite controversial periods in history in more consensual ways and to process mourning, consolidating memories through historical research and in some cases, creating truth commissions, because active collective memories are not compatible with a mythization of the past (Bevernage and Wouters, 2018; Hettiarachchi and Santhiago, 2021). Memory has to be studied and interpreted by historians, and is not a form of blindness when only history brings us the truth about the past (Noiret, 2011).

A key issue of today's difficult process of European integration is the capacity to welcome, by consensus, the divided European memories of the post-World War II history in Eastern European countries that suffered communist totalitarianism until 1989, compared to Western countries liberated from Nazi fascism in 1945. The European Parliament narrative of the House of European History in Brussels (2017) has been challenged by the Platform of European Memory and Conscience, founded by Eastern European countries becasue the permanent exhibition did not show enough of the crimes of the Soviet occupation (Hrynko et

al., 2017). The perceptions of the post-war period in collective memories are highly divergent between Eastern and Western Europe (Kesteloot, 2018).

Together with other social scientists, the task of public historians is also to analyse the memories of events in the present and actively focus on their changing perception in different historical contexts over centuries, keeping their memory alive (Duby and Nora, 2005). Their persistence nurtures intangible heritage and shapes the definition of the concept of identity investigated by Levy-Strauss (1995). Between 1986 and 1996, the Urban Identity in Tuscany multidisciplinary proto-PH project, at the European University Institute in Florence, enquired about the persistence today of collective memories of the medieval past (Carle, 1998). Based on ethnographic methods that engaged with the local population, this study of centennial civic and popular traditions investigated the permanence of collective memories inside and outside the walls of six small medieval towns from the 15th to the 20th centuries.

The French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs wrote, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* in 1925; and Marc Bloch, in the *Revue de Synthèse historique*, and as a historian, wrote a long review of the book, also to draw a dividing line between the two professions in looking at collective and individual memories (Bloch, 1925, p. 77). Bloch was very interested in learning about a theory of collective memory based, as Halbwachs did, on collective psychology. According to Halbwachs, a sociology of memory was made up of two aspects: how the social entered individual memories, and the study of the "mémoire collective au sens propre du mot, c'est-à-dire la conservation des souvenirs communs à tout un groupe humain et leur influence sur la vie des sociétés" (Halbwachs, 1925, p. 199). Bloch agreed with Halbwachs that individual memories were only one aspect of a group's memory (Bloch, 1925, p. 76). Halbwachs identified three different types of collective memory: the "family memory," that of religious groups, and finally, that of social classes. As a medievalist, Bloch argued that "custom," a complex construction of rules and practices over time, was missing in Halbwachs's categories. Therefore, it was worth studying how historical processes impacted changes in collective memories. Historians had to contextualize Halbwachs's sociological memory categories over time (Halbwachs, 1925, p. 77). Bloch proposed to study the presence of collective mentalities in social classes, build on the representations of traditions daily updated. This was the missing piece of reflection in the "*cadres sociaux de la mémoire*."

Bloch anticipated what is a core practice of PH: the study of traditions within local communities, and the struggle against communities' myths when aiming at a memorial reconstruction. According to Bloch, older community members have to actively transfer their knowledge of the past to the younger generations. To help in achieving this process, the mediation of "memory professionals" is needed. Today, public historians may achieve such a task sharing their authority within communities.

HISTORY WITH A SHARED AUTHORITY: PH AS CITIZEN'S SCIENCE OF THE PAST[16]

Michael Frisch's concept of a "shared authority" approach to the past with communities, considers that communities would not be directly empowered, historians having shared their own expertise with them (Frisch, 1990, 2017). "Sharing authority" applies when public historians agree to split and divide their professional expertise, because they practice forms of engagement, trustworthy dialogues, and participation for and with their non-expert audiences, but

keep in mind the guidelines of the project and their public goals. It is easier to accept a shared authority between experts, especially in transdisciplinary contexts with other technology professionals and social scientists and their multiple forms of expertise about the past and memory which actively participate in the making of narratives.

PH implies that they are different forms of knowledge coexisting within communities: what people know (or think to know) about their past and what experts studied about their history. The role of the public historian is then twofold. They have to take account, critically and in their context, of available public knowledge and myth. They also have to share and communicate their own knowledge, and how to apply professional skills and methods to the public knowledge. Doing PH is always about a tension existing between the role played by communities of knowledge (ethnic, gendered, sexual, linguistic, and so on) and the public historian's active role in contributing to their interpretation. Such an interactive process of history-making, sharing an authority with others, is needed to build a community narrative (Noiret, 2022a, 2022b).

To do so, public historians can share part of their authority as experts of the analysis of the past, what is also called in citizen's social sciences a form of "mutual education" between experts and their communities, in defining the kind of relationship that can be built in a social knowledge-making process. A qualified expert such as Jim Gardner in the USA does not suggest that public historians should accept giving up or losing their authority and "radically trust" the role of the public: "historians should not abdicate their responsibilities privileging the public's voice" (Gardner, 2020, p. 61; see also Gardner, 2010). It is preferred that, when historians are working with an audience (which is not always the case in PH endeavours), they should share their authority without losing control of the role of experts.

Such popular access to the creation of historical knowledge, especially in the digital realm, has been defined as a form of citizen science, a "democratization" of the making of history part of the global emergence of a digital open science promoted by and for the citizens.[17] Newly born digital sources do not belong to traditional archives, but to the potential participation of all citizens in the making of history in the present and on the web, with their own memories and documents. The shift towards the digital has ultimately contributed to the development of digital PH as a form of "history." In this context, sharing authority fostered the possibility of co-creating history contents and storytelling. This process of doing history became particularly useful in multimedia PH projects launched with and for communities. Collaboration between the public and history professionals indeed encouraged, even in the digital world, the use of shared authority practices for the creation, management, dissemination, and public use of content generated directly by the communities interested in their history. Public historians and curators active in memory institutions, galleries, libraries, archives and museums (GLAM), understood that the knowledge which came from below, directly from the citizens with their collective and individual memories, had to be collected and channeled, sharing their authority, into the construction of applied digital PH projects.

DIGITAL PUBLIC HISTORY

The developments of Web 2.0 interactive practices fostered a rapid and global transformation of the role of the public (Noiret, 2013). Furthermore, the semantic web (Web 3.0) and interoperable data coding languages through international description standards fostered new

communication processes for the digital content. The web has become "social": web users as passive readers of someone else's content have become direct actors and producers of their own history through now easily built websites and social media. In 2001, with the creation of Wikipedia, and between 2004 and 2006 with the birth of the first social networks (MySpace, Flickr, Facebook, YouTube), the discipline of PH was deeply transformed. Applied collaborative practices that had characterized its birth in the 1970s were moved into the global virtual world and open to everyone, promoting their own "social self" (Floridi, 2014) made up of individual memories, documents, and narratives. Such a citizens' quest to become direct protagonists of the past in the present had become socially ubiquitous and global.

At the turn of the millennium, first Jan van Dijck in 1994 (Dijk, 2020) and then Manuel Castells in 1996 (Castells, 1996) described a new networked society in which mass digital media had empowered different social actors and publics, remodeling social organizations and communication through the digital. In just a few years as Director of the Center for History and New Media (CHNM) at George Mason University (George Mason University, 2007; Goodman, 2007), Roy Rosenzweig, a social historian with a passion for digital media since the invention of the CDROM in the 1980s (Rosenzweig, 1995), was able to orient the CHNM to produce numerous seminal digital PH projects. Digital PH projects integrated PH traditional methods engaging with publics, with the request for direct participation of the users in the creation of digital archives based on individual and collective memories.

On September 11, 2001 a global event took place that allowed the testing of these new forms of collaboration between experts and the public in the digital realm. The terrorist attacks on American soil were documented by their witnesses. The 9/11DigitalArchive[18] collected over 150 000 digital documents on this epochal event, "allowing ordinary Americans to literally make their own history" (Sparrow, 2006). Started in January 2002, this first-born digital archive, based on crowdsourcing methods and collective participation, became the first large "invented" digital archive deposited at the Library of Congress in 2003. Since then, and in all countries, PH has been irremediably and radically transformed. The past and the present, as time categories, have come closer together, and sometimes mixed (Olivier and Tamm, 2019).

Today, numerous catastrophic events that hit communities (wars, civil wars, terrorist attacks, earthquakes, hurricanes, pandemics, and so on) are now documented worldwide through crowdsourcing practices aiming at collecting everyone's testimonies. The 2011 earthquake at Fukushima in Japan and the consequent nuclear catastrophe have been documented directly by the affected communities.[19] More recently, the many worldwide Covid-19 memory projects document worldwide on local dimensions how targeted communities lived during the pandemic.[20]

The new digital sources and digital PH projects with the participation of citizens in the making of history in the present, and on the web, have ultimately contributed to the development of a public science of history, a digital PH or, in other words, a new citizen's history. "Digital PH allows the combination of academic knowledge of history with modern digital communication practices and to engage with the past facilitating user-generated content and authority sharing with involved communities and publics" (Noiret et al., 2022).

The two main and recurring methodological methods in PH practices—shared authority and user-generated content (or crowdsourcing)—have been further shaped by the digital turn affecting the historical sciences. The possibility of crowdsourcing documents, creating new forms of storytelling, has developed greatly within digital multimedia PH projects (Leon, 2017). What has revolutionized the public practice of history online is the fact that profes-

sionals (archivists and historians) are no longer the only ones to act in the virtual world and to produce, or use, digital documentation to carry out research, write history, communicate reflections about the past, and engage with online communities, even if it is not done without many criticisms and the undermining of expert knowledge and truthful narratives.

One of the consequences of the so-called democratization of communication processes, and the capacity to foster a "social self" through widespread public diffusion of digital social media, is the promotion of alternative narratives about the past. Social media fostered direct attacks on what had been, up to then, a social legitimate and scientific recognition of the value of science and of professional research and scientific output. New digital media 2.0 had given everyone with a computer and an Internet connection a voice bypassing expert knowledge which was no longer able to control and validate the message (Nichols, 2017). New social media, especially the web that integrates all other media, deeply changed the way individuals and communities add documents, memories, comments, and narratives, allowing everyone to become a historian, without the need of professional historians (Jensen, 2009, p. 44).[21] These digital transformations affected social behaviors in the digital infosphere and raised important critical issues about the truthfulness of easily spread information. With easy mass access to communication media, it became easier, for instance, to promote negationist views of the Jewish Holocaust (Criscione et al., 2004). Alternative, unscientific narratives of the past in the digital world rapidly spread uncontrolled in the infosphere.

Notwithstanding these critical issues, the process of history-telling through different media reordered the epistemological priorities of public historians in the digital age. The transformation of traditional history-making in the new digital age put at the center of a new attention the concept of "audience" that has always been essential for the practice of PH: "the public has a major role to play in shaping the work of public historians" (Dean, 2018, p. 3).

CONCLUSIONS

A public historian does not renounce any of the scientific methods and the wealth of practices that made up his profession. They get involved in the public arena by proposing ideas, plans, summaries, exhibitions, stories, paths, analysis, reports that push them to the forefront of the media to respond personally to the social "needs for history." More prosaically, public historians follow the understanding of what the public and private institutions that employ them think these needs are, in function of their respective audiences. Public historians' practices are aimed at helping to design, correct, and direct public and private policies, to produce market studies based on the knowledge of history, support legal initiatives, foster urban and cultural heritage preservation, work for private companies, enquire into historical ecosystems for supporting environmental and conservation policies, curate exhibitions and museums, manage material culture evidence, orchestrate forms of re-enactments of the past and "living history," interpret civic and public commemorations; all activities capable of fostering the awareness of the past among the public (Benson et al., 1986).

The social role of history, its descent into the public arena, the use of history with a public purpose in mind, and its diffusion in the media, these different ways used to interact publicly between public historians and consumers of history influenced new ways for bringing history into present discussions about the past (De Groot, 2016). Asking ourselves, as Rosenzweig and Thelen did in 1998, what kind of past is being represented in our societies when entire com-

munities are in need of history, and being able to raise the level of public awareness of history, goes hand-in-hand with the need to identify the type of audience that is being addressed. Both issues are perhaps at the core of public historians' professional orientations.

An important challenge today, and for the future, is not institutional or pedagogical: it is about the need to engage in civic campaigns for a better public knowledge of history, against the proliferation of the fake narratives about the past that foster public clashes between divisive or invented collective memories, outside of a historical and critical analysis. In many countries, memory battlefields are part of the history of the present times. What is needed is to include conflicting collective memories in an open, public debate. This would foster a better understanding of how nations and civil societies developed against the backdrop of their complex and often violent pasts.

NOTES

1. All web resources were active on July 17, 2021.
2. "The primary difference between public and academic history is in the area of communication. In the audiences that we attempt to reach and in the products that we use to convey our scholarship to those audiences," wrote Philip Scarpino, Co-Director of the Graduate Program in Public History at Purdue, Indiana University (Scarpino, 1993).
3. *International Coalition of Sites of Conscience*. Available at: https://www.sitesofconscience.org/en/home/.
4. Now see also NCPH, What is Public History? Available at: https://ncph.org/what-is-public-history/about-the-field/.
5. The terms "applied history" and "proto-public history" had been used to refer to periods even before World War I.
6. History Associations with a Special Interest in Public History. Available at: https://ncph.org/what-is-public-history/additional-resources/.
7. Resources for Public Historians. Available at: https://www.historians.org/jobs-and-professional-development/professional-life/resources-for-public-historians.
8. Rede Brasileira de História Pública. Available at: https://historiapublica.com.br/a-rede.
9. Associazione Italiana di Public History. Available at: http://www.aiph.it.
10. Japanese Association of Public History. Available at: https://public-history9.webnode.jp/.
11. Asociación Española de Historia Pública. Available at: https://www.historiapublica.es.
12. Australian and Aotearoa NZ Public History Network. Available at: https://phn.edu.au/.
13. History and Policy. Available at: http://www.historyandpolicy.org/whatwedo.html.
14. University of Amsterdam. Master in Public History. Available at: https://www.uva.nl/en/discipline/history/specialisations/public-history.html.
15. Australian Centre for Public History, 8 October 2005. *Internet Archive*. Available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20050208103632/http://www.publichistory.uts.edu.au:80/.
16. University of Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History (C2DH). PH as Citizen's Science of the Past (PHAS). Available at: https://www.c2dh.uni.lu/projects/public-history-new-citizen-science-past-phacs.
17. EU Commission (2013, 2017). Green Paper on Citizen Science. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/citizen-science.
18. CHNM (2002–). The September 11 Digital Archive. Available at: http://911digitalarchive.org/.
19. Japan Disasters Digital Archive (JDA) (2015–). Available at: https://jdarchive.org/. Regroups more than 600 collections of multimedia data dealing with the impact of the March 2011 Tsunami and the nuclear catastrophe in Japan.
20. International Federation for Public History and Made by Us. You are the primary source: COVID-19 Story-Collecting Initiatives. Available at: https://ifph.hypotheses.org/3276.

21. "Everyone a historian," the expression revisited by Roy Rosenzweig, came from the title of the 1931 famous lecture by Carl L. Becker, President of the AHA, entitled "Everyman his Own Historian."

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8. Public geography

Salvo Torre

The concept of public geography is relatively new in the international debate and certainly began to be used with some regularity in the first decade of the new millennium; thus, after the spread of the debate on public sociology, from which it explicitly takes its cue. Despite clear differentiation in the use of the term, which recalls a consolidated model of division into large families of geographical thought, several cases seem to indicate a growing tendency in recent years to use the category of public geography as an innovative space for reflection and action in public contexts.

The backwardness of geography is probably due to several factors, one being the still very sectoral and fragmented structure of the geographical debate, which has led much of critical geography not to consider the questions posed by public sociology and public history as a field in their own right. Similarly, cultural geography scholars considered the issue in the same terms for over a century. That debate did not consider the public sphere as an object of specific reflection until the late 1990s. There is also a problem of epistemological weakness: the need to construct methods and better define a field has in some cases led public geography to be placed exclusively in the field of communication. In recent years, however, several interventions have posed the question of the public use of geographical knowledge, reasoning the need to resume a discourse traditionally linked to the radical critique of the function of geographical knowledge, and taking up a critical strand born in the post-colonial phase.

The debate on public geography thus lies at the intersection of different strands of geography, and questions several of the fundamental assumptions of the various currents of critical thought. Although it is indicative of the major social changes that push to redefine the role of knowledge, it could take on a role of its own in producing a different idea of the use of geographical knowledge. It is also a debate that is affected by the demand for change in research methodologies that emerge, for example, from the debate on decolonial epistemologies, or the radical critique of patriarchal systems of hierarchy and classification of the world. However, public geography could take on a fundamental role in the changing perception of the social and human sciences, precisely in correspondence with the spread in recent years of movements such as those on climate justice and ecological justice, which make extensive use of scientific knowledge and discuss some of the issues extensively debated by public geography in recent decades.

A BRIEF GENEALOGY: THE ORIGINS

The term ‘public geography’ is not yet clearly recognised in the international debate. The idea of a public geography emerged with a certain delay compared to other disciplines, and with a certain difficulty, probably because the theme is at the centre of the construction of oppositional geographies, experiences that, starting from critical geography itself, tend to represent geographical knowledge in its public use as something in conflict with academic knowledge

and the institutional use of geography. Until the first decade of the 2000s, the Anglophone debate spoke about geography and public policy or the profile of geography in public debate. For example, in both the French-speaking and the Latin American debate, the term was used to designate a strand of British thought.

Certainly, some fundamental issues in the history of human geography contributed to this delay: partly the instrumental use of geographical knowledge, and partly the European academies' participation in the colonial experience. Overall it was the history of a very present science in society, as knowledge useful for the structuring of political power. The European tradition developed in the great academies and associations until the middle of the twentieth century, still representing the profession of geographer as closely linked to military activities and the colonial experience (Smith, 2013).

In a fundamental essay representing a first review of public geography debate, Duncan Fuller made explicit reference to the need to learn from Burawoy's public sociology and from public history in order to find a shared definition (Fuller, 2008). Fuller asked a network of scholars and experts how to define the concept of public geography. Results showed that there was not yet a shared definition, but also nothing precise in terms of epistemological reflection.

Doubts about the use of the term can be traced back to the debate that animated various intellectual conflicts from the 1970s. Critical geography, Marxist geography, cultural geography and social geography were born in the last two centuries precisely out of heavy criticism of academic knowledge, and were directed towards the idea that it was necessary to disseminate knowledge outside the academies. The first critical geography looked at human geography as a discipline which maintained two qualities for centuries – being a nomothetic discipline, and having a close link with political power – two qualities which made it a science that was also very present in everyday life, but inaccessible to the majority of the population.

Between the 1960s and the late 1980s, in correspondence with a long series of scientific revolutions and the emergence of social movements, a plural debate took shape as the birth phase of public geography. Following Fuller's (2008) reasoning, part of the debate refers directly to the birth of 'responsibility' (Chatterton and Larch, 2009; Morrill, 1984) and 'relevance' (Dickinson and Clarke, 1972; Staeheli and Mitchell, 2005), both of which – especially in their geographical translation – focus on the purpose of the research, however, rather than on the meaning and social use of the results. Fuller recalls how Dickinson and Clarke point out that the focus is very much on policy-related indications, referring to policymakers, or at most to those who follow the political debate on administration. The turning point was certainly the construction of a dialogue between movements and geographic studies, such as the foundation of the journal *Antipode* (Stea, 1969) and the path that led to the foundation of *Progress in Geography* and later to *Progress in Human Geography*. All these experiences, together with those of European groups, led, with a certain oscillation between Marxist geography and critical geography, to the formulation of strong cultural proposals, all aimed at overcoming the boundaries of the strictly academic public. It was also a phase common to the social sciences, in which all the debates on social change were included, from the pressure operated by the new anti-systemic movements (Arrighi et al., 1989) to the transition between structuralism and poststructuralism (Celata, 2021). The cases of the journal *Herotode* in France and the Geografia Democratica group in Italy perfectly embody this tendency to transform a science heavily affected by the process of decolonisation, and then by the 1973 crisis. In this context, the contribution of personalities such as Milton Santos (1974, 1978) is fundamental, because it achieved the first irruption of non-European thought in the vision of geographical analysis,

and because it was naturally oriented towards the construction of public knowledge, aimed at the production of practical social knowledge (Zusman, 2002).

The themes debated by the great geographical surveys were all extremely topical at that stage, but the historical contexts within which the production of geographical science were realised disappeared, which is strange considering that until a few years earlier it was one of the disciplines with the widest audience. Geography in the last two centuries had given rise, quite rarely, to various literary genres and models of popularisation that had a huge non-academic audience.

In the same years, Gambi (1968), Peet (1969), Bunge (1973), Harvey (1974), Quaini (1974), Santos (1974, 1978) and Raffestin (1980) all focused on the need to free geographical research from strictly academic spaces and redefine its function concerning power. David Harvey drew on the tradition of critical thinking about civic engagement and the social use of knowledge, precisely in the years of his turn towards Marxism. In the essay 'What kind of geography for what kind of public policy?' (Harvey, 1974), he directly tackled the problem of the inadequacy of academic research models in relation to the transformations of society, introducing themes that had been the subject of controversy in recent centuries. Nineteenth-century anarchist thought had, for example, produced a reflection on the pedagogy of geography, the construction and the dissemination of collective knowledge. Élisée Réclus can be considered a pioneer of the debate for his focus on the transmission of knowledge and his criticism of the functioning of academic models (Clark and Martin, 2004). A starting point of that debate was precisely the question posed by the model of national classification, which also represented a specificity of the colonial model of world classification. Geographers had made a major contribution to the idea of a world naturally divided by state borders, and had also been involved in many of the political debates about border wars. According to Harvey, the first step was surely to pose a problem that still exists in research today, namely the 'moral obligation of the geographer' (Harvey, 1974). This was the need to mediate between the humanistic tradition and the needs of the state. Geographers tried to learn how to exploit the contradiction between the two spheres, acting within structures such as the state, which were both the institutions that required the research and the object of the questions, but which could also undergo great transformations due to the critical conclusions of those same investigations. In this sense the tradition of critical geography was considered an important precedent:

> If anything, the radical tradition of geography (which was never very strong) harked back to the anarchists, particularly those at the end of the nineteenth century when geographer-anarchists like Peter Kropotkin and Élisée Réclus were prominent thinkers and activists. There is much of value in that tradition. It was, for example, much more sensitive to issues of environment and urban organization (albeit critically) than has generally been the case within Marxism. But the influence of such thinkers was either strictly circumscribed or was transformed, through the influence of town planners like Patrick Geddes, into a communitarianism. (Harvey, 2001, p. viii)

Harvey concludes that the construction of a field of confrontation between that tradition, the experience of the 1960s movements and the Marxist tradition, produced a new space for reflection:

> Part of the radical geography movement in the late 1960s was dedicated to revitalizing the anarchist tradition, while geographers with strong sympathies with, say, national liberation and anti-imperialist revolutionary movements wrote in a more directly historical-materialist and experiential mode and eschewed Marxian abstractions. Geographers of this sort (Lattimore and Keith Buchanan come to

> mind) were marginalized, often treated like pariahs, within their discipline. Radical geographers sought nevertheless both to uphold this tradition (in the face of fierce opposition) but also, as in the radical geography journal Antipode (founded in 1968) to underpin it by appeal to the texts of Marx and Engels, Lenin, Luxemburg, Lukacs, and the like. (Harvey, 2001, p. ix)

A BRIEF GENEALOGY: BECOMING PUBLIC AS A GEOGRAPHER

There is another fundamental aspect concerning the correspondence between the construction of the nation-state and the invention of national geographies, especially the teaching of geography. In that context, geography is characterised as a field corresponding to the construction of identity, so much as to condition the most tangible idea of the school as a place where knowledge about the nation is transmitted. The theme has been addressed several times in the history of the discipline, and it returned to heavily condition the debate in the 1990s when the end of the nation-state was openly discussed (Gibson-Graham, 1996; Escobar, 2007).

Due to various factors – the end of the Cold War and the emergence of new nationalities – the turn of the 1990s saw the need to revise the framework of political geography concerning the spread of postcolonial and decolonial theories that brought about a radical change in the vision of geography, especially the role it can assume in relation to social reality. The crisis of the classical models was also undoubtedly influenced by the cultural turn, especially in American and British academies. Those years saw the first explicit references to the need for geography to move towards what today we might call a public turn, taking on board the criticisms coming from political and social experiences that were still excluded from the academies. The turn became progressively more evident up to the phase of anti-globalisation movements, bearers of criticism of much Western academic knowledge. In that phase, especially during social forums, the collective production of knowledge is also discussed, and various proposals for participatory mapping and collective design of living spaces are disseminated.

The public turn is not characterised by a demand for inclusion in academic courses, which characterised many of the innovative cultural expressions of previous years, but by the opposite demand for participation of experts in the experiences of collective knowledge production. Academics are asked to participate in different forms of research in spaces that look very much like those presented as 'the terrain' in the critical debate of the 1960s and 1970s. It is a question of getting out of the academies and engaging in constant dialogue with those involved in the investigations. At this stage, it is very difficult to find a definition of public geography, but contents and questions all point in the same direction. This is a widespread dialogue, especially in the United Kingdom and the United States, where many studies pose the problem of public engagement, and the dissemination of knowledge faces many changes, from political ones to the spread of new forms of communication (Kitchin and Hubbard, 1999; Martin, 2001).

Fuller's short survey in 2008 showed that even at that time it was difficult for geographers to define their practice or work in terms of public activity. The prevailing definition remained that of a scholar of human geography. A series of considerations on the difficulty of self-definition had led Fuller to write the previous year, together with Kye Askins, an essay entitled 'The discomforting rise of "public geographies" – a "public" conversation' (Fuller and Askins, 2007), in which the two authors noted that a new field was taking shape but that the debate still suffered from many unresolved problems, such as the difficult distinction from radical geography, or the lack of reflection on the role of geographers as workers in the academy. Today we might also add that the debate initially developed with little regard for feminist and decolonial

critiques of the categories of research, not just the modes of communication. In the case of the universities of Northumbria and Birmingham, the first research groups were also born in the same years, which addressed various issues such as the categories adopted and the proposal to redefine the term 'public' referring to the territory (Fuller, 2008):

> For instance, it was noted how only a year ago (at the time of writing anyway) the Birmingham (University) Public Geographies Working Group (hereafter PGWG) had stated that a 'new field' of public geography was actually 'beginning to take shape', arguing that a 'variety of geographies are now emerging which call themselves "public"'. (Fuller, 2008, p. 834)

In 2008, Noel Castree organised a collective reflection on the relationship between pedagogy and geography in which the question of the emergence of public geography clearly emerged. The premise of the discussion is a common starting point for the debate on public geography in recent years:

> This Forum is predicated on the idea that all geographical knowledge is pedagogical and that all pedagogy is political ...
>
> If that exceedingly heterogenous group of people called 'geographers' have anything in common it is this (and it is inevitably generic, even banal): they are together engaged in an ongoing process of producing, sharing, reconstituting and distributing knowledge. This does not make geography a purely epistemological enterprise; on the contrary, the geographical knowledges that are our stock-in-trade both arise from and inform our practical engagements with the world. Even so, these knowledges occupy centre-stage in all we do. (Castree et al., 2008, pp. 680–681)

The PGWG reflected on several of the proposals put forward by Noel Castree in the same years, also identifying in the emergence of a series of works the formation of a new type of geography by public intellectuals. Attention to language characterised this phase of the debate, in which many analyses focused on the search for a model of text that is more readable and can obtain a wider circulation. Alexander Murphy et al. (2005) posed two unresolved problems in recent years: the audience and the recognisability of geographical discourse in a phase of rediscussion of the framework of the social sciences and humanities. It is increasingly difficult to isolate a discourse relating exclusively to a single disciplinary field.

Talking about the public figure of the geographer and the ways in which they move in the context of public debate also helps to understand why the issue is not very present within academia. The issue arose again, for example, when Ward (2007) asked which geographers are to be considered public figures; the answer was: none. In Castree et al.'s (2005) thinking, geography does not produce strong personalities in the public debate, despite the fact that it is among the most widely used science in everyday life. Public discourse uses many categories, but does not recognise the geographical debate. Fuller and Askins (2010) followed Ward's (2007) reflection by identifying Peter Gould, Mark Monmonier and Jared Diamond as potential geographers who could play the role of 'public intellectual'. We also face the old problem of a publicised but not at all public science, traditionally the prerogative of the geography as a technical and technical-military knowledge.

In recent years, some fields of research have made geography a public discipline in a broader sense, not only used but also produced by collective participation. This is the case with climate and environmental crises, and the construction of collective mapping. Although David Harvey, for example, is a more classical figure of the engaged intellectual, he also often intervenes internationally in non-academic and non-traditional contexts, such as homeless

encampments, occupied buildings and schools of popular education. He is a public intellectual who dialogues with dozens of social movements all over the planet.

The work of Duncan Fuller, one of the authors who has been most concerned with this issue, although he died prematurely, shows how the themes considered to be proper to public geography are the traditional ones of critical thinking: see, for example, his studies on the 'alternative' financial sector and ethnic minorities. Fuller and Kitchin's (2004) essay 'Radical theory/critical praxis: making a difference beyond the academy?' is an example of a radical path of public geography, something that can probably be considered an example of how the difference lies in the practices adopted to produce the content rather than in the identification of the themes.

The definition of a science that calls itself "public" is functional, but certainly very limited. A public science must propose collective, replicable practices of knowledge production. The problem lies in the collective use of the results of studies, but also in the collective production of answers to social problems. In 2006, Kevin Ward, analysing various works (e.g. James et al., 2004), asked whether the role of geography was still in any way related to the traditional view of the role of science in public policy. In that question, there were many elements of the tradition, from Carl Sauer's (1941) vision of lifelong learning geography, to the problem of the epistemological disconnect between scientific geography and geographical knowledge as a basis for defining reality. The idea remained that in geography debate there is a simple distinction between the politic and the public, somehow derived from the foundations of geopolitics, according to a model in which knowledge is produced by an observer analysing the territorial declinations of power. This would confirm a certain relationship between the birth of geopolitics and Schmittian reworking of the category of the political.

Contrary to the transition of the early 2000s, it seems that the last decade has instead supported a public turn of geography that does not involve the construction of figures of famous academics, but a series of major debates in which the proposals of geographers have begun to be increasingly relevant and connected to public debate. They have probably been favoured in this by the climate and ecological crisis, by the acceleration of great processes of environmental and social change. Public geography is undoubtedly very much affected by the presence of black, feminist and decolonial geographies, because they all resort to the idea that knowledge should be produced collectively, not just used in political terms. In the same field, the presence of political ecology has pushed towards the connotation of public discipline and towards dialogue with political and social organisations.

In recent years, several consultations have been launched in support of a broad discussion on the issue, such as Eric Sheppard's (2013) President's Column in the *Association of American Geographers Newsletter*. A particular case is the *Manifesto per una Public Geography* edited by the Association of Italian Geographers (Associazione dei Geografi Italiani, 2018), adopted collectively as a proposal to transform academic practices. Presented during a presidential speech by Andrea Riggio in 2018, it proposed building a series of national paths of public geography and considering in the different research activities the problem of the diffusion and use of geographical knowledge (Celata et al., 2019).

METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES: PRACTISING PUBLIC GEOGRAPHY

The problem of public geography is therefore mainly methodological: that is, it is not only a question of writing texts that have a wider circulation, but of producing content that is directly usable in public discourse. Public geography experiments have tried to adopt methods such as co-research or participatory map production; however, the problem of distinguishing between technical knowledge and social issues has arisen frequently.

The solution adopted by Fuller and Askins (2010) was to consult the public, to construct reasoning – including self-reflective reasoning – always starting from enquiry both within the academy and outside. Some classical questions also arise in this framework.

In the symposium organised by Castree (Castree et al., 2008), Laura Pulido and Laura Barraclough underlined, for example, the need to redefine the narratives. Although it seems an atypical problem for geographical analysis, Pulido and Barraclough's proposal is fundamental for the definition of what we could call public geography practices. They talked about the participation of the local population in the construction of the narrative in the experiment 'A People's Guide to Los Angeles' (PGTLA). In that case, it was the creation of a collective narrative that radically transformed the content, not just the purpose of the research. In part, the legacy of participatory geographies is present (Gibson-Graham, 2003; Pain, 2004), but it is also a matter of choices that depend on a radically different idea of the function of research, in which the final product itself is also adopted collectively according to the needs of the social groups involved.

The methodological issue also clarifies the breadth of theoretical positions in the debate. For example, some studies pose the problem of citizenship as access to territoriality (Mezzadra, 2011), and the institutional contrast to widespread geographic illiteracy. In this case, public geography serves not only to compensate for the changing function of public education systems, but also to construct cultural and political identity according to a traditional process. Karen Morin (2012), on the other hand, argued that the fight against geographical illiteracy cannot be separated from issues of power, as the function of participatory knowledge production initiatives would then be highly destabilising for social systems.

Public geography also owes a lot to the experiences of participatory planning and mapping that take place in community map experiments. This is an experience that has found expression in various ways in a number of works in recent years, in networks of enquiry implemented through knowledge sharing. According to Chatterton (Chatterton, 2008; Chatterton and Larch, 2009; Chatterton et al., 2007), some of these authors overlap activism and research not only within a single project, but as a permanent professional identity. Thus public engagement may not be defined by agreement, but is internalised by 'accommodating plural loyalties that sometimes converge and sometimes conflict' (Chatterton, 2008). In the recent cases analysed by Chatterton, for example, methods of geographical investigation must take into account the social construction of territories and social space. This means not only considering the production and dissemination of knowledge and the public use that can be made of it, but also focusing on the participatory production of geographical knowledge. Moreover, the problem posed by a large part of this debate concerns the need to participate actively in the construction; the inability to separate scientific production from the life choices of the subjects involved. Practising public geography in this case means making political choices about participation in collective debates and choices. This choice certainly owes much to the experiences of the late 1990s. This is the case of the People Geography Project (PGP)

(http://peoplesgeographyproject.org/), an experience born in 1999 in New York, inspired by David Harvey's paper, which tried to combine working-class studies, radical geography and critical geography, proposing a participatory mapping of different experiences of urban social conflicts. The PGP went as far as to propose a People's Geography of the United States, also claiming a difference between academic geography and popular geography in the methods of knowledge production.

Part of the debate has focused on the emergence of new geographies, sustained by the spread of new online geographic production tools. Fuller and Askins (2010) focused on the use of networked tools and how the production of new geographies also affects academic knowledge by redefining the idea of collective production. New digital tools have not only facilitated access to cartographic production, but have also proposed innovative methods of mass production of traditional geographical knowledge.

PUBLIC GEOGRAPHY, DECOLONIAL GEOGRAPHIES, COLLECTIVE GEOGRAPHIES: A CONCLUSION

Public geography cannot be disconnected from the idea of the social function of knowledge and the way it changes over time. Duncan Fuller and Rob Kitchin (2004) made use of several quotations from Paulo Freire, who considered geography a tool for interpreting reality whose purpose could not be individual. Its uncertain status also necessarily makes it weak still, but highly dependent on critical thinking. It is partly a question of reflecting on what remains of classical geographical knowledge in today's academia, and partly a question of accepting certain changes that make the perpetuation of the models of science of late modernity impossible. The question is not only about changes in society and cultures. The construction of a multiscalar space, global by definition, made the traditional modes of transmission of knowledge completely inadequate.

For many years now, collective production has also been at the centre of reflection on the subjects involved in research, on the need to produce content that does not relegate communities or territories to the role of passive objects of investigation. Public geography is struggling to take shape, partly because it is still crushed by the criticism of colonial and patriarchal geography, and by its function of regulating normative actions and classifying power. In this framework, it is also important to reflect on the extent to which this debate is conditioned by the new geographies: that is, it requires strong attention to the practices proposed in the experimentation in non-colonial methods of research that addressed the issues of the attribution of meanings and the social construction of territories (Asselin and Basile, 2019; Vásquez-Fernández et al., 2018; Ferretti, 2019). These are big questions that are discussed again through the deconstruction of descriptive methods (Zaragocin Carvajal et al., 2018) or through attention to proposals emerging from decolonial feminism (Lugones, 2003, 2008). As many of the interventions in recent years suggest, the reworking of geographical discourse as a public discourse can be realised through its conscious placement within the process of transformation of social reality.

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9. Urban planning

Marco Cremaschi

Hell is a city much like London.
Percy Bysshe Shelley 1819 [2020]

Modern urban planning (UP) is a broad and blurred field of collective action aimed at regulating the relationships of a society with its spatial ecologies. UP relies upon highly specialized techniques, often incredibly ancient, such as the cadaster, gardening or city design; but also diverse policy tools, such as zoning and building regulations, sometimes cumbersome or antiquated; and increasingly innovative and sophisticated regulatory tools and infrastructures such as, for instance, digital 3D maps and water pipes. Such practices regulate the localization of and frictions between human actions in a given space.

The empirical content of those techniques may be distant from public sociology (PS) concerns. However, all spatial practices have a collective impact, or result from collective efforts. UP constantly deals with spatial conflicts, land being an elusive common good, again one of the concerns at the core of PS; and applies knowledge to public issues, one of the tenets of PS. Besides, PS offers an analytical perspective on the social appropriation of space, the entanglement of matter and society, and the collective uses and critique of forecasting and sensemaking.

Exchanges with PS are pretty consistent, even at first sight, and this chapter focuses on such topics of common interest: the localization of actions in space, the anticipation of future events, the regulation of collective actions and the management of the operational steps of implementation processes, and the political impacts of policy measures.

The chapter first introduces the various concerns and practices of UP, resisting the temptation of claiming a disciplinary status apart from the conspicuous but limited concern with spatial modelling. Across time, geographers, hygienists, historians, conservationists, economists and business actors kindled broad public debates that devised progressive solutions to social issues. On one side, the search for a causal link between, for instance, rural enclosure and urban immigration, or water lines and cholera, sedimented a deterministic approach, more apt to convince decision-makers and technocrats. On the other, an expanding public debate tended to reconduct spatial inequalities to social causes, housing and urban models, amenities and social reforms.

The next section deals with spatial arrangements, a topic that is somehow neglected within social sciences (Jerram 2013; Gieryn 2000). UP has been focusing on the spatial disposition of living and artificial objects since the beginning (even before science and technological studies offered a more apt vocabulary) and invites diverse and intergenerational publics because of the long-lasting effects of land, space and place. Past generations left material traces that future generations will inherit (Corboz 1983). Different logics of production also correspond to varying levels of agency (Cremaschi 2021).

The chapter then copes with time and the intriguing notion of the future, a more central yet ill-defined topic of social sciences. Utopia-rooted aspirations for social reform in a spatial projection creating a lasting model for UP endeavours. Contemporary planning faces the inev-

itable plural dimension of these varied sets of a 'desired elsewhere', internalizing deliberative, dialogic and strategic approaches, and adopting 'tactical' practices of spatial exceptions from dominating regimes. Nevertheless, debates in theories and practices are converging lately in a profound renewal of UP, partially bridging the chasm between its two souls.

The following section addresses ethical approaches and empirical moral practices concerning spatial justice. UP statements mix values and analytical findings at the same time. Debating ethical commitments, not differently from other applied fields, should not divert scholars from investigating how space and norms are imbricated, the warp and weft of what UP does to societies.

In conclusion, the political dimension of UP will become apparent since the onset of strategic planning (SP), which focuses overtly on the public dimension, yet somehow neglects the material dimension. New research approaches have tried to fill the gap since the communicative turn at the end of the 1990s. However, research in implementation studies and policy instrumentation questioned the traditional technical approach to managing urban development, opening the way for a political understanding of the management of projects.

Land, future, justice and policy management are not exclusive concerns of UP by any means; other activities ensured the spatial organization of societies on land trying to achieve a proper set-up, such as agriculture, civil engineering and architecture, whose doctrines and models influenced planning for a long time. Unlike these disciplines, UP is a modern technique, a direct offspring of the industrialization and urbanization process that occurred since the 18th century in Europe; thus, the chapter acknowledges the Eurocentric bias of focusing on the modern industrial and urban roots of planning over the last two centuries, a profoundly European story in all accounts. In addition, a broader concern arose with planning ideological artefacts (Friedmann 1987) and colonial roots (Yiftachel 1998; Miraftab 2009). The focus, however, is on the research and developments in the last 30 years and the exchanges with the concerns common to PS, which is increasingly a worldwide conversation.

A MESSY FIELD OF PRACTICES

In an often-quoted French anecdote, President General Charles de Gaulle harshly addresses his head of regional planning Paul Delouvrier while flying over Paris in a helicopter, yelling: 'Put some order in this mess!' (Laurent and Roullier 2005). The anecdote encompasses all the negative aspects of planning: hierarchy and command, contempt for the people, and indifference to time and processes.

Rational order is the first source of inspiration for planners.[1] As scholarly handbooks claim, a long tradition in functional planning maintains that planning should inject order into the chaos of society and nature. Seen from the zenithal helicopter view, UP is part of the rational governmental techniques that regulate society through space. All countries and national cultures have distinctive champions representing this titanic, disciplinary urbanism; in France, you may think of Hausmann and Le Corbusier. As a technocratic tool, UP has consciously pursued such a depoliticised and technocratic ideal of irenic cities shaped by rational agents (Scott 2008), ignoring the implicit risk of the inconsistency of all projects and the contradiction between intentions and (often unexpected) consequences. Planning governmentality is nourished by such abstract representations of the general interest, although academic critique

has tried (since the 1960s at least: Lefebvre 1971) to unveil the elites' interests shaping these representations.

Another tradition stems from Plato's ideal of the good and beautiful city (Hammond 2020), where virtue and knowledge are mutually consistent. Histories of urban planning in different countries (Benevolo 1967; Choay 1969; Hall 1988) build upon the stories of social reformists, federalists and visionaries pursuing models of a beautiful, healthy and just city at the same time (Friedmann 2011). This second approach is less elitist: planning aspires to coordinate the efforts of many different actors, and its political counterparts are anarchism (Ferretti et al. 2017; Pelletier 2013) and utopianism (Bagchi 2019), and more recently in the Habermasian dialogue (Healey 1996). Even more so, such a practice of 'creative dialogue' with diverse publics and objects is a way of resisting state control. The priotities are inverted: direct scrutiny, networking and everyday practices (de Certeau and Mayol 1998). Urbanism is an outcome, a product rather than an idea, and results from 'the traces of a vast set of practices that continuously and consciously modify the region and the city' (Secchi 2011). Historians cherish heroes who respected justice and the environment, seeking complementarity rather than exploitation between societies and their spaces.

Whether state elites or local reformers do urban planning, they adopt a similar condemnation of greedy entrepreneurs or narrow-minded decision-makers. In other words, UP is committed to correcting both market and state failures by deploying the knowledge of experts or laypeople: in a sense, UP is both language and speech.

In the Western urban model of capitalism (Scott 2008), state control and technical forecasting have come to dominate mainstream UP, although alternative, cooperative approaches keep resurfacing, sometimes even mingling together. The distinction between top-down strategies and practices of resistance is both analytically and politically relevant, but in practice, they hint at overlapping publics. For instance, public functionaries may adopt plans to support and expand the urban real estate market in some cases, correct the impacts of developers' programmes and improve people's lives in others.

Though historically imprecise, as late research on the circulation of models has started to clarify (McCann 2011), this acclaimed duplicity of UP is a good starting point for this critical review that adopts a PS approach. UP offers an extraordinary wealth of applied examples for PS to 'use scientific methods and principles to influence programs, organisations' policies, and outcomes' (Nichols 2017: 313).

However, it may even be trivial to recall that planning outcomes are different and differently appreciated from the point of view of various publics. More importantly, different publics play simultaneous and sometimes conflicting games leading to varied results. From this point of view, the collective construction of planning policies, the know-how and power of the involved actors, and the crucial combination of material and symbolic elements, feed the dialogue with PS.

SPACE, A COMMON GOOD

Among many changes and transformations, a practical concern has held stable since its roots in Middle Eastern Mesopotamian cities (Van de Mieroop 1997): UP concerns the regulation of land through either agreed and spontaneous rules, or imposed and controlled legal framework. One way or the other, coordinated or governmental planning modifies the natural environ-

ment, regulating activities that accommodate collective aims and moderating spatial conflicts. All human societies plan and have planned somehow, even before or without a distinct discipline and specific tools. Communities and societies arrange objects in space, deploying some empirical knowledge of their spatial effects.

Consequently, this definition cuts out a small but distinctive field of analytical and conceptual investment: UP conceives the spatial tools and the empirical models for understanding how societies establish themselves on land (Mazza and Bianconi 2014), but it also analyses issues such as citizenship (Mazza 2015), social order (Weber 1921), social innovation (Bragaglia 2021) and normative ideals (Friedmann 2011) that depend on this implantation. Even more importantly, UP devises and coordinates spatial strategies meant to change spatial structures in the near future. In this vein, we can assume that UP is somehow located at the crossroads of territorial governance, the techniques of anticipating the long-term future, the commitment to spatial models, and the practice of managing the implementation steps (Weber 2015).

This is not to ignore the effort to build a distinctive disciplinary history and the corresponding autonomous body of theoretical knowledge. Since the 1960s, the latter has mostly focused on processual knowledge and decision-making (Faludi 1973). However, we can assume that the rationalizing effort to build a corpus of reflexive knowledge on actions, a full theory of planning, is a distinctive but recent intellectual enterprise (Beauregard 2020) that also finds some sceptical readers (Palermo and Ponzini 2014).

Not all UP practices are aware of such theoretical and ontological intricacies of land and decision processes: for many practical and operational purposes, an extensional notion of space (a measurable surface), or a relational one (a scarce commodity), seems to suffice. However, public concerns about land and space arise continuously under conflicting economic interests.

The interest for the field of UP is that this collective process necessarily implies several forms of knowledge, blending expert and lay contributions. Such inherent tension is an empirical limitation to the progress of the disciplinary field, reflecting the double constitutive process of space: having been produced by a collective effort, space is constantly reproduced as a cultural representation. It has resisted the rationalization fate of modern disciplines.

Indecision between analytical aims and normative stances is apparent in the regularly resurgent commitment to social justice, environment or beauty (Fishman 1998) that we can find in current priorities such as diversity, climate change and spatial integration. Accepting such 'confusion', already visible in the distinction between planning and urbanism, is necessary to understand UP's status, although this pendulum effect has also weakened its disciplinary status.

UP truly benefits from a relational approach to space that overcomes the dualism between human actors and the environment. Geography scholars anticipated this aspect by taking stock of Henri Lefebvre's earlier revision of the concept of space: rather than the static backgrounds of human actors, spatiality scholars (Massey 2005; Harvey 2001) conceived of space as a dynamic interplay of simultaneous practices. The same view may apply to the environment, cities and infrastructures (Barry 2001).

There is a circular relationship between land, space and place, UP being the process of extracting one from the others; the three 'acting' in different ways. Land is active in natural processes and ecologies; space is active since the capacity of acting may be delegated to objects (Latour 2004); places are a cultural construction, like institutions (Creswell 2015), and act the same way as languages do. Acknowledging these different agencies, the claims of

primacy by urban history, political sciences or urban phenomenology on land, space and place, respectively, are greatly exaggerated.

These agencies coexist and need to be adequately acknowledged, reinvigorating the creative dialogue that only allows for understanding the 'becoming' of space. It would not be useful or possible to select one from the others, while there is a lot to gain by considering the different components of materiality involved (Rydin 2014).

However, questions about the nature of this knowledge remain unresolved. The debate in UP shows many disputes about wicked issues where different forms of knowledge blend but rarely match: expert and lay contributions often conflict overtly on significant issues (Gualini 2015), for instance around the localization of major developments. Different assessments are often issued without eliding each other, and highlight different but not equivalent consequences.

This process is worth investigating since it can lead to constructing a 'problematization' that enables heterogeneous actors to tackle an issue together (Callon 1984). Scholars have addressed the plurality of interests, actors and objects in UP situations for a while, particularly under the dialogic approach (Healey 1996; Forester 1999) and the subaltern emancipatory approach (Friedmann 1987; Sandercock 2004).

Spatial techniques are not neutral: even more than policy tools, they rely upon open social processes that may evolve in contradiction. All spatial distributions have social and regulatory effects: even the simplest spatial arrangement – a research building (Gieryn 2000) or a public garden (Cremaschi 2021) – collectively impacts upon social behaviour. However, such spatial causes are not always consistent, and variations depend upon social and cultural mechanisms. Models of propinquity or distance, centrality or seclusion, for instance, reflect strong social values and pursue social effects, but often create unexpected effects.

THE FUTURE, A COLLECTIVE ASPIRATION

Among all public policies, UP deals with the modelling and design of future spatial organizations; more relevant for this *Handbook*, such spatial concerns connect UP to different 'publics'. All anticipation is made for somebody: the prince, the state (local or central), the community, corporate powers or the fluid set of overlapping publics that constitute the metropolitan context of contemporary life.

UP in the 20th century rushed through a stunning parabola, becoming a prime concern of the state (central or local) that assumed control of the conversion of agricultural land into urban land. From the second half of the 19th century, UP went through a fast rise, pursuing exemplary achievements. The legal annexation of land inside urban boundaries often produces an extraordinary increase in market value. Increasing values reinforce land ownership and capital accumulation central to market economies and eventually power. UP thus contributes to strengthening class society through seemingly technical operations such as converting land into urban allotments, zoning and land use norms. Plans make long-lasting the effects of legal categories that laws made abstractly certain, while finance converts them into marketable rights.

Modern plans brought together spatial regulation and building technologies under the reassuring forecast of demographic and migration trends: plans are hybrid artefacts that combine legal norms, strategic visions and spatial design. Initially, they focused only on the city's

development areas aside from the old historical centre; progressively, plans regulated all urban land thoroughly, increasingly recurring to universal norms and rational techniques.

Scholars and social reformers face theoretical and practical challenges when dealing with the future. Unlike space, social sciences deal with time extensively, although such evanescent matter is a perennial issue for all disciplines. UP deals with the modelling and design of future spatial organizations among all public policies.

Even the future has a history. Historical utopias, for instance, left a long-lasting mark on UP practices: the commitment to the prince, a holistic approach and spatial determinism (along with interest in socio-material systems) transferred directly from Thomas More's (1516 [2020]) tale, Vespucci's travel journals (Mattelart 1996), and Fourier's influential essays, to the practice of early planners (Benevolo 1967). Likewise, a vast family of utopian social reformers pictured hopes for justice and social harmony over a material and spatial dispositive, be it Godin's Phalanstery, Owen's New Lanark, or novelists' imaginary settings such as Mercier's (1887 [1994]) or Verne's (1861 [1994]) Paris, Garcia Márquez's (1955 [2017]) Macondo or Le Guin's (1974) Anarres.

It would be a mistake to underestimate these efforts. Powerful anticipations led to inconsistent or counterproductive effects and left long-lasting models and aspirations. The case of Godin's Familistère is revealing: the inspiration came from Fourier and early socialist ideals; the spatial model was borrowed in part from Versailles; the technology was resolutely modern and surprisingly innovative; the normative ideal pursued collective against individual values and wealth. Eventually, urban developers subsumed depoliticized elements developed by the Familistère into modern commodified condominiums, shaping the contemporary model of shared, urban living. However, the original aspiration of cooperative co-housing revives periodically. Public parks, social housing estates and garden cities have often taken similar paths, becoming examples of utopian dreams turned sour, though continuously reinventing themselves.

Also, it would be a mistake to dismiss utopias as old tales while they project a shadow on most 20th century social experiments. Somehow, in a similar vein, technical advancements that occurred during the 20th century correlate to dystopian fears. Late developments such as the smart cities renew these positivistic techno-dreams. In common, utopian reveries and technocratic dreams postulate a spatial order allegedly intended to retrofit an efficient or better society.

In post-war times, futurologists dismissed utopias as methodologically outdated, and established themselves as the standard-bearers of scientific forecasting (Andersson 2012). Unfortunately, their excavation of the future seems bound by social constraints more than by science: dictatorship makes forecasting far simpler. Planning assures consistent injections of future-oriented thinking into the political process (Connell 2009) in a dual, apparently contradictory way: depoliticizing technical issues and repoliticizing others (Christensen 1985).

Of late, emerging new trends in temporary urbanism revive another aspect of old utopias. Temporary urbanism tends to implicate users in the design of space, and to prize social intensity and possibly innovation more than profit and aesthetics, indicating a possible evolution of the planning model (Cremaschi et al. 2021).

While utopias are 'fundamentally unreal spaces' (Foucault and Miskowiec 1986: 24), Foucault's heterotopia (Jesuit colonies, ships, gardens, and so on) and Deleuze and Guattari's inspirational works offered 'shifting ephemeral spaces of otherness within disciplinary structures of power' (Bagchi 2019). As the Arab Phenix, planning utopias shed new light

onto neglected spaces and temporary activities, granting key social inputs (Jameson 2005): upholding the desire for a better living, exploring radical otherness, and testing the tightness of the system. While old utopias are projected into a future and distant elsewhere, contemporary dreams create spatial exceptions meant to become exceptional spaces in capitalism's fabric (Pinder 2016).

Time has passed since the first experimentations in forecasting. While state and technical bureaucrats renounced forecast and control, taking stock of failures and countereffects, contemporary society likely bears an excess of futures. Financial companies constantly monitor and forecast the world's markets; interestingly, financial assets are based on artefacts denominated 'futures'. On the other hand, companies, think tanks, governments, researchers, political groups, activists and nongovernmental organizations produce constant anticipation of future events: 'futures are now everywhere' (Urry 2016).

Plentifulness of the future contrasts with scarcity of hope. Old and new utopias have some profound similarities with current design practices: they blend past and present with nonlinear imaginations of the future, creating a permanent tension between the analytical (dealing with how) and the normative (dealing with the good and the bad).

The practice of anticipating spatial futures discloses society's diversity and radical plurality. After utopia, and after the spread of urbanisation, UP fosters 'a diverse plurality of forms within each region' (Fishman 1998). But whose diversity? Every project or anticipation of a possible future is made for someone: the prince, the state (local or central), the community, the corporate powers, and so on.

Scholars have shown that a fluid set of overlapping publics is mobilized for every urban problem. For whom does UP make plans if the client is multiple and sometimes confused? The gap between the technocratic and populist souls of UP is widening again. Neoliberal policies tend to assume a corporate client and support the rhetoric of partnership, innovation and even participation that claims a seemingly effortless and conflict-free rapprochement. This rhetoric is so strong that even the defence of society's self-organizing capacities can find its place. However, the praise of this new *entente cordiale* comes at the price of forgetting the state's redistributive, palliative and reparative function; for example, in situations where it is necessary to remedy market failures due to a lack of investment in less attractive sectors or regions.

THE JUST CITY, A NORMATIVE IDEAL

UP is inseparable from normative aspirations like any other set of practices: medical care, environmental protection and education. Planners admit that UP must be modern, despite the theoretical and moral necessity of acknowledging its contingency, uncertainty and fluidity (Beauregard 2015: 13); later, the same scholar ironically added that the number of normative planning theories and operational theories models for justice keeps growing, although rarely obtaining satisfactory results.

A sudden sidelining or overt dismissal of normative aims occurred at the end of the 20th century (Raco 2016), coinciding with neoliberalism and the claim to restore the 'free market' natural order. This story has been sometimes praised as a source of a 'third way' in politics and economics. Still, it may be worth recalling that Begin (Israel, in 1977), Thatcher (the United Kingdom, in 1979) and Reagan (the United States, in 1981) targeted planning and public

housing soon after forming neoliberal governments. As a reaction, scholarly research has started to address justice issues and to criticize the implicit values of all forms of spatial order.

Scholars have conceptualized justice as a universal, normative model, although spatial contexts introduce multiple levels forcibly, combining different ideal dimensions such as equity, democracy and diversity (Fainstein 2010; Cremaschi and Fioretti 2016). Though demanding, this opening is likely not enough: in many fields, scholarly discussion has recognized the opportunity to encompass a broader view of justice, including additional dimensions such as recognition, capability, responsibility (Davoudi 2013) and difference (Iveson and Fincher 2011; Fincher et al. 2014). It has also stressed the importance of considering both dimensions of procedural justice and questions of value (Campbell 2006).

If justice cannot be considered a monolith, just planning is a complex *disposatif* that progressively adapts to changing situations, positioned in time and space, according to political strategies that combine elements of redistribution and recognition, affecting the quality of the societal entitlements or limitations. Planning faces urban change's scalar and relational effects, pursuing the 'just city'. Developments, for instance, alter the objects and the relative position of places: a gentrified neighbourhood is no longer peripheral; a growing city appears 'on the map'. For this reason, planning spatial categories of justice – such as periphery, density, *mixité*, segregation – are always context-dependent and cannot be used as universal principles.

Researchers will find some combination of material and normative norms by digging into fundamental UP claims on land, space and place. For example, it is easy to aver justifications by reading through the principles of sustainability, utility and comfort:[2] land is justified for its lasting impact, space for its utility, place for its sensibility. However, not one of these terms stands alone, and all implicitly acknowledge a social dimension and a potential plural definition.

UP must be sustainable because it is inconceivable without robust and long-term investments by various individual and institutional actors: state, collectivities, developers and citizens. UP is thus the process aimed at coordinating the making of infrastructures and buildings, open spaces and networks. This coordination occurs thanks to multiple technical and political exchanges over a long period. Implementing a single urban project often requires decades, while cities last centuries, enduring repeated rounds of destruction and renovation. Even the most temporary or informal settlement, be it a Burning Man festival or a provisional slum on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, relies on complicated sets of technical and informal rules of zoning, privacy and rights of way that are all but ephemeral.

UP is a set of practices finalized for society's general purposes. A Marxist understanding of the political economy approach illuminated mainly economic production in the capitalist era (Katznelson 1993); one of the problems, gently emphasized by a clever observer such as Hirschman (1971), is the gigantic scale of these claims. Aspirations do not coincide with functions. Multiple actors arrange space: if not for political reasons, by political arrangements, legitimate and informal at the same time. A collective effort, the nature of these arrangements is not stable over time. Agreements are always in the process of being redefined, as aims, means, consents and rules may change.

Finally, UP pursues some idea of likeability, inclined to a mundane notion of comfort more than an abstract doctrine of beauty. UP practices are primarily based on various complex socio-technical systems (mobility, but also several engineering systems related to water, sewage, power, communication, and so on) and the organization of public welfare (social housing, schools, hospitals, gardens and amenities), objects of other regulatory activities.

These normative concepts share a notion of form based on a judicious arrangement of objects in space: in this sense, urban form is the first step on the path that confronts UP with its moral obligations. Norms and moral values are inextricable from planners' models, unintended consequences being the rule rather than the exception, as shown by implementation studies (Lascoumes and Le Galès 2007; Rydin 2010), and are rarely discussed analytically.

In the second half of the 19th century, an important controversy illustrates well the opposition between objects and values. The debate pitted those such as Owen and Godin, who saw collective housing as the solution to working-class housing, against those who advocated individual homeownership. The subject matter was different, but so was the supposed associated moral value and, ultimately, the ideology that was supposed to result. However, the debate itself clearly shows the incidence of deterministic shortcuts and reformist generalizations, and how one object was problematized and affected differently, as Callon (1984) put it. Moreover, both positions ignored the complex, becoming, scalar, agglomerative and unexpected effects at the heart of all practical situations.

To sum up, UP pursues ethical intentions in performing public actions rooted in the material world. However, like universal principles such as flourishing and freedom in classical philosophers from Aristotle to Kant, the normative core of UP cannot disregard a certain degree of universalism. Spatial and environmental justice, or the right to the city renewed recently from Lefebvre's (1971) anticipation, or even more programmatic models of what a 'good city' can be, are part of these efforts to express the normative ethic of UP.

No less importantly, however, UP has to care for the moral landscapes affected by spatial decisions. Here, ethics is the reflexive domain of normative ideals, while 'moral' refers to the empirical consequence of actions. The objects and the instruments of policies are neither neutral nor passive, but borrow moral content (Latour 1992) even if they do not produce it. Arranging objects in space contributes to a growing ecology of norms (Lieto 2021), nourishing the inextinguishable complexity of living that actors construe and trigger. It is no coincidence that the design of spaces can also be understood as a form of regulation whose moral content depends on the moral delegation and the 'scripts' of objects, and the actors' ability to recognize their affordances (Rydin et al. 2021). Unfortunately, the gap is still wide between the search for normative ethics and the investigation of empirical moral landscapes.

THE POLITICAL, THE UNREQUITED PASSION

After the 1990s, post-industrial developments and the 'strategic turn' in UP paved the way for a substantial rapprochement between UP and the perspective pursued by PS, illuminating the process of co-construction of urban spaces and local decisions (Watson 2014; Arab 2018). Late strategic metropolitan planning enhanced the spatialization and localization of policies through interinstitutional collaboration, often associated with establishing new metropolitan policymaking settings. However, the social implications of spatial distributions are not always evident, due to the threefold process of space production mentioned before.

Planning studies slowly incorporate the notion of 'public' in many ways, through advocacy, activism, community and political engagement (Albrechts 2020). Dewey has been a significant reference (Crosta 2010), while another sociological thread links Simmel, Tarde, Parks and – through French pragmatists Boltanski, Thévenot and Latour – influences the reappraisal

of materialism and planning (Rydin 2014). Publics coalesce around issues and, as Tarde and Parks remind us, around events and places. Collective action further stabilizes these publics.

The United Kingdom and the United States moved away from comprehensive planning in the post-war period, embracing a hyper-socialized notion of process. While this led to a realistic downsizing of planners' pretences, it made UP a satellite of policy studies. A processual approach overcomes the criticism of opportunism (as well as incrementalism), putting the practice of planning and the concrete network of policy actors at the centre.

A direct hit once addressed vigorously such apparent bulimia of planning (Wildavsky 1973), exposing its lack of content and shifting boundaries; in particular, the neglect of unintended consequences opened the way to a critical reconstruction of all forms of government from the point of view of implemented actions (Hirschman 1971). But, no convincing answer has been offered so far: even careful approaches tend to assimilate spatial planning to a form of governance limited to space (as if there were any unaffected) as a coordination process of actors, social groups and institutions finalized to the 'reshaping or protecting the built and natural environment' (Van Assche and Verschraegen 2008). Post-industrial developments paved the way after the 1990s to a 'strategic turn' in UP, illuminating the processual nature of planning (Friedmann 1987; Faludi 1973), its negotiated and deliberative nature (Healey 1996; Forester 1999).

SP is project-driven and fosters various governance arrangements, opposing modernist planning reliance on long-term technical predictions. In the long path towards more flexible and innovative planning (Pinson 2006), the crucial change was in acknowledging the need for the political management of the projects. Urban projects are flexible tools that deliver change through the design of spatial assets and evolve pragmatically, negotiating norms and responsibilities. With a flexible policy narrative insisting on processes, SP fostered spatial projects and local policies, exploring alternative futures and selecting adequate policy tools (Pinson 2006).

The justification for SP is the fragmented, uncertain political environment (Callon et al. 2009) that requires an understanding of actors and a sociological approach to politics (Le Galès 1998). SP puts 'the public' of planning at the centre, a substantial rapprochement with the perspective pursued by public sociology (PS). Strategic planning (SP) embraces a dialogic process (Albrechts et al. 2016; Balducci and Mäntysalo 2013) and opens to spatialization and local policies through interinstitutional collaboration.

Indeed, SP relates to the participative, visioning and communicative approaches, and is indebted to narration and argumentation, mirroring a change in politics and policymaking occurring in the same years. SP is characterized by both experimentalism and opportunism. Experimentation is 'the act of defining and creating niches … geared towards the selection and retention of emergent practices' (Savini and Bertolini 2019), sharing the aim of emancipating the notion of the experiment from the techno-managerial paradigm. Opportunism results from the empirical nature of all policy assemblages (Brownill and O'Hara 2015). Both opportunism and experiment are inherently political effects: at the core of strategic change, an innovative gesture produces a different institutional order (Avelino et al. 2016).

Hence, the necessity to revive the never extinguished link between social mobilization (Sandercock 2004) and politics (Miraftab 2009; Friedmann 2011), in particular when facing diversity (Forester 2009), the material conflicts around development (Pieterse 2008), disenchantments about traditional politics (Watson 2003), and environmental dilemmas (Kaika 2004).

Inevitably, more powerful disciplines and fields of knowledge contend with the interest in SP's rules, tools and visions. Besides, SP marked the tilting point in removing planning from the dialogic roots with matter and places.

Besides, UP deals with new spheres far removed from the initial concern with land and transport, changing even more rapidly in the post-industrial era. The redevelopment of existing cities requires even greater cooperation of different actors. For instance, containing developments, preserving natural ecosystems and redeveloping abandoned spaces prevail under the imperative to limit growth.

Of late, scholars suggest adopting a renewed approach to materialism (Rydin 2014; Beauregard 2015) that may overcome the intrinsic limits of an all-processual approach and early naïve materialism. That is a promising research avenue. It is worth noting that the geographical sources of UP acknowledged the agency of land well before the new materialism turn in social sciences, a theoretical debt particularly fecund in Europe, where 'urbanism' was spared the dematerialized fate of the processual turn in Anglo-Saxon planning (Hebbert 2006, building on Piccinato 1987).

The SP clarified that technical-instrumental rationality or pragmatic management is insufficient to drive the 'implementation' of projects that form a large part of UP. Instead, research on urban strategies showed that fostering projects is a profoundly public and, in some respects, political activity. However, the disciplinary awareness of the political management of projects is still at the beginning.

CONCLUSIONS: A GAP AND MANY LINKS

The chapter has explored the field of UP through a few keywords – practice, space, imagination, justice and regulation – that are of the utmost interest to the perspective embraced by PS. There are plenty of common interests and joint issues, although direct exchanges between the two streams of research are limited.

This gap has a few possible explanations. The seemingly technical concern of UP thwarts the likely conversation, spatial models lying far from the interests of public sociology (PS). Besides, UP is primarily an assemblage of various practices and disparate sets of knowledge, although aspiring to full disciplinary status. Even more importantly, confusion is inherent in the transdisciplinary character of UP. When asked what UP is about, scholars often react in a similar vein: they point cautiously to its 'messy state' (Campbell and Fainstein 1996), add a long list of caveats (Fainstein and De Filippis 2015), list a vast array of seemingly disparate concerns (Weber 2015), or blame the diversified theoretical core (Rydin 2020).

The first and perhaps the most significant contribution to the debate in PS comes from the research on different publics and, in general, from the analysis of the collective systems of production of public action. The slow demise of the rational technocratic approach, and the rise of a dialogical approach (Forester 1999), has profoundly affected the DNA of contemporary planning. Besides, many applied examples of UP offer vivid examples of how the public engages with knowledge and rules in specific situations (Rydin et al. 2021).

Second, space emphasizes the UP's entanglement with the material aspects of social life, while acknowledging its political nature: matter has been silently at the core of UP that started to update its toolkit only recently. For instance, the debate on density (seemingly a simple spatial measure) and its impact on the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, reinvigorated the

discussion about the difference between direct, indirect and perceived effects of space. In the same vein, climate change and the challenge of the ecological transition claim for a profound spatialization of the understanding of social mechanisms.

Besides, UP benefits from and contributes to the continuous rebooting of the sociological imagination. The constant swaying between pragmatism and prophecies (not unlike other disciplines, however: see Wildavsky 1973) sedimented a historical mistrust of great plans and forecasting, of late renewed by the threat posed by the neoliberal depoliticizing pressure. However, the question about the future is inherent to all discussions of common goods and part of the core of all planning practices.

Moreover, UP cannot but rely on normative statements about the distribution and position of objects, forms and social relations. For example, all claims for spatial justice are inseparable from a minute concern for the moral consequences of spatial configurations. An ethics of planning decisions responds to engaging ideological and political claims that are not specific to planning and require many theoretical connections with broader debate, for instance, reintroducing Polanyi's contributions (Roy 2005). However, all normative landscapes lend themselves to public and political discussion, a situation that PS has often addressed.

Finally, a novel awareness of the politics of planning is apparent, since researchers started to expose the ideological commitment of modern planning to growth (Lefebvre 1971; Forester 1988), its inherent authoritarian nature (Scott 2008) and its overwhelming regulatory ambitions (Holston 1989). This tension has become apparent when taking stock of technical failures (Hall 1982), the critical role of policy tools (Lascoumes and Le Galès, 2007), and the nonlinear ties with politics (Watson 2014; Levy 2016; Albrechts 2020).

NOTES

1. A position inscribed in the rational tradition: 'ancient cities … are usually but ill laid out compared to orderly towns which a professional architect has freely planned on an open plain' (Descartes 2006/1637: 12).
2. I am immodestly adapting here, with no claims to originality, Vitruvius's age-old definition of architecture as 'sturdy, useful and beautiful'.

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10. Legitimacy of law and the expertise of public sociology

Supriya Routh

INTRODUCTION

The idea of legal legitimacy is conventionally explained in terms of the authority of law and the obedience of legal actors by legal positivists (Raz, 1988: 88–105; Hershovitz, 2003: 206; Dagger, 2018: 77, 81, 100). Although legal positivism recognizes legislation as an important source of law, its modern articulations have primarily focused on the judiciary as the source and arbiter of law (Waldron, 1999a: 15–16). According to this narrative, it is the judiciary that legitimizes a legal system by recognizing norms as laws, and applying such laws in resolving disputes through precedents (that is, referring to earlier court decisions), without having to engage the legislature. Legal positivism, thus, centralizes the role of legal experts, that is, judges, and sidelines the democratic process in specifying the legitimacy of law (Hershovitz, 2003: 208–211). Legal positivists contend that in pre-legal societies social actors knew the norms merely through socialization. However, when societies moved from pre-legal to legal societies, it became necessary to have expert "law-detectors" who could recognize laws—in distinction to social norms—created through social authority (Waldron, 1999a: 13–14). In this social evolution, legal legitimacy emanates from unelected, non-representative, and formally non-partisan (apolitical and independent) legal experts.

In contrast, Jeremy Waldron develops an ideal account of legitimate legislation by linking legitimacy to the political representative decision-making process (Waldron, 1999a, 1999b). In Waldron's account, legitimacy of law depends on the majoritarian legislative process rather than on unelected legal experts. By focusing on the electoral representation-based democratic legislative process, he suggests that the only condition for legitimate lawmaking is that it should have the backing of the majority, who, in good faith, deliberate on the subject matter of the legislation before adopting a final position. In this view, although "expert" judges may interpret legislation, they are not the legitimizing authority of enacted legislation. Legitimacy of legislation rests with the decision-making process by elected representatives.

In this chapter, I propose a non-ideal type—or sociological—stipulation for legitimacy of law, thereby offering a complementary, but slightly divergent, version of legal legitimacy that Waldron suggests. In my proposal, while legal legitimacy rests on participatory lawmaking, it should be complemented by "outside" expert opinion. Expert opinion has a role to play, albeit a secondary one, in the legitimate lawmaking process. First, I discuss Waldron's account of the majority voting-based legitimacy process. In contrast with Waldron, I then argue that lawmaking should be decentralized and grounded in interest representation by specific communities. I also note that in this non-ideal type lawmaking proposition, expert opinion has an important supplemental role to play. In offering outside and independent perspectives, but without supplanting the lived experience-based perspectives, expert opinions contribute to the lawmaking discourse by interpreting the community experience and by locating such experience within

the broader socio-political forces. Specific communities and legal actors should attend to such expert opinion in their lawmaking discourse. It is in this respect that I evaluate the role of public sociology as a source of independent expert knowledge contributing to the legitimate lawmaking process. I conclude that public sociology, in both its traditional and grassroots variations, has much to offer to the lawmaking discourse if it remains the source of an outside scientific knowledge that does not end up displacing the community perspective.

LEGITIMACY OF LEGISLATION: COLLECTIVE ACTION IN THE FACE OF DISAGREEMENTS

Waldron emphasizes that law has a central role to play in social justice (Waldron, 1999b: 4–6). Conceptualization of social justice aids in formulating the "right shape and foundation for our laws to have" (ibid.). Law often more concretely executes the conceptual components of an idea of social justice. By focusing on specific tasks, that is, by seeking to establish just and right legal relationships in a specific area, law contributes to—structures—social justice in actual contexts.[1] While law could be enacted, amended, repealed, and replaced, it should conform to the foundational structures of social justice. In navigating its way through social evolution, legal enactments should take cognizance of existing jurisprudence, including judicial articulation of law, not always with an intention to defer, but with an aim to identify the existing foundations of social justice (Dworkin, 1986: 177, 183–184, 214). Law, thus, must "fit" a society's political principles (Waldron, 1999b: 4–6; Dworkin, 1986: 184–185, 189–190, 210–211, 213, 216). Waldron's notion of this fit is complex. He notes that although law should fit a society's political principles, such principles may not always have unequivocal articulation: "Law … aspires to justice; but it represents the aspiration to justice of a *community*, which … is made up not of those who think similarly, but of those who think differently, about matters of common concern" (Waldron, 1999b: 6). Thus, specific areas of law should negotiate these differences and disagreements in coming to normative workable solutions—even if they are not endorsed by everyone—to specific problems.

While specific laws (for example, labor relations law, social security law, tort, contract, and so on) in actual contexts should conform to the prevalent idea of justice in a society, the very idea of law—what is law—in abstract conceptual terms is essentially a question of politics (Waldron, 1999b: 7). Waldron notes:

> The authority of law rests on the fact that there is a recognizable need for us to act in concert on various issues or to co-ordinate our behaviour in various areas with reference to a common framework, and that this need is not obviated by the fact that we disagree among ourselves as to what our common course of action or our common framework ought to be.

Accordingly, within the general framework of a broadly acceptable idea of social justice in a democratic jurisdiction (articulated in the constitution), law is part of the democratic process of governance. Yet, the traditional account of law has largely managed to sideline the democratic discourse from legal conceptualizations (Waldron, 1999b: 8–9; Waldron, 1998: 517–522). A more realistic understanding of law, one that takes democratic self-government seriously, lies in an account of legislation rather than that of judicial adjudication.

Emphasizing the significance of legislation in the governance of a jurisdiction, Waldron notes that the dominant understanding of law has largely ignored the respectability and

centrality of enacted legislation in its imagination of law (Waldron, 1999a: 5; Webber et al., 2018). Instead, the idea of law is primarily tied to judicial (constitutional) lawmaking. Waldron notes that legal philosophers'—legal scholars' more generally—preoccupation with judicial lawmaking emanate from the thesis that since judges are beyond the day-to-day political process and trained in the art of legal philosophy and reasoning, they are the proper authority—politically and intellectually—to delineate and interpret the proper meaning of law. The political process, on the other hand, is seen as inferior because of the unfiltered, chaotic, and majoritarian decision-making process by lay participants, mainly through their representatives in the Parliament (Waldron, 1999a: 24–25, 31, 34–35). In defending the "dignity" of legislation, which is the principal mechanism for securing entitlements for the citizenry, Waldron advances the ideal conditions for law-making, that is, the conditions under which legislation is authoritative, dignified, and respectable as law (Waldron, 1999a: 2–3, 5, 156–162). According to him, legislation is dignified because it signifies an achievement of collective action under conditions of individual disagreements.

While critics often vilify legislation for its majoritarianism, Waldron develops an account of (ideal-type) legislation as reflecting the democratic legitimacy of the majority decision-making process (Waldron, 1999a: 7–11). His ideal-type legislation works under the following assumptions: that disagreements about political decisions occur in every society, that every individual is a responsible moral agent who understands the prerogatives and limits of her freedom, that representative members of the society deliberate on entitlements and rights in good faith, that every individual represents an opinion in contrast to a narrow self-interest (including opinion about an interest), that every individual's opinion is given equal weight, that individuals generally vote their "considered and impartial opinions", that deliberations are public-spirited to further overall social position on an issue, and that deliberations involve a fair discussion of all possible scenarios before concluding on a specific position (Waldron, 1999a: 147–148, 154–156; Waldron, 1999b: 13–15). Waldron creates a distinction between "voting [for] interests" and "voting [for considered] opinions" in a deliberative decision-making process relevant to determining the legitimacy and authority of legislation (ibid). For legislation to be legitimate, individuals must offer their opinions in good faith instead of seeking to further their narrow self-interest while they deliberate. It is the opinion, not interest advocacy, that deserves respect during democratic deliberations. And members must offer such opinions aiming at reaching socially workable conclusions.

Legislation is thus legitimate when it adopts a final position on the basis of majority voting after giving every deliberating individual an equal opportunity to articulate their opinion. In other words, Waldron links legitimacy to the majority decision-making process wherein, in spite of internal differences of opinions, the "representatives of the community" solemnly decide their normative ordering (Waldron, 1999a: 2). Moreover, Waldron notes, since the majority decision-making process "accords maximum decisiveness to each member, subject only to the constraint of equality", it is a fair method of deciding collective issues (Waldron, 1999a: 148). There is much to learn from Waldron's thoughts on how legislation in theoretical circumstances attains democratic legitimacy. However, this ideal-type theorizing does not—nor is it intended to—cover all conceivable normative regulation in divergent societies or the divergent realities of representative lawmaking. It is an ideal of representative lawmaking in legislative assemblies (Parliaments and Congresses). While this ideal offers an aspirational notion, once we move from the plane of idea theorizing to the realities of normative regula-

tion of heterogeneous democratic societies, Waldron's idea of legitimacy needs contextual readjustment.

Legal pluralists have long noted the divergence of sources of law beyond enacted legislation and judicial interpretation (Fuller, 1969; Griffiths, 1986: 4, 8; Merry, 1988; Benda-Beckmann, 2002; Benton, 2012). There is also an extensive and diverse literature on the lack of legislative coverage of a vast amount of socio-economic interaction (Trebilcock, 2006: 64–66; Routh, 2014, 2021; Mahy et al., 2017, 2019). Political scientists have also noted the risk of (exclusion) of marginalized communities from the decision-making process in (electoral) representative democracies and the need to integrate participative lawmaking (Laski, 2015 [1925]: xiii, 26, 246, 251–252). In particular, they have expressed concern about the distance between lived experiences of community members and the "interpretation" of their experiences by their elected representatives (Laski, 2015 [1925]: 242–244). Political philosophy, too, has increasingly moved away from the appeal of (electoral) representative democracy to normatively prioritizing decentralized participatory democracy (Sen, 2009: 324). Sociologists have emphasized the inauthenticity of law from the perspective of the everyday embodied experiences of legal actors (Pence, 2001; Solomon, 2008a: 141, 151; Solomon, 2008b: 180). And ethnographic studies reported from societies and communities wherein social norms and informal law continue to normatively regulate peoples' behaviour, often by subverting enacted legislation (Vargas, 2016; Williams et al., 2015: 296–297; Uzo and Mair, 2014: 57, 61, 66; Gordon, 2005; Snyder, 2004: 219, 228–232). In view of these divergent concerns, I endorse an idea of legitimacy that supplements and contextualizes the above ideal-type formulation of legitimate legislation. In this conception of legitimacy, the ideas of legitimacy and authenticity are intertwined. In this scenario, legal norms are legitimate when they are embraced, in distinction to obeyed, by the community as an honest attempt to effectively organize their lives and relationships so that they are fair. The precondition to such an idea of legitimacy of the legal norms, as I explain below, is a community's direct participation in the lawmaking process, supplemented by non-binding expert inputs when such inputs promote fairness.

ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF LEGAL NORMS: LEGITIMACY AND AUTHENTICITY

While questions about validity and normativity of law are philosophical inquiries, determining whether law is legitimate is a political inquiry. The question that should be asked is: "what political conditions need to be in place for law to bind those subject to it?" (Priel, 2011: 6, 10). This political question, I suggest, has two interrelated components: first, the political legitimacy of law, or procedural preconditions necessary but not sufficient to make legal actors' willingly follow the law, and second, the authenticity of law, or the substantive conditions—contents—necessary for law to be seen by legal actors as relevant and helpful to their specific situations. If such content is authentic, such law procures enthusiastic compliance from actors. Thus, laws are politically legitimate when the lawmaking process respects the autonomy of legal actors; and laws are socially authentic when they accept lived experiences of legal actors as the basis (that is, source of knowledge) for the formulation of legal entitlements. In view of the complexities and heterogeneities noted earlier, a mere formal-political ideal of legitimacy is not enough in making sense of how communities relate to legal regulations. An idea of legal legitimacy that seeks to explain the idea in the complexities of human interactions rather

than only on the basis of formal expressions of political authority, should integrate both of the above perspectives in explaining the conditions of legitimate law (Zurn, 2010: 216). Thus, legal legitimacy should be understood as a combination of political legitimacy and social authenticity. While the latter two are interrelated, this chapter primarily deals with the social authenticity component of legal legitimacy.

In principle, legal standards cannot claim to have significant influence over legal actors if such standards fail to respect the autonomy and self-determination of actors. In this sense, legitimacy is the very essence of legal standards, the absence of which strips such standards of their authority. Without this authority actors will only follow the law due to the threat of coercion. Although autonomy and self-determination are the very basis of legal authority, the actual practice of self-determination must be clarified to articulate the nature of political legitimacy. In view of the increasing complexities, divisions of labor, and (immediate and remote) interconnectedness in current political communities, lawmaking through electoral representatives—by means of majority vote—is an insufficient marker of political legitimacy. It is true, as Waldron notes, that the majority decision-making process, when done in good faith, signifies equal respect for all the participants to deliberation. However, when the participants act in their representative capacity, there is a gap between the contextual "lived experiences" of community members and their "interpretation" by their representative (Laski, 2015 [1925]: 242–244). Additionally, modern political representatives often represent constituencies that are remarkably heterogeneous and characterized by internal conflict of interests and power dynamics. In view of the fact of this divergence, the access to the political representative (for example, by means of lobbying) often itself remains an internal power struggle in the community. Because of this increasing complexity, conflicting interest-positions, social inequality, and inequitable access to the political process, an idealized "opinion"-centric formulation of legal legitimacy is analytically restrictive. Instead, directly participatory lawmaking and representation of group interests—not mere opinions—during the lawmaking process should constitute the foundations of legitimate lawmaking.

However, in addition to this foundational legitimacy, there is another practical sense in which self-determination—or more specifically, active lawmaking participation—is central to developing (particularly, redistribution-focused) legal entitlements. In this latter meaning, the normative aims of legal entitlements are better served if those entitlements actually end up achieving their goals, that is, improving the relevant actors' lives. Legal entitlements are most efficient in this sense when the interventions they make are optimal considering the uniqueness of the community's characteristics, nature of private interactions within the community, community members' interface with the local administration, actual delivery of public services, cohesiveness or disjuncture within the community, role of power (or the lack of it) within and outside community interactions, ease of community engagement with the state, legal exclusion of the community (such as in squatter settlements), and so forth. These characteristics are merely indicative, not exhaustive. In fact, in view of the diversity of the political populations, it is nearly impossible to comprehensively document *a priori* variables that need to be taken into account in formulating efficient legal interventions.

Knowledge about these contextual variables is most reliable when it is directly communicated by the actual communities on the basis of their everyday engagement with the above-noted issues. When such communication happens, the most authentic representation is based on community "interests." Interests, as distinguished from opinions, is the unconcealed and undisguised representation of a community's core values and needs. Since communities

have the clearest understanding of their own interests instinctively, interest-representations are the most intimate and hence, most "authentic" to the lawmaking process. Opinion formation, on the other hand, is a socio-political exercise. It assumes not only agency on the part of the opinion-maker, but also *a priori* engagement with the political process with reasonably complete information about the range of socio-political positions. While it is true that interest-representation may not always translate to legal safeguards to the liking of specific communities, its inclusion in the lawmaking process lends authenticity to the eventual legal standards.

Although lived experience-based interest representation supplies authenticity to legal standards, by its very nature, it signifies a specific locus, from where to look at the socio-political processes. This locus, while important, will always present a restrictive worldview unless it is also informed by views and positions from outside the community. This outside opinion is particularly important—even in a lived experience-focused lawmaking process—since legal interventions made within a specific community, because of the socio-political interconnectedness, will almost always have an effect outside the community. However, the more pertinent reason to heed outside opinion is that such opinion—when formed outside a self-interested framework—can help frame the lived experiences of a community with reference to the outside world. In the following part, I will examine the role of public sociology as the source of expert "outside" opinion in the lived experience-focused lawmaking process.

Lived experiences offer "a way of seeing, from where [legal actors] actually live, into the powers, processes, and relations that organize and determine the everyday context of that seeing" (Smith, 1987: 9). By prioritizing lived experience-based lawmaking, legal actors are given an opportunity to remark on not only the entitlements that are required (for a specific purpose) but also the circumstances under which such entitlements could be expected to meet the goals it was created for within a given community. By its very characteristics, then, the nature of this self-determination—participatory lawmaking—must be conceived of as decentralized lawmaking. Thus, decentralized participatory lawmaking constitutes a simultaneous discourse on substantive legal standards and institutional innovations for their enforcement. Decentralized participatory lawmaking gives legal actors an opportunity to supply the reasonings for, and expressions of, legal standards, instead of having to force their actual lived experiences into the language of law (that is, legal categories and legal tests) (Solomon, 2008a: 141, 151). Allowing legal actors to use their everyday language to describe their lives, relationships, and their problems—and having it recognized by law—is both efficient from the legal entitlement perspective and authentic for their social coalescence (Habermas, 1991: 240–243, 252–262; Routh, 2021). This approach to lawmaking is efficient because the disruption caused by legal acculturation and legal enforcement will be minimal, since legal actors are already aware of the tenets and concepts of their everyday language (or concepts) and social interactions. And because of the linguistic community's (people speaking the same language in the same sense within a community) common social understanding of their living and working conditions, legal actors will better appreciate the specific role that law plays in validating their unique community preoccupations.

This approach to lawmaking is particularly crucial in societies with heterogeneous socio-cultural environments and livelihood conditions. An example might be instructive here. The Indian workforce occupies remarkably divergent social spaces signifying multiple intersecting legalities. In the continuum of formal–informal work arrangements, workers occupy different legal statuses depending on the nature of their specific work relationships

(e.g., employee, independent contractor, self-employed, own-account, illegal squatter, undocumented worker, and so forth). Sometimes their work and entitlements are structured through statutes, at others, through social rules based on religion, caste, ethnicity, gender, locality, kinship, fictive kinship, migration status, and so forth (Harriss-White, 2010: 171–174; Mahy et al., 2017, 2019). Because of this deep divergence in working conditions, it is crucial that legal policy-making refrains from generalizing the experiences of workers even within similar categories of working arrangements (such as domestic workers or street vendors) unless their working contexts are also comparable (DeVault, 2008: 1, 2, 5–6; Smith, 1987: 107). Thus, the legal meaning of work, the extent of its social and market contribution, its relationality, and a society's reciprocal obligations to workers, should primarily emerge from the situated deliberations of specific groups of workers sharing common work-life experiences.

Although legal entitlements—the substance and manner of redistribution—should emerge primarily from the contextual lived experiences of individuals and communities, there are limits to this approach when employed on its own. Lived experiences, or the ways of making sense of the world through localized peculiarities, are invariably embedded in broader processes and relations of the socio-economy (Smith, 1987: 8–9, 108). The very *context* in which experience-based knowledge emerges is invariably also created by processes and relations that largely emerge from outside the immediate peculiarities of a community. To continue with the example of work-based relationships, political ideology, macroeconomic policies, product market conditions, consumer preferences, land use patterns, criminalization of certain economic activities, caste and ethnicity-based discriminations, and policies and prejudices on workers' movement, are just some of the factors that have a bearing on local circumstances, and consequently on lived experiences. These aspects of the supra-community, although inherently informing community experiences, may remain unarticulated in exclusively lived experience-focused lawmaking. However, since the law is a tool to normatively pattern the behaviour of legal actors and delineate the principles of institutional engagement, relevant factors transcending specific communities must also be explicitly identified and discussed during the lawmaking process. Accordingly, the lawmaking discourse must allow some openness to outside inputs, whether it takes the form of expert opinion, coalition agendas, or international solidarity.

Different kinds of inputs have different degrees of relevance in an experience-focused lawmaking process. While interest-based inputs offered by coalitions and solidarity networks may emphasize justice and rights, independent "expert" inputs may help (objectively) consolidate realities and relationalities of situated experiences. This divergence results from the fact that whereas interest-based inputs, to a greater or lesser degree, identify with the interests and preoccupations of a specific community, expert inputs often seek to generate objective scientific knowledge. Both of these—interest representation and objective representation—should play a role in deliberations leading to lawmaking. Instances of interest-representation groups are trade union federations and networks of civil society, and expert groups such as research institutes and independent scholars. To be sure, the role played by these supra-community actors and institutions is to offer the wider context of community knowledge, which means that the lawmaking perspective remains that of the specific community. These supra-community engagements add nuance and enrich the community perspective. Thus, the components of participatory law-making, one that values lived experience as the basis of substantive legal entitlements, are: internal community deliberations and supra-community inputs on those experiences, with a primacy in favour of internal community deliberations.

EXPERTISE OF PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY IN LAWMAKING

Representative electoral democracy is primarily structured on the logic of geographical representation of the citizenry. Although a geographical constituency represented by a legislator may be homogeneous, in view of multiple allegiances, identities, and divisions of labor, it is more likely that every constituency is a collection of heterogeneous interests. Moreover, relationships and interactions in electoral constituencies are shaped not only through institutions of the state but also through formal and informal institutions of the civil society. Therefore, the interactions between state institutions and the civil society often lead to complex plural social orderings within a constituency, where the voice of the marginalized communities remains most at risk of being obscured (that is, unrepresented). Accordingly, lawmaking through electoral representatives remains vulnerable to the possibility of perpetually marginalizing less powerful interests. In view of the gap between majority (representative) lawmaking and participatory lawmaking (that is, decentralized interest representation) (Waldron, 1999a: 127), it is lived experience-based participatory lawmaking that has a better claim to legitimacy from the point of view of specific legal communities, and fairness from a political inclusivity perspective.

Interest representation in the above sense does not signify narrowly conceived individual profit-maximizing self-interest. Interest representation, in the sense in which I use the phrase, signifies general interest of the community in maintaining the integrity of its internal social preoccupations, including their ideals and relationships, from the encroachment of external interests, such as the program of the government bureaucracy or the priorities of the market institutions. Community interest, in this sense, is the product of the organic social evolution (Habermas, 1984 [1981]: 66). Communities and individuals are interested in safeguarding their ways of life and creating opportunities to expand their contextual well-being because of their acculturation in the specific community. However, as important as this interest-based lawmaking is, we should also be cautious about the risks of parochialism and internal power inequality of the community. Since the very significance of the community perspective relates to its localness, this perspective may not always be informed by the broader socio-political forces shaping their situated experiences. And since it is the community that is in charge of offering its situated experiences, there may be a tendency to adopt inflexible backward-looking community positions to the exclusion of minority opinions or concern for future generations. Accordingly, it is necessary that the community takes into account—not with a view to defer, but with an open mind to understand—the larger forces in operation relevant to their situated experiences.

As noted earlier, outside experts are potential contributors to the second component of the lived experience-based lawmaking. The role of "[t]he expert from outside" as contributing to democratic deliberations has been long emphasized by the political scientist Harold Laski (Laski, 2015 [1925]: 244). The proper role of the expert from the outside is to aid in the lived experience-based lawmaking process, not to substitute the lived experience perspective. In contrast, legal positivists allow a central role to independent (even if not outside) experts—judges—in developing the law (Raz, 1979: 44, 48–49). Expertise from the outside could come from independent experts such as researchers and universities, or from partisan experts such as the international federation of businesses or trade unions. By the very nature of the role that outside experts are to play—to enable communities to link their situated experiences with

broader socio-political forces—independent experts' reflections should carry more weight (as outside opinion) in the lawmaking discourse.

It is in this role of an outside independent opinion-maker that the sub-discipline of public sociology could contribute to the lawmaking process, and in turn, to the broader agenda of legal legitimacy. Public sociology's *raison d'être* is to inform public debates through research and theorizing (Burawoy, 2004). It explicitly swears allegiance to the civil society rather than the state or the market (Burawoy, 2005). Public sociology aims at furthering the interest of the civil society by caring about the representations and aspirations of the social, and seeking to uncover the nexus of power and capital insofar as the nexus marginalizes the concerns of the civil society. Accordingly, social problems such as inequality, discrimination, erosion of civil liberties, and destruction of the public life are the core concerns of public sociology (Burawoy, 2004: 1604). Acknowledging that social realities could have plural valid representations, public sociology cares about the generation of social knowledge from the bottom, that is, from the interpretations of realities made by people who live those realities. In this characterization, even though public sociology is "expert knowledge," its expertise lies in its epistemological commitment to contextual knowledge generation as represented through a discourse between the civil society and the social scientist. Its preoccupation is "back-translation," whereby public sociologists take "knowledge back to those from whom it came, making public issues out of private troubles" (Burawoy, 2005: 5). Thus, public sociology independently understands, examines, nuances, and narrates lived experiences in its broader socio-political relationships. By interpreting individual and community experiences as collective political challenges, public sociology links the specificity of the local with the general structures of the polity, or more specifically, the political institutions organizing the society.

Public sociology's disciplinary ambition is to re-politicize the civil society by challenging, for example, the technocratic orthodoxy of neo-liberal market exchanges and electoral representative democracy (Burawoy, 2004: 1604–1606; Burawoy, 2005: 7). In explicitly seeking to actively engage with the broader polity beyond the scientific community, public sociology challenges the hollowness of the orthodoxy that when a scientific discipline—public sociology—seeks to politicize and actively takes a political position, it loses its scientific integrity. Instead, public sociology, as Michael Burawoy emphasizes, aims to clarify its scientific values explicitly in the process of creating "reflexive knowledge" aimed primarily at "extra-academic audiences" (Burawoy, 2004: 1607–1608, 1611). An important characteristic of public sociology, relevant particularly for the purpose of this discussion, is that, although public sociology seeks to engage the publics—legal communities—it does not merely aim to lend a voice or amplify the community opinion. It offers its own independent evaluation arrived at through its professional research and reporting conventions. It is these independent evaluations that consolidate or confront the lived experience perspective, particularly during the lawmaking process.

In a lived experience-based creation of legal norms, outside expert opinion could be offered through a combination of what are termed as traditional and grassroots public sociology. While traditional public sociology reports issues of general public interest, grassroots public sociology narrates the particular interests of the decentralized specific communities, such as "neighborhood groups, communities of faith, [and] labor organizations" (Burawoy, 2004: 1608). The first is distinguished from the latter in its methodological distance from the grassroots communities. Traditional public sociology's unique contribution lies in its ability to create "detached knowledge" that is broadly relevant for the whole (which could

be contextually imagined either narrowly or broadly) of the society, in contrast to the "collaborative knowledge" produced through grassroots public sociology (Burawoy, 2005: 7–8). Accordingly, while grassroots public sociology independently interprets local knowledge, traditional public sociology helps in seeing the connections between such local knowledge and broad social knowledge.

This communicative channel between methodologies is important from a lawmaking perspective. Legal regulation of community behaviour and relationships cannot operate in communal isolation. In decisions about the reorganization of institutions and redirecting resources in furthering legal mandates, the community perspective must be in dialogue with the outside perspective. Although public sociology is an outside expertise from the perspective of lived experience of local actors, the two components of the outside expertise—specific and general—should generate a background narrative that informs the community discourse on legal entitlements and obligations. An exchange between these two scientific approaches should be taken into account—as an "outside" contribution—to the lived experience-based lawmaking process. Thus, although the methodological distinction may make sense from a disciplinary point of view, from the perspective of the function of an outside expert in the lawmaking process, the distinction collapses. In this latter sense, public sociology should become an agent in the discursive process of transforming knowledge into an informational basis of lawmaking (Borghi, 2020: 242).

However, just because scientific knowledge is independent and rigorous, it is not beyond controversy as an expert opinion. Expert opinion is often expected to have a uniform and conclusive character. From this perspective, there are problems with scientific knowledge. Scientific knowledge, particularly in social sciences, often is not uniform, and speaks in different voices. Conclusions in social science research often conflict with each other. How might public sociology contribute to the lawmaking discourse if the traditional and the grassroots knowledge contradict, for example? Additionally, the goals of an expert (public sociologist) may not be shared by the community of the expert's research concern, as noted by Burawoy (2005: 9):

> Public sociology … strikes up a dialogic relation between sociologist and public in which the agenda of each is brought to the table, in which each adjusts to the other. In public sociology, discussion often involves values or goals that are not automatically shared by both sides so that reciprocity … is often hard to sustain. Still, it is the goal of public sociology to develop such a conversation.

In spite of possible contradictions or differences in values, the significance of public sociology lies in its aim to inform a legal community of an issue in its attendant complexities and divergent interpretations. Once such outside expert knowledge is offered to a community, it should be left to the community to decide how to make use of the available information in their lawmaking agenda. In the ultimate analysis of legal legitimacy, it is the lived experience of the communities that should validate legal entitlements. The deference to lived experience not only legitimizes the lawmaking process, but it does so by prioritizing the reflective capacity and agency of legal actors (Borghi, 2020: 247–248).

CONCLUSION

Lawmaking is a specific kind of policy exercise. The legitimacy of such policy-making depends on two interrelated components: formal legitimacy (political legitimacy) and substantive legitimacy (social authenticity). Formal legitimacy is endowed through self-determination through direct lawmaking participation. On the other hand, substantive legitimacy—what I have called authenticity—emerges through the knowledge created from the perspective of contextual lived experiences. Thus, if law needs to be legitimate in both of the above-mentioned senses, it must be created on the basis of lived experiences. However, the very idea of lived experience, while central in legitimizing laws, also suggests a specific (local) narrow lens through which to look at the world. By its very definition, then, the lived experience perspective will often miss the larger forces that shape specific lived experiences. In order to safeguard the lived experience perspective from myopic vision and short-sighted conclusions, it is necessary that decentralized lawmaking discourses take into account "outside" independent opinion in locating their experiences in the broader relationships of the society.

Public sociology offers such an outside expert opinion that can—should—inform lived experience-based lawmaking discourse. Even though public sociology aims at collaborative knowledge production and back-translation of such knowledge, it constitutes an outside opinion in the sense that such knowledge is not merely the outcome of the communal acculturation process. Instead, it is produced through conventions and practices of an outside group of "social scientists." Such knowledge is also independent in the sense that it seeks to be free from interest-based conclusions of the concerned community. Knowledge generated through public sociology, created in collaboration with or far from the relevant communities, supplies a range of expert opinions that are capable of consolidating the lived experience-based lawmaking process. However, in the case of conflict and contradictions between the community perspective and the expert opinion, it is the community perspective that satisfies the legitimacy requirement of legal mandates. Accordingly, during the legitimate lawmaking discourse, we should be careful not to displace the situated actors' perspective and substitute it with "independent" expert opinion. In this respect, public sociology should not seek to represent lived experiences for lawmaking purposes. Instead, it should offer supplemental knowledge about a community or actors, to be carefully and sincerely considered by the autonomous community or legal actors. Thus, expert opinion is centrally relevant in the lawmaking process, but the legitimacy of the lawmaking process is dependent on lived experience-based autonomous lawmaking. If we are able to strike this conceptual and policy balance between the two perspectives, legal standards will be able to meet the legitimacy challenge, both procedurally and substantively.

NOTE

1. Waldron notes that this role of law should be categorized as specific jurisprudence, in contrast to questions about the very idea of law, of legal authority, of legal obligation, and rule of law, which are properly the concern of general jurisprudence.

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11. The foundational economy approach: a public social science of socio-economic life

Julie Froud, Angelo Salento and Karel Williams

INTRODUCTION

The academic and popular publishing scene is densely populated with perspectives that try to go beyond the dogmatics of mainstream economics. There are many approaches which in various ways try to bring the aims and principles of economics closer to the point of view of social actors, and thus promote the idea of a public social science of socio-economic life which breaks with the classic tripartite division between the economic, social and political. The strategic importance of these attempts was highlighted by the financial crisis of 2008 and its aftermath, which aggravated inequalities and demonstrated that instability is an intrinsic feature of a highly financialized capitalism, in which fundamental economic choices are removed from political discussion and entrusted to a purely technical rationality. Amongst this group of approaches, the foundational economy perspective is quintessential, for the reasons explained below.

The construct of the foundational economy was developed by an open network of researchers, mostly from Western Europe. The basic idea is accessible in a commonsense way, as it should be when accessibility is probably an important consideration for public science. The foundational economy is the domain in which goods and services essential for individual and collective well-being are produced and distributed. It is the infrastructure of everyday life and the material basis of social cohesion which includes providential services, such as health, care services, education; and 'material' goods and services, such as water and energy distribution, public transport, retail banking, housing. A very large part of citizens' well-being depends on accessing these high-quality, affordable basic goods and services, which depend on collectively provided systems reaching into every locality.

Collective provision requires investment, and over the last three decades private investment has been rationed by extractive and short-term private business, while public investment in the foundational domain has progressively shrunk. If citizen access to foundational goods and services is essential, it is now necessary to rethink the organization and operating rules of foundational provision.

Of course, this brief and simple sketch of the object of our research raises a large number of questions which have answers that are not straightforward. With questions or answers, the connecting foundational theme is plurality. Because the economic processes we are dealing with are multiple (and rich in specificities), the political processes promoting (or undermining) a foundational economic space are diverse, the technical apparatuses and the networks of social actors operating in this space are complex. Against this background, we will highlight the distinctive framing that establishes the claim of foundational economy as a public social science (Burawoy 2005). This approach brings into play multiple forms of knowledge; it combines analytical capacity with a pluralist, non-ideological normativity; it insists on the

importance of repoliticizing everyday life; it develops a work of cultural mediation; it understands the public as a process and adopts an experimental and open approach, best suited for the construction of alliances for knowledge exchange and political action.

RECOGNIZING MULTIPLE ORDERS OF WORTH IN ECONOMIC LIFE

The foundational economy approach is based on the idea that – contrary to the reductionism of mainstream economics – economic life is intrinsically plural. This approach challenges all attempts to explain economic life by reference to a single rational logic, whether that is conceived as an original unity or as the outcome of a convergence. Addressing every policy issue with the tools of mainstream economics is a practice which is both a cause and an effect of the extraordinary power given to economic experts in decision-making processes. Since 2008, it has become increasingly clear that the imperial claim of economics is unsatisfactory on the analytical level and regressive on the political level, because 'citizens increasingly live in a world that they cannot shape' (Earle et al. 2017, p. 3).

Hence one major challenge for a public social science is how to restore plurality to economic life. The foundational response is historicist insofar as place (and hence space and time) are reintroduced to the analysis. This allows recognition of the plurality of ends and values at any one point in time, along with an understanding of the radical differences between structures of the economy in various periods. In the foundational approach, these complexities are thought through using the Braudelian idea that the economy can be described as a building with many levels or floors. In Braudel's history of the early modern period, there is a level 'above' and 'below' the market, where below is the space of material life or the domestic activities of social reproduction, and above is high capitalism or the opaque space in which financial actors operate. Through this apparatus Braudel contested the attempt to construct a reductionist economic science with claims to universal validity and its associated concept of history as the triumph of the market.

Braudel believed that even in his own time – the 1970s – this historical reconstruction of the early modern economy was still relevant (Braudel 1979). The risk remained of a progressive expansion of high capitalism to the detriment of the other domains (as performed through financialization after the 1980s). For similar reasons, another important theoretical reference for the foundational economy approach is Karl Polanyi, with his conviction that when one of the diverse regimes of regulation of economic life is sacrificed, and a market logic expands, this inescapably damages the social body and stimulates a 'counter-movement' (Polanyi 1944).

The foundational economy approach, therefore, develops a zonal conception of economic life (see Table 11.1): a mosaic of forms of regulation that is constructed and transformed on the basis of political and social events and processes, rather than on the basis of a universal economic rationality.

In this framework, the foundational economy has important distinguishing specificities: the demand for foundational goods and services tends to be inelastic; foundational economic activities are mostly sheltered from international competition; public intervention in foundational provision is (still) very evident, whether as regulator or manager or owner/shareholder of businesses.

Table 11.1 Simplified zonal scheme of the economy

Economic Zones					
Unpaid	Monetarized activities, registered in national account				
Unpaid sector – private households	Everyday economy			Export-oriented market economy	Rentier economy
	Foundational economy		Non-basic local provision		
	Existential provision	Basic local provision			
Examples					
Unpaid care of family members	Health, Energy	Food, Banking	Restaurant, Hairdresser	Automotive supplies	Stock/real estate market

Source: Adapted from Krisch et al. (2020).

This pluralist conception of economic analysis, in the foundational economy approach, marks the difference between a public science and the project of critical sociology. Critical sociology credits capitalism with a unitary character and criticizes an instrumental economic rationality on the grounds that it is destructive of social organization destined to produce destructive effects on social organization. By way of contrast, the foundational economy approach recognizes (in both a cognitive and a normative sense) that there are a multiplicity of orders of value in economic life (Boltanski and Thévenot 1991; Walzer 1983).

The project of critical sociology is to unmask by providing a critique of capitalism as such, and/or to advance yet another theoretical and methodological critique of mainstream economics which is 'destined' – Bourdieu would say – 'to appear incompetent or unjust' (Bourdieu 2000, p. 29). The project of public science is to enable by understanding plurality in ways which nurture the language of possibility by highlighting the multiplicity of economic spaces and possible ways to renew it; and by constructively developing alternatives to the monolithic approach of mainstream economics and the economic policies that flow from it, based on competitiveness as the keystone of prosperity.

This foundational project establishes a distinctive methodological orientation in a twofold movement. The first foundational step is to set aside the perspective of economic expertise and the regime of econocracy, and to approach the economics of everyday life from the perspective of the actors of everyday life, *ex parte populi*. As discussed below, from the foundational perspective it is essential to understand 'what matters to people', in order to launch new processes of democratic experimentalism. It is essential to build relationships based on knowledge – and knowledge based on relationships – rather than practising the logic of one-way expert advice by authority. The second foundational step, which is no less important, is to offer a contribution of cultural mediation, which makes the processes of foundational provision and their financial logic intelligible to the layman. This work is necessary because, although foundational activities are decisive for the daily life of citizens, their business models and financial logics remain obscured by the technicalities of financial reporting in accounting frameworks.

These two aspects of the foundational economy approach will be dealt with in later sections. In the next section, priority must be given to the normative foundations of foundational thinking.

A NON-IDEOLOGICAL, PLURALIST NORMATIVITY

The Foundational Economy Collective often meets questions (and objections) about where exactly are the boundaries of this economic zone; and why or how are the boundaries of the zone set to include some activities and exclude others. To avoid confusion about what we are discussing, the collective has laid out a list of activities included in the foundational economy, by Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) class, on its website. When the concept needs to be operationalized – for example, to specify how much of the labour force in European countries is employed in the foundational sectors – this kind of stipulative definition is needed.[1] But there is no doubt that the decision about what to include in the foundational economy involves some discretion and judgement on the part of researchers.

In constructing the website list, the collective's researchers included daily essentials for physical sustenance, but used their discretion to exclude goods and services that meet relational and social needs but are not necessary for survival. This decision could be disputed, because these relational activities are necessary if, in Sen's definition, citizens are to be free 'to live the lives they have reason to value'. Thus, the definition of the foundational economy always remains relative, contextual, disputable and eminently open. The idea that a foundational space can be identified in economic life implies a normative posture. But, crucially, in the foundational economy approach this normativity is never purely rationalistic, nor does it arise from a purely ideological stance.

The foundational space is identified by the intersection of different criteria of justification, that is, different normative options, free from ideological inclinations and independent of *a priori* political or religious affiliations. These justification criteria include the following.

The first justification is a philosophical anthropology, namely the capabilities approach (Sen 1999), which considers the availability of essential goods and services as a prerequisite for a life worth living. These goods and services are the basis of elementary physical functions, such as being sufficiently fed and not suffering from avoidable illnesses; and the support of complex social functions, such as being able to participate in community life.

A second criterion of justification is a materialist anthropology, clearly expressed in Engels's theorem about a hierarchy of needs and aspirations inscribed in consumption practices (Foundational Economy Collective 2018). It is possible to identify, through simple statistical analysis, a core basket of goods and services whose demand is particularly inelastic and independent of income. For example, in Italy, the 20 per cent of households with the lowest monthly expenditure (first quintile) spend about half as much on food as the 20 per cent with the highest monthly expenditure (fifth quintile), but for the former, food expenditure amounts to about 24 per cent of total expenditure, and for the latter, about 13 per cent.

A third justification criterion relates to the moral sense inherent in individual citizens. One of the basic assumptions of foundational thinking is that every economic policy should start by asking citizens what their priorities are, because the answers to those questions will give content to the construct of the foundational economy. Here it is particularly important to dispense with preconceived notions in societies that have satisfied the basic material needs of most citizens, because citizens' preferences cannot then be taken for granted. Surveys on what matters to people have been conducted as part of the activities of the Foundational Economy Collective (e.g., Cunnington Wynn et al. 2020; Salento 2021). As we will note below, the results show that citizen preference systems change only marginally from place to place. But

above all, they show that the system of preferences expressed by citizens is significantly different from that inherent in top-down economic policies.

A fourth criterion of justification refers to the constitutional arrangements of European democratic states. This is not a formalist criterion, based on compliance with legal norms. Rather, constitutional arrangements are interpreted as politico-historical expressions of social orders, since they reflect established conceptions of the common good and social welfare:

> Every capitalist society generates norms and regulations relating to how much inequality is acceptable, what can and cannot be commodified, who should work, what is acceptable pay and conditions of work and who (e.g. minors) should be protected. Such minimum socially defined standards coexist as governing principles – and therefore moral choices – alongside any consumer choice exercised by individuals within a market. (Foundational Economy Collective 2018, p. 91)

European democratic constitutions are not just collections of procedural rules but also delineate an image of society seen from the citizen's perspective. As such, these national constitutions identify, with relatively few national differences, an economic space of entitlement to an irreducible core of fundamental goods and services, sheltered to varying degrees from competition. This does not vindicate the evolutionist perspective of T.H. Marshall (1950), who believed that the sphere of social rights would gradually expand; but it does represent a specific historical acquisition which is unstable and not irreversible because it is subject to continuous tensions that make it fragile, today more than ever.

A fifth criterion of justification rests on the imperatives of environmental and climatic sustainability (Calafati et al. 2021a). The foundational economy we inherited from the 20th century was built without consideration for environmental and climate constraints, which were registered amongst scientific communities for the first time in the 1970s. Today, this awareness of the nature and climate emergency is diffused, and the foundational economy is the sphere where there are the most relevant opportunities for restructuring to meet sustainability goals. This is for two reasons. Firstly, some high carbon footprint foundational sectors – particularly food, housing and transport – account for 50 per cent or more of emissions; these sectors must reduce emissions if sustainability targets are to be achieved. Secondly, some providential foundational sectors – such as education, health, care – have very low environmental and climate impacts and substantial capacity to generate well-being, employment and income; the output of these sectors can be expanded at the expense of other less sustainable sectors that are also less important in terms of enabling citizen development.

This broad and plural normative basis is not the consequence of a vague and generic approach, but reflects the breadth of the historical-philosophical foundations of the foundational economy: which is not the product of a specific philosophical or political tradition, but it is the space in which different traditions converge – first and foremost the socialist and the Judeo-Christian traditions – united by the recognition of the importance of the collective dimension of the economy and well-being.

THE FOUNDATIONAL ECONOMY AS A HISTORICAL-POLITICAL PRODUCT AND THE IMPORTANCE OF REPOLITICIZATION

In March 2020, in the midst of the first coronavirus pandemic lockdown in Western Europe, the Foundational Economy Collective responded to events by publishing a pamphlet on 'what

comes after the pandemic' (Foundational Economy Collective 2020). The extraordinary circumstances of the pandemic highlighted our collective dependence on the 'ordinary' infrastructure of daily life in the supermarket or the care home. Hence the pamphlet's argument about the need and opportunity at this juncture to develop a political project to restructure the foundational economy for the post-pandemic future.

Of course, this emphasis on political action is not simply a matter of opportunism because the foundational economy is always a political project and achievement, so that denying the political dimension of the foundational economy is denying the existence of the foundational economy as such. The foundational economy is itself a political-historical product: it developed as a response to an intrinsically political question about what basic human needs are and how they can be met; hence, what kind of management should be envisaged for economic activities such as water and electricity distribution, health care or education. In a 'purely economic' discourse, there is no such thing as a foundational economy: what we call foundational is just an indistinguishable fraction of a whole – the economy *sans phrase* – which is supposed to be internally homogeneous, devoid of zone-specific economic determinations.

Acknowledging the political dimension of the foundational economy today entails taking into account two aspects: on the one hand, the essential character of foundational goods and services as constituent elements of citizenship; on the other, the continuous dependence of these goods and services on the dynamics of social power and political dialectics. In this context, re-establishing the political nature of the foundational economy is an ongoing struggle in our own time. Because the tendency to depoliticize economic issues – even when they closely concern well-being and quality of life – is one of the most characteristic features of the neo-liberal transformation (Flinders and Wood 2014), as it is supported by positive economics which is eager to free itself from reference to values.

The Italian national experience is significant here, when it comes to understanding how much the technical (rather than political) legitimation of economic policy choices is crucial in present-day capitalist restructuring processes. In Italy, no political force (with the exception of Silvio Berlusconi's party, in its early years) has ever expressed an explicit neo-liberal orientation. However, this has not prevented the financialization of the economy, the commodification of labour and the privatization of public services. These developments have been promoted – albeit with some differences in the justification frameworks – by both centre-right and centre-left governments; while so-called 'technical' governments have pressed hardest with this kind of capitalist restructuring. The 'holy language' of economics is the most effective tool for justifying financializing policy choices, especially in the Italian context where political forces are delegitimated.

One of the essential tasks of a public social science is re-establishing the intrinsically political dimension of what have been defined as economic issues, so that these issues can be legitimately brought back into the space of democratic deliberation. As we have noted, the pandemic emergency has shown that economic choices about foundational goods and services have a huge impact on the lives of individuals and communities. The example of health care is probably the most obvious. After two or three decades of reductions in public health spending, privatization, and the application of the criteria of new public management – a period in which health care was treated as an object of mere economic accounting – the pandemic shows that the health system needs political attention.

The first phase of the pandemic highlighted problems about not enough hospital beds and staff, especially in those countries such as the United Kingdom (UK) that had restructured

their hospitals following a 'lean' model of high flow and low stocks (see Froud et al. 2020a). At a later stage, it was realized that an ongoing pandemic could not be tackled without a low-threshold, territorialized primary health care system that could offer care outside the hospital circuit (see Bifulco and Neri 2022). This analysis does not imply that a system such as health care should be subjected to modernist top-down reform (Scott 1998). Froud et al. (2020a) argue that hyper-innovation in the English National Health Service (NHS) has reduced capability; and the foundational argument is that, if one wants to build a health system in which the hospital is only an extreme solution, one must focus attention on the careful practice of policy and the provision of primary health systems in local contexts.

Similar repoliticization considerations and arguments apply to other sectors, such as housing. After the Second World War, housing provision for the mass of citizens was an important socio-political issue and priority in all the West European democracies. Then, by the 1990s, housing had become one of the most neglected topics in mainstream social science and in politics, to the extent that housing provision could be considered an 'amputated arm' of the welfare state (Cole and Furbey 1994, p. 2). The 2008 financial crisis brought repossessions in some countries and rising market rents everywhere. Consequently, housing is back onto the political agenda, from Barcelona to Berlin, as the financialization of housing establishes new lines of social division between private renters and property owners (see Arbaci et al. 2021).

The re-emergence of housing as a political issue reminds us that, after 1980, while housing slipped from the field of the politically visible, it was increasingly intricated in broader processes of unearned income extraction from urban land. In the inglorious neo-liberal 30-year period, the depoliticization of housing legitimated and created a space for financial actors, who have become the undisputed dominant actors in urban life (Flinders and Wood 2014; Hay 2014; Aalbers 2016). There was little political engagement with the proliferating forms of financial exploitation of urban space, especially in big cities. These have included: the growth of mortgage loans on appreciating private housing for occupancy or rent; the creation of real estate investment funds; the financialization of public spaces such as railway stations and stadiums; the gentrification of urban districts as a lever for the growth of real estate prices and the value of urban land; the creation of platforms for short rentals.

As part of the public social science project – which could more appropriately be called 'civic', when it is so resolutely devoted to reconnecting economic life with the demands of social reproduction – the foundational economy approach restores the political dimension to all these issues. Foundational analysis of economic processes clarifies that the increasingly inescapable housing problem of the 2020s is rooted in specific forms of regulation of the use of urban space. In this sense, it argues that the question of the right to housing cannot be limited to the field of secondary redistribution through social housing for low-income groups, or rent controls for young renters (important as these interventions are). From a foundational point of view, it is necessary to put land – urban land in particular – at the heart of political debate and discussion (see also Monbiot 2019). Thus, social innovations, such as civil society experiments with new forms of housing, are prefiguratively important insofar as they counter the extraction of unearned rents from urban land which undermine well-being and social cohesion (Bricocoli and Salento 2020).

THE ANALYSIS OF BUSINESS PROCESSES AND THE ALTERNATIVE USE OF ACCOUNTING: A WORK OF CULTURAL MEDIATION

Like other normative and critical approaches – such as the commons approach – the foundational economy approach deals with heterogeneous objects which have a distinctive unifying characteristic insofar as they are all essential to social reproduction. In foundational thinking, this zone of the economy is organized into discrete reliance systems producing intermediate goods and services such as clean water and health care (Schafran et al. 2020). Much of this can be read as a fairly orthodox analysis of the infrastructural conditions of social reproduction under the influence of science and technology studies. But foundational analysis breaks with other, related discourses insofar as it analyses the business models and regulation of reliance systems, using the categories of accounting for critical purposes.

The Foundational Economy Collective has produced many studies of business regulation, organization and management in the different reliance systems of the foundational economy, especially in the UK and Italy. These include health (Froud et al. 2020b), care services (Burns et al. 2016), transport (Bowman et al. 2013; Salento and Pesare 2016), housing (Froud et al. 2020b; Bricocoli and Salento 2020), food production and distribution (Barbera et al. 2016). The distinctive foundational point here is about duality and opacity. Duality because, from the citizen's demand-side point of view, these reliance systems deliver essential goods or services; while, from the provider's supply-side point of view, these are not-for-profit cost-recovering or for-profit income-generating activities; for financialized actors these are cash streams which can help to meet return on capital targets set by financial markets. Opacity, because privatization, outsourcing and state enterprise adoption of private sector management practice make it difficult for ordinary citizens and the political classes to assess performance and effectiveness in social terms outside a managerialist frame of efficiency to meet financial targets.

The successive transformations of the professional field of business management have naturally contributed to this result. As the centrality of financial markets and financial accumulation has grown in the economic space, managerialism has undergone a profound transformation.

In a first phase, professional management was able to set its own objectives, which were productionist. In the first half of the 20th century, classic contributions by Bearle and Means (1933) and James Burnham (1941) promoted or described the rise of a controlling corporate managerial class who exercised hegemonic power at the expense of the dispersed owners who held shares in public companies. 'Scientific management' elevated the objective of efficiency, and its logic was strongly anchored to reorganization of the productive side of the business so as to reduce labour costs. More broadly, in this first stage, the conception of business control (Fligstein 1990) was eminently oriented towards production and marketing to deliver final product sales within a frame of consensus, and compromise which could include organized labour.

In a second phase, which has been gaining ground in Europe since the 1980s (and in the United States since the late 1960s), professional management goes with a financial conception of corporate control for shareholder value and owner returns. Large companies are seen as bundles of cash-generating assets, and managers with a financial background are becoming increasingly powerful as servants of external fund investors, who threaten redundancy or merger for senior managers who do not deliver financially. As Rakesh Khurana (2010) has shown, business schools have actively contributed to redefining the logics of corporate

accumulation: they have provided the cultural frameworks and ideological justification to overthrow the old managerialist order, and to replace it with financialized priorities disembedded with respect to the values, options and contingent interests of human actors (with the sole exception of owners).

This changing concept of control has been associated with a shift in the hierarchy of formalized managerial knowledge. Production knowledge about operations control is secondary because improvements can be required by targets; financial knowledge is essential because the manager of the 2020s has to be financially literate in managing cash flows and rationing investment so as to deliver returns by manipulating numerator or denominator to facilitate extraction. In contemporary managerial discourse, there is no room for a plurality of value orders. The old (continental European) idea of the enterprise as a social institution 'established and managed for the satisfaction of human needs' (Zappa 1927) gives way to a different conception. In quoted companies what matters is providing shareholders with a return at least in line with that of comparably risky investments; and in private equity investments what matters is generating the cash which will provide levered returns for the fund.

Against this background, there is no possibility of understanding the trajectories of contemporary firms, inside or outside foundational reliance systems, if the analysis does not come to terms with the importance of accounting in the operating systems of present-day financialized capitalism. And, correlatively, the analyst must be able to use company report and accounts as primary sources in any account of the past or predictions of the future. These points may be elementary, but they remain after a decade or more a key distinguishing feature of foundational analysis which draws on an intellectual tradition called critical accounting – developed in the 1980s mainly in the UK and Australia – which drew on various theoretical perspectives (see Lodh and Gaffikin 1997: 437) and published in academic journals such as *Accounting, Organizations and Society* and *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*.

Accounting has, in fact, an extraordinary performative power in relation to capitalist transactions. It was a decisive tool in the birth of capitalism (Bryer 2000), and accounting remains a presiding element in all capitalism's subsequent transformations, because it serves as the connecting tool between accumulation strategies and organizational and management dynamics. It plays a crucial role in the regulation of economic processes, embodying all the relevant notions in the life of enterprises and in the economic system (profit, loss, efficiency, dividend, cost, and so on). As partial as it is apparently objective and rational, accounting both practically answers and intellectually covers the question of in whose interest the company is set up and managed. This is the starting point for critical accounting analysis (cf. Tinker 1980; Tinker et al. 1982), which understands that 'accounting has consequences for everyone's life, even (or perhaps especially) for those who know little about the subject and have never set eyes on a balance sheet' (Perry and Nölke 2006, p. 560).

It is therefore extremely important for a public social science to make accounting devices and effects intelligible. The very possibility of repoliticizing foundational activities (and the choices related to all our foundational reliance systems) depend on the capacity of that public science to undertake a work of cultural mediation. Accounting is a particularly esoteric expert knowledge whose codes are central to contemporary economic life, but knowledge of the codes is reserved for a class of operators with a specific technical-financial education. The task of mediation is to make some of this comprehensible to citizens. More specifically, this work of demystification is important for two reasons.

First, observing the technicalities of accounting rules allows us to understand the changing logic of financialization. This is so partly because the regulation of accounting is part of a process of isomorphic transformation on a global scale, whose leaders are mainly private regulatory bodies, such as the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) in the United States, oriented towards audit of giant firms. This becomes important, given the key role of accounting in the financialization of all kinds of business, when accounting gains a formatting role as it bridges financial reporting with planning and control activities so that accounting is now responsible not only for *ex post* evaluation, but also for planning and overseeing all activities in a world where the two interact. Under International Accounting Standard (IAS) 36 since 2001, assets with impaired earning power can no longer be carried at historic cost on the balance sheet but must be marked down to current value with a corresponding charge against income. The unintended consequence is all kinds of problems for co-ops and mutuals in market downturns when their revenue falls, and the bank-led collapse of the organized large-scale cooperative movement in the UK.

Second, accounting analysis allows us to understand, case by case, the business models of firms (not-for-profit and for-profit) occupying similar positions in reliance systems, as they attempt to recover costs incurred (with or without surpluses) to keep stakeholders happy. Hence the importance of the 'follow the money' method of business analysis in the foundational economy approach, which always asks what the business model is and where the levers of cost reduction or recovery are. Research by Foundational Economy Collective members (see, e.g., Bowman et al. 2013; Bowman et al. 2015; Salento and Pesare 2016) has observed the use of irresponsible levers: for example, how firms generate extra profits at the expense of wages; how they pressure suppliers; how they ramp tariffs to extract rents from users; how they sell assets for income; how they misuse intra-group financial transactions to leave subsidiaries burdened with liabilities; how they use public resources to reduce business risk.

This type of analysis provides an insight into how the social contract on which large firms were based has been eroded, particularly in the foundational domain. Historically, the operations of a large utility provider (state telecom company or private railway company) were based on the idea of a stream of value, the benefits of which were shared over time among the stakeholders including capital which accepted lower returns. The prerogatives of capital were then balanced against those of other parties, within a broad framework of long-term relationships and common interest. After financialization, we can observe instead the extraction of point-value (Bowman et al. 2014): what matters are the returns on capital here and now, at this moment, in a given enterprise. Often, it is not an operating company that benefits, but some kind of investing or owning parent company which is not interested in the long-term fate of subsidiaries.

Thus, it becomes possible to understand the economic and social costs of extracting high returns from core foundational activities such as privatized water companies where the target rate of return on capital is now 10 per cent or higher compared with a historic norm closer to 5 per cent: public finances are used as a basis for private profit, low wages make the state bear the costs of social safety nets; suppliers have no continuity of orders, cannot afford to invest and slowly go bankrupt; marketing based on confusion pricing facilitates customer fraud; financial engineering gimmicks make operating subsidiaries more fragile. As in private equity-owned UK care chains, if the operating subsidiary fails, the owning fund walks away, while bond holders and banks (which hold the debt) take the hit and acquire the business at a cost which will be attractive to those who bought distressed bonds below par; meanwhile

the operating business then starts off with a clean balance sheet so that the cycle can begin all over again.

BUILDING ALLIANCES FOR CO-LEARNING AND DEMOCRATIC EXPERIMENTALISM

The foundational economy approach is a fascinating interdisciplinary analytical perspective, which can develop insights about issues ignored or seldom addressed by the mainstream social sciences. However, the approach does not aim to refine the critical analysis of present-day capitalism, because it sees smart criticism as a classic temptation for academic researchers; too much academic work in the social sciences ends with invocation of a danger or calls for radical change bundled with policy proposals which are either utopian or inadequate to the problem. Instead, the foundational approach aims to sidestep critique and provide analysis which can support democratic social innovation.

Underlying this foundational approach are some radical convictions about knowledge production. If multiple forms of knowledge are at stake in social and economic processes, team research combining different expertise will usually be necessary. Furthermore, standard academic or think tank processes of knowledge production are inadequate if the aim is foundational analysis to support social innovation, because foundational analysis requires democratic engagement and inquiry into citizen priorities. This is particularly true in the foundational domain where the logic of corporate actors meets the perspective of everyday life. In this kind of space, different orders of worth are co-present and potentially conflicting. To assert the primacy of one order of worth against the others would be questionable from an epistemological point of view and would be unproductive if the aim is social innovation with democratic participation.

The functioning of the foundational economy is all about irreducibly different orders of worth, and so analysis must reject economic reductionism and technocratic solutionism. Instead, the foundational imperative is to ask citizens what they want and to find out what matters to citizens, so that key policies can be the result of dialogue, not of an agenda imposed from above. Often, the engagement activities of administrations and corporations are merely cosmetic, or consult about the details of implementing policy choices which have already been decided. Against this, in cooperation with administrations and intermediary bodies such as trade unions and community organizations, the Foundational Economy Collective develops research that aims to build a realistic knowledge of what matters to citizens (see, e.g., Cunnington Wynn et al. 2020; Salento 2021).

The results of these inquiries in South Italy or Wales, and in town or country, reveal a broad similarity between what citizens want in different settings. Citizens everywhere prioritize the foundational basics, with many citizens in South Italy preferring better services over higher incomes; and the other recurrent 'what matters' theme is the importance of social infrastructure such as public parks, libraries and high streets, which are spaces of sociability for citizens. This reveals a substantial divergence between what matters to citizens, and the priorities of mainstream economic policy: in all the Italian cases, citizens reject the idea that pushing competitiveness to boost individual income will build and maintain widespread well-being. Within this consensus there are of course differences in citizen priorities in various local contexts, according to political history, industrial base, and the presence of third-sector organizations.

From a foundational economy point of view, these results are consonant with the bigger picture that the local dimension does matter, but within a frame of regionally and nationally organized systems. The foundational economy is not entirely an economy of territories, but it is a territorialized economy, as it is embedded in the social fabric, the physical topography and the pattern of urban (or rural) development. The local is always important because foundational goods and services have to be locally distributed through networks and branches, so that coverage and access will, for example, pose different challenges in rural and urban districts for a public ambulance service or a private mobile phone company. At the same time, foundational analysis cannot be concerned solely with local provision and initiative because many of these services will be organized on a regional or national basis, such as when, for example, in the UK ambulance services are organized on a regional basis, and the mobile phone companies promise national coverage.

The foundational politics of social innovation starts by recognizing these multiscalar complexities and how they now are overlaid with governmental incapacity at central state, regional and local levels. After 30 years of privatization and outsourcing, compounded by political fragmentation and the erosion of traditional voting patterns, national governments are structurally weak and suffer from a lack of administrative and ideational capacity. None of the national governments in Europe today would be able to make an organizational effort comparable to that which sustained the great foundational turn after 1945. Conversely, at a local scale – although administrative capacity is still very limited after all kinds of cuts – it is relatively easier to activate innovation processes if we can bring together local authorities, civil society and grounded firms.

To innovate in the space of the foundational economy, it is crucial to develop knowledge about how places work and to build alliances across traditional lines of division. This view of possibilities underpins our concern with how places work. And here we study not only big cities, where development based on urban rent prevails (see Engelen et al. 2017; Froud et al. 2018; Bricocoli and Salento 2020), but also 'ordinary' and peripheral places, which are very often ignored by social research and political debate (Calafati et al. 2019; Calafati et al. 2021b).

As we have pointed out, the foundational economy approach rests on non-ideological normative foundations, which favour the building of broad alliances with all actors who care about the collective basis of well-being. Among these actors there are certainly many third-sector protagonists of direct social action, but it is also possible to recruit the grounded firms in small business, such as in Wales, where the Federation of Small Businesses was the first supporter of foundational intervention.

'Traditional' intermediary bodies have responded slowly to the challenge of the new foundational approach. Central state political parties have everywhere lagged behind in recognizing the importance of renewing the foundational economy, but in Wales the Labour Party and the nationalists are both supportive. Trade unions are becoming more responsive. Following the lead of the Italian General Confederation of Labour (CGIL) and the Austrian Trade Union Federation (OGB), trade unions are increasingly focusing their attention on the collective basis of well-being. The workers' movement has always combined defence of wage earner members with concern about political and social issues. In some countries, trade unions played a major twentieth century role in the development of foundational provision. In Italy, for example, they played a decisive role particularly in the 1970s, in the reforms of housing, health and education.

Following the 2008 financial crisis, on a European scale, trade unions are increasingly experimenting with innovative practices, which shift the focus from labour relations and wage conflicts to the living conditions of citizens. A variety of actions can be identified here. First, a tendency to explore and address questions about wider well-being, not only about economic growth (see, e.g., TUC 2013). Second, a tendency to deal with issues that do not concern the terms and conditions of employment, but focus on the quality and accessibility of basic goods and services; for example, rights to food or housing (see, e.g., Stad 2019). Third, a tendency to develop relationships with social movements, which help to build solidarity outside workplaces and even on an international basis, including around issues such as human rights and social justice, or in alliances against privatization (see, e.g., Etxezarreta and Frangakis 2009). Fourth, a tendency to develop forms of social partnership on place-based issues which can involve working with a range of other actors.

The prize at local, regional and national levels is an alliance of different actors, bringing together various perspectives and diverse regimes of knowledge which combine research findings with the academic expertise and the practical and contextual knowledge of those living and working in ordinary places. This is ultimately indispensable if we are to develop analysis and innovation in the space of the foundational economy. And this propensity for democratic dialogue – as acknowledged by Burawoy's (2005) manifesto – is one of the essential bases for the development of a public social science.

NOTE

1. See Foundational Economy Collective (2018, appendix 1).

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PART III

THEMES AND RESEARCH ISSUES: DEEPENING PS POTENTIALITIES DEALING WITH DIFFERENT FIELDS

12. Science, the environment and the public

Luigi Pellizzoni

INTRODUCTION

According to Michael Burawoy (2005), public sociology is a sociology that deals with social ends in dialogue with non-academic audiences, differing for this reason from work for the academy or clients. Burawoy does not explicitly say what a public is, though from his account one draws that it consists in such dialogue, the plurality of publics being itself an object of investigation.

Building on this, one can say that there can be a sociology of the public, a sociology for the public and a sociology with the public. So, in the case of the subject matter of this chapter, sociology can study how publics over scientific and environmental issues arise and decline; it can put under public scrutiny the way science and the environment are governed; and it can support related social claims and concerns.

This threefold take on public sociology inspires the following discussion. I start with showing how the notion of public lies at the core of modern science as a social institution, and of the environment as a field of policy action. I proceed by arguing that science and environmental policies have witnessed a growing struggle between depoliticization and politicization: the more science, technology and the management of the biophysical world have come to the forefront, the stronger have been the attempts to subtract them from public scrutiny, with the result of undermining the authority of expertise and trust in the benefits of techno-scientific progress, while simultaneously fostering grassroots counter-expertise. In this way science has been thrown into the centre of contentious politics. Attempts to address the problem, broadening the public review of innovation, have hardly been resolutive, also because they have been unable or unwilling to point to its root causes, namely the structural imbalances and injustices affecting the politics of innovation and the environment. The 'neoliberalization' of science and nature has inaugurated a season, emblematized by the ambiguous narrative of the Anthropocene, where the blurring of ontological distinctions, such as between things and cognition, or between the actual and the fictional, paves the way to strengthened opportunities of exploitation and domination. In this framework, I conclude, a sociology of, for and with the public looks increasingly problematic, yet it is needed more than ever.

DEFINING AND ADDRESSING THE PUBLIC IN THE FIELD OF SCIENCE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The notion of the public is notoriously tricky. Its conceptual correlate is the private. Yet, the distinction between public and private cannot be substantive. Whether an issue is public or private is often itself a public question, that is, a question around which disagreement arises within a polity, which has to be settled before addressing it substantively (Benhabib, 1992). The distinction between public and private, thus, has to reside in some formal criteria. Most

frequently evoked are inclusion (versus exclusion), opening (versus confidentiality) and accountability (versus unaccountability, that is, domination) (see e.g. Ku, 2000). Inclusion refers to who is entitled to have a say in an issue; opening refers to what is allowed to be addressed about an issue; accountability refers to how it is allowed to address an issue. However, one can be excluded from discussing an issue, or aspects of an issue can be excluded from general debate, without the issue itself becoming private. Many political decisions, for a number of legitimate reasons (that is, reasons which a polity may recognise as relevant), are taken behind closed doors and under confidentiality clauses. Thus, the third aspect – accountability – is likely crucial. According to John Dewey ([1927] 1984), a public arises whenever two or more people acknowledge that a problem, which emerged in the course of their interaction, involves an external sphere affecting other people, who therefore should have a say if the problem is to be addressed properly (in the cognitive and the normative sense of the word).

The public as third-party accountability appears with special evidence in science. Since the beginning, modern science has built not only on experimental testing of hypotheses, but also on validation of its results by a community of practitioners (Shapin and Schaffer, 1985). The same principle is inbuilt in the idea of peer review of claims as necessary to getting a paper published, accountability being in this way ensured not only to those competent enough to check these claims, but also to the community at large (Baldwin, 2018). That publicness as accountability underpins science as a social institution also transpires from the four normative pillars identified by Robert K. Merton ([1942] 1973): not just 'organized scepticism', which effectively corresponds to the peer review requirement, but also 'universalism' (impersonality of assessment criteria of truth claims), 'disinterestedness' (seeking the progress of knowledge against personal advantages) and 'communism' (disclosure of research results). Claims, such as those of Karl Popper (1945) and John Dewey (1939), about the elective affinity between science and democracy – both being based on power depersonalization and an open, reasoned discussion of assertions – further strengthen the link between science and publicness (see also Wildavsky, 1979; Ezrahi, 1990). Likewise, in a seminal work in the sociology of science, Ludwik Fleck ([1935] 1979) talks of 'thought collective', or 'thought-style', to convey the idea that the socio-cultural framework of scientific work affects the very formulation of questions and experimental designs.

A quantum leap in the public role of science occurred, however, after the Second World War. The concerted governmental, scientific and industrial effort lavished on the construction of the atomic bomb showed that science was key to the strategic and economic competitiveness of nations. At the end of the war, Vannevar Bush (1945) – scientific advisor to United States (US) President Roosevelt, who had commissioned it – delivered to Roosevelt's successor Truman a seminal report. Arguing that science plays a crucial role in public health, well-being and prosperity, and thus needs appropriate public investment, he portrayed a cascade connection between fundamental research, applied research and concrete social benefits. What will be later labelled the 'linear model' of the science–politics relationship (Pielke, 2007) assumes that rational, efficient policy-making is premised on sound science. Good public administrators have one basic task: choosing among the technical solutions available those which best fit the social needs and demands gathered on their desk.

As for the environment, Michel Foucault (2007, 2008) has extensively accounted for how the emergence, from the late eighteenth century, of the problem of government – of government as a problem, rather than a matter of rulers' wish – coincides with a growing focus of political power on the dynamics of population in relation to its biophysical milieu, as

impossible to properly command, hence requiring to be understood, seconded and fostered, with the help of expert knowledge. Thus, we can say, the environment – an intrinsically relational notion, distinct for this reason from that of 'nature' in its various meanings (Williams, 1983) – is from the outset a public issue. According to Timothy Luke (1995), however, the notion of environment ascends to policy dominance much later, namely from the mid-1960s. In this period the environment quickly becomes a public affair, in terms of its crisis. Though never defined with precision, it becomes synonymous with the idea of a biosphere in danger. The idea of environmental crisis gains momentum both in scientific circles and in the public sphere, the post-war generation proving sensitive to evidence of the side effects of technology applications, such as the ecological and health impacts of pesticides (Carson, 1962), which highlight the limits to the ever-intensifying tapping of and sinking into the biophysical realm entailed by a fast-growing population and industrialization (Meadows et al., 1972).

According to the linear model, however, if science is at the origin of problems, it also provides solutions. This is not just a governmental or corporate claim. Prominent environmental organizations have consistently advocated a 'scientific environmentalism', that is, a critique of ecologically harmful activities based not on emotional or principled appeals, but on 'sound science' and the ensuing proposal of 'sound alternatives' to existing or proposed policies (Yearley, 1992).

BETWEEN DEPOLITICIZATION AND POLITICIZATION

As stated, the linear model maintains that 'the policymakers' maxim should be "science first"' (Forrester and Hanekamp, 2006, p. 310). However, this raises problems concerning the two foundations of legitimate power in modern democracies that Max Weber has famously stressed: legality and rationality. The problem with legality comes to the fore under the label of 'technocracy': the ousting of elected representatives from actual decision-power. The issue had been discussed since the nineteenth century, but took on growing import after the Second World War, with the increase in the relevance of science and technology in social affairs. It was an intensification, however, that eventually led to an overturning of the problematic: from the technicization of politics, to the politicization of science. Namely, the tighter the intertwining of science, politics and business becomes, the less can the disinterestedness of science remain unquestioned. If sound policy-making presupposes sound science, then scientific debates become political debates, because the conclusions of the former entail univocal answers to political conflicts (Pielke, 2007). In fact, science has been increasingly drawn into the arena of contentious politics. Examples are plentiful, from the assessment of the environmental impacts of energy sources, to the ecological, social and economic cost-effectiveness of infrastructures. One may suppose that fuel to scientific disagreement comes from the novelty of a technology, but this is not necessarily the case. No doubt, emergent technologies, such as those implied in carbon capture and storage (Keith, 2013), trigger controversies over their actual feasibility, safety and effectiveness. Yet ostensibly dissected technologies, such as those applied to car engines, still give room for debates about their advantages and disadvantages in terms of emissions. In these and many other cases, behind scientific conflicts it is not difficult to discern political and economic skirmishes. Conversely, the international agreement achieved rather quickly on the abatement of the emissions responsible for acid rain or the phasing out of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), deemed responsible for the hole in the ozone

layer,[1] depended to a significant extent on the availability of technical solutions that the industry regarded as economically viable. Had such solutions been unavailable, or too expensive, the scientific consensus that appears at the basis of political agreement would most likely have been replaced by an emphasis on scientific doubts and adversarial positions about the causes of observed phenomena. The belated, and to date still not generalized, ban of asbestos in spite of abundant – yet for long regarded as inconclusive – evidence of its dangerousness (EEA, 2001), is easily explained by its manifold applications and difficult substitutability.

The growing politicization of science has led to a typical dynamic (Pellizzoni, 2011). In a first phase the attempt is to depoliticize an issue by way of shifting it to a technical level. At the moment when it becomes clear that a certain technical conclusion will benefit certain parties, the disadvantaged ones try to raise counter-arguments, and since in any non-trivial issue it is not difficult to find contradictory scientific evidence and interpretations (science's very advancement entails disunity and conflict; see Sarewitz, 2004), controversy is rekindled. Finally, appeals to the common good, fair compromise or direct experience may lead to an agreement, with science becoming a sort of rhetorical device, justifying choice by means of an 'objective truth' eventually ascertained.

It is hardly surprising that a side effect of this dynamic has been a devaluation of scientific authority, shaking the rational basis of political legitimacy. This is paradoxically due precisely to the appeal to such an authority for political reasons, which prevents recognition that, when addressing a policy issue, the scientist operates as an expert. The difference is crucial. While the scientist chooses a question relevant to their own scientific field, designing an appropriate way to answer it, the expert addresses a policy question, relevant to others and typically mixing a variety of issues hardly amenable to a coherent research design, and on many of which this person has no greater competence than the average citizen (Pellizzoni, 2011). As the Sars-Cov-2 pandemic has shown, it is one thing for a virologist to give advice on the pattern of diffusion of an infection. It is another to give advice about such a pattern in the concrete, varied conditions of everyday life, from crowded towns to small mountain villages. Yet another is to say whether, and for how long, all things (social, economic, psychological, and so on) considered, people are to stay at home.

The misadventures of expert advice during the pandemic are a good example of how scientific authority, and with it the rational basis of political legitimacy, is in trouble not only for the politicization of scientific disagreements, but for such authority's eventual falling short of public expectations. The growing import and social awareness of the unintended side effects of technology – in itself related to the very broadening of the pretences of control of the biophysical world, since the greater is the scope of the former, the greater is the salience of the unknown for the decision (Wynne, 1992) – brings into question the promise of effectiveness and efficiency implied in the 'unspoken contract' (European Commission, 2000; Felt and Wynne, 2007) between science and society described by the linear model.

A way to address this problem has been employed since the 1980s, in the form of an alternative model of science–politics relationship, often called 'decisionist' (Millstone et al., 2004). The decisionist model draws a sharp distinction between a science-based problem-assessment and a problem-management where scientific evidence is tempered with social and political considerations. The advantage of uncoupling science advice and policy-making is that scientific disagreement does not prevent consensus on action, while conversely agreement on science does not prevent diverging views on action (Pielke, 2007). So, for example, enduring scientific controversies over the health and environmental effects of genetically modified

organisms (GMOs) in agriculture have not hampered the development of the sector under internationally agreed regulations (over GMOs' patenting, crop raising in the open fields, limits of application of precautionary bans to imports and cultivations, and so on). The opposite has happened with asbestos, and with the hunting of whales and other species unanimously recognized as in danger of extinction.

Comparative studies have shown how national political cultures and institutional set-ups affect the interface of science advice and policy-making (Jasanoff, 2005; Halffman, 2005).[2] Yet, the overall success of the decisionist model has been wide and enduring, as the Sars-CoV-2 pandemic has confirmed. Scientific committees have been established and entrusted with great expectations, while governments have repeatedly stressed that their decisions have to be based on, rather than just apply, expert recommendations. Incidents such as the temporary suspension in some countries of the AstraZeneca vaccine for its suspect side effects have, however, highlighted the core ambiguity of the decisionist model: namely, that it permits a reciprocal buck-passing between experts and policy-makers. The former can claim no responsibility for decisions that use freely their advice. Policy-makers, in turn, can disclaim responsibility for the consequences of decisions to the extent that these were based on sound science.

Outside policy-making, the shaking legal-rational bases of decisions over science and the environment have led to two major societal responses. The first has been registered in policy circles as a growing 'public unease' with science or 'resistance' to innovation; a growing scepticism, if not hostility, towards scientific and technical progress (European Commission, 2000), usually read in terms of a lack of scientific education and correct information (the so-called 'deficit model' in the public understanding of science; see Felt and Wynne, 2007), to be allegedly remedied with more and better education and communication. The second response has been the rise of counter-expertise. Mobilizations on the environment and technologies have increasingly resorted to scientific methods and languages, not in a 'scientific environmentalism' fashion but in an overtly oppositional way (McCormick, 2007).

The origins of counter-expertise lie in the 'popular epidemiology' that emerged over time in a number of local controversies, where the gathering of informal evidence of problems with health or environmental degradation was instrumental to circumventing authorities' neglect (or complicity), bringing the issue to the public sphere, usually thanks to an alliance with recognized experts (Irwin, 1995; Brown, 1997). In turn, popular epidemiology is an expression of so-called 'lay local knowledge', that is, knowledge produced at grassroots level without the guarantees of scientific procedures, yet offering relevant insights into ill- or undetected phenomena: ill- or undetected partly for their 'annoying' implications for authorities and organized interests, and partly for the insensitivity to local conditions of many scientific approaches and related ways of gathering evidence (Irwin, 1995; Wynne, 1996). Counter-expertise has become increasingly available for grassroots mobilizations, as a consequence of the diffusion of higher education and of the increased accessibility of scientific information. In other words, the disunity and politicization of science has trickled down to the grassroots level. This, however, has come at a cost. On one side, the dynamic of deconstruction of opposed scientific claims described above also finds application when the parties in conflict are not organized interests, but people mobilizing against such interests or public authorities. As a result, protests find themselves embroiled in a gruelling skirmish on 'facts', the likely winners of which are the more resourceful parties: hardly the grassroots groups, therefore (Pellizzoni, 2011). On the other side, focusing on scientific assessments of the health and environmental effects of activities limits the scope of protest. For example, addressing urban air pollution by focusing

on compliance with quality standards may provide support to a protest, but may also hamper a broader discussion over city life and urban development (Ottinger, 2010). Likewise, during the relatively short-lived season of mobilizations against phone masts, highlighting the scientific uncertainties about their health effects meant using an argument of public resonance, but also aligning protest with a public discourse centred on individual risks and responsibilities and on the quality of technical progress, without including in the discussion the latter's social assumptions, orientations and commercial logics (Drake, 2010).

MAKING PUBLICS, DEFLECTING POLITICS

In recent decades the space between representative democracy and grassroots mobilizations has been increasingly filled with 'participatory democracy' practices, building on the idea of public deliberation. The notion of deliberative democracy emerged in the 1980s, gaining momentum in subsequent years with a flourishing of experiments and the elaboration of a variety of models, from the consensus conference to the citizen jury, from electronic town meetings to deliberative polls (Bohman, 1996; Gastil and Levine, 2005). Some of these, such as the French *débat public*, have come to be regulated by law.

'Public deliberation', in this framework, is not synonymous with 'public sphere', the discursive space open to each and every citizen on public issues that characterizes the liberal state (Habermas, 1989). It means structured forms of discussion. The case for these stems from an observation and an assumption. The observation concerns the fatigue of representative democracy, testified to by decreasing electoral participation and civic engagement, and the growth in contentious mobilizations. The assumption is that a structured debate – one where topics, participants and rules of interaction are specified from the outset – may help to make it more productive. More precisely, its alleged benefits are to foster citizen engagement in public issues, to strengthen the legitimacy of decisions as a result, and to improve the quality of policies thanks to a broadened reflection (Pellizzoni, 2001). Models are often conceived of in terms of selecting (randomly or otherwise) 'representatives' of the general public and making them interact with appointed experts in order to form a reasoned opinion (Rowe and Frewer, 2000). In principle, therefore, deliberative processes should include all relevant positions and concerns over an issue, especially those lacking adequate expression in the public sphere and support by political parties and elected representatives.

Public deliberation has spread in a number of fields affected by deep controversies that elude channelling through representative democracy (Gutmann and Thompson, 1996). These include, in a prominent position, questions of science and technology, and of environmental and urban governance: partly for their implied uncertainties, which make interests take shape together with, rather than before, issue-elaboration; partly because conflicts have been especially expanding in this field, crucial to societies increasingly dependent on innovation. Experimentation has occurred at a variety of scales, from the national to the municipal, over issues ranging from nanomaterials to genetically modified organisms, from infrastructures to waste disposal, from vaccines to neighbourhood renovation. Critiques have been equally intense, concerning the selection criteria and ensuing exclusions, the possibilities of manipulation of discussions, the uncertain relationship between many public consultations and policy decisions, and the power of the agenda: who and how establishes the question at stake, its content and boundaries. Though not specific to them, such problems have emerged with

particular evidence in debates over science and the environment, for their encompassing yet often ill-defined character. In this field, it has been said, deliberative arenas are 'machineries for making publics' (Felt and Fochler, 2010), their members having to project an image of the general public onto strongly bounded issues. Moreover, such arenas are typically tailored to the apolitical, cognitively naïve but ethically committed lay citizen. The politically engaged citizen – often keen to broaden or reformulate the very topic under discussion – is often marginalized as holding 'unreasonable' or 'ideological' positions. This narrows the scope of the debate, as discussion is constructive only if premised on the framing assumptions of its promoters (Wynne, 2001; Irwin, 2006; Felt and Wynne, 2007; Ward, 2016).

Opinions about deliberative democracy remain divided. For some it offers opportunities for challenging boundaries, performing different models of the public and questioning dominant expert assumptions (Levidow, 2007). For others, wittingly or otherwise, it is a diversion 'from a more adequate onslaught on deeper institutional and epistemic commitments' (Irwin, 2006, p. 316). This claim evokes the theme of the depoliticization of science and environmental governance; the denial of an actual public inquiry into its social premises and implications. On this view, the implementation of deliberative arenas aligns with a broader trend, whereby the appropriate framework for dealing with the science–society relationship is ethical, rather than political. Since the 1990s there has been a flourishing of ethical committees, whose scope has been expanding from the life sciences to all areas of science and technology (Fuchs, 2005), together with the decline of more politically oriented advisory boards. A significant example is the US Office for Technology Assessment (OTA), established in 1972 with the mandate of providing Congress with 'information concerning the physical, biological, economic, social, and political effects of [technological] applications',[3] and discontinued in 1995 almost simultaneously with the creation of the National Bioethics Advisory Committee (NBAC).

Ethical committees are composed of appointed experts (physicians, philosophers, and so on) allegedly able to represent relevant viewpoints and concerns. These boards, in other words, are depicted as 'a "neutral" normative tool, endowed with the potential to speak for rationality' (Tallacchini, 2009, p. 281), ethics itself being portrayed as a neutral technique capable of producing 'a single, correct solution for each ethical problem, largely independent of person, place or time' (Bosk, 1999, p. 63), just like the (allegedly neutral) scientific assessment of an issue. As a result, the ethical review of techno-scientific innovation has been integrated in the assessment of its safety, quality and efficacy (Pellizzoni, 2016). What remains typically excluded is an analysis of its socio-economic impacts; its distributive implications. Put differently, questions of 'how' have filled the space of public inquiry, marginalizing questions of 'why' and 'to the benefit of whom'. Yet, these questions can hardly be addressed separately. Just think, for example, of the issues, at once ethical and political, raised by biobanks (that is, broad, systematic collections of human biological materials). On one side, biobanks support a connection between the public good and the development of commodities in the form of drugs and diagnostic tools, since they provide data to the pharmaceutical industry and genomic research, which in itself is more attuned to developing diagnostic technologies and pharmacokinetic studies than basic aetiological studies (Mitchell and Waldby, 2010). On the other side, concerning citizen participation, growing frictions arise between the traditional logic of the 'gift to stranger' typical of blood donation, to which biobanks' activity is usually ascribed, and the character of 'clinical labour' it assumes when considered from the perspective of the value extracted from biological material (Cooper and Waldby, 2014).

The usually unspoken, yet sometimes explicit, claim opposed to considerations of this type is that dealing with them 'could result in a diversion of investment and could act as a disincentive for innovation and technological development by industry' (European Commission, 1991, p. 8). In other words, relentless innovation and its contribution to the welfare of the whole society, usually through appropriate marketization, are taken for granted (Braun et al., 2010). The same assumption underlies the most recent iteration on the theme of tackling public unease with, or resistance to, innovation: the idea and policy framework of responsible research and innovation (RRI). Analogous to, and rising shortly after, the 'anticipatory governance' approach which emerged in the US in the early 2000s (Guston, 2014), RRI is to a remarkable extent an offspring of expertise internal to the European Commission. It is described as:

> a transparent, interactive process by which societal actors and innovators become mutually responsive to each other with a view to the (ethical) acceptability, sustainability and societal desirability of the innovation process and its marketable products (in order to allow a proper embedding of scientific and technological advances in our society). (von Schomberg, 2013, p. 63)

This is claimed to comprise anticipation, reflexivity, inclusion and responsiveness (Stilgoe et al., 2013). The idea – in itself not new, as it dates back to early forms of technology assessment – is to shape innovation before technological 'lock-in' sets in. However, the focus is not only on research and development, but also on production and distribution; the emphasis is on innovation more than risk; and ethics and other 'normative anchors' (such as the principles included in the European Union Treaty: sustainability, competitiveness, environmental protection, social inclusion, and so on) are treated as triggers rather than constraints. Finally, and most notably, questions concerning the purpose of innovation (rationale, distributive effects, alternatives) allegedly fall within the scope of inquiry.

Given the above, RRI has raised high expectations. However, its implementation to date remains fragmentary. Without dismissing the opportunities it nonetheless has offered, and may offer in the future, for a broadened public reflection about innovation, some general problems have to be stressed. For a start, the lexicon used is still by and large ethical. Second, social divisions elicited by innovation are often depicted in a depoliticized way, such as between technological initiates and technological laypeople (see e.g. Grinbaum and Groves, 2013), or between competing 'stakeholders' among which to reach compromise, rather than between contrasting interpretations of the public good. Third, assumptions fundamental to deciding what are the 'right' social impacts and means of implementation (for example, whether marketization should be the rule unless proven unsuitable) remain unspoken. Fourth, and perhaps most crucially, the very idea of a mutual responsiveness about innovation is misleading if those sitting around the table are only fictitiously equal (Pellizzoni, 2020). No doubt, tackling the power differentials between the social figures implied in the politics of innovation (from lab researchers to end users, from policy-makers to enterprise managers, from citizen groups to corporate shareholders), would entail addressing fundamental questions concerning the relationship between private investment, freedom of research, public funding and major societal consequences, currently 'resolved' by resorting to the market as the eventual means for balancing out everything. That this can hardly be taken for granted, or easily circumvented, is however indicated by issues such as the '10/90 problem' – the fact that only 10 per cent of health research worldwide is directed towards problems accounting for over 90 per cent of the global burden of disease (Woodhouse and Sarewitz, 2007) – or the Sars-CoV-2 vaccination,

with political and corporate elites' reluctance to suspend patent rights even in the face of a pandemic. In such conditions, mutual responsiveness is likely to eventually boil down to a major disclaimer: we 'shared' the choice, we will 'share' the consequences. In other words, RRI and comparable anticipatory approaches to the governance of innovation tend to expand, rather than reduce, 'organized irresponsibility' (Beck, 1992): the structural public unaccountability of governmental, expert and corporate choices in matters of science and technology. This is actually taken for granted in some literature: 'Burdened with imperfect foresight, we take a chance, hoping to be excused from moral blame [let alone legal liability – my addition] if it can be demonstrated we did not have sufficient knowledge of the future consequences of actions at the time: that these could not have been "reasonably foreseen"' (Owen et al., 2013, p. 28).

In the end, the normative assumption underlying many deliberative experiments and the dominant approach to techno-science assessment is that innovation is always beneficial to everyone, even those who suffer from its 'side effects', which have therefore to be taken as socially acceptable costs (Pellizzoni, 2004). This assumption, which opposite evidence accumulating over the years seems unable to tarnish, hampers any real step forward in the governance of science, technology and the environment. The issue gains additional relevance from the vantage point of the 'post-normal science' theory (Funtowicz and Ravetz, 1993). In this framework, which has gained relevance in 'progressive' academic and policy quarters (its actual impact has so far been rather limited), what calls for a resort to a collective reflection beyond scientific or managerial expertise is not so much the need to handle public discontent, as the growing salience of issues where facts are uncertain, values are in dispute, stakes are high and decisions are urgent. Just think of two examples. Should we continue with geoengineering experiments such as constructing highly complex, costly and potentially risky plants for capturing and storing carbon dioxide (Keith, 2013)? Should we continue with 'gain of function' research on viruses (Lakoff, 2017), that is, with their modification to explore potentials of lethality and transmissibility, actively producing mutations in order to anticipate them, for whatever purpose: health, military, commercial? Is replying to these and similar questions just a matter of expert, corporate or government ruminations, or do they require public discussion, if anything because many (if not all) of them entail 'real life experiments' (Krohn and Weyer, 1994), that is, experiments occurring or overflowing in the open, involving all people?

THE NEOLIBERALIZATION OF SCIENCE AND NATURE

An emergent trend in the governance of science and the environment arguably makes addressing this issue even more urgent; and problematic. The expression 'neoliberalization' has been used with regard to both nature and science, referring to comparable processes gaining momentum in the last decades: on one side 'the privatisation and marketisation of ever more aspects of biophysical reality, with the state and civil society groups facilitating this and/or regulating only its worst consequences' (Castree, 2008, p. 143); on the other, a growing presence of private interests in academic life, with corporate funding replacing public funding, a correspondent reframing of universities' mission as providers of human capital and competitive global service industries rather than educational institutions, the expansion of the intellectual precariat and the aggressive promotion and protection of intellectual property (Lave et al., 2010). However, neoliberalization also and primarily entails a profound

ontological work concerning both the human agent, understood as an entrepreneurial unit committed to the ever-growing valorization of itself (Dardot and Laval, 2014), and its bio-physical task environment, understood as fully plastic, contingent, turbulent, yet precisely for such reasons amenable to endless reconfigurations for extracting more value, as long as one gives up attempts at prediction and planning, and turns to foresight, scenario-building and other non-predictive approaches, seeking to enhance preparedness and resilience to surprise (Cooper, 2010; O'Malley, 2010; Pellizzoni, 2011, 2020). This ontology undermines traditional distinctions between subject and object, human agency and biophysical matter's reactivity, nature and culture. It allows, for example, a corporate storytelling committed to depicting ag-biotech as not solely the continuation of what humans did for thousands of years, but of what nature always did, 'the "technology" in these practices [being] nothing more than biology itself, or "life itself"' (Thacker, 2007, p. xix). In other words, nature is technology and technology is nature; or, life is experiment, and experiment is life. Hence, no action can be criticized – as with the traditional environmentalist case – by taking 'nature' as a benchmark, perhaps elusive yet inescapable, for claiming limits to resource extraction and waste sinking; nor can it be questioned by distinguishing traditional and real-life experiments, the former arguably expressing liberal freedoms (of research and enterprise), the latter instead legitimizing public concerns and calling for public discussions.

Beyond corporate claims, this account of reality underpins some narratives of growing hold in the public discourse. One is the 'Good Anthropocene'. As is well known, the notion of Anthropocene conveys the idea that the human impact on the planet is by now on a par with geological forces. The rapid ascendance of the Anthropocene from stratigraphic hypothesis to common parlance indicates that the idea somehow captures the spirit of the time. The Good Anthropocene plot starts with drama (the acknowledgment of the risk of a shift to a planetary state far less friendly to human life), but has a happy ending, or at least a promising development: it is possible to 'take stewardship' of the planet. In its bravest interpretations, taking stewardship means technologically 'decoupling' society from its biophysical underpinnings (Breakthrough Institute, 2015). In other declensions it means using science and technology to keep basic planetary dynamics within (or help them return to) safe boundaries for humanity (Rockström et al., 2009). Coming to terms with these dynamics, however, means something different when the focus is on climate turbulences, viral and bacterial diffusion, and other manifestations of an 'inhuman', wholly indifferent nature (Clark, 2011; Grosz, 2011; Latour, 2017; Stengers, 2017). On this view, politics should become 'geological': it should acknowledge a power far greater than any political rule, and unnegotiable; for this reason relying on preparedness and resilience, trial and error, flexibility and 'ongoing creative experimentation' (Clark and Yusoff, 2017, p. 18).

In this way, Gaia – the ensemble of planetary forces seen as the highest, irrevocable authority – sanctions the soundness and legitimacy of neoliberal governmental styles. From any of the three perspectives above, the possibility of conceiving and building on a less exploitative, more friendly and caring relationship with the planet is ruled out from the outset; while the alleged urgency of action and need to overcome political and social divisions in view of the interest of all transforms a (possibly, the) most political question of our time – climate change: its causes, responsibilities, implications and related choices – into an unpolitical issue (Swyngedouw, 2010). Instructive in this regard is the evolution in the thinking of one of the most academically and publicly influential sociologists of recent decades: Bruno Latour. He was once pleading for a 'parliamentarisation' of the non-human instances knocking at the door

of late modern polities, often in the shape of biotechnical hybrids; an exercise in the 'diplomatic art' of accommodating such instances with human ones by way of a fair representation (Latour, 2004). The only problem here seemed to be the vexed question of ecologism: who is entitled to speak for a wordless world? In his most recent writings, however, Latour's tone has changed. His claim has become that a 'terrestrial politics' cannot take place under the sign of friendship, but by bowing to Gaia's power while acknowledging there is no other politics than for the humans and to their own benefit (Latour, 2018). Likewise, Dipesh Chakrabarty (2009), a prominent post-colonial historian, has come to a conclusion that seems at odds with his previous work: namely, that the advent of the Anthropocene brings into question humanity as a species, calling for a shared responsibility beyond any social distinction based on past and present injustices.

CONCLUSION

The preceding discussion has offered evidence of the scope for a public sociology of science and environmental politics, from tackling the buck-passing between experts and policy-makers, to addressing the ambiguous narrative of the Anthropocene. Plenty of scope, however, does not mean an easy job. Indeed, the task seems to become tougher by the day, as a brief reflection on the issues of 'pseudoscience' and 'post-truth' suggests.

In itself an old theme concerning the demarcation of science (it reportedly dates back to the late eighteenth century), pseudoscience has recently come to the forefront as a major public problem. Science demarcation builds on detection of the scientific method as underpinning claims, which means falsifiability of assertions, checking for cognitive biases, and openness to external evaluation (Hansson, 2021). Pseudoscience, thus, should not be confused with counter-expertise, which is autonomously produced yet ostensibly sound science. However, recalling the origins of counter-expertise in popular epidemiology and lay local knowledge, the demarcation between science – understood as valid knowledge – and non-science looks more blurred than textbooks and prominent columnists pretend, being embroiled with power. The root cause of the rise of pseudoscience is not the increase in the circulation of information and fake news, as usually claimed. It lies in the public unease with science and innovation, which continued to grow in spite of efforts to address it, for the simple reason that technological apparatuses and expert claims exert ever-growing power over people's lives. This issue, however, should be considered not only in quantitative terms but also for its qualitative evolution, related with the ontological shift in the governmental approaches to science and the environment described above. On this view, pseudoscience intersects post-truth, being possibly the same thing seen from different vantage points.

Post-truth has been defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as 'relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief'. The US Trump administration represents for many a watershed in the public legitimation of post-truth. Interestingly, the rise of the issue has entailed an attack on science and technology studies (STS) for their alleged delegitimation of the authority of science through the deconstruction of its claims, as if they were just texts, open to interpretation. STS scholars, it has been remarked, regarded science deconstruction not only as an academic exercise, but also as a way to support weaker or neglected concerns, to break down cultural and social hierarchies by showing the interweaving of knowledge with

power; a matter of public sociology, we could say. What happened, however, was the rise of a 'right-wing postmodernism' (McIntyre, 2018), that is, of reactionary forces who learned from deconstructionists how to undermine unwelcome scientific claims, such as with the growing practice of 'manufacturing uncertainty', that is, of appealing to the lack of conclusive, fully consensual evidence, for example about climate change and its anthropic origins, to hamper undesired policies (Michaels, 2006; Oreskes and Conway, 2010).

A contrarian position about post-truth has come from Steve Fuller, for whom its rise has to be welcomed as it expresses the growing capacity of groups outside dominant cultural, political and economic élites to question the rules of the knowledge game and the power relations these support, taking the responsibility 'to live – or die, as the case may be – with whatever one happens to believe' (Fuller, 2018, p. 107). On this view, pseudoscience is the name of the élites' stigmatization of people's jumping at their table. Fuller probably underestimates how the truth-game can be shifted to meta-levels; which is what happens whenever a message builds on its target's skills in deconstructing communication. Yet, post-truth critics likely underestimate that the issue invests not just knowledge, but reality itself. Trump advisor Kellyanne Conway's (in)famous claim about 'alternative facts'[4] should be taken seriously. Namely, the case for alternative facts should be regarded as a political statement in line with the corporate one mentioned above, about the overlapping of nature and technology; and namely that the distinction between things and cognition, real and virtual, actual and fictional, is vanishing away. This, in fact, is what one draws from many indicators: for example, that biotech patents cover at once matter and the information it contains (Calvert, 2007), or that mining and algorithmic analysis of data may detect a reality which they themselves create (Amoore and Piotukh, 2015). In these and many other cases, ontological blurring paves the way for new or strengthened forms of domination and disempowerment, from biopiracy or farmers' inability to use their own seeds, to the growing securitization and surveillance of everyday life.

In this context, where neither the case for sound science nor for science deconstruction, nor even for challenging Western dualisms of subject and object, mind and body, matter and cognition, seem to offer shelter against the ruling order and its devastations of the human and the non-human world, a sociology of, for and with the public is increasingly demanding, yet it is also needed more than ever.

NOTES

1. See, respectively, the Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (1979) and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (1987).
2. For example, the US adversarial policy model encourages a composition of scientific controversies at the expert level, whereas the consociational model typical of countries such as Italy and Germany tends to shift the composition at the political level (see Halffman, 2005).
3. See Technology Assessment Act 1972, SEC 2 (d).
4. Conway was referring to Press Secretary Sean Spicer's grossly inflated estimates of the size of the crowd attending Trump's inauguration. See: Conway: Press Secretary Gave 'Alternative Facts', *Meet the Press*, 22 January 2017. Available at: www.nbcnews.com/meet-the-press/video/conway-press-secretary-gave-alternative-facts-860142147643 (accessed 16 August 2019).

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13. Public sociology in disaster situations: critical engagement and prefiguration against defuturing processes

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INTRODUCTION

Sociological research on disasters is strongly linked to public sociology because it is intertwined with public processes of accountability and demands for victim reparation. Historically, disaster research has emerged as 'policy sociology' (Burawoy 2004) and has progressively focused on the priorities dictated by government agencies in relative isolation from the theoretical debates of 'professional sociology' (Tierney 2007). With the influence of disciplines such as critical geography and anthropology, however, disaster sociology has also seen the development of critical disaster sociology in parallel with the growing relevance of crisis situations related to the intensification of economic globalization, the simultaneous emergence of a 'global risk society' (Beck 2006) and the deepening of ecological problems, especially climate change (Tierney 2007). Within this context, the public intellectual and activist Naomi Klein produced a highly debated and influential analysis of the disaster-prone nature of contemporary societies as related to the neoliberal 'shock doctrine' that guides 'disaster capitalism' (Klein 2007).

Examples abound of sociologists engaged in supporting processes of inquiry and denunciation alongside disaster-affected communities, such as those related to mobilizations for 'environmental justice' (Allen et al. 2017; Jobin 2021). The environmental justice framework was first developed by social movement activists and was then used and reflected on as an analytical tool in academia before returning to the social movements domain enriched with new understandings and perspectives (Martinez-Alier et al. 2014). This example confirms that the path that critical sociological knowledge travels to arrive at public relevance, both as a contribution to the transformation of common sense and as an engagement with specific publics, is non-linear. Activists and other actors engaged on the ground are often at the source (rather than being the final recipients) of theoretical innovations (Arribas Lozano 2018). The public relevance of sociological knowledge thus results from diverse, interconnected forms of circulation across the boundaries that separate academia and other social spheres of knowledge production.

Based on her personal experience, the sociologist Diane Vaughan (2006) reflected on the 'relational complexity' and porous, overlapping nature of the boundaries between the categories that Burawoy (2005a) identified as 'professional sociology', 'critical sociology', 'policy sociology' and traditional 'public sociology'. Vaughan also emphasized the difficulties of working in the interstices between professional and public sociology, especially the 'emotional work' that this liminal position imposes on researchers, and the risks for junior researchers' future career prospects. It is nevertheless precisely this interstitial condition that:

(1) ensures the permeability of the boundaries that separate the different types of sociology; and (2) explains how theoretical frameworks can become meaningful resources for social actors engaged in the construction of public issues and transformative social processes.

Building on these premises, we first discuss different ways in which the sociology of disaster can be analysed as a public sociology engaged in the elaboration of: (1) useful expertise for public action; (2) critical approaches that reveal the social determinants of disasters; (3) socioanthropological approaches focused on sense-making processes. We then argue that the worsening of systemic crises as a result of the increasing financialized and globalized nature of contemporary capitalism (Foundational Economy Collective 2018) today requires a critical and 'reconstructive' (in the sense of Vandenberghe 2018) sociology of disasters that is actively engaged both in denouncing structural inequalities and in collaborating in 'prefigurative' experiments with social movements, affected citizens and 'reflective practitioners' (Trainor et al. 2018). In particular, the public engagement of sociologists and other social scientists in disaster situations is crucial to initiate and sustain collaborations among affected actors in order to design alternative, place-based pathways to recovery.

To substantiate this last point, we draw on our experience of conducting research on disasters in the Italian context (Centemeri 2010; Mela et al. 2016). In particular, we briefly revisit the activities of the collective, self-managed research group Emidio di Treviri (EdT) in the aftermath of the 2016 earthquake in the Central Apennines. EdT has been conducting research (and disseminating knowledge) on the various dimensions of the post-earthquake recovery in this region. Since its beginnings, it has been oriented towards creating an interstitial space of encounter between theoretical reflections and direct social action alongside the populations most affected by the disaster and, more broadly, the affected territories and their ecologies (Olori and Menghi 2019). As we will argue, this initiative shows the difficulties of applying public sociology in 'fragile areas' (Osti and Carrosio 2017), that is, (mainly rural) contexts in which communities have long experienced processes of fragmentation, which in some cases have led to their almost total disappearance. The long-term engagement of sociologists is essential to support the reconstructive processes, including first and foremost collective 'capabilities for voice' (de Leonardis et al. 2012), which can elaborate and advocate an alternative vision of recovery to that promoted by aggressive pro-growth coalitions whose land valorization logics actually increase socioecological vulnerability to old and new catastrophes.

FROM EXTERNAL SHOCKS TO STRUCTURAL VULNERABILITIES: COMPETING UNDERSTANDINGS OF DISASTERS IN SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIETY

The consolidation of disaster research as a distinctive field in the social sciences is related to a need for expertise in disaster situation management that emerged in the United States in the 1950s. While the very early sociological studies of disasters examined theoretical questions (for example, the dynamics of social change), the focus soon shifted to questions more directly related to disaster prevention and management. Disasters were understood at the time as events whose common denominator was the abrupt disruption of 'normality' due to a sudden external shock. In the geopolitical scenario of the Cold War, the question of how to respond to such disruptive events was key for the United States (US) government, mainly for military defence reasons.

In fact, disasters at the time (no matter what their phenomenology) were considered equivalent to war strikes (Gilbert 1998). The research on disasters thus focused on understanding people's reactions and behaviours in the face of sudden disruptive events with the aim of developing tools and procedures to manage populations 'under attack'. However, this meant that sociological knowledge became subordinated to the technical knowledge produced by the so-called 'hard sciences', such as engineering and the natural sciences (Cabane and Revet 2015). Moreover, an excessive proximity with governmental bodies led to a focus on disaster situations in the so-called 'developed countries'.

This understanding of disasters as sporadic, exogenous events has been challenged since the 1970s by a group of young, critical, politically engaged geographers (including Ben Wisner, Phil O'Keefe and Terry Cannon) who have shown how poverty resulting from forms of economic and political domination was the key factor explaining humanitarian crisis situations in the Global South that had supposedly been triggered by 'natural' disasters, such as the Pakistan floods and the Sahel drought (Revet 2020).

These critical approaches, which had their roots in a political economy perspective inspired by Marxism, were also influenced by contemporary developments in systems thinking that provided evidence of the anthropogenic nature of the world ecological crisis. They led to the emergence of the notion of vulnerability as a key concept for understanding disasters as socio-ecological phenomena. The vulnerability approach progressively gained centrality not only in disaster research, but also in the construction of an international space of disaster governance through the activism of the researchers who had first promoted this perspective (Revet 2020, p. 44).

The vulnerability approach highlighted the observable diversity of intra- and intercommunity responses to disaster, and explained this diversity through a combination of structural, socioeconomic, political and ecological factors. Disaster was analysed as 'the result of underlying community logic, of an inward and social process' (Gilbert 1998, p. 3). In other words, the understanding of disaster evolved, from an isolated event caused by an external agent, into the outcome of long-term processes that had generated conditions of vulnerability. Even in so-called 'developed countries', disasters were shown to have different impacts on a population within the same city, region or nation, depending on socioeconomic indicators including class, gender, age and race (Cutter 1996).

Sociologists have contributed to this debate by developing an approach focused on 'social capital' and based on an in-depth exploration of the role that different types of social relationships ('strong ties' and 'weak ties') play in generating or, conversely, reducing vulnerabilities. This focus on social ties involves recognizing the importance of local knowledge and local actors for effective disaster management (Dynes 2005).

These developments also paved the way for linking disaster research with the movement for environmental justice and against environmental racism.[1] More generally, they saw non-governmental organizations (NGOs) playing an increasingly important role in disaster situations, according to two main logics of intervention. Some NGOs would concentrate on risk education initiatives and would often be criticized for their lack of sensitivity to the diversity of cultural contexts; while others would promote the building of a 'risk culture' based on local knowledge and practices. Although the NGOs usually took cultural diversity into account, they tended to have a quite romanticized vision of the local community that foreclosed internal diversity, tensions and struggles (Revet and Langumier 2015).

PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY IN THE ANTHROPOCENE: FROM RESILIENCE TO THE OPENING OF ALTERNATIVE FUTURES

A growing awareness of the social determinants of disasters and evidence of the 'slow' (see Nixon 2011), pervasive, long-lasting nature of the processes generating risks both for societal or community life, and for individuals' environments and their bodies, have made it increasingly difficult to clearly define where and when a disaster begins and ends, and to distinguish between natural and man-made disasters.

In addition, the emergence in the 1980s of the notion of the 'risk society' in parallel with an increase in crisis situations, such as those related to the HIV epidemic and mad cow disease (Gilbert and Henry 2006), highlighted the questions of risk communication, risk perception and risk acceptability, and shifted sociologists' attention to the production of meaning and knowledge in contexts of radical uncertainty.

Disasters were approached at the time as events resulting from the loss of 'key standpoints in common sense, and the difficulty of understanding reality through ordinary mental frameworks' (Gilbert 1998, p. 9). This difficulty was considered to be generated by the growing complexity that characterized the relationship at the societal level between human, ecological and technological systems.

Acknowledging radical uncertainty meant paying attention to how a disaster and its consequences were made the object of a variety of sense-making struggles; that is, struggles around the meaning of what had happened and how it had affected the given order of things and the possible future (Centemeri 2010, 2015). These developments also led to a questioning of the normativity implicit in categories such as disaster (Calandra 2020), risk, damage and recovery (Centemeri et al. 2022), showing the contentious nature of apparently consensual frameworks such as 'Building Back Better'.[2]

Social scientists have thus proved the existence of forms of exclusion regarding the types of knowledge considered relevant to public action, such as in the contrast between scientific and 'lay' knowledge. This is not simply a cognitive issue, however, but more generally concerns the taking into account of different systems of meaning, saliency and value; that is, a plurality of ways of knowing and being, or 'ontologies' (Leach et al. 2005).

The relevance of this form of exclusion is today at the heart of the critical anthropology of disasters, because crisis situations are increasingly managed in a globalized context through 'frictions' (Tsing 2004) between local contexts of action and instruments of action designed at global level. This question is equally relevant to the sociology of participatory practices insofar as it underlines the normativity implicit in the idea of stakeholders (Cheyns 2011).

More recently, new types of disasters have emerged from the interplay between the dynamics of global capitalism, the rise of the information society, the proliferation of transboundary crises and the emergence of ecological threats at the planetary level. These include climate change, financial collapses, terrorism and pandemics. According to Quarantelli et al. (2018, p. 61), 'we are at another important historical juncture with the emergence of a new distinctive class of disasters and crises not often seen before'. Cabane and Revet (2015) noted that this juncture is marked by a return to centrality of technical solutions and approaches to disasters that are dominated by the natural sciences, especially climate science, and a sidelining of the social sciences, which are confined to the study of local adaptation and resilience capacities.

In this context, the notions of resilience and resilient communities have gained momentum both in the professional sociology of disasters and in public policy discourses and grassroots

mobilizations (for example, the Transition Towns Movement), thus generating potential interstitial areas of public sociology. At the same time, the 'social resilience' framework (Hall and Lamont 2013) promotes a specific normativity that is underpinned by neoliberal policies and narratives and relies on individual and collective capacities to cope with and creatively adapt to unavoidable catastrophes, which are seen as opportunities for change.

In this scenario, where the systemic catastrophe is diluted in the ordinariness of increasingly precarious and vulnerable social worlds, resilience traps the sociology of disasters in an 'ancillary' role. When disaster sociology instead adopts a lens of critical analysis, what emerges is the inexorability of the reproduction of domination structures where the only way to avoid a planetary socioecological collapse is to influence ongoing processes through a radical whole-scale systemic change. Indeed, despite a growing number of international initiatives aimed at disaster risk reduction, including the International Decade for Disaster Reduction (1990–99) and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015), the number of disasters has increased dramatically over the past two decades, in parallel with the global increase in the number of people living in extreme poverty, a proven cause of vulnerability and an accelerator of risk and disaster (Oliver-Smith and Hoffman 2019).

The controversial term 'Anthropocene' hypostatizes the vision of the incumbent catastrophe. On the one hand, the Anthropocene framework often reinforces (promises of) technocratic solutions to managing complexity, and reduces the sociologist's role to promoting the social acceptability of technical fixes. On the other hand, critical sociologists risk being trapped in the impasses of becoming prophets of doom.

Faced with systemic complexity, the sociological analysis of disasters can adopt an approach that is focused on monitoring long-term 'critical processes' (Chateauraynaud and Debaz 2017); that is, it can follow the evolution of scientific debates, public problems and post-disaster reconstruction processes while engaging in place-based 'experimental inquiries' (Pappas 2014). In fact, it is only by examining both the long-term dynamics and the specific contexts that it is possible to identify the factors that can turn certain events into ruptures, emergencies, upsurges, bifurcations or turning points.

Today, renewed forms of engaged public sociology are emerging from the encounter between systemic analysis and situated knowledge in situations of post-disaster recovery, encouraging the creation of 'publics' (in Dewey's sense) that denounce 'defuturing' processes; that is, processes of destroying the future by design (Fry 1999, 2020). This implies that an engaged public sociology of disasters should take the form of a research practice that is necessarily collective, collaborative, transdisciplinary, multi-scalar, place-based and inscribed in a long-term dynamic.

This perspective also implies encouraging the involvement of local researchers to study their 'own' disasters (see, e.g., Tomassi and Fiorino 2019; Ciccozzi 2013). This point was emphasized by Gaillard (2019) in his reflection on how to 'decolonize the approach to researching disasters'. A critical sociology of disasters must first come to terms with the fact that, 'intentionally or not, disaster studies has fuelled an imperialist disaster risk reduction agenda that, in no way, is different to other "sectors" of the broader development agenda' (Gaillard 2019, p. 13). Gaillard suggested the following possible directions for renewing the critical scope of disaster research: 'encourage local researchers who know best local contexts to study local disasters'; 'invite non-Western researchers to collaborate in studying disasters in the West'; 'move away from Western sources, concepts, and methodologies' and draw on 'different epistemologies to reflect different local realities' (Gaillard 2019, pp. 14–15). Gaillard

stressed that 'transferring power to local scholars to take the lead in studying disasters should be the first political and symbolic move' (Gaillard 2019, p. 15).

Transferring power to local researchers is not in itself a guarantee of critically engaged public sociology, however. The main point is to promote disaster research that does not simply 'capitalize' on catastrophe (Schuller and Maldonado 2016, p. 67), but takes a long-term, place-based approach to the affected organizations, territories and populations. The involvement of local researchers only achieves this goal, however, if it is complemented by a research perspective that takes into account the interconnection of systemic dynamics, sense-making processes, political cultures and local organizational logics.

More specifically, a critical and committed public sociology of disasters today should engage first and foremost in denouncing a management of emergencies that is almost exclusively based on the stakeholder perspective, which implicitly benefits those with clearly identifiable economic interests while excluding alternative ways of framing the situation in terms of public and common goods. However, there are many obstacles facing such a public sociology, and these vary according to the intervention context. In the next section, we examine some of these obstacles in depth within the context of the post-earthquake recovery processes in Italy.

THE PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY OF DISASTERS IN ITALY AND THE CENTRAL APENNINE EARTHQUAKE

In Italy, a critically engaged approach to the study of disasters first emerged in the 1960s alongside the first examples of public sociology and mass popular mobilizations in response to the great flood of Florence and the earthquake in the Belice Valley in Sicily.

In 1966, (mainly young) volunteers from all over Italy gathered in Florence to help in the rescue operations after the disastrous flooding of the Arno river, in particular by clearing the mud that had covered the streets and monuments, earning themselves the nickname the 'mud angels'. This grassroots mobilization was one of the first examples of spontaneous youth mobilizations in Italy.

In 1968, a major earthquake in the Belice Valley in Sicily killed 370 people and displaced more than 70 000. The poor management of this emergency revealed deep social inequalities between Southern Italy and the rest of the country. This was the first time that dramatic disaster scenes had been broadcast on TV in Italy, and the lack of humanitarian aid, the mobilization of volunteers and the scandals of reconstruction were there for all to see. The deep emotional impact of the event turned the 'post-emergency' recovery phase into a key public issue, and resulted in a shift away from the still prominent fatalistic interpretation of disastrous events. The sociologist and non-violence activist Danilo Dolci played a crucial role in triggering this dynamic through his research, action and denunciation.[3]

These grassroots experiences contributed not only to creating the national *Protezione Civile* (Civil Protection) system, but also to permeating the scientific debate. With the prominence at that time of Marxist-inspired critical approaches in the social sciences, the underlying socioeconomic causes of such events came to the fore in the political, theoretical and scientific debates on disasters and emergencies. A reading of disasters through the lenses of class relations and class conflicts led to a sociological analysis of industrial (Conti 1977) and 'natural' disasters (Cavazzani 1972) as "capitalist crimes".

While these contributions did not result in a critical sociology of disasters research community, their influence facilitated the local reception of the international sociology of disasters, whose development in Italy was supported by the Disaster Research Center at Delaware University and the Institute of International Sociology of Gorizia as part of an internationalization strategy aimed at broadening the disaster research field.

In the 1990s, Italian social scientists became increasingly involved in the study of technological risks. At the same time, the study of environmental disasters contributed to the emergence of environmental sociology approaches in Italian sociology (Avallone 2010, p. 225).

After the earthquake that destroyed the city of L'Aquila (regional capital of the Abruzzo region) in 2009, there was a resurgence of forms of critical and engaged public sociology of disaster. The emergency management was characterized by a rigid top-down approach, which along with the numerous corruption scandals (Puliafito 2010) sparked widespread protests. Social scientists played a fundamental role in highlighting critical issues in all post-event aspects, including the emergency phase (Ciccozzi 2010), the management of the camps and humanitarian interventions (Bonaccorsi 2009), the reconstruction phase (Alexander 2013), urban planning (Frisch 2009), land use transformation (Olori 2020) and demography (Calandra 2012).

This research activity, however, came mainly from junior, non-tenured researchers and small academic groups (Calandra 2012), so the initiatives struggled to consolidate an analysis that was sufficiently systematic to have an impact on public intervention measures. The creation, on the initiative of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), of the Urban Studies and Regional Science department at the Gran Sasso Science Institute was a late and limited attempt to institutionalize and systematize social sciences' contribution to the analysis of the disaster. This was a missed opportunity to create a research centre that would promote social sciences interventions to support participatory and transformative processes.

This trend was reinforced after the earthquake that hit central Italy on 24 August 2016, causing 299 casualties. Its seismic crater was located at the intersection of the Marche, Umbria, Abruzzo and Lazio regions. Several more seismic events followed, notably those of 26 October and 30 October (6.5 magnitude).

This earthquake was unprecedented for its temporal and geographical extent. It predominantly affected mountain areas that had been classified in Italian legislation as *aree interne* (inner areas) based on indicators of high levels of social vulnerability (see De Rossi 2020). Social vulnerability goes hand in hand with ecological fragility, and both are related to long-term processes of depopulation, demographic ageing and pauperization. These socioeconomic trends have affected the whole Italian mountain region (the Apennines and the Alps) over the last 50 years.

The earthquake areas have seen an exponential acceleration in depopulation and fragmentation due to a management of the emergency phase that was based almost exclusively on displacement, and accompanied by delays in the recovery phase (Emidio di Treviri 2018) and a lack of economic support.

In a context where cultural infrastructure is lacking and with no external support (such as that provided by the OECD in the case of L'Aquila), the development of coordinated post-earthquake research efforts has been difficult. At the same time, the assemblies of volunteers engaged locally in supporting the affected populations have expressed the need from the outset to develop practices of inquiry in order to elaborate the knowledge generated by their

mutualistic practices through a dialogue with scientific research. These mutualistic practices have been a bottom-up response to this emergency through the establishment of a network of self-organized aid (independent of the Protezione Civile system), including self-managed camps and psychological and legal support. These initiatives were intended to support forms of collective action and autonomous territorial planning during the recovery phase.

In December 2016, a call launched across the grassroots mobilization networks led to the creation of the post-earthquake Research Collective EdT.[4] Dozens of PhD students, academics and professionals have been involved in this self-managed research initiative, which has explored various aspects of the post-earthquake recovery, with a strong commitment in terms of making research results available to the affected populations. Since its beginnings, the group has adopted an openly critical but also place-based perspective, collecting data through immersive fieldwork and other methodologies, and designing research questions in strong collaboration with local actors in the post-disaster processes.

The research conducted at EdT has revealed a number of limitations and difficulties with respect to applying a public, critical and reconstructive sociology in a context such as that of the 2016 earthquake; that is, in the *aree interne* of central Italy. While the voluntary engagement of researchers together with the self-organization of the research work has allowed a high level of autonomy in defining research topics and methods, this logic of employing junior researchers without remuneration has been criticized, and even outright rejected, within the context of a wider debate on the rise of unpaid forms of labour in academia (Coin et al. 2017).

The goal of 'co-research' (*conricerca*),[5] a practice based on the co-definition of the analytical framework and research methodology alongside the collective actors engaged in supporting social transformation, turned out to be (at best) an aspiration rather than a realistic objective. A number of obstacles to achieving this co-research goal have emerged, including the impossibility of prolonged fieldwork owing to the researchers' precarious working conditions, the displacement of the local populations due to the emergency management, and last but not least, the lockdown periods during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A further difficulty relates to the positivist approach to the role of 'science' widely adopted in the public debate. On the one hand, there is a prevailing understanding of science as neutral and detached from social conflicts, which implies that an engaged science is considered not to be objective. As a result, fundamental epistemological issues (how science constructs the knowledge that we then use, for what purpose and, ultimately, for whom) are never properly addressed. On the other hand, science is often confused in the public debate with expertise; that is, with the production of technical solutions. Consequently, efforts to problematize established technical certainties are not taken as contributions to the production of a better understanding of the situation. Both these positions have been difficult to deconstruct (Pugliese 2008).

The initiatives intended to facilitate the co-production of knowledge through the joint involvement of scientists, experts, activists and lay people have been partially successful in some of the ecological struggles that have emerged in the region, in response to recovery projects with a significant environmental impact. Finding effective ways of opening a dialogue with institutional actors – especially those in charge of the recovery process – to publicly discuss EdT's research results, and of denouncing power inequalities among the supposedly equal stakeholders, have proved difficult, however.

Notwithstanding these limitations, EdT has nevertheless been able to interact in a transformative way with the social worlds in which the research interventions have taken place in

some situations. On the one hand, a variety of local and non-local actors have commended the quality and relevance of the collective's scientific output. Some of its results – such as evidence on delays in emergency management, data on demographic decline, statistics on the medicalization of displaced persons and on land consumption – have been used as an 'informational basis' (Borghi 2018) by earthquake victims, grassroots movements and journalists to make public authorities accountable for their decisions, and to construct public claims. The results have thus been helpful in turning discontent and indignation into forms of collective action.

Many of EdT's research activities in the different local contexts have led to the development of relational networks involving a huge variety of actors. These place-based collaborations have been crucial in terms of defining new research objectives and forms of research practice that are more openly oriented towards supporting 'prefigurative', practice-based processes of 'sustainable materialism' (Schlosberg 2019). This has involved a shift away from an approach to the disaster as a catastrophic event, to an exploration of the long-term and structural determinants accounting for the socioecological fragility of the *aree interne*. In particular, there has been an increasing focus on exploring the relatively recent marginalization of the Apennine territories in the Italian history of economic development (Ciuffetti 2019), and the contribution of the agrosilvopastoral culture in the production and reproduction of common goods (Ostrom 1990). To this end, EdT has supported grassroots social reactivation initiatives, the organization of training schools, and the creation of an archive of independent scientific output on the recovery process and local struggles.

Having uncovered a composite world of practices, identities and interests in the earthquake areas that are sometimes discordant, if not openly conflicting, EdT has identified various directions for action, each with its own specific objectives and strategic paths, thus participating in the creation of a series of local publics that have supported the constitution of partially overlapping collective actors. In this sense, the dynamics triggered by EdT have counteracted the individualization of the experience of the disaster engendered by the displacement measures.

Recovery measures in the region have been tailored to meet the needs specifically of stakeholders who are private property owners, which has contributed to further exacerbating the processes of fragmentation and individualization. In fact, recovery has been framed as the 'revitalization' of the *aree interne* exclusively in terms of economic growth (see Macchiavelli and Olori 2019). The political and academic endorsements of this vision have prevented any serious discussion of an alternative, bottom-up reconstruction guided by objectives aimed at regenerating the mountain socioecosystems in the 'reinhabiting' sense (Centemeri 2019).

The EdT initiative shows the importance of a 'critical public sociology' of disasters, in the sense of a public sociology that goes in search of 'potential and actual counter-hegemonic publics', and tightens 'relations with social movements but not forgetting other publics that are less active, less organized, less articulate' (Burawoy 2005b, p. 390). This is only possible if sociologists accept the challenges of transdisciplinarity while integrating the ecological perspective as a source for theoretical renewal and experimentation with new modes of practical engagement.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The EdT initiative represents neither best practice nor a model to be imported to other contexts. This was not the motive for this brief discussion of its activities. Our aim was to contribute to the general discussion on the current challenges faced by the public sociology of disasters in the Anthropocene era by providing experiential insights from a group of researchers who are trying to produce critical and reconstructive sociological knowledge in a disaster situation with its own specific resources and constraints.

This initiative confirms that the public sociology of disasters is necessarily an interstitial practice. In our case, interstitial means first and foremost an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research practice as a prerequisite for investigating territorial contexts characterized by complex socioecological interactions at different levels. It is interstitial, then, in the sense of an openness to collaborating with the actors most directly affected by the disaster. This collaboration is essential if we are to design research interventions that can help to sustain critical and reconstructive processes that have some reasonable hope of resonating with local sensibilities.

A successful interstitial positioning requires autonomy in the definition of research objectives and methods, and above all the potential for continuous redefinition based on lessons learned in the field. This latter condition is difficult to meet in an academic context that increasingly rewards the pursuit of preformatted research objectives.

The autonomy of the EdT Research Collective relies on the voluntary-based engagement of usually junior, non-tenured researchers. The self-organized nature of EdT partly explains the problems it has faced in not being taken seriously as a qualified partner in the elaboration of public policies. Furthermore, the difficulty of ensuring the project's continuity has complicated its active contribution to prefigurative practices. However, prefigurative engagement is today a key component of a critical public sociology of disaster in terms of both reviving the affected populations' capacity to aspire (Appadurai 2004), and challenging the 'extractivist' disaster capitalism practices (Klein 2007) that rely on the many abstractions of neoliberalism (Tsing 2004). Prefigurative efforts are nevertheless heavily stymied by the structural fragility of interstitial sociological interventions. They also have to contend with the absence of local publics with whom to concretely prefigure reconstructive processes so as to counteract the dynamics that (re)produce socioecological vulnerability.

What emerges from the contemporary Italian post-earthquake recovery process experience are the specific difficulties of applying a public sociology of disasters in 'fragile areas'. In the *aree interne* of the Apennines, the dynamics of pauperization, ageing and depopulation have contributed to the fragmentation of the social context. An emergency management that was almost exclusively based on displacement has reinforced this process, generating further isolation, conflict and territorial dispersion. And yet the dominant logics that guide the recovery plans seem to ignore both the problem of defining who the beneficiaries of the reconstruction should be, and the voice of future generations (not to mention ecosystems and non-human beings). Political actors uncritically apply the framework of the economic stakeholders as the only legitimate representative of the collective interest. As such, they have no need to work actively on creating local publics who can contribute to defining a shared vision of the problems and solutions. Problematizing the question of the 'subjects' with whom one rebuilds after a disaster is today one of the main tasks of the public sociology of disasters.

From this point of view, the EdT initiative demonstrates the value of a strategy that is promoted more generally by movements and social networks working to support the need

for reasoning in terms of common goods as a way out of a paralyzing state versus market opposition. In our case, this alternative translates as the inclusion of forms of self-organization in the management of common-pool resources within the decision-making mechanisms of recovery. In the Apennine area, there are still forms of collective ownership of agricultural land, forests and pastures (or 'communal tenure' according to Ostrom 1990). These so-called 'rural commons' are managed by local bodies that are defined as *comunanze agrarie*. The *comunanza* is a legally recognized entity, with the task of managing the common resources of a given territory through an administration composed of a president and councilors who are chosen from among the residents, by the residents themselves. The *comunanza* is an inclusive organizational model that historically has been able to combine collective self-organization and institutional recognition based on the pursuit of social equity and environmental sustainability objectives. These experiences of autonomy in the local governing of populations and resources, when guided by objectives of solidarity and co-responsibility (as in the 'sustainable district' notion discussed by Donolo 2003), can be drawn upon to imagine alternative pathways of community (re)construction, to recognize socioecological vulnerabilities, to support decision-making processes that aim at the collectivization of risk, and to increase collective preparedness for future crises.

In this sense, the public sociology of disasters has an important role to play both in supporting the capacities of communities to repair and reconfigure broken socioecosystems, and in countering the defuturing systemic processes that continue to feed fast and slow disasters.

NOTES

1. In particular, the response to Hurricane Katrina dramatically exposed the enduring racial divide in disaster relief in the US (see Wright 2011).
2. This catchphrase was coined by former US president Bill Clinton in the aftermath of the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami, and was developed into a list of ten propositions conceived as operational guidelines for the humanitarian post-disaster intervention.
3. Danilo Dolci (1924–97) was an Italian intellectual and activist, and one of the leading figures in the nonviolent movement. Dolci had been engaged in the Belice Valley context since the early 1950s, promoting forms of denunciation and direct action against the extreme poverty that plagued the region. After the earthquake, he engaged in denouncing the public institutions' inefficiency and collusion with the Mafia during the reconstruction phase.
4. For a more in-depth discussion of this initiative, see Olori and Menghi (2019) and Emidio di Treviri (2018). The name 'Emidio di Treviri' represents a form of subversion of local religious devotion practices, because Saint Emidio from Ascoli is a local saint who, according to local tradition, protects against earthquakes. The story is that he was born in Trier (as, incidentally, was Karl Marx).
5. The term *conricerca* in the Italian public sociology tradition (see Armano 2020) refers to a methodology in which researchers and social actors share a similar vision of the wider goals of social transformation, and a shared theoretically informed frame of understanding of a given problematic.

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14. Public sociology and populism

Paul Blokker

INTRODUCTION

The relation between sociology and the 'public' – or related concepts such as 'crowd', 'people' or 'society' – is complex and historically variegated (cf. Chiantera-Stutte 2018; Brighenti 2014). Modern social-scientific tendencies towards professionalization, generalization, quantification, standardization and big data tend to try to grasp the 'public' and 'society' by means of a rational-scientific assessment, in particular through the measurement of individuals and groups, pretending to be able to comprehensively understand society rationally and in its entirety. In current times probably increasingly so,[1] sociology endorses a rational 'reading' of society and its composite individuals by means of generalization, measurement, the usage of indicators and benchmarks, hierarchization, and by means of establishing abstract (statistical) relationships between individuals, societal processes and larger society.[2] As Steffen Mau has recently sustained, there is a 'general trend towards *quantitative forms of social ranking* which are steadily evolving into a hierarchical classification system in their own right' (Mau 2019: 1). Such quantitative and hierarchical approaches are equally relevant in comparative studies of societies.

As argued by Laurent Thévenot, however, the creation of generality or general/standardized knowledge involves a form of sacrifice; or, as Mau argues, such quantification involves the re-creation of the social world, creating a *sui generis* reality (Mau 2019: 2). To be able to classify on the basis of a general characteristic, the particularity and distinctiveness of individuals and their lifeworlds tends to be lost (cf. Thévenot 2011) as an image of society is being constructed (Mau 2019: 2). As Andrea Brightenti claims in relation to collectivities: 'The much sought-for specificity in our apprehension of social multiplicities cannot be reduced to a quantitative matter, which could be ensured, for instance, by better counting systems, or by an extensive application of quantification procedures to social multiplicities' (Brighenti 2014: 38).

The emphasis on general and standardized knowledge is particularly upfront in instrumental policies of modernization, development and governance (cf. Serban 2015). Modernization is understood on the basis of technical, allegedly neutral and objective indicators and standards, which are grounded in the idea that modern society consists of a singular, rational model, that only needs to be put into practice and institutionalized. In modernization thinking, the public and society (or 'civil society') is understood in a specific way (cf. Blokker 2010), and can be measured according to, for instance, the quantity of non-governmental organizations active in a country, the number of media or newspapers (in relation to the public sphere), or the number of people involved in political activism. The modernization approach is hence closely related to a distinct 'political technology of reform' and related governmentality (Serban 2015: 208), which acts on society in order to reshape it in a prefabricated image.

A good example of the modernizing approach towards societal fabrication is the 'transition' processes in East–Central Europe since 1989, which followed a more or less explicit blueprint

for societal change and which understood the result of modernization as involving the construction of a specific, liberal-democratic society. The example of post-communist transformations, and the outcome of the modernization processes, also brings the argument to bear on populism. In the last ten years or so, the East-Central European countries that were supposed to start converging towards a Western European standard and type of society seem now to have started to 'deviate' significantly, predominantly due to the political action of conservative, right-wing populist governments. In this context of 'backsliding', more than 30 years since the major changes of 1989, the transition/modernization governmentality is re-emerging, this time as a recipe against forms of populist 'deviation', in particular in countries such as Hungary and Poland. The latter were believed to be front-runners in convergence a decade earlier, but are now rapidly dismantling liberal institutions of checks and balances, a pluralistic civil society, and free media. According to Licia Cianetti and Seán Hanley, the 'rise of democratic backsliding as the dominant frame for understanding undemocratic change is reminiscent – albeit in reverse – of the so-called transition paradigm'. As they state, this paradigm was 'overoptimistic'. Cianetti and Hanley worry that the flaws of the transition approach are now reproduced in the 'backsliding approach' or what could be called anti-populism. These flaws – some stressed by Cianetti and Hanley, some added here – include the following dimensions:

1. The exit from authoritarianism means automatically the construction of a (liberal) democratic society.
2. The transition from one regime to the other can be identified along a linear, standard trajectory of societal change.
3. The building of democracy and society is about one feasible model: (a specific interpretation of) liberal democracy (as Cianetti and Hanley state in their recent work, also in the so-called Varieties of Democracy project the linear and mono-dimensional approach is visible).
4. Since the relevant model of democracy and its distinctive components, including civil society, are known, they can be operationalized, quantified, measured and evaluated by means of indicators and checklists.
5. So-called established democracies are relatively immune from the pressures which the transition – or now, backsliding – countries face.

The pretension to create ever more precise and instrumental sociological knowledge, as exemplified in the modernization/transition/anti-populism approaches, appears – at least in part – to be in contrast with a sociology that wants to get closer to individuals' and society's specificities, that is, with regard to lived experiences, distinctive traditions and conventions, local and individual perceptions and needs. It is equally in contrast with a view of society as ultimately based on indeterminate social action, and as not neatly operating according to societal, general laws.

Measurement, quantification and the formulation of general societal 'laws' or 'tendencies' depart from deductive knowledge and tend to invoke an increasing analytical distance between professionalized sociology and wider society. Society is reduced to a collective or public to be 'measured' in relation to an ideal standard. The top-down approach, which hardly engages in understanding and interpreting society, potentially enhances forms of alienation between individuals and institutional knowledge, and possibly increases distrust towards institutions and expert observers amongst the members of society. A generalizing/standardizing/ranking approach to society imagines or even constitutes society and social reality by means of its own

concepts and its reduction of reality through the usage of measurable concepts and standardized models (cf. Supiot 2017). The infinite complexity and richness of social life is reduced by means of an 'aggregation of heterogeneous elements into a single whole' (Supiot 2017: 92; cf. Thévenot 2019), thereby creating an understanding of society on the basis of what is measurable and measured, to be 'divided up by measure', while turning a blind eye to dimensions and aspects which are less easily observed, and obfuscating the plurality, distinct experiences and diversity of individuals and society alike. Quantification in this regard surely enhances the governability of society and the comparison across societies. It enhances transparency towards policy-makers, and may expose, for instance, forms of discrimination, inequality or corruption. It may, however, equally tend to enhance the distance between generalized, standardized knowledge and the specificities of unique individual life situations and lived experiences.

The instrumental, abstract[3] but ultimately partial type of knowledge produced by means of generalization, standardization and quantification may hence be moving sociology increasingly away from citizens' own perceptions, and from knowledge of lived and meaningful societal relations and participation in society at large. If public sociology is to bring 'sociology into a conversation with publics, understood as people who are themselves involved in conversation' (Burawoy 2005: 263), we might question whether a highly specialized and professionalized sociology will be able to hold such a conversation. As Michael Burawoy argued in his original statement on public sociology, '[t]he project of such public sociologies is to make visible the invisible, to make the private public, to validate these organic connections as part of our sociological life' (Burawoy 2005: 264). Public sociology displays in this a clear tension with the standardized modernizing approach, which is currently prevalent also in the anti-populist position in both political science and (political) sociology, which tends to understand populism and backsliding as deviations from a norm or (liberal) standard (cf. Müller 2016; Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017; Akkerman et al. 2014; for a critique see, e.g., Isaacs 2017; De la Torre and Mazzoleni 2020).

Here it is argued that public sociology needs to resist this modernist, anti-populist governmentality, and needs to return to people's own perceptions, understandings and demands (cf. Hann 2020). A return to ordinary people's experiences and forms of 'world-making' needs a 'populist' turn in sociology, this chapter suggests. In general, one might say that populism's *raison d'être* is to build on individuals' own understandings and perceptions. Our modern societies appear to increasingly display forms of rebellion against the aforementioned professionalized, expert or technocratic knowledge and intellectual-scientific wisdom. This rebellion often takes the form of what is indeed labelled 'populism', in the sense of a critical, bottom-up reaction against institutions and elites. This chapter makes a case for a specific type of populist sociology, in contrast to the currently prevalent anti-populist sociology. In this, it investigates how the relation between a public sociology and populism may be understood.

The chapter starts from what is the currently most diffused understanding of populism, that is, as a bottom-up rebellion against liberal democracy and the governance of professional elites. Second, it critically discusses the origin of contemporary understandings of populism, and points to a need for the reinterpretation of populism. The notion of populism is largely seen in a negative light, in particular due to sociologists working in the tradition of modernization theory (cf. Jäger 2017).[4] Modernization theory tends to promote a generalized understanding of democratic and socio-economic progress, downplaying a historical and societal diversity of experiences. In this, it tends to increase the distance between scientific knowledge and citizens' perceptions, in that it frequently assesses the latter as irrational and as a threat to the

process of modernization and democratization, while putting strong emphases on institutions that supposedly keep the irrationality of the people in check (constitutionalism, the rule of law, representation). In other words, it promotes a generalized idea of democratic society, while displaying a 'fear of the masses' as well as of particularity and diversity. Third, in a response, the chapter discusses the call for a 'populist sociology', which regards a rebellion within sociology, against a hyper-professionalized and instrumentalized sociological science. Fourth, turning outwards to society, left-wing forms of populism are discussed, in their manifestation of a critical and emancipatory approach to society. Fifth, the chapter makes a case for a different understanding of populism, which informs a 'democratic populism' or 'civic populism', which can be understood as the basis for one form of intending a 'public sociology'.

WHAT IS POPULISM?

Since the 1990s, and in particular in the last ten years or so, populism has become a ubiquitous concept in the social sciences, even if the discussion on populism is of a much older date (Ionescu and Gellner 1969; see Jäger 2017 for the American historiographical discussion). A discussion of populism in the context of public sociology is relevant not least due to a shared emphasis on the 'public', 'people' or, generally, 'members of society' (cf. Burawoy 2005), and on the knowledge produced about and by members of society. Populism as a concept draws attention to the distinction between institutions and society, whereas public sociology critically engages with the gap between 'ivory tower' or expert knowledge and the emancipation of (groups in) society. As many have argued, populism can be understood as an intrinsic part of democracy, so much so that some now argue that we are going through a 'populist phase of democracy' (cf. Anselmi 2018: 1), in that it consists in a prominent 'modality of social expression of popular sovereignty, which acquires different forms but has some very specific traits that are determined by the social conditions of the context where it manifests itself' (Anselmi 2018: 2).

Many analysts have affirmed the rise of populism in Europe in recent decades.[5] Their analyses attest to a growing societal discontent aimed against the political establishment, in particular since the economic and financial crisis of 2007–2008. Observers underline the supposition that, rather than being merely a transitory phenomenon restricted to situations of social deprivation and unfulfilled popular expectations, populism should be regarded as a structural phenomenon whose critique strikes at the centre of the modern democratic system itself.

This close relation between the populist critique and the dynamics of democracy has been highlighted in a useful way by a few insightful analysts of populism (Canovan 1999; Meny and Surel 2001; Urbinati 1998, 2014, 2020; Arditi 2007). Populism is understood by many analysts as a political 'style' and a set of distinct arguments, rather than as a coherent ideology in its own right (which would need, apart from a coherent set of core, superstructural, politico-philosophical premises, to include the 'translation' of the latter into a set of institutions, such as those found in liberalism as a political doctrine and its institutional derivations in the form of representative, pluralist democracy, the division of powers, and 'checks and balances'). The distinctive set of populist arguments includes an absolute prioritization of the people, its political participation (however defined) and its sovereign will, anti-elitism and an anti-establishment attitude, a claim for radical freedom and 'direct democracy', a re-enchantment of the alienated people (an alienation which is deemed the result of the artificial constructions of legal-rational

institutions) through the unification of the people with political power, combined with a disdain of formal institutions and pluralist representative democracy, and an organic and undivided vision of the 'people'. Populism can be understood as both more and less than an ideology: more in the sense of constituting a kind of trans-ideological phenomenon which can be incorporated in ideologies at both the left and the right ends of the political spectrum; less in that it allegedly does not form a coherent, fully developed ideology in itself.

The acknowledgement of a distinct relation between populism and democratic society (most directly through the importance of the demos for both) also means that populism cannot be treated as a mere pathology of modern democratic society, as argued by some (cf. Müller 2016; Arditi 2007). Populism should be understood as a distinct interpretation of democracy, rather than as a wholesale critique and rejection of democracy. As most forcefully argued by Margaret Canovan, 'populism in modern democratic societies is best seen as an appeal to the "people" against both the established structure of power and the dominant ideas and values of the society', and therefore constitutes a 'perennial possibility', as it arises in the inescapable tension between what Margaret Canovan calls the 'pragmatic' and 'redemptive' interpretations of democracy: 'Populism is not just a reaction against power structures but an appeal to a recognized authority. Populists claim legitimacy on the grounds that they speak for the people: that is to say, they claim to represent the democratic sovereign, not a sectional interest such as an economic class' (Canovan 1999: 3).

Populism should be understood as entailing a rather one-sided and particular view of democracy, emphasizing its emancipatory, redemptive features. In contrast, a 'pragmatic' view of democracy is about order and the rule of law (and in different ways based on rational and expert type of knowledge), and in this sense emphasizes an opposed but equally one-sided view of democracy. In political reality, both visions exist at the same time (just as liberalism, for instance, contains a pragmatic and a redemptive side) and have to exist side by side, as democracy, in its redemptive guise without the restrictions of pragmatism, would lead to totalitarianism; whereas pragmatism without faith would lead to uninspired, instrumental and technocratic politics. According to Margaret Canovan, populism moves in when there is 'an asymmetry brought about by an excess (of pragmatism) and a deficit (of redemption)'. As reformulated by Yves Mény and Yves Surel:

> Democracy, as Janus, presents two faces and can therefore be the object of two contradictory readings. Democracy presents in fact a redemptive vision (the best possible way of governing the city), but also, more banally, a mode of governance and regulation of conflict by means of rules and ad hoc procedures. In any way, the notion of popular power is at the centre of the redemptive vision (cf. Lincoln's formula), while the Schumpeterian definition (competition for the selection of those who govern) leads us to the pragmatic vision. The redemptive approach, in the end, refers to the total and direct power of the people (the sovereign), while pragmatism calls for the limitation of power and the institutionalisation of its exercise. Democracy, any kind of democracy, is therefore constructed on this tension, on this indissoluble relationship between Utopia and realism, between faith and pragmatism. Faith is necessary in order not to reduce democracy to weary and hardly convincing rituals; scepticism or pragmatism are equally necessary, in order to reduce the expectations and to temper the risks of which unrestrained enthusiasms or the Utopias of political voluntarism might be the bearers. (Mény and Surel 2001: 34)

Democracy can thus be interpreted in its dominant constitutionalist and technocratic way, but is also open to different interpretations, in which the problematic features of liberal democracy are often underlined (elitism, alienation, the failure of pluralist democracy to represent the

social whole, the failure of the liberal state to address substantive issues at the political level, the exclusive attention to instrumental, rational values without representing sentiments, emotions and the collective identity).

In particular in recent years, sociological and political-scientific perspectives on populism have re-emphasized a legal, constitutionalist reading of democracy, which is understood as the opposite of what populism stands for. Populism is predominantly understood to indicate a series of negative dimensions of society and ordinary citizens. In other words, social-scientific approaches tend to take an 'anti-populist' position, stressing the dangers of popular sovereignty and (rather one-sidedly) endorsing a legalist, technocratic model of democracy. Populism is in this way largely understood in reductive or 'thin' terms, as a strategy, rhetoric or ideology that works against existing institutions and elites (cf. Anselmi 2018). Rather than indicating a sensitivity for, and an emphasis on laymen's knowledge and ordinary people's ideas and preferences, or the expression of complex social articulations of popular sovereignty and forms of disenchantment, the term 'populism' has come to mean a composite of backward, undemocratic, irrational, closed, non-reflexive, unsophisticated, and even outright dangerous positions and ideas.

In many ways, it could be argued, in current sociological and political science approaches, populism has come to mean the opposite of public sociology: rather than indicating a position which engages with, promotes and builds on the real experiences and ideas of ordinary people, it has become a denunciation of allegedly wrong and problematic behaviour of people. As mentioned, much of social-scientific research takes an 'anti-populist' position and engages in the description and classification of what is understood as a entirely negative phenomenon (cf. Fitzi 2018: 47–48). In this way, much of research on populism focuses on manifestations of right-wing radicalism and conservatism, while the original (and intrinsic) 'bias' of historical populism – towards marginalized, powerless and excluded groups – has become largely ignored. Populism now stands for simplified and plebiscitarian forms of politics, rather than for the revolt of ill-treated and exploited masses against oligarchical and elitist systems.

Two issues in contemporary populism research are particularly problematic. First, research on populism takes a largely presentist approach and ignores the historically variegated development and manifestation of populism. This is problematic for the discussion here, because potentially useful and positive dimensions of populism, on which public sociology could build, are not taken into account. Second, sociologically speaking, there is little sociological research on the social roots and implications of the populist phenomenon and its variegated manifestation in both temporal and geographical/contextual terms (cf. Fitzi 2018: 48; Anselmi 2018).

The historical amnesia in populism research is unfortunate because it leads to a failure to appreciate specific bottom-up and democratic dimensions of populism (related to the emancipatory dimension discussed above) that are of great relevance for public sociology. An original context of major importance in the rise of populism is evidently the United States of America at the end of the 19th century (Boyte 2007; Frank 2017; Jaeger 2017). As Jason Frank puts it:

> contemporary democratic theory's approach to populism has been unduly influenced by Carl Schmitt's theory of political identification. Both liberal critics and radical democratic admirers of populism have focused attention on the question of who the people are ('the boundary problem') while neglecting the related question of how the people act ('the enactment problem'). This framework obscures the central importance of populism's experimentation with different forms of

> egalitarian praxis, and how these forms come to shape political subjectivity. The formative praxis of populism is clearly indicated in the nineteenth-century American case. (Frank 2017: 1)

In Harry Boyte's view, three important populist moments can be identified in American history: the late 19th century small farmers' movement, the democratic movement emerging in the wake of the Great Depression, and the black freedom movement (Boyte 2007: 6). Both Boyte and Frank point to the significant dimensions of egalitarianism, pluralism and civic learning in such movements.

(LEFT-WING) POPULISM AND ACTIVIST SOCIOLOGY

As argued by a number of scholars (Stavrakakis and Jäger 2018; Oklopcic 2019), and as mentioned above, the widespread scholarly attention to populism is frequently expressed in the form of 'anti-populism'. Populism as an object of study has become incorporated into political-scientific, but also sociological and legal approaches, in a highly normative, rather than analytical manner, resulting in a form of 'moral panic'. The most important instance of this is the fact that populism is frequently reduced to, or equated with, right-wing and radical right-wing forms, which allegedly deeply threaten existing democratic society. Right-wing populism tends to understand the people as the nation, an artefact seen as highly problematic in social-scientific research, and the political subject is understood in a highly collectivist way, in strong contrast to the ideal (liberal) view of society as pluralistic and individualist.

The construction of the 'populist enemy' is problematic, not least due to a tendency to paper over contextual nuances as well as historical differences and specific conflicts involved. In this regard, it is of great importance to take a diversified approach to populism in order to understand its variegated contextual and historical manifestations, revealing at times its emancipatory and inclusive potential. The latter is largely denied in contemporary debates, not least due to a lack of reflection on the comprehensive societal struggle of which populism is a part. This is of significance for my discussion in relation to public sociology, in that such societal struggles tend to be about exploitation, discrimination, emancipation and equality, core issues of interest to public sociology. The way marginalization and emancipation are understood, however, is highly different in distinctive populist projects. A key issue concerns the way the political subject is constructed. This is highly different in populist projects. It is in cases in which populism takes an inclusive and pluralistic guise that it shows affinities with the project of public sociology.

As argued by Yannis Stavrakakis (2018), various observers, not least politicians, journalists and political scientists, tend to see in populism an anti-democratic phenomenon which threatens liberal-democratic systems, human rights and the rule of law. An important tendency in such observations, however, is the strong counterpositioning of populism and liberal democracy, and the general lack of discussion of negative, oppressive and exclusionary dimensions of liberal democratic systems. In this, populism includes forces which criticize the liberal-democratic status quo for its oppressive, corrupt and non-egalitarian or even highly inequal features. Some manifestations of populism, however, in particular on the left, criticize the liberal status quo in the name of equality, emancipation, pluralism and effective human rights. In this, they return in important ways to the original populist manifestations of the turn of the 20th century. In contrast to distinctive nationalist tendencies in right-wing populism,

which understand the people as a homogeneous force which can be represented and interpreted by a singular leader, reducing the public to members of a positively endorsed group, in left-wing populism such a centralizing and collective dimension is not necessarily present, and the pluralistic character of the public is recognized. Emphasis on diversity and bottom-up engagement may allow for authentic ways of engaging with diverse individuals.

An example of an inclusionary approach to defining the people, in which plurality and diversity are recognized, is that of the Spanish movement-party Podemos, which is frequently taken as an example of left-wing populism. For instance, in its promotion of human rights, Podemos 'constructs rights in ways that blur the distinction between citizens and migrants – without eradicating it' (Nash 2016: 1298). For Podemos, foreigners are not the 'enemy within', and its construction of the 'people' is rather one which groups together those citizens (and non-citizens) who are victims of globalization and neoliberal capitalism. This does not mean that forms of nationalism and patriotism are entirely absent in Podemos's discourse, but that its understanding of the people is closer to an idea of the 'plebs', that is, those who until now have been in different ways excluded from effectively partaking in political rule (cf. Nash 2016: 1298). In recent work on transnational populism, as exemplified by the Democracy in Europe Movement (DiEM25), attempts at constructing a pluralist and pan-Europen people are discussed. In such populism, the negative dimensions of nationalism and nationally defined peoples are strongly emphasized, while commonality between Europeans and non-Europeans as democratic citizens is stressed (cf. Scharenberg 2021; Moskvina 2021).

Left-wing populists tend to construct the people in relation to the democratic participation of marginalized persons. In this, they endorse human rights as ways of protecting ordinary people (for instance, through social rights; Nash 2016). and promote civic participation. Populist projects which seek authentic civic engagement are radically different from exclusionary populist projects. The latter are predominantly grounded in a mixture of an exclusionary, ethno-nationalist and religious construction of the people, scepticism towards the rule of law, and strong leadership (Corso 2014). In this regard, the left-wing populism of Podemos, Syriza and DiEM-25 – with its emphasis on a positive image of the ordinary people and popular political participation – has more affinity with some of the claims and practices of left-wing populists in Latin America (cf. Mudde and Kaltwasser 2013; Panayotu 2017). In the early stages of various left-wing populist projects – for instance, in Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador – strong emphasis was put on extensive popular participation, while technocratic discourse was strongly rejected (Couso 2012; De La Torre 2016: 124; De la Torre and Burbano de Lara 2020). In contrast to the invocation of the people of right-wing populists in Europe – that is, in an ethno-national, exclusionary manner – in Latin America strong emphasis has been placed on the participation of the excluded and deprived social classes, including indigenous peoples, in constitution-making (cf. Colon-Rios 2012; Nolte and Schilling-Vacaflor 2012).

Important varieties of populist projects are hence evident. In left-wing cases (in both Europe and Latin America), populism tends to emphasize a public claim to bring democracy closer to the people by means of rights and participatory instruments; whereas in right-wing populist programmes in Europe, populist elites design democracy on the basis of ethno-national constructs of the people. The imaginary construction of the people as the collective subject is a negation of the ultimate diversity and plurality of any society, and fails to articulate the diversity of views and positions of (groups) of citizens. It hence risks resulting in forms of exclusion and oppression. This is particularly evident in the friend–enemy logic that is displayed in the right-wing populism of Le Pen, Orbán and Kaczynski, but it is equally visible in the later,

governmental stages of Latin American experiences, in which frequently centralizing, authoritarian tendencies took over. A core problematic dimension is the reification of the people as a homogenous entity. As observed by Andrew Arato, the 'hopeless search for a subject that incorporates the authentic or genuine "people"' undermines the democratic populist project (Arato 2016: 9), either due to a tendency to strong exclusion and authoritarianism, as in right-wing populism, or due to a tendency to strong-leader executivism or the democratic dictatorship of populist leaders, as in Latin American, left-wing populism (Arato 2016: 291–292).

POPULIST SOCIOLOGY

In important ways, it remains an empirical question whether the populist attention for the ordinary people and citizens needs to ultimately result in a political project that endorses a unified, homogenous understanding of the people. In distinctive contexts, this may not need to be the case, and populism might take the form of a levelling, democratizing and inclusive force. In the context of sociology as a discipline, as a means of analysing society, and as a form of societal self-understanding, populism may be relevant in at least two ways.

First, the populist critique, which calls for a non-prejudiced and receptive approach to citizens' knowledge, perceptions and wishes, might be applied to the problem with which the chapter started out: that is, an increasingly professionalized sociology which tends to become increasingly detached from real-life problems and isolates its scientific knowledge from wider society (siding with the formalistic, legalistic, elitist dimension of democracy). This is also noticeable in the internal hierarchies and 'class formation' of the sociological discipline itself. As passionately defended by the American sociologist Monte Bute, sociology maintains within its own ranks significant hierarchies and reproduces itself on the basis of an internalistic, career and status-driven pursuit of scientific knowledge. According to Bute, '[T]here is no profession more insensitive to status inequality wihtin its own ranks, or as inept at recognizing how taken-for-granted practices create and perpetuate this peculiar caste system. Sociology itself is in need of a populist insurgency' (Bute 2013: 80).

In its current form, it is 'implausible to believe that a citizen-friendly sociology will emerge from academia's gated communities'. A populist sociology, in contrast, understands sociology as a 'calling', not a 'career', and stresses, according to Bute, the fostering of 'sociological imagination' in undergraduate students; as public teachers, sociology should engage with 'diverse communities of citizens' and share its knowledge with various groups, including citizens; and sociologists ought to be loyal to local institutions and communities, in contrast to the 'self-aggrandizing behavior of hyper-professionalism' (Bute 2013: 80). Such a position also has epistemic implications. Ought the sociologist be preoccupied by a 'scientific ethos and methodological fetishism', or should a sociologist rather understand sociology as one form of reflexive knowledge in a wider society made up of alternative forms of knowledge? For Bute, distinctions between 'academic' and 'non-academic worlds' are less relevant, while an emancipatory sociology, which seeks to co-assist in promoting meaningful social change, is more so (Bute 2016: 509ff).[6]

This brings us to a second dimension of a populist sociology, which flows in a way from the first: sociological engagement with society, not least in the form of activism in civil society movements. Such activism is relevant not only for those studying social movements, sometimes in an emphatic manner, but also in a more general sense, as an ackowledgement of the

practical research that movements and associations engage in. But perhaps more importantly, engagement of scientific researchers in activism and civil society activity helps by contributing to the stimulation of collective imagination. In other words, a 'populist sociology' does not merely entertain a form of sociological imagination as inspired by the sociological canon and scientific endeavour, but actively participates in a more political-practical form of imagination, in order to co-produce creative and alternative visions of society. This moves researchers away from an exclusive focus on the generation and accumulation of 'academic capital', towards a 'vocation' which combines academy and citizenship (cf. Haiven and Khasnabish 2014: 18). It also acknowledges different knowledge that is generated outside of academia, not necessarily following the standardized, narrow, and often little imaginative orientations of scientific work. Researchers could follow a strategy of 'convocation', in which they both contribute to making ideas public and known amongst peers and other relevant groups, as well as provide their own knowledge and capacities in social activism (Haiven and Khasnabish 2014: 21). As Haiven and Khasnabish claim: 'it seeks to mobilize our historic circumstances and privileges to provide for movements something that they, all too often, tend to bypass or take for granted. We wanted to use our power as researchers to create new spaces of dialogue, debate, reflection, questioning and empowerment' (Haiven and Khasnabish 2014: 23). There is a populist dimension in this, in the sense of the appreciation and valorization of knowledge produced within society, by non-specialized citizens and not merely by specialized institutions.

CIVIC POPULISM

In the light of the discussion of populism above, which stressed the widespread negative view of anti-populism, a major question is whether a 'democratic populism' (Boyte 2020) or a 'civic' form of populism (Boyte 2003) can be imagined and practically observed. According to the American sociologist and activist Harry C. Boyte, a democratic populism is highly necessary in current times of polarization, fragmentation of society, and ongoing 'cultural wars'. Civic or democratic populism could be a third way, distinct both from right-wing populism – with its emphasis on exclusion, homogeneity and closure – and left-wing populism, with a potential bias towards the social question, that is, a focus on *Homo economicus* and material or distributive equality. In contrast, as Boyte states, 'in democratic populism' (which Boyte defines as inspired by a 'cooperative, egalitarian, pluralistic ethos and civic learning features, strengthening communities in an age when local communities are everywhere endangered):

> as people defend their ways of life they develop in democratic ways. They become more conscious of other groups' interests, more inclusive in their understandings of 'the people,' and more expansive in their vision of future possibilities. Anyone involved in broad organizing or movements like the sixties' freedom struggle has seen this. (Boyte 2007: 10)

In Boyte's (2007: 3) terms, populism has three dimensions: 'It is a movement building popular power to break up unjust concentrations of wealth and power. It is a culture-making movement, sustaining and advancing values of community, liberty, and equality. And it is a civic learning movement, developing people's civic identities, imaginations, and skills.'

Core dimensions of a civic or democratic form of populism lie hence in bottom-up participation, the positive evaluation of the critical capacities of ordinary people, a democratizing and pluralist common objective, and the general understanding of the people as a co-contributor

and partner in democratic politics. According to Harry C. Boyte, democratic populism consists in a 'movement building popular power to break up unjust concentrations of wealth and power. It is a culture-making movement, sustaining and advancing values of community, liberty, and equality. And it is a civic learning movement, developing people's civic identities, imaginations, and skills' (Boyte 2007: 3). Historically, as briefly observed above, the agrarian populism of the late 19th century and 1920s and 1930s is relevant, as well as the broad movement around the American New Deal (Boyte 2007: 6; 2020: 70).[7]

Two further dimensions indicated by Boyte are of great significance in my view. First, Boyte puts emphasis on possibilities for co-creation and partnership, between citizens, on one hand, and professionals, scholars, experts, politicians and administration, on the other. Co-creation emphasizes the democratic and collaborative capacities of citizens, their participatory potential, but also their ability to publicly and collectively 'produce' and 'create'; whereas partnership emphasizes the possibility of positive relations between citizens and other, professional actors (in contrast to the polarizing, strong anti-establishment position of other populisms). As Boyte aptly observes (referring to Carmen Sirianni's book *Sustainable Cities in American Democracy*):

> there is generally little knowledge among everyday citizens 'that professionals can be trustworthy and productive partners in sustainability and resilience.' Most professionals 'likewise have little sense that ordinary citizens and diverse urban residents can make their own work more effective, democratically legitimate, and worthy of public support.' He calls for 'a strategic initiative across the entire field of sustainable and resilient cities' to make democratic professional work 'more visible, linked, and connected to higher education training programs, professional associations, and policy.' This is also a call for an inclusive democratic populism in which professionals reclaim their civic and public purposes and help develop civic agency.

A second, related, dimension is that which Boyte calls 'public work', that is:

> the sustained effort (paid or unpaid) by a mix of citizens to create goods (material or cultural) of lasting civic value. This definition highlights the public impacts and products of such effort; it also suggests the collective, power-generating dimensions of work that accomplish things people cannot achieve in isolation. It is a way to conceptualize practices of effective citizen organizations, which do not simply fight for a redistribution of the pie. (Boyte 20023: 739)

The dimension of work and of creation puts emphasis on a form of civic politics that is not often identified. Whereas politics is often seen as grounded in participation, deliberation and negotiation, crucial political dimensions regard work; or, in other words, the creation of common or public goods and organizing together to try to achieve change (Boyte 2003: 739). This dimension of *praxis* or political action stresses the dimension of doing, rather than the dimension of articulating or criticizing.

This dimension of action and praxis is equally emphasized by the American political historian Jason Frank. In his discussion of populism in the *Oxford Handbook of Populism*, Frank claims that contemporary studies of populism tend to stress an identitarian, Schmittian dimension of populism, prioritizing its mobilization of an abstract, unified political subject, as a 'People-as-One' (referring here to the work of Claude Lefort), neglecting a variety of historical experiences, which may reveal the 'importance of practical habituation into certain orientations, dispositions, and capacities for radical democratic action and cooperative self-government, and how this formative praxis actively shapes the ends that radical democrats

pursue' (Frank 2017: 6). By stressing the illiberal and anti-pluralist characteristics of many (right-wing) forms of populism in contemporary times, experiences related to, for instance, the American populism of the end of the 19th century are left undiscussed.

One may, however, identify important democratic lessons in such manifestations of populism, as Frank, similarly to Boyte, points out. Such lessons include, for instance, the way in which collaborative forms of populist action may involve 'political education', which may be described as a 'form of political "paideia": the formation of assertive and cooperative citizenship through practical activity' (Frank 2017: 10). Self-formed civic associations would engage in the creation of 'countervailing democratic power' – in populist fashion – to large enterprises and formal politics (Frank 2017: 10). Such 'alliances were associations for coordinating popular power from below, they were practical sites of political subjectivization more than simply incubators of class consciousness, and this subjectivization is poorly understood in the simple terms of a qualitative identification with "the people" opposed to "the elites"' (Frank 2017: 12).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Populism can be relevant for public sociology in two main ways. First, public sociology may be inspired by forms of populist engagement and practice. Populism may be a resource of (critical and practical) knowledge, and public sociological analysis may gain important insights (about virtuous democratic practice) as well as find ways of collaboration and sharing of its own scientific insights. Second, public sociology may activate a vigorous stance against populism as it is generally understood: that is, in its manifestation as an illiberal, anti-pluralistic, moralistic force. Exactly by emphasizing the positive, inclusive and practical dimensions of populism, public sociology may counteract forms of closure and exclusion.

Populism hence provides an opportunity for sociology to get closer to society and citizens, and to avoid strategies of inward-driven, hyper-professionalization. By means of paying systematic attention to citizens' own views, and creative and critical capacities, public sociology may help to develop a sociology which is critical to its own scientific constructions, and which is capable of finding meaning in non-scientific forms of knowledge creation as well as practice.

The scientific treatment of populism exactly shows the limits of an academic-scientific approach to populism, geared towards the construction of neat definitions and solid/uncontestable scientific knowledge (cf. Mazzoleni and de la Torre 2020; Jäger and Stavrakakis 2018). By paying due attention to the inherent tensions in the concept of populism itself, but also to the ambiguous relation of populism to democratic society, sociology may help to shape alternative democratic imaginaries, which deeply question citizen apathy or outright negative perceptions of society as theorized in many liberal theories of democracy.

NOTES

1. Classical sociology obviously equally contained an intrinsic drive towards a scientific 'grasp' of society, notably from Comte onwards (Brighenti 2014; cf. Wagner 2001).
2. Including by assessing the value or worth of individuals, and *ipso facto* of society at large, by means of individual classification, in relation to educational level, employment position, political

attitudes, and by means of societal ranking, with regard to, for example, corruption, the rule of law, democracy.

3. 'To abstract' means to draw away, to withdraw, to remove.
4. As Jäger argues convincingly, an initially positive and pro-democratic interpretation of the American agrarian populism of the end of the 19th century was countered by a strongly negative understanding in the heydays of modernization theory, that is, the 1950s and 1960s. This modernizationist reading of populism, associating it *inter alia* with backwardness, ignorance, anti-Semitism and racism (based, however, on scarce evidence), was subsequently reproduced in populist studies in Europe, which emerged from the 1980s onwards (Jäger 2017).
5. The following paragraphs consist of revised parts of Blokker (2005).
6. In specific academic approaches, such as in French pragmatism (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006), the elitist, professional knowledge of the sociologist is questioned, while the knowledge of ordinary people is appreciated for its critical dimensions (related is also Sen's capability approach; see, for a useful discussion, Borghi 2018). In a related manner, specific methods, such as Q-methodology, question the usefulness of the generalized and standardized knowledge as produced in quantitative approaches, such as factor analysis, and instead argue in favour of a comprehensive analysis of individuals' perceptions, and the reconstruction of complex difference between individuals (cf. Watts and Stenner 2012).
7. The latter example may be one reason why in contemporary times so many new 'New Deals' are being launched.

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15. Borders and migrants in Europe

Tatjana Sekulić

When the curtain falls this time,
we will have to listen to a whole chorus
calling out, 'We did not do this.'
Hannah Arendt (1945)

INTRODUCTION

On 9 November 1989 a growing group of people climbed the Berlin Wall, a symbol of the insurmountable border dividing two coexisting worlds in Europe: a 'free world' of capitalism and liberal democracy, and the 'illiberal and oppressive world' of post-totalitarian communist regimes. Witnesses and contemporaries may recall a breathless momentum of alternatives opening up: would the regime of the Democratic Republic of Germany use violence? Would the most exciting eruption of a would-be European civil society in the 20th century transform the Cold War into open military conflict? It did not. The communist regimes imploded because of their own contradictions and inability to maintain the promise of social justice and emancipation. The European Community of 12 member states (in 1989) absorbed Eastern Germany in 1991, Central and Eastern European countries took a path towards market economy and liberal democracy, socialist federal states dissolved into nation-states, peacefully or through violent conflicts. Shortly after, the European Union (EU) was born with the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, subsequently enlarging to the EU15 in 1995, the EU27 in 2004 and 2007, the EU28 after Croatia joined the Union in 2013 and then, facing its first exit (the United Kingdom) experience, becoming the EU27 in January 2020. The reunification of Germany also brought about a number of complex and contradictory questions (Habermas 2020), while EU integration as a project for the reunification of the 'two Europes' (Supiot 2010) proved to be deeply troubled. The EU became more and more constrained by the contingent national interests of the member states, paradoxical in its attempt to deepen the bonds that tie, and to widen out towards the East, while remaining within the same Westernized imaginary framework (Sekulić 2020). The multiple crises that have been affecting the European Union and its member states since 2000 opened breaches within the original project and called its own principles into question (Balibar 2016; Guiraudon et al. 2016; Habermas 2012), bringing Europe's future to the 'edge of the precipice' (Macron 2019) and, from the beginning of the war in Ukraine in February 2022, confronting it with the spectre of a new Cold War.

Language has the capacity to sum up in a few sentences all those dramatic events affecting the life experience of generations of men, women and children for more than three decades. Walls and barriers have been growing up all over Europe, becoming more visible since the opening of the Balkan route in 2015, while only 25 years have passed since people collected fragments of the Berlin Wall as souvenirs. The electrified barbed wire and migrant-hunting units put in place by the Hungarian government in 2015, together with the deep-blue morgue

of the Mediterranean Sea, represent the most visible and disturbing forms of what has been happening in front of our very eyes. The politics of fear generated mostly by the new right-wing populist political actors, in Europe and all over the globe (Wodak 2015), seem to be quite successful in producing justification and legitimation for exclusion, reversing its effects on generations of old and new European migrants. At the same time, the counter-narratives and political agency of the 'third way' European left did not create sufficient conditions for overturning the trend of securitization and moralization of borders and criminalization of migrants. Understanding the language of these new walls (Sicurella 2018; Wodak 2020), and contrasting either scientifically or publicly the symbolic and effective violence and victims they have been producing, has became a challenge for the 'public face of sociology' and its aim of defending the interests of humanity (Burawoy 2005, XI Thesis: 24).

Many ways and perspectives were engaged by the social sciences and humanities to explore the causes, consequences and dialectics of these processes. For the purpose of this chapter, I direct the reader's attention to the issue of borders, from the standpoint of the symbolic and effective impact of this great European transformation on their reshaping and their regime (re)definition. These processes, understood in terms of bordering and ordering (Van Houtum and Van Naerssen 2002; Paasi 2020), have been persistently affecting the construction of European 'we-ness' and 'otherness', in a spectrum of different dimensions: the dimension of its identities, of its founding principles, of its institutional architecture, of its practices. Their dynamics, unfolding in an extended European public space, supra and transnational by definition, create and re-create constant tension with the political will of the member states' elites and national public opinions. The border-crossing regimes, intended here as specific 'multiple regimes that constitute the border as an institution' (Sassen 2016: 2), define the contingent politics of inclusion and exclusion of real people, each of whom is understood as a bearer of specific individual rights and statuses.

The borders are then examined through the lenses of the migration phenomenon. While the principle of free movement of people (together with capitals, goods and services) remains a declared milestone of the Union as a community (Recchi 2013), new boundaries and barriers have been growing up all over Europe, becoming 'increasingly overlapping, nested and blurred' (Bauböck and Guiraudon 2009: 448), and providing new ways to define the figure of a 'migrant'. The opening of Western Europe towards the Central and Eastern European countries meant not only the opening of the borders and liberalization of mobility, but it also resulted in the unattended consequence of sharing specific citizenship rights – and the life space and practices – with European 'others'. Moreover, it could be affirmed that with the fall of the Berlin Wall a new history of migration in Europe began, challenging previous models of interpretation of the phenomenon.

The three different scales I use for analysing the transformation are the following. The first one, the national state scale, regards the constellation of citizenship regimes and alteration of models of integration within Western European countries in the perspective of the 'failure of multiculturalism' (Modood 2012). The second, the transnational internal European scale, concerns the dialectics between the EU citizens' residence and labour mobility regime within the territory of the Union based on common citizenship of the EU as a polity, and the persistent consideration of these people as 'internal migrants'. The third one, the global scale, tackles the issue of the 'people on the move', regarding constant waves of (forced) migration along Mediterranean and Balkan routes that have been producing the 'refugee crisis' since 2015. To do all this, I open an interdisciplinary dialogue between political sociology and the sociol-

ogy of migration, critical political geography, political philosophy, and anthropology, while relating it to the promise of public sociology in 'creating meaningful social change' (Hossfeld 2022: 3).

The dialectics of borders and migrations are, firstly, explored with regard to the traditional models of migrant integration in Western European states in the perspective of a 'series of turns' in the last 20 years (Bassel et al. 2021). Secondly, I briefly question the EU principle of free movement extended to the new members (and aspirant-member states through visa liberalization) in the perspective of Eastern European mobility towards the West. Thirdly, I analyse the way in which the EU politics and policies concerning the 'refugee crisis' – in terms of securitization and externalization of border controls and protection – have become a threat to its founding principles of human rights and the rule of law. Finally, I try to reflect on the question of how the borders and spatial orders established and mobilized in othering (Paasi 2020) can be challenged and occupied by alternative voices and actors seeking other forms of inclusion, participation and solidarity in an alternative European laboratory of post-national citizenship.

BORDERS EXIST

In July 2015, German Chancellor Angela Merkel visited a secondary school in Rostock where she met a 14-year-old girl, a Palestinian refugee whose family had received a negative response to their application for political asylum, after waiting for a long period. 'I would like to go to university. It's really very hard to watch how other people can enjoy life and you yourself can't. I don't know what my future will bring,' the girl said. Merkel replied: 'I understand what you are saying, nonetheless politics is hard sometimes. There are thousands and thousands more in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. And if we say "you can all come here, you can all come over from Africa," we can't cope with that.' At the end of August 2015, Germany decided to open its borders to the Syrian refugees, while Merkel addressed the public with the words: 'If Europe fails on the question of refugees, if this close link with universal civil rights is broken, then it won't be the Europe we wished for.' The *New York Times* journalists Alison Smale and Melissa Eddy reported the story under the title 'Migrant Crisis Tests Core European Value: Open Borders' (31 August 2015). The existence of borders as human constructs can be explained in the same way as Brubaker and Cooper defined the existence of nation, race and ethnicity: as the product of a process of reification operating through its cognitive, social and political dimensions (Brubaker and Cooper 2000: 5). The modern force of nationalism, notwithstanding its being 'a malleable and narrow ideology that values membership in a nation more highly than belonging to other groups' (Bieber 2020: 10), resists as a dominant principle of ordering producing and re-defining the border regimes. Borders emerge in their more visible expression as physical and geopolitical frontiers delimiting the sovereign territory of the state, in an 'imagined co-extensionality of the state, nation and people' (Bauböck and Guiraudon 2009: 442). The state holds the political authority for a specific regulation of opening and closing the gates. According to Bigo, being a political institution, a border is considered 'as a defensive line that allows a distinction to be made between inside and outside' (Bigo 2013: 216). Balibar would add that every political practice can be considered as being territorialized, as it identifies and classifies individuals or populations by the criteria based on their capacity to occupy a certain space or to be admitted to it (Balibar 2012: 92–93).

The new spatiality of the borders (Newman 2003; Rumford 2006) was explored in terms of the multifaceted spatial diffusion of the control sites within the territory through growing mechanisms of securitization, and outside the nation-state through mechanisms of externalization (Casaglia 2020, 2021). Borders emerge especially as normative barriers controlling access to national state citizenship – defined prevalently by criteria of *jus sanguinis* and/or *jus soli* – and understood here as a tool of differentiation put in place by nations seeking for mutual distinction, and preservation as such (Bieber 2020). Rogers Brubaker defined the right to citizenship as internally inclusive and externally exclusive in terms of a paradox, as it refers to real people coexisting in time and space, seeking rights and dignity. Some of these people are permitted to stay within the 'national state container' as denizens or non-citizens with limited rights, some of them acquiring political citizenship in the long term and on severe conditions; others are refused as non-deserving of any similar status.

Yasmin Soysal recalled Marshall's conception of citizenship making rights means of inclusion by grounding them in effective membership institutions as the 'very social and institutional arrangements', without which the individuality of the person cannot be recognized and rights cannot exist. According to Soysal, it is 'exactly these arrangements that are under threat today in Europe, laying bare the vulnerabilities of citizens and non-citizens alike' (Soysal 2012: 16–17). In her words, the transformation of citizenship regimes as such after World War II, and in Europe in particular, can be understood better by exploring the entangled practices of human rights and citizenship.

According to Balibar (2012: 97), territory is the most abstract space constituting the horizon of citizenship. Yet, the right to citizenship, and rights, liberties and obligations deriving from it, are separated from the territory of the state, as the bearers of nationality continue to retain it while crossing the borders (Kochenov 2019) or residing in other parts of the world, since the body is the most elementary space where border technology applies (Balibar and De Genova 2018; Casaglia 2021). In this sense, that kind of differentiation operates through the politics of separation of bodies in different space-sets. As Adrian Favell (2014: 135) affirmed, 'Without sovereign political regulation of the movement – in the shape of citizenship and naturalization laws, welfare rights for members only, and the control and classification of border-crossing and re-settlement – migration would just be people moving around.'

The exclusive 'right to have rights' reveals itself to be a privilege of 'appropriate citizenship', as it turns out that there are no borders for the 'right' passports. The international travellers who move by choice alone – tourists, businessmen, expats, exchange students, retirees – 'melt through borders, untouched by the state, their uncapped numbers reflecting only market demand, commercial interests and the dictates of economic and human capital accumulation'. Conversely, boundaries and barriers exist for immigrants moved by forces beyond their control, who 'elicit categorization and strict state control of numbers' (ibid.).

The ongoing transformation of mobility on a global scale has enacted processes of 'realignment of the citizenship' (Bauböck 2010; Bauböck and Guiraudon 2009) that can be observed both on the national state scale and on the European scale. They are concerned not only with migrants as denizens or non-citizens, but also with fully entitled citizens as such, through the prism of the intersection of their identification with other criteria of belonging – those of gender, class, race, ethnicity, age – thus defining the 'lesser' Europeans (Soysal 2012; Hill Collins 2019). The inequalities in status, life styles and opportunities among individuals and groupings of both citizens and non-citizens, and related social problems, according to Patricia Hill Collins should be considered 'as caused by an interconnection of colonialism, racism,

sexism, and nationalism'. This new approach in the way of seeing the problems 'provided a new vantage on the possibilities for social change' (Hill Collins 2019: 2–3). It opened up a new horizon of hope for many people aspiring to a better life, and fighting for recognition of a multitude of particular identities, claiming full citizenship rights and participation in the public space based on their political subjectivity.

Still, equality is considered a normative ideal displayed as a self-evident implication of citizenship, while the actual inequality of social status and opportunities, traced within the European countries, regards both the structural discrimination and access to agency, as affirmed by Baubock and Guiraudon (2009: 448). The authors proposed to consider equality in terms of non-discrimination, embedded in a notion of universal personhood, and not (only) within the status of citizenship as a particular membership. This new way of conceiving citizenship triggered its redefinition towards further models of inclusion, and sharing rights and liberties, disembedded from formal national state membership. The realignment involves 'macro-level processes changing constellations of political boundaries and the individual level of vertical relations with political authorities and horizontal ties among co-citizens' (ibid.: 448). As Isin (2012) affirmed, how subjects act to become citizens and claim citizenship had substantially changed.

At the same time, the opposition to these challenging transformative processes turned out to be particularly strong. The scientific evidence of growing inequalities on a global scale, and within developed societies, led to greater awareness of the destructive potential of a globalized advanced capitalism resulting in the 2008 financial crisis (Altvater et al. 2013; Azmanova 2020; Boltanski and Chiapello 2005; Fraser 2013; Piketty 2013), and exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Yet, the Western (or Northern) political tendency to fortress the frontiers and raise the drawbridges remains prevalent in the political agency of the EU. A multitude of voices of intellectuals and civil society were raised during the peak of the refugee crisis in 2015 and 2016, claiming radical change in these politics, summed up here in just one phrase: 'Yes, there is much to be ashamed of having the EU passport' (Dal Lago 2016, 2018). Here a space opens up to the critique of neoliberalism as a dominant model of governmentality since the 1980s, pervading the European integration processes, while shaping EU policies and eroding the instruments of welfare and social justice as such, with lasting consequences. The universality of fundamental human rights clashes with, and within, the borders of the European Union, while the consequences of this situation have extended to the definition and to the practices of European citizenship. This 'third wave of marketization', as a global process, brought up new forms of devastation of everyday life for so many people, reinforcing the aim of traditional public sociology in portraying its causes and consequences, and compelling the alternative politics (Burawoy 2022: 16–20).

The making of politics is harsh sometimes, as Angela Merkel said in her response to the Palestinian girl, either in admitting that 'we can't cope with it', or when deciding to open the borders of Germany to the Syrian refugees in 2015, because otherwise 'it would be a failure for Europe'. Open borders is one of the core values of the EU, and freedom of movement has been one of the core freedoms of the Community since it come into being in the late 1950s. According to Ettore Recchi (2013: 19), 'it shines for its not exclusively economic significance … Its political significance is resolutely much broader'. Through the historical reconstruction of its genesis, the author demonstrated how this principle gradually introduced the innovative concept of European citizenship in a post-national constellation of post-civil war Europe, eventually normatively affirmed with the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992 (ibid.: 19–21).

The multiple crises of the EU (Guiraudon et al. 2016), the 'refugee' crisis being at the focus of this analysis, producing negative effects towards both new generations of citizens of migrant origin, and internal migrants from the Eastern European member states, brought Europe to a crossroads, as was affirmed by Agnes Heller. During the last years of her life and work, she spoke a lot about the political conceptualization of a stranger, and of the figure of the migrant as its most significant embodiment. Her criticism was directed to the broken promise of the EU and its incapability 'to resolve the contradiction between the fundamental human rights and the rights of citizenship, bound to the national state' (Heller 2016). Some forms of solidarity survive nowadays concerning almost exclusively the circumscribed inner borders of the nation-state citizens (and other residents, to a certain point), and specific contextual relations between other nation-states, manifesting a great deal of fatigue even on that level. The voices claiming to 'open borders' and welcome migrants do not seem to be strong enough. Yet, as Žižek affirmed, the opening of borders is not a solution per se, and he defined its rhetoric as hypocrisy if devoid of radical rethinking of the normative and practical constitution of social justice in Europe, and on a global scale (Žižek 2016). Compassion, instead of solidarity, emerges as the main justification accepted for any positive action towards refugees, keeping the subject of *caritas* at a distance, and underlines the extremely asymmetrical power position between the holders of power on controlling the borders and movements – national governments and supranational EU institutions with their security mechanisms – and migrants on the move, with no reciprocity in the relationship.

The symbolic and effective violence of the borders (Balibar 2001, 2012), reinforcing the existing barriers and building new walls, occurs instead as a dominant political practice throughout Europe. In the next section I will briefly analyse how it unfolds with regard to: (1) the traditional economic migrants and migrant-origin citizens in the EU; and (2) intra-European mobility from East to West; with a few more words concerning (3) the refugee crisis in Europe.

ETHNIC MIGRANTS AND EAST–WEST POST-ENLARGEMENT MOVERS

The immense literature about the complex issue of migration in Europe cannot be summed up in this section. I will focus here merely on a few relevant dimensions that have been emerging during the last two decades, in particular after the Al-Qaeda terrorist attack on the United States of America in September 2001. The crisis of the dominant migrant integration patterns in Western European countries – assimilationist, pluralist and temporary – was already going on, before terrorism assumed the green colour of Islam, and the image of black and brown skin of Muslim migrants. The recent right-wing populist discourse has produced a kind of a mish-mash of old racist and post-colonial categories of discrimination, and new anti-Islamic and racist ones. Its dominant discursive pattern has shaped a new racialized figure of the migrant, concerning both 'ethnic migrants', or newly arriving refugees, and creating their identikit in the form of a recognizable threat in the public space (Maneri 2021; West 2016). The crisis of multiculturalism has become a common place in political and media discourse since 2010, with the uprisings of youngsters in the Parisian *banlieues* as a symbolic representation of failure.

Contemporarily, a new post-enlargement European mobility began, after the 2004 and 2007 accession of ten post-communist countries. The colour of these migrants – or European East–West movers (Favell 2014: 12–15) – assumed the nuances of whiteness; while the need to limit the EU migrants' in-work benefits became one of the main pro-Brexit arguments (Hobolt 2016: 1261). A 'Polish plumber' and a 'Romanian builder' turned out to be new stereotypes of intra-EU mobility and a cynical image of the 'freedom of movement' core principle.

The *Atlas of Migration* (European Commission, Joint Research Centre 2019, 2020) reports the statistics regarding migration flows in the EU and worldwide. I read these official fact-sheets – including the United Kingdom (UK) until 2019 – as a story of institutionalized everyday multiculturalism, where over 90 per cent of residents within the EU28 prove to be 'nationals': people with full citizenship rights. The rate had been slowly decreasing since 2013, from 94.2 per cent to 92.2 per cent, as the flows of EU mobiles and non-EU migrants grew. These comprehensive numbers hid the rate of year-by-year naturalization, and the quantification of 'second generations'. But what is more important for this analysis concerns the continuation of the practices of citizenship acquirement, notwithstanding the negative oscillation of numbers and procedures being made more difficult (Bassel et al. 2021), running from 843 894 positive cases in 2016 to 705 907 in 2019 (EU27).

Altogether, the portion of the East–West movers settled in another EU country, despite growing from 1.9 per cent in 2013 to 2.9 per cent in 2019, with different motivations (work, family, education, other), remains quite low if counted on the EU27 basis, although their presence is concentrated in a few states perceived as the most attractive in terms of work and life conditions. The percentage of EU mobiles who changed their citizenship (or opted for a dual one) has become increasingly important, especially in the case of Germany (constantly around 25 per cent in a five-year time span from 2014 to 2018) and Sweden (oscillating from 25 per cent in 2014 to 17 per cent in 2019). A negative effect of losing EU citizenship occurred in the UK, as just before the exit procedure was accorded, in 2017, the statistics reported 26 per cent new British citizens of EU28 origin.

The 'legal' migration flows of the 'non-EU' residents with short- and long-term permission to stay increased from 3.2 per cent in 2013 to 4.9 per cent in 2019, with important absolute figures concerning the big Western European countries such as Germany (7.2 million), Italy (5.7 million), France (5.2 million) and Spain (4.1 million). The political and media pressure regarding 'illegal' border-crossings of people seeking refuge goes far beyond the actual numbers of the asylum seekers, and works as a forestalling device for masses of refugees crammed into the camps in Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Sudan and other African states, or who have not yet departed from their countries of residence. The EU policies of securitization and externalization of border protection, congruent to the border regime of closing and exclusion, have a reverse effect on member state policies of citizenship, in their different dimensions – social, cultural, civic, economic and political – and the very notion of a European citizenship.

'Ethnic' Migrants and Their Offspring

In April 2021, the website of the French right-wing magazine *Valeurs Actualles* published a letter signed by 18 retired high-ranking officers of the Army addressed to the President Macron, warning about the menace of a 'civil war' provoked by his 'concessions' to Islamism. The letter was followed one month later by another one, this time anonymous, written by an

unknown number of younger troops belonging to the so-called 'generation of fire': soldiers who experienced 'active service' regarding the 'war against terrorism' at home and abroad, as was reported by the press agencies. Both letters indicated 'suburban hordes' and other groups who 'scorned our country, its traditions and its culture' as the main counterpart in the civil war. The anonymous letter could be signed by the public, and in one day collected over 160 000 signatures. The shadow of a new 'civil war in France', quite different from the one addressed in Karl Marx's (1871) work on the Paris Commune, was resolutely condemned by the state authorities and a large part of civil society. The issue was positively addressed by Marine Le Pen, an opposition candidate against Macron for the Presidential elections in April 2022.

Learning from the Yugoslav disasters in the 1990s, such violent expressions of an anti-establishment and anti-migration argument have to be taken into consideration and publicly countered by scientifically founded arguments. If there were a failure of the European migrant integration models, summed up under the label of 'multiculturalism', then the responsibility and accountability would lie with political agency of the national states elites and of the EU itself. It seems that being a migrant is perceived as an ongoing, intergenerational burden, needing 'various trials to be believed that one belongs' (Bassel et al. 2021: 265), even after formal citizenship has been achieved. Bassel et al. speak about three turns in the politics regarding citizenship regimes observed in the case of the UK, but considered valid for other Western European countries. The first one regards the culturalization of citizenship requirements with regard to the language, knowledge of values, emotional and symbolic recognition of oneself as a co-citizen, leaving a good deal of room for interpretation according to the standards of a 'white listening subject'. The second turn regards the neoliberal citizenship policy of 'skilling' the requirements and measuring one's competences and human capital. The third one concerns the securitization politics of border regimes. Here citizenship appears as a malleable category in the sense that, if acquired by naturalization, it can also be revoked. These three driving logics, according to the authors, lead to a 'broader intensification of citizenship as a technology of governance', in order to separate 'deserving' migrants from 'undeserving Others' (Bassel et al. 2021: 263). Urban segregation of intergenerational migrant populations and other poor non-deserving minorities (Picker 2017), growing right-wing racially based terrorism in Western Europe (Maneri and Quassoli 2021), externalization of asylum practices and criminalization of refugees, are to be considered alarming symptoms of the post-neoliberal democracy crises in the EU, demanding deeper interdisciplinary investigation.

East–West Post-Enlargement Movers

'I am Roman, You are Romanian, and She is Roma' was the title of a paper written by a student of mine in 2011, when trying to untangle the confusing labels used in reporting a crime in Rome, in which the Romanian community of Roma people was involved. The condition of these 'migrants from within', regardless of their effective citizenship status, sheds light on the segregation mechanism and discrimination technologies of governance with which the EU still has to reckon (Picker 2017). It could be seen as a dark side of the EU's Janus face, the bright one being the celebration of the Erasmus programme, in which the nuances of blackness and whiteness are coupled with youngness, middle-class life style, and higher education.

Who are these mobile Europeans, where are they, what do they do? These questions guided the analysis of Ettore Recchi (2013) in one of the most important sociological inquiries on this topic. They are positioned along the axes between the extreme points of 'elite movers'

and traditional 'ethnic migrants' (Favell 2014), where the East–West trajectory is consistently different from the opposite one. Recchi affirmed the extent to which the low level of identification with Europe signified scarce solidarity with other Europeans, 'who remain primarily the "others"' (Recchi 2013: 183). Recently, Favell (2014: 13) wrote about over half a million of eight accession-country citizens moving into Britain's boom economy since 2004, with the comment that 'in this they are unequivocally making Europe'. The fragility of the European Union project emerges when comparing his words to today's post-Brexit Europe. At first glance, the statistics show that EU mobiles are unequally distributed towards the West, as in 2019 the biggest post-communist member country, Poland, registered only 0.1 per cent of EU-mobile residents. In 2019, compared to the EU27 average, they prove to be less skilled and poorer than EU nationals, but not to the extent of non-EU migrants (Education attainment only first grade: EU nationals 20 per cent, EU mobiles 27.4 per cent, non-EU 45.1 per cent); Early school leavers: EU nationals 8.9 per cent, EU mobiles 22.5 per cent, non-EU 26.9 per cent; Poverty and risk of exclusion: EU nationals 19.6 per cent, EU mobiles 26.5 per cent, non-EU 45.3 per cent) (European Commission, Joint Research Centre 2020).

And now, a brief final consideration of how much the perception of these 'European Others', with whom citizenship status, rights and resources were to be shared, led to further enlargement fatigue and crisis regarding candidate and potential candidate states, with uncertain and durable consequences (Sekulić 2020, 2021). The EU bordering regimes, concerning these 'third' countries considered as a part of the 'refugee crises' and stakeholders in their alternative solutions, may be clearly observed along their frontiers and boundaries.

FORCED MIGRATIONS AND THE VIOLENCE OF THE BORDERS

The 'migrant' or 'refugee' crises exploded in spring 2015, although the so-called Mediterranean Route opened up well before that: during the 'Arab Spring' revolutions in 2011 and the violent conflicts that emerged as a response to the regimes, the flows increased significantly, while reaching their peak in April and May 2015 with 1 594 000 'illegal border crossings' detected and recorded by Frontex (European Parliament, LIBE Committee 2021). There is no room in this chapter to enter into the extreme complexity of the issue, concerning so many geopolitical players involved in the crisis, including Islamist fundamentalism in its multiple formations.

While boats and rafts overflowing with people entered the field of vision of different European audiences as a kind of exceptional, unpleasant and disturbing sequence of events – either in the case of successful disembarkation, or in the case of being lost at sea – the Balkan Route offered another type of spectacle. The images of a critical mass of bodies pressing against the borders of the European Union member states, whose presence could not be easily ignored and who could not be easily removed, invaded the public space worldwide. The rare exception was the response of the German government in temporarily opening the gates and allowing entrance almost exclusively to Syrians escaping the war. Germany was followed by a few other states, such as Austria and Sweden, in opposition to the Dublin agreements, and in response to the European public being so deeply upset by the sight of a lifeless child lulled by the sea waves: three-year old Alan Kurdi, found dead near Bodrum in Turkey on 2 September 2015.

The change in Merkel's politics and the temporary opening of the borders provoked enthusiasm in some European citizens and the media, in favour of the 'new course' in German

and EU migration politics. Contemporary, new acts of terrorism occurred in many European cities: October 2015 in Ankara, November 2015 in Paris, January 2016 in Brussels, June 2016 in Istanbul, July 2016 in Nice, and December 2016 in Berlin. At the time, in May 2015, the European Agenda of Migration (EAM) had been already adopted, defining European policy towards the 'migrant crisis' in terms of security management of the refugees and asylum seekers, by means of Frontex and Europol, leading to the effective criminalization of migrants. Terrorism became increasingly perceived as an intrinsic component of the new migrations, making room for the justification of the EU's political choices in the crisis management. Appeal for mobilization of civil society actors against the closure of the EU borders and temporary suspension of the Schengen Agreement brought limited demonstrations in several European cities on 27 February 2016, without any resonance in the official media and with no effect on the EU's or national decision-making processes regarding the refugees. The liminal inhuman condition of the 'people on the move' was created in a gap between legitimate justification of their rightful demand for refuge and asylum, and supposed illegality of their presence inside the territory of a single national state according to its contingent legislation. A vacuum was created, within which norms and values that citizens designed for themselves were temporarily suspended for those 'redundant' and de-subjectivisized masses (Bauman 2016), with severe consequences for all.

The Balkan Route was officially 'closed' at the beginning of March 2016, contemporaneously with the ambiguous agreements whereby the European Commission transferred funds to Turkey, and sealed by the police forces agreement between Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia and North Macedonia on how to control the flows of migrants (Sekulić 2020). Armouring the doors and raising the drawbridges left hundreds of thousands of refugees trapped along the Balkan Route, in inhumane conditions, well documented by numerous activists, reporters and photographers. The absence of proposed political and structural solutions for the refugee crisis by the supra- or transnational European institutions and actors left the management of this burning issue to the governments of the individual member and aspirant national states. Protection of borders through the politics of exclusion and the violence of the borders was a coherent continuation of the two-decade-long political orientation of the EU core member states (Bauböck 2018a; Guiraudon 2018; Marchetti and Pinelli 2017).

Many voices were raised in public about the failure of the EU to 'respond adequately to the massive inflow of refugees and other migrants' from 2015 on (Bauböck 2018b). In an interview to the *New York Times* in May 2016, Zygmunt Bauman defined the refugee crisis that had exploded a year before as a 'crisis of humanity', not just a 'humanitarian' one. Talking about refugees in a broader historical context of modernity and post-modernity, he used the term 'redundant people … thrown out of the realm of humanity', as an echo of the Arendtian concept of the 'worldlessness' of the stateless pariah (Arendt 1979). At the same time, louder voices demanded the closure of the borders and criminalization of migrant solidarity action by individuals and civil society.

In September 2020, the EU adopted a New Pact on Migration and Asylum, while the politics of securitization and externalization of the borders was confirmed in a dramatically changed geopolitical situation. The new bargaining with the Libyan and Tunisian authorities by the EU representatives and by the individual member state governments over the control of the flows, and the new decision by Denmark to externalize the reception centres of legitimate asylum seekers while waiting for a decision about their fate, will hardly improve the current situation. It becomes even more difficult to accept these policies in their political, moral and

even metaphysical sense, concerning the categories proposed long ago by Jaspers (1946), who discussed the question of German guilt. Certain acts towards the refugees, played out all along the EU borders by national governments of the states that have specific agreements with the European Union, verge on the criminal if measured by the norms of international criminal law. This law imposes behaviour based on the common acceptance of the respect of fundamental human rights and liberties, and of the legal personhood of every human being. The *modus operandi* and actual complicity of the member states' governments and the EU agencies have been under examination, the latest by the Frontex Scrutiny Working Group founded by the European Parliament in late January 2021.

The May 2021 Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) described the situation in these words:

> Migrants continue to suffer unimaginable horrors during their journeys to, during their stay in, and when attempting to depart Libya. Before reaching Libya, during their journeys through the remote Sahara Desert across the east, west and south of Libya, migrants routinely face dehydration, starvation, lack of access to medical care, arbitrary detention, kidnapping, trafficking, sexual abuse, and other forms of physical violence at the hands of traffickers and smugglers, as well as criminal gangs, armed groups, State security forces, police, immigration officials and border guards. (United Nations Human Rights. Office of the High Commissioner 2021: 2–3)

The 2014 Guidelines of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights defined the issue of border protection in this way:

> International borders are not zones of exclusion or exception for human rights obligations. States are entitled to exercise jurisdiction at their international borders, but they must do so in light of their human rights obligations. This means that the human rights of all persons at international borders must be respected in the pursuit of border control, law enforcement and other State objectives, regardless of which authorities perform border governance measures and where such measures take place. (United Nations Human Rights. Office of the High Commissioner 2014)

As Gündoğdu (2015: 11) suggested, we urgently need to understand the perplexing persistence of rightlessness in the 'age of rights'. At the same time, what seems to remain a political and social act has been reduced to appealing for benevolence and compassion for people in distress. But can that be all 'we' are capable of doing, as human beings and as citizens? Returning to the fundamental values that the EU declares itself to be built on, Bauböck reintroduced the moral premises of the argumentation, 'unashamedly', as he said, as there should be something shaming in the moral arguments, bridging the professional and public sociology. According to Bauböck, disagreement with the European bordering politics, regardless of facts and empirical hypotheses about the new flows of mass migration, revolves around two basic questions: 'How strong should Europe's commitment be to rescue migrants at sea, to admit asylum seekers and to distribute the burdens of refugee admission fairly among member states? And what are morally acceptable limits to these commitments?' (Bauböck 2018b: 2).

This leads the analysis to explore several limitations of the present political condition on a global scale. The first regards the impotence and inability of the 'big actors', such as the United Nations (UN), or in this case of the EU, to act in order to prevent violent conflicts and to face their consequences, represented in this case by an unrestrainable flow of refugees. The climate crisis and environmental perils are considered here as another enormous dimension causing 'the loss of habitat' and requiring global intervention (Sassen 2016). The second

concerns the national state scale, where the political domain proves to be affected by the crisis of representative democracy, threatened by populism, epistocracy and anti-politics; by the rise of the Far Right, and by the weakness of the Left. Both limitations affect the civil actors and agencies, which are unable to create durable alternative structural frames of action on the national and transnational levels.

The condition of being a refugee involves the specific rationale of forced migration, and connects with the possibility of individual choice. The first – of being expelled or deported – with no choice at all; the second – of escaping war, an environmental or social disaster, or political discrimination – with a very limited choice between staying or fleeing, which opens up a minimum space of risk calculation. In the second case, we can consider the choice to be hypothetically possible, involving different spheres of rationality – not just the instrumental one – and the emotions. In most cases, however, no choice at all seems to be available. Once on the move, many testimonies speak about the 'trap of the journey', regarding both those who are expelled, and those who flee. On the road, time expands and tightens. Movements are marked by an intersection of events, by a circular movement concerning departure, dispersion, deviation, arrival, reverse; a labyrinth, or even a vortex in their trajectory. There must be a feeling of loss of balance, a kind of labyrinthitis, where fixed points fluctuate, move around, provoking a sense of disorientation and anxiety. Time proves neither to be human time any longer, nor social time: it becomes an ex-temporal situation of a permanently temporary nature, a lasting interstitium (Altin 2020).

This brings us again to Bauman's provocation in speaking about 'redundant people'. Forced migrants became increasingly perceived as a threat for the national 'we-communities', especially on the local level, as they have nothing to lose but their life, and thus they need everything. Sharing the rights related to the national citizenship also means sharing the resources, and is consequently often represented and perceived as a menace to life space and individual wellbeing on the local scale. How can we fight that kind of perception, and shape new social frames supporting action based on a principle of inclusive solidarity that presupposes equality of all concerning the right to share resources?

While discussing the indelible waste of life time multiplied for every individual in the condition of the refugee, Marxist categories, particularly those of his critical analysis of the way in which capitalism produces profit through the accumulation of surplus, turn out to be appropriate for this inquiry. Profit is built up by the exploitation of human practical capacity to create anew, which goes far beyond the satisfaction of primordial needs. It means that profit is produced by hours of a person's work, as the sum of fragments of a life time, and as a product of their vital energies. Capitalism as such is an engine, and a creation of modernity, contradictory and multifaceted, in its being substantially alienating, but still inevitably needing human beings. The inner contradiction of advanced capitalism, regarding in particular those individuals and populations identified as the 'losers of globalization', could be metaphorically represented by the figure of a refugee. On the one hand, the refugee condition signifies a loss of life time by the potential producers of profit; on the other hand, refugees are failed consumers whose needs cannot be easily satisfied and increased (excluding the limited industry of humanitarian aid), as their status is life time and costs consuming: a double loss (Bauman 2016; Sassen 2016). The dehumanization of advanced capitalism in its financial non-productive form could be seen as the last stage of alienation, producing the unsustainable growth of inequality, and of 'redundant people', on a global level. How can we re-consider

the life time of every human being as a value and as a resource outside the capitalistic way of thinking?

The condition of a refugee in a post-neoliberal, populist world, together with other poor, sheds light on the emergence of deep contradictions in late capitalism, clashing with basic liberal democratic principles. Žižek posed an ambitious question in 2016, on how to 'reconstruct society on such a basis that poverty will be impossible?' (Žižek 2016: 8). We need a revolution in our understanding of fundamental human rights, enchained within national state sovereignty and territory, institutionalizing them in an alternative, better way (Gündoğdu 2015; Benhabib 2020). Nowadays, the main logical sequence seems to be the following: all citizens are humans; not all humans are citizens. Citizens have political rights; no political rights means no full citizenship. Legal immigrants have limited political rights: they are half-citizens defined in terms of denizens, or non-citizens (Kochenov 2019). Asylum seekers and refugees have no political rights, as they remain in a limbo between two (or more) national citizenships: no political rights, no narrowly defined citizenship, leads to the denial of humanity – a non-person condition (Dal Lago 2004).

Thus, how to re-define political rights in order to give political relevance to every human being as a subject of rights? The United Nations as a child of the League of the Nations has never been sufficient to persevere in this goal. Whether the EU still has the institutional potential to create and formalize a new and solid consideration of rights, remains an open question. Concerning its basic and declared arguments on legitimation and justification – as a guarantor of peace, free mobility of people and goods, liberty and democracy – it becomes a question of responsibility by all its actors and agencies, and their accountability in the case of failure.

SUMMARY

The angel of history, *Angelus Novus*, brings back to mind the story of Walter Benjamin, who committed suicide after his failed attempt to cross the border between France and Spain illegally, on 16 September 1940, escaping from the Nazis. Today, as in the past, the legal international and European guarantees of human and humanitarian rights are not sufficient to safeguard escaping humanity, and to prevent our neighbours from being turned into strangers, or even enemies (Beck 1999; Rumford 2016). There were so many lessons to learn from the history of the Yugoslav Wars in the 1990s: about bordering, ordering and othering; about boundaries and forced migrations; about grave lack of wisdom in the agency of political conflict solution and devices, on the EU and the international scales. It was the first violent sign that the fall of the Berlin Wall and of the communist regimes did not mean that democratic transition and Europeanization were the only alternatives. Research on borders and migration is not only a matter of refugee protection, or of welcoming and integrating migrants, but above all it is a matter of the society we aspire to become, where people will be 'likely to flourish' and 'can rebuild a meaningful social world' (Gibney 2015, in Bauböck 2018b: 145).

As a border-crossing community of critical sociologists with 'original passion for a better world' (Burawoy 2005: 5), we should insist on discussing publicly the re-definition of individual political rights in order to give political relevance to every human being as a subject of rights, and as a citizen of world society (Brunkhorst 2005). We should offer our specific knowledge to create policies and institutional devices able to guarantee the human, social and civic rights of migrants and refugees in a new consideration of citizenship based on dignity and

reciprocity. And in doing this, reinforce the democratic strength of resistance to the new wave of authoritarian and totalitarian tendencies spreading through European societies. I propose a step forward: we should formulate several normative claims in this field, claims that need interdisciplinary critical public action in which each type of sociological knowledge identified by Burawoy – professional, critical, public and policy-oriented – would have a specific role. The first might be the claim to provide norms on the right to share vital resources, the right to which no one must be denied.

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16. Local/urban democracy and citizenship

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses local democracy and urban citizenship. The focus is on European cities: they have been for centuries the locus of civitas. Civitas is the body of self-organized local inhabitants acting collectively as citizens and regularly claiming a say in local institutions. Max Weber's portrait of the European city saw local bourgeoisies as revolutionary forces able to establish new, self-governed associations of citizens (Weber, 1982 [1921]). Many cities of pre-modern Europe harboured civic organizations financially independent from local authorities that advanced their collective interests. Moreover, in some of these cities religious confraternities raised funds for local welfare and in most of them there were stable poor relief obligations (Prak, 2018, 297–298). Citizen involvement in the local polity was favoured by the social proximity that characterized urban life, their common economic interests and their political aspirations (Tilly, 1995, 8). This collective involvement at times produced changes in local regulations of taxes, uses of urban space and access to resources. These changes affected the distribution of local power. In modern times civic agency has furthered political participation and the articulation of claims by organized citizens (Tilly and Blockmans, 1994). In sum, the participation of citizens in their civic capacity forms part of the historical democratization of cities.

The European city as an ideal type and manifestation of local democracy has existed in many different versions and has served as a reference for analysis. Robert Dahl (1967) evoked the virtues of the Greek *polis* for his problematization of local democracy in large cities in the United States. He referred to the *polis*, with its relatively small size that ensured opportunities for direct participation of its citizens, where friendship, extended families and citizenship blended and where the quest for community and solidarity could be realized. Writing about contemporary cities, Dahl was aware of the possibility and the limitations of direct participation of citizens in important matters. He rightly points to the difficulty for cities and their citizens to solve problems that outstrip their level, such as the global environmental crisis (the same goes for the Covid-19 pandemic health crisis). Dahl foresaw that neither cities nor nation-states, nor for that matter supranational regions, could solve such issues of great relevance, and imagined collaborations between governments at different levels. Today's scholarship on multilevel governance is rich and offers considerable nuances which go beyond the focus of this contribution (Enderlein et al., 2010). More central to this chapter is Dahl's insight about the opportunities and limitations of citizen participation in local democracy.

Dahl pointed out some of the difficulties of governing large and heterogeneous cities. He saw both external and internal factors that condition democratic participation in cities. Firstly, there is high mobility, with frequent recent arrivals of new residents whose socialization in the political life of the city requires civic democratic education as well as learning how city governance functions. Secondly, there is the plurality of loyalties, identities and interests that citizens and residents in general have in contemporary cities. The expectations of common

loyalty to the city as an all-inclusive 'political community' has been questioned through ample scholarship ever since the studies of the Chicago School. As Albert O. Hirschman (1970) points out, in political dynamics 'loyalty' delays the use of 'voice', because citizens maintain expectations for improvement in the delivery of promises by government agents and institutions. When political representatives and policymakers fail expectations, citizens will use their voice and may eventually exit. In today's debates on the strength of democratic institutions the participation of citizens and the quality of local democracy deserve attention.

From the perspective of the institution of citizenship, the effective performance of local democracy involves: (1) the constitution of mechanisms of legal belonging that regulate membership and confer rights and entitlements, such as political participation; (2) the autonomy to decide on full membership and political participation (Faist, 2019; Clarke, 2012, 654); (3) some level of loyalty among citizens and new residents to effectively participate in political decisions over important matters that concern their wellbeing; and (4) a non-exclusionary public sphere open to innovative participatory practices. Of the four requirements, the first two involve the decisions of higher national governments and parliaments. The last two offer ample room to local institutional actors and civil society to improve the quality of local democracy and urban citizenship.

Another take on local democracy is to focus on the process of democratization in cities. The expansion of democratization processes all over the world is widely recognized (Diamond, 2012). The emphasis on the process of democratization rather than on the outcomes of local democracy effectively recognizes the difficulties of effective democracy. The democratization process gains significance as we consider the expansion of citizenship. Citizenship aspirations reflect and can translate into specific political projects. Historically, class identity and collective action were major factors in advancing social citizenship. Workers' movements led the drive for democratization since the 1800s.

In the classic work of T.H. Marshall (1950), with emphasis on the status of the citizen, the evolutionary character of citizenship accompanies democratization. In this work the granting of political rights through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in England was a consequence of the concessions of rights of freedom in the previous century. These new political rights were then exercised to confront existing concentrations of power. In this more 'inclusionary' polity it became possible to acquire social entitlements. One example was the Factories Acts (enacted 1833–78) which limited the hours that women and children could work in textile factories, passed by the British Parliament (Moos, 2021).

Citizenship is an equalizing force if we look at the status of the citizen (Marshall, 1950). The legal frame for inclusion becomes important in this respect, and explaining citizenship then involves identifying the exclusionary borders (Bosniak, 2017). Some studies have opted to explore those practices of citizenship which can lead to undoing existing closures of legal citizenship (Isin, 2000; García, 2006). These practices sometimes emanate from the status of being a citizen, and in other instances – as Sassen (2006, 65) points out – are expressions of those who are at the margins of the institution of citizenship. The incorporation of 'enactment' of citizenship serves to highlight social practices of citizenship in the dynamic process of the expansion of the institution of citizenship in cities. Isin and Saward (2013) suggest that instead of seeing citizens as recipients of citizenship rights, we should look at the contribution of citizens who through their acts help to enact citizenship in general. Citizenship becomes more inclusive as a result of new civic struggles; which are, basically, claims for equality, membership and participation.

Citizenship in this chapter includes those citizen practices that create opportunities for democratization of local institutions. It is in the local public sphere that local democracy manifests itself and urban citizenship develops. The agency involved in urban citizenship has become increasingly diverse not only because of the heterogeneity of urban populations but also through an increasing variety of issues around which social actors are engaged in 'enacting' citizenship. This diversification can lead to fragmentation of demands and to difficulties in maintaining socially heterogeneous organized citizens centred around important common issues (Della Porta and Diani, 2015; Blokland et al., 2015). Has the expansion of citizen participation in cities contributed to the improvement of local democracy? In what follows, I reflect on this question.

The central argument is that the combination of agency, opportunity structures for participation, and available instruments conditions the quality of local democracy and the realization of citizenship in cities. Firstly, citizens' agency contributes to the 'enactment' of citizenship by introducing new issues in the local public sphere (García, 2006; Isin and Nielsen, 2008; García Cabeza et al., 2020, 1–24). Secondly, the quality and effectiveness of civic organizations and local communities, and their capacity to have a say in the governance of each city, partly depends on the opportunity structures present in the local and the national polities in each country. There are both common and specific local cultures of local democracy and participatory processes in the European region. Thirdly, the institutions of urban citizenship include mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion. Who is entitled to what in cities is not only mediated by who participates in public debates, but also requires the participants to know how, through familiarity with resources and instruments, participation can be made effective rather than remaining symbolic. Lastly, however, there are limitations to what local institutions of citizenship can achieve in a multilevel governance framework.

In this chapter I look first at some interrelated aspects of local democracy and citizenship highlighting the central role of civil society. Next, I review recent historical scholarship on local citizenship before the French Revolution to show continuities in urban Europe. Then, I draw on contemporary analysis of urban citizenship and on the potential of citizen practices for institutionalising local/urban citizenship. The conclusions show how research on local democracy and urban citizenship may inspire public sociology.

LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND URBAN CITIZENSHIP

The democratic process relies on individuals or groups having the power to participate in the political process. Citizen participation, therefore, lies at the heart of democracy. Unless citizens can participate freely in the government process, democracy is not possible. In the world of ideas, advocacy for local democracy is found in nineteenth century liberal thought. J.S. Mill, for example, argued that 'local democracy not only provides greater opportunities for political participation but also that it is an instrument of social inclusion' (in Pratchett, 2004, 358). For Mill the local institutions of democracy allow for acquiring education and practices in political skills. Mill's focus on representative democracy requires that institutional designs be conducive to citizen participation. These designs have traditionally been associated with local arenas of decision-making.

Participatory innovations in local governments and local governance dynamics have been recognized by scholarship which has emphasized the opportunities offered by institutional

design for participatory democracy (Pratchett, 2004; Stoker, 2006). These studies describe the active role of citizens in local spaces of democratization, whether through their membership in civic organizations and routinized practices, or in innovative social movements. Authors use the term 'citizen participation' to avoid any misunderstanding about role of the participant – as a citizen, a civil servant or a member of a political party – but the term 'political participation' also refers to non-professional activity (Aström, 2019). 'Citizen participation' here means social action (agency) that builds the 'institution' of urban citizenship, and in doing so contributes to the democratization of the local arena. The next subsection looks at some opportunities and limitations of local representative democracy, forms of participatory democracy, and urban citizenship.

Local Representative Democracy in European Cities: Creating Opportunities for Participation

Europe has many large metropolitan cities and yet most Europeans live distributed in a large number of small and medium-sized cities, characterized by stability and fairly close to each other. European cities have relatively low population mobility and high social cohesion, helped by consistent provision of public services (Häussermann and Haila, 2005, 52–53; Servillo et al., 2017; Servillo et al., 2012). European cities have become a laboratory for reshaping the political in Europe (Le Galès, 2002). History seems to repeat itself. The ancient Greek city as a political community placed the male members of the *polis* at the centre of democracy and citizenship. The Republic of Rome granted the citizens of Rome a privileged status, and thereby constituted the first representative democracy. In the medieval city-state (Weber, 1982 [1921]) representative bodies emerged as well as an autonomous civil society organized in corporations that played an important role in self-governing political institutions. The splendid civic gothic architecture in many European cities still testifies to this. Although today's local democracy is mediated, to some extent, by European multilevel governance, internally the cities of Europe combine relative local autonomy with representative democratic participation and participatory direct democracy. A distinction is often made between active citizens and those who do not organize, but 'representative democracy requires the active participation of citizens whether in elections or by other means' (Le Galès, 2002, 237).

Representative local democracy has seen innovation, due in part to active citizens and active residents. It is at local elections that new political parties are more likely to enter into electoral competition, and that new coalitions form before entering the national political arena. This is partly because winning elections at the local level is often more feasible (Clark and Krebs, 2012, 88–89), but also because social proximity and common experiences generate common identities that are powerful motives to join in political mobilization (Nicholls, 2008, 4–7). The constituencies of local elections have widened to incorporate new members of foreign origin. Residents in cities who are citizens of other European Union (EU) member states can stand for election and can vote in local elections, after the introduction of the 'Citizen of the Union' or European citizenship.[1] Residents from third countries in the territory of the Union can vote in local elections in many EU countries, although they are still excluded in 12 countries.[2]

Political participation in municipal elections is highly significant, although arguably incomplete as a measure of citizen participation in local democracy. Local elections give citizens a degree of control over the elected representatives. Citizens can exercise some control over the fulfilment of election promises by leaders of political parties when called to new elections.

Moreover, the levels of citizen participation in elections provide legitimacy to the elected politicians and to their policies. For example, the declining turnout in local elections, particularly of young citizens, calls into question the standing of individual politicians and political parties. A study in the United Kingdom, France, Spain, Austria, Finland and Hungary found that young people, although willing to engage politically, are turned off by the focus and nature of existing mainstream political discourse and practices, which many believe ignore their needs and interests (Cammaerts et al., 2014).

Local election turnout in European cities presents large variations. In the United Kingdom, it is consistently between 30 and 40 per cent, with the London boroughs scoring highest. In Ireland, it was 51 per cent between 1967 and 2014. In Spain, a consistent proportion of around 65 per cent participated in local elections between 1983 and 2015, with turnout varying from year to year. In the Netherlands, turnout has tended to decrease, from 59 per cent in 1998 to 55 per cent in 2018. Turnout in Italy shows a slight decrease, from around 70 per cent to 68 per cent in the 2014–19 period. In French local elections, turnout has tended to decrease: from 74 per cent in 1959 to 63 per cent in 2014. One has to bear in mind that some variation is due to an occasional coincidence in the national and local elections' voting dates, which encourages higher participation. Two important factors influencing turnout are the political culture, and the level of decentralization of public policy. In relation to the participation culture in elections, the average turnout in national elections in Belgium, Germany and Sweden is over 80 per cent; whereas in Switzerland it is 46 per cent. In those countries, participation in national and local election varies in concert. When there is a high disparity between turnout in national and in local elections, the explanation lies somewhere else. In the United Kingdom the average participation in national elections is 62 per cent, over 25 points higher than in local elections. In this case the major explanatory factor is the limited power local administrations have in commanding public resources and implementing public programmes.

In Europe, as in other parts of the world, citizens refrain from participation in local elections either because they do not feel represented or because their concerns are not taken into account in the political agenda. Other factors may be considered. Clark and Krebs (2012) have pointed out the relevance of education and income to the understanding of citizen participation through representative democracy. Those with high and medium levels of education and income participate in larger proportions in local elections, while citizens who reside in low-income sections of cities often do not vote. This 'exit' from participation in local elections is due partly because local power is deemed to be in the hands of elites or interest groups with no direct connection to them or the issues that are relevant to their lives. On the other hand, Clark and Krebs found that responsiveness is higher when local leaders establish mechanisms of communication with community leaders, and a visible number of representatives from these communities are integrated in the city councils. Taking as a reference participation in local elections in the United States of America (USA), Clark and Krebs (2012, 108) indicate that participation increased among minorities when they perceived the presence of members of their communities in the local power institutions.

In the USA the presence of leaders and activists from minorities and from non-dominant social groups in local political bodies increased political representation, partly through the practice of quotas of presentation for minorities and groups traditionally excluded from political citizenship (women and migrants). In Europe, scholarship shows a less homogeneous picture. A study in Norway reveals that the introduction of quotas had a limited impact on women's representation in local councils, and on the probability of a female mayor. The

authors of the study also found no consistent evidence for shifts in public policies due to increased representation of women in positions with executive powers (Geys and Sørensen, 2019). A contrasting example in Spain conveys that councils with women mayors had higher expenditure on security, protection, and programmes to support equal opportunities for women in the labour market and youth services to enhance their civic and employent inclusion (Hernández-Nicolás et al., 2018). Two caveats concerning local democracy and political representation are in order. First, the presence of representatives from minorities does not ensure the discussion of issues affecting those minorities. Democracy requires more than presence: it requires deliberation, autonomy and accountability (Phillips, 1995). Second, the representation of groups in decision-making bodies, and the distribution of power in European cities, need to include welfare institutions as these are important bodies of redistribution of power and wealth.

In sum, representative local democracy covers a wider field than just participation in local elections and institutional bodies. Citizens' institutional political participation also occurs through local budget forums, party membership and signing petitions. To maintain or improve legitimacy and the loyalty of the citizens, local power holders have diversified spaces for participation on local issues, promoted 'citizen conferences', or set up meeting points that facilitate signing a petition. Local authorities organize participation in consultations, sometimes in the form of referenda, for the different policy areas or on measures concerning infrastructure. New instruments have been designed to make participation, in the wider sense, easier and more attractive.

Institutional political participation is confronted with a paradox noted by Robert Dahl (1967). Decisions can rely on representative democracy concerning crucial issues, whereas at the same time there can be wide participation concerning numerous issues of little consequence. Local leaders need to convince citizens that their active participation in local representative democracy is effective rather than symbolic. For analytical purposes, three questions may be asked: (1) To what extent does formal participation involve having a say in important matters in the governance of each city? (2) What opportunities exist to participate on equal terms (legally) in decision-making? (3) Does the governance design of institutions and programmes permit and facilitate participation through accessible mechanisms in the design and implementation of local policies? (Heinelt, 2012, 231–237).

Participation

In recent decades authors following the Tocquevillian and communitarian ideas have stressed that there is something to gain by using the approach of 'civic engagement' instead of political participation. Some have argued that the boundaries between civic and political engagement are not always clear. The American Political Science Association has come to agree that 'civic engagement includes any activity, individual or collective, devoted to the collective life of the polity' (Van Deth, 2014, 352).

There are different kinds of civic engagement. One is civic participation in issues that concern community welfare. In cities, neighbourhood associations exist created by the local inhabitants with the aim of having a say in territorial planning affecting their neighbourhoods, whether it is affordable social housing or street safety, for example. As Moulaert (2009) explains, at the neighbourhood scale, problems of deterioration and restructuring are more immediately experienced and agents responsible for them are more readily identifiable, and it is at this level, too, that alternatives are constituted. A sound method is the engagement in

social activism and social innovation. I will return to the question of expanding modes of civic engagement and 'acts of citizenship' that can be part of the life of the local polity or, for that matter, of the increasing repertoire of political activities in cities.

Opportunities

The question of the opportunity structures for participation offered by local political power in Europe goes beyond the participation of citizens and of denizens. Local societies are not only characterized by high social heterogeneity, but they are also the site of highly fragmented organized interests through differences in social class, ethnicity, cultural values, and so on. Moreover, the highly variable nature of civic incorporation strictly conditions rights and entitlements in some cities; whereas in others the wide network of civic organizations and their high level of institutionalization offers venues for civic participation to non-legal citizens while local welfare institutions provide entitlements to them.

With regard to political participation of immigrants and third-country nationals, research has shown that there are variations from city to city, within and across countries. In the German cities Berlin and Frankfurt there were more opportunities for immigrant participation in the shape of claims for citizenship than in cities such as Munich, Stuttgart and Cologne. Adding cities from the Netherlands and the United Kingdom showed higher opportunities for participation in Utrecht, Leeds, Greater London, Rotterdam and Amsterdam. In these cities Koopmans (2004, 451–452) observed higher access to the local policy process.

Welfare implementation

The political (governance) design of local institutions varies from country to country (Goldsmith and Page, 2010). There are variations among cities in how access to institutions and participatory democracy operates. One difference is the decentralization of welfare implementation to localities. For example, in Scandinavian countries social democratic welfare redistribution was quick to develop. 'Welfare institutions and local democratic institutions became closely interwoven through public or user participation and various kinds of boards. Participation became one of the institutions that extended and combined political democracy and social citizenship' (Villadsen, 1993, 43). Participation in boards, direct consultations with citizens, and other forms of participation associated with the design, allocation and implementation of services, have served in these and in other countries to develop local democracy. With the neo-liberal turn of the 1990s, a European trend to 'disengagement of the state' from the direct provision of in-kind services, in favour of outsourcing or cash transfers, involved a 'horizontal re-shuffling of responsibility' in which third-sector organizations and the private sector have gained space of action, and with encouragement of recommunitarization (Martinelli, 2017).

A governance design that claims to be open to citizen participation in the provision of policies requires the introduction of instruments that often imply modifying objectives, accepting new conceptualizations, changing regulations and legitimizing new ways of governing. There is more involved in this process than the application of technical expertise to participation mechanisms. New instruments are needed not only to integrate new and more diverse actors in the implementation of policy, but also to put into practice new concepts to frame policy (Lascoumes and Le Galès, 2007).

Participatory Democracy: Citizens, Urban Communities and Civic Engagement – A Path Dependency in the Making of Urban Citizenship?

First of all, in European cities local democracy relies on institutions, regulations and mechanisms of participation built over the centuries, although not necessarily in a continuously progressive trajectory. There are solid arguments and scholarship defending the origin and growth of local democratization and urban citizenship in pre-modern times (Prak, 2018). Historical discontinuities exist because the formation of nation-states in the modern period contributed to weakening the political capacity of local citizen organizations, or because democratic institutions were suspended in non-democratic periods. Furthermore, the architecture and agency of local democracy were not only built by local (and to some extent national) elites and power holders: local citizens organized in civic organizations, operating as corporations or in spatial community associations (neighbourhoods), had an important role in the constitution and transformation of local democracy.

Cities have a long history as the primary locus of individual and collective allegiance and integration into a polity. Local democracy through citizen practices and citizenship as a municipal institution existed throughout Europe, well before the watershed events of the United States independence and the French Revolution introduced constitutional democracy. Historical scholarship on local communities, particularly in Europe, has shown that citizens were involved in local governance through collective organization and were able to avert a monopoly of power of the local oligarchy. How was this possible? Citizen practices in cities provided the muscle for their involvement in municipal regulations, corporate agreements and local welfare, and so created a more solid citizenship institution than any formal status recognition could.

In pre-modern cities citizens organized basically through the guilds, in their neighbourhoods, and by joining the militias, as Max Weber (1982 [1921]) explained. In a major historical contribution, Maarten Prak (2018, 67) shows that by 1500 almost two-thirds of Europe's largest towns had formal institutions for citizenship representation. In his analysis he shows and argues, firstly, that those local civic and communal organizations were more democratic than is sometimes recognized, because they extended their membership to broad sectors of the local middle classes. This extended membership gave them a strong position when it came to the selection of officers, and to the decisions taken by them. Secondly, guilds, neighbourhood organizations and militias were an integral part of local governance, which means that they were recognized as legitimate actors. And thirdly, the three types of organizations were complemented by popular instruments of participation, such as lobbying and petitions (ibid., 71–80).

There is, of course, the issue of how far their participation stretched. The urban councils of medieval cities in Europe were dominated by elite families who made sure that the entrance mechanisms to decision-making bodies would consolidate their position. In many cities formal mechanisms existed to ensure time limits for power holding by a particular family. In a similar vein, the guilds have often been portrayed as closed corporatist organizations. However, the guilds had developed more than one path of membership in relation to the local polity and local society. In some cities, candidates to become a guild member had to be formal citizens; in others it was guild membership that conferred citizenship. There were exclusionary principles and mechanisms, of course, such as those that affected women. Not to have a skill or money could impede membership. Also, guilds discriminated against religious minorities.

Counter-examples exist, such as the large presence of women in some craft guilds in specific cities. Most relevant was the stabilizing role that guilds had for cities through their involvement in the collection of taxes, in fire services and jury duty, which contributed to cohesiveness in the life of the locality. Similarly, the guilds acted to provide support for the cohesion of the local communities through financing elements of social assistance. The involvement of guilds, voluntary donors and religious confraternities in welfare, and the contributions of municipalities, also confirm that local citizenship was a general feature in pre-modern times in Europe (Prak, 2018, 130–138).

The formality of local citizenship in pre-modern times is relevant to current debates, as will be seen in the next section. Prak's central thesis is that by keeping the institution of citizenship –from 1000 to 1800 – free from legal and national constraints, cities, particularly in Europe, included wider groups than the elites and corporations in a web of extended social and political practices in the local polity (ibid., 297–298). Even so, a further point needs to be made. Tamar Herzog (2020, 95) agrees with Prak in that local citizenship was often assumed by performance rather than by formal declaration. But she connects informal attachment to the local polity to the legal acquisition of citizenship. In her study of Spain, she found that citizenship depended on attachment to the local community, up until modern times. This attachment could be demonstrated in various ways (local residence, marriage to a local person, ownership of real estate, paying taxes or serving in the militia). These affiliations generated citizenship locally and beyond. 'Spanish municipal corporations were charged with implementing most royal policies' (such as collecting taxes), but also 'Iberian municipal bodies expressed grievances, received concessions and pressed for reforms' (ibid., 93).

In her research Herzog found that formal declarations of membership, although they existed, did not make people citizens. But they were a matter of proving legal registration. In fact, formal declaration could help individuals and communities in showing who was who. She gives an account of the vitality of the local corporations and the importance of local citizenship (local belonging and local identification). Early modern Spain elevated local citizenship by making it an essential prerequisite to obtain rights and privileges in what was becoming a national political community. She concluded that in Spain national citizenship continued to be tied to municipal adhesion in modern times. Thus, formality of citizenship was obtained from municipal institutions which, rather than acting to constitute citizens, simply recognized their pre-existence. It was also the prerogative of municipal authorities to declare who was a citizen. Such demonstration of membership was resorted to when challenged (Herzog, 2020, 96–99).

These two historically based analyses highlight a crooked path dependency stretching from pre-modern times, through the transition to modernity, to contemporary expressions of bottom-up social and political practices that constitute the scaffolding and the cement of local citizenship and democracy.

Contemporary Urban Citizenship

From a legal perspective the supremacy of national legislation in determining who is a citizen, and thereby establishing the criteria for inclusion and exclusion in the national political community, has relegated municipalities to the role of executors of national immigration policies. This has somewhat demoted the important role of local political inclusion and local democracy. But the turn towards decentralization of policies and multilevel governance in

many policy areas, particularly in welfare provision, has contributed to a redefinition of the contours of citizenship and to greater salience of urban citizenship. The configuration of locally implemented entitlements is also a process that can originate in localities. Charles Tilly (1995) emphasizes citizenship advances in modern claims-based politics whose main actors have been social movements. Some consensus has emerged in defining citizenship 'as a social process through which individuals and social groups engage in claiming, expanding and losing rights' (Isin and Turner, 2002, 4). In the process of enacting citizenship and widening participation, cities are crucial. That is where citizenship practices (García, 2006) and 'acts of citizenship' are created and reproduced (Isin and Nielsen, 2008).

The central element of urban citizenship is the linkage between citizenship and residence rather than sharing a national identity, as shown in the previous section. Daily life is where citizenship is experienced and where opportunities for participation and claiming rights can be exercised (García, 2006; Baübock, 2003). Urban communities and organized citizens become enablers of citizenship rights, acting as innovators in developing initiatives. Such actors can organize and define alternative ways of providing social programmes, and go beyond activism to incorporate 'bottom-linked' practices into social policies (Pradel Miquel et al., 2020). Bottom-linked practices link bottom-up activism and community action to local institutions.

Urban citizenship practices sometimes spread to other cities when actors who defend citizen opportunities and rights operate in a multilevel governance environment within a country or in the European arena. An example of the latter is the Solidarity City network (Kron and Lebuhn, 2020). The opportunities given by specific local and regional governments that integrate the participation of citizens as new actors in the deployment of social benefits can redefine the relationship between governance and citizenship.

Urban citizenship can be seen as a process in which the cumulative effect of 'acts of citizenship' can lead to new social rights for 'outsiders' who are incorporated in society through new forms of participation (Isin, 2000; Isin and Nielsen, 2008; García, 2006; Isin and Saward, 2013). Often, this process involves organized contestation against the limitations to the exercise of citizenship (culturally, socially or politically) by national regulations. An example of such pushback occurred when widespread protests broke out in many large European cities around 2011, following the 2008 economic and financial crisis and the subsequent austerity policies that jeopardized the life chances of large numbers of citizens. This was particularly the case in the cities of Southern European countries, since the changes in their regulatory systems (financial and national) negatively affected the social entitlements of many citizens (García Cabeza et al., 2020, 1–24).

One constraining factor of urban citizenship concerns the difficulties in achieving a coherent urban citizenship programme in cities given the fragmentation of bottom-up claims reflecting the different socially organized interests and social agendas of urban movements (Blokland et al., 2015). Social claims and urban policy strategies over citizenship issues often differ between cities within the same country according to specific local citizenship and integration regimes, because each urban governance regime offers a specific political opportunity structure for integrating claims (Koopmans, 2004). These variations – affecting civil society and the policy choices of local institutions – reinforce the importance of contextualizing and articulating urban citizenship with city governance. However, city variations conducive to fragmenting rather than reinforcing the equalizing capacity of social citizenship within countries could be overcome when the actions of citizens contribute to legal reforms that affect all citizens of a country, and not only some cities, as the next section will show.

ACTS OF CITIZENSHIP, BOTTOM-LINKED CITIZEN PRACTICES AND LOCAL DEMOCRATIZATION

In this chapter political participation has been loosely defined as citizens' activities affecting politics. Participation enables citizens to evolve their capacities, to articulate their demands and to legitimize decisions. 'The repertoire of political activities included in local citizen participation has expanded considerably, and by now, the list is virtually infinite' (ranging from voting and signing a petition, to joining an occasional street demonstration) (Van Deth, 2021).

Citizenship building is a dynamic process with advances and setbacks in individual and collective rights and entitlements, often requiring political struggles. The process of enactment of citizenship is context-related and involves social and political action that can be seen as 'acts of citizenship'. Such acts of citizenship represent people's need to be heard; they are irreducible political struggles that arise in social life (Isin and Saward, 2013, 22); they are ruptures in the established order, and from these ruptures new realities – different from the established ones – are conceived. To analyse these acts permits us to identify new social and political actors, new ways of acting and new spaces of participatory democracy. Acts of citizenship are defined as: 'those acts that transform forms (orientations, strategies, technologies) and ways of being political (citizens, strangers, outsiders, aliens) by bringing new actors into existence as "activist citizens" (that is, rights claimants) through the creation or transformation of "sites" and "scales"' (Isin, 2009, 383).

The political involvement of residents in cities becomes visible in the emergence of new 'sites' in institutions, courts, streets, media, networks; where 'acts' – voting, volunteering, blogging, protesting, resisting and organizing – take place over time in the struggles for citizenship. The scales at which these acts occur can be the neighbourhood, the city, the region or the national public sphere. Through their 'acts', 'actors' transform themselves and others from subjects to citizens claiming rights (civil, political, social, sexual, ecological, cultural) (Isin, 2009, 368). Thus, rights, sites, scales, acts and actors are elements that constitute a body politic (Isin, 2009, 372). Through this conceptualization of citizenship dynamics, Isin and Nielsen (2008, 38) make an analytical distinction between the 'active citizen' and the 'activist citizen'. The latter are the more creative, as they contribute to the creation of new spaces and practices of citizenship.

Citizen practices in cities have also been identified as socially creative initiatives. These practices can originate in communities, civil society groups or within social movements in cities (Moulaert et al., 2013; García Cabeza et al., 2020). Seen through the lens of social innovation, bottom-linked governance of civic groups can serve to advance urban citizenship and local democracy. Bottom-linked governance is defined as 'new forms of democratic governance collaboratively built between social innovation initiatives and activists, their scalarly dynamic networks and state institutions and agencies' (Moulaert and MacCallum, 2019, Ch. 4). Bottom-linked cooperation can consolidate organized citizens' innovative initiatives, and at the same time influence and/or modify local orientation in social policy and governance.

Studies on the impact of social innovation initiatives in cities have shown that active members of communities and civic groups develop new strategies and ways to exercise solidarity, and that sometimes their organizations mobilize wider sectors of the local society to pressure local institutions into introducing welfare programmes, and national parliaments into adopting legislative changes affecting social citizenship (García, 2019; Pradel Miquel et al., 2020). This bottom-linked governance perspective has shown that there are forms of collabo-

ration between social innovation actors and local administrations that can contribute to democratization of local institutions. Often local institutions will adopt bottom-up citizen practices without creating interactive spaces of cooperation. But there may be instances in which difficult negotiations happen to work out these new spaces, which often require new instruments (Lascoumes and Le Galès, 2007). However, the attempts to arrive at bottom-linked governance and bottom-linked social innovation by citizens and local administrations provide room for transforming democratic institutions through co-creation, co-learning and negotiation, and in the process shape the reinstitutionalization of relationships between state and civil society (Moulaert et al., 2019).

FINAL REFLECTIONS

This chapter has looked at the association between local democracy and the expansion of urban citizenship in the European city. Cities in Europe have been the sites of social agency since the formation of the ancient *polis*. Citizens have created collective organizations that expanded the institution of citizenship locally, and by doing this democratized local institutions. In pre-modern times the manifestations of social agency in Europe took the form of pressure from guilds and neighbourhood organizations, and of civic associations and activism in modern and contemporary periods. Moreover, urban citizenship has gained salience with globalization and the intensification of transnational population flows. Whereas national citizenship represents legal rights and obligations protected and guaranteed by formal institutions, urban citizenship constitutes a wider field of action in which a central role is occupied by civic organizations and by direct participation in community and neighbourhood projects. The ample variety of spaces of participation in cities generates social and political pressures to lend urban citizenship legitimacy.

Urban citizenship gained ground as citizen practices interacted with institutions. In pre-modern centuries some of these interactions were instrumental in ensuring fair taxation and in implementing policies of social assistance. With the advent of decentralized welfare state policies, civic organizations and local institutions have cooperated in various ways with room for innovation in the co-production of policies. Finally, other initiatives have emerged from the innovative capacity of civic organizations to create alternative ways to provide services and extend solidarity to members of communities. Some of these organizations have taken part in bottom-linked governance. All these organizations have their own peculiarities and cultures of membership. They have mainly shown loyalty to the local polity, and by doing so have contributed to some extent and in different capacities and shapes to the democratization of the city. These dynamics of loyalty may have delayed the use of voice, following Hirschman.

Local democracy has also gained from the strand of urban citizenship that does use voice from citizens and denizens. Many studies describe the conquest of new spaces of participation separate from institutions in European cities. These are examples of 'acts of citizenship' in which activists engage in political action to modify social and political realities, and in the process enhance citizenship by claiming new rights. In this conceptualization urban citizenship is wider than its legal framework. At one time the strength of working-class movements in cities, characterized by homogeneity of culture and class, achieved social change. We now see a modern version of this agency. But now, failures of market integration, fragmentation of

economic interests, cultural identities and plurality of adscriptions result in a jumble of processes of local democratization. Only as a result of exceptional outbursts of crises –economic, health, social or ecological – do radical social movements spring up and force social changes.

We have seen that participation of citizens in local democracy is fundamental to its vitality. Whether citizens participate in local elections, or through the different political and civic organizations, they reaffirm the legitimacy of the local polity. The declining participation of sectors of the population is not just an 'exit' option, but should equally be seen as social and political exclusion. To avoid non-participation, local institutions may need to look at the opportunity structures offered for the participation of city residents, both citizens and denizens.

Research on local democracy and urban citizenship may inspire public sociology because it focuses on the agency capacity of residents and on their specific actions in the local public sphere. Historically, local civic actors have contributed to local governance in different ways according to the specific circumstances and issues at hand. A general feature of the agency capacity of urban organized residents is their potential to enact citizenship and become a political force by creating new spaces of participation. Urban civic and community organizations have confronted local institutions and negotiated with them the opening-up of mechanisms for participation. In turn, local institutions have shown receptivity by creating opportunity structures to channel voice and to inspire loyalty in the governance of cities. Sociologists actively engaged in public issues may remember that many locally born social movements have eventually found echoes in national and international public spheres, and have thereby contributed to social change.

A final consideration for public sociological debates concerns the opportunities that civic organizations provide for local democracy, and towards building knowledge in co-production with academics. The knowledge accumulated by residents through their practices and political agency as active members of society should not be neglected.

NOTES

1. Article 8 (1) of the Maastricht Treaty (1992) stated: 'Every person holding the nationality of a Member State shall be a citizen of the Union'. This was followed by specific rights such as: the right to move and reside freely within the territory of the member states; the right to vote or stand for election in municipal elections and European elections for those citizens residing in member states of which they are not nationals; the right to petition the European Parliament; the right to appeal to the Union Ombudsman and the right to diplomatic or consular protection by any member state when EU citizens find themselves in the territory of a third country.
2. Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Poland and Romania.

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17. Associationalism: the past, present, and future of public sociology

Bruno Frère and Jean-Louis Laville

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter we would like to take stock of the highly controversial public sociology and its organic turn proposed by Burawoy. For some, it is a salutary renewal of the sociological approach, which they believe to be engulfed in an outdated positivist representation of the social world. For others, it is a veritable destruction of the scientific basis of the approach. Either way, much ink has been spilled about public sociology over the last 20 years. For our part, we would like to adopt a nuanced position. There is no doubt that public sociology today brings a breath of fresh air to sociology. Like pragmatic sociology under the aegis of authors such as Boltanski, or Appadurai in the field of cultural studies, public sociology seeks to restore to actors their reflexive capacities and their ability to intervene in the public sphere. Just like the critical sociologist, they are capable of calling into question institutions and the established order in a "specific and situated" way, even if their social conditions are humble and precarious (Borghi, 2015, pp. 105, 111). This is why researchers and actors can work together within the collectives they form to define common political positions to be put forward in the public sphere.

That said, public sociology is, in our opinion, only part of a much older proposal in the history of sociology: the associationalist proposal. Indeed, as will be seen in this chapter, the leitmotif of public sociology—which aims to bring sociologists and laypeople into association with one another in order to make common claims—has long been supported by various currents of thought and various methodologies. After outlining public sociology's main ambitions, we discuss participatory investigations, socio-analysis and intervention collectives, which we believe embody similar approaches in France, Canada, and Latin America.

We then go into some depth about this synthetic perspective, which we call "associationalist," by delving into the 19th century, and by looking more specifically at Proudhon, a precursor of French sociology. By studying his conception of common sense and of workers' and laypeople's knowledge, we will see that sociological approaches such as his—which were marginalized early on by Comte's positivism and then Durkheim's distanced objectivism—largely prefigured all of the "public" perspectives of the "organic" type mentioned above. Finally, we stress the point—a point that is iconoclastic when viewed through the epistemology of the social sciences dominant in the 20th century, but salutary at the beginning of the 21st—common to all of these proposals: the vocation of sociological science is not to abandon political stances. Rather, its ambition is to support and help to shape critical representations and instituting practices that exist among civil society actors, by associating itself more readily with dominated collectives—such as the working class in the 19th century—than with dominant ones.

PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY: A COLLECTIVE ENGAGEMENT CRITICAL OF INSTITUTIONS

Michael Burawoy is generally considered to be the last great theorist of public sociology. He is generally known for the organic twist that he gave to it, explicitly rooting it in a Marxist perspective. Indeed, if we believe that what Burawoy calls public sociology refers to the work of authors who publish in newspapers and appear in the media on current affairs—or to offer reflections that popularize their work in order to make it accessible to the general public—then a great many intellectuals can be described as "public." A typical example is Bourdieu, or Sartre in philosophy. But Burawoy believes that today this relationship to the public should be radicalized by assisting social and political movements. Although he calls for an intellectual turn that would revive what he sees as the golden age of public sociology, he is also careful to demarcate his own project within this movement. While 20th century sociology was ultimately a "traditional" form of public sociology, Burawoy argues for a more organic public sociology. Whereas the former, classical sociology was addressed to an invisible, amorphous, passive audience, the latter is aimed at a clearly defined public, or even counter-public, that is active and visible in relation to a specific cause, that can set an explicit political agenda together with the sociologist, and that shares common values (Burawoy et al., 2004, p. 104; Baert, 2015, p. 123)

To put it as Burawoy himself does, the public organic sociologist:

> works in close connection with a visible, thick, active, local and often counter-public. The bulk of public sociology is indeed of an organic kind—sociologists working with a labor movement, neighborhood associations, communities of faith, immigrant rights groups, human rights organizations. Between the organic public sociologist and a public is a dialogue, a process of mutual education. The recognition of a public sociology must extend to the organic kind which often remains invisible, private, and is often considered to be apart from our professional lives. The project of such public sociologies is to make visible the invisible, to make the private public, to validate these organic connections as a part of our sociological life. (Burawoy, 2005, pp. 7–8)

If it has become urgent to develop an organic public sociology that moves beyond the classical sociologies that Burawoy describes as professional, political or critical, then this is for geo-political reasons. Indeed, the world has changed profoundly in 50 years:

> In 1968 the world seemed ripe for change for the better. The civil rights movements, the women's movement, student movements around the world, antiwar marches and sit-ins captured the imagination of a new generation of sociologists who saw conventional sociology as lagging behind the most progressive movements; whereas today the world is lagging behind sociology, unapologetic about its wayward drift. Sociologists shift their critical eye ever more away from sociology toward the world it describes, a shift reflected in the insurgent interest in public sociology. In short, over the last 35 years there has been a scissors movement. The political context and the sociological conscience have moved in opposite directions, so that the world we inhabit is increasingly in conflict with the ethos and principles that animate sociologists—an ethos opposed to inequality, to the erosion of civil liberties, to the destruction of public life, and to discrimination and exclusion. (Burawoy, 2004, p. 1604)

If today sociology must become public and, now more than ever, assume its political responsibilities, then this is precisely because the civil society to which it has always been linked, as a science, is currently under threat. This threat must be seen in the context of the discipline's history. Indeed, for Burawoy, it is clear that if:

> political science's distinctive object of study is the state and its value the protection of political order, and if economics has as its distinctive object the economy and its value is the expansion of the market, then sociology's distinctive object is civil society and its value is the resilience and autonomy of the social. (Burawoy, 2004, p. 1615)

Sociology "is born with civil society and dies with civil society," he adds:

> The classical sociology of Weber, Durkheim, Simmel, and Pareto arose with the expansion of trade unions, political parties, mass education, voluntary associations at the end of the nineteenth century, just as U.S. sociology was born amidst reform and religious organizations. Sociology disappears with the eclipse of civil society as in fascism, Stalinism or Pinochet's Chile, just as it quickly bubbles to the surface with the unfurling of perestroika in the Soviet Union or the civic and labor associations of South Africa's anti-apartheid movement. (Burawoy, 2004, p. 1616; also Burawoy, 2005, p. 24)

What can and should sociology do in the face of these regressions of recent decades? The question is all the more urgent today, as in several democratic states the coronavirus crisis has, on the one hand, given rise to a new upsurge of pre-existing authoritarian tendencies and, on the other, confirmed the irrepressible power of unregulated global capitalism, illustrated in particular by the dictate of the pharmaceutical firms, which no global democratic institution can control. To answer this question, Burawoy encourages us to recall the historical role of sociology:

> 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. (Burawoy, 2014, p. 153)

And in this public sphere, if sociology has to work with civil society then this is precisely because:

> in a world tending toward market tyranny and state unilateralism, civil society is at once threatened with extinction and at the same time a major possible hold-out against deepening inequalities and multiplying threats to all manner of human rights. The interest of sociology in the very existence, let alone expansion, of civil society (even with all its warts) becomes the interest of humanity—locally, nationally and globally. (Burawoy, 2004, p. 1616)[1]

So we can understand why Burawoy is enthusiastic about associationalism, noting that association is in a way what civil society almost spontaneously generates. "It is a political venue unto itself" (Burawoy, 2004, p. 1606), a public place where members, including sociologists, can debate the stances they might publicly adopt, as Durkheim already underlined (Burawoy, 2005, p. 8). What is striking about Burawoy's organic public sociology:

> is not so much that it promotes critical engagement with the non-academic world—something which after all has been argued before [by classical public sociology]—but that it advocates a dialogical model, whereby sociologists and their publics are, theoretically at least, equal partners and equally responsible for producing knowledge. Burawoy's utopian vision for sociology conceives an intellectual and social partnership between the sociological researchers and the communities they

> serve, whereby both parties are willing to learn from each other and collaborate, while striving for a common political goal. (Baert and Shipman, 2015, p. 189)

In this approach, "scientific" and "lay" forms of knowledge are placed on an equal footing.

It is no longer a matter—as was the case with Sartre and Bourdieu—of claiming to provide actors, engulfed in their bad faith or the *illusio* of the social game, with a higher level of knowledge, the sociologist being the only one able to return to the practice of logic to grasp the truth of domination (Burawoy and Von Holdt, 2012, p. 45). In the framework of public sociology, the critique of domination in fact amounts purely and simply to a dialogical enterprise in which both parties—the researchers and those with whom they cooperate—are, from an epistemological point of view, on an equal footing (Baert, 2013, pp. 130–131). While organic public sociology is therefore a very refreshing programme, putting an end, so to speak, to a certain intellectualist tradition in sociology, it appears above all as a contemporary attempt to synthesize various sociological approaches that are not new. As Fassin notes, the idea that knowledge, and especially critical knowledge, must today be co-produced with social actors was already largely present in participatory approaches (Fassin, 2015, p. 600).

HYBRID KNOWLEDGE TO CHANGE THE WORLD ORDER: PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

Participatory research is a trend initiated in the United States by social psychologists such as Mayo and Lewin (Lewin, 1948). It became particularly popular in Latin America very early on through Freire's pedagogy of freedom (Freire, 1970) and Fals Borda's critique of development policies (Fals Borda and Rahman, 1991). Meanwhile in Canada, Porter had already defined a form of participatory democracy that came quite close to Burawoy's definition of organic public sociology (Helmes-Hayes, 2009). In France, this terminology of participatory research would be taken up and defined by the Fondation Sciences Citoyennes, created in 2002, as "a process of democratising knowledge, both in terms of the way it is produced and in the use that can be made of it" (Storup, 2012, p. 26).

The fact that forms of participatory research are experiencing an unprecedented rise is symptomatic of the profound transformations that are currently affecting the relationship between science and society. However, there are significant differences between these forms. Not all of them, admittedly, are likely to fulfil the critical dimension of organic public sociology, which involves the actors and associated researchers adopting a common emancipatory stance towards institutions. Thus, some participatory research simply aims to optimize the management of organizations by producing directly exploitable knowledge, to improve the productivity of certain professional practices, or to make science more effective by involving citizens in data collection (Juan, 2019). Godrie, for example, diagnoses and critiques an "integrationist model" in health and social services. Here medical knowledge remains central and is only marginally enriched by the contributions of patients, who sociologists help to formalize their stance. "Under the guise of democratisation", this model "avoids any real renegotiation of the relationship between modes of knowledge" (Godrie, 2019, p. 14). The call for researchers' participation is designed to relegitimize technicized approaches in order to make them more acceptable in an unchanged system of political power. This is also what is happening with the mobilization of "traditional ecological knowledge," part of the sustainable develop-

ment trend in Canada for natural resource co-management projects with indigenous people. Their knowledge is appropriated, "compartmentalised" and "distilled" by researchers who have penetrated collectives, certainly, but have done so in order to improve the performance of their own economic management (Ranger and Gagnon-Bouchard, 2019). It is more a matter of assimilation than of mutual transformation, and the conditions for cognitive justice in the sense that Burawoy would understand it are not met. In these latter cases, it is clear that we have moved quite far from the ambitions of public organic sociology, which explicitly aims to strengthen the critical stance of civil society organizations against the established political and economic order.

Conversely, other participatory research is carried out with a view to knowing with the other, not about the other. It aims to strengthen people's power to act to change their living conditions. Thus:

> citizen participation is not limited to a consultation on a specific theme or to data collection, but is seen in terms of co-construction of the project from beginning to end, i.e. from the definition of the problem and the development of common objectives to the interpretation and dissemination of the results and the implementation of the project. (Storup, 2012, p. 21)

The organic dimension of public sociology is fully present here, except that the people involved will more readily refer to the idea of participatory research.

Thus, Carrel describes a "post-poverty epistemology"—which refers to a type of research that cross-fertilizes knowledge—when she presents the Equisanté research, carried out in Montreal with people experiencing poverty, researchers, volunteer health professionals, and ATD Fourth World (ATD Quart-Monde[2]) activists. She emphasizes the importance of spaces specifically for people experiencing poverty, but also the importance of support by qualified permanent ATD volunteers and sociologists in helping them to put their claims into public words. For people who have experienced extreme poverty, talking about this is not easy. This is why they value this sociological support, describing it as a "bridge" without which, they say, "we would have been analysed," reduced to mere abnormal objects, abandoned to the state's usually purely managerial perspective and destined to be reinserted into this world order which, however, never ceases to exclude (Carrel, 2020, p. 269).

This stance, which from the outset is critical of a society that generates exclusion (which Marx had already identified as being necessary for the permanent reduction in the value of labour on the market), has an impact on the scientific level. For participatory research is in fact based on a project of transforming the discipline of sociology:

> the approach of classical sociology is to remain rigorous, objective, but the price to pay is enormous, because it means depriving oneself of all the knowledge that the poorest people have of their reality ... Let us try to make this requirement more flexible so that we can access all the reality that has escaped research up until now.

As Carrel says, "the cognitive and the political are intimately linked" (Carrel, 2020, p. 275). When it takes into account the words of vulnerable populations in order to frame their main values and claims, the sociological approach gives rise to interactions between experiential and scientific knowledge, as the ATD Fourth World association maintains. Post-poverty epistemology produces knowledge enriched by combining the competencies of the most precarious with sociological knowledge, in an equal partnership. Which has led some sociologists

to say that Burawoy did not really invent anything, at least for Canada (Goldberg and Van den Berg, 2009).

On this subject, as on others, the mistrust of scientific authorities is not insignificant. More generally, the very notion of participatory research is subject to denigration by advocates of a "purer" science, who suspect "engaged researchers" of ideological drift (Jaeger, 2017) or of a culpable abandonment of the requirement for political neutrality; of which Burawoy has also been accused (Holmwood, 2007). But the lines are moving, as shown by the gradual evolution of the largest research institution in France, the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS). Its ethics committee published an opinion in 2015 that accepted the use of "citizen science" only for data collection. However, following a call in the press in 2016, notably by ATD Fourth World and a laboratory of sociologists from the Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers, an agreement was signed in 2019. It establishes a permanent associative space for research based on the cross-fertilization of knowledge with people experiencing poverty (Frère and Laville, 2022). This more open stance confirms that of a 2017 decree where it is stated that social work is based on "academic knowledge in the social and human sciences, on the practical and theoretical knowledge of social work professionals and on the knowledge resulting from the experience of people benefiting from social support, who are involved in the construction of responses to their needs."[3] The CNRS took a long time to convince, and its procrastination highlights the divisions within the academic world: the question of whether there should be an affirmation of a single, positivist, scientific body of knowledge, or knowledge pluralism, is still widely debated today.

But this desire to promote exchanges between sociological and lay knowledges has the wind in its sails, fanned by various academic disciplines that have been ensuring such exchanges take place for some time. For example, the field of agro-ecology has been trying for some 40 years to distance itself from the productivist and extractivist framework imposed by our thermo-industrial modernity for over a century (Latour, 2017). In France, the Ultra Tree participatory research project is proof of this. It brings together researchers in social anthropology, economics and agronomy with actors involved in establishing peri-urban market garden plots. In order to deal with the problem of these farms' viability, the system is built on the sharing of experiences, as well as a mixture of personal statements and active listening that aims to define the main features of a non-productivist mode of production. "The production of concrete ways of supporting market gardeners is the centrepiece of the approach" (Hermesse et al., 2019, p. 206). It forces the research participants to systematize their learning with a view to integrating it into their practice, and it allows "the actors on the ground to concretely measure the usefulness of their participation in the research" (Hermesse et al., 2019, p. 206).

Associations of farmers and researchers speak of reappropriating the practical knowledge of the former, which does not embrace the use of inputs harmful to certain plants or animals. And "against the technicians who dictate" practices, they argue, "we are taking back areas of freedom that we feel capable of defending." They are learning to "make use of natural processes again, to understand them better, to get them going again and to integrate them into agriculture". They are testing new working hypotheses, which means "not going it alone and sharing in groups" (Hermesse et al., 2019). This does not mean going back to the agriculture of yesterday, but rather initiating processes in which trials are punctuated by moments of collective evaluation thanks to the cross-fertilization of agronomic knowledge and the experimental knowledge of farmers. The fields become open-air laboratories that are set up to find a sustainable model that farmers can live on while caring for the planet and marketing healthy food.

Yet these participatory research mechanisms continue to come under recurrent attack from professional organizations in the hands of those who defend productivism, raising the spectres of backsliding, malice or distortion of competition. In this hostile context, the "farmers" know that they need to further strengthen their dialogue with researchers from public institutions such as the CNRS who are willing to think together about such issues. As we can see, far from the confusion of roles for which Burawoy's public sociology is often criticized (Goldberg and Van den Berg, 2009), it is complementarities between "scientific" and "lay" knowledge that are emerging.

SOCIO-ANALYSIS AND SOCIOLOGICAL INTERVENTION

Burawoy is naturally aware that the organic method he advocates is not without antecedents or contemporary equivalents. In dialogue with Michel Wieviorka, who preceded him as president of the International Sociological Association (ISA), he readily draws parallels between public sociology and the sociological intervention Wieviorka practises:

> 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. (Burawoy, 2014, p. 152)

This definition of the sociology of intervention, which Wieviorka inherits from his teacher Alain Touraine, is not without antecedents. Following the example of Latin America, in the social sciences of post-1968 France "various theoretical currents discussed the contributions and practical know-how of E. Mayo and K. Lewin's North American social psychology" (Cousin and Rui, 2011, p. 525). Among these currents, we often remember the socio-analysis or institutional analysis of Guattari, Loureau, Lapassade and other teachers from the still famous Centre Universitaire Expérimental de Vincennes.[4] The leitmotiv of institutional analysis is clearly the involvement of the researcher. They are encouraged to engage in a reflexivity capable of clarifying their personal choices. As soon as they become involved in a group, they do so in all good conscience, because what is at stake is the collective arrangement of statements of a common discourse that each person must be able to accept. The profound reorganization of research work—placing researchers and members of the collectives with which they were involved on an equal footing—led to the creation of numerous professional groups providing intellectual and cultural services. In France in the 1980s, we thus saw the emergence of "intervention collectives" whose members sought to work towards versatility, access to information and decision-making by all (Corpet et al., 1986).

The members of these collectives went into the public sphere with the aim of making knowledge usually reserved for specialists available to as many people as possible. These collectives, which included sociologists, developed considerably in the area of ecology, to the point where some became consultancy firms or training organizations that continue to provide advice on experiments in new energy technologies or organic farming.

It is important to trace their trajectory because at the time the researchers participating in them were caught up in the same attempt at associative organization, mixing together researchers and actors, as that advocated by Burawoy. None of them had a miracle recipe. When they were confronted with difficulties (for example, is it fair to implement equal pay when different

jobs involve very different responsibilities and working hours?), they proceeded through trial and error and makeshift solutions. Exchanges with the actors generated what we might call "experiential transversalities" (Marchat, 2019): sources of knowledge, based on the sharing of experiences, that remain beyond the reach of academic researchers. Living the experience is decisive. Becker (1963) would not have written the sociology bestseller *Outsiders* if he had not been a jazz musician.

The Marxist orientation of these intervention collectives—an orientation that has a strong presence in institutional analysis—is gradually fading away, as it is in Touraine or Wieviorka's sociology of intervention. And it is necessary to "distance ourselves from intervention practices that see change and liberation as having to happen through the destruction of an institutional order that is perceived from the outset as dominant and repressive" (Cousin and Rui, 2011, p. 525). Sociological intervention must first of all make it possible to reveal, think about and regulate conflict in collectives, with the aim of producing a common public stance. So it is not surprising to see these sociological intervention collectives refer to the practices developed by Paulo Freire, or for a more francophone reference, Saul Alinsky (1989 [1946]).

For intervention collectives it is no longer only a question of criticizing institutions (they are inevitable), but rather of working to critique existing institutions on the one hand, while thinking about how to institutionalize a series of associative practices on the other.

Let us take the example of one of these intervention groups, the Centre for Research and Information on Democracy and Autonomy (Centre de recherche et d'information sur la démocratie et l'autonomie—Crida). This Centre was inspired by socio-analysis's critique of institutional control, but it did not set itself the sole aim of revealing what the institution was repressing: from 1981 to 2016, the goal of its openly intervention-oriented research was more that of making democratic emergences visible. Thus, from 1990 to 1997, at the request of officials worried about the increasing number of audits and controls to which their associations were being subjected, the members of Crida became involved in a group combining actors and researchers dedicated to the in-depth study of associations' functioning. Like organic public sociologists, they "aim[ed] to enrich public debate about moral and political issues by infusing them with sociological theory and research" (Burawoy, 2004, p. 1603). Although they delved into the technicalities of the tests to which public authorities were subjecting these associations, Crida's critiques and innovative solutions often ended up being neutralized as a result of managerial and budgetary recommendations. But Crida also realized that, by bringing to light the specific institutional history of each association—its founding values, its original purpose—and making its members freshly aware of this, it was possible to strengthen their resolve against the managerialization of their activities by external actors such as public funding bodies. For example, many collectives—historically built, for example, on the basis of feminist or environmentalist associative projects, or to fight for the rights of minorities or the most precarious (such as ATD Fourth World)—have been able to influence public policies and drive for political and legislative recognition of a series of specific forms of discrimination. Without the work carried out over the past 40 years by this type of group, it is likely that the world would be an even worse place today.

In this kind of intervention we can see a convergence with socio-analysis on the centrality of the concept of institution. But there is an important difference here, too, which may also point to a difference between this kind of intervention and Burawoy's organic public sociology. Indeed, socio-analysis considers the institution as a quasi-synonym of reproduction of the order of domination established by the state and capitalism. The collective (which includes

sociologists), meanwhile, is seen as a quasi-synonym of the critique of all forms of public and economic institution.

In this somewhat one-sided vision, any new form that is instituted becomes equivalent to other instituted forms exercising domination; signalling, according to Lourau (1971), the failure of the revolutionary project. The problems identified by socio-analysis are therefore more pertinent than its solutions. Unlike socio-analysis, which claims to uncover the hidden grain of the institution, Crida's sociological intervention does not always (or only) object to institutionalization. The task is to participate in the democratic debate about how we represent social actions politically. There is no panopticon, but rather a presence of researchers who are anxious to step up and offer their interpretations, without believing that they have a privileged perspective on the social. Crida's production of numerous monographs, which are then handed back to the actors, and its sharing of results, are aimed precisely at encouraging collective reflection on the ambivalence of institutionalization, which can result in anything ranging from the expansion of the public domain to administrative standardization. Its researchers then help to constitute spaces for public debate in conjunction with the actors concerned. The alliance between the two is worthwhile because of the mutual enlightenment that they can bring to each other. This is a practice of deliberative democracy.

History is not all domination. Egalitarian initiatives have already given rise to institutions. The advent of political rights gave rise to civil and social rights, and then cultural rights with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declaration in 2001. And this chain of rights has only been achieved thanks to institutional pressure exerted by the political coordination of collectives made up of researchers and actors.

Social scientists can engage in associations along with civil society actors in order to take up a critical stance on the dominant political and economic orders, while striving to build something else. This is what Proudhon's pre-sociology already attempted to do, as we will now explore. In this type of association, we see an "equalization of 'rights to speak'" (Callon et al., 2009, p. 34). The opportunities given to each person, researchers and actors alike, "to argue on his or her own account and to question the justifications of others, transforms for a time the usual hierarchies and their underlying conceptions. This mutual discovery obviously affects each actor, whose identity is modified in turn" (ibid.). The reconfiguration of identities is the result of a reciprocal learning process that is all the more fruitful when one undertakes to "overcome the gap separating laypersons and specialists" (ibid.).

As we can see, there are many points in common between institutional analysis, the sociology of intervention, and participatory research. If we wish to look for a genetic origin of this family resemblance—a resemblance shared by all of these attempts from which organic public sociology inherits—then we can hypothesize that they are all actually part of an older, more fundamental matrix. This is an epistemology that has, so to speak, dug its way under the official hagiography of 19th and 20th century sociology (identified, for example, by Giddens and Sutton, 2013). This matrix has always led researchers, academics and other intellectuals to engage in civil society alongside ordinary actors for the purpose of political transformation. We propose to describe this matrix as associationalist, in contrast to a more distanced, objectivist sociology.

ASSOCIATIONALISM AND COMMON SENSE

This "objective" and "distanced" form of sociology was first sketched out in a rough way in Comte's positivism and then formalized definitively by Durkheim. With *The Rules of Sociological Method*, which Durkheim wrote in 1895, the status of sociological knowledge was fixed at a distance from lay knowledge. The time had come, he said, for sociology to:

> take on the esoteric character which befits all science. Thus it will gain in dignity and authority what it will perhaps lose in popularity. For, so long as it remains embroiled in partisan struggles and is content to elaborate, with indeed more logic than commonly employed, common ideas, and in consequence presumes no special competence, it has no right to speak authoritatively enough to quell passions and dispel prejudices. (Durkheim, 1988 [1895], p. 114)

The scientific knowledge whose precedence Durkheim asserted over profane knowledge would go on to dominate sociological modernity throughout the 20th century. Bourdieu's *The Craft of Sociology*, for example, fairly faithfully reproduces Durkheim's position on this. Bourdieu conceives of the sociologist's task as that of the intellectual who refuses to "consecrate the self-evidence of common sense" (Bourdieu et al., 1991 [1973], p. 54). Even in his later writings, he would affirm that sociology must be done at a distance. And to be at a distance is to guard against the "rationalizations produced from this standpoint, which is no longer that of action, without being that of science" (Bourdieu, 2005 [1977], p. 18).

This tradition of objectivity and distance, which marked the golden age of 20th century sociology, largely helped to push associationalism into the background. The latter sociological proposal had to deal with rather unfavourable historical conditions. Indeed, in general, the invisibilization of popular associationalism can be explained by the transition from the "first" 19th century, the era of democratic revolutions, to the "second" 19th century, the era of capital and empires, to use Hobsbawm's (1978) chronology. At the end of the Second Republic in France (1848–1852), Napoleon III was proclaimed emperor. Democratic hope was once again eclipsed, and with this a nascent civil society was further suppressed, to pick up Burawoy's analysis. But what was thus simultaneously invisibilized, to an even greater extent, was the fact that a number of intellectuals were at the forefront of the hitherto burgeoning phenomenon of association. The role played here by Proudhon, the instigator of a participatory sociological approach *avant la lettre*, is particularly illustrative.

Dardot and Laval should be credited for having recently brilliantly reminded us that Proudhon's *ateliérism* or associationalism was first and foremost a perspective that aimed to account for the self-institution of society. This self-institution, from the scientific point of view—and contrary to Comte—could not be subjected to an "objective" or "detached" analysis of "the pre-established nature of the social fact." From a political point of view—and contrary to Marx—it rejected the ideal of a revolution achieved by taking the reins of the state, and emphasized that this revolution was at work in the daily practice of self-managed workers' associations, not owned by those who were still called capitalists at the time (Dardot and Laval, 2014).[5]

Unlike Marx, who only learned what a worker looked like through the accounts that Engels brought back from his family's factories, Proudhon never stopped surveying the associative initiatives of the time, such as those of the famous silk weavers, the Canuts of Lyon. In the course of his investigations, Proudhon tried to clarify and structure what Durkheim and

Bourdieu would call common sense, rather than reject it. What is important, he wrote, is to associate with civil society in order to:

> observe how the people attach themselves to certain ideas rather than others, generalise them, develop them in their own way, and turn them into institutions and customs that they traditionally follow, until they fall into the hands of legislators and justiciars, who in turn make them into articles of law and rules for the courts. (Proudhon, 1977 [1865], pp. 70–711)

From the practices of workers' collectives, an idea emerges, and the people are about to take hold of it: it is association, whose principle is mutuality. "By the importance that it receives today and by the way in which the working classes demand that it be applied, it tends to become a PRECEPT, to take on a decidedly obligatory character, in a word, to acquire the force of law" (ibid.). The Canuts recognized themselves as equals at work, decided collectively on the management of their organizations, and paid themselves fairly (Frère, 2018). And Proudhon called on all of French society to follow the example of these new norms.

Dardot and Laval stress the crucial role in Proudhon's thinking of law, which is an instituting concept in the same way as it is for the sociologists of intervention mentioned above. It is through this means that it becomes possible to bring into existence associations, which these working-class practices of cooperation and mutual aid then informally maintain. Worker and consumer cooperatives must be described and protected by law. Proudhon made this request to the French parliament in the middle of the 19th century, well before the famous 1901 law that legally recognized workers' associations. Until then, the strict prohibition of the Le Chapelier law—passed in 1791 to ensure the absence of any "influential" intermediary bodies between the state and the free conscience of individual citizens—prevailed.

The associative effervescence that prevailed before and at the beginning of the Second Republic made a lasting impression on Proudhon. It was, he claimed, the realization in practice of what certain speculative minds had already glimpsed in the French Revolution of 1789 (Proudhon, 1977 [1865], pp. 70–71, pp. 80–81). In Proudhon's view, the associationalist idea would come to the mind of any intellectual who observed the practices of spontaneous solidarity in civil society. But for Proudhon, it would not come to the intellectual through some detachment, like a norm that, thanks to distance, one can locate in the principle of working-class practical reason; a norm that this practical reason is incapable of reflexively and distinctly formulating itself. Rather, Proudhon's theorization of associationalism came to him from the workers' own testimonies, which they themselves formulated reflexively in his company. In this respect, Proudhon cannot be considered a modern author; something that Marx (1983 [1846]) reproached him for very early on. He remained outside the great divisions imposed during the second 19th century between science and non-science, and even more so between objective facts and political values: the divisions that characterize what Latour (2004, p. 33) has called the constitution of the moderns.

Proudhon is quite comfortable not to remain at any "neutral" scientific distance, assuming that it is together that scholars and lay people reach a higher level of knowledge. The associationalist idea comes from the common sense that researchers and researched share:

> By common sense, we mean 'judgement' insofar as it applies to things that are intuitively and immediately obvious, whose perception requires neither deduction nor investigation. It is more than instinct [or habitus, as Bourdieu would say], which is unaware of its determinations, whereas common sense knows what it wants and why it wants it. Nor is it faith or habit, which neither judge nor know them-

> selves: whereas common sense knows and judges itself, as it knows and judges everything around it. Common sense is equal in all men; it is through it that the highest degree of self-evidence and the most perfect certainty comes to 'ideas' … Common sense is both reason and experience synthetically united: it is judgment, but without either dialectic or calculation. (Proudhon, 1983 [1846], vol. II, pp. 211–212)

The mutualist principle lies in the common sense of the associates as a collectively rationalized experience. It is immediately obvious to the civil society actors of the time, who make judgments about it: judgments that it is too simple to consider wrong merely because they are produced by lay people. Proudhon does not seek to "have the last word" on the working class world or an "intelligent" attitude towards it (Boltanski, 2012 [1990], p. 35). In their practical situations, workers have neither the need nor the time to go back to the first principles that give meaning to their actions, or to the political orientations that permeate them. Proudhon therefore set out, together with these workers, to trace in writing both their political demands and the characteristics of their associations that they wished to see legally protected. In Burawoy's terms, during the course of their investigations, the sociologist's (Proudhon's) exchange with the associated workers becomes a dialogical space capable of producing knowledge. But unlike Burawoy, Proudhon suggests that this co-constructed knowledge is itself able to nourish various processes of institutionalization.

In the blurred midst of his scientific and political work (both parliamentarian and polemicist; his criticisms of the bourgeois government got him imprisoned in 1849), Proudhon tirelessly investigated workshops such as those of the Canuts. Strictly speaking, he allied himself with the latter and led the political struggle to establish a role within public services (railways, the post office, and so on) for their model of associative functioning.[6] Proudhon observed that the Canuts exchanged and shared tools among associations (*ateliers*), and had relatively equal incomes. On a large scale, therefore, "farmers, civil servants, industrialists, etc. should guarantee each other service for service, credit for credit, pledge for pledge, security for security (etc.), for which purpose economic law should be adapted to the reforms of commercial, civil, administrative and public law" (Proudhon, 1983 [1846], vol. II, p. 180).

Dardot and Laval have noted that, in addition to formalizing the critique of capitalists and government that makes him probably the first organic public sociologist, Proudhon was mindful of living long enough with the associated workers to be able to produce a report on their everyday life at work; a report that also constituted a societal project to be instituted:

> By the "mutualistic constitution of the nation," Proudhon means both a guarantee of justly distributed incomes to everyone through a system of mutual insurance, and justice exchanged on the basis of equal costs and penalties between persons considered equal. This approach is designed to nullify profits that are accrued merely as a result of owning property. The social constitution is nothing other than the juridical self-organization of society. Beginning with the recognition of the particular rights of different sectors, the constitution proceeds toward a formalized common law for all co-producers across the whole of society. Groups of producers, consumers, co-owners, associations, and public services are each bound together by this one autonomous law that, in its entirety, is the social constitution. It is not an arbitrary or voluntarist "social re-construction" imposed from above by an external government. The social constitution is the recognition of the more or less organized and explicit legal forms that govern collective life, both inside particular groups and between them, according to the principle of mutualism. (Dardot and Lavale, 2014, p. 256)

In association with each other, scholars and laypeople, actors and researchers, can produce and lay down in writing knowledge about this new egalitarian legal order that they are practising

on a daily basis, like Proudhon tried to do with the Canuts. This is what will ultimately lead to social transformation. And sociological investigation, in Proudhon's sense, will not be for nothing.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have seen that Burawoy's organic public sociology constitutes a most stimulating programme at a time when our societies are facing a double threat. Firstly, the reinforcement of capitalist hegemony, as illustrated for example by the incredible growth of pharmaceutical multinationals during the coronavirus crisis. Secondly, an authoritarian upsurge, as illustrated by the march of Trump supporters on Capitol Hill in January 2021 in the United States, by the monopolistic powers installed in Russia and Turkey, and by the rise of the far right throughout Europe. Like Bourdieu, Burawoy believes that, by penetrating deeply into civil society, sociology could act as a martial art that enables civil society to defend itself from these perils. This is not a new idea. In France at the turn of the 20th century, for example, Durkheim and Mauss were very loyal fellow travellers of the then nascent workers' movements, which were gradually organized into popular associations. At that point it was a matter of resisting the ravages caused both by industrial capitalism, on the one hand, and by public policies unconcerned about the fate of the proletarian classes, on the other, at a time when the state was still far from having become "social" (Castel, 2002). But these two intellectuals were public sociologists in the classical sense of the term. They willingly considered their knowledge as knowledge that could only be formulated at a higher level, by detaching itself from the social.

If public sociology has become organic with Burawoy, then in a sense it has done so in order to leave this pedestal which, by virtue of a somewhat narrow modernist definition of the scientific approach, has ended up depriving civil society—and more particularly the humble and precarious within it—of the capacity to construct a critical discourse. Worse, this objectivist, transcendent detachment has ended up making invisible new social practices that could inspire public policies, and by doing so move us far beyond the critique of existing policies. In this chapter, we have attempted to show that this organic desire to delve deeper into the flesh of the social world is not so much a novelty, as the contemporary resurgence of a sociological project that originated in the 19th century with Proudhon. This proposal has periodically resurfaced in the form of participatory research or sociological interventions in the second half of the 20th century. We have called this project associationalism.

By referring to the work of Proudhon, the mid-19th century figurehead of the associationalist movement, we have been able to show that this great pioneer of the sociological approach did not see his work of intellectual formalization as standing at a distance from common sense. Rather, he saw it as a process of co-constructing knowledge with the workers with whom he was associated; a process that was enabled precisely by a collectively shared common sense. His epistemology defines knowledge much more broadly than did that of Comte or Marx in the same era. It explains the author's genuine proximity to the social movements of the time. Thus, when he wrote to the workers who asked his opinion on the *Manifeste des Soixante*[7] so that he could inject into it political proposals more powerful than their own, Proudhon (1964 [1952], p. 312) warned: "I have no hesitation in answering your question [but] my thinking can hardly be anything other than the interpretation of yours."

His associationalist epistemology is thus part of a dialogical perspective that wholly prefigures the post-poverty epistemology espoused by contemporary action research currents; provided, that is, that they do not simply seek to equip the managerial state (as we have seen, this can happen in the context of healthcare or measures to address unemployment), but rather to keep alive the possibility of its critique. Proudhon, who on many occasions came into conflict with public policies charged with combatting poverty, which he accused of being *miserabilist*,[8] undoubtedly also prefigured socio-analysis in this respect. The proponents of socio-analysis (Guattari, Lourau, and Lapassade in France) entrusted researchers with the task of helping the users of various public services (the sick, the unemployed, and so on) to put critiques of the institutional policies that concern them into words. But in contrast to socio-analysis, and probably to Burawoy as well, Proudhon went further. In accordance with what some proponents of sociological intervention would suggest—as Touraine and Wieviorka have theorized, and as Crida illustrates in this chapter—he held up the instituting power of associative engagement. And it is probably partly thanks to his work that today in France popular associations, workers' cooperatives and mutual healthcare organizations still have legal statuses that allow them to resist the onslaught of capitalism and state bureaucracy. This is true even though, as Polanyi (2001 [1944]) diagnosed very early on, these sectors' tendency to move towards commercial and administrative isomorphism has been at work for a long time.

When it recognizes the instituting power of association, organic public sociology offers a promising perspective to sociology, as indeed its equivalents have already shown in the field of agro-ecology. We may hope that the new energy Burawoy has breathed into it will keep alive the political concerns of researchers and civil society actors in a multitude of environmental and solidarity-based initiatives. We need only think of the recent phenomenon of the Temporary Autonomous Zones (Zones d'autonomie à défendre), full of young farmers, craftspeople and various intellectuals (Bulle, 2020). Having associated together to construct a more emancipatory, less productivist and less administered society, they are already working in their own way to revive the democratic utopia of past revolutions.

NOTES

1. "If we can transcend our parochialism and recognize our distinctive relation to diverse publics within and across borders, sociologists could yet create the fulcrum around which a critical social science might evolve, one responsive to public issues while at the same time committed to professional excellence" (Burawoy, 2004, p. 1616).
2. https://atd-quartmonde.be.
3. Decree n°-2017-877 of 6 May 2017.
4. Founded in the aftermath of May 1968 with the aim of offering a participatory, self-managed and libertarian-inspired education, this university (which became Paris VIII after it moved), would welcome teachers no less than François Chatelet, Gilles Deleuze, Jean-François Lyotard, Michel Foucault, Alain Badiou, Michel Serres, Robert Castel, Giorgio Agamben, among others.
5. For the relationship to Comte, see Dardot and Laval (2014, pp. 408–409). For the relationship to Marx, see Dardot and Laval (2014, pp. 371–380).
6. At the state level, "the purpose of the completed mutuality will be to divide itself into as many workshop associations with specific and antagonistic tasks organised in a federative democracy" (Proudhon, 1977 [1865], p. 172f.).
7. This 1864 manifesto, intended for the press of the time, presented a program of social demands to support workers' candidacies in an election.

8. For example, Proudhon attacked the "national workshops" of the Luxembourg commission charged with making proposals for social reform. He accused the government of the Second Republic of charitable condescension towards the workers recruited in these workshops, who were entrusted with all sorts of public works under strong state supervision, topped by a total disregard for the endogenous evolution of associations in civil society itself. Indeed, these workshops were built from scratch by members of the commission for unemployed workers, who were always assumed to be idle, wasteful and incapable of self-organization (see Frère, 2009).

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18. *Public*, *policy* or *politicized* sociology? Notes from the field of welfare and poverty research

Sandro Busso

The public relevance of welfare systems has been well recognized for many years, and the economic crises of the last decade have done nothing but reinforce this perception. However, despite the fact that they concern pretty much the entire society, social policies, as well as the sociologists dealing with them, are increasingly represented as dealing exclusively with specific targets and with the lower tiers of social stratification. Being less and less at the centre of sociological thinking on the overall structure of society, the topic of welfare has slowly become the object of a specific subfield of the discipline, resulting in an increased difficulty to reach a public dimension despite its inherently 'public' nature. Therefore, compared with the huge expansion of the debate within the academic community and the relevant interactions with the policy system, public sociology of welfare appears to be the weakest of Burawoy's (2005) well-known four types of sociology.

Consistently with this general framework, this chapter deals with the sociology of social policies mainly as a discipline devoted to the study of exclusion, poverty and marginalization rather than as a pillar of political economy, relying in particular on the field of poverty research. This field of expertise, indeed, highlights, more clearly than other fields can, some of the biases and trade-offs related to the problem of the selection of the publics and to its proximity with the policy system, the latter in particular emerging as a factor that strongly conditions the development of public sociology in this area. The main argument of the following pages is that the four 'souls' of sociology have become progressively more distant, and that the interactions between them are today more problematic than they used to be because of the many obstacles that stand in the way of creating virtuous circles such as those advocated by Burawoy in his proposal. The development of the discipline is then described as profoundly characterized by a narrowing of discursive spaces that affects the development of a public sociology of social policies, which requires as a precondition an effort towards repoliticization.

The analysis starts with a focus on the transformations occurring within the discipline and academia, and then moves on to the crucial dimension of the involvement of sociologists in policy making. The effect of this involvement on discursive spaces is then analysed, to conclude with the challenges for the development of a public and politicizing sociology.

INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE WALLS OF ACADEMIA: PROFESSIONAL AND CRITICAL SOCIOLOGY IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL POLICY

The huge amount of sociological knowledge produced in the field of welfare inevitably extends over all four types of sociological labour identified by Burawoy (2005) from the beginning of the debate on public sociology. Since the origins of this field of study after the Second World

War, and even more since its recognition as an autonomous field since the 1960s (Daly 2000), the public relevance of the knowledge produced has always been well known, even though often not distinguished analytically from its usefulness in policy making processes.

Public sociologists dealing with welfare issues have belonged to both the traditional and the organic type, the balance between the two reflecting the historical fluctuations between centralization and devolution that have taken place in almost all national contexts, albeit at different times. Indeed, during the expansion phase of the Keynesian period, welfare was mainly seen as the object of national policy making, leaving little space for the development of an interaction with those active local publics, which stands as a prerequisite of organic public sociology. As Gouldner noticed, precisely in the years of maximum development of the Keynesian welfare system, as the locus of reform efforts moves upward from the local to the national level 'the community to be reformed becomes an object, something apart from and outside the reformer … Social reform now becomes a kind of engineering job, a technological task to be subject to bland "cost–benefit" or "system-analysis"' (Gouldner 1968, pp. 109–110). Only at a later stage the decentralization processes and the rise of the governance model allowed the development of a thicker interaction between local administration and civil society, in which sociologists also found their place (Evers and Brandsen 2016).

The relationship of sociology and sociologists with – in Burawoy's terms – an 'extra academic audience', however, is influenced first of all by the trajectories followed by the discipline, and by the scientific community of welfare scholars. In fact, two major trends have taken shape hand in hand with the development of the field of study. The first is a tendency towards specialization that has affected sociology as a whole. Of course, there is not a wide agreement on the consequences of this trend: if on the one hand some scholars underline the perverse effect of the transformation of sociology into an 'archipelago of poorly connected islands of specialization' (Calhoun, 1992, p. 25), others consider it as a starting point for a profitable cross-fertilization (Abbot 2000; see also Leahey and Reikowsky 2008). This latter position certainly finds numerous supporting examples, above all the role played by gender studies in boosting the comprehension of welfare systems (Daly 2000). For the sake of this analysis, however, it should be noticed that this process also poses the risk of a disconnection between, on the one hand, the study of the social and economic processes that determine the demand for social policy and, on the other hand, the focus on the institutional answer to these emerging instances. As will be seen later on, such a disconnection has been fostered by the closeness between researchers and policy makers. Moreover, this risk of fragmentation is also relevant within policy studies, since specialized policy research 'tells us little about how the pieces fit together as a coherent system of governance in a particular time and place' (Soss et al. 2011, p. 9).

Such a push toward specialization also interacts with the progressive affirmation of social policy studies as an independent and multidisciplinary field of study, with an identity based on its object of study rather than on disciplinary belonging, which in turn entailed a huge effort aimed at identifying – and reinforcing – the boundaries of the field (Coffey 2004). Once again, the multidisciplinary nature of welfare studies has effects on its relation with the policy community, in which sociologists, while enjoying a wide network of possible connections, have suffered the risk of marginalization and loss of specificity.

A second major trend consists in the progressive distancing of the two types in which, taking up Burawoy, the sociological work that identifies the academic community as a target is articulated: the professional and the critical. If, in principle, there is no incompatibility between

the two, the critical being 'the conscience of professional sociology' (Burawoy 2005, p. 10), the situation in practice is much more complex, as Burawoy himself noticed, stating that 'within each category we tend to essentialize, homogenize and stereotype the others' (ibid., p. 11). Welfare sociology makes no exception to this general consideration. The difference between instrumental and reflexive knowledge (considered as complementary) at the origin of Burawoy's distinction gives way to a contraposition between opposite and almost irreconcilable reciprocal representations, where instrumental knowledge becomes 'mainstream' and prone to the will of those in power, while reflexive knowledge becomes politicized and not objective. Rather than take sides in the dispute, it is useful to consider the processes and the features of the context that brought about such a distancing. A background element, common to many fields of study, was the sensitivity and strength of political disputation during the Cold War period, which progressively pushed academics towards the extremes of an ostentatiously apolitical attitude or, on the contrary, towards a militant and politicized manner (Fleck and Hess 2014). The choice of course did not depend strictly on their conception of sociology as a discipline, but rather on wider considerations on the repercussions of these attitudes on career paths or political and extra-academical opportunities (ibid.). Aside from this general consideration, a more focused perspective identifies the root of the irreconcilability of the two perspectives in the transformations of welfare. Following Ball's (1997) argument on the subfield of education, the end of the Keynesian paradigm can be seen as a phase of detachment of social policies from the commitment to the moral and political values that characterized their expansive phase, especially the reduction of inequalities. While inclusive welfare during the neoliberal period turned into a 'schumpeterian workfare state' (Jessop 1993), those who devoted their efforts to this field of study on the basis of a shared ideological background experienced a tension that no longer allowed them to combine 'a commitment to the pursuit of efficiency and a commitment to the pursuit of social justice' (Ball 1997, p. 257).

The distancing between professional and critical sociology thus becomes a crossroads that structures entire careers, as well as an identity choice. In the preface to his book entirely devoted to the 'social science of poverty', Sanford Schram (1995) describes in these terms the early stages of his career: 'The process of getting my work out to others almost always at least implicitly involved having to choose whether I was, for lack of better terms, a "critic" or a "scientist". Being both as much as neither did not help me with the editorial review process' (Schram 1995, p. xvii).

The difference between the two models was not simply a matter of perspective, but involved in the first place the methods used: statistical analysis used to be considered a tool for 'scientists', while 'critics' should rely heavily on theoretical assumptions and non-empirical speculation.

While inappropriate generalizations should be avoided, such a tension within academic sociology in the field of welfare has major consequences on its relationship with the extra-academic audience. Indeed, as will be seen in the next section, the growth of policy sociology is associated to a conception of professional sociology very close to that presented 25 years ago by Schram. On the contrary, the public dimension seems to be more narrowly relying on the critical one. Again, the proximity between researchers and the political system plays a fundamental role in determining this split.

Beyond disciplinary matters and the evolution of the sociological scientific community, another internal feature of academia that determines its relations with the outside world is the transformations of financing and, in a broader sense, the so-called process of neoliberalization

of the university. The downsizing of public resources, indeed, often turns engagement in applied research into a necessity rather than a free choice (Holmwood 2011), thus denying what Polanyi (1962) posed as a precondition for the development of scientific knowledge, namely the possibility to proceed towards objectives that it sets autonomously. Alongside the problem of financing, the neoliberal 'publish or perish' career model, too, influences the choice of topics and methods and the interactions with the 'outside world'. Following Stacey's (2007) provocative yet definitely reasonable proposal, a publicly engaged discipline should require, first of all, a rotational moratorium on academic publishing and an increase in recruitment.

The decision to abandon the ivory tower, as well as its outcomes, therefore depends on factors that go far beyond individual preferences or representations of what academia should be. Rather, it is influenced by both external and internal conditions, the latter including matters of governance and quality of work.

LEAVING THE IVORY TOWER: POLICY SOCIOLOGY AS A HISTORICAL HERITAGE

Analysing the relationship between sociology and policy making is crucial to fully understand the challenges posed by the development of a public sociology of welfare, since this field of study is traditionally considered as strongly linked with the realm of politics. It is therefore no coincidence that Boudon's (2002) description of 'cameral sociology' as a social science aimed at improving the adequacy of policy decision starts with an example taken from this field of study: Le Play's (1877) research on the European workers is indeed described as motivated by the need to rationalize social policy under Napoleon III.

Of course, the degree of closeness between sociology and politics varies considerably over time and space, as has always happened in the troubled and discontinuous relation between governments and expert knowledge since ancient societies (March and Olsen 1995). However, together with the overall growing demand for data that characterizes modern societies (Boudon 2002), the development of specific policy fields such as that of welfare has brought about an increase in requests for what Lindblom and Cohen effectively – and critically – defined as 'usable knowledge' (Lindblom and Cohen 1979).

This is, for instance, the case of the expansion phase of welfare in Europe during the 'Glorious Thirty'. In her remarkable portrait of the Swedish case, Katrin Fridjonsdottir (1990) described the development of sociology as a discipline 'at the service of the welfare state'. This close link with policy making should be seen as a two-way relationship, since sociologists contributed to shape public action, but at the same time their involvement moulded the discipline and its self-perception:

> The period in which the social sciences expanded significantly and in some cases, such as sociology, were actually formally established, corresponded with the period in which the Swedish welfare state was built up. Great expectations were held for what the social sciences could achieve and what they could contribute to this development … sociologists studied the problems of working life and contributed material and proposals to implement various parts of social policy. It is from this time that one can trace the roots of the sociologists' self-image as social engineers at the service of society. (Fridjonsdottir 1990, p. 254)

If, in accordance with a widespread – though often stereotyped – image, in the Nordic countries sociology and welfare grew together while sharing the goal of a harmonious development (ibid.), in the United States political commitment was an opportunity to give recognition to already well-developed lines of study, such as those on poverty. As noticed by Alice O'Connor (2009, p. 12), 'it was not until the War on Poverty in the 1960s that the state officially recognized poverty as a category for investigation, launching a research operation within the newly created Office of Economic Opportunity, adding poverty statistics to the federal census, and adopting an official "poverty line."'

Such a political recognition was far from being purely symbolic: the designers of the 'War on Poverty' were indeed 'painfully aware of the lacunae in knowledge surrounding the effort they were embarking in' (Haveman 1997, p. 6). For this reason they financed a strong research programme through the Office on Economic Opportunity, which brought about, among many other consequences, a strong increase in the number of scientific articles published on the topic from that moment on. Again, as in the case of Sweden, the emphasis is on the capacity of policy making to shape the research agenda.

A different phase of the relationship between the sociology of welfare and the political field can be identified during the period beginning with the end of the 1990s. Once the toughest season of political neoliberalism had been disposed of, a resumption of attention to the issue of social policies laid the foundation for a revival of the relationship, albeit on very different bases.

Several factors weigh on the assumptions of the relationship. On the one hand is the contraction of resources for social policies that has been going on for over two decades; on the other is the evolution of the whole conception of public intervention, which incorporates the dictates of emerging paradigms such as new public management and evidence-based practice, not to mention the general political framework characterized by a dismissal of attitudes defined (negatively) as 'ideological' (cf. Busso 2019).

Perfectly consistently with the Third Way's slogan 'what matters is what works', the evidence-based practice movement gained considerable support in various fields other than the medical sector in which it was developed: 'Social care thus followed health care in acquiring an institute for "excellence", to be achieved by the development and dissemination of knowledge' (Smith 2004). The growing demand for expert knowledge inevitably involved sociologists as well as other scholars. Their task, however, was mainly linked to evaluating welfare programmes or, at best, elaborating scenarios concerning the supposed impact of policies (Lewis and Surender 2004). In turn, they were almost excluded from a wider and more systemic reflection. Indeed, the evidence-based approach assumed a starting point that 'while all sorts of systematic enquiry may have much to offer the rational development of public services, our primary interest is in evidence of what works … We will to some extent assume that policy goals have been articulated and that client needs have been identified' (Davies and Nutley 2000, p. 3).

In this phase a paradox occurs: on the one hand, expert knowledge is a source of legitimacy for policies based not on 'good intentions', but on the search for results; on the other hand, their role is downsized, relegating them to the unique role of evaluators. Though surprising at a first glance, this is consistent with the literature on depoliticization, which sees 'technicalization' as an extremely effective governing strategy, rather than a 'disappearance of politics' (Burnham 2001; Flinders and Buller 2006). This is perfectly clear in O'Connor's analysis of the Clinton Welfare reform, described as 'a triumph of politics and ideology over knowledge

… and a defeat for the policy analysts who had mustered an enormous amount of scientific data showing that the bill would send millions more children into poverty – very much in the hope of preventing politicians from doing the wrong thing' (O'Connor 2009, p. 3).

Though with many differences, the possible functions performed by policy sociology during these decades can be traced back to the model that Weiss (1979) defined as 'problem solving', in which research is called into question starting from a more or less well-defined policy input. At the same time, sociology served 'tactical' and 'political' purposes, providing legitimacy to the political system and to its choices mainly through the 'illusion of technique' (Soss et al. 2006).

A slightly different pattern emerges in the case of the European Union over the past two decades, more precisely from the connections between scholars and institutions that went along with the success of the so-called social investment paradigm: 'Strongly supported by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD's) work on education, families and inequality and the World Bank's recent "inclusive growth" priorities, over the 2000s, a fairly coherent "epistemic community" gained considerable sway in international organizations and policy think tanks' (Hemerijck 2017, p. 3).

Rather than simply responding to the precise demand for knowledge of political and – equally importantly – economic institutions, a variety of intellectuals from different milieus became active promoters of this emerging paradigm (Jenson 2010), which would once again push the welfare state beyond the one we knew (Morel et al. 2012). Sociologists had a prominent role in this process, benefiting from the uncertain boundaries of the paradigm that allowed different perspectives to struggle for policy influence, and contributing to 'expand the ambiguity of the concept further' (Jenson 2010, p. 73). Such uncertainty in definitions was, among other things, one of the main reasons for the success of social investment itself, since within a wide European framework local policy community could appeal to the version they found most suitable to their contexts (Jenson 2008).

The internal heterogeneity of the epistemic communities, as well as the ambiguity of the concept of social investment, should not be mistaken for a conflict. Indeed, as the main definition of the concept (Haas 1992) suggests, scholars taking part in the community not only shared a set of normative principles, but also converged on certain 'notions of validity – that is, intersubjective, internally defined criteria for weighing and validating knowledge in the domain of their expertise' (ibid., p. 3).

This last point is particularly relevant for the analysis that this chapter proposes. Indeed, the development of policy sociology in the field of welfare is consistent with a reflection on public sociology mainly for the way in which it has influenced, or indeed shaped, the perspectives and practices of the scientific community. It is therefore not a matter of elaborating on how much sociologists could steer the definition of policy goals. Nor can the goal of analysing the content of the policies that emerged from this interaction help. On the contrary, it is crucial to consider the way in which this evolution determined the range of possibilities for a public sociology of social policies of welfare to flourish.

Following this argument, we can go back more than half a century of policy sociology to find some precious hints about the way it has influenced the development of this disciplinary subsector, in terms of both relevance and distinctive features.

The first element is to do with the public relevance of sociological thinking that resulted from the rush of academic to gain the favour of policy makers. As Gans (2009) notices, indeed, throughout its historical development sociology suffered from the competition of other

disciplines, economics above all, which were quicker to build a reputation of being publicly relevant. This is of course not due to the quality of their respective intellectual contributions, but mainly to their capacity to adhere to the requests that came from the political system, as noticed by O'Connor about the United States (US): 'as sociologists and anthropologists watched both community action and cultural theory get pummeled in the political fray, analysts were well positioned to continue the transformation of poverty knowledge, begun during the War on Poverty, into a highly pragmatic, technical subfield of applied microeconomics' (O'Connor 2009, p. 214).

The second element is to do with the goals of sociological research on poverty and social policies, and with the balance between techniques and approaches. The connections with policy making brought about an increased relevance of the so-called 'cameral' model of sociology, characterized by a descriptive approach (Boudon 2002; Goldthorpe 2004) and an 'ostensibly atheoretical' orientation (O'Connor 2016, p. 180). Moreover, although the definition of cameral sociology does not involve relapses from a methodological point of view, in the field of welfare many scholars suggest that quantitative methods are prevalent in it (Piven 2007; O'Connor 2009, 2016), which determines trade-offs with theoretical and analytical choices that can sometimes not be properly addressed (Soss et al. 2006).

This point has clearly nothing to do with devaluing approaches and techniques, or to affirm the existence of a relation between these and the public or political value and orientation of the knowledge produced. Rather, the aim here is to question whether the possible positive interactions between research approaches highlighted in many cornerstones of meta-reflection on the discipline (including Burawoy's) are likely to be found within the trajectories followed by the sociology of social policy. Following this argument, and avoiding generalizations, the analysis will focus in the next section on the third possible effect of the relevance of policy sociology, namely the shaping of the research agenda and the consequent restriction of the discursive space that affects the development of a public sociology.

BEYOND COMPLIANCE TO POLICY: NARROW DISCURSIVE SPACES AS A CONSTRAINT FOR PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY

Despite its close relationship with policy makers, sociology as a whole has never been prone to serving the will of the powerful or being obsequious towards them, nor has it ever limited itself to legitimizing the will of politicians for its own gain. Leaving aside the obvious heterogeneity within the community of scholars, many aspects of the dominant approach to social policy have been addressed critically, from the feminist critique of the patriarchal nature of Keynesian welfare (Daly 2000) to the questioning of the principle of social investment (Hemerjick 2017), through the numerous attempts to deconstruct the stereotypical vision of welfare dependence of the neoliberal period (Schram 2006). Sociological policy analysis therefore has not given up the task of 'speaking truth to power' (Wildavsky 1979), even though sometimes speaking 'very much from the inside' (O'Connor 2009, p. 213; cf. Piven 2007). Moreover, the more the field of study has became established, the more the critique has developed and flourished, and even among those who has been afraid of a politicization of the discipline, the positivistic model adopted by the supporter of a merely technical role has been a way to blunt criticism deriving from the connections with research financiers (Piven 2007).

The 'dangerous relations' between policy sociology and public sociology therefore do not lie primarily in the risk of a loss of independence. Rather, the main possible perverse effect of sociology's relationship with the policy field should be identified in its being part of a wider process of depoliticization that ended up reinforcing 'the dominant story line' despite wanting to oppose it (Piven 2007, p. 162). This paradox may be explained by referring to the model of the so-called 'discursive depoliticization' (Hay 2007; Wood and Flinders 2014), which mainly consists in removing 'the political' by shaping debates and disciplining them towards a single political goal. The process may indeed take different forms. On the one hand, the objective may be the naturalization of specific policy solutions that are removed from debate by moving them to the 'realm of necessity', as happened for instance with austerity politics during the financial crisis (Wood and Flinders 2014). On the other hand, the strategy may simply consist in the promotion of a topic as a relevant public issue: depoliticization therefore may occur even though competing interpretations exist as choices, by means of narrowing the discursive space and conditioning the agenda.

The clearest example of this mechanism is undoubtedly the debate on welfare dependency (Schram 1995; Katz 2013). Raised by US conservatives in their struggle to limit the amount and duration of benefits, and more generally to delegitimize welfare, in the last decades of the XXth century the topic gained such relevance in the agenda that researchers almost could not avoid dealing with it. Sociology, like other disciplines, progressively shifted its gaze from the condition of being poor (and from the structural conditions that determined poverty) to that of welfare client, analysing individual behaviour often under a strictly rational choice approach that emphasized people's supposed agency. Although in many cases the issue was addressed critically, this attention involuntarily ended up by reinforcing the general framing of poverty in terms of inactivity, if not laziness (Piven 2007). Beyond the form that representations take, and the categories on which they are built, their impact on discourses is given precisely by the narrowness of the focus of these analyses, which concentrated strictly on 'the poor', dismissing the relevance of the process of 'impoverishment' (Crane et al. 2020). With the disappearance of the latter, Piven suggests, the scenario changes considerably: 'Gone from the picture, from the research model, were the big institutional arrangements, labor markets or patterns of corporate investment, for example, and the bearing of government tax and spending policies on those patterns' (Piven 2007, p. 162).

The consequences in terms of responsabilization are clear: if the whole society disappears from sociological analysis, the causes of poverty must necessarily be sought in the behaviour of the poor, who actually remain the only actors on the scene. This process of individualization has involved research as much as politics, and it is much criticized by the supporters of a 'relational approach' (which I will return to shortly), both for the quality of the knowledge it produces and for its political consequences (Schram 2019).

The subfield of poverty studies offers other useful hints to understand discursive shifts. Specialization in the policy field, indeed, runs the risk of making politics disappear from the analysis. Welfare programmes are therefore sometimes analysed ignoring the underlying political rationale and the political goals they serve, resulting in a weak comprehension of public intervention (Soss et al. 2011). More specifically, they often tend to take for granted the explicit objective of policies – namely, to reduce poverty and social exclusion – while neglecting a long-known function of welfare: the government of the poor in order to ensure their cooperation and integration, and to inhibit their disruptive potential. This of course is not to say that sociology failed to understand the social control function of welfare state as a tech-

nology of citizenship (Cruikshank 1999); it simply means that the more research gets close to the policy system, the more it works within its narratives, without questioning its explicit objectives, and therefore contributing to naturalize them. The primacy of welfare's control and regulation function over the emancipatory function is often recognized with regard to forms of proto-welfare such as the Poor Laws, which aimed to protect society from the poor, rather than the opposite. However, the representation of contemporary welfare as a way to 'regulate' (Piven and Cloward 1971), 'punish' (Wacquant 2009) or 'discipline' (Soss et al. 2011) the poor is the object of a very small – though well-established – minority of the critical scientific community.

The loss of relevance of the analysis of political goals and their overarching rationales is certainly not limited to poverty studies. The Third Way approach to welfare research, indeed, boosted this trend by means of its effort to dismiss ideological policy making, and to focus on means rather than ends. Once again, the involvement of scholars in effectiveness evaluation brought about a dramatic decrease of reflection on the moral and axiological basis of welfare. As Sanderson (2002, p. 70) brilliantly highlights, this approach 'reduces questions of ambiguity to those of uncertainty, thus obscuring or neglecting important political, social and moral judgements', and therefore consistently narrowing the discursive space.

All these processes tend to confine the gaze of the social science of welfare and poverty, which is therefore often 'constructed in ways that greatly constrain its ability to be a source for alternative policy approaches. The result is that existing welfare policy, with all its limitations, is affirmed in general even as it is challenged in the specific' (Schram 1995, p. xxvi).

Following Katz, it may be argued that the consequences of this dependence on political agenda and lack of capacity to imagine alternatives goes beyond the legitimation of the existing order. In his view, indeed, 'research failed to shore up the intellectual foundation of the welfare state' (Katz 2013, p. 155), so that 'almost no one noticed that it had crumbled, until it was too late' (ibid.). The neoliberalization of welfare, in this perspective, lies much more in the discursive dimension than in the policy solutions adopted by policy makers or in budget cuts. Indeed, 'the terms of contemporary welfare policy discourse, such as "dependency," "self-sufficiency," "personal responsibility," "labor activation," and even "contract," or "assetbuilding," invoke historical and social contexts associated with western, liberal capitalism that impart particular meanings to isolated actions' (Schram 2006, p. xii).

And it is precisely this framing of individual behaviour with its normative consequences that turns discourses into self-fulfilling prophecies that get people to enact the relevant discursive practices (ibid.).

The importance of the discursive space as a superordinate dimension, in which both policy making and research act, helps with figuring out the prominent role of policy sociology in relation with the other types of sociology emerging from Burawoy's division of sociological labour. The inextricable bond with welfare systems acted as an obstacle to the development of an independent discourse that affected the whole discipline. As Fridjonsdottir notices:

> certainly, the discourse of a social scientific discipline may be elaborated in more-or-less conscious detachment from public and political discourse. However, even so public discourse may well exert a strong indirect influence on disciplinary developments … In some periods, such interactions may well amount to a virtual invasion of the domain of the social sciences. This may be so even in the case of disciplines which have earned a far greater reputation for being 'rigorous' – to use a favourite term of economists in characterizing what they perceive to be a key virtue of their own theorizing – than sociology has ever ventured to lay claim to. (Fridjonsdottir 1990, p. 248)

Public sociologists' failure in shaping the borders of the discursive space set by policy sociology is what makes Piven affirm that '[w]ittingly or unwittingly, at least some public sociologists had served the new political elites instead of the public' (Piven 2007, p. 163). For this reason, in her perspective, a public sociology cannot exist without a clear choice of interlocutors, which entails 'breaking out of the too-comfortable pattern of treating government as our patron' (ibid.). The possibility of a positive interaction with policy research seems to be simply out of the question: public sociology should develop against policy research, and not together with it.

Piven's argument finds equivalents in the debate on governance and on its effects on the narrowing of the discursive space, which are not limited to the policy making process and its participants, but extend to civil society as a whole (Gaynor 2011). In this sense, guaranteeing the openness of the discursive space necessarily requires an exit choice from the political system (Davies 2007).

PUBLICS AND PARTISANSHIP: CONCLUSIVE REMARKS ON A POLITICIZED SOCIOLOGY

Critical arguments on the narrowing of the discursive space are inevitably connected with a reflection on the different publics of public sociology and to the almost inevitable choices researchers have to make. Facing the primacy of policy issues in the debate, critics of Burawoy's 'ostensible political neutrality' (Zussman and Misra 2007, p. 11) suggest that public sociology should explicitly choose the point of view of those suffering from marginalization and exclusion: in Piven's words, the 'people at the lower end of the many hierarchies that define our society' (Piven 2007, p. 163). This choice implies, in her view, the transformation of public sociology into a politicized one, and an overcoming of the too-wide objective of engaging 'multiple publics in multiple ways' that characterized Burawoy's early theorization together with an idea of partisanship simply – or simplistically – declined in terms of defending the interest of humanity.

Beyond the complex theme of partisanship – to which I will return shortly – the question of the public deserves further consideration. Indeed, welfare sociology, and even more so poverty research, experienced in their development a sort of polarization, consisting in narrowing the target to policy makers and welfare beneficiaries or the poor, almost ignoring the wider public that stands between the two, both as a target and as a research object. Apart from the specific branch of studies on welfare legitimacy (Van Ooschot et al. 2017), the role of public opinion has often been neglected (Piston 2018), with another possible perverse effect on the discursive space. In fact, as Piston notes about the well-known distinction between deserving and undeserving poor, this ended up 'assuming a one-to-one correspondence between the views of political elites and the views of the public' (ibid., p. 23), thus reinforcing the normativity of a distinction which, on the contrary, is surprisingly rare among the wider public, who appear far more 'pro-poor' than the general perception would suggest.

Recognizing the need to widen the public of sociology, and assuming as more or less shared its emancipation from the point of view of those in power, does not automatically solve the problems with partisanship. Two major problems arise, which are to do, respectively, with what partisanship means, and with how to promote the interests of those with whom we are siding.

The first question can be effectively addressed by going back to a debate far in time but highly relevant in its content: that between Gouldner (1968) and Becker (1967) at the end of the 1960s. While critically addressing Becker's statement of the impossibility of an objective sociology in the field of welfare, and the need to decide 'whose side we are on', Gouldner introduced some cautions about a simplified representation of partisanship. This, indeed, runs the risk of falling into a simplistic identification with the disadvantaged, driven by a 'titillated attraction to the underdog's exotic difference' (Gouldner 1968, p. 106), and which does not duly consider, among other things, the existing difference of status between the researcher and his public. The danger of 'talking for', instead of 'talking with' should therefore be taken into account, as well as the risk of having the pretension to decide who the 'real' oppressed are. Gouldner's proposal, far from being prone to the will of the 'upper bureaucracy', clearly identified as non-embodying the general interest *per se*, is therefore to promote a partisanship based on 'values' rather than 'factions', and more specifically the value of not being compliant with any form of human suffering.

Given the ambiguities related to the notion of partisanship, a second set of problems is to do with how to engage those with whom we are siding, and how to improve their conditions. Public sociologists in the field of welfare, and especially those dealing with poverty, need to address two obstacles. The first is the asymmetry intrinsic in the relation between the researcher and the public (Adler and Adler 1987), often more visible in this field than in others, which makes the task of breaking the boundaries between 'subjects' and 'objects' of the research harder to accomplish (Busso et al. 2019). The second obstacle – strictly related, though analytically distinct – is the weakness of the political voice of those who experience poverty and social exclusion. This is not only due to the lack of material means allowing them to have weight in the political context, but also to the social undesirability of an identity that makes it unsuitable to 'to constitute a salient categorical identity for those affected. Collective action is difficult without common identification' (Lister 2004, p. 152).

Whatever the idea of partisanship may be, the challenges for a public sociology of welfare that acts within a narrowed discursive space are not only concerned with its politicized nature, which of course calls into question the individual positioning of researchers as well as of the discipline as a whole, but also with its politicizing potential. Indeed, contrasting discursive depoliticization can be seen as a precondition to promote the 'capability for voice' (Bonvin 2012) of welfare beneficiaries, and to avoid the risks related to certain models of traditional public sociology, often unaware of the social asymmetries, and limited to mere advocacy. This, in my view, implies two different tasks that are of course not new to sociologists, and have currently been addressed by well-known research programmes. The first has to do with the perimeter of actors involved and with their public role, and consists in creating the conditions for the recognition of a plurality of voices, including that of the poor; it means, in Pizzorno's words, 'recogniz[ing] each other's worth of being preserved, or – in a different terminology – of entering the game (Pizzorno 1991, p. 219). To do so, welfare sociology must necessarily enlarge its scope away from a strict focus on the socially excluded as an immanent category, to avoid the risks of individualization and responsibilization that ultimately disqualify the voices of many who suffer from the consequences of marginality. This goal has been brilliantly advocated by relational poverty scholars, who highlight the relevance of 'understand[ing] entanglements of cultural politics that produce classificatory schemes (racial hierarchies, deserving/undeserving, legal/illegal and so on) together with political-economic

processes that produce a range of forms of poverty politics in the current conjuncture' (Crane et al. 2020, p. 340).

A focus on processes and relations is seen as a way to repoliticize poverty by many means, such as recognizing its collective nature and therefore collective responsibilities, uncovering the dual nature of welfare politics as a way to contrast but also produce social exclusion, and ultimately identifying the power relations that exists within a society. This also brings about an unveiling of ambiguity that allows people to speak on the basis of their values rather than of their knowledge.

This approach leads to an overcoming of hierarchies of actors and goals, and to a legitimation of 'unthinkable politics' (ibid.), which is actually the essence of the second challenge of a politicizing sociology, namely that of enlarging the range of possibilities and policy alternatives beyond the well-known and currently legitimated solutions. The analytical argument is well known in the wide debate on science–politics relations, where scholars such as Pielke have denounced the 'desperate' need to expand the range of policy options (Pielke 2007, p. 141), and has been put into practice by scholars dealing with the topic of universal basic income: a policy almost non-existent in practice, but which is gaining growing interest, also outside the boundaries of the academic debate. As suggested by the most authoritative voice in this debate, Philippe Van Parijs (2013), this kind of utopian thinking does not imply a merely abstract thinking, but requires 'answers to many factual questions' (ibid., p. 173), which challenge sociologists in their field of expertise and do not imply a biased or non-objective practice of the discipline. Therefore, he suggests, 'utopian thinking is not just a slightly embarrassing hobby indulged in by a handful of marginal members of the profession, but it can claim to be a central dimension of every respectable sociologist's job' (ibid., p. 172). If, following Rancière, politics has renounced 'its long complicity with ideas of future times and other places', ending 'the voyage to the isles of utopia … and embracing the waves, in the natural, peaceful movement of growth' (Rancière 1995, pp. 5–6), why should (public) sociology do the same?

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19. Critical sociologies of work in the cultural industries: pathways to 'creative justice'?

Mark Banks

INTRODUCTION

In simplest form, the cultural industries might be defined as organized worlds of symbolic production. More precisely, they exist as activities organized around the production of goods primarily valued as aesthetic or expressive, rather than simply utilitarian and functional. This includes various publicly and privately funded activities that generate literature, poetry, plays, television shows, films, music, art, fashion, games, designs and advertising, and other widely acknowledged cultural or 'symbolic' texts and objects; yet tends to exclude activities such as (say) science, finance, construction and engineering, which have obvious symbolic content, but are led by more practical or 'useful' desires and purposes (Banks, 2007; Hesmondhalgh, 2012; Miége, 1979). Regardless of specificity, the production of all these cultural goods creates a (potentially) profitable intellectual property that both demands – and tends to ensure – organization around a more or less complex industrial model, depending on the activity in question. Furthermore, one of the principal features of the cultural industries is that they offer people cultural work that appears to be both meaningful and desirable.

To work in culture is a form of prestige, especially in those more autonomous and authorial occupations and jobs that demand specialist creative skills and abilities. In 2015, a YouGov public poll[1] identified the United Kingdom public's 'most desirable job' to be 'author', and also included television presenter, interior designer and journalist in its top ten of desired professions. The esteem garnered by people who work in music, journalism, theatre, television and the wider arts – even if they toil in mundane or backstage roles – is testament to the respect and reverence bestowed on cultural work. Cultural work is widely seen as admirable, glamorous and good. Governments and employers also tend to present such work as exciting and appealing; and open to all comers with the right ambition, drive and talent. The idea that cultural work is a functioning meritocracy where creative talent is the primary qualification for advancement is, however, one of our more pernicious occupational myths. Similarly, the sense that people are autonomous, respected and well treated in cultural work – not just in terms of pay and conditions, but also in terms of having their labour and the products of their labour appropriately valued and recognized – is also too readily assumed. This chapter therefore begins from a challenge to the idea of cultural work as being intrinsically good, open and inclusive. More fundamentally, my opening premise is that while cultural work certainly has the potential to offer good and meaningful work to a wider public, this potential is not being fulfilled, and so we now need to think more urgently about how to advance greater social justice in the context of the cultural industries and cultural work. In the terms of reference of this *Handbook*, such urgency is part of a necessary commitment to public sociology of a particular kind: one committed to critical and normative enquiry aimed – in this case – at broaden-

ing opportunity to participate in the social production of knowledges and in the re-politicizing of everyday life, including in the domain of the (cultural) workplace (see Burawoy, 2005).

The focus on justice is especially driven by recognition of some of the social injustices that now pervade cultural work; most obviously manifest in the form of workplace inequalities. While governments have tended to present evidence of rapid and expansive growth in cultural (or 'creative') industry jobs, incomes and revenue, with increased benefits and opportunities for all, research from critical social science, public policy and the third sector has offered a much more critical perspective.

Firstly, for the majority, the best kinds of creative jobs in culture are becoming more exclusive and harder to obtain. In cultural work, as in society at large, the most vital factors in determining both opportunity and outcome remain class and parental background, or the 'social composition' of presenting candidates (Husen, 1974). Ethnicity and gender also play significant parts in shaping recognition of cultural ability, reward and achievement. Research has consistently shown cultural work as a viable career becoming limited to a narrow and more socially privileged constituency, comprised of either those who can afford to work for free or low pay, buoyed by independent incomes or inherited wealth, or those who can draw nepotistically on a wide array of social and cultural contacts and resources to smooth their way into opportunity (see e.g. Brook et al., 2020; Cohen, 2012; Conor et al., 2015; Eikhof and Warhurst, 2013).

Secondly, especially in low-status, 'below the line' and backstage work, wages seem to be stagnant or evaporating, opportunities for secure or long-term work diminishing, and work environments becoming more oppressive and unmanageable, especially when compared with the conditions enjoyed by some of the more established industry elite and those occupying executive and managerial ranks. Numerous studies have now drawn attention to low pay, precarity and insecurity (e.g. Bain and Maclean, 2013; de Peuter, 2014; Gill and Pratt, 2008), oppression and exploitation, as well as physical and mental abuse (Qiu, 2016; Quigg, 2015). The glamour and appeal of cultural work is no doubt a contributing factor in maintaining the levels of exploitation and ill-treatment that ordinary workers are now routinely forced to endure.

Work in the cultural industries is therefore increasingly marked by deep inequalities, as well as wider injustices, at the expense of a fair and democratic access, and inclusive and appropriately rewarded public contributions to the vital process of culture-making.

What can be done? Certainly, there is now much opposition to cultural work inequality. This has taken the form of some recently intensified arguments, lobbying and action by workers and activists themselves, as well as support from wider publics. Academics have contributed here too, both as activists and in their role as professional and public intellectuals. My own small contribution here has been to propose the idea of 'creative justice' as a conceptual model for helping us to advance the case for a more socially just cultural work. In a previous book (Banks, 2017), I outlined a case for developing creative justice as a normative philosophy of cultural work, one that would rest on foundational principles designed to anchor conceptions of what fair or just cultural work might actually look like or be. To summarize briefly, I proposed that a more socially just sharing of jobs and opportunities in cultural industries workplaces was justifiable on three fundamental grounds:

- Economic grounds: it is of social benefit that everyone who wishes to should have a fair chance to try to enter, participate in and earn a living from cultural work.

- Cultural grounds: in cultural work, people should have fair and equal opportunities to obtain cultural recognition and respect, and to express themselves and their interests, within certain limits.
- Political grounds: opportunity to participate in cultural work strengthens access to the democratic polity, assuming a pluralist, multivocal society that permits cultural dialogue between different democratically inclined parties and interests.

These three conditions were adapted from the tripartite and 'participatory' conditions for social justice outlined by Nancy Fraser (2013). Under such conditions, I posited that all adult members of society would be 'able to interact with one another as peers' (Fraser, 2013, p. 184), as moral and juridical equals. In such terms, I proposed that a 'creatively just' society would be one that maximizes the social distribution of the range of economic, cultural and political opportunities and rewards associated with cultural industries production. Creative justice would therefore reside in a world where these conditions were able to be met and maintained, to the maximum possible standard.

The purpose of this chapter, however, is not to elaborate the details of my own theory. Rather, the purpose is to discuss some of the sociological perspectives that have informed it. More precisely, my aim in this chapter is to critically discuss some of the ways in which sociological thought has sought to develop various ways of thinking about justice and fairness in the organization of cultural work. In doing so I inevitably reveal something of my own preferences and prejudices, yet also, I hope, give fair dues to the range of theories deployed by others in their quests to identify their own understandings of what I have specifically termed 'creative justice': ways of conceiving of justice, fairness and equality in organized worlds of symbolic production. Ultimately, I hope to provoke thought in others interested to ground and devise their own normative theories of something like 'creative justice'.

THREE SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO CULTURAL WORK AND JUSTICE

In what follows, I will discuss – somewhat schematically – three contrasting sociological approaches to the understanding of cultural work. I will refer to these as two 'critical' (and usually more 'objectivist' or 'realist') lines of thinking (see Burawoy, 2005 for a summary of critical sociology as mindset and approach), and one more 'pragmatic' (and usually more 'relativist' and 'social constructionist') approach. I will outline how the different assumptions and claims that underpin these two approaches might point towards different understandings of how fairness and justice might be conceived in cultural work. Each is premised on contrasting understandings of how work is organized, and each has different assumptions about how work is, or ought to be, judged as a 'just' or ethical endeavour. As we shall see, each has its own strengths and weaknesses.

Critical Sociology 1: Objectivist/Realist

The first critical strand, which is not at all unified, draws variously on different traditions in anti-capitalist and cultural critique – mainly Marxian political economy, structuralism, neo-Aristotelianism, and more materialist versions of feminism and cultural studies – but

does in my view tend to converge around some kind of objectivity[2] and implicit realism. This is not to say such writers should be regarded as 'critical realists'[3] in the formal sense (most would likely claim that they are not), or that they disavow subjectivity or social construction, but rather to suggest that there is some ontological sense of both the 'objective' and the 'real' underpinning their work. Their work is objective in the sense it rests on an ontological politics that believes it is possible to state objectively the conditions under which human beings might differently (and justly) flourish or suffer at work. It is real in the sense that it (implicitly) assumes that the worlds it seeks to describe do not simply exist in the heads of researchers or research subjects, but outside of them also. Here, I would include my own work, as well as the work of writers such as David Hesmondhalgh and Sarah Baker (2010), Melissa Gregg (2009), Rick Maxwell (2015), Kate Oakley (2014), Jack Qiu (2016) and Anamik Saha (2018), but also some of the earlier field-defining contributions of Angela McRobbie (1998), Rosalind Gill (2002), Andrew Ross (2000) and Gillian Ursell (2000), most of which make no explicit realist claims. This approach is most commonly expressed in research that tries to describe and understand the objective consequences for human beings that might arise through their good or ill-treatment, and specifically their discrimination, exploitation and alienation in the cultural industry workplace. Above all, this research (although partly concerned with discourse and social-construction) is also concerned with sufferings and harms that are judged to exist objectively, and what to do about them.

Such research, therefore, to a greater or lesser extent, tends to adopt a normative orientation towards its object of inquiry (and, I have to say, mostly it looks at the world of cultural work and says, 'Things are pretty bad'). Conventionally, of course, social science has been suspicious of 'normativity', a term often used pejoratively to infer the suspect presence of ethnocentricism, ideology or bias. It was once widely held that in order to be objective (in the sense of neutral or value-free), social science should disavow any normative claims. But the idea of a non-normative social science is not only impossible, it is self-contradicting, in that it uses a normative position (that normativity is wrong or bad) in order to disavow normativity (see Fekete, 1988; Sayer, 2011). Any critical social science worthy of the name must itself in some way be normative: it must adopt an orientation of evaluation and judgement in order to be effective as critique; that is, to be able to say why some things are better or worse than others, or indeed to argue for any kind of position, since even a principled non-prescription is itself based on a normative claim. This does not mean that such normative claims are always right or infallible – often they can be wrong – but it is a requirement of critique that it seeks to evaluate and then to posit a fallible alternative to the actual, otherwise it can only ever merely describe what already exists, and by doing so exclude the possibility of theorizing any kind of emancipatory change (Adorno, 1967; Diken, 2015; Sayer, 2011).

Accordingly, such approaches, as found in cultural work studies, do tend to foreground a strong sense of critical theory as the means to offering a normative social critique and models for social change. This often proceeds by addressing empirical cases through the use of concepts – such as 'inequality', '(self)exploitation', 'patriarchy', 'domination', and so on – all of which are assumed to describe real, historically prior (but changeable) entities, with their own objective effects. Such entities are assumed to be both general (applying across cases), and grounded and articulated in specific experience. Furthermore, in their (mostly) ethnographic inquiries with cultural workers and managers, the kinds of approaches I have in mind are less concerned with the idea of uncovering opinions or value-judgements, or what might be regarded by some social scientists as mere subjective and arbitrary preferences, and instead

focus on the range of things that matter to people, in an objective sense, in terms of shaping the specific qualities of their lives. Here workers' values and experiences are understood not simply as 'subjective', but also as a kind of multifaceted and non-arbitrary reasoning about events and circumstances – a process that involves affective and emotional, as well as rational, dimensions – grounded in some sense of what actually matters to the human capacity for flourishing and the well-being of the persons involved. These might include (say) objective human needs for care, nurturing, physical sustenance, maintenance of bodily health and integrity, socialization, recognition, or freedom from abuse or violence. Thus, in its quest for social justice, such an approach seeks to identify 'good' work and flourishing, but also 'bad' work and harms, and to develop both case-specific and more general categories for describing and understanding them, as explored in different empirical situations. To further clarify the relation between the subjective and objective here, while not explicitly stated, such work seeks to categorize and account for both 'subjective' phenomena (in the sense of people's own discursively shaped, located experiences and understandings as individual 'subjects'), but also 'objective' phenomena (bodies, entities, forces, structures and events), that shape how people experience the world both subjectively (as language-using, interpreting subjects) and objectively (as sentient beings with particular human needs, capacities and vulnerabilities). In such an approach, therefore, 'exploitation', 'sexism' and 'low pay' might conceivably be understood as both social and linguistic constructs, discursively made and subjectively experienced, and as real forms of harm with objective consequences.

Since critical approaches tend to not to mask (but simply take for granted) their normative orientation to cultural work, they are open to challenge. Opponents might argue that because all descriptions of work (and the human well-being to which they pertain) are always culturally specific and located, then any strongly normative claims might tend inevitably towards ethnocentricism, undue partiality or oppressive 'normalizing'. This can indeed be a danger; but it is not inevitable. Such criticism ignores not only that all social science approaches are in some way normative and evaluative (even when they claim not to be), but also that the evaluative work which goes on in critical analysis – evaluation being based on close attentiveness to the case under consideration, the vital intellectual activity that occurs between the 'is' and the 'ought' – is more often undertaken with the presumption that while research findings might be in some way 'factual' or 'objective', they are also fallible and open to potential future challenge and revision (see Sayer, 2011). Such research tends to accept, as most social science perspectives do (either implicitly or explicitly), that there is a need to be modest and provisional about one's claims; or at the very least to recognize the potential for them to be revised or challenged. Nevertheless it remains a valid concern (especially amongst poststructuralist and postcolonial theorists) that such critical theory runs the risk of projecting a fixed political viewpoint or a value-laden (but ultimately dogmatic and unreflexive) analytical perspective. A further concern is that such approaches might tend to impose general tenets or precepts for justice that might deny or disclaim the complexity of what goes in specific empirical situations, where the standard (often Western or Anglocentric) 'rules' or criteria for justice might not apply.

However, while acknowledging these concerns, the approaches to cultural work study I have in mind, far from being prescriptive and universalizing, tend perhaps to resonate more strongly with the kind of 'plural objectivism' elaborated by Andrew Sayer (2011). A plural objectivist seeks not to impose a singular notion of value, or to posit absolute truth; but neither do they accept that just any kind of value (or reasoning) is legitimate. As Sayer puts it:

> the objectivist conception of well-being does not assume that there is only one good way of living – [so] it is compatible with pluralism, but not with relativism. Pluralism in this context is the view that there are many kinds of well-being, but that not just *any* way of life constitutes well-being ... relativism (is) [of course] the idea that what is good is simply relative to one's point of view. (Sayer, 2011, p. 135)

In short, this first kind of critical cultural work research has a clear and objective sense of social justice and injustice; and a language to describe what it regards as subjective experience and the objectively real phenomena that shape people's lives. It tends to stand implicitly opposed to social science approaches where values are regarded only as local conventions or norms (that is, socially arbitrary), or, alternatively, as power-laden, linguistic conceits. It proposes that through shared commitment to rational and reasoned (but appropriately tentative and reflexive) debate, societies can come to some agreement over how people who work in culture might lead lives that enable them to better flourish, and to support or minimize harm to themselves and others. For what we might refer to as these more 'objectivist' writers on cultural work, it seems that although there might be no way of identifying an absolute or infallible set of values or justice principles, there are values that might be regarded as more (or less) justified, or premised on some better sense of their truth or falsity, that societies might collectively evaluate and elect to adopt. This is not simply for reasons of their practical adequacy (to adopt a realist term), but also, importantly, because of the sense that to do so is both right and just. Might the values of anti-slavery, gender pay equity and anti-racism be such examples? Are they truths practically adequate enough for us to accept as objectively conducive to all human flourishing: standard values that we might live by? A critical-objectivist might say so, but convincing others remains an issue. But that is the job of this kind of social science: it tries to identify some operable standards and to convince others of their value and necessity, while seeking to disarm accusations of universalism, or other kinds of ethnocentric or 'totalizing' thinking.

For some, however, the claims of critical or objectivist approaches appear rooted in uncertain grounds or based on naïve hope. Problems of assuming an objective external world are of course well rehearsed; for many poststructuralists 'reality' is now widely assumed to be socially constructed and contingent, and any universal claims for justice are often regarded as merely partial, or as potential tools for oppression, or else a rationalist fallacy. Naïve forms of objectivism and realism can indeed be those things, though of course there are different forms of realism which can to some extent embrace ideas of relativity and construction.[4] My view of much of this kind of critical cultural work literature is that it is implicitly rather than explicitly realist; it assumes foundationally, usually either by inference or *sotto voce*, a set of objective and external criteria by which any current, or better or worse, reality might be evaluated, based on rationalist and equalitarian principles of social justice. So, for example, writers such as Jack Qiu (2016) tend to assume that the humiliations and degradations of the exploited Apple production line worker are real rather than socially constructed, and it would be better if they did not happen and workers were treated more fairly and humanely. This is not just Jack's subjective opinion, but a reasonable assessment of people's needs based on an objective sense of what makes humans suffer or flourish. In Angela McRobbie's (1998) work, the ill-treatment of women fashion workers is not presented as simply a bloodless transgression of social norms by some firm or manager, but a real harm and form of suffering imposed upon vulnerable and disadvantaged persons.[5] Crucially, as previously stated, the views and voices of workers, and their accounts of their own lives, are taken seriously as expressing something of the reality of

their condition and situation. This is not to say that these views are infallible and incontestable – indeed, they might well be mistaken or wrong[6] – but neither are they simply 'subjective'[7] opinion or merely a product of discourse. To regard them only as such would be not only reductive and patronizing, but also potentially dangerous, since it might lead us to misrecognize or misunderstand the genuine harms or suffering felt by others; and prevent us from doing something about them (Sayer, 2011). What matters here, then, is developing some sense of the range of operable values that we would wish to see foregrounded in the organization of 'good' and 'just' cultural work; that take account of objective human needs, as well as issues of social construction, cultural specificity and subjectivity.

Critical Sociology 2: Bourdieusian

Allied to these approaches – but also somewhat different – is another kind of critical sociology, exemplified best in the work of Pierre Bourdieu (see e.g. Bourdieu, 1984, 1993, 1996, 1998). Bourdieu's understanding of cultural production has much in common with the kinds of the approaches outlined previously, in that it locates social power and the will to accumulate (and dominate) within the confines of capitalist social structures; with what he terms the 'economic field' tending to exert significant control over the field of cultural production, and the cultural work it contains. Yet, at the same time, Bourdieu also gives credence to the idea that individuals (at least to some extent) are creative social actors, able to negotiate within the confines of the 'habitus' and 'fields' in which they exist, and make their own experience in worlds of art and culture.

Both Bourdieu and the previous approaches I outlined are 'critical' in the sense that they are somehow concerned with the injustices and inequalities that pervade society. The best of Bourdieu's work – studies of inequality in educational selection and attainment, the production of culture and the valuation of cultural goods, and the social reproduction of class-structured patterns of taste and judgement – appears to be based on an assumption that there is something fundamentally unjust about the ways these systems work, and that they might theoretically be differently organized, given a different set of circumstances. For example, Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) illuminate processes of selection in the school and university. Here, social inequalities are reproduced wholesale, as the socially privileged are elevated into desirable positions at the expense of their more disadvantaged peers, who are excluded through processes of homophily and misrecognition rather than through objective assessment of capacity and talent. We can also use Bourdieu's work to identify the ways in which judgements of cultural value are (partly) tied to histories of social organization and (class) inequality, as well as exposing the ways in which artists and cultural producers compete for status and rewards in competitive endeavours marked by (unequal) struggles for various kinds of 'capital' (Bourdieu, 1984, 1993). However, while he produced consummate sociological research, there are three problems that I want to raise in relation to Bourdieu's work, that seem to inhibit its potential to offer (at least on its own) a more comprehensive account of something akin to creative justice in cultural work.

Firstly, Bourdieu has often been criticized for the lack of explicit attention paid in his work to the criteria for social justice and social reform (Swartz, 1997). Bourdieu had relatively little to say about the objective consequences of work for individuals, or the extent to which oppression, domination, exploitation, and so on, might actually affect people, or require particular kinds of intervention or remedy (though see Bourdieu, 1998 for some consideration). Much of

his work suffers from an ethical or normative deficiency: it has little to say about values that might underpin progressive social change. This does not necessarily undermine the quality of his analysis, of course, but it does beg the question of what kinds of standards or procedures for justice might underpin any Bourdieusian accounts of work and employment in culture.

Secondly, while Bourdieu's work is an attempt to resolve tensions between individualized, idiographic accounts of social reality, and more abstract and totalizing explanations, his own account of social organization tends to be marked by an over-emphasis on the more systemic and historically established structures of reproduction that (despite his best claims) often appear to overly determine the choices and judgements of individuals. This is made quite evident in his discussions of cultural value and the distinctiveness of cultural objects and practices (Bourdieu, 1996). The idea that cultural objects, texts or goods might contain their own intrinsic or objective value was disclaimed by Bourdieu, since he tended to regard a taste for culture as being less about any innate properties or qualities of the object under consideration, and rather more about an expression of the social interests of those proffering a judgement. Put simply, in his work cultural value tends to be linked to class interest and social power, with the very 'best' art and culture, and the ability to taste and appreciate its beauty, merely reflecting the dispositions and schooled abilities of those effecting apparently 'disinterested' judgements. Therefore, in Bourdieu, questions of objective quality tend to be subordinated to matters of taste: judgements of what is worthwhile in art or culture simply being expressed in terms of what people happen to like, given their social origins and position. While in the more objectivist critical approaches I have previously outlined there also has been relatively little discussion as to whether cultural objects actually have any intrinsic or objective value (not least because such studies tended to focus on conditions rather the products of labour), one or two writers have now started to explore this terrain (e.g. Born, 2010; Hesmondhalgh, 2014; Ross, 1998), highlighting that Bourdieu may well have underestimated the objective qualities of the products of the cultural industries and their relation to conditions of reception and use.

A third problem is Bourdieu's tendency to reduce questions of social action to questions of interest, which means that – in my view – he cannot do justice to the full range of qualities and values that make up the constitution of the practices of cultural work. For Bourdieu, the social world is fundamentally an arena of competition: a ceaseless quest for status and distinction in a recursive game of power. People compete with their various 'capitals' (or lack of them) in order to secure advantages relative to others across different social fields. The reproduction of the social – including the world of work – is strongly patterned and shaped by history and, for individuals, tied closely to the inheritance of advantages and disadvantages primarily associated with their class background and upbringing. The worker appears here as someone with a 'strategic interest', a player in a game; the aim of this game is to secure wealth ('economic capital'), or specific credentials and qualifications ('cultural capital'), or connections and ties ('social capital'), or some specific aesthetic prestige and recognition ('symbolic capital'); or likely some combination of all of these. So, for Bourdieu, the value of work is instrumental (even when it appears not to be so) for both owners and producers, and the particular values that cultural workers might live by – their aesthetic convictions, ethical values, embodied practices and desires, the pursuit of 'disinterest'; and 'art for art's sake' – are not so much radical and challenging, or other-directed, as inherited, prescribed and self-serving. For Bourdieu, work lacks 'objectivity' in the terms of the first kind of critical sociology I discussed – in the sense of being based on reflexive ethical evaluation and reasoning, and a sense of real human needs, or even a wider notion of social justice – and is only objective in the more limited sense

of pertaining to a set of (objective) material conditions that incline people towards reproducing certain kinds of habitual (and mostly self-serving) understanding and action. Many of the studies of cultural work in this vein have implicitly revealed this ethical deficiency, and instrumental conception of justice, by tending to focus on the competitive, strategic antagonisms that underlie cultural work (see e.g. Brook, 2015; Pinheiro and Dowd, 2009; Faulkner et al., 2008), rather than their wider moral or ethical constitution or casting (Banks, 2006). Yet, doubtless these studies and Bourdieu's oeuvre have also contributed enormously to our understanding of social organization and ethical matters in cultural work, not least through theorizing work's historically determined and habitual character, and the competitive ontology that (at least partly) drives the field of cultural production.

A Pragmatic Sociology of Cultural Work

In contrast to critical sociology there is an emerging range of cultural work study being inspired by the more celebrated work of a set of empirically focused, 'pragmatic' sociologists such as Bruno Latour, Michel Callon, Luc Boltanski, Lauren Thévenot, Antoine Hennion, and others. While hugely diverse in approach and focus, what the work of these writers shares is some antipathy to the approaches taken in the kinds of critical sociology I have outlined. In relation to cultural work specifically, perhaps the work of Antoine Hennion (e.g. Hennion, 2007) is most noteworthy and developed. His critique of conventional critical sociology and Bourdieu is especially eloquent and pointed, drawing attention to the indeterminacy of cultural taste (rather than, *à la* Bourdieu, emphasizing its social origins), and arguing that cultural production is in itself a situational and creative co-accomplishment, involving actors and social objects with autonomous capacities, rather than a process overly determined by inherited social structures or the irresistible power of capital(s). However, here I choose to illustrate the pragmatic approach somewhat differently, by looking at the particular contribution of David Stark (2009). For me, his work offers the most illuminating example of the disciplinary shift from a previously dominant 'critical sociology' to a newer (pragmatic) 'sociology of critique', at least as evidenced in (one of) the workplaces of the cultural industries.

In *The Sense of Dissonance*, Stark (2009) casts the idea of value plurality in somewhat different terms to that of critical sociology. Following Boltanski and Thévenot's (2006) influential work *On Justification*, he argues that contemporary societies (and workplaces) are best understood as sites of multiple, competing schemes of value, or 'orders of worth'. Stark shows how even the most apparently commercial organizations and industries are characterized by 'heterarchical' orderings of competing evaluative principles, where the pursuit of economic interests always runs in tandem, and interleaves and intersects with, other interdependent principles of evaluation and worth. It is the 'productive friction' (Stark, 2009, p. 18) of different orders of worth (say between the logics that make up ideas of 'productivity and efficiency', 'good citizenship' or 'creative design') that result in the vitality of new commodities or ways of producing them. The idea of intersecting 'orders of worth' is helpful for drawing attention to the plurality of motives and ends (and people's arguments and justifications for them) that circulate in workplace contexts, including the cultural industries. Stark posits not just a sense of plurality, and a legitimate co-existence of values, but a productive abrasion between values, and one that appears particularly relevant in cultural industry contexts, marked as they are by strongly contrasting and competing cultural and economic value criteria (Eikhof and Haunschild, 2007). Indeed, in *The Sense of Dissonance*, Monique Girard and Stark's own

ethnography of new media start-ups in New York is revealing in the ways in which a complex 'ecology of value' ensures that a plethora of 'divergent principles' (see Stark, 2009, p. 84) are brought to bear in creative production, which combine in tension with respect to different interests and intended outcomes. Stark's empirically rich approach does very well what more objectivist approaches often fail to achieve: provide a nuanced and dynamic sense of value and values *in situ*, yet in perpetual contention and motion. The overall purpose of Stark's work is to show that economic innovation proceeds through 'dissonance', through the productive friction of competing value-criteria in constant institutional play under conditions of a imputed discursive equivalence; where an array of orders of worth are always engaged in, and only temporarily resolving, linguistic disputes to serve the pragmatic principle of 'getting things done'. Here, for Stark, as Blokker describes for pragmatic sociology more generally, emphasis is not placed on identifying a set of general tenets or standards through which workplace justice might be recognized or applied:

> In contrast … to the political-philosophical endeavour [of critical sociology] to come up with a singular or reduced set of principles for a society to be just, pragmatic sociology presumes a plurality of criteria of justification, related to a plurality of views of the common good, which are understood as in principle irreducible and between which no ultimate hierarchy can be identified. (Blokker, 2011, p. 252)

As a pragmatist, Stark is less concerned with playing arbiter to any particular values, or (as any kind of objectivist/realist might) establishing some rational basis for evaluating between them based on external criteria; and much more concerned with revealing discrete empirical 'situations' in which different values might compete and intersect, relationally, according to their own internal logic of justification. Put in simpler terms, if the objectivist looks 'out' for justice, the pragmatist looks 'in'. The implications for social justice are therefore quite different in the two approaches.

On the one hand, the value of Stark's approach, characteristic of pragmatism more generally, is to reassert the significance of individuals and groups as moral agents, with discreet 'critical capacities', acting in accordance with their own grounded evaluations and assessments of what matters to them. Tests of justice that are therefore able to be worked out *in situ*, rather than scripted by social structure or any 'universal procedure' (Boltanksi and Thévenot, 1999, p. 365). Yet, at the same time, pragmatism seeks to decouple justice from external referents or a basis in the objective. Since Stark's ontological claim is that the social world is structured according to principles of instability, dispersal and heterarchy, meaning that values and valuation will differ in their legitimacy only according to the specific context, so the kind of problems that pertain to the new digital media workplace (for example, exploitation, hyper-intensity, burnout) can be recognized, but only as expressions of a locally dysfunctional heterarchy. And it is telling that his prescription for their remedy is couched not in the language of addressing systemic failure, or challenging the effects of hierarchical managerial control or capitalistic power (since these are disregarded as outmoded and crude abstractions), but in noting that workers can hope to adopt highly personalized engagements of 'looking out for each other',[8] by some assertive self-management in what is termed the 'civic order of worth'.

But if this is 'critique', then it is not clear what is being criticized. At the heart is a claim about the potential of radical, decentred plurality: about local powers and the abrasive complexity of value and values in productive parallel motion. In this respect it offers a necessary corrective to crude structuralisms, or naïve realisms. It offers a highly nuanced theory of

action. Yet it rests on the assumption that justice is an internal matter of dispute, without any externally stable or accepted standard or referent, and so disavows any claims to objectivity in the sense displayed by the critical sociologist. Further, such a 'black box' approach overlooks that while the context may always be in some sense singular and unique, it now seems that the actual orders of worth which dominate in the contemporary economies of advanced capitalism are showing a remarkable performative consistency and hierarchy of pattern. The economic present shows us that what Stark (borrowing from Boltanski and Thévenot) calls the 'the market order' and 'the industrial order' tend routinely to override the 'civic' and 'domestic' orders that are concerned with equality, social justice and mutual care; but the reasons for this are not necessarily located in the context of any one firm, or set of circumstances, however uniquely the arrangement is expressed. These circumstances would likely be regarded by critical sociology as shaped by objective, structural relations that also transcend their local contexts of expression.

Additionally, the pragmatist assumption that orders of worth interact, compete and co-adjust in a plane of discursive equivalence might be true in some empirical cases, but neglects that the substantive ability to voice one's arguments or justifications is relative, and dependent on the resources one has prior to entering and attempting to participate in the arena of polyvocality. Not everyone can assert their case, never mind have it heard. Stark is broadly silent on those historically established, deeply sedimented and external forces (of inherited power, inequality, systems of social hierarchy) that shape the capacity to act locally and to voice or activate one's order of values. It also skirts the fact that one of the objective consequences of competition in the scheme of orders might be a diminution of one's powers to speak, presuming that one already had such powers in the first place. But what is to be done about these issues, which do not go unacknowledged in his work, and cannot be solved within a pragmatist framework; or can, but only in a limited way?

How does one move from an analysis of the heterarchy of located tensions (say) between economic value and social values, to a more general sense of what is valuable or just? How does one account for, say, cultural work domination, or injustice beyond the case in question, with a view to ameliorating its pernicious effects at a societal level? One cannot have a separate policy for every single organization or firm. Yet just as Boltanski and Thévenot (1999, p. 364) argue for the need to leave behind the quest to 'discover [general] normative rules and procedures leading to justice', so Stark's work suggests the need to develop procedures based on actors' own located senses of justice in specific situations. This, again, is to counter the possibility of claims to 'utopian' forms of objectivity, or ethnocentrism, or vulgar systemic explanation. But while located and specific experiences must always be taken into account, they are insufficient in themselves, at least from any implicitly objectivist or realist perspective, precisely because they are specific and cannot be properly evaluated unless compared against a wider set of similar or different cases, and against established and more objective ethical standards. And like an objectivist account, they might also be wrong; but it would be hard to know this, or even recognize the category of 'wrongness' from within a purely formalist pragmatism. In other words, the issue of the external standard by which any criticism of (cultural) work might be judged is not satisfactorily addressed. For example, in my own research I have often noted how white jazz and classical musicians and selectors have often assumed that their black counterparts cannot read and interpret music scores to the same academic standard, because of some innate biological characteristics; that is, black players tend to be regarded as being 'less technical' or 'intellectual', and to base their approach in a somewhat

more 'natural', 'feel' or 'groove'-based style (Banks, 2017). This is a racist fallacy, a form of misrecognition, but not one that we can understand only through an evaluation of the 'orders of worth' present in jazz itself.

Stark's approach, brilliantly rich in many respects, loses sight – in a realist sense – of what might be called the things that objectively matter. It might be said to lack the external and emancipatory 'conception of the good' that is necessary for case evaluation and critique. In this kind of pragmatic work, quite deliberately, it is assumed that what is valuable is simply what people say is valuable; and there is no real benchmark of human flourishing against which this might be tested or judged. Pragmatic analysis therefore seems incapable of providing any objective ethical grounds that would justify an intervention to remedy 'ill-being' in cultural (or any kind of) work. As Bulent Diken (2015, p. 6) notes, without this external referent, such theory therefore lacks 'the promise of emancipation' central to any properly critical social science: a necessary vision of alterity beyond the same. To that end, on its own, while useful and instructive, it fails to provide an adequate basis for theorizing what I am terming 'creative justice'.

CONCLUSION: PATHWAYS TO CREATIVE JUSTICE?

In this chapter I have critically outlined some of the sociological theories that have helped me to develop a theory of cultural work: the organized production of symbolic goods in the cultural industries. In particular I have considered how these approaches offer different conceptual resources that might help others to develop their own pathways towards theorizing (and possibly enacting) greater justice in cultural work. The key questions that remain are: is there a set of justice standards to which we might cede, if not an absolute truth, then at least a greater truth or at least a more adequate one? Or is 'good work' in cultural industries merely that which we say is good, or just, and only able to be realized partially, locally and in the contingencies of its undertaking? To intervene in a political or policy sense, to make better cultural work available to all, fairly and justly, do we have to assume at least an implicitly real world, made somehow manageable through recognition of shared standards, or should even that hubristic and oppressive ambition be left to lie, while we embrace the dissonance of unreality and the local good that is realized only in its own pragmatic or discursive justification? As I have made clear, my choice has been to take the former view: proposing that a critical, more 'objective' or 'realist' approach might be better equipped to advance the public cause of social justice in the cultural industries. The ambition here is to outline a sociology of work in the cultural industries that is explicitly (rather than anti- or crypto-) normative, and that considers how we might collectively develop a better, more truthful (or at least practically adequate) sense of social justice in cultural work; one that is partly based on plural objective criteria, rather than on a more fully constructionist, relativist (or more agnostic) pragmatic approach. Such an approach is consistent with Burawoy's (2005, p. 25) notion of a 'critically-disposed' public sociology committed to normative address of justice concerns. This does not mean that such an approach can claim any privileged access to truth, or that it might possess a programmatic set of standards which might be oppressively imposed, across all cases. Nor does it mean that we should regard constructionist or pragmatic approaches as without use or merit; on the contrary, one of their great advances has been to foreground the value of deep empirical inquiry, restate the importance of sociological context, and reinforce the significance of avoiding crude forms

of totalizing thought. They remind us of the need to move beyond the confines of any established empirical and theoretical conspectus. Certainly, I advocate the need for more nuanced, situated and empirically rich research of the kind practiced by these social science approaches. But there is also an insufficiency here; and perhaps a kind of refusal. Firstly, there is insufficiency in the conception of the social world, which tends to disavow the idea that there might be an objective reality that is separate to discourses about that reality, as well as a real world of experience that relates to people's sense of what matters to them objectively in terms of their human flourishing and suffering. In that we would need conclude that some states of being – including at work – really are better than others. While constructionist or pragmatic approaches help us to see the world in 'close-up', to appreciate its empirical complexity and nuance, it is also often the case that people within those worlds become mere ciphers or relays for discourses (or simply parts of a technical 'assemblage') that have no apparent root in or bearing on a real world to which they allegedly pertain, nor derive any of their efficacy from their relation to the objective conditions of flourishing or suffering. Secondly, there is a refusal in the sense of failing to acknowledge the urgent necessity of developing critical and normative perspectives as well as relativist or crypto-normative approaches that defer or disavow the need for critical judgement, and by implication, a theory of creative justice. But I would argue that without such critique we lack the 'promise of emancipation', and the prospect of better cultural work, for all, tomorrow.

NOTES

1. See https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2015/02/15/bookish-britain-academic-jobs-are-most-desired.
2. 'Objectivity' not in the positivist sense of 'value-free' or 'neutral' or even infallibly 'true', but in the realist sense of: (1) pertaining to the properties and powers of things themselves, the very qualities they are made from, enable or contain (independent of what subjects might think about them); and (2) a fallible or practically adequate claim of 'truth'.
3. For example, see Sayer (1999).
4. 'The way reality is constructed and reconstructed is an active process and reality is itself actively involved' (Parton and O'Byrne, 2000, p. 174).
5. '[W]hen we say something like "unemployment tends to cause suffering" we are not merely "emoting" or expressing ourselves, or offering a "subjective" opinion about a purely normative matter, but making a claim (fallible, like any other of course) about what objectively happens' (Sayer, 2011, p. 42).
6. A basic presumption of any objectivist or realist understanding fallibility is that there must be something to be wrong about, since entities exist independently of the claims being made about them (see Sayer, 2011).
7. As in the sense of 'a matter of opinion'.
8. '[T]he response to the problems of heterarchy is not less heterarchy but more – a rivalry of evaluative principles not only within organizations but more broadly in the society ... a heterarchical politics that openly challenges the market metric of value by articulating alternative principles of the valuable' (Stark, 2009, pp. 210–211).

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20. Sociologies of education in an era of new critique: getting out of methodological nationalism and reconsidering education through a global perspective

Romuald Normand

INTRODUCTION

Sociologies of education are associated with the birth and development of public education. Historically, they met the societal project of reducing social inequalities, while developing knowledge on curriculum, socialization, and guidance within education systems. Since, they have diversified their methods, from large-scale surveys to school ethnographies and classroom observations, while remaining close to the state and its democratizing project for secondary education.

However, this "education for all" vision entered a crisis in the early 1980s. It can be explained in several ways: public education has been ideologically criticized, the comprehensive school model has been abandoned, marketization and privatization have developed, youth mass unemployment, school failure and drop-outs have increased, social movements have claimed for a better recognition of cultural, ethnic, racial, and religious differences. At European level, the lifelong learning strategy has been implemented in reformulating societal issues to bring together education and economy, to define new skills and certifications beyond diplomas, and to enhance non-formal and informal education.

This in-depth transformation of educational systems and policies has led to a new public sociology of education re-examining the current objects of the discipline, renewing them, while being more concerned with globalization and Europeanization. By reformulating some routinized concepts, often forged in national spaces with limited comparisons, this sociology of education, through a dialogue with policy studies, has attempted to better understand new relationships between education, society and economy in a globalized space including multiple actors.

This new public sociology of education has sought to explain and interpret new facts and reforms in education: accountability mechanisms, policy travelling under the influence of international organizations, economization, privatization, datafication, and digitalization. This new research stream has broadened studies in education policies, no longer limited to national and statist spaces, or to local communities or authorities, in characterizing transversal flows and networks that have transformed education systems and shifted boundaries between the public and the private. In the following pages, without being exhaustive, this sociological landscape is described and mapped through its coherence and diversity, while some links to social sciences are established. The reader is invited to explore this new research field shaped over the last two decades. Indeed, some societal and global transformations impacting education led to reformulating sociological critique according to what could be observed and analyzed.

First, referring to Michael Burawoy's analytical framework (Burawoy, 2005), I show how the academic sociology of education, like its expertise, focused on national space and the comprehensive school model, has been challenged by the globalization and Europeanization of education. The comparative turn and its transnational sociology have profoundly renewed the conceptualization of sociologists, while opening up a new space for criticism. I then show that this confrontation has given rise to new research objects better adjusted to social transformations in educational systems policies, but also to changes in demands and aspirations claimed by educators themselves. Without endorsing the reformist agenda carried by major international organizations, this new sociology of education has nurtured a new dialogue with emancipation projects beyond the neo-liberal ideology, but also a too narrow statist vision.

THE CRISIS OF NATIONAL SOCIOLOGIES OF EDUCATION: A WEAKENING LINK BETWEEN THE STATE AND THE "EDUCATION FOR ALL" VISION

National sociologies of education really emerged after the Second World War in a time of reducing social inequalities by the welfare state interventions. As expertise of social planning, sociology justified democratizing secondary and higher education, particularly against conservative discourses and psychologists defending IQ and eugenics, and, as Pierre Bourdieu named it, the ideology of the gift. Major surveys, such as those of James Coleman, were important moments in institutionalizing national sociologies of education when the future of economic growth seemed open to upward social mobility for working-class students (Normand, 2020). Although it took different paths in European countries, this discipline is closely associated with the state and its "education for all" vision (Normand, 2013). But this specific relationship has been weakened due to three major causes: inequalities have been redefined according to the new European lifelong learning agenda, structuralist and Marxist theories entered a crisis and national sociologies of education have been converted into new assumptions on social justice, whereas the discipline was facing limitations to characterize new relationships between education, economy, and society.

The European Lifelong Learning Agenda: Reconceptualizing Social Inequalities in Education

The European lifelong learning or Lisbon Strategy, launched during the 2000s, has considerably renewed educational issues for European Union member countries (Lange and Alexiadou, 2010). It led to creating the open method of coordination which strongly encourages states to converge in sharing common indicators and benchmarks. By promoting employability and competitive workforce for the knowledge economy, the European strategy targets "at-risk" populations (youth, women, migrants, senior workers) and conveys a new conception of inequalities focused on raising cognitive and social skills. Issues related to school dropout, early school leaving, childhood education, and literacy have supplanted those of upper mobility, stratification, access, and priority education programs. This restructuring also reflects a new relationship between the welfare state and education. The European Commission is currently developing its social investment strategy to promote inclusive education and children's well-being through targeted programs (childcare, reduction of class sizes, access to

the labor market for unqualified women). The issue of inequality is also related to extending international surveys on student outcomes supported by international organizations (Meyer and Benavot, 2013). Since 2001, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey has gained worldwide recognition in measuring education system performance and equity by testing and comparing student skills, considered as a means to reduce the inequality gap. The representation of inequalities is transformed because it endorses an international perspective (comparisons by countries, and not by social groups within the same country), and it no longer refers to issues such as structure, resources, or social reproduction within education systems but to causal factors such as school effectiveness, teaching quality, and educational leadership.

The Dismantlement of the Relationship between Sociologies of Education and the State

Beyond the new representation of inequalities in education, to which some sociologists have also contributed, the relationship between national sociologies of education and the state has been dismantled. Indeed, national sociologies of education were useful to the state when they conducted surveys to measure inequalities and to justify the comprehensive school project based on the access for all students to secondary education (Imsen et al., 2017). But since, sociologists have focused on students' capacities as well as their ethnic and cultural diversities, and they entered the public debate between multiculturalist and populist claims. They also faced a loss of legitimacy because the "equality for all" big narrative was difficult to maintain while school markets and privatization were extending their influence (Seppänen, 2003). The state itself, and its representatives, have ended up rejecting criticism addressed by national sociologies of education in terms of social/cultural domination and reproduction. They turned to blame educational professions who were also facing a moral and professional crisis (Normand et al., 2018). The radical critique of neo-liberalism long shared by sociologists was no more accepted by the reformist camp who were trying to legitimate a balance between the state and the market while new conceptions of social justice in education, particularly in terms of equity, was valued (Lingard et al., 2014). The identification of different grammars of the common good, or the recognition of differences, have also transformed sociological approaches to working-class inequalities and socialization in highlighting new moral ontologies (Thévenot, 2014). They have questioned the state capacity of ensuring a fair redistribution through bureaucratic standards and provision.

The Pitfalls of National Statism and Methodological Nationalism

Changing sociological perspectives in education could also be explained by global and Europeanizing effects (Dale and Robertson, 2009a). Those have consequences for state sovereignty, but also for new governance and knowledge that have penetrated national spaces. Beyond the European Lisbon Agenda, competition has increased between North America, Europe, and Asia, generating hybrid forms of multilateral governance that are less dependent on states' regulations, while at the same time education policies have been regionalized. Thus, various global, regional, and local scales have disrupted states' powers and challenged the European welfare model upon which education had been historically based (Dale, 1999). These new forms of coordination have promoted neo-liberal globalization and markets which have become progressively institutionalized in education systems, while enacting new types

of responsibility and accountability. Then, the European space can be considered as a structure of opportunities that changes scales through an integrated strategy, opening the door to quality regulations gradually imposed on national education systems. The decentering of the state, as has been argued by Roger Dale and Susan Robertson (2009b), who have been inspired by Bob Jessop and Henri Lefebvre, challenges methodological nationalism shared by sociologies of education when they consider the nation-state as the "container of society." Dale and Robertson show that changes in scales characterize new educational processes and policies framed and transformed by new regulatory mechanisms. They highlight the spatial and temporal dimensions of neo-liberalism through its multiple arrangements and trajectories, but also its mechanisms of standardization, harmonization, and diffusion. Rather than being confined to 'isms' (methodological nationalism, embedded statism, disciplinary parochialism, educational ethno-centrism), global governance in education can be studied through its own grammars, institutionalizing modes, and scales, as well as links between local contexts and global changes under the influence of international organizations.

TRANSNATIONAL ACTORS, GLOBAL NETWORKS, AND POLICY BORROWING: THE COMPARATIVE TURN

Globalization has led to changing scales and perspectives for some sociologists of education. Pioneering studies have shown the historical role played by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in influencing education policies, from a planning period to the design of international indicators (Henry et al., 2001). The OECD and the European Commission (EC) appeared to be increasingly focused on human capital investment in education systems. This international influence has been also analysed in terms of policy borrowing and lending, to emphasize national contexts, education system legacies and paths, translation and hybridization of international standards, as well as emerging networking actors and epistemic communities.

Policy Borrowing and Lending: New Comparative Sociologies of Education

By analyzing the global circulation of educational reforms, Gita Steiner-Khamsi and Florian Waldow have offered a better understanding of the policy borrowing and lending processes that influence national developments, in linking comparative and policy studies in education (Steiner-Khamsi and Waldow, 2012). They have studied this international circulation process by also focusing on local contexts, agencies, and impacts, while justifying political and economic reasons behind transfer from one country to another, or from one continent to another. Inspired by social learning theories, this research on policy borrowing and lending has also looked at the historical and cultural dimensions of transfer as well as the intersection of the education sector with other sectors, notably health. This research has made it possible to develop a critical approach to "standards" and "good practices" promoted by international organizations, by showing issues of power and alliances between various actors to implement reforms, but also to contest and resist them. These studies have also highlighted different mechanisms of transfer, from coercion to mimicry or institutional isomorphism, selection, and translation, as well as cultural and linguistic choices that could be made by host countries, and the role of some international donors.

A Constructivist and Political Sociology of the European Education Space

Martin Lawn and António Nóvoa early identified a European space and a movement towards Europeanization that became the touchstone for developing a substantial public sociology on European education (Nóvoa and Lawn, 2002). In studying this European "magistracy of influence," they joined the previous research on policy transfer and the role of international organizations, but they paved the way to trans-European sociological studies, notably on education quality and its political stakes, and on European actors (Lawn and Grek, 2012; Lawn and Normand, 2014). Sociologists have studied links between discourses, norms, tools, and agents, often invisible in the European educational space. They have highlighted the Europeanization of education through common frameworks, figures, and categories by showing how governing policies were being established through evaluation (Souto-Otero, 2015). They have also studied actors such as entrepreneurs, elites, experts, academics, and advisors involved in different networks, partnerships, brokerages, and other forms of soft governance. This led to a new empirical research agenda focused on political ontologies shared by European actors, their arrangements, and their diverse social, political, and epistemic commitments. This public sociology of education has been reflexive to better highlight complex effects in Europeanizing education and the shaping of a lifelong learning policy frameworks. It has shown the way in which European standardization was enacted through a calculative space guiding national educational policies, but also epistemic work among transnational actors.

Global Networks, Transnational Actors, and Policy Frameworks: A Political Sociology of Privatization

At global level, the new public sociology of education has studied the extraordinary set of actors—Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon, and Microsoft (GAFAM), philanthropic associations, think tanks, expert groups—that challenge borders between the state, public administration, and the private. The complexity of these transnational relations and exchanges reveals, beyond issues of governance, a dynamic of private interests and privatizing rationale, as illustrated by the pioneering work of Stephen Ball (2007, 2012). This privatization was previously understood through a classic opposition between the market and the state, but sociologists have become interested in different forms of regulation, marketization, and privatization of education. Influential and transnational actors (edu-business, ed-tech companies, foundations, social entrepreneurs) penetrate public education, particularly through welfare programs and digital technologies. These global policy networks have been studied in using network ethnography methods that characterize flows, mobilities, and interactions between these different actors. Thus, it is possible to reveal the entrepreneurial dynamics that, beyond financing and profitability, uses trust, reputation and marketing in persuading policymakers to rework their political agenda. Then, heterarchical relationships replace bureaucratic and administrative structures through multiple connections, both horizontal and vertical, which reinforce the interdependency between the public and the private. These regulating mechanisms have been also analyzed as a "meta-governance" or policy frameworks that transform the state's interventions throughout a new "deliverology" made of "standards," "best practices," "tool-kits," or "packages" (Gunter and Mills, 2016).

DATAFICATION, MEASUREMENT, AND STANDARDIZATION: STUDYING THE PISA PARADIGM

The advent of major international surveys and the development of accountability systems have undoubtedly increased the weight of quantitative data in education policies. In a few years, PISA has become the benchmark for the quality and performance of education systems, while at the same time it was considered as a new measurement of inequalities. This issue of quality has been the subject of major comparative research programs by the new public sociology of education. While some sociologists were interested in the complexity and contingency of new scalars of policy, as mentioned above, others identified the impact of quality assurance on education professions (Ozga et al., 2011), or the role of the PISA survey in reconfiguring education systems and policies (Sellar and Lingard, 2014; Lindblad and Popkewitz, 2004; Lindblad et al., 2018). Social theories such as those of Bob Jessop (2010) on meta-governance, Miller and Rose (2008) on governmentality, Desrosières (1998) and Porter (1995) on the socio-history of statistics, Lascoumes and Le Galès (2007) on the political study of instruments, or Michel Callon and Bruno Latour's (Latour, 1987, 2005) actor–network theory were exploited. The idea of studying political assemblages such as digitalization also corresponds to an important extension of this sociological research stream.

Governing by Numbers: A Sociology of Measurement in Education

The implementation of accountability mechanisms in education systems has been studied by the new public sociology concerned by their real effects on educators and schools, as well as the increasing instrumentalization of teaching practices. Whether education systems adopt "hard" or "soft" accountability methods, market-led or state-led governance, standardized tests and data-based reforms correspond to new performance regimes, leading to the restructuring and de-professionalization of the teaching force on behalf of transparency and participation. As proved by sociologists, these data frame problems and build solutions in giving legitimacy to some policymaking visions in a global space of international comparisons (Grek et al., 2020). These calculation techniques also help to build consensus between a multitude of political and institutional actors, who invoke neutrality and technical rationality to justify some political choices and avoid authentic debates on the future of education. Public rankings, league tables, and PISA scores serve to persuade public opinion to use school choice and comparison between schools; but parents and educators are not involved in the definition of curricula or teaching methods (Grek, 2007; Carvalho and Costa, 2016). The use of social media has become instrumental in disseminating this ideological mindset, without considering issues of discrimination, ethnicity, and race. The accountability policies reveal at the end a narrow 'new QIsm' (Gillborn and Youdell, 2001) and a regime of performativity that undermines teachers and students (Gillborn, 2008). These political technologies also serve to promote a neo-liberal vision by promoting idealistic subjects enlightened by rational choice, and pursuing their interests among options offered by market mechanisms and quality assurance. This transfer of responsibility from the state to local actors and consumers leads to diverse forms of rationality and control through governing by numbers (namely, prescriptive assessment techniques and inspection regimes, rewards and punishments, budgetary incentives, and fixed targets).

Actor–Network Theory and Political Assemblages

The new public sociology of education has focused heavily on international surveys, notably PISA, showing how they serve the global and neo-liberal policy agenda as transnational technologies of power. Sociologists have underlined this surveillance regime and global panopticon involving international organizations, states, and their agencies. In this way, an institutional order operates that goes beyond official discourses and reports, to display assemblages of apparatuses, processes, and practices that govern education systems while formulating new norms and expectations (Grek, 2014). These political and epistemic formations, their new alliances, but also the way they empower other actors and frame problems, have been put under scrutiny by sociologists. They have studied this global metrological field, their spatial relations, and temporalities beyond the reach of states. Two opposing research streams explain this global agenda and policy: a Bourdieu-inspired sociology studying the ideological formulation of interests, power games, and the economization of education largely influenced by the neo-liberal human capital theory (Lingard et al., 2005), an actor–network theory inspired by Callon and Latour, more attentive to flows of ideas, practices, and standards among socio-technical networks that instrumentalize practices by means of different performative tools and devices (Landri, 2015). The concept of policy assemblage, inspired by science and technology studies, is used to depict knowledge production while exploring the heterogeneity of diverse entities interacting in continuous processes with moments of uncertainty, controversy, stabilization, urgency, and drama that mix facts, objects, individuals, rhetoric, institutions, and protocols (Gorur, 2011, 2014). While constitutive of the knowledge being produced, these relationalities and dynamics participate in the invention of new metrologies, calculative practices, and large-scale comparisons.

A Sociology of Big Data and Digitalization

Another sociological direction was the study of digitalization and datafication linked to developing digital technologies and algorithms. Sociologists have explored technical devices and platforms as socio-technical assemblages that significantly transform relationships between actors while implementing logics and rationalities that change educational formats (Selwyn, 2012; Williamson, 2017). These socio-technical devices participate in a kind of "learnification" by conveying standards, visualizations, and interfaces which, under their apparent neutrality, define some ways of knowing, learning, and interacting with others (Landri, 2018). These modularization and individualization of learning through digital architectures are largely designed outside the field of education by industry and ed-tech business. Thus, digital tools and platforms are merely intermediaries for companies, institutions, and governments, defining and imposing new rules of conduct by introducing "good practices," embedded-assessment software, and pedagogies inspired by neurosciences and cognitive psychology that largely elude teachers. The digitalization of education also corresponds to new value chains in the information economy where marketization of knowledge, but also control of behaviors, appear to provide benefit and added value for large companies (Amazon, Google, Pearson). Business capitalizes on exchanged data and educational contents to design personalized learning programs for students and their families. These new providers contribute to extend digital products and services while this market penetrating the educational area, generating platform capitalism for which teachers and students' activities are extracted

and monetized (Decuypere et al., 2021). At the same time, digital technologies restructure traditional forms of education by promoting classroom managements detached from ordinary social interactions and physical arrangements between teacher and students, making learning relatively contingent in time and space. This digitalization is reinforced by the emergence of big data and algorithms that change evidence use and production in developing assessment techniques and emphasizing new learning conditions. Connected intelligence penetrates classrooms to offer applications that students and parents can also use on their mobile phones.

MARKETIZATION, CHOICE, PRIVATIZATION: CHALLENGING PUBLICNESS IN EDUCATION

Marketization and privatization have also provided a new object of study for the public sociology of education. The policymakers' conversion to New Right or Third Way ideologies has led to worldwide measures diversifying educational provision and offering more choice to students and parents. By ending standardized public education, inherited from the comprehensive school, education policies have combined new managerial approaches with school choice that have profoundly destabilized education professions (Gewirtz et al., 2009; Gunter et al., 2016; Normand et al., 2018). Reforming agendas inspired by advocacy networks and think tanks have differentially privatized public education, while new private actors and big industry have made additional profits at an international scale (Verger et al., 2016a, 2016b). Combined with the Global Education Reform Movement, business, consulting, and philanthropy have strongly shifted boundaries between the public and the private (Sahlberg, 2016).

Analyzing the Politicking Agenda between the New Right and New Left

In the early 1980s, the rejection of the comprehensive school model owes much to the New Right activism, as several United States (US) and United Kingdom (UK) sociologists have shown. The revival of the US right was supported by the evangelical movement, demanding religious education and prayer in schools. School choice defenders claimed for charter schools and vouchers, and right-wing politicians were eager to control professions through standards and accountability mechanisms (Apple, 2006). In the UK, manufacturing the crisis in public education was combined with neo-liberal and conservative claims that dismantled the educational compromise forged after World War II. The triptych of market, management, and accountability led to an unprecedented restructuring of schools and the teaching profession (Ball, 2017). Since, sociologists have provided evidence that the UK Third Way, far from breaking with the conservative heritage, had continued the previous policy, even if Tony Blair's government renewed conceptions of social inclusion in rearranging educational and welfare services (Tomlinson, 2005; Walford, 2013). Accountability and school choice policies, as well as their consequences, have been widely studied by the new public sociology of education in terms of widening social inequalities and discrimination, adverse managerialism, professional undermining, blind "deliverology," biased school choice, and pressuring inspection, leading to moral crisis and burnout among teaching professions (Gunter and Mills, 2016). These reforms also revealed the influence of white papers, think tanks, consulting groups, experts, and other spin doctors in guiding educational policies across an agenda increasingly

influenced by international organizations, while the Third Way recipe was being exported worldwide (Gewirtz et al., 2004).

School Choice and the End of the Comprehensive School: A Critical Sociology

School choice and the diversification of school provision have been particularly explored by sociologists. Under the action of states and advocacy movements, new school organizations have emerged (charter schools, magnet schools, grant-maintained schools, specialist schools, academies) with diversified modes of funding and resources management. They could rely on more autonomy in designing curriculum and selecting students as well as in recruiting teachers (Seppänen et al., 2015). These schools operate today in an increasingly competitive environment, while being subject to accountability imperatives for receiving public funds (Hursh, 2015). In addition, priority education or compensatory education programs have been revised to accommodate private providers and funders, while parents and local communities have more opportunities to participate in school boards and governance (Power and Gewirtz, 2001). Sociologists have shown how this new political configuration mainly benefited upper-middle-class students and parents, leaving disadvantaged students in poor neighborhoods and ghettoized schools. They have also provided evidence on increasing social differences due to school choice, as such as segmented and differentiated behaviors induced by these policies. Adverse consequences such as school drop-out, repetition, but also stigmatization and racialization, could be observed beyond ideological discourses proclaiming equal access to most talented students based on their effort and merit. School choice policies have also increased guilt among parents and teachers who were judged responsible for academic failure among minority students. Other sociologists have underlined the way neo-liberal imaginary imposed in states' legislation has legitimized the school market and individual choice as policy solutions to reduce the opportunity gap, while forgetting the cultural and social capitals that determine student success. These policies were also blind to differentiated strategies among upper-middle-class parents, particularly in choosing options or classrooms that maintain a certain social homogeneity within schools (Brown, 1990). Other sociologists have produced evidence on the widening gap between schools rooted in their local community, and those participating in an elite and international cosmopolitanism, with specific modes of selection and enrolment (Van Zanten et al., 2015).

The New Sociology of Privatization and Global Industry

The public sociology of education, in studying economization, marketization, and privatization, has shown how private providers have rapidly developed in education systems as a "global industry" (Verger et al., 2016b). This industry is supported by "independent" agencies, expert groups, consultancies, private companies, and coalition advocacy groups. Public education represents a profit opportunity for them through networks established with policymakers, civil servants, and administrations that implement educational reforms. This "education services industry" (ESI), as Stephen Ball (2007) explains, is emerging in a space where the distinction between advice, support, and lobbying is increasingly blurred. Similarly, banks, private equity funds and information and communication technology providers increasingly invest in education at an international scale. A global and entrepreneurial strategy is enacted by philanthropic organizations, social entrepreneurs, and non-governmental organizations to

promote philanthropic capitalism, combining market and charitable aims, that are based on venture capital and impact assessment. They also benefit from the transformation of the state, which uses subcontracting in education programs for targeted populations, while blurring the boundaries between the public and private sectors. New educational alliances or "loosely coupled multi-organizational clusters" are formed, in addition to more focused local and technological networks (Ball, 2012). Education is then considered as a social investment which, like venture capital, must start with business plans, use quantitative measures of effectiveness, be replicable to scale up and, ideally, leverage public expenditures in a way consistent with the donor's strategy. This new governing mode catalyzes the public and private sectors in a corporate model to solve local community problems that take place in scalable experiments and innovations.

TOWARDS A NEW CRITIQUE FOR SOCIOLOGIES OF EDUCATION?

Today, public sociologies of education tend to find a place between denunciating neo-liberal reforms implemented at an international scale, and credibly reflecting societal transformations and their effects on education. Indeed, new emerging multipolar actors, and governance that articulates the local and the global, leads to adoption of a more reflexive stance far from the statist vision forged by sociological tradition. The issue of inequalities in education has been largely transformed, revealing new social situations produced by educational reforms, but also demanding new rights. The heritage dimension of education, like its monolithic history, is increasingly contested not only by civil society members, but also by historians who favor global history that examines slavery and the colonial past with greater distance and neutrality. Gender issues have disrupted categories of thought forged by national sociologies of education firmly focused on class structures. The ecological dimension, in relation to sustainable development, but also new technologies, such as social-digital assemblages, lead to relativizing human-centered approaches, whereas links between education, culture, and arts are supported by activist movements. Southern countries, long forgotten in the anthropocentric Western sociological account, are reminders of the necessity to diversify theories and explanations in international comparisons or definition of the commons. These transformations call for a renewal of sociological critique in education.

Gender, Race, Ethnicity: Between Social Justice and Cultural Recognition

Gradually, the public sociology of education considered that explanations such as cultural capital and social class were insufficient to reflect on inequalities in student achievement. Gender and race, as social constructs, also contribute to maintaining gaps between disadvantaged and middle-class students; while identity, religious and cultural factors, also explain heterogeneous school success and inclusion. Maintaining gender inequalities often corresponds to patriarchal ideology transposed into relationships between teachers and students, in addition to stereotyped behaviors in families, which subsequently lead to gendered choices as well as adverse consequences in school guidance and social stratification. Politics based on the nation-state, and cultural particularisms, undermine multiple identities and intercultural relationships by keeping educators blind to the intersectionality of gender, race, and ethnicity

(Bhopal and Preston, 2012). These social and cultural biases maintain beliefs and practices that impede educational equity. Hegemonic pedagogical practices limit the inclusion of indigenous or minority cultures, while the dominant native language does not facilitate interactive communication. In calling for greater emancipation and social justice, sociologists, inspired notably by Pierre Bourdieu, Nancy Fraser, and Judith Butler, call for greater participation and involvement of families and local communities in educating their children. They propose to fight against cultural, ethnic, and racial stereotypes and stigmas that affect groups of students in schools, by being more open to women's voices, care, and emotional, moral, and affective dimensions in educational relationships (Gillborn, 2003; Youdell et al., 2020). These public sociologies criticize dominant discourses and ideologies as power mechanisms that maintain historically situated perceptions and practices, as well as a status quo within the society and education systems (Tomlinson, 2008). They defend the need to develop a global intercultural dialogue capable of better giving place to consequences of globalization and how they transform relationships between the state and individuals. In better including feminist, racial, and post-colonial demands within societies, and giving place to new rights and capabilities, education can serve a new project of emancipation.

Revisiting and Bypassing the Colonialist Heritage: The Search for the Commons

By acknowledging issues addressed by migration, the colonial legacy, and past slavery in European societies, post-colonial studies have historically and geographically contextualized diverse modes of culture and education that escape dominant and standardized school cultures and discourses (Takayama et al., 2017). They also reveal the silence surrounding the colonized narratives and experiences in curriculum or pedagogical practices. Through textbooks, the colonizer controls immigrant children's imaginations and aspirations at the same time as colonization is made ambivalent, introducing a sense of non-membership and nomadism detrimental to social inclusion and self-representation (McCoy et al., 2017). Beyond multiculturalism and lost roots, the post-colonial critique demonstrates challenging social experiences of exile and migration shared by students in a foreign school institution, and how they feel both affiliated and disaffiliated with dominant language, culture, and learning styles. In the vein of Basil Bernstein's sociology, sociologists have characterized the teaching instrumentalization supported by international organizations as well as accountability tools that leads to an invisible, implicit, and affective deformation of minority students' social ontology in diffracting knowledge and enhancing performativity, that is detrimental to their learning (Lingard, 2010). Therefore, studying indigenous contexts requires a reflexive sociology capable of illustrating dilemmas in cultural practices alien to dominant curricula, while valuing indigenous education. In another direction, the new public sociology on the educational commons is developing, criticizing the confinement of knowledge and its practices in a neo-liberal hegemony and commodification that denies Southern cultures and indigenous languages (Means et al., 2017). Emancipation requires highlighting new spaces for multilateral and transnational discussions and exchanges emerging from the civil society and able to escape capitalist capture to give room for imaginaries, affects, and potentialities through new pedagogies and educational practices. Rather than an educational closure, the attention given to the commons reveals a social ontology and relationships at distance from managerial and technocratic rationalities, but instead open to communicative experiences and identities, and the maintenance of publicness in education through its cultural variations and enactments.

Post-Modernist and New Materialist Theories

Another emerging stream of public sociology research in education is concerned with the new materialism inspired by actor–network sociology and the issue of non-human agency (Fenwick and Edwards, 2012). In trying to move beyond social constructivism, which is mainly focused on the analysis of knowledge, language, and subjectivity, these sociologists study the material world in its multiple arrangements and flows, while reflecting on capacities among human and non-human that challenges the traditional divide between nature and culture, or the body and the self. Inspired by the post-linguistic turn in social sciences, as well as feminist and post-colonial studies, sociologists have also examined, after Michel Foucault and Judith Butler, some new ontologies coupling humans, cultures, and materials, that resist and offer alternatives to dominant power and social exploitation (Fenwick and Landri, 2012). By proposing a post-anthropocentric approach, this political sociology of education considers the variety of knowledge and learning environments available to human beings without enclosing them in a technological and instrumental reductionism, but showing continuities and flows that direct learning. The multiple singularities and variabilities characterizing these arrangements between human and non-human beings have been underlined, as well as their perpetual changes and reconfigurations. This new materialist ontology breaks with the dominant thinking of transcendental humanism to challenge dualisms (agency/structure, human/non-human, reason/emotion, mind/body), and to better analyze heterogeneous social lives in education as well as various associations between entities in the vein of Bruno Latour. Inspired by the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari, these sociologists also emphasize the relational dimension of these material and social entities, as well as their degree of contingency (Thompson, 2020). The notion of assemblage makes it possible to reflect on these chaotic connections, extreme variability in actions and events, as well as human capacities and flows that guide politics in education. Different processes of territorialization and deterritorialization but also nomadism can be studied in relation to spatial and temporal flows with recurrent attempts of the state's capture and codification. The sociology of education is invited to reconsider the shaping of the self, no longer as the product of discourse, but as an embodied, transformative, and productive impetus in moving spaces and times.

CONCLUSION

What is the place of public sociology of education, between academism, expertise, and social critique? From an academic perspective, the space of the nation-state, upon which national sociologies of education have historically been built, is no longer sufficient to analyze the Europeanization and globalization impacting education systems, as well as the role of international organizations and other emerging public or private actors. Comparative studies, considering policy scalars, are also an important component of this sociological reflexivity. The development of international expertise and governing sciences that produce a more utilitarian knowledge for policymakers challenges the sociological orthodoxy. As a consequence, national sociologies of education face several dilemmas: some difficulties in merging with interdisciplinarity research due to their specific methods and objects; quasi-foundational impossibilities to endorse normative and prescriptive assumptions in order to maintain distance and reflexivity required for sociological thought itself; conflicts of interpretations that lead to

juxtaposing theories and paradigms that are difficult to understand and assimilate by laymen. But sociology of education also suffers the backlash of neo-liberalism and the rationalization of educational systems and sciences that are increasingly subjected to managerial mindsets. Another challenge is the capacity to adapt theories to current societal transformations in education, and to maintain an explanatory scope for the future of education systems without becoming locked into expertise. Despite these challenges, the new public sociology of education has retained a reflexive capacity to analyze social pathologies in education and, although breaking with structuralist and neo-Marxist thinking, it has renewed the sociological toolkit to better examine some dysfunctions and misunderstandings in school organizations, governance, and policy programs at a global level, but also the suffering and humiliation of educated people. In tune with societal transformations and new social aspirations, this reflexive and critical sociology has been capable of participating in the public debate by renewing its topics and concepts to propose new paths to emancipation. In coupling theorical and methodological innovations, the new public sociology of education has been concerned with interpreting social realities and making room for imaginaries, while accompanying new social movements as well as reflecting on transformations and futures of education systems and policies.

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21. Sociology of expertise as public sociology

Gil Eyal

The coronavirus pandemic has made clear the dilemma faced by sociologists of expertise. Their analyses are more in demand than ever before. They can and must be public sociologists. But can they speak about expertise without undermining public trust in science and experts? Their bread-and-butter is to demonstrate the inherent contingency and subjectivity of experts' judgments, measurements, and forecasts. But now everybody knows how to do this, and the consequences of critical proliferation are not reassuring. Openly scornful, Andrew Cuomo, the Governor of the State of New York as of the time of writing this chapter (March 2021), says he does not trust "the experts" (and insists on the air quotes). Nine of the state's top public health officials resign in protest (Goodman et al. 2021). Displaying an astute grasp of the contingent nature of expert measurements, a few mothers organize a Twitter campaign to encourage healthy people to get tested in order to lower the positivity rate in their neighborhood so schools can reopen. What can sociologists of expertise say that would not be adding fuel to the fire? If the order of the day is to shore up trust in experts, do we have even the slightest inkling how to do this?

Maybe it is not the order of the day? Mistrust of experts might be justified in light of their dismal track record. Think Three Mile Island, Chernobyl, Fukushima. Recall the United States (US) Surgeon General's disastrous tweet: "seriously people—STOP BUYING MASKS! They are NOT effective in preventing general public from catching #Coronavirus" (Tufekci 2020). Perhaps the problem is not people's lack of trust in experts—Americans routinely express high levels of trust in scientists (Pizmony-Levy 2021), and Europeans are not far behind (Lazarus et al. 2021) – but the experts' lack of trust in people? In this context, calling attention to the hubris of experts is what public sociology needs to do.

And yet, this is not altogether convincing. When the pandemic is over and the post-mortem begins, it is likely to finger the mistrust of experts. The overwhelming fact about the pandemic is a huge discrepancy in daily death ratios between the Western liberal democracies and the East Asian countries: upwards of 1500 deaths per million in the US, United Kingdom (UK), Belgium, Spain, Italy, and so on, as against 3–69 per million in China, Taiwan, South Korea, Vietnam, or Japan. I am not suggesting that mistrust in experts explains this difference by itself. Such a huge, sprawling fact is no doubt due to multiple, interacting factors. And yet, the degree of contestation around expertise—what I have called, before the pandemic, a "crisis of expertise" (Eyal 2019)—certainly correlates with this divide. In the US, UK, and the European Union, there is intense conflict between epidemiologists, virologists, medical doctors, hospital directors, economists, physicists, "coronavirus influencers," and politicians over who has the relevant expertise to deal with the pandemic. There is no doubt that this conflict undermines trust in public health authorities. In the East Asian countries, in contrast, there is a specific group of experts who enjoy more credibility than all others. They are called "SARS Heroes": people such as Zhong Nanshan and Zhang Wenhong in China, Joseph Sung and Yuen Kwok-Yung in Hong Kong. In Taiwan, the Vice-President is a well-recognized "SARS Hero."

They accumulated credibility during the first SARS epidemic in 2003, and now they lend it to public health authorities (Eyal 2021; Au et al. 2021).

To clarify, I am not claiming that mistrust of experts is the sole factor explaining the catastrophic disparity between the pandemic experiences of Western and East Asian countries. I am certainly not suggesting that the critical bent of sociologists of expertise is somehow responsible for the crisis of expertise that long preceded the pandemic. But it is also hard to see how it would have helped matters. I am saying that the pandemic is an occasion for self-examination. To be a public sociologist is to intervene in public affairs by engaging in a reflexive dialogue with non-academic audiences (Burawoy 2009). What does this mean, for sociologists of expertise, if expertise is in crisis and if mistrust of experts is widespread?

POLICING THE BOUNDARIES OF PUBLIC DEBATE?

This call for self-examination is not new. It was first made almost two decades ago by Harry Collins and Robert Evans (2002, 2007). It is a pity that too much time was lost in acrimonious debate, so that we have arrived at this moment unprepared. What I would like to do in this section is to briefly consider what Collins and Evans's proposal for "Studies of Expertise and Experience" (SEE) implies for how to be public sociologists of expertise. Then I will consider the limitations of this proposal and what alternative ways may there be.

Collins and Evans's (2002, 235–242) diagnosis was encapsulated by what they called "the problem of extension": "How far should participation in technical decision-making extend?" By "technical decision-making" they meant issues that lie at the interface between science and politics. For example: what is the acceptable level of a pollutant? What should be the global warming target? Can schools open during the pandemic? Who should be prioritized for vaccination? These questions cannot be left to scientists, because the need to address them far outruns the slow pace of scientific consensus formation. Decisions must be made before there is absolute scientific consensus. Addressing them requires a broader public debate, involving not only stakeholders, but also members of the public who "have contributions to make to what might once have been thought to be purely technical issues." The problem of extension is how to avoid a complete cacophony and technological paralysis in such wide-open debate. As Collins and Evans argued prophetically: "Perhaps this is not today's practical problem, but with no clear limits to the widening of the base of decision-making, it might be tomorrow's" (ibid., 237).

Their solution was expertise. Very simply, participation in public debate about technical affairs should be limited to those who have relevant expertise in the matter. This may seem obvious, but Collins and Evans insisted that the line separating expert from non-expert is not the same as the line separating credentialed scientists from non-scientists. For any given technical matter of concern, most of the scientific community has no relevant expertise and should keep silent (ibid., 250, 259–260). Being a radiologist does not prepare one to advise on pandemic mitigation policies. At the same time, there could be ordinary members of the public who do possess relevant expertise by virtue of their experiences. While non-credentialed, they should be considered "experience-based experts" (ibid.). When sheep on the Cumbrian Fells showed elevated levels of radioactive cesium after Chernobyl, the British government consulted nuclear scientists about the extent and likely duration of the contamination. Their assessments were contested by local sheep farmers, who had decades of experience with such

matters because their fields lay near a nuclear power station. The sheep farmers' assessments turned out to be far more accurate. While they did not have a degree in nuclear physics, they knew a lot about other dimensions of the problem (the type of soil in the hill areas, how cesium behaved in this soil, the local vegetation, and so on) (Wynne 1996). In short, they had complementary expertise that the nuclear scientists did not possess (Collins and Evans 2002, 253).

Sociologists could play a role, Collins and Evans argued, in fostering an inclusive, yet also productive, public debate on technical matters, if they eschew their constructivist impulses and treat expertise as a "real and substantive possession of groups of experts" (Collins and Evans 2007, 2–3). If they do so, they can act as public sociologists by separating the experts from the non-experts, thus policing the boundaries of public debate.

Before I turn to the limitations of this proposal, let me underline first what an advance it was then, and still is now. We keep hearing complaints that people are simply ignoring "the facts," or that we are living in a "post-truth" world. Yet, as Collins and Evans (2002, 236) insist, "truth"—even in its constructivist form as scientific consensus—is not the matter here, but expertise. Truth cannot resolve the problem of extension, because these are matters about which there is not yet absolute scientific consensus, they contain too many uncertainties, and they are shot through with value choices. Take the problem, right now, of whether the vaccinated should still practice mitigation measures: wearing masks and social distancing. The truth of the matter is almost beside the point. If we find out, a year or a month from now, that the vaccinated are definitely not infectious, would that mean that the experts were "wrong" to advise practicing social distancing, while my contrarian uncle was "right" when he ignored their advice? Clearly not, because at issue here is how to deal with risk. The question regarding risk is not who is right, but whose partially wrong risk assessment we should trust. The point about the sheep farmers is not that they were right, but that an impartial examination of the technical dimensions of the problem would have indicated that they had relevant, trustworthy expertise not possessed by other groups. It follows that trust in experts could be restored if sociologists teach the public how to distinguish between those who have relevant expertise (independent of credentials) and those who do not.

How can sociologists play this role? Where would this ability to examine the technical dimensions of the problem come from, if they themselves are not experts on the matter? Collins and Evans argued that while sociologists are not likely to have "contributory" expertise in these matters, they can achieve "interactional" expertise, and this should suffice for their policing role. Nuclear physicists and sheep farmers possess "enough expertise to contribute to the science of the field being analyzed." But sociologists can educate themselves so they possess "enough expertise to interact interestingly" with the two sides and mediate between them. Clearly, this is what every self-respecting sociologist of science does (Collins and Evans 2002, 254). Presumably, such interactional expertise would allow sociologists to recognize who can meaningfully participate in technical debate, and who cannot. This is the role that Collins and Evans envision for public sociologists of expertise.

THE LIMITATIONS OF SEE

I think that Collins and Evans theorized one way to be a public sociologist of expertise; one way in which sociologists can encourage responsible and productive public debate about technical matters. I also think, however, that their approach suffers from distinct limitations

because it is modeled on the situation and skills of the sociologist of science, especially one studying "normal science" *à la* Kuhn. Their approach is based on a theorization of a particular practice, what sociologists of science have been doing for quite a while. This basis gives their proposal its plausibility—we know that this can be done, at least in some situations—but also its distinct limitations. The phenomena collected under the rubric of "expertise" are often quite distinct from the situation of the sociologist of science, and pose different challenges.

This is evident, first, in the very framing of the problem as one of "extension." The image is of a boundary extended from the inside out, so to speak. The boundary encloses a "core set" of scientists, who control a particular domain of research, and the problem is how much to open it up, who to let in, so as to secure legitimacy, yet without letting everybody in. This is an "invitation" frame, where there are "hosts" who control the forum, the agenda, the guest list, and the doors. In the realm of expertise, this framing corresponds to the situation of expert advisory agencies, such as the National Academy of Science in the US, or the Dutch Gezondheidsraad. Having come under criticism for their lack of transparency (Hilgartner 2000; Bijker et al. 2009), they sometimes opt for a strategy of "inclusion" that allows in a few well-behaved "stakeholders" (Eyal 2019, 111–115, 122–123). Collins and Evans would simply like sociologists to be the bouncers in such an arrangement, letting in those with relevant contributory expertise (such as the Cumbrian sheep farmers) and keeping the others out. Indeed, this is what governments and companies such as Facebook would like sociologists of expertise to do. When they see that I am a sociologist of expertise, they call to ask whether I can help them to figure out how to draw this line. This is both good and bad. It is good because there is clearly demand for public sociology of expertise of this type. It is bad because it is unlikely to inspire trust in the sociologist's motivations.

The problem, however, is more fundamental. When one ventures outside "normal science" and into the more fluid and contested terrain of expertise, there is not one core set but many, often jockeying as to what set of disciplinary skills are relevant to the problem at hand. The "hosts" in the invitation frame look nothing like normal science core sets. The composition of expert advisory committees, for example, is often hotly contested: do nutrition scientists have the expertise to set recommended dietary allowances (RDAs), or should the committee include also epidemiologists and cardiologists? (Hilgartner 2000, 89–90). Who has the relevant expertise to deal with the pandemic? There is not one core set, but many, whose competing claims undermine each other. The same holds for many other urgent problems that require expert assessment (for example, climate change; Lahsen 2013). The limiting assumption here is that the notion of "core set," developed in the sociology of science, could apply unproblematically to the problem of expertise, which is essentially a problem of interfaces. How could sociologists conceivably possess enough interactional expertise to police these interfaces, when there is an all-out struggle between multiple groups of experts, as well as laypeople clamoring to be heard? It is unlikely that any of them would consider the sociologist to have enough expertise—interactional or otherwise—to play the "bouncer" role in this struggle.

The second limitation of SEE has to do with the concept of interactional expertise itself. Interactional expertise, in Collins and Evans's formulation, is a lesser form of expertise, a pale copy of the original, measured by how well it can "pass" (as in a Turing test) for contributory expertise. This clearly reflects the predicament of the sociologist of science. They must learn the language of the scientists to be able to hold a conversation that would be "interesting" to them. It is also an ethical virtue. The sociologist of science is modest. They would not venture to say anything before they have working knowledge of the field. This knowledge is

verified by talking to the "natives," who they take as their authorities. Thus, some interactional expertise is *sine quo non* for a public sociologist of expertise. If Brian Wynne was not able to speak interestingly with the physicists, how could he make them see that the sheep farmers had a point? Yet, the hierarchy of expertise, in which contributory is "more" than interactional, means that the conversation, as Collins and Evans envision it, is not a true dialogue (Selinger and Mix 2006). The two sides to the conversation are not equally open to the possibility of being changed by their interaction, since one has a superior form of expertise and already knows everything that the other is trying to imitate. Again, this makes sense for the sociologist of normal science. There is no reason to think that gravitational wave physicists would or should be changed by their conversation with sociologists or activists. But this is a limiting condition for most technical debates about pressing public affairs.

In most of these debates, the credentialed experts do not know "more" than the activists and the non-credentialed experts. They know more only about one aspect of the problem at hand, but less about other aspects, as was evident in the sheep farmers' case. This is why Niklas Luhmann says that "an expert is a specialist to whom one can put questions that he is unable to answer" (in Bechmann and Hronszky 2003). The scientist in their laboratory has contributory expertise. They know more about their research topic than almost anybody else in the world. But once they step outside the laboratory to play the role of an expert, they will be asked questions about which they know much less. They will have to resort to judgment, estimation, and assessment to address these. They can only hope to answer them through dialogue with other experts. In the early 2000s, a group of Argentinian mothers noticed unusually high level of cancers in their neighborhood. Making their own inquiries, they produced a hand-drawn epidemiological map suggesting a putative link between the incidence of cancer and proximity to soy fields sprayed with glyphosate (Arancibia and Motta 2019). The carcinogenic effects of glyphosate were unknown at the time. The mothers had to approach biologists and epidemiologists and convince them of the strength of their evidence. None of the experts knew "more" than the others. They were like the proverbial seven blind men investigating an elephant. The biologist could investigate the plausibility of a mechanistic model. The epidemiologist could design a study to test the reliability of the mothers' evidence. Tentative knowledge of glyphosate's carcinogenicity was the product of a dialogue between all of them, in which some scientists were willing to take seriously the evidence produced by the mothers and be changed by it. If the interactional expertise of the sociologist is merely a lesser form of the contributory expertise of the scientists, they would not be able to impress upon them the necessity of being changed by dialogue.

Indeed, this is how Collins and Evans themselves interpreted Epstein's (1995) analysis of how AIDS activists became "lay experts." They say that over time "the activists gained so much interactional expertise in research design that, allied with their experience, they were able to make real contributions to the science that were warmly embraced by the scientists." (Collins and Evans 2007, 52–53). Even if some ability to converse interestingly about virology got the activists a foot in the door, by far their more significant contribution was to actually modify how the scientists thought about clinical trials (especially the issues of compliance and substitution bias). This underlines the point made by Selinger and Mix (2006, 306–307) that:

> if we appraised the expertise of the activists by measuring how well they could converse via a Turing test with contributory experts who had already made up their minds as to what counts as medical knowledge, we would miss the fact that their value as interactional experts lies precisely in their ability to "interact" with contributory experts in a way that provides the latter with a new under-

> standing of how to best contribute to the advancement of medical science … [this] will emerge from a dialogue in which both the interactional and contributory experts leave the conversation changed.

Finally, the idea that sociologists could play the role of "knowledge scientists" (Collins and Evans 2002, 272)—that is, experts about expertise, who advise the public about who should or should not be part of technical debate—is too cavalier about the problem of trust. After all, Collins and Evans's own analysis of the problem was that with respect to technical matters of public concern, the question cannot be who is right, but in whose expert judgment we should trust. Yet, now they were essentially asking the public to trust sociologists' expert judgment to tell them who to trust (Forsyth 2011). The glaring circularity is a symptom of Collins and Evans's reliance on the model provided by sociology of science. Trust figures into the sociology of science—indeed this was one of Collins's (1985) seminal contributions—as the extra social ingredient that helps to explain how controversies at the cutting edge are settled. Yet, this meant that trust itself is like the "ether" of 19th century physics: something that is absolutely necessary for the theory, yet nobody knows what it is or how to measure it.

To summarize: Collins and Evans's proposal encapsulates one particular model for how to be a public sociologist of expertise. It is useful for some situations, but not for many others. Most importantly, it does not offer a convincing solution to the problem of shoring up public trust in experts.

NETWORKS OF EXPERTISE

One of the reasons why Collins and Evans's proposal was greeted with controversy is the contrast they drew between their own theory, in which expertise is a "real and substantive possession of groups of experts," and a "relational" approach, wherein expertise is something attributed to the experts (Collins and Evans 2007, 2–3). On closer inspection, however, this distinction is untenable and unnecessary. Empirically, one does not observe expertise, but performances. Expertise is an underlying property that is observed by means of the actions that it makes possible; the capacity to carry out certain specialized tasks that are either impossible in its absence, or that are performed better, faster and with greater certainty of desired outcomes in its presence. While for certain analytical purposes it makes sense to treat this capacity as lodged in the body of an expert (Dreyfus and Dreyfus 2005), for other purposes it is useful to do a full inventory of the much broader set of conditions that enable expert performances. There is typically work performed by subordinate experts, or even by patients and clients, without which there can be no expert performance (Eyal 2013). There are the affordances provided by devices and instruments (Hutchins 1995), or by institutional and spatial arrangements (Ophir and Shapin 1991). There are concepts that structure what is perceivable, thinkable, and articulable (Foucault 1972). From this perspective, expertise is both real and relational.

The value in making this inventory is to highlight the shifting balance of relations, and the "trials of attribution" (Latour 1987), between all these different elements, even as they are assembled into a coherent collective agency, a "network of expertise." A group of experts may have positioned itself in an "obligatory point of passage" within the network, which allows it to speak for all the other elements (ibid.). In such a situation, expertise appears as the "real and substantive possession of a group of experts," but only because the contributions made by other components of the network are obscured and "black-boxed." Introduce a disturbance

into the network, rewire how its nodes are linked, and expertise will no longer appear as the secure possession of the credentialed experts. Again, from this perspective, expertise is both substantive and attributed.

For an example, I can draw on my own work on the history of autism (Eyal et al. 2010). Psychiatric diagnosis of developmental disorders crucially depends on the reports and meticulous record-keeping of parents. For a long time, however, this dependence was obscured by various devices: the closed door of the clinician's office, which did not allow parents to observe what took place inside; the clinician's notes, which digested the parents' reports without attribution; and most damningly, the strategy of "mother-blaming," which turned the meticulous record-keeping itself into a symptom of parental "coldness." Thus, psychiatrists controlled the network and attributed its output to their own insight. Yet, when parents of children with autism went around the clinicians to collect their own data by surveying other parents, they made visible the unreliability of psychiatric diagnosis. The same child was given up to 11 different diagnoses depending on which clinician they saw. When parents collaborated with psychologists to open the closed door and create lines of visibility into the conduct of therapy (using a one-way mirror), it became evident that some parents were much better therapists than the experts. And when they and the psychologists scrutinized the language of mother-blaming, they uncovered there the clinicians' own frustration at being unable to help the child. These little devices—the survey, the one-way mirror, the concept of "scapegoat"—rewired the network of expertise and enabled the parents to win some of the trials of attribution (parental "coldness" did not cause the child's autism, it was a consequence of having to deal with it). As a result, the attribution of expertise began to drift away from the psychiatrists and towards the parents. People begun to talk of parents as "experts on their own children." Psychologists referred to them as "co-therapists" or even "colleagues." By now, these are mantras of the field and credentialed experts ignore them at their peril.

Thinking in terms of networks of expertise implies a different vision of what it means to be a public sociologist of expertise. The main concern is not to distinguish who can participate in public debate about technical matters, but how to open up the debate to include those whose contributions were rendered invisible by existing mechanisms of attribution. For this task, sociologists must possess some sort of interactional expertise, but it cannot be the ability to converse interestingly with some "core set," because, as noted earlier, this would preclude a true dialogue between the different parts of the network. To converse interestingly with the psychiatrists would have meant, *ipso facto*, to become deaf to what the parents had to say. Instead, sociologists working in this vein have been attuned to what happens in the interstices of the network, the "trading zones" between its different parts, where "interlanguages" develop (Galison 2010). Returning to the example of AIDS activists (Epstein 1995), one can say that they were able to develop expertise in research design because the conduct of clinical trials is a trading zone between researchers and patients. To run a clinical trial, researchers must secure the cooperation of patients. In order to do so, they must relax somewhat their monopoly over expert knowledge and practice some sort of "generosity" (Rose 1992), however rudimentary. They must teach patients some concepts taken from expert language with which to understand their role. Over time, the interstice becomes populated with a set of specialized roles—trial coordinators, patient advocates, "recruitmentologists" (Epstein 2007, 182–202)—who speak a specialized *patois* (replete with words such as "compliance" and "ascertainment"), an interlanguage mediating between expert discourse and the everyday language of patients. This is the zone where AIDS activists were able to make fundamental contributions. They may have

learned the language of virology well enough to converse "interestingly," but this is not where they left their mark. Their impact was greatest on the interlanguage (and conduct) of clinical trials, which they have mastered and then transformed. Similarly, in their study of the French Muscular Dystrophy Association, Rabeharisoa and Callon (2004, 151) have focused on the "progressive elaboration … of an intermediary discourse … which … enables patients to go into the content of research without getting lost in it." This they consider to be "the most outstanding" innovation of the association.

In short, sociologists of expertise have been attending to interstices and interlanguages not because of some post-modern infatuation with hybridity. They do so because at the interstices one finds the resources with which to practice a particular version of public sociology of expertise. The interlanguage that translates between the different parties to the exchange also conserves their different viewpoints and experiences. In the language of clinical trials coordination, one can still hear the echoes of what concerns patients, how participation in the trial figures in their illness trajectories. In the language of the environmental impact assessment, one can still hear the "voices of the side-effects" (Beck 1992, 76–80). The public sociologist of expertise should bring these echoes to the fore, demonstrate the crucial role they play in expert performances, and thus help them to "speak up, organize, go to court, assert themselves, refuse to be diverted any longer" (Beck 1992, 77).

I will not dedicate another lengthy section to discussing the limitations of this version of a public sociology of expertise, because its inadequacies for dealing with the problem at hand, namely the crisis of expertise, should be fairly evident. If Collins and Evans's proposal to police the boundaries of public debate suffers from circularity and is unlikely to elicit much trust, the networks of expertise approach does not even try. It too is based on a theorization of a particular practice; not of the sociology of science, but of the "hybrid forums" described by Callon et al. (2009): the ad hoc organizations composed of affected parties, experience-based experts, activists, and concerned scientists, who have pitted themselves against the official numbers, the "acceptable levels," the positivity rates and the likelihood ratios of regulatory science. The seeming mechanical objectivity of these numbers was calculated to elicit trust in the judgment of official experts (Porter 1995). The hybrid forums, and the public sociologists aligned with them, work to deconstruct the assumptions, conventions, and implicit trade-offs that undergird these numbers. They work to replace the seeming objectivity of risk assessment with the radical uncertainties it papers over. For the hybrid forums, "risk is a false friend," while uncertainty should be embraced and there "is no reason to halt" the "sociotechnical spiral" that thrives upon uncertainty (Callon et al. 2009, 16, 18–27). Yet, expert judgment is precisely a "halt." It is a gesture that combines experience and technique with authority, and which asks us to suspend doubt in order to decide upon the best course of action given uncertainty. At no moment in recent times was the necessity for trust during this halt clearer than right now.

To summarize: the networks of expertise approach offers an alternative model for how to be a public sociologist of expertise. It theorizes a different practice of intervening in public affairs. Yet, it too is partial and limited. Most importantly, it offers no resources with which to address the problem of shoring up public trust in experts. Often, it denies that there is such a problem at all.

THE CRISIS OF EXPERTISE

The following is not a solution, not a superior approach, not the "truth" about expertise, not a middle road between two extremes, not a synthesis. None of that. All I aim to do is to offer an exegesis of a few words—"expertise," "risk," "regulatory science," "trans-science," "trust"—and argue that it points towards a third (as of yet not quite worked out) version of public sociology of expertise.

The networks of expertise approach steps back from the experts themselves. It draws an analytical distinction between experts and expertise as two different—though obviously related—objects, requiring different modes of analysis. This distinction serves to unmoor the word "expertise" from the thing it supposedly stands for, and allows a different question to be asked: not "What is expertise?" but "What does it do?" What is it that we do when we use the word "expertise"?

Unlike the word "expert," which dates from the 14th century, the word "expertise" is relatively new in the English language. It was adopted from the French in the late 19th century, its meaning and even spelling remained unstable well into the 20th century, and it only came into wide usage during the turbulent decades of the 1960s and 1970s (Eyal 2019, 11–13). Why was there suddenly a need for this word? This is a question of historical pragmatics: How was the term "expertise" used? By whom? In what context? To do what work that other words could not do? "Expertise" was first used in contexts where it was no longer clear who the experts were and how to decide between competing claims. During the "New Deal," for example, US courts debated whether administrative agencies of the government should be accorded the same deference given to expert witnesses. This became known as "the expertise theory." The new word was needed because the introduction of a new entity parading as expert raised the question of what makes somebody into an expert and how to recognize them. This is the work that the word "expertise" does. As long as it was fairly clear who the experts were and how to recognize them, there was no need for a word that designates how experts differ from non-experts. The need only arose in response to transformations that made these matters less clear-cut. In this sense, "expertise is not a thing, not a set of skills possessed by an individual or even by a group, but a *historically specific way of talking* … occasioned by a situation in which the number of contenders for expert status has increased, the bases for their claims have become more heterogeneous and uncertain, and the struggles between them have become more intense" (Eyal 2019, 14–19).[1]

What has caused this situation? One obvious answer is the rise of new social movements—the patients' rights movement, the women's movement, anti-psychiatry, environmentalism, the consumer rights movement—which challenged the experts' authority. This vast but paradoxical uprising, which Foucault (1982) compared to the Protestant Reformation, destabilized the sureties about who were the experts and how to recognize them. The movements represented alliances between laypeople and members of subordinate professions, which further destabilized professional hierarchies. "Expertise" was a word that registered the ensuing perplexity, but also gestured at some way by which it would be possible to sort out the competing claims.

Alongside "expertise," another word was used incessantly during the same period: "risk" (Eyal 2019, 64–65). The social movements were using this word to hold state authorities, private corporations, and the experts to account for the "overflowing" of technological development with unintended and harmful consequences (Callon et al. 2009; Beck 1992). Risk was a "forensic resource" (Douglas 1990), pointing upwards at the "visible hand" of state bureau-

crats, corporate executives, or experts either as directly responsible for these consequences, or as failing to stop the culprits. Risk discourse further destabilized who the experts were and how to recognize them. As Ulrich Beck (1992, 29) put it: "there is no expert on risk." There is no expert on risk partly because there are too many experts on risk. Assessing and managing risk is a multidisciplinary task, which often pits one group of experts against another. More importantly, there is no expert on risk because risk analysis is ethics and politics camouflaged by numbers. Every risk assessment inevitably balances potential harms against potential benefits, weighs who is more worthy of protection and who is less, and what is the duty of state authorities.

Risk assessment is the task of regulatory science. Like expertise, the historical pragmatics of this term are revealing. I am drawing here on an excellent paper by David Demortain (forthcoming). The phrase "regulatory science" is very new, dating from the mid-1970s. So, it dates from roughly the same time as the rise in "expertise" and "risk" talk, but it does something somewhat different. Where is the term "regulatory science" first used? In a 1976 preface to a compendium of US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) annual reports. Soon after, the term appears in a report of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) about the regulation of toxic substances. Both agencies describe what they do as "regulatory science." Why do they need this term? What work does it do for them? Regulation in the US used to mean economic regulation. It used to mean anti-trust, making sure that markets are free and fair. This was the legal basis for justifying state intervention. This was what people meant when they said "regulation." This is not just a matter of law. It is intimately connected to how capitalism is legitimated (Habermas 1973). Free and fair markets are self-legitimating. Anti-trust regulation merely seeks to keep them free and fair. But what the FDA, the EPA, or the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) were doing was regulation of a different kind, "social regulation," which arose in response to the aforementioned demands by social movements. Social regulation is focused on a different set of goals: not the functioning of markets, but things such as "clean air" or "occupational safety." But it inevitably intervenes in markets and can appear to be "picking winners and losers." The "visible hand" of the state appears to be responsible for redistributive consequences, for the hazards, costs, and damages distributed this way and that. To say, therefore, that what the agencies do is "regulatory science," is to emphasize the "science" part of this compound word, to emphasize that they are merely translating the regulatory goal mandated by the law—"clean air"—into objective, neutral, scientific measurements and tests necessary to verify it. So the term "regulatory science" is born at the intersection of two political forces—the social movements that demand social regulation and the business forces that oppose it—and it codifies a particular strategy for legitimating the state's expanded role in mediating the clash and assuming responsibility for the redistribution of hazards and costs. As the neo-Marxist critics of the time pointed out, "regulatory science" means that science is called upon to rescue the state from its legitimation crisis through a "scientization of politics" (Habermas 1970).

Now compare "regulatory science" with the pragmatics of a term such as "trans-science," invented at roughly the same time, to characterize almost exactly the same set of activities (risk assessment), by somebody—Alvin Weinberg, Director of the Oakridge National Laboratory in the US—who was very much at the heart of this struggle because he had to deal with the whole question of nuclear power plants. Weinberg's hyphenated compound emphasizes not the "science" part, but the "trans" part. The point of the compound is to say that this set of activities, these tests and measurements, are not exactly the same as "science" proper. What

Weinberg (1972, 211) wanted scientists to do was to "help delineate where science ends and trans-science begins. We scientists sometimes refuse to concede that science has limits. The debate on risks versus benefits would be more fruitful if we recognized these limits." Scientists should be candid about "the limits to the proficiency of their science," or they will lose credibility with the public (ibid.). Weinberg was worried about the feedback effect upon science that was likely to follow from scientists playing the role of risk experts (ibid., 220). Delineating an area of "trans-science," therefore, was meant to allow scientists to participate in these debates, but to leave science itself intact and buffered, protected from the chaos that was likely to erupt on the other side of the boundary. The term "trans-science" indicates, therefore, that the scientization of politics did not solve the legitimation crisis. On the contrary, it led to a recursive politicization of science (Weingart 2003). Science, or more precisely "regulatory science" and "expertise," has itself become polluted, infected by the very same suspicions that it was called upon to assuage. This is the predicament that we still find ourselves in, 40 years later. The scientization of politics leads to the politicization of science, and the two processes entangle one another in an unstable, crisis-prone mixture. This is the context for the contemporary worries about mistrust in experts. The crisis long preceded the pandemic. It is systemic and not the product of this or that event. Nor is it due to the rise of the Internet and social media (though they probably aggravate it). Finally, the crisis does not signal "the death of expertise" (Nichols 2017), nor a wholesale rejection of experts. It involves not only mistrust of experts, but also unprecedented dependence on them.

A public sociology of expertise that addresses itself to this crisis must begin by taking the problem of trust seriously. Some measure of trust in far-flung, complex socio-technical systems, and the experts who design and run them, is an inescapable dimension of membership in modern society (Giddens 1990; Luhmann 2017). But what is this trust? How much of it is necessary? What should we do when we are told to "trust the science"? Should we trust in the judgment of the human experts who run the system, or should we trust in the mechanical objectivity of procedures, protocols, devices, and algorithms? This is where I think a third approach to how to be a public sociologist of expertise could make a contribution. This approach should focus on what happens at the access points of expert systems (Giddens 1990): doctors' offices, vaccination sites, hotlines, weather reporting, environmental impact assessment public hearings, and so on. These points are where trust in expert systems is generated, but also where these systems are most vulnerable. Hence, access points are strategic research sites for a public sociology of expertise that addresses itself to the problem of trust in experts. The critical bent of the "networks of expertise" approach is still necessary. Analysis of the power dynamics linking the access points to centers of calculation is *sine quo non* for the public sociologist of expertise in this version. But it must be tempered now with attending to how trust is produced or destroyed in their interrelations, and how it may be shored up.

I said before that trust is like the "ether" of 19th century physics: absolutely necessary, yet impossible to pin down. The following, therefore, is not a theory of trust, but an unsystematic set of "rules of method" to be observed when studying the generation of trust and mistrust at the access points.

First, trust is not a subjective attitude that can be measured by a survey. Many sociologists use the term "trust" in its commonsense meaning as a subjective attitude of an individual. To trust is to believe in someone or something, and this belief provides reassurance. To study trust, therefore, you simply need to ask people: administer a survey. We know, however, that context and wording matter. You can get completely different responses from people if you

word the question differently, or if you ask them at a different time. Trust in the coronavirus vaccine in the US, for example, was at a low point in summer 2020, yet picked up when vaccines became available. What people say and what people do is often at odds. If you ask Americans right now whether they trust the experts of the FDA or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), their answer will depend on political affiliation. But the odds are that even the most conservative American does not think twice before they take their FDA-approved medication twice a day. Compared with the behavioral phenomena of trust, the subjective attitude is a moving target, a frail reed swaying in the wind. Put differently, the access point where trust is generated does not look like a survey. If it does, if it constructs trust as an explicit subjective attitude, it will only serve to provoke mistrust. Public sociologists of expertise, therefore, should be at the access points, not measuring trust from a distance.

Second, mistrust is not the opposite of trust. Measuring trust with a Likert scale imposes the idea that it is linear and continuous: whoever trusts more, mistrusts less. But as Giddens (1990, 88–89) puts it, every trust relationship necessarily entails ignorance, and therefore always "provides grounds for skepticism or at least caution." Trust and mistrust come packaged together, and what appears as a lot of trust can easily flip into its opposite if the experience at the access point contradicts implicit expectations. The relation between trust and mistrust is not linear and monotonic. We all know the adage that it takes a long time to build trust, while to destroy it only takes an instant. Temporality indeed is at the heart of the phenomena of trust and mistrust. Trust is like music. Duration, sequence, tempo, resonance, repetition, are of the essence. A note, having been struck, shapes a context in which another note can appear as in harmony with it, trustworthy, or as a "false note." It can continue a melodic line, or it can appear discordant because it is played too fast, too slow, or out of sequence. This is why "warp speed" was a very unfortunate slogan for a campaign whose success depended on building trust. This means that public sociologists of expertise should not only be at the access points; they should be there over time, closely attending to the eventful nature of trust.

Third, while trust is not a subjective attitude, it is also not merely "tacit acceptance of circumstances in which other alternatives are largely foreclosed" (Giddens 1990). Some sociologists reject the commonsense approach to trust. They contrast what people say with what they do in order to demonstrate that what people say about trust has no importance. In this approach, trust is a collective social fact, produced by and for systems of social relations. Its function is to reduce the complexity of choosing between alternative futures (Luhmann 2017). In this approach, trust is ultimately unfounded and irrational, akin to religious faith (Simmel 2004). This approach is contradicted by the fact that we all make distinctions between "blind trust" and trusting responsibly. To treat trust as ultimately unfounded is a scholastic fallacy (Bourdieu 2000). Only from the point of view of the scholar, who can stop time in its tracks to examine action in its "frozen" state, so to speak, does trust appear unfounded. In reality, most of the time we do not experience trust as some sort of leap of faith, but as well founded, something that jives with our embodied, experienced routines.

Fourth, to study trust is to study practices for sorting out blind from responsible trust, ethno-methods for recognizing and exhibiting whether one is trusting responsibly. The alternative to the scholastic approach is to attend, as Bourdieu says, to "the logic of practice." Trust is not blind faith, but a "skillful suspension of doubt, an extremely sophisticated methodology of practical consciousness, through which people manage to live with the fact that there are gaps and missing pieces" (Mollering 2006). We share methods for recognizing and exhibiting when trust is reasonable, responsibly given, and when it is blind faith (Garfinkel 1963). These

methods are primarily about the temporal framing of the situation. Absent these frames, one will be peering down the abyss of a split-second leap of faith. This is why the parents interviewed by Brownlie and Howson (2005) fretted about giving the MMR vaccine to their children. As one of the fathers said: "Although it might be a very, very small percentage risk, its your child and if it gets that, you have to deal with that for the rest of your life, I mean would you ever forgive yourself? To feel that you were responsible and that you could have prevented that?" This is not mistrust. This is existential dread, the true opposite of trust (Giddens 1990). What the father articulates is a collapse of the mechanisms that allow him to recognize what constitutes responsible trust in this situation. These mechanisms, the frames and framing work involved, are a crucial aspect of what takes place at the access points. Remaining with the example of vaccination, parents in the US used to be given a yellow card on which their children's vaccinations were noted. Now, alas, this card has been replaced by electronic health records. Big mistake. On this card, the vaccinations were part of a routine schedule, juxtaposed with other milestones such as the child's height and weight, head circumference, and so on. The vaccinations were thus framed by a routinized narrative of normal, ordinary childhood. The yellow card was a temporal frame that averted the glance from what may be worrisome about the present moment, and emplotted the vaccination within a longer time frame that was grasped as "development." This framing allowed parents to recognize and exhibit that they were trusting responsibly, while a framing that presents vaccination as a "choice," as a "decision" to be made as part of an individual calculus, would leave them where this father found himself, peering down the abyss.

Fifth, trust in experts is composed of two things: trust in the staff at the access points, and trust in the larger system of expertise behind them. These are supposed to reinforce one another, but they do not always do so. Take vaccines again. Trust in vaccines is composed of two things. First, trust in the expert system that produces and regulates them: namely, the scientists who devise them; the pharmaceuticals that manufacture them and run clinical trials; the FDA that inspects and approves them; the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) that sets immunization schedules, and so on. Second, trust in the people and organizations that actually administer vaccines at the access point: namely, doctors, nurses, and volunteers at clinics, hospitals, public health departments, and so on. If trust in either one of these is lacking, vaccines will not be trusted. The only way to get people to trust vaccines is through the access points represented by doctors and nurses, and this can only happen if, first, the staff at the access point trust the expert system of which they are the outer node; and second, if the staff themselves are trusted by the patients. There is, however, a certain structural tension concentrated at the intermediate position of the staff. To secure trust in vaccines, they must be trusted themselves. But to be trusted by patients, they need to signal a certain distance from the larger expert system. They cannot appear as its puppets and parrots. If they appear as merely rehearsing a script they have been required to recite, they will seem untrustworthy. Indeed, if they themselves feel like puppets and parrots, they will not trust the system. So there is always a potential that the staff at the access point will become unruly, rebel, and set off on their own path. Doctors, even well-meaning ones, fully committed to the public health goal of vaccination, may find that their best way to secure trust is to signal their distance from the CDC and frame vaccination as a choice (Reich 2018, 152–155). Then they may find that people flock to them because word-of-mouth has it that they are flexible and are not in anyone's pocket. Over time, this may become a business model. Their waiting room will fill with people who already expect this flexibility. The junior staff at the access points, who do not have the authority to

frame matters as a choice, may feel like puppets and parrots. As a result, they will not trust the expert system of which they are the messengers. Brownlie and Howson (2005) found that UK National health Service (NHS) health visitors, who were supposed to communicate the safety and efficacy of the MMR vaccine to worried parents, were themselves among the most mistrustful. Nowadays we hear that vaccine hesitancy is especially acute among nursing homes and rural hospital staff, probably for similar reasons.

The crisis of expertise is systemic. It has multiple causes and aspects. Yet it manifests itself most acutely as a crisis of trust, where increasing dependence on experts is met with increasing doubts, hesitations, and outright hostility. A third version of public sociology of expertise can address itself to this crisis by attending to the triangulation of relations at the access points of expert systems.

NOTE

1. This does not mean that expertise is not "real." Attention to the historical pragmatics of the word "expertise" does not imply that the thing to which it refers does not exist. But it does require that one's theory of the thing will be flexible and reflexive enough to incorporate within it the historical pragmatics of the word, and then also the reverberations in the thing that result from it being spoken of, using this new-fangled word (Hacking 1999).

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22. Poverty, the battle against stigmatization and the role of public sociology

Enrica Morlicchio and Dario Tuorto

INTRODUCTION

The last 50 years or so have witnessed an unprecedented boom in studies of poverty throughout the social sciences. A blossoming of concepts, methods of measurement and field studies has been characterized by a fruitful exchange of ideas and opinions between sociologists, economic analysts and statisticians concerned with measuring the phenomenon of poverty, together with a number of psychological and anthropological analysts. Sociology has nevertheless made efforts to pursue its own lines of enquiry as well, and this chapter aims to contribute in some way towards such efforts by adopting the viewpoint of public sociology.

If we go back to the early 17th century Elizabethan Poor Law, we can see that measures were already in place at that time to govern and regulate the poor of England. Apart from vagabonds, fortune tellers and brigands, who were the targets of severe repression, the help offered to the poor in Elizabethan times consisted in the provision of indoor relief to unfortunates 'deserving poor' such as orphans, foundlings, invalids and widows, together with forms of vocational training and assistance designed to get those capable of working, and willing to do so, into work (in other words, those who would now be considered 'unemployed'). Such individuals subsequently became 'undeserving' when the emergence of the capitalist labour market meant that those at the margins were forced to accept any type of work and wage. The living conditions in the workhouses offering refuge to the able-bodied poor, were thus rendered harsher and stigmatizing, and measures were introduced to implement the principle of less eligibility, whereby any kind of work should be preferable to public assistance. In England, soon after the Poor Reform Act implemented in 1834, there was still no distinction made between the terms 'poor' and 'idle'. The latter term covered both conditions: that is, a form of behaviour and way of being (idleness), and a labour market condition (not in work, and therefore unemployed). Since then a number of things have changed for the better, of course: 'Much of the massive suffering … is already behind us' (Polanyi 1944, p. 258). Or rather, it was. In fact, many things once again appear to be very similar to what went before, as forms of worker pauperization emerge and the distinction between workers and the poor is once again increasingly vague.

Nowadays, there are at least two dynamics underlying the representation of poor people in the political sphere and in the social services: one of a macro nature, linked to socio-economic changes and to a better understanding of the processes of impoverishment; and the other of a micro nature, relating to direct interaction with the poor who are the beneficiaries of the measures adopted. Both dimensions contribute towards the emergence of often stereotyped ideas of what causes poverty and of the way the poor behave (Cozzarelli et al. 2001), with their personal traits often cited (laziness, immorality, a lack of motivation), together with social dynamics (prejudice, discrimination, a lack of contacts and resources) or cultural circum-

stances (attending poor schools, the break-up of the family, being born in a poor environment, doing bad jobs, and/or having a low IQ).

This chapter aims to reconstruct some of the most common views held of the poor and of poverty, and to explore the link between such categories and the directions taken by the corresponding policy. More specifically, we are going to show that within the context of the constant ambivalence between combating poverty on the one hand, and 'regulating the poor' on the other (Cloward and Piven 1971), new forms of blame and moral condemnation of the poor have emerged, together with public rhetoric based on the social representation of the poor as unable to provide for themselves and to self-organize in need of 'good' advice, or idle people requiring explicit and implicit forms of workfare. Our focus on these themes aims to shine some light on one aspect of poverty that is less commonly investigated (even by sociologists), but which is of great importance for public sociology, namely the lack of recognition, or the misrecognition, of the poor; however, we do not intend to underestimate the broad question of economic inequality, given that in order for poor people to overcome the stigma of poverty and to recover their capacity to act and to make decisions, there has to be a greater, more equitable distribution of resources.

STEREOTYPES, TYPOLOGIES AND POLICIES ORIENTATIONS

Scholars are in broad agreement regarding the multidimensional character of poverty, and the underlying processes which render it, at one and the same time, both reversible and recurrent. It is a phenomenon capable of affecting large swathes of the population for varying periods (Castel 1995; Paugam 1991, 2005), and this inevitably impacts upon the type of institutional measures that can be adopted to curb poverty, and the specific aims of such measures.

Simplifying things somewhat, those policies aimed specifically at the poor may be said to have one of five aims. The first such aim is that of prevention, both in the economic sense and in terms of social inclusion, through educational policies, policies aimed at bolstering employment, especially among women, and policies designed to establish minimum wage levels. These policies are thus of the kind adopted *ex ante*, that is, before the conditions of poverty arise, or before the intergenerational transmission of disadvantage and poverty can be established (because people not only become poor, but are often born poor).

The second aim is that of promoting individuals' capacities, of bolstering human capital and employability, thereby rendering poor people themselves capable of overcoming their condition of need by increasing both their skills and their motivation. This approach differs from the preceding one insofar as it foresees personalized forms of self-betterment governed by 'contracts' or 'agreements' between the entity providing the assistance and the beneficiary (Borghi 2005).

A third aim is that of remedying the losses suffered, through the adoption of consumption support policies in the form of monetary transfers, the provision of food, and even more essential services such as the provision of blankets and hot drinks to the homeless. In this case, the consequent measures operate when a situation of poverty has already emerged.

A fourth objective is that of compassionate assistance, and the policies adopted with this objective in mind tend to be somewhat sporadic, and are not designed to prevent or remedy poverty, but target passive individuals in the main.

Table 22.1 Representations of poor people, type of policy and the underlying orientation

Representation	Policy	Orientation
The good	Charitable neo-paternalism	Pedagogical
		Compassionate
The bad	Zero tolerance	Repressive
	Criminal populism	Punitive
	Workfare	Disciplinary
The ugly	A wall-building policy	Immunization
	'City cleanliness'	Displacement
	'Hostile architecture'	Reification

Finally, the fifth aim is that of social regulation and control. In this case, measures aimed at those who are already poor are combined with actions designed to prevent organized social conflict, and to establish the subjection of individuals through rituals such as lengthy waiting in a queue to ask for information, or filling out a module, or other 'blame the victim' procedures (Auyero 2012; Dubois 1999).

This typology of the approaches adopted to the poor through implementation of given social policies is not organized in any historical order, nor is it designed to suggest any scale of desirability, although the first types are undoubtedly closer to the principles of social justice than the latter types are. On the contrary, it is designed to show the complexity of those factors involved in establishing measures for the poor, and the 'long waves' of those actions taken (Paci 1982), characterized by periods in which the specific objectives and arrangements put in place declined, and other periods in which they re-emerged.

The link between the characteristics of policies and their underlying direction is based on a deeper dimension rooted in the social representation of the poor, and in the latent or openly expressed stereotypes cited in support of certain public decisions. The literature in this field frames matters in various different ways, starting from the recurring themes operating as genuine labels expressing the fundamental traits of poverty, the differences that exist within this phenomenon and in the public's image of it, and also the permeable borders between one category and another. Table 22.1 shows three different representations of the poor (the 'good', the 'bad' and the 'ugly'), and associates each category with a specific type of policy and underlying orientation. In doing so, it aims to show how each type of policy substantially affects public action, and vice versa.[1]

The Good

The representation of the poor as 'good' is based on expectations of their virtuous behaviour. The poor must not be a nuisance, and they must stay where they belong, in their humble dwellings or in those places specifically designed for them: soup kitchens, shelters for the homeless, social services waiting rooms. In exceptional circumstances they have to act heroically, risking their lives to thwart robberies or to save children in danger, for which they are deemed deserving of public praise or, if they are illegal immigrants, of a residence permit. Good poor people are also those who cooperate with social services, who send their children to school, even if this does not protect them from such phenomena as 'lunch shaming', that is, the exclusion or segregation of those children whose parents cannot afford to pay for their children's school lunches.[2]

The category of the good poor (the 'deserving poor') who do not constitute a threat to the social order, or who are not required to work as they are not 'able-bodied', is often pitied as mentioned before, and this pity is embodied by neo-philanthropic and neo-paternalistic approaches such as the 'gift economy', which lead to a kind of infantilization of the poor, who are seen as fragile individuals in need of protection, completely devoid of all personal resources and incapable of collective action. Such approaches are characterized by three aspects in general: (1) the choices of justice are warranted using the language of charity rather than that of social justice; (2) relations are perceived as relations among people which hide power inequalities; (3) the services rendered are seen as gifts and not rights (de Leonardis and Bifulco 2005, p. 209).

A paternalistic relationship is based on the assumption that one of the two parties lacks the capacity to know what is best for them, and the self-discipline required to act in accordance with such principles. Hence the 'stronger party' in the relationship is authorized to shape the other's behaviour in order to avoid negative consequences for the person incapable of knowing what is good for them (Mead 1997).

A further example of the paternalistic approach is that of the courses in financial management that are increasingly included among activation policies in general, rather than work activation programmes only. Those attending such courses are taught how to use money, based on the idea of the family budget for example, in order to encourage 'responsible', shrewd behaviour; such behaviour consists mainly in adopting methods of saving for possible emergencies, and in conforming to the 'good payer' model (Busso and Meo 2015). Such practices do not seem to be designed to get people out of a condition of poverty, so much as to 'better manage' such poverty on the basis of common practices not necessarily shared by the poor themselves. This infantilizing approach often seems to ignore one key aspect, namely that the poor do not need to be better capable of managing the limited resources available to them, but rather they require greater resources in order to make ends meet. A similar interpretation may also be given of the introduction of procedures for cash transfers via pre-paid cards, which limit any such spending to the acquisition of basic necessities.

These policies are based on the idea of the 'necessary constraints' underlying the paternalistic approach; according to this view, the poor do not possess the ability to manage their own finances, are incapable of spending money in a responsible manner, and for this reason they need educating in such matters. In truth, the international literature in this regard has focused on another aspect instead: it sees the problem of the poor not so much as that of learning the importance of the value of money, but rather that of managing their limited resources in such a way as not to be stigmatized for their conduct. This issue arises in particular with regard to their children. In low-income families, the difference between basic necessities and luxuries is a contingent one. Food, clothes, shoes, healthcare products and school items are obviously things that cannot be done without; whereas in the case of other goods, the question of what can or cannot be done without, or reduced, is a more complex one (Daly and Kelly 2015). Certain luxury items become basic necessities in select cases. Absolute needs cannot easily be distinguished from relative needs, particularly when the establishment of an individual's social reputation is at stake. Children and adolescents try to avoid being treated differently from others, and try to feel at ease in the world they live in; and their parents are torn between not giving priority to activities deemed non-essential from a functional viewpoint, and the feeling that in a consumer society such activities or goods are nevertheless essential for a person's health, development and social identity. In order to create an acceptable public image,

low-income individuals adopt creative coping strategies. However, these strategies could in fact increase stigmatization, when for example they include restrictions on purchasing options (such as the non-use of credit cards, having to forego the purchase of costly original products and the latest models of goods), which feeds the impression of their being excluded from the consumer culture (Hill and Stephens 1997; Bowring 2000). The characteristics of consumption and the social significance of money in the case of low-income families could thus become incompatible with the generally perceived importance of such things in contemporary society (Hohnen 2007).

The Bad

The stereotype of the 'bad' poor person is, predictably enough, diametrically opposed to that of the deserving poor. Once again, the image in question is multifaceted. Taken to the extreme, the bad poor person is one who commits actions that may be classified as 'subsistence crimes' (stealing from supermarkets or from orchards, illegal squatting in empty properties), or who harasses people when begging. The 'scrounging poor' are also deemed bad, that is, those who live off the backs of taxpayers and who waste the help they are offered. In countries such as the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (USA), the most commonly chosen representatives of this particular category of bad paupers are the eccentric, cunning 'welfare queens', the immature, irresponsible 'teenage mothers', and the idle, long-term unemployed; and these figures are often from ethnic or racial minorities (bearing in mind that 'race' is a social construct, however).

In the UK in particular, this has also led to the making of a number of successful TV series whose titles already offer a very negative idea of the poor, such as, *Saints and Scroungers* and *Nick and Margaret: We All Pay Your Benefits* (Romano 2017). In Italy, on the other hand, the working poor are in the main those who have been labelled as lazy scroungers, despite the fact that they are part of the labour market to all intents and purposes. This kind of blaming the victims in Italy emerged at the time of the introduction of the Minimum Income Scheme in 2019 (*Reddito di cittadinanza*), a measure that was criticized at the time for encouraging people to be passive ('lying on the sofa') or irresponsible ('the poor on holiday'; see Anselmo et al. 2020). Another example of the belief in couch-bound idleness as an inherited trait of poor families, is the 'three generations of the same family that have never worked' meme. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation set out to identify and investigate such 'never-worked' families in the deprived areas of Glasgow and Middlesbrough in the UK, but found not a single one. The authors of the study – Macdonald, Shildrick and Furlog – wrote that while they were trying to hunt down a Yeti, they shot a Zombie instead: in other words, the much-feared subject of their research simply did not exist, or was limited to a mere handful of cases (MacDonald et al. 2014).

The category of poor who 'commit criminal offences', and that of the so-called 'scroungers', have each been treated differently. The former has been the target of policies that Luigi Ferrajoli has classified as 'criminal populism', in that they are designed to prosecute minor offences associated in the main with life on the streets and the need to survive, in an effort to indulge the public's 'classist and racist reactions' (Ferrajoli 2007, p. 372). The poor who commit criminal offences have been targeted by conservative lawfare and zero-tolerance approaches to prevention and control (in this regard, see the important work by Wacquant

2008), or by measures designed to promote a broader definition of public safety (Ceretti and Cornelli 2013).

The latter category of bad poor people – the 'scroungers' – on the other hand, have mainly seen their access to services restricted, including through tighter requirements in terms of their duty to look for work. Both types of policy – criminal punishment and the duty to look for work – fail to take account of the desire for redemption of those individuals who, for one reason or another, have hit rock bottom.

The Ugly

The social construction of the 'ugly' poor is based on the emphasis given to aspects of their appearance deemed disturbing, that is, the identifying features of those living in deprived conditions. A crucial role is played in this social construction by images of squalor and degradation associated with the state of poverty. Such images are designed to generate disgust and repugnancy in the observer, and thus a form of 'aporophobia' which means fear of poor people (Cortina 2017), and 'disgust' (Hancock 2004; Tyler 2020). Social distancing measures relating to this have recently emerged: walls, checkpoints and passes, gated communities or towns, the massing of people in refugee camps and 'collection centres'; hostile architectural measures, that is, the installation of benches and other items of urban furniture fitted with 'deterrents' designed to prevent the homeless using them; and the demolition of encampments for reasons of public hygiene. These social distancing measures are designed not only to discriminate, exclude, stigmatize and punish the poor, but also to ignore them: this they do by denying poor people any form of recognition, thus condemning them to a state of social inexistence (which may frequently result in a threat to their very physical existence) (de Leonardis 2013; for a critical approach to the quantification of inequality see also de Leonardis 2021). In this case, not only do we see the misrecognition of poor people, when society offers a demeaning or imposed image of such people – the social disqualification mentioned by Serge Paugam (1991) – but in some cases their lack of recognition and the negation of their identity as well (Pizzorno 2007). This is one of the characteristic features of those policies targeting poor people whose 'ugliness' becomes something to be removed. It refers to those social categories whose mere presence contributes towards tarnishing urban spaces both in economic terms (for example, by bringing down property prices in those areas frequented by beggars, the homeless, drug addicts and others who have dropped out of society and who live on the streets), and in terms of social capital and cohesion (by weakening the feeling of security and interpersonal trust, and encouraging closed communities and networks separated from the outside world; see Bergamaschi et al. 2014).

The debate over urban cleanliness and degradation extends the category of ugliness to include not only passive conduct and acts of renouncement (Merton 1938), but also those actions challenging and rebelling against the existing use of public space, which in turn call for administrative and trade-regulation measures of a strongly disciplinary nature; examples of this include anti-graffiti, anti-youth actions (MacDonald 1997) where a negative connotation is attributed to all and sundry, regardless of whether they are poor or not, but simply because they behave as if they were (for example, by drinking in the street rather than inside a bar, by sitting on the ground rather than strolling around, by being noisy rather than observing silence, by appearing more unkempt and scruffy than radical fashion dictates as acceptable, and so on). The category of ugliness can itself take on different meanings. If, for example,

rather than referring to ways of acting and behaving that are deliberately irreverent and not in keeping with the context, it refers to the presence of physical features, impairments or forms of disability, as expertly analysed by Erving Goffman (1963), this may result in a different, more empathetic evaluation. However, if the physical stigma exists in addition to other stereotyped personal or collective traits (being a foreigner, a drug addict, and so on), then a short-circuit may be triggered between judgements of worthiness or guilt (Hancock 2004).

The three labels illustrated here are particularly well suited to accounting for modern-day forms of welfare chauvinism; that is, hostility towards foreigners requesting the same social service provisions as those enjoyed by the native population. Poor foreigners are probably more likely to be classified as ugly or bad than impoverished native citizens are. The former are more often seen as opportunists or as a discordant/disturbing presence than are national citizens, who in the majority of cases are perceived as among the 'deserving poor'. However, this typology is a dynamic one, and there are exceptions: the native poor can also become ugly or bad when their image, otherwise not particularly negative, is marred by another aspect of 'dangerousness' (for example, they may be classified as undeserving poor if they are young, and therefore seen as potentially opportunistic or as deviants, or when they come from a stigmatized part of the country or city).

THE EFFECTS OF OBJECTIFIED POVERTY: THE LOSS OF THE CAPACITY TO ASPIRE

So far we have seen that the simplified representations of the poor are accompanied by certain types of policy and of directions/aims promoted by such policies. The question remains, however, as to what happens to the poor themselves. What effect does labelling people as being 'poor' have on them? That is, what is the impact of the objectification of poverty that people suffer, according to those principles established by society and its institutions? What are the necessary preconditions for the collective processing of individuals' own experiences of deprivation in the absence of a common class condition?

One of the effects of long-term poverty is, in fact, the loss of the 'capacity to aspire' according to Arjun Appadurai (2004): that is, the specific cultural capacity to develop aspirations with regard to the future, to make decisions relating to the achievement of those aspirations, and to have one's voice and demands heard. Unlike the rich, who can count on a much more diversified range of experiences, who are more aware of their own desires and who possess the means of achieving them, the poor on the other hand do not own a 'cultural map' offering pathways towards the realization of their aspirations, and are less able to exercise control over their own destiny and to produce narratives in their favour.

Going back to Goffman's (1961) reflections on psychiatric hospitalization, it is reasonable to assume that weaker, more exposed individuals are less capable of reacting to judgements and assessments made regarding them, and even the solution of the 'conversion' – the internalization of those labels they are burdened with, '*RMiste*' (recipient of minimum income support), unemployable, NEET (not engaged in education, employment or training) – pretending to be 'as they want you to be' – becomes a compromise solution dictated by circumstance. According to Appadurai, this lack of 'navigational capacity' among the poor is not the result of any individual cognitive deficit (particularly when considered as part of the cultural inheritance passed down by one's family, as in the idea of a culture of poverty), but rather of the

limitation of the social space in which needs, plans and aspirations are formed, and democratic protest takes shape (Albert Hirshman's 1970 'voice'). As we have seen, notwithstanding being the object of contempt or reification, poor people do not stop aspiring to recognition; what they do lose, however, is their capacity to symbolically reassess their own social standing and confirm their own identities, insofar as they no longer see themselves as holders of rights and of claims in regard to such rights; and thus, as Ruth Lister (2004, p. 154) has ironically pointed out: '"Proud to be poor" is not a banner under which many are likely to march'. This limitation of their capacity to act collectively is something that concerns all poor people; however, the many forms and conditions of present-day poverty have a variety of different effects. The capacity to develop a counter-narrative, or to advance economic demands, depends on both economic and non-economic factors (for example, being young, educated, existing in a situation where bridging social capital can favour connections and create bonds), on the duration of poverty, on the opportunity or otherwise to escape the cultural 'control' of the situation in which one lives (having other role models, experiences, usable contacts), and on the presence or otherwise of associations and parties capable of sustaining any protests.

WHAT CAN SOCIOLOGY DO TO PROMOTE THE AGENCY OF POOR PEOPLE?

Sociology can play an important role in many ways in the process of the social recognition of poor people and in the reconstruction of their desire to aspire. For example, sociological knowledge is useful in showing the empirical weakness of the causal links taken for granted in public discourse and political debate. It possesses the tools needed to intervene in the planning of measures designed to counter social exclusion or to document the validity of such. It can draw attention to who or what lies at the margins, rather than who or what is in the centre (Saraceno 2004), and can even dispute the prevailing beliefs and the stereotyped representations we have examined up to this point.

Burawoy's (2004) well-known work on public sociology rightly re-launched the debate on the diverse aims (instrumental or reflexive) and on the diverse publics (academics or non-academics) of sociology. In Burawoy's view, the social sciences can play a key role in the construction of public space, by dialoguing with the collective actors representing civil society (trade unions, associations, groups, neighbourhood committees), and in particular with those persons who remain in the shadows, distant from, and invisible to, academia (ibid., pp. 5–6). Public sociology is part of a broader branch of sociology, the components of which, although performing different functions, are all necessary and interconnected by a relationship of 'organic solidarity' (Pisati 2007). Within this framework, the first type of sociology – 'professional' sociology – is tasked with developing theories, concepts, questions and research methods (Santoro 2007). Although addressing academia, it provides legitimacy and knowledge to those branches of sociology that engage with the outside world (Burawoy 2004). This is complemented by 'critical' sociology's focus on reflexive knowledge, by proposing debates, monitoring the descriptive and normative foundations of research programmes, and revealing the limits and interest characterizing them (Scott 2005). The third type of sociology, that of 'policy', serves the purpose established by clients or institutions for whom it provides advice. Its importance is gauged in terms of its practical capacity, utility and effectiveness when proposing those measures to be taken (Ericson 2005). Finally, the mission of 'public' sociology

is to promote a constant dialogue between sociologists and the outside world, reflecting on the external image of sociology and bringing to light and collectively discussing any questions of public interest and relevance.

The four ways of 'doing' sociology, resulting from the interweaving of Burawoy's categories, take on specific importance when applied to the question of poverty, as they highlight the need to problematize and re-politicize the ways in which knowledge is produced and policy-making is conducted. For each of the different aspects of the discipline, specific contributions can be imagined, all of which go towards constituting a transformative, emancipatory social science.

Professional sociology, based on specialized knowledge aimed at its academic public, could undertake to redefine those areas in which it produces and collects data for the analysis of social phenomena. More specifically, it could apply methodological knowledge to an exercise enabling poverty to be seen as more than simply an economic problem. Given that figures for people's incomes and spending are more immediately available, it comes as no surprise that they tend to be used to measure poverty levels. However, as Andrea Brandolini (2010, p. 68) has pointed out, measuring poverty 'exclusively within the sphere of available economic resources is only one aspect of the story, albeit an important one'. An innovative approach, in this case, would consist in highlighting different, neglected aspects of poverty. Chiara Saraceno argued that there are various different things at stake involving sociology, when constructing social indicators. These include: the capacity to produce and divulge knowledge that social actors may use; the relationship with the client; the formulation of the questions concerned; the production and utilization of knowledge; the potentially conflicting multiplicity of final users (Saraceno 2004, p. 509).

As far the second type of sociology – critical sociology – is concerned, the emancipatory task envisaged is that of utilizing academia's privileged position in order to re-adjust the prevailing representations of poverty, by intervening in the process of the construction of stigma and of the negative attributes that poor people are labelled with. In practice, critical sociology should focus on the problem of how inclusiveness is to be promoted, and should see that the distorted images of the phenomenon are not used to feed forms of selective access, which can result in the exclusion of certain categories or their being penalized as victims. In other words, critical sociology should reflect carefully on why certain categories are excluded, and on what this exclusion means for those concerned. In her works, Michal Krumer-Nevo (2017) highlights the importance of placing poverty within the context of power relations: as a lack of material capital, social capital (hindering opportunities for education, employment, relations and health) and symbolic capital (weakening opportunities to gain respect). She argues that politicizing research questions implies being guided by reflexivity when establishing the questions and content of research. The reactions of marginalized individuals should always be documented and analysed as manifestations of the inequalities engendered in everyday life by the policies pursued, as consequences of the different ways in which people see their opportunities restricted. Instead of emphasizing the negative aspects, sociologists should focus more on successful outcomes, and on the forms of agency and resistance that poor people express.

In the case of policy sociology, the challenge appears to be a particularly complex one. Expert knowledge, when called on by the institutions, may confirm and legitimize the policy agenda, or point out, when deemed necessary, the need to introduce discontinuity in the underlying logic and the methods of application of public policy. A case in point is the question of dependency on assistance. In this case, sociology seen as an emancipatory discipline

could encourage institutions to adopt a different approach to the way in which poor people are defined, judged and classified, not only by society but also in terms of their access to welfare provisions. This could help to challenge the idea of the inadequacy and incapacity of the social services in dealing with the problems concerned, by encouraging reflection on the appropriate levels of resources to be made available to poor people, on the best ways of providing support (emphasizing, for example, the risks of one-off measures), and on how to prevent certain styles of consumption appearing as opportunistic, rather than as attempts at integration into consumer society or the sparkling world of employment (for example, as previously mentioned, young people's need for social recognition through the possession of symbolic goods such as smartphones and so on).

Likewise, another very recent, albeit rather vague, concept – that of activation – needs to be deconstructed. How do institutions assess poor people's capacity to be productive at work and to behave in a civil, responsible manner? How much weight do they give to any progress that such people make? What importance do they give to the specific nature of cases, of personal histories, of the limited space in which a poor person moves? As the literature on this question suggests, the policies adopted in this regard can be of a contradictory nature. Louis Wacquant's studies of single mothers in the USA clearly show how such women are systematically stigmatized: they are considered to be bad mothers if they work, and opportunists if they choose not to work but to remain at home to look after their children (Wacquant 2009).

One final possible future direction for sociology lies with the multifarious world of civil society. In this case, mention should be made of the universities' so-called 'third mission', which has become increasingly important in recent years. Broadly speaking, this third mission consists in displaying the universities' capacity to play an economic and social role, involving actors outside of the academic sphere (Pitrone 2016; Boffo and Moscati 2015). From an emancipatory viewpoint, talk of relations with the local territory implies shifting the focus of the mission towards the pursuit of new forms of interaction with actors on the fringes who are not formally organized, but are currently emerging in social practices and are often marginalized by public opinion and the media (Tarsia and Tuorto 2021). The involvement of non-academics in research is not a new thing, as shown by the long history of action research, participatory action research, and community-based participatory action research. Nevertheless, despite being aware of the problems, communities do not always possess the required tools to deal with such problems (Nyden 2010). By applying this consideration to the question of poverty, sociologists busy working outside of their academic sphere should be capable of creating and proposing spaces for cooperation in which the parties in question – in our case, those persons with fewer resources and limited visibility – can be active participants and can acquire knowledge that can then be used to build their careers in a self-determined manner. Universities should bear in mind the way in which poor people reflect on their own condition, and thus encourage occasions for interaction and rethink the arenas in which such interaction can take place, so that these experiences and the materials produced can be used by the social actors concerned.

To sum up, then, in the light of the various different directions that sociology can take, it appears clear that it is capable of having a significant effect even on such a complex, multidimensional phenomenon as poverty. However, it also remains true, as Saraceno has pointed out, that sociology runs a risk if it sees its studies and analyses as having an impact on public discourse:

> it is not sociology's task to tend towards the good and just. Even though each one of us may (and I personally believe should) be motivated to conduct sociological research by some notion of what is good and just … Sociology's social responsibility is not only to respond to society's questions and stimuli, or even to constitute a democratic or participatory activity. It is to formulate good, theoretically and methodologically meaningful research questions supported by empirical findings permitting middle range explanations to be provided. (Saraceno 2004, pp. 505–506)

NOTES

1. This three-way division, named after the famous Sergio Leone film, is widely used in the literature. For a more detailed analysis of its application to studies of poverty, see Busso et al. (2018).
2. The question of shame has been examined by numerous authors, including Nussbaum (2004) and Newman (1999). On the specific question of lunch-shaming, see the various studies carried out, mainly in the USA, including Goodman and Cook Britiny (2019).

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23. Health

Magdalena Chiara

INTRODUCTION

The knowledge production cannot be divorced from its context. In this instance, it is difficult to think of health-related topics and problems without considering the scars left by the coronavirus on people, communities and governments, bringing the world to a halt just as we entered the third decade of the 21st century. Although it was a novel phenomenon, the organization of an adequate and pertinent response in line with the seriousness of the situation ran up against pre-existing structural problems.

Spatial and housing inequalities, the health systems' weaknesses and the difficulties in translating the preventive measures into changes in the behavior of the population placed normal modes of policy-making "up against the ropes." Furthermore, they revealed the limitations of the disciplines used to understand the phenomena that were taking place, the porosity that exists between the "inside" and the "outside" of scientific circuits, and the need for establishing dialog between "expert" and "non-expert" knowledge to understand the phenomena and make decisions that radically affect society as a whole. More than in most other situations, health has been the subject of debate, and the policy decisions have been argued over by both experts and the different social actors affected in different ways by the crisis.

Without referring to it directly, this chapter deals with some of the problems in health policy analysis that were strained by the COVID-19 pandemic, and proposes an approach to the academic field not from a "macro" perspective but following the progress of policies through the state's agencies and their relationship with society.

Drawing on the dialog between various sociological approaches and the contributions of other social sciences, this chapter seeks to deal with public sociology's contribution to the analysis of the complexities inherent to the health field. It seeks to make a contribution to the research into social and political processes in relation to health policies, paying particular attention to the viewpoint of the actors in given contexts.

The chapter is based on two premises: the first is that in health, the problems are made up of the ideas and projects that the various actors carry with them; and the second refers to the fact that social and territorial context is a decisive factor that needs to be taken into account in the research. The health systems' problems and the difficulties that reforms have encountered in resolving them are starkly evident in the relationship between state agencies and society. This chapter brings together various social science studies that have been shedding light on these interfaces, and inscribes them in the challenges brought by public sociology.

The chapter deals with key conceptual aspects for an understanding of social practice in relation to health policies. It first seeks to identify the attributes that set this field apart; then proposes a few keys for observing the policies in action; and deals with the complexity of their implementation. It concludes with a provisional agenda for research.

BEYOND A SECTORAL APPROACH

Health is one of social policy's most complex sectors. The wide range of goods and services involved, the strength of the markets, the role of technological innovation, and the diversity of actors involved, are some of the attributes that identify this dimension of welfare.

In this chapter, health is considered as part of the broader field of social policy. It aims to deal with its specificity, but intends to focus on the actors, whether individual or collective, in certain specific contexts.

To inquire into the relationship between the general population and the policies it is necessary to start from open concepts and to build bridges between disciplines, to be able to deal with the complexity of the problems the policies are facing.

The Sector and Its Boundaries

The sectoral and the health aspects are two attributes that characterize the field. The first attribute refers to the way that social interventions are organized. The sectoral logic of regulations refers to one of the means that the state has for organizing its interventions on social life, being noted for three properties: it is governed by the principle of specialization, it has an intra- and inter-organizational dynamic dominated by the legality of the rules, and it bases its justification systems almost exclusively on technical and scientific knowledge (Muller [2002] 2010, pp. 54–57). Although also present in other sectors, these properties are reinforced in the health sector by the fact that the image of the medical profession tends to overflow the medical care aspect, becoming a generic reference framework for policy design, implementation and analysis.

The health sector concept refers to the methods used to organize the interventions, activities and resources, and it provides the structure for some of the institutional research (especially that generated by governments and international entities). Its most direct effect consists of the definition of boundaries based on dominant social representations. However, as Pierre Muller correctly indicates, these dominant representations are "the object of constant conflict in relation to the controversies regarding their inclusion in the political agenda" (Muller [2002] 2010, p. 122).

Sectoral borders may vary and be disputed following changes in the paradigms for the organization of policies and the strains of critical situations. The perspective of social determinants (World Health Organization 2010) and comprehensive approach strategies (Cunill Grau et al. 2015) represent systematic efforts that place strain on the limits between sectors using analysis and intervention models. The crisis as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, presented governments with unprecedented challenges that required coordination of numerous actions in various sectors, directing them towards two cross-cutting objectives: the search for effectiveness of the response, at the same time as the construction of legitimacy (Boin et al. 2020).

Health as a Field

Although it appears to be powerful in detecting differences and revealing the logic and principles underlying institutional organization, the notion of a sector has its limitations when it comes to understanding the dynamics of public action. The field concept, as proposed by

Pierre Bourdieu, opens up the analysis and enables to take into account the different interactions that take place in it. According to Bourdieu, it is:

> a field of power, the needs of which are imposed on the agents participating in it, and as an arena of struggle where agents confront each other with different resources and aims according to their position in the structure of the field of power, contributing to conserve or transform its structure. (Bourdieu 1997, p. 49; our translation)

From this perspective, the health field includes a network of structured relationships and interactions, with a certain degree of stability, hierarchical and conflictive at the same time, in the context of which the "position" is a determinant in the structure of the relationships occupied by the actors (Belmartino and Bloch 1994). The shift from the notion of a sector to the concept of a field does not alter the attributes that identify it, but it leads to complementary readings on the dynamics that take place in relations between actors, their tensions and conflicts.

From the field concept it is possible to return to the second aspect, the singularity of the health sector context, to shed light on the production and consumption of goods and services, and on the specificity of the actors and their relationships in certain specific contexts. In this social policy domain a varied basket of goods and services is produced, in which from an economic standpoint, "pure" public goods coexist with goods with benefits that are "private." Unlike in other sectors, these goods and services respond to different needs at different moments in a person's life, as the risks of falling ill are also different. In recent decades, scientific and technological innovation in the treatment of illness has become a factor that defines the demand for the goods and services to be provided, prioritizing the role of policies designed to regulate their inclusion in benefit plans to ensure that they are covered effectively (Glassman et al. 2017, pp. 1–18). Compared with benefit transfer programs, for example, the complexity of modern health systems is extreme (Beland 2010, p. 35).

From both an economic and a political science perspective, another attribute that identifies the field is the strength of the medical, hospital, and pharmaceutical markets. State institutions coexist with these markets under service provision and financing models that vary significantly from country to country, with regulatory capabilities and vertical and horizontal coverage that also differ (Beland 2010, pp. 35–36). In the area of the service provision, there is a notable (and necessary) historical health worker autonomy (in particular for medical professionals) as well as of services (Immergut 1992, pp. 10–16). Problems with the recruiting and retention of professionals (doctors, midwives, and nurses) in the most deprived areas particularly affect low- and medium-income countries, and are the target of specific policies (McPake 2011, pp. 125–133).

Public health studies investigate the complexity of these management processes in the sector. Preserving the health of a population implies the need to generate and provide services through what could be called a continuum of promotion, prevention, diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation, and palliative care. In turn, these healthcare aspects must be accessible to the whole population, guarantee continuity of care, be organized into comprehensive responses, and be adequately coordinated across the various complexity levels. The performance of these attributes is hindered by the low priority of health policies, and because of the difficulties experienced by systems in adapting to the new needs and demands of the population (Minue 2020, pp. 301–307).

For over a decade the social determinants of health have been indicating that the impact on equity in health and well-being is not exclusively determined by the performance of the

health services systems. A series of structural factors (social and economic policies; and class, gender, and race policies) and other intermediary determinants (associated with material circumstances of life, social level, and psychosocial factors), impact decisively and in an interconnected manner on the state of health of a given population (World Health Organization 2010, pp. 20–41).

Health in Social Policy

Consideration of health within the field of social policy (as this chapter proposes) means looking beyond the production of goods and services and its dynamics, and seeking to understand policies as a response to the "social question"; this implies dealing with the tension between the promise of equality that operates on a political level, and the inequality that prevails on an economic level. As a result, health policies can be seen as a field for mediation between the political and economic order that is organized in the singularity of the particular social and territorial context.

Assuming that health policy is a part of social policy means returning to the conceptualization of the social question in the analysis of health problems; or in other words, considering the latter as a particular form of expression of the former. Sociologist Robert Castel defines the "social question" as:

> an aporia through which a society experiences the enigma of its own cohesion and tries to forestall the dangers of its disintegration. It is a complaint that interrogates, calls into question the capacity of a society (known in political terms as a nation) to exist as a collectivity linked by relations of interdependency. (Castel 1997, pp. 16–17)

From this perspective, health problems are not the mere result of processes that can be understood through an instrumental rationality, as they express a historical construction that encloses within their definition the contradiction and conflict between equality in the right to health and the inequality in the conditions in which that right is exercised. The contradiction and conflict between "equality" in the right to health and the "inequality" in the conditions in which that right is exercised refers to both the distribution of income among individuals and families and the inequality between territories.

This perspective enables the definition of health problems and their actors in the context of the tensions and dilemmas that appear within the network of relations in the field. That is where the problems are defined, where the meaning of what is public is debated[1] (not always progressively), and the responses that are accepted are put to the test.

POLICIES IN ACTION

A Relational Approach

Consideration of health as an "open field" implies setting research questions in the broader domain of social policy. The sectoral perspective makes it possible to identify the specific processes taking place within it, generating knowledge regarding "the particularities of the production and consumption of certain public goods, the forging of certain relationships

and the configuring and participation of certain specific social, professional or trades union groups" (Danani 2009, p. 28, our translation).

Returning to these contributions, health policy can be defined as the group of institutionalized interventions by the state that have as their object those phenomena and processes necessary to preserve the health of the population, recognizing their capacity to define (and produce) the problems, as well as to outline the rules according to which the interventions are drawn up, involving actions in relation to the preservation of individual and family health, in addition to those aspects in relation to collective health.

This definition opens up the research towards the particular conditions of the production and consumption of health goods and services, the network of relations along which the policies flow, and the dynamic of the pre-existing actors, and is shaped by certain socio-territorial contexts. When health policy is understood in that manner, it is possible to move away from those approaches that consider it to be a mere reaction or response to the problems, and to recognize its capacity for production, both in defining (and producing) the problems and in generating the rules according to which they are drafted.

Thus, health problems are defined in a political field, but also in a field dominated by experts (in a complex interaction between the technical and the political knowledge), in the development of which the social question is defined. In this context, state organizations shape the definition of the problems, define responsibilities, and establish the people that deserve public interventions.

The power of expert knowledge in health (in the cases of both the medical sciences and the economy, for different reasons) tends to move back to a second level any analysis of the complicated path followed by the problems, from the moment that they become visible until a group of actors calls for their inclusion on the "government agenda" (Kingdon 1995). Although expert knowledge has a symbolic force that is not to be disdained when it comes to constructing the problems (in the sense of defining them and classifying them so that they become tangible), the mobilization of the actors that become transformed into a "promoting coalition" (Sabatier and Weible 2010) does not occur in a neutral social space without other actors, and in particular, veto groups. The "sociology of public action" makes a valuable conceptual contribution to the investigation of the independent processes through which public problems gain a place on the agenda (Lascoumes and Le Galès [2009] 2014, pp. 77–96).

It is important not to lose sight of the fact that—as is the case in other public policies—health policies also overflow the borders of state organizations (national, state, or municipal ministries and agencies of various kinds) to intervene (by act or by omission) in the tensions and conflicts of society. It is not only a question of problems concerning the health outcomes, but also that they are intertwined with others that refer to the policy processes and also to the very conditions of the structure, that is to say, the material conditions (human resources, infrastructure, access to medicines, among others) by means of which healthcare services are provided.[2]

Policies Through Their Instruments

The reconstruction of how policies overflow the borders of the organizations that promote them, and succeed in causing changes, is one of the most difficult exercises of research. The first challenge is to determine the ways in which government decisions lead to mechanisms for the supply, financing, and regulation of the processes designed to guarantee the promotion

and health of the population. These decisions are manifested in the form of plans, programs and laws, "devices" that flow through heterogeneous institutional matrices and are executed by actors with ideas, interests, and resources that also differ.

The second challenge consists of grasping the simultaneity of the joint action of the various policy "devices"; this is an exercise of capital importance because in the implementation processes the (virtual) limits of plans, programs, and laws become diluted and are transformed into resources, incentives, and regulations that permeate the dynamic of the organizations which are directly or indirectly responsible for providing health services, simultaneously affecting the lives of people, families, and communities (Chiara 2017, pp. 193–196).

Analysis of the policy instruments allows investigation of the way in which they are organized and follow the path of their implementation, as different scholars have shown (Linder and Peters 1993; Vedung 1998; Salamon 2002; Lascoumes and Le Galès 2007; Hood and Margetts 2007; Howlett et al. 2020). One of the most significant contributions to analysis of the interface between state organizations and society is that made by Lascoume and Le Galès, for whom "a public policy instrument constitutes a device that is both technical and social, that organizes specific social relations between the state and those it is directed at, according to the representations and meanings it carries." It is a particular type of institution for the purpose of carrying a concrete concept of the politics–society relationship, and sustained in turn by a specific form of regulation. From this perspective, "public policy instrumentation means the set of problems posed by the choice and use of the instruments ... that allow government policy to be made material and operational" (Lascoume and Le Galès [2009] 2014, p. 113; our translation). This is particularly relevant for the analysis of health policies, as they affect organizations that are responsible for providing services (hospitals, health centers, and outpatient facilities) that not only existed prior to each intervention in particular, but that also have as their leading players actors with high degrees of autonomy. Instruments such as guidelines in healthcare practice, new payment systems, restriction of access, accreditation, family doctor or medicare reimbursement (Braun and Etienne 2004, p. 8; Yue et al. 2020, pp. 3–6) are instruments used by health policies that seek to regulate the doctor–patient relationship directly, and are in turn subject to reinterpretations and disputes as to their meanings.

Inertias of the Institutions and Dynamics of the Actors

The institutional architecture of health systems varies considerably from country to country, and is very complex within each country. Basic characteristics do not correlate directly with the classic typologies of welfare regimes (Esping-Andersen [1990] 1993). The complexity of the sector is partially responsible for such imbalances.

Some are organized on the basis of "private insurance" (and are characterized by the role developed by the market in both the financing and the provision of the health services), others are "social security-related health insurance" (through participation in the labor market and the payment of social security contributions), while in other cases the traits that define them are focused on a "universal health model" (using eligibility criteria based on residence in the territory, financed out of taxes, gratuitous at the moment of access, and reserving a central role to governance by the state) (Moreno Fuentes 2016, pp. 246–255). These arrangements are socio-political constructs that reflect correlations and the balancing of forces between the various interests of the actors and ideas regarding public welfare, as well as regarding the role of the state in its attainment. These are not mere macro institutional schemes, as they express

conflictive relationships between actors concerning a matter that is central to the lives and living conditions of the population: the sharing among social groups and generations of the risk implicit in maintaining the health of the population.

In the framework of such a complex scheme, one of the principal difficulties faced by health policies is the need to ensure the cooperation of the actors and institutions involved at each of the levels in which they intervene (state and local bodies, union associations, public and private services). This is an important matter for all public policies, but is of key importance in the field of health, given the process for the decentralization of responsibility generated by more complex spaces, increasing the range of alliances and coalitions, but also establishing veto points for the changes proposed by the policies.

For this reason, understanding the impact of the characteristics of the institutional arrangements on the course of the policies is of greater importance in health than in other social policy sectors. Scholars such as Tulia Faletti (2010) and Andrea Terlizzi (2019) have highlighted that the health decentralization processes (in their political, legislative, administrative, and fiscal dimensions) should be understood beyond the binary logic that opposes them to centralization. These processes have structural consequences for the organization of governance of health systems in the territory (Del Pino and Hernández-Moreno 2021) and encourage multiple decision spaces (Terlizzi 2019, p. 976) that are a sounding board for the strains around the autonomy and discretionary nature of sub-national government levels in relation to the policies.

Recovering the perspective of the actors and rebuilding their ideas (Beland 2016; Beland and Katapally 2018; Terlizzi 2019) in specific institutional contexts is one of the challenges of the analysis of policies in the context of (ever-present) decentralization.

Thus the history of the institutions, their political organization, the dynamic of relations among actors and the decentralization policies concur in each national context in the modelling of a highly complex institutional map.

The existence of unitary and federal countries, the differing intensity of their decentralization processes, and the coexistence of different models of health systems' organization, lead to problems that, while differing from one country to another, share two attributes: high levels of fragmentation, and inequity gaps in the coverage between populations and territories.

IMPLEMENTATION IN THE TERRITORY

For over four decades, implementation studies have been shedding light on the processes that are initiated when policies are executed. Various approaches and theories have been used to interpret them in their singularity, seeking to overcome both the traditional separation between "policy" and "technique" and the divorce between "deciders" and "implementers."[3]

With a differing emphasis, these studies challenged the supremacy of technical rationality, searching for keys to the interpretation of the processes that take place in determined socio-territorial contexts; this is a concern of public sociology (Burawoy 2005, p. 206) rarely dealt with in analysis of health reform processes. By means of empirical research these studies have shown that implementation processes largely transcend the application of instrumental knowledge, and have highlighted the role of the reflexivity of actors in the adaptation processes suffered by policy guidance in practice.

In the case of health policies, the most recent studies have shown greater development in primary healthcare and political and social sciences' scholars have dealt with micro and macro implementation (Cunill Grau et al. 2011; Martínez Franzioni 2006).

One attribute that distinguishes health studies is that they promote involvement by the stakeholders as much as by the researchers. Those actors are encouraged to ask themselves questions and assume a leadership role that demands better research. At the same time, researchers are invited to perform more practical tasks centered on matters that awaken the interest of those implementation actors (Peters et al. 2014). The assumption behind these proposals is that the research's design must reflect the specific problems that the stakeholders must deal with in order to contribute to improve the implementation of the policies.

This call to deal with the specificity of the problems from the viewpoint of those actors requires concepts that can capture in all its complexity the singularity of the socio-territorial and political context in which the health policies are to be deployed. Rigorous consideration of the social and political processes that take place in the implementation in given territories is a requirement to improve the effectiveness of the policies beyond mere rhetoric.

In health it is common to conceive the territory as something that is "outside" the services. From geography, some scholars (Santos [1994] 2005; Amin, 2005; Haesbaert, 2007; Bronzo, 2007) have insisted on the need to look at the territory as something more than the scenario in which the policies are implemented. Distancing themselves from spatialist ideas, these scholars adopt the concept of territory as a historically constructed social space in which the various flows articulate and strain resources in a given space. From this perspective, territory is a particular type of space with certain determined attributes that refer to the appropriation and self-referencing of the actors (Chiara 2016, pp. 7–9). Thus, the territory is not external to the actors, but is an object of construction and dispute.

Therefore, the relationship between health policies and territory must be understood from the standpoint of mutual conditioning. Policies have the ability to build territoriality, but in turn, the territory shapes them and in certain conditions can become a space in which solutions are defined. Municipal experiences and those of social organizations on a local scale are an example of this.

Without ignoring the hierarchy of the principle of specialization and scientific knowledge in the legitimization of public action, the path followed by health policies in the implementation on levels close to the population (local or neighborhood) shows other actors who are bearers of more complex agendas that exceed the limits of strictly health-related matters. This perspective leads to focusing attention on actors not contemplated in the design who are in interface areas between the field of health policies and other policies. By empowering other actors, other logics are restored when it comes to constructing the problems and in the way in which state agencies are legitimized. Legality of the rules, the power of technical scientific knowledge, and the image of the medical profession, tend to become diluted as organizing principles in the systems for justification of public action at levels closer to the population, where other needs and problems arise.

This happens because on a local and neighborhood scale the recipients are more complex than those that were built by policies in their design. Thus the population's demands for health services merge into others (social and political), and in that context governmental and administrative actors at local and neighborhood level deconstruct and reconstruct the policies. This means that the implementation shows that health is a field in dispute: there are different views of the problems, there is no single knowledge, and both experts and non-experts can speak out.

RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS

This chapter seeks to contribute to the analysis of social and political processes that occur in relations between health policies and society. To do so it deliberately distances itself from traditional "top-down" approaches that characterize studies in this field.

With this aim it has addressed certain critical issues for health policy research. It first organized the aspects that distinguish this field from other welfare domains and presented a conceptual approximation that sheds light on the relations and exchanges established by the actors. Next, it proposed a theoretical and methodological approximation to analyze the policies in action: the complex relationship between problems and policies, the challenges faced when capturing the joint action of their devices, and the inertia of the institutional matrices. The chapter then showed the implementation as a moment when the network of actors and their ideas regarding the problems overflows the limits of the sector in certain territories. The path followed was based on two premises: the first is that health problems also consist of ideas and projects that the various actors carry with them; and the second is that the social and territorial context is a decisive variable for the analysis.

Returning to the public sociology perspective, particular effort was placed on transcending boundaries and constructing a dialogue between disciplines. The purpose of this exercise is not merely academic, as it is based on the conviction that the ways of understanding and the knowledge generated in the research can lead to ways of designing different public policies. Clearly defining the conditions under which "knowledge" can be tied to "action" is the purpose of this final section. From the above review, eight topics arose that could be a starting point for a program of research into public sociology:

- Each discipline on its own has shown limitations in the understanding of the complexity of the problems faced by health policies. Nevertheless, to generate a conversation between disciplines does not seem to be enough. There is a need to build frameworks for analysis capable of getting to the bottom of complex processes, at the same time as nourishing the design of public policy instruments appropriate for the needs of people, groups, and communities.
- Over and above the power of sectoral logic to set boundaries on the scope of policies, its limitations when it comes to analyzing the processes included in public healthcare actions have been shown. The borders that mark where the health sector ends and another sector begins are the result of dominant representations, and are the subject of various disputes within the field. Research on the political and social processes that take place in the development of health policies must not assume these borders to be given, but should challenge them: following the causal relations between problems, recovering the hypotheses of the experts, and placing them in a dialogue with the perspectives of the social actors.
- Therefore, what attributes should knowledge possess? For academic logic to contribute to dialogue with other actors, it must be nourished from the general debates in the field as well as being linked to particular contexts.[4] If health policies are a "mediation field" between the principle of equality (on a political level) and inequality (on an economic level), the contribution of academic knowledge cannot be normative (in relation to how the policies "must be"), but must attempt to contribute to the debate between actors to progress in the construction of what is public, and understand the factors to which that inequality is tied.

- The proposed approach makes it possible to initiate a conversation between academic knowledge and other broader publics (health team professionals and non-professionals, social organization leaders, government officials, politicians, legislators, community health agents) who know about, reflect on, interrogate each other on, and have projects regarding health policies. The public sociology proposal makes it possible to organize an informed and structured conversation on the obstacles faced on the construction of more egalitarian conditions for access to health services.
- Non-academic actors introduce a new agenda into this conversation. This tradition is characteristic of the health field and has a long history in clinical research, but fewer credentials in relation to administration problems. For the results of the research to be useful in improving the implementation, it must reflect the specific problems to be dealt with by those stakeholders in the contexts in which they arise.
- Given the traces left by reforms, complexity is an unavoidable attribute for the health field. At meso and micro level there are many decision spaces where the meaning of the policies is debated. They are formidable analysts of the process of construction of what is public. Capturing the dynamics between actors that take place in the decision spaces is a core aspect of social research in relation to health policies.
- To participate in this conversation, the contribution from academic research must take into account the situational totality of the policies, and avoid the cutbacks (always arbitrary) of its devices (programs or projects). The policies seen from below—whether from the households or from the stakeholders—do not recognize such limits.
- Lastly, learning spaces (such as continuous training, postgraduate courses, diplomas) play a fundamental role in the production of knowledge, as they promote dialogue that allows incorporation of the singular experience of actors in the more general context of the structural problems. Providing conceptual density of the (always complex) situations faced by those policy managers enables the problem experienced as private to become a public matter for both policies and also for society. It makes the structural problems of health policies visible in the implementation arenas.

NOTES

1. Bifulco and de Leonardis propose a series of guidelines to determine what is understood by public (as opposed to private): exposure to public view, having a claim to universal validity, having goods that are treated as public, and that their institutions assume authority to regulate relations between organizations (Bifulco and de Leonardis 2005, pp. 193–201).
2. Revisiting the classic trinity introduced by Donabedian ([1996] 2005, pp. 692–695), the problems constituting the field are those referring to the "outcomes," the design and implementation "processes," and also the conditions of the "health structure."
3. In an effort to systemize the various perspectives, the anthology by Luis Aguilar Villanueva (1996) was an early attempt to review the various generations of authors and investigations of implementation studies that began with the pioneering work of Pressman and Wildavsky ([1973] 1998), making them accessible to Spanish speakers.
4. The work carried out by "Região e Redes" is a perfect example of research in which the objectives of decision-makers are integrated. https://www.resbr.net.br/.

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PART IV

FOR A PUBLIC ACADEMIA: PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY AND PUBLIC ACADEMIES

24. Paradoxes, contradictions, and deep feelings of ambivalence, or, academia still appeals

Eeva Berglund

INTRODUCTION

Some time after the financial meltdown of 2008, the journal *Ephemera: Theory and Politics in Organization*, published a short article I had written about my reluctant exit from an excellent anthropology department after only a few years into what had looked like a dream career (Berglund 2008). I experimented with other occupations (freelancing as a writer and researcher, and for a short while as an urban planner), but even when doing those things, I stayed on at the fringes of the academic community. Shortly after the *Ephemera* article, I left the United Kingdom and moved (back) to Finland. Throughout, I found it difficult to stay away from academia. Eventually, in 2016, I landed a five-year contract, part-time, but nevertheless, with a Finnish university. There, as Adjunct Professor or Environmental Policy in a design department, I now teach broadly anthropological and planning-related content to mostly design and business students, while feeding my ongoing drive to engage with several areas of research.

Here I revisit the themes of that text from 2008. I show how the same story continues, but it has also been turned somewhat on its head. True, academia is in even worse trouble than it was then. Academia, however, appeals, and it appeals to me regardless of discipline. What I will dwell on, and in the spirit of Michael Burawoy's (2005) take on public sociology, is the relevance of sociology and anthropology to public life. Anthropology, which has developed along a related yet distinct trajectory to sociology, is actually rather popular and visible now, partly thanks to its attentions to non-modern or non-capitalist ways of arranging life on Planet Earth (an illustrative example is *Feral Atlas*, Tsing et al. 2020).

Even though the well-catalogued problems of the university as an institution are potentially devastating—as voluminous research and comment will testify (e.g. Nordbäck et al. 2021)—contemporary academia engages in significant, perhaps existentially crucial ways, with public concerns of all kinds. To echo the voguish discourse of the Anthropocene that I engage in my teaching and research, in order to live within the ruins of modernity and innovate for "socio-ecological vitality" and not "accumulation and expansion" (Paulson 2018, 87), academic research is more important than ever. To maintain the capacity to address shared issues in the contemporary world, the university as an institution must be continually developed, not undermined. I therefore mount this defence of academia also from a sense of responsibility: coping with the legacy of modernity requires the kind of deep and broad learning that only academia can offer. We critics must be judicious about our complaining. I pursue mine through a place-based, personal, and also document-based, but above all precise description of academic work, including an acknowledgement of its huge variation. The low morale, stretched resources, frenetic work tempo, and often overblown expectations are not the only part of the story. But my concern is above all to argue that academic work is more continuous

with life and thought outside higher education than its characterization as an "ivory tower" admits. I thus highlight the active traffic between university and other kinds of work, whether centred on practices *in vitro*, *in silica* or in the field.

If defending academia, and the possibility of further developing a public social research, requires some recasting of the narratives around universities and the work they do, I find this quite easy to do, contrary to how I felt in 2008. Firstly, I have been lucky enough to have much joy in and through social research. Secondly, my training has fostered an anti-essentialist, empiricist (if not empirical) and open understanding of academia and of intellectual work generally. This owes much to the field of science and technology studies (STS) and social movement research. Yet social research has been under attack, not only from those beyond the university world and its presumed elite sympathies, but even from many within it, unhappy with the direction it is going, yet unable to change it (e.g. Ingold 2016; and the contributors to a forum in *ANUAC*, edited by Heatherington and Zerilli 2017, in anthropology; and Nordbäck et al. 2021, in management studies). Notwithstanding the problems foisted upon it by neoliberalization, and the struggles brought on in the wake of an epoch-making pandemic, I would now prefer to recognize rather than condemn the university, and contribute to renewing it.

I begin with a brief sketch of the problems, an updated and much shortened version of my older essay, whose main contents are probably too familiar to readers to require repeating at length. I then reflect on what can be learned from working, as I have done, with issues around environmental problems and social movements. I rehearse how neoliberal academia, like the capitalist aspirations most of us deem normal, exhaust human bodies and minds and damage the planet. These converging and worsening crises, I suggest, provoke epistemological confusion. Interestingly and importantly, this is mixed in its effects, sometimes energizing research by stretching the imagination, but at other times following unchallenging lines of enquiry whose function seems to be to assuage middle-class guilt or, proverbially, to serve corporate rather than human interests. We critique with responsibility, I suggest, when we distinguish between these different projects and their executions, and when we treat the academy with the same nuance and generosity that, as social scientists, we extend to those whose lives we study. That way, even as critics, we also help to develop and nurture our community rather than competing among and exhausting ourselves, as academics we might easily do. That way, we can also draw attention to the importance of scholarly social thought in public life, as well as to the continuing imperative to pursue university science.

REVISITING ACADEMIA'S TROUBLES

Since writing of academia's problems in 2008, the literature on the corrosive impacts of marketizing universities into a global industry has grown and grown (e.g. Collini 2012), and now parallels an even more voluminous archive of the damages wrought by applying neoliberal ideals in all areas of everyday life. Universities are under massive pressure to reduce themselves to supports for capitalist expansion. This inevitably leads to human and nonhuman tragedies, including losses in the risk-taking abilities and epistemological supports that governance in a technologically saturated and politically febrile world needs. Nevertheless, I note that for those involved in higher education and research, for some of the time, universities really are full of exciting, bold, and risky ventures, energized by both youthful enthusiasm and mature wisdom.

Before I get to that: the struggle. As an inherently international yet place-bound venture, university life around the world is recognizable as the same but different. Some pockets are leading the way in novelties that others must—or so they claim—adapt and accept. This can lead to the capture or extraction of ever more cognitive or knowledge work for instrumental, often monetized, ends. Even for someone (like me) suited by temperament at least to its mix of institutional standards and creative freedoms, as well as its alternating rhythms of community and solitude, the rewards of academic work are routinely overshadowed by frustrations. If I thought I was wearing my heart on my sleeve in 2008, the confessional mode of writing about the topic is no longer exceptional (e.g. Nordbäck et al. 2021).

As I noted in 2008, by the end of the 1990s, in the English-speaking world, the debilitating aspects of audit and celebrity culture in higher education were leading to the sector getting swallowed up by the twin imperatives of the knowledge economy and creative cities. They adopted a language that would make them appear more entrepreneurial and more useful to society as purveyors of employability. Our experiences, at least as younger academics, contrasted sharply with the promises and hopes of doctoral and postdoctoral times, challenging though they had also been. Misplaced fantasies about the university life aside, work satisfaction in academia might have been expected to be particularly high. Besides the obvious human propensity to enjoy learning, in my field I felt excited by the socio-political role of research, which I saw as significant given how the world is so overtly "in the process of being made" that it calls for a human right to research (Borghi 2020, 250).

Alas, the imperative to constantly excel damaged the quality of the work, as one felt the need to read and write competitively, paying less attention to the detail of a scholarly work than to how one's own response to it could further one's own career; though I had already noted this during my doctoral studies (Berglund 1998). Isabelle Stengers points out that however stupid it might be, those academic fields where applying benchmark evaluation and defining success in terms of commercial intellectual property rights does make some sense, have become a template for all university work. What she calls the "fast" science model of knowledge is fast not only in a literal sense—the rush to generate research outputs (Stengers 2018, 51)—but also in the sense of leaving no room for risk-taking or creativity, leaving academics unable to actually get a "better understanding of the threatening world we live in" (ibid., 106) because we have been "too busy meeting the relentless demands to which we now have to conform in order to survive" (ibid., 107), where survival must refer to the occupational, not the biosocial.

At the turn of the millennium, managerialism in universities was less about academic work than about serving the needs of firms operating globally. One of these was and is the academic publication market, whose pathologies were at that point not yet as severe as they have become since. We reacted as academics with the occasional vote of no confidence, a strike day here and there, but often with humour, making fun of the language of business management and noting its silliness. This continues today. I am more aware also that this applies to ourselves as we adopt new habits with varying levels of reluctance and resistance. As before, university administrations experiment with temporal fixes of various kinds, such as setting targets, or introducing digital upgrades whose key motivation is to replace salaried time. Frenetic technological change compounds already endemic time-anxiety and, just as it did 20 years ago, causes people to "skim rather than dwell" (Sennett 2006, 127). These changes parallel the globalization and industrial logic that also involves removing local attributes: all you need is a ranking.

Normalizing competitiveness at all levels clearly impacts psychological and physical wellbeing. It fosters narcissism and other psychological attributes that only serve the team—research group, department, institution—to the extent that the team's success helps to ensure one's own survival. The story is told with ample personal detail by Emma Nordbäck and her colleagues, writing about the arrival of neoliberal academia in Finland, specifically in the institution where I currently work (Nordbäck et al. 2021). While gender plays no insignificant part in how academic work is valued and renumerated, with "soft" or "field" research cast as dispensable as well as feminine, the pandemic more than likely exacerbated such issues. For example, the longer-terms impacts of the altered spatial arrangements it brought about–turning academics' homes into sites of new–old gender struggles–remain to be seen, but the pandemic certainly brought to the surface the deeply personal, physical, and psychological dimensions of cognitive and creative work, sharpening prior inequalities. Gendered frameworks for reproducing society started becoming more noticeable but also more entrenched as pandemic-induced demands on time to maintain, to care, and to carry out conventionally unpaid labour started to fall disproportionately on women. As usual, when everybody is under pressure, trouble cascades down the hierarchy. Here Richard Sennett's (2006) insights appear an apt diagnosis of the times: taking care of oneself and building self-esteem at work is ever harder. Researchers in many fields face a toxic mix of fearmongering, ranging from threats of reduced resources to the usual exhortations to competitiveness; and now, especially in politically contested areas such as human or planetary health, even outright attacks on one's work and person. Improvement cannot realistically be expected any time soon.

In this chapter I refer in a general sense to the world of academia, the university, higher education, or scholarship, using them more or less interchangeably. I want also to avoid essentializing a still vibrant and internally very diverse world. That is what the world of university learning has always been about, and a good part of my motivation here is to encourage more nuanced, more empirically recognizable, and also more politically resonant accounts of and interventions into its world. Interestingly, the experiences in the United Kingdom that led me to my complaint in 2008 are remarkably similar to the experiences currently affecting me and my colleagues in Finland. Two shifts that affect me directly and that colour my analysis are, firstly, the way global environmental degradation cuts far more deeply into everyday comforts as well as international politics; and secondly, the impulse to simplification in public life, reflected in how humanities and social science scholarship have been devalued and even attacked.

THE SCIENCES OF THE SOCIAL

Although it was already on the cards, the troubles in the humanities and social sciences were not so much of an issue in 2008 as they are now. European governments and funding bodies have overseen painful reductions in their prestige and funding (Green and Laviolette 2019). Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (the STEM subjects), prominent in efforts to make university impact visible, have, on the whole, fared far better. Research impact defined as narrowly as it currently is, disadvantages scholarship that might tend towards slowness, such as the time-consuming ethnographic work that anthropology still builds on. Following Stengers, slow science would acknowledge the plurality within scholarship and across fields of research endeavour. It would also respect the need, but also the fact, of quite

different yet fruitful and reliable criteria of evaluation across different disciplinary contexts (Stengers 2018, Ch. 3). Thickly contextualized case studies of social life or in-depth analyses of an artistic corpus are not produced in the time-frames typical of laboratory experimentation or computer modelling, yet it is this simpler model of "fast" science that utterly dominates. As Stengers is at pains to point out, channelling authoritative knowledge through the "blind objectification" of a world-conquering, modernizing and deluded "fast" science leads to many problems. It "leaves us with a more desolate, empty world" (Stengers 2018, 145), it belittles swathes of what is relevant and important to communities and social groups (perhaps now recognized as stakeholders) and it ignores the actual complexity required to learn.

As an institution, then, the university or academia now channels collective effort into the realm of technical innovation, seeking solutions to problems that are already known. This goes with conceptions of progress that define betterment in technological terms (Suchman 2011), making a comfortable parallel with the dominant epistemology based on the belief that the market knows best. All this is neatly reflected in the architecture (Nordbäck et al. 2021) and documents (Strathern 2006) of contemporary academia, the standardized and algorithmically formatted environments of glass, steel, and PowerPoint that have spread from corporate life into higher education.

Universities now defend their work by appealing to their role in coping with multiple interlocking and planetary crises. So do I, but rather differently from the standard account that gives such prominence to STEM-dominated promises of scientific breakthroughs and technological innovations. The problem is that there is very little evidence that climate chaos can be averted without grappling with puzzles of a social and cultural nature. The world "out there" is now suffused with artificiality, and organized for and by machines and assemblages of machines, and other things that were invented to support profit making. Given the historical dominance of "fast" science, it is perhaps understandable how publics, funders and policy makers alike imagine efforts in the natural and technical sciences as keys to addressing a global existential threat, but this should be challenged. In comparison, the social dimensions of climate policy receive paltry research funding, as noted recently by Overland and Sovacool (2020). They note further that hopes to apply what natural science has worked out, by inventing remedies and offering them to people to help them change their behavior, are utterly misguided. More likely, more gadgets will get invented, but overall little improvement will come forth.

It is indeed tempting to succumb to the thought that academia is simply beyond repair. Enmeshed as it is in the pathologies of a dominant politics that reaches around the globe and into the deepest and most intimate recesses of individual lives, perhaps academic science really is less likely to offer guidance than is the world of art, a position suggested recently by Tim Ingold (2016). An anthropologist whose work is widely cited among humanities scholars, but also in architectural and design research, as well as by anthropologists, Ingold puts beautifully into words an ambivalence that probably many of us in the academic industry recognize.

Ingold, like Stengers, refers without apology to the role of learning in a civilized life. Now retired from the University of Aberdeen, he was a pioneer of environmental anthropology in Europe and has continued to write provocatively and resonantly about how the social and the technical are entangled in life everywhere. In very practical terms, he also defended academia, launching a campaign to reclaim the university—his own, and in general—from marketization, in 2015 (Ingold 2020). In that process, he defined the university as a place with responsibility above all to its region and the people who make it, which it carries out by educating "future generations of citizens and to forge the knowledge needed to sustain a just and prosperous

world" (Ingold 2020, 66). The manifesto from that campaign,[1] from which this was quoted, defines the purpose of the university as a place to think, and to learn how to weigh thoughts "against the evidence of experience, and to translate them into policy and practice, systems of law and governance, as well as great works of science, literature and art. These things are the foundations of civilised life" (quoted in Ingold 2020, 66).

I share Ingold's affection for the discipline of anthropology. In *Anthropology and/as Education* (Ingold 2018), he describes it as "generous, open-ended, comparative, and yet critical inquiry into the conditions and potentials of human life in the one world we all inhabit." He goes on:

> By general consent, the organisations of production, distribution, governance and knowledge that have dominated the modern era have brought the world to the brink of catastrophe. In finding ways to carry on, we need all the help we can get. But no-one—no indigenous group, no specialist science, no doctrine or philosophy—already holds the key to the future, if only we could find it. We have to make the future together. (Ingold 2018, p. 59)

Yet he sees neither the university nor academic anthropology as up to that task. In another paper, he is quite scathing about academia, a word he puts into quotation marks (Ingold 2016, 19) and damns for having succumbed to a crassly instrumental ethos, led by a "global scientific elite … in collusion with the corporations" (ibid., 19). Academia, he argues, now serves the knowledge economy with data, neatly quantifiable and calculable but divorced from the human capacity and need for care and meaning. I thank Ingold and the innumerable others who commit to print such observations, and allow them to circulate and, hopefully, gain some traction.

Yet I am uncomfortable with the essentialist readings of academic work in such denouncements. I see that universities remain places where it is possible to study in "the spirit of reason, tolerance, justice and common humanity" that he calls for (Ingold 2020, p. 48). If in-fighting and splintering go on, so do other things, both at the level of personal psychology, but also, even more importantly, at the level of collective learning. This kind of hostility towards academia is debilitating to all involved and particularly depressing to younger colleagues or those who might be weighing up whether or not to invest in it.

In the next section, I pursue this point by briefly reflecting on my current teaching experience and linking it to social movements. They have done more than is usually acknowledged to describe, analyse and foster learning, particularly in the realm of environmental politics. I reflect on how teaching about (un)sustainability in the face of uncertain futures leads to paradoxes, contradictions, and deep feelings of ambivalence and even confusion, and still energizes. It opens up to what Stengers calls for: the possibility of another way to institutionalize the learning we collectively need.

WORKING ON ISSUES WITH SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

I have been teaching part-time since 2016 within Aalto University's Master's programme in Creative Sustainability, run mostly across the departments of design and business. I chuckle at the corporate-speak used to market its "offer," but I also recognize that, as for previous generations, prevailing discourse supports students' efforts to negotiate their way into future occupations. Seeking to promote sustainability in a very unsustainable environment, the programme

tries to foster a critical awareness of the shortcomings of the very discourse that it is based on. The underlying imperative to design very difficult planetary-scale and system-wide transitions (Kossoff 2019; Ceschin and Gaziulusoy 2019) fosters self-critique and intellectual growth as well as many other things, from hope to anxiety. It is impossible to keep the academic element of our students' education separate from their civic change-making impulse. Clearly, the university offers them space to think and rethink. They work on socio-technical issues while tackling cultural and economic conundrums, and so practice the much-lauded transdisciplinarity that features so highly in the institution's rhetoric. Most students are somehow involved in groupings and projects that pre-exist their studies, as more or less activist participants in campaigns promoting political change or fostering socio-technical innovation. They contribute to social movements, designing liveable futures while working out ways of being political. I encourage them to embrace and explore the possibility of being researchers and activists simultaneously, just as I encourage them to exploit their time in a university, where research can be esoteric and indifferent to political persuasion or business interest.

Our students and colleagues form part of increasingly international networks at the same time as constituting the university as a place and as a prominent part of the region around it. Numerous projects and small assignments involve the local or regional community and its policy making apparatuses. In lectures I also make sure to contextualize learning in various Finnish histories, notably the social movements and protests I have studied myself, relating to natural resource politics (in forestry; Berglund 2001) and more recently, urban and design activism (Berglund and Peipinen 2018). In surveying these examples of working towards sustainability, we pursue the exercise outlined by Stengers, of noting the troubles ("think of our sickness" to create a sense of the possible and thence to apply collective intelligence and becoming, as she puts it, "capable of learning again" (Stengers 2018, 81). This is hard work for all of us. We must negotiate endless tensions that are created by our varied backgrounds and the short time allowed for each course within the curriculum; and, of course, by the achingly difficult issues we are dealing with. As the pioneer of Finnish environmental social science, Yrjö Haila, notes, understanding "the potential of science to clarify the human predicament defined by inscrutable global environmental problems" is a difficult question even for specialists and multi-disciplinary coalitions of concerned people, as well as for what he calls "connoisseurs of public intelligence of science" (Haila 2020). I can only nod in my teaching towards the fraught domain of science–policy research and practice. I hope that what we do encounter of it helps students appreciate that the conundrums involved here are not only reflections of our intellectual or personal deficits, but reflections of how the world is.

The story of how science became the model for reasoned and reasonable decision making is now a preoccupation in many places, as reflected in debate on decolonizing knowledge. An early figure in that discussion, Arturo Escobar (1999, 3) noted, with some understatement in 1999, that "Politics and science do not lend themselves to easy articulation." He has continued to pursue the point by journeying across activist and academic worlds, from the Global North to the Global South and back again. A key insight from Escobar's work is that the defence of territory and liveable environments by social movements of the South is also a defence of dynamic and powerful knowledge practices that can both oppose and coexist with globalized knowledge (Escobar 2020). While not alone in voicing such critiques, Escobar's insight is particularly robust since it comes from his engagement over decades with social movement intellectuals. This is an easily overlooked source of wisdom that those of us who study protest have, however, learned to appreciate.

When I draw on social movements in my teaching, it begins to make the complexity of global sustainability issues more understandable, but it also highlights the knowledge base and knowledge interests of protestors, drawing attention to the politics involved in establishing the relevance of knowledge (Stengers 2018; Borghi 2019). Social movements' interests start to appear as matters of concern, drawing in information from various sources and not only authorized experts, thus creating new publics and new issues. This applies from the Colombian Amazon, as in Escobar's work, to the middle-class comforts of Finland, as in (most of) my more recent research. In a comment piece about science and democracy, geographer Sue Owens notes how little interest there has been in empirical investigations into this phenomenon, adding that "we should far more often 'go and see', especially in the highly dynamic circumstances of technological innovation and change," what is going on where technical and scientific expertise meets political disagreement (Owens 2011, 331).

Neither Ingold nor Stengers have much to say about social movements. Yet social movements have a key role not just in environmentalism, but also in the birth of modern science as a whole. Arguably many of the crucial achievements of modernity emerged out of protest (as our mythology, indeed, recognizes). The intellectual role of social movements is crucial to understanding and, I suggest, developing, the future of academia. This role is only very occasionally acknowledged, for instance in social movement research (Melucci 1996), although it goes back, as Andrew Jamison notes, to the religious movements of the sixteenth century. Scientific knowledge was indeed crucial to modern environmentalism—from the 1960s—a point that is now widely recognized (Jamison 2006). This is not affected by attacks on scientific knowledge, of whatever provenance, corporate or other, even if concepts such as "climate denial" and "agnotology" are currently important parts of the lexicon in contrast to 2008 when my earlier essay was published. Today's public culture features many painful contests over scientific literacy, not least around climate, as symbolized and enacted in the work of Greta Thunberg, a significant early 21st-century social movement figure.

The democratic life requires, of course, constantly negotiating what counts as opinion, belief, truth, knowledge, fact, and so on. But to go over histories of social movements' knowledge making is also to acquaint oneself with some remarkably persistent ways of clinging to ignorance. A typical context is development "aid" (Hobart 1993), but equally shaming are current struggles to cope with the waste of ordinary life (Alexander and O'Hare 2020). A key point here is that when activism leans on scientific expertise—an issue animating my own doctoral research in the 1990s (Berglund 1998)—it is likely to bring to the surface in a grounded way both the necessity and the insufficiency of science. The image of scientific research now driving university research, focused as it is on "excellence," "impact," and competition, appears in this context as particularly poorly suited to the times, ubiquitous sustainability-talk notwithstanding.

Networks of activists and researchers have worked from the grassroots for decades, pushing environmental problems into public consciousness. They have been generating multiple pathways to secure ecological sustainability and social justice (Smith et al. 2017), and blurring the divide between lay-person and expert at the cutting edge, so to say, of sustainable innovation (Hyysalo 2021). Sometimes it is apposite to talk of counter-science or counter-knowledge, for instance in natural resource conflicts, or where toxins have damaged bodies while government officials deny the very existence of any toxins. Empirical attention to environmental social movements helps to explore that, and how specialist expertise based in academia dovetails with efforts undertaken by "lay" people.

Though the categories of lay and expert remain strangely persistent, as Owens (2011) noted, Jamison's argument that "social movements play an essential role in the creation of scientific knowledge" (Jamison 2006, 47) is no longer contentious. Social movement scholars have done much to help redefine what counts as environmental problems, and how environmental law is developed; but as in the 1960s, the early days of Nordic environmentalism (Räsänen 2012) or in most of my engagements with activism, the lay–expert divide really is less significant than questions of social and political positioning and power. What is also significant, is the ability to extend what counts as relevant, and what information is sufficient to be acted upon; a point made by many others (e.g. Stengers 2018; Borghi 2019). The field of environmental justice, particularly as a political movement, has emerged in real-life situations that are very far away from the putative superior knowledge of the controlled laboratory experiment, but close to axes of systemic socio-economic violence such as race and gender (Di Chiro 2008; Liboiron 2021).

Building on the ability, indeed the imperative, of arguing against environmental injustice to live with and involve knowledge in several dimensions at once, activists have broadened and deepened conceptions of 'the environment' in historically informed and sometimes theoretically challenging directions. Lively debate continues around, for instance, new materialism (Bennett 2010) and environmental humanities (Haraway 2016), but to link the point to social movements, as in environmental justice research for instance, grounds the arguments (White et al. 2016; Schlosberg 2019). Jamison developed his argument from empirical research into the cognitive praxis of the environmental movements of 1980s Europe. He observed that social movements were particularly adept at bridging specialist scientific capabilities and social realities, their knowledge work contributing to what he calls hybridization, the historically significant process of "bringing together … social roles and forms of knowledge that were previously separated for one reason or another" (Jamison 2006: 47). I encountered this in my own ethnographic work with German environmentalists in the early 1990s (Berglund 1998), and have routinely found it since, as researcher and activist, as well as in my brief time (after exiting academia) as a local authority planner in a London borough.

Urban and land-use planning is one forum where expertise of different kinds is often generated through some issue of public concern. As planning turns into action, multiple potential futures become reduced to single construction projects or rival, mutually exclusive, land uses. New knowledge will definitely have been gained. Analyses of such processes, for instance by Gisa Weszkalnys (2010) (or Berglund 1998) in Germany, or Simone Abram in the UK and Norway (e.g. Abram 2017), highlight rhetorical games of a power-political and administrative nature, but they also offer evidence of highly dynamic processes of learning. As this work shows, the relationships between social movements or local campaigners and local authorities easily turn into stereotyped caricatures. The planning and policy documentation left behind from any such process is only a small part of what went on. Fortunately, the thick description and careful analysis of scholars provides far more detail and nuance, and offers less binary and oppositional explanations. In short, such academic work can yield fuller and more honest pictures of protest as well as bureaucracy, looping back via public debate into mainstream culture in helpful ways.

One example of protest where scholarly social research has helped to inform public debate is environmental protection. In Finland (as elsewhere), the environment became a public concern and a policy focus in the 1960s, very much based on scientific work. As happened elsewhere, some figures became prominent, such as Rachel Carson who alerted the world to the toxicity

and tragedies of DDT. Most likely, however, it has been regional networks of experts responding to local issues (Räsänen 2012), rather than international heroes, who have most effectively guided how social movements have been shaped. The historical analysis by Räsänen parallels many local accounts of how specialist skills and equipment were needed to establish where toxins harmful to humans or wildlife might be lurking. The full picture of the impacts of DDT, however, required a range of information. In the 1990s, what later became known as citizen science developed particularly through making inventories of Finland's extensive forests. As state expertise was challenged, counter-experts started to map biodiversity (Berglund 2001), something that today's environmental governance considers quite standard. Similar trajectories have since spread to other conservation issues. Forest conflicts that are being reignited once again, and so are a natural focus of discussions in the classroom, where students can bring their own background knowledge and interests to bear on our collective learning.

There is one other style of intellectual work that is arising through a social movement, only just emerging, and certainly ad hoc, that is relevant to this repoliticization of everyday life and of science: materialist activism. The playful embrace of strangeness here might indicate epistemological confusion, but it may yet turn out that the confusion lies elsewhere. Let me briefly expand on the challenge posed by the diffuse movement that my colleague Cindy Kohtala and I have looked at: materialist activist communities (MACs), as we have called them. A variant of what David Schlosberg (2019) has dubbed sustainable materialism, they are offshoots of maker spaces, open-knowledge, repair, art and craft activists in wealthy places, where sustainability-oriented activists have explored ways to meet basic material needs in less unsustainable ways. Studying and working with them, we have become aware of a new urgency for scientific work. The ethos of MACs, however, is far from the impact-seeking of academia. Their work is nevertheless often based on high levels of scientific education and literacy—one activist who was working at an art school casually told me her PhD was in molecular biology—and in many cases utterly continuous with the endeavours of technoscientific experts in university or corporate settings (see Berglund and Kohtala 2021). However, and this is important, they include values, ethics and political considerations seamlessly in their thinking and doing. They make explicit choices about how to pursue or direct their activities, not only for or against some abstract notion of "green", but also in the complex and multi-dimensional environments that they inhabit: Who, exactly, will benefit? How, exactly, will a novelty fit in with pre-existing ways? In stark contrast to what here I have called "fast" science and its neoliberal ambitions, they imagine better futures on the ground in webs of material, ecological, but also social dependency, aware of their own entanglement in capitalism even as they seek to counter it (Berglund and Kohtala 2021, 162).

We were both struck by their almost principled embrace of confusion and mess—sometimes quite literal—but ended up rejecting the idea that to highlight mess is merely a romantic reaction to profit-led and technocratic forms of expertise. We found ourselves echoing those who would acknowledge and respect knowledge gained through embodying, experiencing, experimenting with, and being entangled in the world (Gatens and Lloyd 1999; Haraway 2016). We also highlighted MACs' non-formulaic ways to keep working. At issue is not only the experimental science. Their principled awareness of different choices contrasted with the TINA doctrine (There Is No Alternative) and linear technological imaginaries, prompting them to hone skills and insight about anything that might be relevant. This would include the "slow" thinking that every competent adult is expected to engage in, which deals with the human, the social, and the cultural—the traditional terrains of humanities and social science scholarship.

Returning to the Masters students who are mostly from design or business backgrounds, they also appreciate fine-grained, even esoteric, research into social life, and they bring their own experiences to bear on developing knowledge about it. As a teacher, I encourage reading, writing, listening, and talking about social ties and cultural meanings. Doing so, however, can only happen because the university is what it is: a place somewhat but not completely apart, a haven for slowing down and taking risks.

I conclude by situating my experience in an overarching matter of concern: the Anthropocene. It has multiple possible implications that imply various choices for action in academic as well as political work.

TO CONCLUDE: THE ANTHROPOCENE AND OTHER CONFUSIONS

To engage with environmental change in the context of the humanities and social sciences at present is to encounter debate on the Anthropocene. The new term—Human Era—highlights changing earth system dynamics but also the "mess" that technological and cultural infrastructures geared to Western notions of progress have left around the planet (Tsing et al. 2019). One might call this a modern mess, horribly real, whether or not we ever were modern (Fortun 2014). And it is getting worse: plantation-like monocultural projects continuing to accelerate extraction, displacement, and disturbance; while policy and regulation leave it up to the culprits—often corporate-dominated regulatory structures—to manage the resulting troubles. Effectively they do so by "licencing hazards" (Fortun 2014, 320), often through impressive acrobatics (sometimes called innovations) in policy and accounting. This big picture is nicely captured in the discourse of the Anthropocene even if critics rightly take issue with the idea of the Anthropos in it, noting that it occludes the historical and racially organized injustices and inequalities involved. To use the concept need not, however, be to erase or downplay difference, as the work of Anna Tsing and her colleagues has demonstrated, and as captured in the concept of the "patchy Anthropocene" (Tsing et al. 2019). "Anthropocene" is useful in the same way that "capitalism" is a useful descriptive term. But it also denotes a set of epistemological and political, not to mention viral, novelties—new situations maybe—whose histories and aetiologies are shrouded in uncertainty and ignorance, even as modern science offers probably the best tools available for understanding their implications. The pandemic is but one example of new conditions and new demands on science that the Anthropocene is bringing about.

I suggest that sometimes the confusion unleashed by this new condition energizes research and stretches the imagination. At other times, research follows unchallenging lines of enquiry, as in the marketized world of so much university research discussed above and by Stengers. Yet, a different intellectual programme is already out there, as I have argued, within the university itself but above all in the work of social movements broadly conceived, continuous with yet also distinct from academia. The work going on around it tends to be vaguely oriented towards a future horizon that inspires concern. But above all, it challenges the division of issues into technical versus social-ethical or political ones. In so doing, to talk of the Anthropocene raises questions, but also—sometimes at least—leads to action. It certainly does not mean turning against, or turning one's back on, academia.

The examples I mentioned above underscore how much social movement activity is actually fundamentally, joyfully linked to the world of university research and teaching. New concepts and categories are being worked on, making intellectual traffic go in many directions: from one university department to another, from one professional community to another, from one stakeholder to another, and so on. The COVID-19 pandemic has been a particularly suggestive context, slowing down thought and allowing reflections on how sophisticated and specialized information and knowledge from very different domains can begin to develop a new public life. Public health and behavioral information must be juxtaposed with emerging biomedical discovery and insight; media outlets and social groups are forced to confront the political in the scientific, and vice versa. Slowly this can bring to the surface how significant the "soft" or "cultural" dimensions of understanding are, alongside the hard medical science, pushed along as it is by armies of researchers and algorithms as well as fleshy bodies from the almost unimaginably small to the global, which the pandemic made strangely, newly, concrete even as it confined life to the neighbourhood level.

University work remains under threat, but it does have momentum and life that exceeds the bleak descriptions. It is assembled from heterogenous ingredients, actors, networks, theories, and more. These in turn arise not within a citadel-like scientific community, but rather from the to-ing and fro-ing of people and collectives with different knowledge interests. What I have wanted to argue, however, is that the science that social movements and policy work both needs and pushes, remains crucially dependent on the institutional set-up of academia. This applies to all scientific research, not only the paradigmatic laboratory experimental kind, but also the humanities and social sciences. It is important to recall the protest-driven roots of all of it, as well as the public engagement that feeds it with concerns, energy and criticism. To illustrate this, I invoked environmentalism as a social movement but also the pandemic. This forced everyone to pay attention, and it threw together novel entities and their behaviors, the economic and technical assemblages, arrangements, and dynamics that generated the possibility of their emergence, the meanings and comforts—or lack thereof—that have enabled the victims to rebuild their lives and communities, in ways that challenged yet rewarded research.

One of the reasons that a university appeals is that it draws together all these kinds of learnings. It does so in ways that still energize both the old and the young. Universities are still, despite the essentialist critiques, nourished by the traffic across the academic–vernacular divide, and yet fundamentally built on the centuries of scholarly and educational work that make them what they are. They combine the cosmopolitan and the local. With the pandemic, and later war in Europe, having raised more discussion about the end of globalization, what this will mean for places and for understandings of global is a live and interesting debate. How Anthropocene fears will shape publics, research, and their relationships is another live debate. So many questions to address, so many paradoxes, confusions, and feelings of ambivalence. Acknowledging these may be a first step to making another science—still—possible.

NOTE

1. https://reclaimingouruniversity.wordpress.com/.

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25. Publicness and teaching: public knowledge as collective process of repoliticization of daily life

Vincenza Pellegrino

INTRODUCTION

> Every year we create approximately 25,000 new BAs, who have majored in sociology. What does it mean to think of them as a potential public? It surely does not mean we should treat them as empty vessels into which we pour our mature wine, nor blank slates upon which we inscribe our profound knowledge. Rather we must think of them as carriers of a rich lived experience that we elaborate into a deeper self-understanding of the historical and social contexts that have made them who they are. With the aid of our grand traditions of sociology, we turn their private troubles into public issues.
>
> Michael Burawoy (2005, p. 9)

The title of this chapter, 'Publicness and Teaching', and the epigraph, already show the basic issue I would like to deal with: that is, academic teaching as a device of collective sociological research and 'public sociology' starting from Burawoy's own categories, put in relation to a wider literature on the possible emancipatory function of social sciences today. The teaching-as-research practices analysed in this chapter can in fact, in my opinion, be included in the American sociologist's proposal of a type of sociological knowledge that arises from a more meaningful interlocution with non-academic publics more 'internal' to the conditions dealt with by academia. In my case, as we shall see, these publics are called upon to work on the self-representation of the conditions they experience in order to reinterpret the sociological categories within interlocution with students, and thus within a specific cognitive *mixité* – a sociological reflexivity acted out by the middle classes together with the subordinate classes – over which I shall ponder. As I will point out, this kind of cognitive confrontation is not at all aimed at pacifying different experiences and imaginaries; on the contrary, it aims at making explicit the distance between them, trying to put the cognitive assumption of inequality back at the centre of the public space.

As we know, Burawoy (2005) differentiates sociological work in terms of a 'public' sociology, understood as cognitive production resulting from deeper interaction with non-academic groups, in a more 'traditional' way (in relation to the mass media, for example) and an 'organic' way (in interaction with the conceptualizations and epistemologies internal to social conditions and mobilizations); a 'policy' sociology (sociological production at the service of clients interested in providing answers to social problems); a 'professional' sociology (meant to include academic sociology and defined according to criteria set by the public of experts, based on tested and repeatable theories and methodologies); and finally, a 'critical' sociology (dedicated to the analysis of epistemological foundations, that is, the analysis of implicit categories present in research programmes, in order to better understand how certain categories assume greater power within the debate). For the American sociologist, these typological distinctions are, in turn, essentially based on the different type of 'public' involved in cognitive

production, at times predominantly academic in the case of professional and critical sociology, at times non-academic in the case of policy and public sociology, and on the type of thought formally exercised within the cognitive process, that is, predominantly instrumental thought, which proceeds 'by solving puzzles', dominant in his opinion in professional and policy sociologies, and predominantly reflexive thought, prompted by the 'definition of ends', dominant in public and critical sociology. But for Burawoy, in actual fact, these forms of sociological work are formed together: his interest is in their 'dosage', therefore, in the way their mixture varies according to the dimensions of power in the field, the 'divisions' of sociological work that depend on the position and age of the academic intellectual, for example, or on the regulatory tensions of his context, and so on. In this sense, Burawoy, for instance, speaks of 'critical sociology as the self-reflexive consciousness of professional , and of 'public sociology as the reflexive consciousness of policy sociology' (Burawoy 2005, p. 10), and so on (many of the criticisms that have been levelled at him, in my opinion, overlook this aspect).

In light of this, I am analysing sociological co-teaching as a specific form of professional sociological work (the space is the university sociology classroom) of a critical type (that is, centred on rethinking the cultural categories implicit in social theory) which is in fact already a public type of sociological work in the sense of the rethinking of the categories performed together with 'insiders' of the conditions under discussion (insiders understood as 'co-teachers', as we shall see). We could say that this is a rather new form of public sociology, professional and at the same time 'organic' with respect to the social conditions being studied. But there is here a specific 'organicity' different from the one traditionally taken into consideration (Burawoy refers to Gramsci himself). The cognitive process is placed between social groups that (self-) represent themselves as distant on the social scale (as is the case between students and irregular migrants, or students and inmates serving life sentences); the process of sociological recategorization is therefore based on listening to the self-representations of others and redefining the 'distance'. This is a specific reflexive process: it is not a question of 'organicity' in the classical sense with respect to this or that predefined social group, historically stabilized, let us say, of which to become bearers. It is not a question here of doing sociology of work with and for workers within a working context, or sociology of migrations with and for migrants. Here the sociological work that takes place in university classrooms open to the public is organic in the sense that the theoretical constructs of sociology are reinterpreted with those whom sociology 'categorizes'. The target public is both academic (because the students are academia) and non-academic (the co-teachers are social actors who are experts in sociological events through direct experience).

Before delving into the analysis of this type of public sociology, I would like to make it clear from the outset that the proposals I am going to discuss did not originate from Burawoy's proposal; it is, if anything, in retrospect that I have grasped common defining aspects. In this sense the aim of this chapter is to analyse them, in order to propose a relatively new declination – I believe – of public sociology itself. But there are significant differences between my epistemological framework and that of Burawoy, which I think it is useful to place in the introduction.

The American sociologist speaks of public sociology in terms of 'communicative' knowledge, in the sense of knowledge that emerges from a conversation in which the *a priori* sharing of theoretical and empirical notions is not the central aspect, as is rather the existential and political relevance of the subject matter, which produces a type of knowledge (a type of 'truth', says the author) that can be characterized in terms of 'consensus', that is, of mutual

accommodation of meanings inherent above all in the dimensions of values. In this sense, this work tends to be different from the specific type of professional and academic sociological work, characterized instead by a 'truth' based on 'correspondence with the empirical world'. By speaking in this way, Burawoy gives the impression that the 'consensus' he speaks of as characterizing public sociology is comparable to ideological convergence or, if you like, convergence on a shared and comprehensive way of reading the power system. In other forms of co-research and participatory research I have encountered something that resembles this, and that I do not rule out as a legitimate form of social science, if methodologically regulated, despite being exposed to complex epistemological and methodological problems which I have had occasion to discuss recently in collective works edited by me (Pellegrino and Massari, 2021a, 2021b). But, apart from this, what I propose here in terms of public sociology is something different. In the cognitive practices I am going to discuss, the 'convergence' between sociologist and public (the social groups involved) does not so much concern the dimension of values as it does the work of redefining social categories starting from forms of self-representation of conditions, co-elaborated and then verified by successive classroom groups. Here there is a precise reference to the empirical dimension, to the methodological concreteness with which self-representations and categories are grouped, and in this sense, the distance between public sociology and professional sociology is reduced. The form of cognitive production I am going to talk about, the teaching-as-research settings, can then be understood as devices of 'con-sensual' reflexivity because they generate meaning from sociological self-analysis of everyday experience within the sociology classroom. The difference between 'consensus' and 'con-sensus' is therefore not trivial: in the way I understand public sociology here, the hyphen (that is, the use of the term 'con-sensus' instead of 'consensus') is fundamental.

Specifically, then, the form of public sociology dealt with in this chapter concerns the space of cognitive *mixité* created by students together with informal and formal social groups, associations and movements committed to issues of inequality and made up of people who experience it directly. There is here no abstract idealization of social *mixité*, as instead happens today in various contexts (I am thinking for example of certain public policies in France): I do not mean to say that these practices are appropriate tools for effective anti-segregation measures (it takes more than that), and I am well aware of the limits inherent in a superficial rhetoric centred on the encounter between social classes but aimed at reassuring without affecting the causes of conflict, creating spaces that are then quickly closed, with an experimentalism that often remains for the cultural benefit of the wealthy classes (e.g. Blanc 2012). So I am not claiming here to carry out redistribution, but rather to change academia by means of its daily operation. What interests me is the potentiality of cognitive work carried out by social groups within academia. And yet, the public space generated through this voice exercise, the numerous entities working together on the implicit aspects of sociological categories, brings about a change: the awareness of one's own cognitive potential grows, and the voice acquires a specific social potential, which I will discuss. In this sense, if anything, we could speak of 'cognitive redistribution', on which in fact Burawoy bases the 'relevance' of public sociology. But while Burawoy bases this relevance on the fact that the public involved recognizes the actual links between sociological categories and everyday life, I find that the relevance of this work of self-representation in public is also linked to its methodological soundness and control of the empirical dimension. The cognitive process I am talking about is repeatable, and the categories derived from it can be taken up by subsequent groups and validated.

Starting with these brief critical notes of mine on the concepts of 'con-sensus' and 'relevance' in public sociology with respect to Burawoy, the chapter develops the idea of a type of public sociology which is relatively unprecedented in my view.

How this sociological work is reproduced – what is the procedure by means of which we think together, how we define a setting as both educational and research-oriented at the same time – is certainly a central theme of the chapter. Given the need to be brief, I will use the case study approach (e.g. Yin 2003) by retrospectively reconstructing a number of processes with respect to elements defined by Burawoy himself, namely with respect to: with whom sociological knowledge is produced; what are the 'regulatory premises' (what is the incoming shared knowledge) and what are the types of outgoing 'recategorization'; how is the group's 'accountability' to be understood regarding the control of the produced data and the circulation of the self-representative categories obtained. In particular, the chosen case studies are linked to university sociology courses held by me over the past decade:[1] the course on the sociology of globalization, which involved students, asylum seekers, feminists and social workers with different languages and backgrounds, in particular with regard to theories on the links between colonialism and capitalism; the course on cultural sociology, which involved students and high-security inmates inside prisons, in particular on biographical analysis in sociology and the concept of biographical 'turning point'.

The chapter is structured as follows. After analysing today's academic context and how we can conceptualize the depoliticization of public knowledge, I present a number of case studies of sociological teaching-as-research, focusing on the idea of cognitive repoliticization of everyday experience, declined in terms of re-reviewing experience through the lens of social class, and operationalized in the specific terms of 'stitching together biographies', as will be seen. The next section is dedicated to the definition of a 'cognitive double movement' of public sociology presented here, defined as a sociology at once 'of critique' and 'of possibility'. In the brief conclusions, I then take stock of the opportunities and risks inherent in this type of sociological production.

ACADEMY, DEPOLITICIZATION, REPOLITICIZATION: INTRODUCING THE TEACHING-AS-RESEARCH

In universities, as in other state institutional sub-assemblies, a conflict is currently taking place between different ideologies and cultures concerning the role that state institutions should assume in relation to market operations. Far from being extraneous to and overwhelmed by global economic developments, the state accompanies the evolution of the market. Specifically, universities use public money to support knowledge applicable to economic performance by 'commercializing' knowledge, as some people put it, and at the same time emptying the university of its critical role, making it a 'hopeless place' (e.g. Callinicos 2006; Hall 2021). In Europe, it is not so much a matter of a process of privatization of public space – for example, a switch to private funding for research – but rather of a complex process of cultural and operational hybridization of economic logics 'within' institutional ones. Cultural and organizational processes which have acted since the latter decades of the 20th century in a 'karstic' way, unseen, inducing a deep corporatization of the state and weakening its functions in containing or rebalancing the prerogatives of the market, according to New Public Management models, the proliferation of assessment techniques and instruments based on the

quantification of this efficiency, such as monitoring, audits, rankings, financial logic mixed with self-giving and solidarity rhetoric (as occurs in the mixture of banking foundations, local organizations and state institutions), and so on (e.g. Bryan and Rafferty 2014; Dowling and Harvie 2014). It is also with reference to these processes that several authors speak of 'depoliticization', in the sense of the removal of the political dimension within the decision-making processes in all policy areas (Foster et al. 2014), and in general, the removal of discourses on inequality and on what generates social conflict within institutions, replaced by an emphasis on the effectiveness of actions able to contain this conflict through increased productivity. This directly concerns universities, and translates into obsessive ranking based on factors such as the rate of employment of students (to the 'spendability' of the knowledge taught), but also on the patents registered (to the 'spendability' of research), legitimizing the saving of human resources with the meritocratic rhetoric of 'choosing the best'. This leads to the precariousness of research work, competition, repetitiveness to increase the number of publications, fragmentation of topics, in short, 'low-quality' research (Powell 2016). It might perhaps be useful to provide some data so as to photograph the intensity and speed of this process in Italy: the country today spends 0.3 per cent of its gross domestic product on tertiary education compared to 0.7 per cent in Europe; public spending on research in ten years in Italy has shrunk by one-fifth; in the same period, university enrolments have dropped by 10 per cent; from 2007 to 2018 the doctoral grants awarded have fallen by more than 40 per cent; between 2008 and 2020 the number of researchers dropped by around 15 per cent; 90 per cent of research fellows after ten years find themselves excluded from universities, and so on (OCPI and Eurostat 2019). A decisive aspect of this process of depoliticization of institutions concerns the specific reaction of academic corporations.

Speaking of sociology, Burawoy (2005) recounts that the intellectual demands expressed by the fathers of sociology, including Marx and Durkheim, were linked to the search for scientific rigour, for an empirical method that would convey solidity to critical thinking and make it more useful for social change. In this regard, I find it interesting how Burawoy reconstructs the academic careers of scholars such as Mills, Dubois, Park and Gouldner. Dubois, for example, left the University of Atlanta to found the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, whose cultural campaigns had great influence on the academic categories of the time regarding racism and social segregation, categories that changed specifically as a result of the reflections made by feminist associations and mobilization movements on how academic sociology essentially ignored the ubiquity and depth of oppression. Park moved in the opposite direction, we may say, from a career in investigative journalism – famous for his enquiries into the colonial question in Belgium – to a late entry into the sociology department in Chicago. The distance between professional and public sociological work is really difficult to trace for these intellectuals.

Then, despite the fact that this type of sociological research had been methodologically increased and had become more controllable, something happened from the 1980s onwards that reversed its course. 'The attachment to the idea of progress and a better world that brought many of us to sociology has now been redirected towards obtaining specific social credentials such as academic ones', says Burawoy (2005, p. 5); that is, 'progress has taken the shape of a complex of disciplinary and disciplining techniques'. Caught up in the rhetoric of technical improvement, we have legitimized standardized courses with pre-established exam programmes without knowing our public, or the classifications of universities in relation to the labour market, but also the very long bibliographic reviews that serve to protect ourselves from

hyper-specialized criticism, leaving, in point of fact, little room for new ideas, peer review that has become a struggle (being published in ever smaller and more expensive spaces), and other unsustainable practices. This has made confrontation with the outside of academia increasingly marginal, and specifically weakened precisely those forms of sociology which claim to produce refined critical analyses of power while remaining hermetically sealed in rooms where there is a desperate struggle for (academic) power.

Starting from this contextual analysis, which I share, I ask myself how we can reverse these processes by focusing on one of the ways in which they are nurtured: the epistemological and operational division between teaching (the so-called first mission of Italian academia) and researching (the so-called second mission). The context I have described is in fact, in my view, reproduced and speeded up by the increasing separation between the cognitive processes that go by the names of teaching and research: on the one hand, researchers specialize their languages in order to achieve (improbable) academic visibility; on the other hand, teachers adopt an accessible and pragmatic language in order to attract more students. If a colleague is the genius to be beaten through specialized radicalization of language, the student, on the other hand, is the insipient adult to be socialized through the repetition of 'basic concepts'. Seen within the broader debate on the depoliticization of state institutions, this division between first and second mission is specifically depoliticizing. (And all the more so is the third mission, that of the relationship with the surrounding area: set up to repair the damage of 'separateness' resulting from this way of doing research and teaching, which due to the mere fact of existing, legitimizes that separateness).

It is starting from this institutional context, depoliticized but above all depoliticizing because of the separation between the missions of academia, that I propose teaching as a relevant form of public sociology.

TEACHING AS PUBLICNESS I: RECATEGORIZATION AND REPOLITICIZATION OF DAILY LIFE

It is appropriate to enter into the heart of my proposal starting, as I said, with the case studies, following some of the defining elements proposed by Burawoy (with whom do we produce knowledge, with respect to which 'introductory categories', that is, which shared regulatory dimensions, and with which form of accountability as regards data control).

The first case of teaching-as-research that I would like to analyse in terms of public sociology is that of Open Lessons, already discussed in other papers of mine (Pellegrino, 2018, 2019; Pellegrino et al. 2019). These sociological lessons are defined as 'open' in a double sense: the teaching is open, that is, in the classroom together with the teacher as 'co-teachers' are people who live the social conditions of which the sociological categories speak; but participation is also open, that is, also present, besides the students, are networks, groups and associations that the co-teachers specifically invite and involve. Over the years, the co-teachers (about six in each course) acquire a more substantial knowledge of sociological categories, and this, although not the primary objective of this device, has greatly modified the relationship with them, enhancing their presence, incisiveness and critical capacity. Involved in the classrooms, therefore, are university students, many of whom come to Parma from the south of Italy (an issue which, as we shall see, is relevant), migrants, especially of sub-Saharan origin who have faced the journey and the crossing of the Mediterranean, social workers of the Ciac no-profit

organization of Parma, and interested members of the public. The continuous presence of these co-teachers over time shows that their engagement is not to give testimony (to talk about the migratory experience inasmuch as migrants) of the 'instantaneous' type (an encounter) or dramaturgical type (to recount their own dramatic experiences on the public stage). Rather, they are here engaged in a shared analysis of the categories which speak of their own condition in a long process (at least as long as a university course, often longer). A 'double public' is thus created for this public sociology: a transitory public, for the duration of a six-month and/or annual course, and a sociological public made up of the co-teachers, which is more stable and in this sense 'organic' (in the meaning given in the introduction).

The way (the method) whereby we operate – and which we will find in the other case studies presented in the chapter – involves preparatory meetings prior to the start of the course; might I say 'almost' focus groups conducted with the co-teachers in which discussions centre on the sociological categories to be critically analysed. Through a process of brainstorming, these categories are commented on by the co-teachers in order to select 'close concepts' to be dealt with during the course. The course is thus divided into passages devoted to these close concepts, in a predefined way: after the introduction to the concept of the words linked to it (vocabulary definition phase), there follows a phase of autobiographical reflexivity in the classroom (a phase in which each participant places the concept in relation to their own experience, usually by means of the off-the-cuff autobiographical writing method); finally, there is a phase of reconceptualization of the initial categories (vocabulary reinvention phase).

During the open lessons on the sociology of globalization, the concepts of 'coloniality of power' and 'decoloniality' as praxis were among the debate categories focused on by the migrant co-teachers, starting from Mignolo's most recent writings (Mignolo and Walsh 2018). The co-teachers chose to explore the links between colonialism and capitalism and their continuation beyond the historical phase of colonialism itself and military occupations. We focused our analysis on how that 'hierarchization of the human' referred to by Latin American scholars functions today, based on skin colour or a certified rationality of the instrumental type that defines some as 'semi-human', thus legitimizing their material exploitation. With their analyses, they have underlined how the blind spot of sociological categories is rather with respect to institutional violence of the cultural type: many were the accounts of arriving in Italy, entry into the reception systems, specific surprise and disappointment in finding there a specific type of mortification, 'colonial' that is, linked to infantilization ('you never well understand where you are and what you have to do'), sanitization ('you don't understand how to raise your children, how to protect them from bacteria'), forced reacculturation ('don't talk about God and spirits when you talk about your history'), which quickly makes people more confused, fragile, and ready to surrender ('then you stop sharing your intimate projects'):

> I disembarked thinking, convinced in fact, that the violence was over. If you like, I realised later that I really thought that Europe was superior; they had convinced me of this in Senegal ... So you will appreciate how I was confused by the fact that I was stripped naked and washed with a reed; I saw the photos of my children thrown away along with other things because they were dirty, I was silenced many times to explain myself better, in short, I experienced a lot of humiliation. (A, 34, co-teacher of Senegalese origin)

> When you have taken an oath that binds you to prostitution-mongers and you are afraid to break it because it is a serious thing, you don't offend the invisible things, you respect commitments, this is what keeps us in peace, but they tell you that that oath is not worth anything, it is like telling you that what you believe in is not worth anything, and if you don't stop talking about spirits they call

> the psychiatrist, and you have to choose between being ignorant and being crazy, then you know that you are alone and you have to manage with debts and spirits. (M, 32, co-teacher of Nigerian origin)

These analyses of the welfare state as an unconscious and specific device of colonial hierarchization and disempowerment of certain human beings are present in the literature, as we discovered and discussed together. But it is thanks to the co-teachers and their original way of putting in analytical continuity (post)colonial contexts of departure with those of arrival that we have come to frame together specific categories such as that of 'dislocation of the abyssal line'.

Starting from Santos's (2016, 2018) category of 'abyssal line', which is specific to social coloniality (the placement of certain human groups among the non-human that legitimizes their exploitation in the name of their lack of culture), we developed in the classroom the idea that this colonial abyssal line recurs in Europe today. We thus defined the concept of 'dislocation of abyssality', subsequently verified with other colleagues in other fields of research; the result is a core part of sociological articles published today in specialist journals (Pellegrino and Ricotta, 2020).

The following is an emblematic example of the cognitive work I am talking about, in which the role of the students is also very interesting. Every year, the class always includes a high percentage of students who come from the south of Italy to study in Parma (about 50 per cent in average classes of 150 students). The initial categories of 'coloniality' and 'cultural inferiorization' resonated strongly with their experiences and autobiographies, compared to the processes of 'recreating the south' (of fuelling the internal frontier of the country) which are no longer spoken about but which have proved to be much more topical and pervasive than we think:

> How many times have I been told by someone who wanted to rent me a lousy flat that if I came from the Calabrian countryside, I'd find things more than suitable ... Something I didn't expect, harangues that are still alive, perhaps more explicit among older people, those who rent houses, but in short, how widespread puns, stories, jokes about the south still are. How much cultural work still exists to keep the embers alive, I realise from talking about it here. (G, 23, student of Calabrian origin)

The initial labels ('natives' versus 'migrants'; 'north' versus 'south', and so on) have been remixed through this cognitive practice. I return to the example of the concept of inferiorization due to lack of development: some students, who initially (self-)perceived themselves as natives versus migrants, when confronted with the analysis of the concept of coloniality and abyssality, identified themselves specifically. Thus, the group focused on structural power functions that are transversal and present in different spheres.

Another emblematic example of this recategorization process is labour exploitation. The teaching-as-research classrooms have elaborated a number of categories: 'highly illegal employment' (which we have defined in terms of the current declination of slavery, understood as physical and material domination of labour centred on constant humiliation and deprivation of identity, very present for example in some areas of agricultural work and gang-mastering), 'illegal employment' (with sporadic payments and few guarantees, transversal to many contexts, from construction to cleaning work) and finally 'semi-illegal employment' (so-called grey labour), that is, suspended between formal and informal, in which there is a partial formalization of work that legitimizes the employer to exploit in a more pervasive

way, once again within an 'inferiority' rhetoric, as is the case in the worlds of artisanal and agricultural production in the Po Valley, for example:

> They paid me for 1 month and made me work for 6 months, then they gave me a contract for 3 hours and made me work for 10 hours but they paid me for 4, and they said that for me it is a fortune and I saw they were convinced of it and I wondered why they were convinced of it, if it was a fortune for them or not, and I told myself that they were really convinced that I deserved this. (H, 27, co-teacher of Gambian origin)

> The fact that I am a student and that I am penniless are two things that go well together in the babysitting job. That I study a lot they are aware and it makes me reliable and worthy of the contract, but the fact that I am poor makes me underpaid and worthy of a quasi-contract in which are indicated much fewer hours, which they know I need. I say that it is this mixture of reliability and exploitability here that makes work 'semi-illegal'. (A, 23, student, originally from Puglia)

The notion of 'semi-illegal employment' which emerged from this work of self-analysis between students and migrants is transversal to their lives, as opposed to what is defined in the classroom as 'contemporary slavery', of which the students realize they are spectators ('we know the countryside, we cross it but we remove what we see'). On the one hand, therefore, this sociological work reveals common experiences of precariousness and exploitation, which portray emerging social classes (those of semi-illegal labour precisely); on the other hand, the same people are bearers of 'abyssaly' distant experiences that force them to think about degrees of privilege with respect to the system as a whole. Social inequality is thus redefined by the comparison between social groups as something that now changes and becomes transversal to old social classes, since it is linked to a new phase of deregulation of labour, even though it legitimizes itself through hierarchies of the human being that are ancient and resistant to time, and which determine different forms of domination. A new way of conceptualizing social classes is that which emerges from focusing both on some surprising common dimensions of experience, which can recreate in the public the idea of a social bloc of the exploited, and on the differences that demarcate the abyssality we have been talking about and make the colony alive around us. In this sense, these cognitive processes do not pacify publics with one another. They do not create emotional agreement between them. In short, they do not allow them to leave the classroom more relaxed. Quite the contrary. Even if the autobiographical method of commenting on sociological categories sheds light on unseen biographical commonalities, and helps to conceive functions of inferiorization transversal to social groups, biographical divergences allow, in the classroom, what Bourdieu defines in the terms of 'struggle of classification', grasping the difference between 'abyssal' and 'non-abyssal' inferiorisation.

This cognitive process of self-positioning with respect to social class is, in my view, really a work of repoliticizing one's everyday life. This is also what we find in the second case study, that of the teaching-as-research conducted with the migrant women of the Sguardi Incrociati collective, begun with the Centro Interculturale of Parma and which focused on the categorization inherent in women's emancipation, starting from the concepts proposed by post-colonial feminisms and other feminist experiences and traditions. I have already spoken about this experience in several publications (Pellegrino 2015, 2018), in which I discuss in greater detail how these women criticize the more strictly European way of imagining the subjugation of others, proposing to free the body of others from long dresses or the hijab, while remaining silent about their own exhausting diets, their maniacal ambition for a child's body (hairless and wrinkle-free), and govern their bodies through a mix of hyper-eroticized 'secondary elements'

(very long and well-groomed nails, for example) and undifferentiated 'primary elements' (slimness and muscularity reminiscent of male and children's bodies). These reflections of migrant women stimulate the female students who 'remember here to be female', as one of them says. They recount one another and analyse together this obsessive kind of control over body shape.

All of this is very interesting to us in terms of public sociology as a device for repoliticizing everyday life, precisely in the sense that the female student says 'remembering to be female' thanks to mirroring in the accounts of migrant women. The point here is that this happens to the extent that this process of 'collective reframing' of sociological categories is liberating with respect to the fear of not possessing the specialist language. What legitimizes students, co-teachers, and teachers to feel like intellectuals is, for example, an explicit licence to linguistic reinvention:

> You ask me what my cultural identity is. But I don't feel it, I don't have it, it's not there in general, I believe. Or rather it is created because I want to describe myself to myself differently from what you think of me. More than identity here we should talk about 'to identity', that is, the verb to put things in the form of identity in order to define them, to think them. I am interested in the moment, in the way of 'identitying', but I am not interested in identity in the way you request. (I, 38, Italian co-teacher of Romanian origin)

Since then, we have always used the word 'identitying' instead of 'identity', because this word does not exist, and this works well in creating a space of thought that is both intimate (proper to that group) and public (without previous history and therefore without exclusions). Creating new words is the goal of a truly public sociology. There is an interesting tension here. The incoming regulatory categories (the notions from which we start, but also those we bring with us, which precede the classroom) are the basis on which the initial engagement with the public rests, but it is the creative process that creates the 'real public', the social group engaged in doing sociology that questions those initial categories. The ability to give discursive form is linked to an irreverent posture towards the already established language, which is based on autobiographical narrative and the invention of words; this kind of collective authorship is of central importance to me.

Finally, these two case studies on the cognitive processes of teaching-as-research show some defining elements of the kind of public sociology I am interested in. Taking up Burawoy's categories, I think that students are presented as the 'amorphous' and 'passive' public of which the author speaks; people who do not see themselves in a historical or social class perspective because they have no experience of political socialization: no associations, no parties and no mobilizations with respect to dimensions of subjugation which they do however experience. The social groups involved as co-teachers, on the other hand, are publics in conditions of marginality and low social visibility, but 'distinct' and 'non-passive', that is, they often experience escape from exploitation and violence that result in forms of self-organization and sometimes even of revendication. Creating sociological categories through the cognitive recomposition of these different forms of precariousness, through the interpretation of the systemic elements that unite different forms of exploitation-for-inferiorization today, creates public and political space. Giving meaning to sociological categories through one's own experience works because one is specifically exposed to other experiences. The indistinct and passive nature of the middle-class public to which the students belong – more precisely, a public lacking political categories useful for understanding its own experience of mortification and subjugation

– evolves in contact with a less indistinct and less passive public which experiences major inequalities first-hand, releasing a much greater potential for elaboration and self-representation.

Beyond this, the long-term sociological public of the co-teachers is really interesting: an 'enlarged academia' of people who have become aware of their own experiential knowledge, linguistically more powerful, effective, expert, who invent a specific sociological language – technical and poetic at the same time – able, in my opinion, to etch the imagination of professional sociologists (I am thinking of the papers presented by the group of co-teachers of the Open Lectures and of Sguardi Incrociati in the conferences of recent years).

TEACHING AS PUBLICNESS II: CRITICISM AND HOPE

In my view, this type of public sociology always involves two stages of analysis. Not two 'phases' of the course, but rather two 'movements' of thought to be repeated for each topic addressed: a first movement of critique, a second of proposal. Let me put it better: the first movement is centred on the reading of the limits of our social order – social and environmental – and is therefore a work of sociological analysis that focuses on the idea of social unsustainability and possible social catastrophe. This cognitive dimension lies, for example, in interpreting the forms of subjugation and exploitation of which I spoke, reconsidered starting from autobiographies, better understood thanks to comparison with the biography of others. But, from experience, we know that this type of analysis makes individual and social pain, previously considered normal and inevitable, less tolerable, because it denaturalizes the social order, and exacerbates the sense of loss. In short, it fuels fear and pessimism. On the other hand, the energy that comes from recognizing each other (talking about and listening to one another in public) brings a feeling of hope, and sustains something that I have come to call 'sense of possibility' which comes close to Appadurai's (2004, 2013) definition of the 'ability to aspire' as capacity of vision linked to the empirical experience of the 'margins of manoeuvre' against inequality.

The cognitive process that characterizes this type of public sociology thus starts from inequality (it analyses the possible catastrophe), but seeks and finds social possibility (that is, it analyses the conditions of escape from suffering). Social catastrophe and hope, critical deconstruction of reality and analysis of the social possibilities in the field: these two cognitive movements must, in my opinion, be held together and recomposed in public sociology, which is both 'critical sociology' and 'sociology of the possible'. Here lies, perhaps, the most exciting and complex part of this proposal, and I would like to illustrate it better with the help of other authors.

I am thinking of Santos (2018) and his proposal for the composition of the 'sociology of absences' (or of the absent) with the 'sociology of emergences' (or of social emergents). On the one hand, the sociology of absences which he proposes is the systematic analysis of exclusion from the perspective of the 'epistemological south' (of contexts deprived culturally and materially by colonization). But on the other hand, this production of colonial counter-memories is only the first step in a confrontation aimed at gathering visions of an alternative future. Indigenous ecological movements, plural feminisms of Islamic or Hindu matrix, philosophies of African and Latin American rural contexts, are areas of sociological research in which the author proposes taking up a position similar to that proposed by me: starting from a different way of recounting colonial history (and development as a product of

that history), one can explore epistemologies and visions alternative to those of the neo-liberal global order, precisely because these groups have survived a certain type of domination without wanting it for themselves. This exploration of cognitive possibilities which insist on resisting marginalization is what the author calls 'sociology of emergences'. The double cognitive movement, therefore, is generated by listening to the past and at the same time to the future imagined in these social groups, and in this sense the author speaks of 'prolonged oscillation between thinking-feeling with fear and thinking-feeling with hope' (ibid., p. 11).

I have taken up this approach together with Ciro Tarantino (Pellegrino and Tarantino 2019), defining the 'sociologies of the possible' starting from numerous authors who use this same expression within a wider theoretical frame of 'emancipatory social sciences' (Wright 2010) aimed precisely at grasping the dimensions of the possible in the real. In order to delve into this dimension of a sociological work expressly oriented towards holding together critique and hope, I propose two case studies, recalling that the process is the same as the cases already seen (namely, preparation with co-teachers, classroom discussion of a number of sociological categories, individual narratives, and finally reconceptualization of the categories).

The first case is that of a didactic-and-research course that I have been pursuing for the past two years thanks to collaboration with the Migrantour European project,[2] in which trained migrants become 'intercultural escorts (guides)' who cross the city with the students. In these workshops, which we call 'narrative cartography', in crossing the city together and on foot, students and guides recount to each other episodes, experiences, memories linked to other distant places ('this square always makes me think of another square ...', 'this statue makes me think of that other hero ...' and so on). The migrants' memories create a 'global city', that is, they open up before the students' eyes a scenario in which all cities are visibly contained in the same city. The squares they cross are in practice 'rearranged' by these narratives. In the end, the sociology course is not centred on teaching about the city which is 'evident', that is, before our eyes in an obvious way, but about crossing and making visible the more specifically global city which already is, through listening to the imagination. After analysing spaces and stories of segregation experienced by migrants (critique movement), the university proposes to the students a reflective experience in which the construction of the desired glocal city takes shape (movement of possibility). That glocal city is already in the migrants' perspective and experience, in ghetto neighbourhoods that are nevertheless full of courtyards where sociality and mutual aid flourish; pain and hope, segregation that repeats itself and interculturalism that repeats itself. The university is the place to reflect on both sides of the coin and at the same time support interculturalism by listening and giving substance to the invoked city.

A second case study, which allows me to return to this aspect, is the annual course on cultural sociology held in prison with students and inmates, which we call Cerchio-Scritti (Circle-Writings) and about which I have already spoken in other papers (Pellegrino et al. 2020). This is a workshop course dedicated to the use of biography in social sciences. During this course we focus on the category of 'turning points', that is to say, 'threshold' moments with respect to which the person places the change, the having become 'else' from what they were before, those moments that in retrospect turn out to have long-lasting consequences and lead to a narrative redefinition of the self. This category of analysis lends itself very well to the sociological work of the public type we are analysing because it is an example of a sociological category that cannot be generated by the researchers, but rather must always be relocated with respect to the persons involved because they self-attribute to themselves the change which is such only in relation to their beliefs, convictions and subsequently changed values. In this case

too, a critical reinterpretation of the concept is proposed, starting from narratives that illustrate the idea: the biographical turning point has been explained through metaphors contained in the narrative archetypes of myths or tarot cards, for example. We have dealt at length with the figure of the Hanged Man: the image of a man hanging upside down from a tree, caught at the instant he stops struggling and then turns to look at his interlocutor, thus grasping the world from another perspective. The whole sociology class found themselves declining this image starting from their own individual history:

> The Hanging Man indicates turning points that I recognise. Struggling to free yourself is a sign of life, what keeps you alive through 'defensive' adaptation. By stopping, then, you find balance, a type of adaptation that I would say is 'expansive'. That balance may resemble surrender, but what comes after surrender is the unknown. In letting go. Life comes to life if I tell it to you as we hang here. (N, 51, co-teacher prison inmate)

> I'm hanging on like a kid tied up with the thread of my illness. The physiotherapist has been waiting for me for 17 years, with standard rehabilitation treatment, ever since multiple sclerosis struck. Every morning brings different emotions, some of which recurring. On the wave of physical pain, I reflexively think: 'why have I been stricken with this disease, which no longer allows me to lead the life I have always led?'. Then in meaningful encounters like this one I realise that real life happens anyway. (C, 26, female student)

In these narratives, the idea of 'biographical impairment' (of a change in life that prevents a return to the previously desired condition) is understood in light of other biographical impairments of a different nature. The same happens with the opposite idea of 'biographical repair'. This mechanism of mediation of the individual with their own history through the narration of others about a common passage (for example, being metaphorically 'tied upside down') leads to a 'specific reparation of pain linked to the understanding of its common form', says an inmate. So these cognitive processes allow the cognitive movement of 'critique' (in this case, the critical reading of an existential damage) and of 'possibility' (in this case, centred on the existential commonality). In prison, the experience of listening to the fragility of others makes it possible to create a context of less biographical (self-)victimization (not stopping, for example, with standardized accounts of life in prison usually repeated by inmates, which here take a different form, within dynamics of more equal comparison between biographies).

During the years of recategorization of the concept of 'turning point' in prison, some elements turned out to be surprisingly common among both students and those serving life sentences: the centrality of the experience of betrayal, for example, taken in the broader sense as an experience of distancing from the expectations of those we love, as a break of the implicit conditions set by the love pact, but above all as an experience of continuation of affective relations after mutual disappointment. This 'after' is a widespread experience put forward by the persons as the basis for biographical metamorphoses, which I consider to be of great interest.

Finally, this sociological work shows that lives are more similar than the participants imagine, despite always being surprising:

> Hearing you talk about frantic races, precariousness, the sense of guilt you have because you cannot keep up with things to do or expectations, hearing you talk about what this historic moment is like for young people, I feel a great lack of freedom in this excess of doubts and forks in the road, which changes a lot the idea I have of the outside, less fortunate, less free, which makes me perceive the inside differently ... (C, 50, co-teacher prison inmate)

> That you were 'normal' people with normal feelings I already knew before entering, I believed it, I don't feel myself to be one of those who imagine that a mafioso is a monster, but what I learn here is very different, it gives a different depth to the way people work, moved by instances of affection and protection rather than of power. (E, 23, female student)

To discover oneself more similar than expected in some respects, and more different than expected in other respects, is what I think specifically affects the ability to deconstruct sociological categories. In the process, you not only produce original categories, but you 'act'. The sociology class in prison is a turning point for the participants, just as the globalization class with migrant guides is interculturalism. Public sociology is thus a cognitive and relational practice that often acts out the kind of social possibility it is analysing.

SHORT CONCLUSIONS: THE OPEN ISSUES

Over the years of practising teaching-as-research, I have come to know the opportunities of this proposal, but also the risks and difficulties, about which I would like to add something. With regard to opportunities, I could summarize schematically:

- The institutability. This type of public sociology is repeatable and involves more people than other non-distant forms of collective reflexivity, for example those proposed by persons engaged specifically in 'participatory' and 'creative' type of research, which in my experience are more demanding in terms of creating settings and sharing tools. This proposal, on the other hand, presents the possibility of establishing public sociology in a more meaningful way.
- Repeatability and control. The way in which students and co-teachers (in part) follow each other year after year makes it possible to repeat these cognitive processes, to enlarge the publics and to validate the categories gradually elaborated, stabilizing them. Of course, the classroom groups involved change in terms of gender, social class and origin, and we cannot select them in the proper sense (we do not make the classrooms), as is the case, on the other hand, for all qualitative action-research. But it is possible to investigate their characteristics at the beginning of the course and figure out how to act in sub-groups to recreate the setting that interests us. Year after year, group after group, it is possible to verify the most recurrent self-representations and to establish imaginary and cultural dimensions actually linked to the (self-)attribution of the social class.
- Creative recategorization. The cognitive potential of the encounter between social groups that claim to be distant but find themselves exposed to similar social functioning, such as the pervasive regeneration of the lines of demarcation between the south and the north, which never cease to be drawn, is evident. Conceiving these 'system elements' generates a specific kind of repoliticization of one's everyday life.
- Emancipation. This kind of sociological work 'puts the culture in the ground', a student once wrote. The emotional process created between students and social groups 'fixes' the contents, makes them a life experience, invents the things that are talked about while they are being talked about. Knowing this way opens consciousness, activates and motivates. Apart from what happens to the students, I am interested in what happens to the co-teachers: they become experts in sociology. Life inmates living in conditions of radical isolation, and irregular migrants, to return to the examples given, become a sociological

public that expands over time; people who develop an awareness of their cognitive capital, of the strength of their expertise on the phenomena. This is why they ask me to take part in specialist conferences (something that occurs more and more often). Their overflow into academia will be my main objective in the coming period.

But on the other hand, there are also critical aspects to work on:

- Difficulty in engaging a student public. In the last few years of Covid-19, with distance learning, the appreciation of the students involved has dropped a lot. The course assessment questionnaires showed that the proposal was considered to be too demanding ('disproportionate to the credits'), imprecise ('you don't respect the timetable, you finish late'), in a word, frustrating rather than activating. I have given this matter a lot of thought. I have come to think that something is happening, that the university's latest turn towards digitalization will make the relational and emotional process that sustains this kind of collective reflexivity much more difficult. The experience of being separated, each with our own screen, and having to 'stitch biographies' together at a distance, changes things a lot. Digital transition – which I hope will not be accomplished, but which I fear – in fact shows little compatibility with the proposal to reconsider the links between research and teaching in these forms.
- Lack of academic legitimacy. The organizational commitment to implement this form of public sociology is very high (preparatory focus groups, self-training of the group of co-teachers, participation in the conferences together with the co-teachers, take a lot of time). Material resources are needed, such as teaching tutors to facilitate this organization, like those I have obtained in past years thanks to external funding that offers no guarantee for future years. As I was saying, today's academia thinks and moves in a different way. These experiments, despite showing considerable potential, are nowadays highly reversible, entrusted to teachers who are already structured, and in this sense privileged, and who are secure enough to ignore the assessment criteria and rankings that I have spoken of.
- Difficult co-authorship. My experience over the years has been that the public of co-teachers becomes enthusiastic and gradually acquires a more and more complex language, which makes its critical thinking increasingly more likely to make an impact on academia. But academia is not permeable. It does not recognize collective writing or collective presentation with lectures perhaps in and using different languages. Papers and conferences are very standardized forms of communication unsuitable to accommodate these publics and cognitive processes. In the end, the co-teachers write together with me but then ask for my mediation to carry the results around: theirs remains a partial presence. This calls into question academic production as a closed and inaccessible form of communication (especially writing), unsuitable for this public sociology.

These are all aspects to be focused on. However, this does not mean that we should not continue in the direction of a more socially relevant scientific production, because sociological knowledge limited to the careers of scientists is, in my opinion, bound to disappear.

NOTES

1. For example, Open Lectures online sites: https:// www .unipr .it/ notizie/ fino -all11 -maggio -appuntamento-con-le-lezioni-aperte-di-globalizzazione (accessed 26 September 2021).
2. Online video Migrantour Parma\Unipr Open Lectures: https:// www .youtube .com/ watch ?v = mbqPSfcsJg0 (accessed 26 September 2021).

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26. Postcolonialism and sociology

Manuela Boatcă, Sina Farzin and Julian Go

Insights of postcolonial theory have informed and influenced many critical sociologies for several decades. Postcolonial sociology – as a decidedly sociological engagement with the postcolonial condition – however, only began to make inroads into the mainstream of the discipline in the early 2000s. While it is the critique of Eurocentrism, linear paths to modernity and self-contained development have occupied centre stage ever since, the question of whether or not postcolonial sociology could bridge the gap between academic knowledge production and engagement with public causes has rarely been asked. We take this opportunity to address this crucial nexus in the context of the larger contributions that postcolonial sociology can make to discussions about public sociology today. Addressing mainstays of postcolonial sociology, such as the fact that representations of the social world are political and embedded in one's own geopolitical and historical context; or the fact that experiences of the periphery are essential for a critical assessment of power relations; or concrete examples such as the fact that policing in the United States (US) originated in and is repeatedly informed by colonialism and empire, illustrate the necessity of bridging and cross-pollinating sociological thinking and political activism in ways that are relevant to both postcolonial theory and public sociology.

Sina Farzin: In recent years we saw a rising awareness and controversies around colonial issues, often informed by postcolonial discourses. We also see a growing number of publications trying to mobilize postcolonial thought for sociology, often with an emphasis on social theory. Take for example Gurminder Bhambra's global social theory project (http://globalsocialtheory.org), Syed Farid Alatas and Vineeta Sinha's (2017) *Sociological Theory Beyond the Canon*, and of course your book, Julian, *Postcolonial Thought and Social Theory* (Go 2016a), or *Decolonizing European Sociology* that you, Manuela, published together with Encarnacion Gutierrez Rodriguez and Sérgio Costa (Gutiérrez Rodriguez et al. 2016). Some even speak of a 'postcolonial', 'decolonial' or 'southern' turn. How would you describe the common denominator behind those interventions? And how would you describe the relationship between the academic field and public movements (if you see any)?

Julian Go: This is a great question, because I think you're hitting upon an important feature of this work: which is that it is, at this point in time, indeterminate. I do think there is a sort of 'turn' or perhaps a sort of 'movement', but it is open-ended and disparate, with different labels ('postcolonial', 'decolonial', 'southern') and different approaches. To my mind, though, they all can be considered part of a larger 'movement' in the sense that they do share a basic critique. That is, a critique of certain traditional components of sociological theory and research. That critique is wide-ranging, but at its core I think it's a critique of, crudely speaking 'Eurocentrism', but Eurocentrism not just in the sense of 'studying only Europe' but also in the very theoretical approaches, concepts and methods of sociology. Simply put, sociology has for too long represented what I call in my book 'the imperial standpoint' and the 'imperial episteme' (Go 2016a). That imperial standpoint and episteme is not just about representing a geographic location, that is, 'Europe'. It's more in that it carries with it certain analytic tendencies (metrocentrism, essentialism, analytic bifurcation, the occlusion of empire

and colonialism, the suppression of subaltern agency and so on; which I discuss further in my book) that merit reconsideration. I'd say that all of those different works you mention, and others, such as Connell's (2008) *Southern Theory* or the 'indigenous sociology' movement of the 1990s, share this basic critique, that is, that sociology has for too long been Eurocentric, in that it has for too long only represented the imperial standpoint, even if they would not necessarily put the matter in those terms, and even if they each probably only critique certain aspects of what I am crudely calling here 'Eurocentrism', and even if there are different names for the critique (for example, 'decolonial' versus 'postcolonial'). I think the difference lies in what scholars think is the best route out of that Eurocentrism; how to overcome sociology's imperial standpoint. Some follow Bhambra's (2007) innovative intervention in *Rethinking Modernity*, which is essentially to reconstruct 'connected histories'. This idea of 'connected histories' comes from transnational historians (Bhambra cites the historian Sanjay Subrahmanyam's work for the concept). For Bhambra's approach, to put it in an admittedly simplistic way, it means bringing the history of colonialism into our theories and research, and in some ways extends the basic move made by Wallersteinian world-systems theory: to see things holistically (I argue in my book that it means a form of relationalism, but it can mean different things to different people of course). But at a different end of the pole, scholars offer something else entirely: that is to find entirely new theories beyond the traditional sociological canon and located in or from the colonial or postcolonial world. This is what Alatas, Connell and others have been pursuing (and in Alatas's case, for over a decade). There are other approaches too. For instance, I suspect – and I may be wrong – that in the United Kingdom (UK), the term 'postcolonial sociology' basically means that you are offering critical analyses of race and ethnicity (hence, 'connected histories' in the UK context seems to mean taking colonialism seriously, which in turn means taking race seriously). Nasar Meer (2018) has discussed this recently. In the US context, where the sociology of race and ethnicity is already well established, this is not exactly what postcolonial sociology has come to mean. There are probably other possible alternatives as well, which I think Manuela Boatcă's edited collection speaks to. In any case, I do think there is some kind of shared project going on; just that their labels, exact points of critique, and solutions vary.

As for the question about the academic field and social (or public) movements, I think that, if there is a kind of postcolonial, decolonial, anti-Eurocentric 'turn' in the social sciences, it has been partly driven by – or at least has been further animated by – public movements. This is my assessment of what has been happening in the US, at least. In the last few years, more and more sociologists have been interested in critical theories and scholarship that critique the whiteness and Eurocentrism of sociology, and this to my mind is clearly related to rising concern over increased white nationalism under Trump, and heightened racial inequalities in policing and the economy and social movements (such as Black Lives Matter) challenging those tendencies. So I'd say intellectual trends towards critiquing whiteness and Eurocentrism have partly reflected social movements in this sense. However, in the US, this has not always led to an intellectual interest in more global critical theories such as those offered in postcolonial/decolonial thought. Instead, the concerns have led to other adjacent interests. Hence, there has been a rise in interest in W.E.B. DuBois, but mainly for DuBois's offerings for thinking about racial inequality in the US, and not so much for his critiques of colonialism and empire. This too, I'd argue, reflects the character of social movements recently in the US: for instance, Black Lives Matter has largely focused on domestic concerns, even though it does seek transnational alliances and addresses global issues to some degree. On the other hand,

I do think the newer interest in postcolonial/decolonial thought in the academic field has been partly driven by movements such as Black Lives Matter. For one thing, some intellectuals in the US concerned about racial inequality in the US recognize that such inequality is connected to the history of colonialism, empire and ongoing US imperialism abroad. These folks are more likely to be drawn to postcolonial/decolonial theory just as they are drawn to Dubois. For another thing, the social movements and rising public concern has pushed some scholars to postcolonial/decolonial theory in a more general sense: those movements and concern have smashed the complacency of many sociologists, reminding us that that sociology as it stands is behind the times. Therefore, those sociologists have been looking for alternative perspectives and theories. So social movements have impacted upon the academic field by compelling academic sociologists to question the utility and character of the knowledge they are producing.

Manuela Boatcă: You both focus on common denominators rather than on the different labels currently in use for the debates around postcolonialism and sociology. I think this is a very good place to start. It helps to highlight the fact that central features of 'postcolonial', 'decolonial' and 'southern' approaches, such as the critique of Eurocentrism, have been around for a very long time, although they didn't use any of the present labels or explicit postcolonial vocabulary. They did, however, intend (and succeed) to bring about a shift of perspective that would definitely count as postcolonial today. Latin American dependency theories are one such example. As early as the 1960s and 1970s, they countered the dominant approach of the US modernization school with a fundamental critique of Eurocentric conceptions of history, as well as with a theory and policy of development from a 'Third World' perspective that included a new sociological vocabulary and an innovative political economy of capitalism based on a relational model of center–periphery dependency. In this respect, dependency theories addressed quite a few points that are central to the discussions about public sociology today: the fact that representations of the social world are political and embedded in one's own geopolitical and historical context; or the fact that experiences of the periphery are essential for a critical assessment of power relations, and that development and underdevelopment are not separate realities and representations of cores and peripheries, respectively, but are structurally intertwined. The fact that dependency theories did not initiate a worldwide sociological 'turn' at the time (although they impacted upon Latin American, African, and to some extent Indian sociologies, and were crucial in the emergence of Immanuel Wallerstein's world-systems analysis) is in itself worthy of postcolonial analysis and of an inquiry into their public sociology component. The fate of the dependency approach had a lot to do with the fact that it was mainly developed in the periphery and its findings published more often in Spanish and Portuguese than in English, so it was less visible and less accessible in the global North, as well as less valued there. When postcolonial studies, centred mainly on British colonialism, started gaining visibility in academic centres of the global North, dependency theories no longer fitted either the timeline or the vocabulary that postcolonialism offered, since Latin America had been colonized two centuries before the rise of the British Empire and had become independent long before the majority of British colonies. This is what Fernando Coronil, writing an entry on Latin American decolonial thought for the *Postcolonial Studies Reader* in 2004, termed 'Elephants in the Americas': The different genealogy, vocabulary and location of Latin American decoloniality – which owes a lot to dependency theories and shares some of its prominent authors, notably Aníbal Quijano – made it an awkward fit with postcolonial terminology despite the many common denominators. That does not make the common ground any less important for a radical critique of social theory,

which is why dependency theories feature prominently in Connell's (2008) *Southern Theory*. And it resonates well with the notion of multiple knowledges that are often in conflict, which is central to public sociology today. I therefore tend to be rather sceptical of self-proclaimed 'twists and turns' and 'paradigmatic shifts' in sociology. I would insist instead on the fact that a collective critical endeavour committed to the critique of Eurocentrism/Occidentalism, to decoloniality, or to postcolonial sociology, needs to excavate, acknowledge and work through the continuities between dependency theory, Third World and Chicana feminism, Indian subaltern studies, Africana philosophy, indigenous knowledges, decoloniality and postcolonial studies, in order to develop a self-understanding of the commonalities on which it can build. This is of course also linked to different academic settings with their own histories, politics of naming and of exclusion, and thus to concerns of public sociology more generally. Immanuel Wallerstein has been mainly viewed as a historian in Germany, which made it easier to relegate world-systems analysis to a past period of the discipline of history, rather than to see it as a radical critique of social science and the academic division of labour. Neither the report of the Gulbenkian commission, which Wallerstein presided over, and which was titled *Open the Social Sciences* (Wallerstein et al. 1996), nor Wallerstein's (2001) *Unthinking Social Science: The Limits of 19th Century Paradigms*, were widely discussed in Germany as specifically sociological critiques targeting Eurocentrism. Sanjay Subrahmanyam's work on connected histories entered German academia through the prominent role it played in Sebastian Conrad and Shalini Randeria's (2002) German-language collection *Beyond Eurocentrism: Postcolonial Perspectives in History and Cultural Studies*, and Randeria's related concept of 'entangled histories of uneven modernities' (Randeria 2002) both of which have since become standard reading for postcolonial curricula. Ella Shohat and Robert Stam's (2013 [1994]) book *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media*, despite having been published in English, or maybe because of it, but certainly because it is not primarily aimed at sociology, has received far less attention in Germany although it speaks to the same issues. And Samir Amīn's (2011 [1989]) book *Eurocentrism: Modernity, Religion, and Democracy. A Critique of Eurocentrism and Culturalism* is sometimes referenced for its title, yet has tended to circulate more widely in French-speaking contexts than outside of them despite having been published in English. Here, the hierarchy operating among what Mignolo called imperial languages still serves to distribute attention, postcolonial visibility and academic currency.

Julian Go: Thanks Manuela! I completely agree with your point that there are many shared perspectives among seemingly diverse schools of thought, which too often go overlooked. It is precisely for this reason that I am often dismayed by the infighting that is sometimes seen in some of these discussions, by which I mean the tendency for some folks to try to argue that one or another school or thinker is inferior or less worthy than others. Now, I do think it is important to recognize differences among the projects, as well as commonalities. I also think it is crucial to reflect upon the various limitations as well as the benefits of each of the different thinkers, schools, or approaches – whatever you want to call them. But reflecting about the limits of certain approaches over others is not the same thing as dismissing them as subpar or worthy of ignoring, which is, unfortunately, what I see happening by some proponents of some of these schools of thought. Hopefully this is something that can be overcome by a new sensibility that aims for a perspectival pluralism among these different schools rather than pure opposition (I argue for 'perspectival realism' in my book, for instance, which aims to move towards such a type of plural realism; Go 2016a).

Manuela Boatcă: Yes, you are totally right about the infighting that only leads to fragmentation of otherwise shared bases for a genuine critique and change. To be clear, I was also not pleading for glossing over differences among approaches and projects. By mentioning earlier projects for which the critique of Eurocentrism was fundamental, I instead meant to draw attention to the fact that acknowledging genealogies of thought should be particularly important to postcolonial and decolonial critique. While new approaches (not only in the social sciences) have often tended to overstate their own originality and to advocate a new 'turn' as a result, doing so usually happens by erasing the contribution of previous approaches. In the case of postcolonial thought, this would amount to disavowing Southern approaches, indigenous and Black European thought, among others, by conveniently leaving them out of the genealogy, which easily happens once the postcolonial becomes a fashionable label (even this critique has already been voiced a while ago by people such as Ella Shohat and Arif Dirlik). I think it is therefore all the more important for postcolonially minded scholars to recognize the many ways in which critiques of Eurocentrism, imperialism, and colonialism have informed 'Southern' thinking and critical approaches for quite some time, and to draw from the common bases instead of (sometimes) reinventing the wheel.

Julian Go: I think we agree. At the same time, I have argued that 'postcolonial theory' while sharing some things with, say, Latin American dependency theory (itself a complex category that is internally varied), does offer some distinct perspectives that should be taken as friendly amendments or additions rather than 'disavowals'. One amendment is the role of colonialism: in my book (Go 2016a) and elsewhere, I have argued that one of the key interventions of postcolonial theory is that it specifies colonialism as constitutive of modernity. This in turn requires an understanding of colonialism as a distinct relatively autonomous force that articulates with, say, economic systems but is irreducible to them. I also argue that colonialism, in turn, entailed important modes of racial domination that have also been constitutive. Now, in my readings of Prebisch (Go, 2016b) or A.G. Frank, for instance, I find little discussion of racial domination or of colonialism as an autonomous force. This work is fantastic for critiquing economic modernization theory and for highlighting the importance of colonial exploitation, but it says less about colonialism as a particular social form that constitutes the identities of colonizer and colonized (instead, I would argue, it treats colonialism as primarily an economic modality that is only contingently necessary for global capitalism; that is, an incidental form of accumulation). Nor does it take race as seriously as later decolonial theorists such as Quijano or postcolonial theorists such as Fanon. So there are real differences, and these differences – along with the similarities – need to be acknowledged. Debates should be had. But the debates should be substantive. Again, I think, Manuela, you and I would agree here. And I think we also agree that meaningless debates that we see sometimes emerging among the larger body of work need to be avoided at all costs.

Sina Farzin: Thank you both for this first mapping of a rather broad terrain. The 'infighting' you mention seems (at least in part) like yet another manifestation of what Andrew Abbott (2004) describes as 'fractal heuristics': argumentative patterns occurring on different scales in sociological subfields (correct me if I am wrong). Do you see trenches or dividing lines depending on the different stances that scholars take with regard to questions of public engagement? In many contexts such engagements are qualified as 'unscientific' or 'activist science'; do these distinctions play a role? How would both of you describe the impact of critical perspectives on Eurocentrism within sociology in different regional or national academic

settings? And how do different intensities of public engagement with questions of postcolonialism – which are connected to different colonial histories – affect the academic reception?

Julian Go: I think you're exactly right, Sina, regarding 'fractal heuristics'. Regarding your question about different national contexts and their reception to critiques of eurocentrism, I can only speak of the US and perhaps from what I can perceive of the UK. Regarding the UK, my perception is that 'postcolonial' sociology has become one way in which what North American sociologists might think of as 'the sociology of race' enters UK sociological discourse. In other words, my guess – and it's only a guess – is that, in the UK, critical sociologies of race have been comparably absent; and so the postcolonial approach becomes the umbrella for it. Postcolonial sociology and critical sociologies of racial inequality thereby become equated. This makes some sense: postcolonial theory is about empire and colonialism, and the connections between the British Empire and the UK's racial minorities are clear (as the recent controversy over the Windrush generation shows starkly). In such a context, to critique empire as postcolonial theory is also to critique racial inequality. Now, I could be completely wrong about this. Maybe postcolonial theory and the sociology of race in the UK have not been equated. But the recent article by Nasar Meer (2018) on race and postcolonialism discusses this and suggests that this may be partially true at least. The US is different. What is often called the 'sociology of race and ethnicity' has long been institutionalized. There are various American Sociological Association (ASA) sections relating to it, and there's a journal of the ASA called *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*. It has typically been about African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinas(os)/Chicanas(os), Native American groups, and their experiences in the US, as well as racial and ethnic stratification within the US. But that work is varied, and does not always, if ever, critique Eurocentrism. It is typically methodologically nationalist and internalist. It does not typically address empire. So as a sociological discourse, the postcolonial approach and its critique of Eurocentrism and imperialism is separate from that subfield. This is reflected in how W.E.B. DuBois (1897) has been received in the US. He is known, of course; and he is read. But sociologists tend to read him for what he has to say about the African American experience in the United States. They are too often blind to his larger critiques of colonialism and empire. Of the postcolonial theory and the sociology of race, the former is less known in the US, when known at all. I attribute this to the general 'exceptionalist' discourse in the US about empire: the belief that the US has never really been an empire. Given that belief, which even many traditional sociologists have long bought into, it is difficult to get sociologists – even sociologists of race – to think in postcolonial terms; that is, to embed their analyses of race within a critique of empire and colonialism. The challenges I have faced in US sociology have therefore been especially layered. I have had to focus much of my early work and continuing work towards getting other sociologists to acknowledge the very existence of American empire. Only then can I introduce the postcolonial critique. At the same time, I've recently had to engage conventional sociologists who work on 'race and ethnicity' and try to convey to them the importance of going beyond methodological nationalism and to recognize the importance of empire for the current condition of racial minorities in the US, for *Postcolonial Possibilities for the Sociology of Race* (Go 2018). The good news is that, in recent years, not only has American empire become acknowledged more and more, but so too has postcolonial sociology. There is now an emerging group of younger scholars especially who are open to the postcolonial critique. But it is still an uphill battle.

I do see also a fractalization among scholars interested in postcolonial/decolonial thought as the interest grows wider. This to me is less an Abbott-type of fractalization and more

a Bourdieusian field logic: as more and more folks get engaged in postcolonial/decolonial academic debates, there has been an almost natural and predictable tendency for some of those entrants to claim capital by articulating particular 'stances' (in Bourdieu's terms) about activism and science. For instance, I've noticed some people criticizing 'postcolonial theory' by relating to the academic trend of postcolonial theory in the humanities in the 1980s (with Bhabha, Spivak, and so on) and decrying it on the grounds that it is not public and political enough, and is instead too 'academic'. These folks then try to discount postcolonial theory on those grounds and seek presumably more 'radical' and 'activist' thinkers. Or they use some oblique reference to 'political commitments' as a way to discount what a sociologist is trying to say. My own take on the matter is this: such lines are predictable, lazily drawn and are simply asociological. On the one hand, as I argue in my book, postcolonial theory since the 1980s in American academic humanities, and hence in social science today, has been a scholarly endeavour. I argue in my book that this postcolonial theory has a lineage that goes back to more activist anticolonial theory as seen in DuBois or Fanon, for instance; but I also recognize and state explicitly that there is a distinction to be made between the first wave of postcolonial theory (that is, the anticolonial thinkers such as Fanon and DuBois of the mid-twentieth century) and the second wave of postcolonial theory (that is, the academic work first emerging in the humanities in the 1980s). The distinction is that the first wave were not academics in the conventional sense. The second wave were. On the other hand, both waves share underlying ideas and critiques, and both seek to produce new knowledge (and did produce new knowledge) that can be used for direct political activism and public engagement. They just do so in different ways. Relatedly, today, I simply don't see such a big dividing line between 'activism' on the one hand, and the project of postcolonial scholars rooted in the academy to produce social scientific knowledge on the other hand. I am always befuddled by those who insinuate such divides generally between scholarship and public activism, and I'm still disappointed that the divide is being created among scholars who share similar postcolonial/decolonial projects. Whether we seek and generate post/decolonial knowledge because we want to add new theorists to our syllabi, or to better organize and inspire a revolution, we still have to seek and generate post/decolonial knowledge in the first place! This is my view on social knowledge generally (whether 'postcolonial' or not): regardless of whether we want to use social knowledge to teach better or whether we want to use social knowledge to mobilize politically in society, that social knowledge still has to be produced and made available in the first place. In other words, whether for teaching or movements, the work of knowledge production has to be done. It is a necessary step. As an academic and scholar, my first goal, then, is to do the work of knowledge production. In my own ways I take that knowledge to the 'public' and to the 'streets', but I still have to generate that knowledge for it to be used in the first place.

Manuela Boatcă: The analogy with 'fractal heuristics' works well until the question is raised of what discipline or field the different argumentative patterns are subfields of: sociology? Or postcolonialism? In Germany, for a long time, postcolonial and decolonial perspectives were not considered to be part of sociology at all. Worse still, they were seen as what Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez (1999) has called 'third-degree imports'. Ideas borrowed, first, from the humanities, in German, *Literatur- und Kulturwissenschaften*; second, from a different cultural space, that is, the Anglophone world; and third, from a different historical context, that is, one that was 'truly' postcolonial, such as the British context, since Germany's role in the history of colonialism and the present of coloniality was considered insignificant in comparison. We have come a very long way since then, and one can definitely say that postcolonial perspec-

tives have made significant inroads in the social sciences in the past 15 years. There is now a solid corpus of literature in German on classics of post- and decolonial perspectives as well as on their impact and further development of their perspectives in sociology, political science, geography, and so on. But it is still possible, indeed it is the rule, to get a sociology or political science degree without ever having been exposed to postcolonial thought. It would not be possible, however, to get a degree in sociology without having studied functionalism, or modernization theory. This is why I said I was sceptical about celebrating any 'postcolonial turn' just yet, either as regards the equation of critical sociologies of race with postcolonial sociology, as Julian suggests for the UK, or with respect to any important sociology of race as in the US case. Not only are there no established equivalents in Germany to the sociology of race and ethnicity institutionalized in the US, and no Departments of Ethnic Studies, Race and Ethnicity Studies, or Turkish-German studies, for that matter, to mirror them. But, more important still, 'race' as a term is still not used in most German social science texts in the German original. The original term *Rasse* is reserved for reference to its use during World War II and thus to what is considered a tragic exception in the history of an otherwise racism-free national society that has since learnt from its mistakes. The term is therefore disconnected from its systematic, century-long use in the transatlantic slave trade and in the German colonies in Africa as well as from its impact on today's hierarchization of human groups. In this respect, the treatment of the term in Germany is somewhat similar to the situation that Étienne Balibar had diagnosed for France in 1991 when he said that 'migration' functioned there as a euphemism for 'race', but 'race' was never used. In many ways, we are still dealing with third-degree imports when it comes to both postcoloniality and the critical sociology of race in many parts of Europe. In saying so, I am not equating Europe with Germany and France. There is a significant amount of work being undertaken in Hungary, Poland and Romania and their respective (and growing) diasporas on the political economy of empire, critical whiteness theory and decoloniality. Yet this is a younger generation, mostly precariously employed and with no institutional say in their countries, or a limited say in the diaspora, and is not representative of how social sciences are being taught in these countries, either. Moreover, the postcolonial label is being appropriated for nationalistic, right-wing arguments, most notably in Poland, but in Hungary and Romania, too. I would venture to say that, to this day, the sociology of race is more strongly represented in those parts of the world in which the migration of enslaved Africans played a significant role, and which use 'race' as a census category for this very reason. I tried to show this in *Von den Siegern geschrieben* (Boatcă 2011). That renders 'race' sayable and a category of sociological analysis at the same time. That is the case for the US and many parts of South America and the Caribbean. The UK introduced 'race' in its census in 1991 in response to increasing immigration from the Commonwealth. To what extent the sociology of race becomes a sociology of empire, if it ever does so, is very different from case to case, and I agree with Julian's assessment of why the former did not necessarily translate into the latter in the US case. Brazil has a well-established and complex sociology of race, yet postcolonial and even decolonial perspectives have had a very hard time gaining any institutional foothold in Brazilian social sciences and to my knowledge have not become commonplace today.

Sina Farzin: Different national histories of colonialism, and the fact that postcolonial ideas and themes entered academic discourse via the humanities, are probably important reasons for the delayed reception in Germany and the US. What would you say changes when concepts developed in disciplines such as literary and cultural studies 'travel' into sociology? Could you identify important readjustments accompanying these shifts, or do you see (or even hope

for) the emergence of a new transdisciplinary field? Also, my impression is that many themes and issues closely related to postcolonial perspectives – such as going beyond methodological nationalism, or reflecting critically about the normative implications of modernization theories – have initiated growing research activities in recent years. Yet still sociologists tend to shy away from the label 'postcolonialism', because of not only its ties to the humanities but also its close relation to social activism and the anticolonial movement. Many of the first wave thinkers and their successors were or became deeply involved in political activism beyond academic settings; Julian mentioned W.E.B. Du Bois, who is probably a very prominent example. How does this conflict between the norm of a 'value-free sociology' and political activism affect the field today (if it does), and what is your take on it?

Julian Go: These are thought-provoking questions that probably require much more space than we have here. But let me try. As for the first issue about cross-disciplinary 'travelling' from the humanities into sociology: I think the main adjustment that needs to happen is that the concepts and theories should be transformed into empirically verifiable social-theoretical propositions (by which I mean propositions not about literary texts, but about the broader social world); and these propositions or 'hypotheses' must be empirically validated. For instance, in US literary postcolonial studies, one can find many implicit claims about the social world, claims emerging from founding postcolonial theorists or related theories. These include the claim that knowledge is power, that racist or Orientalist images shape social action or policy, that colonialism shaped all aspects of modernity, and so on. Social scientists would want to turn these implicit claims into empirically verifiable propositions, and also dig deeper empirically. Is knowledge really power? What kinds of knowledge feed into power relations, and under what conditions? How exactly has colonialism shaped modernity, if at all, and in what respects? What are the different relationships between racial discourse on the one hand, and state policy or violence on the other? And so on. A related difference is that some literary postcolonial studies take an individual's social experience as empirical validation for a social generality. If Fanon experienced racism in France, there must be racism across France, and the experience he had must be how racism operated in all of France. As a social scientist, I would be more inclined to ask further questions, such as 'How general was Fanon's experience? Is this really how racism operated, or were there other ways too?' I am not saying that we must deny the individuals' experience or its importance. To the contrary, I believe that the best postcolonial studies begin from the lived experiences of colonized subjects. But I think that postcolonial studies in the humanities is inclined to take the individual's experience as the only thing of relevance, or as evidence for wider social processes, while social scientists are more interested see how those individual experiences connect to broader social patterns and mechanisms. This is exactly what C. Wright Mills (1959) called 'the sociological imagination'; and it's exactly what is needed when pushing postcolonial theory from the humanities into social science. And my larger claim is that we need social scientific postcolonial studies, alongside postcolonial studies in the humanities. We cannot persuade sceptics – whether they be other scholars or the public – about the importance of colonialism, colonialism's legacies and empire in our lives without providing some empirical validation. We can of course appeal to their human values through art and literature. But social science has a distinct contribution to make: specifically, to offer up empirical evidence of general social processes. This is why I argue in my book that a transdisciplinary project is not only possible but also desirable and essential. Now to the question of the values. I do not see a fundamental conflict between 'science/value free sociology' on the one hand and political activism based upon values on the

other. Instead, I see a necessary relation: the former informs the latter (and hopefully the latter informs the former). I am not saying that they are exactly the same thing. To say that would be to fall into an epistemic relativism which I think we must resist at all costs (and which forces us into not being able to say which 'news' is 'fake' or not; and which would provide us no means of ever saying that colonialism is important for shaping social relations, and so on). So I'd instead be Weberian about it (one of the few times I'd be Weberian): I think that the essence of so-called 'scientific' sociology (that is, so-called 'value-free sociology') lies in its procedures for making, assessing and validating claims about the social world, and that these procedures are 'value-free' to the extent that, while they might emerge from certain values, they in themselves do not dictate values. To give one example: the method of regression analysis emerges from statistical reasoning, which in turn has some origins in racist thinking of the 19th century. But if I use regression analysis, does that mean that my analysis dictates racist values? If I use regression analysis to show that the number one cause of a country's position in the socioeconomic world system is whether they had been colonized or not, does that mean that my analysis – just by virtue of the fact that the statistical procedure has racist origins – is racist? This is of course a complicated issue, but to my mind it can also be put quite simply: we cannot fight oppression in society if we do not understand the logics, dynamics and forms of oppression in society. And a postcolonial sociology can help us to do that.

Manuela Boatcă: I thoroughly agree with you, Sina, that one reason for the delayed reception of postcolonial approaches in both Germany and the US stems from the perception that they were a domain of the humanities. As someone who has started out as a humanities scholar herself – I studied German and English philology in Bucharest before turning to sociology – I tend to see the synergies rather than the differences between the humanities and sociology. What attracted me most to sociology was a class in sociolinguistics that I had taken as part of a philology curriculum. What drew me to qualitative research was Fairclough's critical discourse analysis, of which I had learnt as part of my English philology training, and which is widely used in sociology to this day. So, as social scientists, we need to be aware of the fact that disciplinary boundaries are historical as well as political constructions, and that the emergence of the social sciences, as well as the intellectual division of labor between sociology, anthropology, political science, economics and history, was concomitant as well as complicit with empire, something that Wallerstein et al.'s (1996) report *Open the Social Sciences* had already pointed out long ago. Therefore, while I agree with Julian that social scientists are more interested in broader patterns than in individual experiences, I do not think that social science's distinct contribution – in opposition to literary studies – is to provide empirical evidence to general social processes. I believe that sociology and literary studies have a lot in common in terms of theory production, and that literary studies, but also film studies and cultural studies more generally, offer us some of the richest sources through which the teaching of sociological theory can become more concrete as well as empirically grounded (although not statistically representative). And yes, you are right, the perceived conflict between the norm of a value-free sociology and a politically engaged postcolonial approach still drives a wedge between sociology and postcolonial studies. On the one hand, this is due to a misrepresentation of Max Weber's stance, or, rather, an overgeneralization of his view of only one phase of the research process. He actually never advocated a value-free sociology, and was well aware of the fact that researchers' class, upbringing and social location shape their interests and, thus, the research questions they regard as relevant. He did advocate value-freedom, but only when assessing the results of empirically researching the questions thus formed. He, however, again

conceded that the recommendations derived from the research results are shaped by individual values. So, on the other hand, this misrepresentation of sociology as value-free has led to a postulate of objectivity in social science research that seems to be at odds with political activism. Yet, as we have all learnt from feminist research, the personal is political, and standpoint is crucial. Postcolonialism is very similar to feminist standpoint theory in this respect, in that it points out that there is no neutral, objective standpoint, that perspectives are geopolitically located, shaped by class, gender and race-imbued values, and historically contingent. Weber would have agreed, and had indeed described his own position as one derived 'from the standpoint of Germanism' when arguing against Polish immigration into Germany at the turn of the 20th century, as I discussed in 2013. The Weberian sociology bequeathed to us through Parsons and modernization theory has simplified his position to advocate for value-freedom, but postcolonial sociology can bring the political back into the social without the risk of losing the explanatory power of sociology in the process.

Sina Farzin: The tension you describe between scientific objectivity and political activism could also be described as the distinction between scientific and public sociology which Michael Burawoy has made popular among sociologists, and to which both of you referred several times above. Where do you place your own work in this systematic? And do you think the recent development of a postcolonial sociology will bridge the gap between engagement with public causes and internal knowledge production? Is that even something one should wish for?

Julian Go: This is an important question. However, to elaborate on my point earlier, I don't see an opposition between 'scientific objectivity' and 'political activism'. Let me give an example from my current research into policing and imperialism (which is very much a postcolonial project of rethinking policing in the US as a colonial project in itself, not least because, I argue, policing in the US originated in and is repeatedly informed by colonialism and empire). If I participate in (as I have) social movements against racialized police violence and police militarization (such as movements seeking to 'defund' the police) – whether through teach-ins, newspaper editorials, or taking to the streets to physically confront state violence – I operate at least partly from the knowledge that policing is racist, disproportionately impacting non-whites, and that defunding police will alleviate police violence and racism. To my mind, that knowledge has to be 'objective', both for me to believe in the claims at all, and in order to persuade others to my point of view (of course I can make emotional and value-laden appeals to persuade others, but I'm not an artist or movie-maker or a poet, I'm just a social scientist!). If I don't have 'objective' knowledge that policing is racist, and the ways in which it is and isn't, or if I don't have some amount of 'objective' knowledge that suggests that defunding police will have good effects, then I am no different from, say, supporters of President Trump or of policing who say that 'policing is not racist and harms as many white people as black people', or 'defunding the police won't solve anything', or 'there is no such thing as institutional racism'. What can differentiate me from those Trumpers is that I operate from objective knowledge produced by social science. It's called social truth (or what Durkheim called 'social facts'). We can make a parallel here with postcolonial theory: postcolonial theory is premised upon the claim that colonialism is constitutive of modernity and has had lasting effects, but if I can't make 'objective' or 'scientific' claims to demonstrate and prove that it is constitutive of modernity and that it has had lasting effects, then my position is no different than that of the countless historians who say that colonialism is only a minor passing phase in history that is irrelevant. Think of Du Bois: one of his most important contri-

butions to sociology was to show that the racist assumptions of genetic inferiority were wrong. And how did he do it? Through 'objective', 'scientific' knowledge. His *Philadelphia Negro* deployed all kinds of numeric data and analytic methods (what some of my students would decry as 'quantitative sociology') to show that the impoverishment of African Americans was due to social conditions, not biological factors. It is no accident, I would claim, that Du Bois turned to full-time activism and left academia after he had done all of that systematic, scientific work. That work was necessary for him to do his activist work later. So 'objectivity' or 'science' to my mind is necessary for political activism. It is not opposed to it. And here is where the role of the social scientist comes in: the social scientist can help to produce the critical knowledge (and I'd claim that social scientists informed by postcolonial thought produce better critical knowledge than conventional social scientific thought) that is necessary for political activism. Furthermore, it is not only that postcolonial social scientists can help produce that knowledge, it is that we are obliged to. I have no illusions about my privilege: as an academic, I have the time and resources to engage in sustained social scientific research. People who are political activists often don't have that time and resources (that is, who aren't in the academic field) to conduct sustained, systematic investigations; they are too busy doing political work. But we academics can do that work, and we must do it; otherwise, no one will. Or if they do it (like some journalists), they will do it poorly. Given this, I remain befuddled at folks who try to valorize 'activism' at the expense of academic knowledge production in the 'ivory tower'. They are not opposed, and if anything, good politics requires the ivory tower. For those of us in the ivory tower, the goal should be to make sure that the knowledge which is produced, and which can fuel politics, is powerful, critical knowledge. We need to make knowledge the best it can be. I am convinced that postcolonial/decolonial thought can help with that. I am also convinced that the tools of social 'science' can also help (even though I recognize that to some, the very term 'scientific' means 'oppression').

Manuela Boatcă: Thanks for making this connection between our own work and the various divides we have been addressing. I think a concrete example such as the one Julian has given of his research on policing and imperialism is a great way to illustrate the necessity of bridging and cross-pollinating sociological thinking and political activism in ways that are relevant to both postcolonial theory and public sociology. In my case, I would highlight the nexus between the public interest in issues and debates about migration and citizenship rights, and the sociological analysis of citizenship as a colonial institution. On the one hand, a growing number of Western states scandalize the claims to residence and citizenship of people racialized as non-European, non-Western, or non-white. Many such states increasingly denounce or block illegalized migrant paths to residence and further restrict the rights and the duration of refugees' presence on their territory. Such measures painfully reveal the rising importance of unequal citizenships for global mobility, and of unequal rights more generally. They form the object of political activism and often the subject of political art. One powerful and highly mediatized public intervention in 2016 was the Center for Political Beauty's removal of the white crosses installed for the commemoration festivities for the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall and their relocation on the European Union's (EU) external border, in order to commemorate the tens of thousands of lives lost at the EU border since the fall of the Berlin Wall. On the other hand, restrictive migration measures and refugee policies (should) also alert us to the larger role that citizenship as an institution has played in constructing and maintaining the idea of a modern West, whose integrity allegedly needs preserving, protecting and shielding from presumably unfathomable non-Western Others. Sociological theory played a big part

in that construction, and informs the understanding of the workings of citizenship to this day. Especially due to sociological conceptualizations, citizenship has for a long time been seen as an equalizing mechanism: an institution devised to counterbalance social inequalities by conferring universal rights on all individuals, regardless of particularities of birth such as ethnicity, class or social origin. At the global level, the Western notion of citizenship has however been functioning as a selection mechanism on the basis of race, gender, literacy and property status ever since its emergence in the context of the French Revolution. Its juxtaposition with religion more generally, and with Western Christianity in particular, has served as a hotbed of racist gestures and practices of exclusion even before citizenship crystallized as an institution: from the expulsion of both Jews and Muslims from the Iberian Peninsula after the conquest of Granada in 1492, and the use of the 'Christianizing mission' to justify European colonialism in the Americas, Asia and Africa while denying rights to the natives; to the denial of citizenship rights to Jewish residents throughout most of Europe before 1848, and the Catholic-led initiative of inscribing the 'Christian roots of Europe' into the European Union constitution in 2004; up to the exclusion of veiled Muslim women from naturalization ceremonies and citizenship in France in recent years and former US President Donald Trump's attempted ban on immigration from Muslim-majority countries in 2017. A post- and decolonial perspective on sociological conceptualizations of citizenship is not only a means to uncover the close connections between these very different moments in time, but also a tool towards the kind of mutual education that public sociology advocates, and at the same time a necessary intervention in current racist policies.

Sina Farzin: Many thanks to both of you for those insights into a very active research field. My last question is rather short: are there any further readings beside the publications mentioned above that you would recommend to our readers?

Manuela Boatcă: As far as further reading is concerned, I think a crucial resource are non-English language publications. Postcolonialism is about so much more than the British Empire, or what gets published in English. For readers of Spanish, I recommend Catherine Walsh et al. (2002), *Indisciplinar las ciencias sociales: Geopolíticas del conocimiento y colonialidad del poder*; and *Feminismos y poscolonialidad: descolonizando el feminismo desde y en América Latina*, edited by Karina Bidaseca and Vanesa Vazquez Laba (2011). For an understanding of postcolonialism as applying to Eastern Europe as well as going beyond the humanities–social sciences divide, have a look at Madina Tlostanova and Walter Mignolo (2012), *Learning to Unlearn: Decolonial Reflections from Eurasia and the Americas*; or *Postcolonial Transitions in Europe: Contexts, Practices and Politic*s by Sandra Ponzanesi and Gianmaria Colpani (2016).

Julian Go: Regarding books to read beyond what we've been discussing, I think that postcolonial sociology can learn a lot from Black Marxism and Native American/Indigenous studies. It is already connected to these areas, but the links should be deepened. I'd therefore recommend, for starters, Cedric Robinson's (2000 [1983]) *Black Marxism*; and *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* by Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012).

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Index

9/11DigitalArchive 97
'10/90 problem' 165

Abbott, Andrew 4, 31, 371, 372
Abbott, Edith 26
Abram, Simone 344
Abu-Lughod, Lila 82
'abyssality' 357–8
academia 336–49
  activism 373
  citizenship and 197
  cognitive production 352
  confrontations with 355
  depoliticization 353–5
  neoliberalization of 252–3, 337
  poverty representations 318–19
  professional knowledge 200
  progress 354
  repoliticization 353–5
  social policy 250–253
academic data world 66, 68
academic history 99
academic legitimacy 364
accountability 159, 284, 286–7
accounting 149–52
action–knowledge relationship 331
action research 49, 319
activism 88, 174, 289–301, 345
  academia 373
  environmental justice 344
  expertise 298, 300–301, 343
  see also political activism
'activist citizens' 228
activist sociology 194–7
actor–network theory 285, 290
actors
  health policy 330
  political participation 228
  pragmatist concept of 61
  sociological interventions 49
  stream of experience 34–5, 36–8
'acts of citizenship' 228–9
Addams, Jane 26, 33–4
adversarial model 169
agency 52, 220, 317–20
agricultural land 118
agro-ecology 239–40
Aguilar Villanueva, Luis 332
AI *see* artificial intelligence
AIDS activists 298–9, 300–301
Al-Amoudi, Ismael 68
Alatas, Syed Farid 367, 368
algorithms 68–9
alliance-building 152–4, 199
'alternative facts' 169
Amīn, Samir 370
Anthropocene 167–8, 177–9, 336, 346–7
anthropological conception 44
anthropology 74–80, 82–3, 336, 341
anti-populism 189, 190, 193–4
anti-utopia 3
'aporophobia' 315
Appadurai, Arjun 234, 316, 360
applied history 88, 92
Arato, Andrew 196
architecture, definition 125
Arendt, H. 211
artificial intelligence (AI) 68
Asad, Talal 82
Ashton, Paul 93
Askins, Kye 107, 108, 110–111
aspirational capacity 12, 44, 46–7, 52–3, 118–20, 316–17
assemblage concept 290
associationalism 15, 234–9
asylum seekers 211, 214
audience 5, 27, 98
authenticity, legal norms 132–5
autism study 300
autobiographical work 356, 358–9

"back-translation" 137
'backsliding approach' 189, 190
'bad poor' stereotype 314–15
Balibar, É. 204, 374
Balkan route 202–3, 210, 211
Ball, S.J. 252, 283, 287
Banks, Mark 15
Barraclough, Laura 110
Barth, Fredrik 80
Barthes, Roland 76
Bauböck, R. 206, 212
Bauman, Z. 7, 213
Beck, Ulrich 303
Becker, Howard S. 60, 241, 260
Bedarida, François 91
Benjamin, Walter 12, 214
Berglund, Eeva 16

Bernstein, Basil 289
Bhambra, Gurminder 367–8
Biehl, João 82
Bifulco, L. 332
big data 66, 68, 82, 285–6
Bigo, D. 204
biobanks 164
'biographical impairment' 362
biographical turning point 353, 361–2
'black box' approaches 274, 299
Black Lives Matter movement 368–9
Black Panthers 87
'Black Problem' 30, 274–5
blind trust 305–6
Bloch, Marc 95
Blokker, Paul 14, 273
Boatcă, Manuela 16, 368
Bohman, James 25
Boltanski, Luc 7, 61, 67, 234, 272, 274
Bonvin, Jean-Michel 12–13
borders 202–17
Borghi, Vando 47
Borofsky, Rob 77
bottom-linked citizen practices 227, 228–9
bottom-up cosmopolitanism 6–9, 10–11, 46
Boudon, R. 253
Bourdieu, Pierre 15, 75, 144, 235, 237, 243–4, 246, 270–272, 280, 285, 289, 325, 358, 373
Boyte, Harry 194, 197–9
Brandolini, Andrea 318
Braudel, F. 143
Brazil 92
Breckinridge, Sophonisba 26
Brightenti, Andrea 188
Bronte, Lydia 88
Brownlie, Julie 306–7
Brubaker, Rogers 204–5
Bunge, W. 106
Burawoy, Michael 2–5, 7
  anthropology 336
  association 243–5
  consensus/relevance concepts 353
  critical sociology 275
  democratic dialogue 154
  diversity of sociology 317
  EC model 59–61
  education 280
  expertise 138
  organic public sociology 234–8, 240, 241, 246, 251
  participatory research and 239
  partisanship 259
  pragmatist approach 12, 23
  public as recipient 27–8
  publicization 77
  reflexive knowledge 137
  sociological categories 31–2, 174, 215, 250, 252, 258, 318, 350–351, 354–5, 359
  sociology of the public 42, 158, 190
  workplace production study 86–7
Burnham, James 149
Bush, Vannevar 159
business process analysis 149–52
Busso, Sandra 15
Butler, Judith 289–90

CA *see* capability approach
Cabane, L. 177
Callon, M. 122, 272, 284–5, 301
cameral sociology 253, 256
Canovan, Margaret 192
capability approach (CA) 10, 12, 42–57, 145
capitalism
  accounting 150
  contradictions of 214
  critical sociology 144
  profit 213
'capitals' 270, 271
Carrel, Marion 238
Carrithers, Michael 82
Carson, Rachel 344–5
Castel, Robert 326
Castells, Manuel 97
Castree, Noel 108, 110
categorization of sociology 31–2, 64, 174, 215, 250, 252, 258, 318, 350–351, 354–5, 359
Cefaï, Daniel 12
Centemeri, Laura 14, 65
Chakrabarty, Dipesh 8, 168
Chatterton, P. 110
Chiapello, E. 61
Chiara, Magdalena 16
Cianetti, Licia 189
cities 218, 219, 221–3
citizen participation 218, 220, 221–2, 223–4
citizen preference systems 145–6
citizens' history 87
citizens' science 95–6
citizenship 197, 208, 218–33, 378–9
  capability approach 53
  culturalization requirements 209
  equality and 206
citizenship rights 205, 214, 219, 378–9
civic data world 66–7
civic engagement 223–4, 225–6
'civic order of worth' 273
civic populism 197–9
civil society 136–7, 236, 238, 244–5, 317
civitas 218

Clark, A. 222
Clarke, J.P. 105
class, concept of 358
class conflict 352
Clifford, James 77–8
climate change 167, 340
climate sustainability 146
Clinton, Bill 184
co-creation 198
co-learning 23–7, 152–4
co-production 34
co-research 181
co-teaching 351, 355–7, 359–60, 363–4
cognitive double movement 353, 361
cognitive production 350–352, 355, 358–60, 362–3
'cognitive redistribution' 352
Cohen, D.K. 253
Coleman, James 280
collective engagement 235–7
collective geographies 111
collective mapping 108
collective memory 94–5
collective planning 118–20
collective repoliticization 350–366
collective well-being 142
collectives
  historical basis 241
  public arenas 25
Collins, Harry 15, 295–6, 297–8, 301
colonialism 105, 367–80
colonialist heritage 289
coloniality 356–7, 360, 373
Colpani, Gianmaria 379
commodification 9, 19, 147, 289
common goods 184
common sense 142, 243–6, 304–5
commons, search for 289
communication, democratization of 98
'communicative' knowledge 351
communism 94, 202, 214
community interests 133–5, 136
competition 51, 271, 274
comprehensive school model 279–80, 281, 287
Comte, Auguste 234, 243
conflict, politicization of 25
'connected histories' 368
Connell, R. 368, 370
Conrad, Sebastian 370
consensus 351–3
consociational model 169
constructionist approach 266, 269, 275–6
constructivist sociology 283
consumer society 313–14
consumption 145, 311, 314, 319, 326–7
contributory expertise 296, 298
conventions 61, 63–4, 66–7
convergence concept 352
conversion factors 43, 53
convocation strategy 197
Conway, Kellyanne 169
Cooper, F. 204
"core set" concept 297, 300
Coronil, Fernando 369
cosmopolitanism 6–9, 10–11
Costa, Sérgio 367
counter-expertise 162, 168
counterpublic 5, 29–30
Covid-19 pandemic
  academia and 339, 346–7
  co-teaching 364
  decisionist model 161–2
  expertise on 294–5
  foundational economy 146–8
  memory projects 97
  poverty and 16
  responsible research and innovation 165–6
  uncertainty 9–12
'creative dialogue' 116
'creative justice' 15, 264–78
Cremaschi, Marco 13
'criminal populism' 314–15
critical 376
critical accounting 150
critical anthropology 82–3
critical discourse analysis 376
critical engagement, disasters 174–87
critical geography 104–5, 106
critical sociology 8, 31, 42, 144, 174, 234
  cognitive production 350–351
  disasters 182
  poverty representations 318
  research programmes 317
  social policy 250–253
  work 264–78
critique 82, 360, 362
  of Eurocentrism 367–72
  of quantification 58–9
  sociology relationship 7–8
cross-fertilization in research 238–9, 251
crowdsourcing 97
CTG price index 67–8
'cultural capital' 271
cultural geography 104
cultural industries 264–78
cultural mediation 149–52
cultural objects 271
cultural recognition 288–9
cultural value 271
cultural work 264–78

Cuomo, Andrew 294

Dahl, Robert 218, 223
Dale, Roger 282
Dardot, P. 243–5
data infrastructures 68
data worlds 65–9
datafication 284–6
de Gaulle, Charles 115
de Leonardis, O. 332
De L'Estoile, Benoît 80
decisionist model 161–2
decolonial approaches 16, 111, 356
  see also post-colonialism
'deep democracy' 7
deficit model 162
defuturing processes 174–87
Deleuze, Gilles 119, 290
deliberative democracy 43–4, 47, 131, 133, 136, 163–4, 242
Delouvrier, Paul 115
democracy
  citizenship and 218–33
  conversion factors 43, 53
  epistemological quality 44
  pragmatist approach 192
  public deliberation 163–4
  science and 33, 159
democratic backsliding 189
democratic constitutions 146
democratic experimentalism 152–4
democratic legitimacy, law 129–31, 133, 136
democratic populism 191–3, 195, 197–8
democratization 15, 47, 98, 191, 219–20, 228–9
Demortain, David 303
dependency on assistance 257–8, 318–19
dependency theories 369–71
depoliticization 6, 14
  academia 353–5
  environment 160–163
  policy sociology 254, 257
  science 14, 158, 160–163, 164
  welfare systems 260
Descola, Philippe 78
deserving poor 259, 310, 312–14, 316
Desrosières, Alain 59, 62–4, 284
development aid 343
Dewey, John 5, 12, 23–4, 26, 28–9, 31, 37, 49, 122, 159
Diamond, Jared 108
Diaz-Bone, Rainer 13
Dickinson, J.P. 105
digital public history 96–8
digitalization 285–6, 364
Dijck, Jan van 97
disasters 14, 174–87
discursive depoliticization 257, 260
discursive spaces 256–9, 260
distanced objectivism 234, 243
'doer' dimension, capability approach 44
Dolci, Danilo 179, 184
Donabedian, A. 332
Dostoyevsky, Fyodor 78–9
Dryzek, John S. 25
Du Bois, W.E.B. 29–30, 354, 369, 372–3, 377–8
duality 149
Durkheim, E. 234, 236, 243, 246

earthquakes 175, 179–82, 184
East–Central Europe 188–9
East–West post-enlargement movers 207–19
EC *see* economics of convention
ecological fragility 180
ecology of public experience 23–7
'economic capital' 271
economics 19, 144
  cultural work 265, 270
  foundational economy 142–56
  orders of worth in 143–4, 152
economics of convention (EC) 58–72
Eddy, Melissa 204
education 52, 80, 279–93
  citizen participation 222
  comparative sociology of 282–3
  global perspective 279–93
  measurement in 284
  public history 92
"education for all" vision 279, 280–282
election participation 221–2
electoral representation 129, 133, 136
emancipation 6–7, 38, 192, 194, 289, 363–4
emergency management 179–80
empire, critique of 372
employability 51
Engels, Friedrich 145, 243
entrepreneurial dynamics 283
environment 158–73
environmental justice framework 174, 344
environmental politics 168
environmental protection 344–5
environmental social movements 343, 347
environmental sustainability 146
epistemological analysis framework 350–351
Epstein, Steven 298
equality 206, 326, 331
Escobar, Arturo 342–3
ethical committees 164
ethics 122, 272
ethnic migrants 207–19
ethnicity 265, 288–9, 368, 372, 374

ethnography 77–9, 82
EU *see* European Union
Eurocentrism 367–72
European border-crossing regimes 202–17
European cities 218, 221–3
European democratic constitutions 146
European education space 283
European integration 94–5
European lifelong learning agenda 279, 280–281
European Union (EU) 48, 202, 206, 210, 212, 221, 225, 280, 294, 379
Europeanization of education 279–81, 283
evaluative work 268
Evans, Robert 15, 295–6, 297–8, 301
evidence-based practice 46, 47, 254
exclusionary populist projects 195
experience-based experts 295
experience-focused lawmaking 134–5, 136–9
experience–knowledge–information connection 11
"experiential transversalities" 241
experimentation 31–4, 123
expert knowledge 137, 161, 327
expert opinion 129, 138, 161
expert systems 304, 306–7
expertise 31–4, 294–309
  activism and 343
  capability approach 47
  legal legitimacy 129–41
  mistrust in 15, 294–5, 304
  networks of 299–302, 304
  policy sociology 254
  poverty and 318
  public history 96
  social movements 344
exploitation 267, 268, 357, 359, 360
extensional approach 117, 295–6, 297
external shocks 175–6
Eyal, Gil 15
Eymard-Duvernay, François 61

Faletti, Tulia 329
Fals Borda, O. 237
Fanon, Frantz 371, 373, 375
Farzin, Sina 16
Fassin, Didier 13, 237
"fast" science model 338, 340, 345
Favell, Adrian 205, 210
feminist standpoint theory 377
Ferrajoli, Luigi 314
field concept 324–5, 373
financialization 151
financing of academia 252–3
Finland 336, 339, 342–3, 344–5
Fleck, Ludwik 159
Follett, Mary P. 25, 31–2, 33–4
'follow the money' analysis 151
forced migration 210–217
formal legitimacy 139
Foucault, Michel 65, 68, 76, 78, 82–3, 119, 159, 290, 302
foundational economy 14, 142–56
Fourier, Joseph 119
'fractal heuristics' 371–2, 373
Frank, A.G. 371
Frank, Jason 198–9
Fraser, Nancy 6, 29, 79, 266, 289
free movement principle 204, 206, 208
Freire, Paulo 111, 237
Frère, Bruno 15
Fridjonsdottir, Katrin 253, 258
friend–enemy logic 195–6
Frisch, Michael 95
Froud, Julie 14
Fuller, Duncan 105, 107, 108–11
Fuller, Steve 169
future, concept of 114
futurology 119

Gaia theory 167–8
Gaillard, J.C. 178–9
Gambi, L. 106
Gans, H.J. 255–6
Garcia, Marisol 15
Gardner, Jim 93, 96
gender
  academia and 339
  citizen participation 222–3
  cultural work 265
  education and 288–9
  guild membership 226
  poverty 319
  pragmatist approach 30
  teaching-as-research 358–9
"general–specific publics" distinction 28
generalization 188, 189–90
geographical debate 104, 109
geopolitics 109
Giddens, Anthony 305
gift economy 313
Gill, Rosalind 267
Girard, Monique 272–3
global education industry 287–8
global methods, public history 91–2
global networks 282–3
global-scale migration 203, 205
globalization 279–81, 282, 347, 353
glocal practices 93–4, 361
Go, Julian 16
Godin, B. 119, 122

Godrie, B. 237
Goffman, Erving 78, 316
Good, Anthony 80
'Good Anthropocene' narrative 167
'good poor' stereotype 312–14
Gould, Peter 108
Gouldner, A.W. 251, 260
government as a problem 159
Gramsci, Antonio 351
grassroots mobilizations 162–3, 179
grassroots public sociology 137–8
Guattari, Félix 119, 290
Guéant, Claude 81
guilds 225–6
Guiraudon, V. 206
Gündoğdu, A. 212
Gutiérrez Rodriguez, Encarnacion 367, 373

Habermas, Jürgen 23, 25, 79
Haila, Yrjö 342
Haiven, M. 197
Halbwachs, Maurice 95
Hamilton, Paula 93
Hanley, Seán 189
hard sciences 176
Harvey, David 106, 108, 111
health 323–34
health care 147–8
health decentralization 329
health policy 324–31
health problems 327, 331
Healy, William 26
Heller, Agnes 207
Hennion, Antoine 272
Herzog, Tamar 226
heterarchy 272, 273, 274, 276, 283
hierarchical classification systems 188
Hill Collins, Patricia 205–6
Hirschman, A.O. 4, 219
historical-political economics 146–8
historiography 89
history
  memory relationship 91, 93
  public history distinction 93
  public purpose 89, 92–3, 98
  shared authority 95–7
Hobsbawm, Eric 90, 243
Horton, Richard 10
housing provision 148
Howson, Alexandra 306–7
Human Era 346
human rights 12, 47, 195, 338
human survival 19, 21
humanities–sociology connection 376
hybrid forums 301
hybrid knowledge 237–40

identity 94–5
identity politics 29
idleness 310, 314
immersive methods, public history 87
immigration 224, 226
imperial standpoint 367–8
implementation
  public sociology 52–4
  welfare policy 224
inclusion 159, 194–5, 297
inclusion rights 205
India 134–5
individuals, classifying 199–200
industrial convention 61–2
inequality 51, 358
  cognitive dimension 360
  colonialism and 368–9, 372
  critical approaches 270
  cultural work 265, 267
  education 280–281, 288–9
  health policy 326, 331
  migrants 205–6
  poverty and 318
inferiorization 357–9
informational basis 10–11, 43, 47
Ingold, Tim 340–341, 343
innovation 153, 165–6, 342
institution concept 241–2
institutional analysis 242
institutional arrangements 328–9
institutional criticism 235–7
institutions–public connection 33
instrumental knowledge 60, 252
integrationist model 237
interactional expertise 296, 297–8, 300
interest representation 14, 129, 134–6
interest-based lawmaking 133–5, 136
"interlanguages" 300–301
international public history 91–2
Internet 66, 96–8
interpretive space 7
interstitial positioning 174–5, 183
intervention collectives 240–241
intervention concept 327
Isin, E. 206, 219
Italy
  academia 354, 355
  coloniality 357
  disaster research 175, 179–82
  neoliberalism 147
  trade unions 153

Jäger, A. 200

James, William 28–9
Jamison, Andrew 343–4
Jany-Catrice, Florence 67
Japan 92, 99
Jaspers, K. 212
Jeffries, Vincent 87
Jessop, Bob 282, 284
Johnson, Wesley 89
Jones, Arnita 89
'judge' dimension, capability approach 44–5
judicialization 80
'just city' 120–122
justice 121, 130
  cultural work and 265, 266–75
  environmental 174, 344
  pragmatic approach 273–4
  see also social justice
juvenile delinquency 26–7

Kaczynski, Ted 195
Kant, Immanuel 82
Katz, Elihu 27
Katz, M.B. 258
Katz-Lazarsfeld, Paul 37
Kelley, John 89
Keynesian welfare system 251, 252, 256
Khasnabish, D.A. 197
Khurana, Rakesh 149–50
Kitchin, Rob 109, 111
Klein, Naomi 174
knowledge
  action relationship 331
  attributes 331
  commodification of 9, 19
  experience–information connection 11
  foundational approach 152
  objectivity 45, 47, 59, 377–8
  sociological worlds 60
'knowledge alliances' 42
"knowledge scientists" 299
Kohtala, Cindy 345
Krebs, T.B. 222
Krumer-Nevo, Michal 318
Kuhn, Thomas 297

labor
  division of 60, 133, 136, 376
  as privilege 19
Lacan, Jacques 76
Lamont, M. 61
land as common good 114
land–space–place relationship 117–18
land-use planning 344
Lane, Julia 68
Laruffa, Francesco 12–13
Lascoumes, P. 284, 328
Lasswell, Harold 28
Latin America
  coloniality 356
  dependency theories 369, 371
  participatory research 237, 240
  populism 195–6
Latour, Bruno 167–8, 244, 272, 284–5, 290
Latsis, John 68
Laval, C. 243–5
Laville, Jean-Louis 15
Lawn, Martin 283
lay expertise 31–3, 298, 344
'lay local knowledge' 162, 177
laypersons 34, 78
Le Corbusier 115
Le Galès, P. 284, 328
Le Pen, Marine 195, 209
Le Play's research on workers 253
learning spaces 332
Lefebvre, Henri 117, 282
left-wing populism 194–6, 197
legal citizenship 226
legal legitimacy 129–41
legal norms 132–5
legal pluralism 132
legal positivism 129, 136
legality 160
legislative legitimacy 13–14
legitimate law 13–14, 129–41
Lévi Strauss, Claude 13, 74–6, 78, 95
Lévy, Bernard-Henri 75
Lewin, K. 237, 240
liberal democracy 192–4
lifelong learning agenda 279, 280–281
Lindblom, C.E. 253
linear model 159–60
Lippmann, Walter 28, 31
Lisbon Strategy 280
Lister, Ruth 317
literature–anthropology link 78
lived experience-focused lawmaking 134–5, 136–9
Loach, Ken 91
local democracy 218–33
local dimension, foundational economy 153
local–global methods 91–2
Lourau, R. 242
loyalty 218–19
Luhmann, Niklas 298
Luke, Timothy 160
'lunch-shaming' 312, 320

Maastricht Treaty 202, 206, 230
macro-level poverty 310

McRobbie, Angela 267, 269
Macron, E. 208–9
MACs *see* materialist activist communities
majoritarian legislative process 129, 131, 133, 136
Malinowski, Bronislaw 77
managerialism 149–50, 338
Marcus, George 77–8
market convention 61–3
market evolution 353
market logic 143
marketization 6–7, 9–10, 286–8
Marshall, T.H. 146, 205, 219
Marx, Karl 76, 209, 238, 243–4
Marxism 105–6, 121, 176, 213, 235, 241
Marxist-inspired critical approaches 179
"masses" 28
material capital 318
materialism 124, 290
materialist activist communities (MACs) 345
Mau, Steffen 188
Mauss, Marcel 246
Mayo, E. 237, 240
Mead, George Herbert 25–6
Mead, Margaret 78
measurement conventions 63–5
media world transition 76
Mediterranean route 203, 210, 355
Meer, Nasar 372
memory 91, 93, 94–5
mental health 80
Mény, Yves 192
Merkel, Angela 204, 206, 210
Merton, Robert K. 159
methodological nationalism 279–93
metrology 63
micro-level poverty 310
Mignolo, W.B. 356, 370, 379
migration 14, 79, 202–17, 357, 361, 374, 378
militantism 42
Mill, J.S. 220
Miller, P. 284
Mills, C. Wright 375
Minervini, Roberto 87
mistrust
  in expertise 15, 294–5, 304
  of scientific authorities 239
  trust relationship 305
Mix, John 298–9
modernity 7, 11, 211, 336, 343, 375, 377
modernization 188–91
modernization theory 190, 200, 377
Moebius strip analogy 34
Monmonier, Mark 108
moral sense 145
moral values 122
More, Thomas 119
Morlicchio, Enrica 15–16
Moulaert, F. 223
Muller, Pierre 324
multiculturalism 14, 203, 207, 208–9
multilateral governance 281
Murphy, Alexander 108
mutual education 8, 9, 11–12
  capability approach 45–6, 51–2
  postcolonialism 379
  public history and 86, 96
mutuality principle 244–5, 247

nation-states 107, 225
national sociologies 280–282
national state citizenship 205
national state-scale migration 203, 207, 213
national statism 281–2
"national workshops" 248
nationalism 195, 204, 279–93
nature 160, 166–8
neoliberal academia 252–3, 337, 339
neoliberal citizenship policies 209
neoliberalism 65–9, 120–121, 147–8, 206, 281–2, 284, 287
neoliberalization 166–8, 252–3, 258
network ethnography methods 283
networks of expertise 299–302, 304
New Right agenda 203, 286–7
NGOs *see* non-governmental organizations
Noiret, Serge 13
non-governmental organizations (NGOs) 176
Normand, Romuald 15
normative planning ideals 120–122
normativity 132–5, 145–6, 267, 268
Nóvoa, António 283
Nussbaum, Martha 43

objectified poverty 316–17
objective knowledge 45, 47, 59, 377–8
objective quality 271
objectivism 266–72, 273–4
objectivity 59, 243, 276, 377–8
objects in space 122
O'Connor, Alice 254–5, 256
official statistics 66, 68
Okamoto, Michihiro 92
Olori, Davide 14
opacity 149
open borders 206, 207
'open' teaching 355–6
opinion formation 134
opportunism 123
oral history 90, 94

Orbán, Viktor 195
organic public sociology 5, 20, 29, 234–8, 240–241, 246, 251, 350–351, 356
organic sociology 86
Overland, I. 340
Owen, R. 122
Owens, Sue 343–4

panopticism 68
Park, Robert E. 27–9, 354
Parks, Robert Ezra 123
participation
  citizenship and 223–4
  local politics 224
participatory action research 49, 319
participatory democracy 163, 221–3, 225–6
participatory investigation 234
participatory lawmaking 134, 135–6
participatory mapping 110–111
participatory research 237–40, 242
partisanship 259–61
partnership 198
Passeron, Jean-Claude 270
passivity 2, 5, 20, 24, 27
paternalism 44, 46, 313
patriarchy 13, 104, 267, 288
Paugam, Serge 315
peer review 355
Peet, R.J. 106
Pellegrino, Vincenza 16
Pellizzoni, Luigi 14
peoples' history 90, 94
perspectival pluralism 370
PH *see* public history
philanthropic capitalism 288
Pielke Jr, R.A. 261
PISA *see* Programme for International Student Assessment
Piven, F.F. 259
Pizzorno, A. 260
place–land–space relationship 117–18
planning practices 13, 114–28, 344
Plato 86, 116
plural objectivism 268–9
plural realism 370
pluralism 29–30, 60–61
plurality 132, 142–6, 272–3
Polanyi, Karl 6, 9, 143, 247, 253
policing 80, 377
policy assemblages 285
policy borrowing 282–3
policy instruments, health 327–8
policy lending 282
policy orientations, poverty 311–17
policy sociology 31, 174, 250–263, 317–18, 350–352
"policy world" 60, 79
polis 79, 218, 221
political activism 20–21, 37, 375–8
political assemblages 285
political economics 146–8
political geography 107
political legitimacy 131–2, 161
political management, planning 122–4
political participation 221, 223, 224, 228, 266
political rights 214, 219, 242
political sociology 283, 290
politicization 5–6, 13–14, 25, 78–80, 83
  of science 160–163, 304
  of sociology 250–263
politics 24–5
  deflecting 163–6
  praxis dimension 198
  science relationship 161, 261
  scientization of 304–5
  sociology relationship 253
  of uncertainty 9–12
Ponzanesi, Sandra 379
poor stigmatization 257, 310–322
Popper, Karl 159
popularization 13, 78–80, 83
populism 14, 188–201, 207
populist sociology 14, 196–7
Porter, T. 59, 237, 284
positional objectivity 45–7, 52–4
positivism 81–2, 129, 136, 181
possibilism 4, 12
possible–impossible relationship 3–4
postcolonial sociology 367–8, 372, 376
postcolonialism 16, 289, 367–80
post-modernism 290
post-normal science 166
post-poverty epistemology 238
poststructuralism 269
post-truth 168–9, 296
poverty 16, 178, 238–9, 250–263, 310–322
power relations, poverty context 318
'power-with' 25
pragmatic sociology 234, 272–5
pragmatism 23–41, 192, 274
pragmatist institutionalism 61
pragmatist pluralism 60
Prak, Maarten 225–6
praxis dimension, politics 198
Prebisch, Raúl 371
preferences 45–6
prefigurative engagement 182, 183
preparedness 10, 17
prison life 78–9, 362

private health insurance 328
private–public distinction 158–9
privatization 283, 286–8
problem management 161
problem-solving model 255
process-based dimension, public 5–6
processual approach 123
professional sociology 31, 42, 53, 174, 250–253, 317–18, 350–351, 354
profit 213
Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 281, 284–6
progress 354
Progressive Era 23
project-driven planning 123–4
protest movements 342, 344
Proudhon, P.J. 15, 234, 242, 243–8
PS *see* public sociology
pseudoscience 168–9
public
  cognitive production 350–351
  construction of 332
  Dewey's conception of 23, 28, 37
  geographical definition 108
  process-based dimension 5–6
  as recipient 27–9
public arenas 23–7
public debate, boundaries of 295–9, 301
public deliberation 163–4
public experience
  ecology of 23–7
  "triple helix" of 34–8
public geography 13, 104–13
public history (PH) 13, 86–103
public inquiry 23–41
public movements *see* social movements
public narratives 35
public–private distinction 158–9
public social science 77, 80, 142–56
public sociology (PS)
  aims/purpose 137
  alliances 10–12
  definition 2
  epistemological implications 45–6
  implementation challenges 52–4
  operationalizing 48–54
  strategies 10–12
  study methods 86
  twofold objective 47
  typology of 31
public sphere 7, 163
publicity 29
publicization 77–83
publicness 5–6, 88–92, 286–8, 350–366
publics
  challenges of 80–81
  partisanship of 259–61
Pulido, Laura 110

Qiu, Jack 269
Quaini, M. 106
quality assurance 284
quality conventions 61–2
quantification 13, 58–72, 188, 190
Quarantelli, E.L. 177
questioning process 86
Quijano, Aníbal 369, 371

Rabeharisoa, Vololona 301
race 368, 372, 374
racial inequality 288–9, 368–9, 372
racial profiling 80
racism 30, 207, 275, 354, 375–6, 377–8
Raffestin, C. 106
Rancière, J. 261
Randeria, Shalini 370
rational planning 115, 125
rationality 160, 188
Re-InVEST project 43, 48–54
Reagan, Ronald 120
real life experiments 166–7
'real utopia' 3
realism 266–70, 274, 276, 299
Recchi, Ettore 209–10
'receiver' dimension, capability approach 44
Réclus, Élisée 106
reconstruction 36
recovery framework 182
redemptive approach 192
reductionist economics 143
reflexive knowledge 60, 137, 252, 351
refugee condition 213–14
refugee crisis 203–4, 206–7, 210–212
regulatory science 303–4
relational approach
  expertise 299
  health policy 326–7
  policy sociology 257
  space 117
relational networks 182
relational poverty studies 260–261
relativist approach 266, 269, 275
repoliticization 5–6, 146–8, 261, 350–366
representative democracy 163, 213, 220–223
representative lawmaking 129, 131, 133–4, 136
resilience 177–8
resilient communities 177–8
responsibility 83, 105, 313
responsible research and innovation (RRI) 165–6
responsible trust 305–6

"retroaction" 59
Revet, S. 177
Ricœur, Paul 34
Riggio, Andrea 109
right-wing populism 194–5, 197, 199, 207
rights 12, 47, 195, 205, 242, 338, 378–9
    see also political rights
risk, terminology 302–3
risk assessment 296, 301, 303
'risk society' 176–7
Robertson, Susan 282
Robinson, Cedric 379
Roosevelt, Franklin D. 159
Rose, N. 284
Rosenzweig, Roy 91, 98
Ross, Andrew 267
Routh, Supriya 13
RRI *see* responsible research and innovation
Ruskin, John 91

Said, Edward 83
Salento, Angelo 14
Samuel, Raphael 87–8, 90–91, 92
Santos, Milton 105, 106, 357, 360
Saraceno, Chiara 318, 319–20
"SARS Heroes" 294–5
Sartre, Jean-Paul 76, 235, 237
Sassen, S. 219
Sauer, Carl 109
Saward, M. 219
Sayer, Andrew 268–9
scalability 11
scalable projects 11
"scapegoat" concept 300
Schlosberg, David 345
school choice 286–8
Schram, Sanford 252
Schumpeterian democracy 192
science 158–73
    decision-making model 342
    democracy and 33, 159
    depoliticization of 14, 158, 164
    expertise 296–7
    functional definition 109
    neoliberalization of 166–8
    politicization of 304–5
    politics relationship 161, 261
    positivist approach 181
    quantification relationship 58
    "trans-science" distinction 303–4
science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) subjects 339–40
science and technology studies (STSs) 25, 168, 337
scientific authorities, mistrust of 239
scientific knowledge 138, 343, 378
scientific management 149
scientific objectivity 377–8
Scoones, I. 10
sectoral approach, health policy 324–6
SEE *see* "Studies of Expertise and Experience"
Sekulić, Tatjana 14
selection bias 52
Selinger, Evan 298–9
'semi-illegal employment' 357–8
Sen, Amartya 10–11, 12, 43, 45–6, 145
Sennett, Richard 339
sexism 268
sexual harassment 35–6, 37–8
shame 312, 320
shared authority 95–7
Sheppard, Eric 109
'shock doctrine' 174
Shohat, Ella 370
Shore, Cris 79
Sinha, Vineeta 367
slavery 357–8
slow science 339–40
slow thinking 345
Smale, Alison 204
Smith, Linda Tuhiwai 379
social capital 271, 318
social constructivism 290
social distancing measures 315
social investment paradigm 255, 256, 288
social justice 130, 207, 266, 268–9, 271, 281, 288–9
social media 98, 284
social movements 21, 29, 302, 337, 341–7, 368–9
social order 360
social policy 44, 250–253, 324–6
social protection 6–7
"social question" 326, 327
social science, crisis of 339–41
social security-related health insurance 328
social theory 351, 367, 369
social ties 176
social vulnerability 180
socio-analysis 240–242
socio-economic life 142–56
socio-technical assemblages 285
socio-technical innovation 342
socio-territorial context, health policy 329–31
sociological categorization 31–2, 174, 215, 250, 252, 258, 318, 350–351, 354–5, 359
sociological intervention 240–242
sociological theory 367, 376, 378–9
sociological worlds 59–60
sociology
    anthropology and 74–85

Burawoy's reasoning 2–5
civil society connection 236
critique relationship 7–8
historical role 236
humanities connection 376
politicization of 250–263
'sociology of the possible' 360–361
Socrates 86
Socratic method 91
Sontag, Susan 76
Sovacool, B.K. 340
Soysal, Yasmin 205
SP *see* strategic planning
space
as common good 116–18
cosmopolitan approach 7
land–place relationship 117–18
objects in 122
spatial arrangements 114, 118
specialization in sociology 251, 257
"specific–general public" distinction 28
Stam, Robert 370
standardization 188, 189–90, 284–6
Stark, David 272–3, 275
"statactivisme" movement 69
state
education link 280–282
health policy 327–8
market and 353
quantification relationship 62–3
statistical chain 64–5
statistics 58, 63, 66, 68
Stavrakakis, Yannis 194
Steiner-Khamsi, Gita 282
Steinmetz, George 81
STEM subjects *see* science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
Stengers, Isabelle 338, 339–43, 346
stereotypes 310, 311–17
stigmatization of poverty 257, 310–322
Stirling, A. 10
strategic planning (SP) 115, 122–3
structural vulnerabilities 175–6
STSs *see* science and technology studies
"Studies of Expertise and Experience" (SEE) 295, 296–9
subaltern studies 29
subjective attitude 304–5
subjective–objective relationship 268
subjective opinion 270
Subrahmanyam, Sanjay 370
substantive legitimacy 139
Surel, Yves 192
sustainability 146, 341–2
Sutcliffe, Anthony 91
symbolic capital 271, 318

Tarantino, Ciro 361
Tarde, Gabriel 27, 37, 123
Tarr, Joel A. 88
teaching as publicness 350–366
teaching-as-research 16, 350, 352, 353–5, 358–9, 363
technical debates 296
'technocracy' 160
temporary urbanism 119
Terlizzi, Andrea 329
territorialized economy 153
territorialized political practices 204
territory 205, 329–30
terrorism 207, 211
Thatcher, Margaret 88, 120
Thelen, D.P. 98
Thévenot, Laurent 61, 64, 67, 188, 272, 274
Third Way politics 120, 197, 203, 258, 286–7
Thompson, Edward Palmer 90
Thunberg, Greta 343
Tilly, Charles 227
Tlostanova, Madina 379
Torre, Salvo 13
Touraine, Alain 240–241, 247
trade unions 153–4
"trans-science" 303–4
transnational actors 282–3
transnational-scale migration 203
"triple helix" of public experience 34–8
Truman, Harry S. 159
Trump, Donald 168–9, 246, 368, 377, 379
trust 299, 304–7
truth 296, 352
Tsing, Anna 11, 346
Tuorto, Dario 15–16
'turning point' concept 353, 361
"two-step flow of communication" 27

UK *see* United Kingdom
uncertainty 9–12
undeserving poor 259, 310, 314–16
United Kingdom (UK)
education politics 286
election turnout levels 222
public history 90–91
'race' terminology 374
racial inequality 372
United States of America (USA)
education politics 286
election participation 222
populism 193–4
postcolonial sociology 372, 377
public history 88–9

'race' terminology 374
"universal health model" 328
universalism 122
universities *see* academia
UP *see* urban planning
urban citizenship 220–227
urban communities 225–6
urban degradation 315
urban democracy 218–33
urban planning (UP) 114–28, 344
urban space 148
urbanism 13
Ursell, Gillian 267
USA *see* United States of America
user-generated content 97
utopia 3, 114, 119–20, 261

vaccines 162, 296, 305, 306–7
value-choices 16
value-free sociology 375–7
value plurality 272–3
values–objects opposition 122
Van Parijs, P. 261
Vaughan, Diane 174
venture capital 288
Vespucci, Amerigo 119
visibilization 5
Vitruvius 125
voice 44, 46–8, 52–3, 219, 274
voting-based legitimacy process 129, 131
vulnerability approach 44, 53–4, 175–6, 180

Wacquant, Louis 319
Wagner, P. 7
Waldow, Florian 282
Waldron, Jeremy 129–32, 133
Wallerstein, Immanuel 368, 370, 376
Walsh, Catherine 379
Ward, Kevin 108, 109
Warner, Michael 81
Washington, Booker T. 30
Weber, Max 4, 225, 376–7
Weinberg, Alvin 304
Weiss, C.H. 255
welfare dependency debate 257
welfare implementation 224
welfare policies 47
welfare state 280–281, 357
welfare systems 250–263, 281
wellbeing 43, 142
Weszkalnys, Gisa 344
Wieviorka, Michel 241, 247
Williams, Karel 14
women *see* gender
work
  critical sociology of 264–78
  legal definition 135
  political dimensions 198
worker pauperization 310
workers' associations 244–5
"world" terminology 60
world-systems theory 368, 370
Wright, Eric 3
Wright, Susan 79
Wright Mills, Charles 4, 5
Wulff, Helena 78
Wyatt, Robert 91

youth vulnerability 53–4

Žižek, S. 207, 214
Zola, Émile 76