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Sociology as a Vocation

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Politics in the Middle East

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> Editorial

Facing an Unequal World

I write this editorial from Ramallah, the administrative center of the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank – a place of exception that opens new vistas of domination, affecting the conditions of producing sociology no less than the object of its study. If Gaza experiences the rapid and terrifying violence of bombing, then the West Bank experiences the slow violence – to follow Jackie Cock's formulation in this issue of *Global Dialogue* – of geographical partitions, multiplication of checkpoints, the encroaching wall that expels Palestinians from their land, dividing them from each other, all conspiring to promote the unilateral expansion of Israeli settlements.

Life in the West Bank is defined by uncertainty and insecurity, not least in university life. But Palestinians are as resourceful in defending themselves as the Israeli state is in brutalizing them. For example, Al-Quds University, based in Abu Dis, has sponsored a unique experiment called *Campus in Camps* – a project to bring new critical education to the refugee camps. The brainchild of Alessandro Petti, Sandi Hilal and Munir Fasheh, fifteen young men and women from four camps have elaborated a "collective dictionary" that problematizes basic concepts of social science – citizenship, participation, well-being, sustainability, knowledge, relation, common – infusing them with local meaning. This intense process of Freirean education has brought about a transformation of the social consciousness in which the camps are no longer seen as a place of victimization but a political space that has been constituted and reconstituted since 1948.

As Feras Hammami describes in this issue of *Global Dialogue*, the state of exception affects the dominators too – the Israeli state suppresses dissent within its own universities. Of course, Israel is not the only example of dictatorial rule in this region. Mustafa Attir describes what it was like to conduct sociology under Gadhafi's regime and the challenges this poses for the new order. Moving further afield, Chilean sociologists – Oriana Bernasconi, Alejandro Pelfini and Carolina Stefoni – describe the limitations and paradoxes of the democratic transition as it affects moral issues, environment, and migration. The theme of democratization also informs Michael Hsiao's description of the ascendant trajectory of Taiwanese sociology, starting with the importation of American theory and methods, the subsequent turn to critique of the authoritarian KMT party-state, followed by a radical turn as sociologists joined the democratic movement. Countering this optimistic view, Su-Jen Huang casts doubt on sociology produced in small countries with limited research communities.

Such impediments, however, don't stop innovative techniques of sociological intervention. As we learn from José Soeiro and Dora Fonseca, Portuguese sociologists have developed innovative mobilizations against austerity measures, many of them transplanted from Latin America. These young sociologists are less concerned about the dilemmas so eloquently described by Eloísa Martín, editor of *Current Sociology*, the dilemmas of operating in a professional world governed by norms of the North. They are ready to adapt and recreate sociology, taken from anywhere, to challenge the destructiveness of third-wave marketization and its political instruments.

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André Béteille, one of India's most distinguished social scientists, discusses the entangled relation between sociology and anthropology, and how sociologists must retain a critical autonomy when they enter policy and public realms.

Jacklyn Cock, feminist, environmentalist and critical thinker, draws out the ubiquity of slow, destructive violence in South Africa today – a central and necessary theme for sociological analysis.

In an interview with Sari Hanafi, Libyan sociologist Mustafa Attir describes what it was like to be a sociologist under the repressive regime of Gadhafi and the challenges facing the Libyan sociologists of today.

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> The Vocation of Sociology
A Pragmatic View

by André Béteille, Delhi University, India

André Béteille has been called the "wisest man" in India, and with good reason. Starting with his canonical monograph, *Caste, Class and Power*, which brings Weberian sociology to an anthropological village study, Béteille has written on almost every dimension of inequality, and on a wide range of related public issues. He has won many accolades and awards, and chaired the Indian Council of Social Science Research. He resigned from the Prime Minister's National Knowledge Commission when it proposed increasing caste-based reservations. He is very much the public sociologist with strong professional commitments, having written in all the leading newspapers and spoken out when public opinion or public policy is at odds with his sociological knowledge.

André Béteille, recently photographed in Delhi.

The adoption of sociology as a vocation requires one to acquire and maintain a sense of sociology as a distinct intellectual discipline. At the same time, if we are to pursue sociology as a vocation and not just as a career, it will not be enough to focus only on the technical apparatus of the discipline, although that also is important and cannot be treated lightly. Sociology as an intellectual discipline has developed a large, though loosely connected body of concepts, methods, and theories and that has to be treated as a valuable resource by every practicing sociologist.

Sociology has to be distinguished from common sense which is limited in its reach, and uses many unexamined assumptions for interpreting and explaining everyday phenomena. Sociology should not go against common sense but must go beyond it to reach a broader and deeper view of the operation of society. The subject matter of sociology is such that it is far more difficult to insulate it from the assumptions and judgments of common sense than, say, particle physics or molecular biology. Again, while current affairs may be grist to the sociologist's mill, the sociologist differs in his orientation to current affairs from the journalist.

As an intellectual discipline, sociology may be viewed in terms of three attributes: (i) it is an empirical science; (ii) it is a systematic science; and (iii) it is a comparative science. As an empirical science it seeks to maintain a clear distinction between value judgments and judgments of reality, or between "ought" questions and "is" questions. To be sure, the study of a society requires the study of its norms and values, but the sociologist studies norms in the descriptive and not the prescriptive sense. Further,

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the sociologist seeks to examine in a systematic way the interconnections among social processes, without any presumption as to whether those interconnections are basically harmonious or basically discordant. Finally, sociology is a comparative science which seeks to place on the same plane of observation and enquiry all human societies, the sociologist's own society as well as other societies.

My commitment to the comparative method has made me a strong advocate of the unity of sociology and social anthropology. Most Indians in fact study Indian society and culture, but the country is so large and its population so diverse that one can study the entire range of social arrangements within the same country. The natural tendency in India is to work on the presumption of the unity of sociology and social anthropology whereas in the West the tendency has been to separate the study of "advanced" societies described as sociology from the study of preliterate, tribal, or peasant communities which is assigned to anthropology.

The same commitment to the comparative method has made me skeptical of the view commonly advocated in India that Indians should develop their own distinctive sociology of India so as to free themselves from the constraints of a Western framework of enquiry and analysis. The general framework of sociology may have originated in Europe and America and may still be biased by presumptions arising from those societies, but there is no reason to believe that that framework is rigid and inflexible and cannot change. In fact it has changed continuously, and I have myself written general works on inequality with at least the expectation that they will be read by students in India as well as outside India.

In a long career of teaching postgraduate students in a premier academic institution, I have struggled, like most of my colleagues in India, with the need to harmonize the teaching of "sociological theory" with "the sociology of India." In the courses on "theory" students are taught about Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Parsons, Merton, and so on, while in the ones on India they are taught about village, caste, and joint family, so naturally, they find it hard to make the connections between the two sets of courses.

I have, in the course of my teaching, developed an approach based on what I call "sociological reasoning." After explaining the defining features of sociology as an intellectual discipline, I discuss a variety of specific topics. I often begin with politics and speak about "politics as a subject for sociology." After all, politics is of interest to a wide range of people. What I ask is whether there is something distinctive that sociology brings to the understanding of politics. The same question may be asked about religion. Religion attracted serious intellectual attention from theologians and philosophers long before sociology became an intellectual discipline: did sociology introduce something new to the understanding of religion? We may ask the same question about family, kinship, and marriage, and a host of other subjects.

I have used the idea of sociological reasoning to carry the findings of sociological enquiry and investigation to a wider public. My view is that the sociologist should write for his profession, but not for his profession alone. He has also a responsibility to reach out to a wider public. Hence, in addition to publishing papers in professional journals, I have also contributed editorial page articles to some of the leading dailies of India, such as the *The Times of India*, *The Hindu* and *The Telegraph*. But although I have made occasional use of these dailies I have tried to avoid writing like a journalist, who has to comment on events from one day to the next, but have tried instead to interpret such events in a larger historical and sociological perspective.

My view of myself has always been that I am a sociologist and not a moralist. My own special interest as a sociologist has been in the comparative study of inequality. As is well known, inequality is a deep-rooted and pervasive feature of Indian society. Educated Indians love to moralize about the evils of inequality and the virtues of equality. But inequality cannot be wished out of existence simply by denouncing it in public. I have devoted a great deal of time to understanding the different forms and dimensions of inequality and the social currents by which they are altered, transformed, weakened, or reinforced. I have tried always to maintain a pragmatic attitude to equality and inequality as against the utopian or the fatalistic ones which are, in the end, two sides of the same coin. ■

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> The Vocation of Sociology
Exposing Slow Violence

by Jacklyn Cock, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

Sociologists don't come more engaged than **Jackie Cock**. A pioneer of South African sociology, she has consistently and constantly explored the relationship between violence and inequality: from her classic *Maids and Madams*, a feminist analysis of domestic work, to her interrogation of gender and war in *Colonels and Cadres* and her revelations of environmental injustice in *The War Against Ourselves*. She has fashioned sociology to expose the major injustices of our time, both in South Africa and beyond.

Jacklyn Cock, chairing a panel at the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa.

The social structures and processes which shape our experience are often hidden or obscured by conventional beliefs, powerful interests, and official explanations. One of the most dangerous of these is how violence is usually understood as an event or action that is immediate in time, and explosive in space. But much destruction of human potential takes the form of a "slow violence" that extends over time. It is insidious, undramatic and relatively invisible. By slow violence I mean what Rob Nixon calls "the long dyings," a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all. Both environmental pollution and malnutrition are forms of this slow violence. Both instances are relatively invisible and involve serious damage which develops slowly over time.

Food is where many issues converge – inequality, climate change, globalization, hunger, commodity speculation, urbanization, and health. Food is not usually associated with violence except in relation to riots and the social protests which, in 2008, took place in some 30 cities around the world in response to dramatic price increases. However, malnutrition involves a form of "slow violence" because its damaging effects on the human body are often hidden and involve an erosion of human capacities and potentials that occurs gradually over time. This is most dramatically evident in the one billion of the world's people who are malnourished or the reality, in contemporary South Africa, that one in every four children under the age of six shows signs of stunted growth (both physical and intellectual) due to chronic malnutrition.

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The very broad and descriptive concept of "food insecurity" obscures the distinction between hunger and malnutrition. The conventional media evokes images of skeletal and emaciated drought victims in Somalia. But food insecurity is far more elusive, and can be hidden beneath layers of clothing or body fat. Malnutrition is often obscured by obesity among poor urban people who rely on cheap food which is high in calories but deficient in vitamins and minerals. It is not evident to the eye.

Environmental pollution – most obviously in the case of the carbon emissions which cause climate change – is increasing and is having devastating impacts, especially on the poor and vulnerable in Southern Africa. Much of this degradation takes the form of a "slow violence" that extends over time, being insidious and relatively invisible. Even the extensive impacts (and the official recognition) of the dramatic, ecological catastrophes of Bhopal and Chernobyl were slow to develop.

Close to Johannesburg, in an area known as Steel Valley, catastrophic pollution by a steel mill was obscure, slow-moving and long in the making. The penetration of the "slow violence" of toxic pollution was extensive, permeating the landscape, moving slowly through the air and the underground water and – in many cases – was driven inwards and somatized in the form of genetic defects, cancers, and kidney failures among animals and humans.

Much pollution – both of bodies and rivers – is hidden, either from our immediate sensory perception or from our understanding. It operates in invisible ways and their exposure depends on a process Ulrich Beck calls "social recognition," which is the task of sociology, especially when, as was the case of Steel Valley, the threats to human life were also deliberately concealed. The power of the steel mill management, aided by uncaring or incompetent state bureaucracies, followed a pattern of deceit and denial to avoid responsibility for the damage caused.

But the potential of sociology for human emancipation goes beyond "exposure" to "explanation." Both examples of "slow violence" cited here have social causes as well as social consequences; in the case of environmental pollution the externalization of environmental costs by a powerful corporation, in the case of malnutrition the operation of a food regime focused on profit rather than human need.

"Slow violence" is not a class-blind concept. It is the poor who are most vulnerable to the slow violence of malnutrition and of environmental pollution. They often struggle alone as atomized individuals. But demonstrating how individual experience is shaped by broader social processes is part of C. Wright Mill's rich legacy. The "sociological imagination" implies sociologists engaging with "ordinary men" (*sic*) in the real world (and, I would urge, with the basic issues such as access to nutritious food and clean water).

Michael Burawoy theorizes this engagement in two forms: "the extended case method" and "public sociology." The former involves a dialogue between researchers and "researched" that is respectful, sensitive, and reflexive. Sociologists must be willing to extend their experiences into the lives of those they research. They must be willing to spend time in homes, mines, and factories, for extended periods of time. It is from this vantage point, from below, that social processes can be exposed and rigorously analyzed. Similarly, "organic public sociology" "makes visible the invisible" and works in close connection with a "visible, thick, active and often counter public." This involves emphasizing collective work and rejecting the call of C. Wright Mills "to stand for the primacy of the individual scholar." Instead, in this highly individualized neoliberal moment, sociologists have to stand in solidarity with the poor and the oppressed.

In doing so sociology can strengthen social movements, mobilizing collective action around issues such as "food sovereignty" and "environmental justice" – movements infused with a commitment to social justice, which challenge corporate power and demand alternative social arrangements, arrangements which promote human emancipation. ■

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> Libyan Sociology during and after the Dictatorship

An Interview with Mustafa Attir

Dr. Mustafa Attir, Libyan sociologist who survived the rule of Gadhafi.

Dr. Mustafa O. Attir is Professor of Sociology at the University of Tripoli, Director of the Center for Sustainable Development Research, and former President of the Arab Sociological Association. He is the author of numerous books and articles on the impact of modernization and oil on the Libyan society. He is interviewed by Sari Hanafi, Professor of Sociology at the American University in Beirut, member of the ISA Executive Committee, 2010-2014.

SH: Can you tell me about your academic trajectory in Libya?

MA: I got my BA from the School of Liberal Arts, University of Libya, majoring in Sociology. In 1962, I was sent by my university to the US where I got an MA from the University of Pittsburgh and then a PhD in sociology from the University of Minnesota in 1971. I returned to Libya where I have been teaching ever since as well as holding a number of university posts, including Dean of the School of Liberal Arts, Director of the University Research Center, and University President.

SH: I attended a workshop organized by the Center for Arab Unity Studies. Some leftists and nationalists criticized the NATO intervention in Libya while Libyan participants were unanimously supporting it. What is your position?

MA: The Arab Spring began in Libya on February 17, 2011. It started as a peaceful demonstration in the Eastern city of Benghazi. The regime responded furiously using all kinds of military hardware. But the excessive use of violence against unarmed protests did not stop Benghazi's demonstration which spread all over the country. Hardly any city or town was spared, and the movement looked like a

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people's revolt. After some time, the regime succeeded in securing its control over certain parts of the country including the capital, while all the East and parts of the West and South remained in the hands of the rebels. Soon the country was plunged into what amounted to civil war even though the rebels' military hardware was in no way a match for the fire power of Gadhafi's security battalions, which utilized heavy equipment including armor, air and artillery assets, as well as foreign mercenaries. Modern media made it possible for the rest of the world to see the brutality and the damage Gadhafi's security battalions inflicted upon civilians. Soon the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution authorizing member states to establish and enforce a no-fly zone over Libya, and to use "all necessary measures" to prevent attacks on civilians. This led to NATO intervention, which was limited to air and naval fire, but the fighting on ground was left to rebel armed militias. Finally, after 246 days, the war came to an end. Gadhafi was stubborn and ruthless, and had it not been for international military intervention, the country and its people would have been decimated.

SH: How can a sociologist like you produce knowledge about his society when it is under the rule of dictatorship? And what kind of knowledge could you produce?

MA: It was not an easy task to teach sociology in Libya, to be independent, and save the content of courses from being colored by ideology. Being educated in American schools I was deeply involved with empirical research and quantitative techniques. In sociology I was concerned mainly with modernization and social change. This area was relevant to Libyan society as well as the rest of the Arab World. Libya has a small population, divided into tribes which are closely connected to each other. Since money was not scarce and being the first sociologist with a PhD degree, I faced no difficulty in having access to top-rank officials, and securing adequate funds for any topic I wanted to study. In order to avoid getting into trouble I kept away from two areas: religion and politics. However, I managed to do research among prisoners and on at least two occasions the sample was drawn from those who were in prison due to their affiliation with the Muslim Brotherhood and what came to be known as the Arab Afghan. Although funds came from government departments it was not necessary to put research findings into practice, since the relationship between research and decision-making was very weak.

SH: Have universities in Libya purged the intellectuals who were close to Gadhafi's authoritarian ruling class?

MA: University professors in Libya could be classified into two major categories: the first group was composed of those who got their university education prior to Gadhafi's military coup in 1969 and were given scholarships abroad because they were distinguished students. Almost all of them attended Western universities (American, British, German, and French). Members of this group are dedicated to their profession and did their best to serve their specialties and students. The second group became students when Gadhafi began talking about his private ideology, later consecrated in his Green Book. During those days Libya had no political parties but some university students did affiliate themselves with different political trends in the region. Gadhafi, however, decided that everyone, especially university students, should follow his new ideology and many did. In 1976 he ordered those students who believed in his ideology to cleanse university campuses of students whom he categorized as reactionaries. Clashes began right away and many were injured or arrested while others were forced to leave the university. In the following year he began organizing his followers into revolutionary committees. Members had to memorize Gadhafi's sayings, follow his steps, and perform any task he ordered them to do, including hanging students publically on university campuses.

According to university regulations only students with distinction should be sent abroad to graduate school. But since the late 1970s students who became leaders of revolutionary committees were rewarded with study abroad. The majority were not academically oriented and, therefore, not qualified to enter good schools and ended with diplomas from third- or fourth-rate universities in East European or Arab countries. When they returned they took up teaching positions to spread Gadhafi's ideology among students and the public in general. Therefore, when Libyan universities were reopened after the war, some of these teachers left of their own accord, others were told to leave, but some managed to hang on to their teaching posts because of their social ties with high-ranking individuals in the new regime. Family and tribal relations can often preempt laws and regulations. This has always been the case, still is, and will continue for long time to come.

SH: Have intellectuals played a role in the Libyan revolution?

MA: What took place in Libya, as well as other Arab countries, was an uprising which may develop into a revolution or may not. Intellectuals were taken by surprise. At the beginning it was a movement by young people using modern information technology. However, the date of February, 17 was scheduled before the Tunisian uprising. It is related to a massacre which took place in Benghazi on the same day in 2006. Prior to 2011 individuals did demonstrate but their numbers were not large and were dispersed easily by security forces. In planning the protest of 2011 young individuals exchanged and discussed ideas and strategies via Facebook. The regime was well aware of these activities and was prepared for any revolt. What happened in Tunisia and then in Egypt encouraged more people to par-

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ticipate in the Libyan uprising. Even though the beginning was in Benghazi individuals in Tripoli and other cities were also preparing themselves to take part. The excessive brutality with which the regime dealt with a peaceful march triggered a chain of reactions all over the country. As the uprising continued, older people from all strata of society including intellectuals joined in. As the regime had survived so many failed military coup attempts as well as all kinds of international pressure many Libyan intellectuals began to accept the idea: that the only political development possible must come from within the regime itself.

SH: As a sociologist, how do you see the future of Libya?

MA: The slogans that spread during the uprising centered on getting rid of Gadhafi, changing the regime, and establishing a democratic political system. You mustn't forget that all but 12% of the present Libyan population were born and raised during Gadhafi's reign. This means that almost all active Libyans were taught that their political system was the best in the world, and their democracy which had no political parties, no elections, and no representatives, was the only true democracy. All media facilities were state-owned and directed toward propagating Gadhafi's ideas. The goal was to make all Libyans stand firm behind one stream of thought. Libyan rebels succeeded in changing the system and getting rid of Gadhafi, but I do not think they are qualified to establish democracy. The interim government with hundreds of newspapers,

tens of television stations, and countless political parties, held a fair election, but the rebels did not lay down their arms. Therefore there are more than one thousand armed groups, each operating independently. They get involved in any action their leaders decide: from policing their district and operating checking points to making an arrest, and even interrogating, and sending people to private prisons. In addition, the country has a number of extreme religious groups who insist on imposing their private interpretation of religion on others. As long as these types of groups operate outside the law, establishing a democracy will be wishful thinking.

SH: What is the mission of sociology in the post-revolutionary Libya?

MA: Today it has become possible to conduct research on topics that had become taboo under Gadhafi. There are piles of empirical data that could be reanalyzed to develop new theoretical models, involving variables related to the nature of the political system which lasted 42 years. At the same time, the Arab Spring introduced new areas and directions for research, addressing forces that will shape the future of Libyan society: sophisticated media facilities, new political players, international powers, Islamist groups, and expatriates. Sociology's task is to describe how all these different and conflicting components are going to fashion the Libyan scene. I have no doubt that Libyan sociologists are going to have their hands full for some time to come. ■

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> Political Crisis in Israeli Universities

by Feras Hammami, Royal Institute of Technology (KTH), Stockholm, Sweden

The Israeli state surveils teaching and syllabi at its own universities.

Staff members of several Israeli universities recently signed a petition protesting a proposal made by the Subcommittee for Quality Assessment of the Israeli Council for Higher Education (CHE) to bar the Department of Politics and Government at Ben-Gurion University (BGU) from admitting students for the academic year, 2013-14. Professor Gilad Haran at the Weizmann Institute of Science initiated this petition arguing, "academic freedom in Israel's higher education system is in severe danger." While the petition was signed in September, the Israeli state has been censoring freedom of expression in its universities since the establishment of Israel as a Jewish State in 1948. This date also marks the *Nakba* (*Catastrophe*) for the Palestinians, the loss of historic Palestine, ethnic cleansing, displacements, death of families and friends, loss of properties, and massacres perpetrated by Zionist militants (later the State of Israel) before and after 1948. More than 27 Israeli universities have consistently supported the apartheid policy of Israel through direct participation in both political and military activities (Hever, 2009).

> Stifling of Political Dissent in Israeli Universities

The right-wing government of Benjamin Netanyahu has sanctioned a series of repressive measures to deter domestic criticism from human rights groups, media and judiciary (Cook, 2012: 22). Jewish students and faculty members police the academic environment, acting as watchdog over the courses of "dissident" professors. To avoid public vilification, job loss, imprisonment, or even death, staff members delimit the information that might provoke the authorities. Professor Ariella Azoulay of Bar-Ilan University was denied tenure because of her political associations. When Professor Neve Gordon at BGU announced his support for the boycott of Israeli universities in 2009 the extra-parliamentary group Im Tirtzu called upon the university to dismiss the professor and "put an end to the anti-Zionist tilt" (*Haaretz*, 9/30/2012). The Minister of Education Gideon Saar also criticized the Department of Politics and Government at BGU for its "post-Zionist" bias. Professor Ilan Pappe who supports the academic boycott of Israel was himself boycotted in Haifa University. After he had received several death threats and had been condemned by the Knesset, he moved his work to the University of Exeter in 2008.

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Nizar Hassan, director of several award-winning films, was condemned by the Knesset Education Committee for criticizing a Jewish student who arrived to class at Sapir College in the Negev wearing military uniform (Cook, 2008). There was no such condemnation of a Jewish lecturer at the same college who asked a female Bedouin to take off her veil when she came to class. Since the eruption of the second Intifada in 2000, the Israeli police and secret services have intensified the arrest and interrogation of Israeli-Palestinian students in Israeli universities. Yusef, a student of the University of Ben-Gurion, lost his life due to his political association with an Arab Student Committee on campus (Gordon, 2006: 194-5).

> **Aiding the Military Occupation**

Israeli universities support military research and training through close cooperation with the weapon manufacturing companies Elbit and RAFAEL. These companies are best known for providing the monitoring system for the Israeli Apartheid Wall, a 760-kilometer long concrete barrier that juts into the occupied West Bank, enabling Israel to annex more Palestinian land. Technion University is financed by Elbit to advance robotic weapon systems such as the aerial drone and unmanned combat vehicle technology that aided the Israeli attack on Gaza in 2008-2009. It had also provided a special assistance to students who served in the attack. According to Hever (2009) Haim Russo, manager of the El-Op branch of Elbit had been appointed to the Technion's executive board, and the President of Elbit Systems has been granted an honorary doctorate.

Several Israeli universities are built on the ruins of Palestinian villages and towns that were destroyed in 1948 and 1967. Tel-Aviv University has never acknowledged the fact that it was built over the ruins of the destroyed Palestinian village of Sheikh Muwanis, whose residents were displaced and exiled. Other universities, such as the Ariel University Center of Samaria, are built in illegal settlements under international law in the West Bank. Although Ariel College and its staff have been boycotted both in Israel and overseas, the Minister of Education praised the decision to grant the institution full university status.

These examples show that closing down the Department of Government and Politics at BGU is not without political motivation. As stated by the president of BGU Professor Rivka Carmi in her letter to the Presidents of Israel's research universities "there are many internal and external threats against Israeli academic institutions […] This is not Ben-Gurion University's private battle, but a struggle of all Israeli academic institutions […] Ratification of the current decision by the CHE is like hoisting a black flag over the independence of Israeli academics." Professor Tanya Reinhart of Tel-Aviv University says that "never in its history did the Board of any Israeli university pass a resolution protesting the frequent closure of Palestinian universities. […] in extreme situations of violations of human rights and moral principles, the academia refuses to criticize and […] collaborates with the oppressing system" (Reinhart, 2004). The same is true of Israel's supporters abroad; not one of the 450 presidents of American colleges, who denounced the boycott call, protested against the destruction of the Islamic University in Gaza (Gordon and Halper, 2008).

In response to the violation of human rights within and outside Israeli universities, concerned academics worldwide have demanded that their universities implement the ethical policy enshrined in their constitution. Among others, the British Committee for the Universities of Palestine, the Swedish "Action Group at KTH for the Boycott of Israel," the staff association of McGill University, and the Student Union of Berkeley have demanded that their universities break relations with universities that are complicit in Israel's apartheid policy. The University of Johannesburg was the first university to stop its cooperation with the Ben-Gurion University. At the European level, 260 academics from twenty different countries urged the European Commission to exclude from EU programs Israeli companies involved in the abuse of Palestinian human rights.

The boycott campaign is often seen to contravene free dialogue and the achievement of academic freedom. However, the past 70 years of dialogue with Israeli authorities have neither promoted the "peace" process nor obliged Israel to comply with the UN resolutions or international law. Examples from South Africa during the apartheid regime show that international calls for academic freedom can be effective. Such calls might uncover the apartheid policy of the Israeli government, challenge the surveillance system that controls freedom of expression in universities, and rescue Israeli universities from their current political and, indeed, ethical crisis. ■

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> Theater of the Oppressed
A Form of Public Sociology?

by José Soeiro, University of Coimbra, Portugal

The project "Estudantes por Empréstimo" (Students for Loan) holds a forum theater, May, 2010 in the Senate Room of the Portuguese Parliament. Around 200 students came from all over the country to act out solutions – legislative and other – to their problems, conducted under the circumspect eye of King D. Luís of Portugal. Photo by Carla Luís.

There we were in the middle of the Congress of the Portuguese Sociological Association, held in Porto in June (2012), putting on a "forum-theater" play, called *Estudantes por Empréstimo* ("Students for Loans" as opposed to "Loans for Students", http://estudantesporemprestimo.wordpress.com/). It narrates a concrete story – a student who, having no scholarship, was forced to take out a bank loan in order to proceed with her studies. The play is a *Theater of the Oppressed* project that has been running for more than two years, performed in dozens of schools and colleges in Portugal, from north to south, with thousands of students taking part. Bills and petitions were made from it; debates and direct actions were inspired by it. Depicting the costs of education, the play dramatizes unequal access to higher education, cuts in public funding and the spread of bank loans to students, subjecting their future to the financial system.

After watching, recognizing, identifying, and laughing, the audience is prompted to discuss what happened in the performance, what the story expressed, and what is the root of the problem. The audience is then invited and stimulated by the facilitator, known as the *joker*, to take to the stage and rehearse possible solutions to the problem posed in the play: could they have done something different in that situation? Some people accept the challenge and the forum unfolds.

> Theater of the Oppressed Meets Sociology

The Forum Theater is the most common form of the *Theater of the Oppressed* (TO), a theatrical-political method invented by the Brazilian Augusto Boal, and used in many countries as part of social, political, and educational work. In Portugal, several community groups have adopted it to think about their difficulties and rehearse the changes they would like to implement. Its starting point is a radical democratic hypothesis: theater is "the ability that humans possess – not animals – to observe themselves in action" and that's why "everyone can do theater, even the actors!"[1] With theater we represent reality in another space – the aesthetic one – and so we become agents, deciding the reality we create. Simultaneously, we gain the privilege of being spectators.

In TO, *spect-actors* – a term created by Boal to name a participant as both actor and spectator – are invited to break the wall that separates stage and audience, those who observe (spectators) and those who have the monopoly of action (actors). This conventional division of labor that

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confers on a few the monopoly of thought, action or legitimate word is put into question, in theater and beyond. Nobody is confined to their social role: the ability to perform other roles is the proof of the possibility of emancipation.

Was it an accident that this forum theater was part of a sociological congress? Or, on the contrary, is it, in fact, a form of sociological debate and intervention? What is the relation between TO and public sociology? What can each learn from the other, and what difficulties does such a dialogue face?

The craft of sociology and of theater are both, in a sense, a symbolic production of reality and the manufacturing of categories of representation and understanding. In both cases, they do it at odds with other actors – other disciplines, politicians, other media – that offer competing ways of representing the social world. A forum-theater play is a narrative about reality, a point of view about it. Forum theater usually shows the different scenes of the story as frameworks of interaction. One of its dramaturgical challenges is how to make evident the structural elements that are present in what Erving Goffman called "the interaction order". Sociology can help here.

Sociology has developed a significant apparatus to represent, through concepts, elements that are not readily identifiable in each concrete situation, because they lie beyond it. These are for sure useful in the work of making visible, in the theatrical scenes, the systemic properties that are there in social situations, the structures that are so often invisible. At another level, sociology has deeply studied how social relations are somatized through practices and dispositions and how roles are one of the means through which the social world is embodied. Sociology might challenge theater to take into account how roles, identities, forms of action, bodily hexis are structured

by social relations of power. Last but not least, sociology is used to look at individual stories and narratives not in their irreducible singularity but in the relations they express. What in TO is called "ascesis" – the process through which we pluralize individual narratives and go "from the phenomenon to the law" – is a basic operation of sociological reasoning.

> A Device or a Challenge for Public Sociology?

Equally, TO might also be a powerful device for public sociology. Being a more complete human language, theater can bring to each debate the complexity of the context, mechanisms of interaction, how the social is embedded in body and space. In an immediate way, it ties the discussion to the experience, to what Pierre Bourdieu called "practical sense," avoiding an abstract code that is often experienced (and used) as a means of dispossession, particularly for those that don't belong to the field of sociology. Because forum theater is located in the interstitial space between what exists and what doesn't yet exist (and can be performed by *spect-actors*), it invites us to think about social reality critically, as just one possibility among others. In TO, the oppressed harbor within themselves both submission and a rebellion; each body is at the same time the locus of domination and of liberation; each repetition is at the same time an act of reproduction and the possibility of a deviation.

Finally, TO is interactive. It can be both "instructive and entertaining," to use Brecht's expression, and allow public sociology to reach much broader audiences. For an audience that is not immediately drawn to a sociological discussion or political debate, an invitation to watch a play might be more exciting than going to a formal debate or class. This, at least, was the experience we had with the project of *Estudantes por Empréstimo*: there were always many more people involved than in previous

attempts to promote the usual "information sessions" on scholarships or on the situation in higher education. Theater was not ornamental or illustrative, but it was seductive to youths who were not so motivated by other forms of debate.

Of course, not everything is easy when we think about Theater of the Oppressed as a possible means of a public sociology. De-specialization is at the very roots of TO. Is it compatible with sociology, even if we think about it as "communicative knowledge exchanged between sociologists and their publics" as Burawoy describes it? If public sociology is to be more than a way of disclosing, in public space, the relevant results of "professional sociology" and the difficult questions of "critical sociology," how should it deal with what Jacques Rancière calls the "permanent scandal" of democracy, that is taking equality not as a goal but as a presupposition? In other words, how can public sociology claim the difference in status between the thinking of the sociologist and the common sense and, at the same time, accept the democratic premise (very present in TO) that we all have the same right and legitimacy to speak about the social world? Can public sociology dismiss the idea of the sociologist who enlightens the dominated with science and instead make a risky move towards a negotiated collective construction of knowledge in public space, aiming to become itself a new common sense as Boaventura de Sousa Santos proposes? And can this be done without giving up the scientific protocols and requirements of sociological discipline? We should, at least, give it a try. ■

[1] Boal, A. (2002) *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*. London: Routledge.

> Precarious but Inflexible

The Rise of a New Social Movement in Portugal

by Dora Fonseca, University of Coimbra, Portugal

Protests of the Inflexible Proletariat. The banner reads, "Only struggle will defeat precarity, austerity is no solution."

The growing crisis in the Euro zone has fostered numerous reactions from both governments and civil society. For its part, civil society has demonstrated an astonishing capacity to generate new collective actors whose actions are directed at the negative consequences of globalization and neoliberal politics. The last few years have seen a cycle of contention in which democracy as such is questioned, calling attention to closely related issues, in particular the precariousness of labor. The dismantling of the welfare state and

the reconstitution of its goals have become common concerns that are fostering the emergence of new collective actors and the transformation of existing ones.

> The "inflexible precarious"

The "Inflexible Precarious" or in Portuguese "Precários Inflexíveis" (PI) is one such actor. The movement first appeared in the capital city, Lisbon, in 2007, with the goal of continuing the mobilization work begun with the successful May Day parade. Creating the collective actor "Inflexible Precarious"

was a way of filling up the void that existed in social movements, namely the discussion of and focus on labor precarity and its social effects. PI grew out of a small collective called Ferve that mobilized against the misuse of the "independent work" status. Ferve stands for *fartos d'estes recibos verdes*. It can be translated as "fed up with these green receipts," where "green receipts" refers to the "independent work" status applied to workers who don't have a formal relation of subordination with an employer. Legally, these workers are their own bosses and thus assume responsibility for their own social security

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and other benefits, but, in truth, they are wage earners subordinated to their employer without access to social benefits to which they should be entitled. PI built on Ferve by focusing not just on "green receipts" but on a variety of forms of labor precarity.

The PI's creation and development follow what Sidney Tarrow has defined as the main processes of social movements: first, mounting collective challenges; second, drawing on social networks, common purposes, and cultural frameworks; and, third, building solidarity through connective structures and collective identities to sustain collective action. The mounting of a common claim has been particularly visible in this case: accomplished by condemning labor precarity in the face of prevailing efforts to present fragile contractual relations as freeing and less rigid and, thus, more in line with individualistic life projects and professional careers. PI follows the tendencies of autonomous organizations that are so different from conventional political parties and trade unions.

PI presents the same characteristics generally attributed to new social movements: strong internal democracy; diffused leaderships; flexibility; high degree of informality; heterogeneity of interests; strong reliance on the tools of cyberactivism; creativeness and innovation in public actions; reticular, segmented and multi-faceted structure; limited interest in negotiating with antagonists; solidarity as an objective; and the quest for participation and direct action. In the case of PI, one feature played a central role from the beginning, namely the strong reliance on tools of cyberactivism. The blog http://www.precariosinflexiveis.org/ was the first public manifestation of PI's existence. It was launched online right after its creation and the first post was the "Precarious Manifesto," in which the activists define themselves as "being precarious in their jobs and life." They denounced their precarity, which pervades numerous sectors of the economy (especially the public sector administered by the State), as well as

their "invisibility" in political discourse. They declared their intention to "reinvent struggle," thus suggesting that traditional methods – used by trade unions – are no longer adequate to post-modern society. They claim to be "precarious but inflexible," announcing their determination to oppose the strong tendencies of labor precarization and proletarianization.

The initial actions were mainly directed at publicizing and condemning unjust and illegal situations that embroiled precarious workers who, by definition, enjoy weaker forms of social protection due to their more flexible work contracts. They have difficulty participating in workers' traditional collective organizations such as trade unions. This is not just a matter of the incapacity of the labor movement to deal with new forms of the labor process, but with the movement's growing prejudice against and mistrust of formal organizations and institutional politics.

One of the main objectives is the construction of a new identity: that of the "precarious worker." This is a necessary condition for effective mobilization against the deregulation of labor relations. Therefore, throughout PI's existence, the central objective has been to foster awareness and raise consciousness among those working in jobs with lesser rights or even no rights at all. By mobilizing new meanings connected with the destructive effects of labor precarity, the PI (in alliance with other similar national and international collective actors) has created a new field of dispute and conflict. They initially launched a number of actions of an expressive character, but which have now evolved towards higher levels of instrumentalization and formalization so that PI is now a formal *association*.

> The Iron Law of Oligarchy?

Nowadays, the "inflexible precarious" are experiencing a new phase in their "life cycle." As an association with national scope, PI is now undergoing formalization and legalization. This shift from an informal to a more formal or-

ganization is considered a logical step and a *sine qua non* for the recognition of their legitimacy as an organization with representative powers. Armed with legal status it moves into the electoral arena with hopes of speaking on behalf of its constituency in an institutionalized dialogue with other organizations and formal powers.

Despite the new possibilities created by a formal association, there is concern that the *iron law of oligarchy* will take effect and endanger its revolutionary character as the PI focuses more on keeping its structure intact rather than pursuing its primary goals. The passage from spontaneous protest to organization has led to the emergence of a bureaucratic structure that transforms PI's objectives and blunts its initial antagonistic thrust. But, according to some authors, such as Alberto Melucci, bureaucratization is not an inevitable and irreversible outcome, and above all it does not necessarily accompany the modification of the radical aims of the organization. These alternative possibilities will be assessed in the next months with the reopening of the "political season." New austerity plans for the Euro Zone countries are expected, as well as corresponding reactions from radical political movements which reject the *status quo*. Only then will we see the real effects of the increasing formalization of this remarkable organization.

For the time being the "inflexible precarious" have been successful in containing oligarchical tendencies, as attested by the role it played in the mobilizations of September 15, 2012 (when hundreds of thousands of people ventured onto the streets, called forth by informal networks, protesting against austerity) or in the protests against the approval of the 2013 state budget (on October 31, 2012, organized together with the CGTP – the biggest trade union federation in Portugal), or even by the effort displayed in mobilizing for the general strike called by trade unions, which took place on November 14, 2012. ■

> Sociology in Quicksand

Report from the VII Portuguese Sociological Congress

by Maria Luísa Quaresma, University of Oporto, Portugal[1]

Enthusiastic members of the new generation, attending the Congress of the Portuguese Sociological Association in Porto, June 19-22, 2012.

The VII Portuguese Sociological Congress took place at the Faculty of Letters of the Oporto University, on June 19-22, 2012. It was organized by the Portuguese Sociological Association (APS). Founded in 1985, this association stands for the development, recognition and dissemination of Portuguese sociology that the dictatorship had regarded as an "inconvenient science." The fall of the dictatorship in 1974 and the new age of democracy brought vitality to the newly created APS. Since the end of the 1980s we have been

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organizing a national congress every four years bringing the Portuguese sociological community together but also opening doors to international scientific knowledge from foreign researchers.

The theme of the congress – "Society, Crises and Reconfigurations" – was all the more appropriate for a period when economic and social disturbances have meant that predictability has given way to uncertainty, security has given way to risk, and hope has given way to fear. A program of diverse formats and themes, attracted more than one thousand sociologists, including 669 presenters, from different institutions. Even though 72% were from Portuguese institutions, we must mention that this congress gathered a high percentage (19%) of foreign sociologists, especially from Brazil.

On June 19, the pre-congress meeting took place, highlighting a novel initiative directed towards young sociologists. The idea was to organize the discussion of issues that concern those who are now starting out on a professional path within sociology – their inclusion in the labor market or the possibilities of a career doing sociological research. This first item on the program was organized around

the presence of the ISA President, Michael Burawoy and was attended by 180 young sociologists. Against the grain of the conventional model of conferences – so often hierarchical and distant – the session "Conversation with Michael Burawoy," started months before, when young sociologists proposed issues and questions that they wished him to engage. Responding to them, Professor Burawoy reflected on the democratization of scientific knowledge, the monopoly of scientific legitimacy by big centers of academic production, the possibilities of sociological intervention in the public sphere in a context of economic and social crises, and various other topics.

During the remaining three days of congress, an eclectic academic program guided by Plenary Sessions on "Society and Politics," "Society, Democracy and Values," and "Crises and Political Perspectives" engaged prominent public figures as well as known and respected Portuguese sociologists in a creative interaction with the audience. These panels debated topics that transcended disciplinary frontiers, laying the ground for bridges between scientific production and social and political action. Foreign and Portuguese specialists discussed the consequences for

Southern Europe of policies in such fields as the economy, work and precarity, education and health, aging and social security, territory and environment. Finally, there were many thematic sessions, the most popular of which were Organizations and Professions, Sociology of Education, Art, Culture and Communication, Cities, Fields and Territories, and finally Globalization, Politics and Citizenship.

The scientific program was supplemented with a vast cultural and entertainment program which included the display of short films, a student theater forum, concerts (from known bands but also from the Homeless Orchestra, a project of the educational service from the Casa da Música), and book fairs. The three days culminated with the congress dinner, a special moment of reencounters, intertwined sociological affinities, and affective entanglements. Thus, a great forum of debate and scientific discussion was concluded, leaving its mark on contemporary Portuguese society where, more and more, sociology is a vital field of intervention. The most indelible imprint, however, was on our individual biographies, updating and revitalizing our passion for sociology. ■

[1] English translation by Dalila Cerejo (Associação Portuguesa de Sociologia).

> The Triple Turn of Taiwanese Sociology

by Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao, Director of the Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica, Taiwan, and former President of the Taiwanese Sociological Association

In retrospect, the history of sociology in Taiwan has its own unique character. Though Taiwan was under the Japanese colonial rule between 1895 and 1945, there is no evident legacy or inheritance from the Japanese tradition of sociology in the twentieth century in Taiwan. Nor was there a clear transplantation or continuation of sociology from the Republic of China (1911-1945) to Taiwan, when the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) took over the rule of Taiwan from the Japanese after WWII. The birth of sociology in Taiwan began in the early 1960s when it was deeply influenced by American sociology, leading to a relation of dependence between 1960 and 1980. Then in the early 1980s, the "indigenization movement" in sociology, along with psychology and anthropology, was staged as a collective reaction to the above over-dependence on US social science paradigm. The intellectual landscape of Taiwanese sociology began to change.

At the beginning, a consensus of self-criticism was forged among the second generation of Taiwanese sociologists – most of whom were in fact trained in America – that sociology lacked solid empirical research on Taiwan and had little relevance to the reality of Taiwan despite attempts to theorize the Taiwanese experience. This second generation called for a "rooted" development of sociology with an embedded cultural and historical Taiwanese identity. Soon sociologists would also embark on a "liberalization movement" as they realized that the KMT's authoritarian rule was detrimental to the development of a healthy and independent sociology. They demanded that a free and democratic society be established in Taiwan. The "liberalization movement" aimed to make sociology useful in advancing Taiwan's political democratization. In short, since the 1980s, Taiwanese sociology has witnessed a dual experience of "indigenization with liberalization" which has not only directly reshaped the character of sociology of Taiwan, but also indirectly transformed the course of development of the country's society and politics.

"The most vibrant sociology arose with Taiwan's social transformation"

To be more specific, there have been three turns associated with the "indigenization with liberalization" movement in Taiwan's sociology over the past three decades. The first was the "moderate turn" whose aim was to capture Taiwan's social reality and social transformation. One significant move was the initiation and consolidation of the regular large-scale "Taiwan Social Change Survey" since 1984, which has provided a high-quality empirical data set to document major trends of Taiwanese society. The other was to publish a series of edited books depicting and analyzing significant social problems facing Taiwan as a transitional society. So far, six volumes have been produced in 1979, 1984, 1991, 2002, 2005, and 2010. They

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have served as reliable reference books for academics and the public alike.

The second move of sociology was the "critical turn" that engaged important public issues. One crucial move was to challenge the political taboos sanctioned by the authoritarian KMT regime by engaging three previously prohibited research areas, namely, ethnicity and ethnic relations, social class and class cleavages, and gender and gender inequality. Therefore, it is not surprising that among the 1133 chapters in the 160 edited sociology volumes published between 1980 and 2011, social class, social mobility, structural change, and related topics take the lead (a total of 214 chapters), followed by themes associated with ethnicity (131 chapters), and then gender-focused issues (78 chapters). Another major research project was devoted to documenting the rise and practice of emerging social movements and social activism in civil society. Thus far, five major edited books on social movements have been produced and widely used on campus as well as being familiar in social movement circles. They were published in 1989, 2000, 2006, 2010, and 2011.

The third shift was the "radical turn" which gave sociology a role inside Taiwan's political democratization. Many practicing sociologists were actively writing essays in newspapers and popular magazines, organizing or attending public seminars and press conferences to defend and advance the cause of democracy. In essence, Taiwanese sociologists have practiced public sociology or engaged sociology in Taiwan's pro-democracy movements since the 1980s. Quite a number of Taiwanese sociologists have taken an active role as public intellectuals and activists directly involved in initiating, mobilizing, and leading various fronts within the pro-democracy movements.

The dialectic of sociology and social transformation since the 1980s shows that the most dynamic and vibrant development of sociology took place when Taiwan experienced the deepest transformations. Taiwan's social and political changes have led local sociologists to develop an organic affinity with Taiwanese reality, energized them to challenge authoritarian rule by engaging in critical sociological research, and even encouraged them to participate in the pro-democracy movements. In so doing, Taiwanese sociology has not only been a liberalizing enterprise but it has also, in turn, helped Taiwanese society become more democratic. ■

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> The Predicament of Small Nation Sociology: The Case of Taiwan

by Su-Jen Huang, National Taipei University, Taiwan

Begun less than 60 years ago with only a handful of sociologists with hardly any PhD training, sociology in Taiwan has grown in recent years into a discipline of about 300 PhD-level scholars. It has made significant progress in research and often contributed to public policy deliberation. It has made great strides that befits a country rapidly transforming itself from an agricultural society into an industrial powerhouse.

Yet there is a limit to Taiwan's sociology in its striving for a theoretically and methodologically sound understanding of its own society, a limit imposed by the small size of its academic community which in turn is determined by the country's population size and its academic investment. This limitation very likely imposes itself upon other small countries as well as upon other social science disciplines.

Today's sociology, like any other academic discipline, is so highly specialized that it is commonly divided into scores of subfields each of which, in turn, contains more than a dozen major research issues. Such a specialized discipline requires years of theoretical-methodological training and practice to carry out a meaningful study on any major issue. A community of a mere 300 sociologists means that most sociology subfields in Taiwan are able to recruit at most a handful of active researchers, and many important social phenomena are simply left unresearched.

As many aspects of Taiwanese society remain untouched by sociological research, our sociological understanding of Taiwan contains numerous and large empty patches. This deficit of knowledge, in turn, severely hampers our research. Without an adequate supply of indigenous studies to consult and cite, our research and teaching are being forced to rely more on foreign than indigenous materials. For the local situation, we often have to resort to speculation. As a consequence a significant portion of our understanding of Taiwanese society is actually based on educated guesses rather than on solid research, and readers of academic reports often have a hard time distinguishing guess work from sound knowledge.

"Taiwan's sociology is largely an import substitution industry of copycat studies"

Even for subfields that do receive scholarly attention, the number of active researchers is typically only in single digits. Publications appear sparsely and slowly, often with years in between, if not decades. Even in relatively popular subfields it often takes years to see one's work being cited or commented upon. Productive dialogue between colleagues is often but a dream. Academic solitude is simply a matter of fact for many researchers. Even the best researcher will be frustrated by the lack of feedback and appreciation.

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What is worse is that the scarcity of colleagues and dialogue also means the lack of checks and corrections in research. In extreme cases a badly flawed publication might remain the only available indigenous material on that topic for a decade, gaining the status of conventional wisdom by default, and misleading everyone along the way.

When too many topics remain poorly studied or even outright misunderstood, even the most thoroughly studied topics might suffer from misconception. The reason is simple. In doing research we don't construct the whole picture from scratch. Instead we typically rely on a common stock of knowledge for background that is collectively constructed by the academic community and the common sense of our society. It is against this background of a common stock of knowledge that we interpret our data and reach our research conclusions. When this common stock of knowledge about our own society is vastly incomplete and often dubious, even the most diligent researcher runs the risk of misinterpreting their findings. In other words, no matter how good is our research design, data collection, and data analysis, a severe deficit in background knowledge about our society can easily lead to a flawed interpretation of our research findings.

Furthermore, the shortage of local research also hinders the emergence of original concepts and theories that are often needed to analyze the distinctiveness of one's own society. Every society has certain uniqueness that cannot be adequately comprehended with

concepts or theories imported from abroad. In this kind of not-so-rare situation, in addition to local data, an indigenous concept or theory is needed to fully comprehend one's society. Yet there are simply not enough scholars to develop them. Even in those extremely fortunate and rare cases when a scholar is able to come up with a good original concept or theory, there will be very few colleagues to appreciate and cite it. Facing the competition of imported concepts and theories which are honored by hundreds if not thousands of citations in international publications, the chances that an original concept or theory can win local followers are very slim. Despite the fashionable call for "indigenous" concepts and theories, the fact is that there are not enough colleagues, not enough mutual citing, therefore not enough credibility in the academic marketplace for such locally derived concepts or theories to flower. As a consequence, Taiwan's sociology is bound to be largely an import-substitution industry that produces copycat studies by feeding local data into imported models.

So what can we do other than be pessimistic? Considering the relevance and value of social sciences in so many public policies, and the tremendous social cost of flawed public policy due to ignorance, it is our responsibility to press for investment in social sciences. On the other hand, we need to honestly acknowledge the limits of our understanding of our own society, be diligent in building up our wider social knowledge, and be more self-reflective in research interpretation. ∎

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> Moral Issues and Individual Liberties in Chile

by Oriana Bernasconi, Universidad Alberto Hurtado, Santiago, Chile

"What counts as common morality is not only imprecise but variable"

(Seyla Benhabib, 2004)

Over the past decades Chile has seen social reforms in health, education, pensions and the labor market. Undoubtedly, these reforms have contributed to the development of a more inclusive and more equal society. Much more needs to be done, however. Enormous challenges are pending concerning issues of personal autonomy, economic equity, political participation, and protection against discrimination. A mature democracy requires advances in all these areas, and the social sciences have a role to play through the production of knowledge that might help to disentangle social disputes by, for example, reducing indifference, misunderstanding, or mistrust.

In Chile social disputes where the moral element is key are called "value disputes" (*disputas valóricas*). Public debates around the right to euthanasia, divorce law, the legalization of abortion, or the rights of sexual minorities belong to this category. In Chilean society, most of these public controversies have emerged around the law. Because the discussion of these bills requires a debate on the rights and duties of members of a community toward one another, their study can tell us a great deal about a society's moral culture. It can reveal, for example, prevailing ideas of the good and the fair and their social distribution, the sources of moral norms, and the procedures used in moral deliberation.

With the recovery of democracy, Chilean society also began to propose and discuss different reforms oriented towards broadening individual liberties and reducing public interference in people's lives and decisions. If, in the majority of Western European societies, abortion inaugurated many of these moral debates and the issue of euthanasia came subsequently, in Chile, claims for constitutional reforms of this sort began in the early 1990s with the question of sexual education, followed by a nine-year debate about a divorce law (only approved in 2004) and, then, by six different legal initiatives to regulate "death with dignity" and establish the right to euthanasia – a discussion spanning the years between 2000 and 2012. Debates continue today around the rights of sexual minorities and the

"morning-after" contraceptive pill. A society gets involved in these types of disputes when the broadening of individual rights and the fight against discrimination become political projects. Whereas some Chileans celebrate these demands as a sign of moral maturity, others deplore them as a sign of a disturbing permissiveness, of moral decay, and even of crisis.

I have reconstructed and analyzed the regimes of justification and critique deployed in the controversy aroused by legal initiatives to regulate euthanasia and "death with dignity" in Chile.[1] This was a seminal legal and moral debate. Recent developments in biological and biomedical research have created new possibilities for intervention, manipulation, extension, improvement, and ending of human life, redefining its very meaning. The cases of euthanasia alongside in vitro fertilization, cloning or wombs for rent, show us that there continue to be socio-technical controversies of similar structure and content, posing moral challenges.

"Value disputes – moral maturity or moral decay?"

The analysis of this controversy revealed a divide between two moral principles: the patient's autonomy and the inviolable nature of life. Those defending the right to euthanasia see it as a voluntary, positive act demanded of a physician by a patient in unbearable and irreversible pain. Those opposing the proposal enlarge the scope of the act beyond the medical context and include passive euthanasia or the act of letting die by omission of necessary treatment. But the debate went beyond the weighing of these principles to include the very description of the situations to be regulated by law: the nature of death and the notions of assisted suicide, ordinary or extraordinary treatment, terminal patient or palliative care were all under debate. Thus, the controversy involved not only the values citizens are willing to defend, but also the socio-political construction and use of allegedly discrete technical facts, and the intertwining of morality and science in these "late modern" times. ■

[1] I interviewed Members of Parliament, and bioethicists involved in the controversy, studied the legal proposals and their discussion in Parliament, and examined coverage in academic articles and newspapers.

> The Limits of Environmental Politics in Chile[1]

by Alejandro Pelfini, Universidad Alberto Hurtado, Santiago, Chile, and FLACSO-Argentina

Protest against a large-scale hydroelectric dam in Patagonia, Chile.

In 2011 Chile suddenly gained an important place in world news. The spread of student protests against one of the more expensive and unequal systems of higher education in the world received unexpected attention. More generally, that year marked the spread of social movements and the horizontal politicization of citizens who had passively accepted the consolidation of neoliberalism despite twenty years of democratic recovery. The new politics expressed itself not only around student protests, but also in other fields beyond the traditional distributive cleavages. The rights and the autonomy of indigenous populations and the conservation of some "commons," regarded as an environmental heritage, drew support and solidarity from people who were not directly affected.

Numerous protests spread from local communities to massive demonstrations in the capital, Santiago, against a large-scale hydroelectric dam (Hidro Aysén) in one of the most pristine spots of Chilean Patagonia, against the installation of thermoelectric centrals, and against

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large-scale mining in general. A huge citizens' movement started to question not only the direction of environmental policy in the country, but more broadly energy policies and their linkages to an extractive and profoundly non-sustainable accumulation model. In this sense, Chile, viewed as one of the first and relatively successful neoliberal experiments in the world, suddenly reveals itself as a laboratory of ecological modernization for semi-peripheral societies.

Chile's environmental policy-making is no more than ten years old, arguably starting after the crisis of salmon cultivation in the Southern Pacific. It is essentially reactive in nature, acting primarily after the fact: it does not contribute to the formation of public agenda, but rather evaluates, mitigates, or even justifies pre-established agendas around productive or extractive investment. Policies serve to reproduce and legitimate the extraction of raw materials, which is the basis of Chile's current relative wealth. Salmon cultivation, timber, and minerals are Chile's main exports. They are the object of environmental

regulation with three essential aims: the protection of the resource (but not of the surrounding ecosystem); the control of socio-environmental conflicts; and the safeguarding of the investors' interests and juridical security. Environmental policies focused on these extractive resources involve three fundamental actors: the investor (usually a transnational corporation); the State as an enabler that also authorizes an investment project; experts (think tanks or agencies of environmental impact assessment), who provide scientific legitimacy for a given project. These actors are connected through strong networks: an intra-elite alliance dominating the field of environmental politics, while civil society and ordinary citizens are relegated to the role of observers.

My project seeks to analyze how this network consolidates itself in a dominant discourse (mainly the discourse of Corporate Social Responsibility), organized around a privileged institutional arrangement (Voluntary Agreements), and using Environmental Impact Assessment to legitimize and reproduce its domination

of the environmental policy field. In this context, progressive and democratic ideals such as accountability, transparency, and participation have been reduced to an instrument for the separation of state, market and civil society, promoting flexible partnerships and self-regulation. A collective learning process has certainly begun and some measure of democratization has occurred as well, but in the form of a "surveilled learning process" under the tutelage of weak democratic processes. The question this raises is whether the limitations are only due to "simple" instrumentalization by a corporatist coalition of elite groups or whether it is related to the ideals (accountability, transparency, and participation) themselves that, in the final analysis, are less progressive and democratic than usually assumed. A more sensitive and active citizenship is at least bringing innovative questions to the public sphere, taking politics beyond established institutions and into the streets and the mediascapes. ■

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> A Migrant Occupation

at the Center of Santiago de Chile

by Carolina Stefoni, Universidad Alberto Hurtado, Santiago, Chile

A grocery store serving Colombian and Peruvian migrants in the center of Santiago, Chile.

In the heart of the civic and historical center of Santiago de Chile lies the city's largest migrant enclave. The area brings together a significant number of immigrants from various Latin American countries, though a clear majority is of Peruvian origin. These Peruvian immigrants have developed an intense commercial activity, focused on products for the foreign population, such as cookware, pre-made food sold as street snacks, call centers, parcel shipping, and remittance services.

Some of the factors behind the development of this enclave are: the availability of older homes and commercial storefronts as a result of the continuous process of depopulation of the city center during previous decades; a concentration of immigrants, precisely because of the availability of homes that are subdivided into small rooms and rented informally; the establishment of import companies that

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A Santiago shopping mall turned into a trading and community center for migrants from all over Latin America.
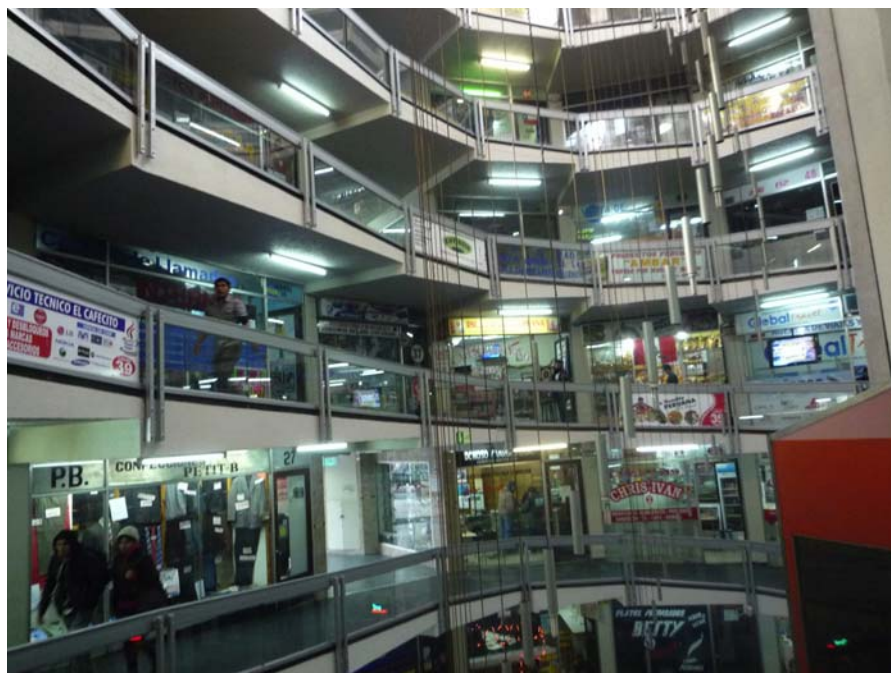
provide products of Peruvian origin, making them available to vendors who are just getting started in this area; and two amnesty processes carried out during *Consertación* governments (a political coalition of center-left), which allowed the regularization of immigrants and facilitated their subsequent incorporation into formal trade.

I would like to highlight three central features of this enclave. First, in immigrant labor and business, formal and informal practices often overlap. While the city government has sought to end street trading, currently, many formal stores still maintain informal practices such as selling on the streets, working without a contract, or selling products for which there is no authorization. These practices are merely strategies to increase the profits of vendors involved in a market with a high level of internal competition and thus a low level of economic returns.

The second interesting feature to note is that the enclave acts as a geographical reference point for the construction of identity in the immigrant community. This space is renowned among immigrants living in Santiago – by the rest of the inhabitants of the city, and by people who live in immigrants' countries of origin – as a meet-

ing place for all those who share the same condition of being foreigners.

The third element is related to the geographical position of this enclave within the city and how it affects the forms and meanings the enclave assumes. The fact that it is located in the civic and historical center of Santiago means that migrants establish all sorts of social relations with the other inhabitants of the area, be they office workers, tourists, civil servants, or workers in general. The type of social relations that they establish help shape the character, the meanings, and the boundaries that give the enclave its shape.

Indeed, migrants' ways of inhabiting a geographically-bounded place within the city center generate meanings and representations that are often in tension with other accounts of the city. Here it is possible to point out two examples. The first is the idea that this part of the city is civically important, since it houses the executive and judicial powers, namely, the State Building, the Department of Justice, and numerous ministerial offices. It was here that the city was founded and where the Declaration of Independence was signed. Thus, this strong historical and democratic

significance is in tension with the idea of a place of and for foreigners.

Second, the enclave calls into question the idea of a global city, a more modern way of representing Santiago that has been promoted recently by the city government. This includes campaigns that promote the idea of a clean, safe, and orderly city, along with a series of policies oriented to recovering urban space in the historical center that, for decades, has been going through increasing depopulation and abandonment. An enclave of immigrants is at odds with the idea of a global city or an international trade center, which the city has sought to promote in recent years.

The presence of immigrants and the uses they make of the space – amidst these other accounts – generate disputes in public space, disputes that, in turn, contribute to the character of the enclave. ■

> The Challenge of Internationalizing Sociology

by Eloísa Martín, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and Editor of *Current Sociology*

Currently, in institutions of higher education around the world, a common demand is heard: internationalization. Amidst various efforts to achieve that, one in particular tops the list: publish in high-impact academic journals. Over the last 30 years, this task has long been identified and denounced as one of the core requirements of the sciences in general, and particularly of the social sciences. At the same time, publishing internationally means publishing in *English*. The reach of journals in Spanish, French, Arabic, or German is limited to certain linguistic communities that, although transnational, have failed to gain international status. The predominance of English as a privileged, global, academic language has reinforced this tendency.

Nevertheless, many of the publications that are considered "international" – because they are ranked in the top positions in the indexes, have high impact factors, and are edited in English – *in fact are not*. As Tom Dwyer noted at the ISA's 2009 Conference of National Associations[1], the fact that a journal is published in English doesn't imply, even logically, that this journal will be *international*. By definition, the journals of the national associations of sociology in North America or Western Europe are concerned with developing national research programs, and this is not necessarily a drawback. The problem is that non-dominant universities and the agencies that fund them consider these journals "international" and demand publication *precisely there*. This becomes a dilemma for those who work outside "mainstream" academia, especially those whose native language is not English. As a result, for the majority of sociologists around the world, the demand to publish internationally places them in a difficult quandary.

In the face of this demand for a spurious "internationalization," which is not minor but in many cases shapes the perspectives of the field and even the possibility of employment itself, there are three possible reactions. First, a hyper-localism, either at a national or regional level, that rejects the demand to publish internationally – sometimes through a sophisticated critique of the indexing system and the measurements of impact, and sometimes simply as a defensive and culturalist reaction – and focuses instead on publishing for a domestic audience. The advantage of emphasizing hyper-particularity is that it can help deepen research on certain subjects, resulting in rich and detailed analysis. But the impossibility of entering into a dialogue with other perspectives and the limited relevance for a broader discussion significantly narrow the reach and potential theoretical importance of such contributions.

A second reaction accepts the urgent need to publish internationally and makes that the primary goal. In order to achieve it, non-dominant sociologies absorb the questions, theories, and methodologies of the dominant schools and imitate the styles of writing they endorse. Paradoxically, the non-dominant sociologists don't always achieve their goal, perhaps because they don't escape the trap of imitation. Writing texts that look perfectly academic, they are unable to maintain both relevance and originality. Perhaps the effort to make local analysis fit mainstream theoretical or stylistic formats becomes a Procrustean bed.

A third alternative, no less problematic or difficult to achieve, is that of dialogue. Authors, institutions, and journals that recognize the existence of local specificity in academic questions, theoretical debates, and writing styles, and at the same time see international publication as a doorway not only for national sociologies to grow and develop, but also as a way to participate in the construction of sociology as a project that is at once global and collective. This is the hope of publications by the International Sociological Association and of *Current Sociology*.

The *World Social Science Report* (UNESCO, 2010: 153) noted that the internationalization of publications favors the dominant regions: Europe and the United States. In fact, more than 80% of academic journals in the social sciences are published in English, and two thirds of the most influential publications in the field are published in only four countries: the United States, England, Holland and Germany. Meanwhile, Oceania, Latin America, and

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Distribution of Articles in Top Social Science Journals by Author's Regional Affiliation.
Source: SCOPUS
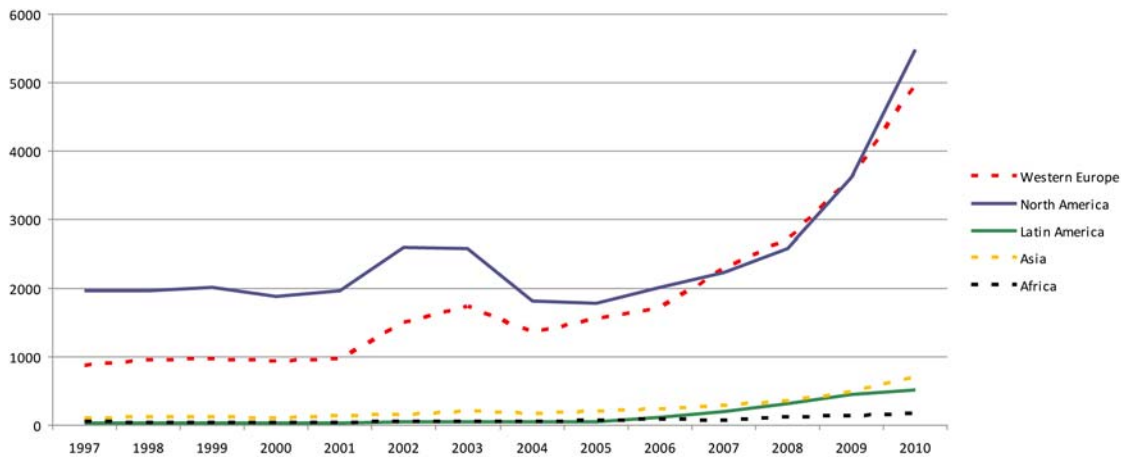
Africa each contribute less than 5% of articles worldwide (UNESCO, 2010: 143-4).

If we observe the journals ranked in the top positions on SCOPUS,[2] we can see that the majority of the authors they publish are affiliated with institutions in Western Europe and North America and that Asian and Latin American authors have a limited presence (albeit growing, in the case of the former) and that authors from African universities are almost completely absent.

Current Sociology is not immune to this trend. From 1999 to 2009,[3] just over 72% of the articles it published were by authors affiliated with European or North American universities. Similar to other mainstream journals, Asian and Australian authors made up 8.1% and 5.3%, respectively. In terms of academic affiliations, more than half of the authors published in the journal came from just five countries: Great Britain, the United States, Canada, Germany, and Australia.

But it is interesting to note that Current Sociology published 6% Latin American authors, 3.2% African authors, and 2% Middle Eastern authors. We are still far from reversing the trends denounced by UNESCO, but at the same time, I can assert with some pride that Current Sociology

has opened the gates for other authors and other schools, establishing itself as a clearly international journal that works hard to be increasingly plural in its content and in the geographic diversity of its authors.

Since its establishment in 1952, Current Sociology has worked continuously towards this end. It accepts proposals for articles in any language – a practice shared by International Sociology. And it is open to publish new topics, theoretical and methodological proposals outside the mainstream, and alternative styles of writing. Rather, the journal is defined by its commitment to dialogue, which allows it to convey local analyses to an international audience. Of course, in this process, some local specificity will be lost, but not necessarily the sophistication of such analysis. And the possibility of debating with colleagues around the world is something that can enrich both the authors and the community of readers of Current Sociology. ■

[1] Dwyer's comments can be seen in the video "Challenges for a Global Sociology" at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QA5GaEPQcZI.

[2] I would like to thank Matías López, editorial assistant at Current Sociology, who came up with the data for this chart and created it.

[3] More details and additional information from this survey of Current Sociology can be found in Eloísa Martín (2012) "Making Sociology Current through International Publication: A Collective Task." Current Sociology 60(6): 832-7.

> Is US Sociology in Decline?

by Bronwen Lichtenstein, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, USA, and President of RC49 (Sociology of Mental Health)

Sociology Degrees Awarded by Degree Level in the US, 1966-2010.
Source: ASA, Research on Sociology 2012.
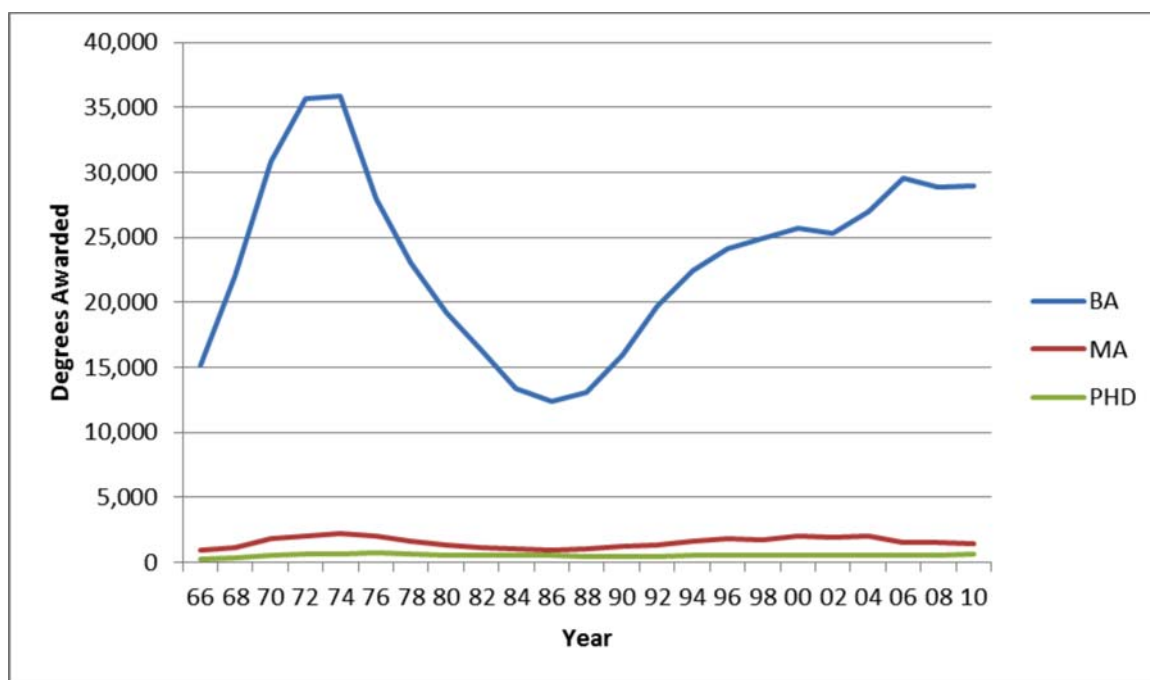
What is the state of sociology in the United States? In 1994, when I migrated from New Zealand to Alabama, USA, I heard that sociology was in decline. The University of Alabama's PhD program in sociology had recently been abolished because faculty members had been fighting among themselves and the administration had sought resolution by shutting it down. A minor in sociology was folded into the Department of Criminal Justice, where I am presently employed. Since then, talk of reconstituting a sociology department has gone nowhere and the sociology minor suffers from insufficient course offerings to maintain viability or to foster growth. The outlook is not bright in my part of the United States.

I did not consider what was happening in the larger sociological sphere until I read this sentence in Benjamin Ginsberg's 2011 book *The Fall of the Faculty: The Rise of the All-Administrative University and Why It Matters*: "Precisely this fate [closing down] has befallen a number of academically well regarded sociology programs around the nation in recent years as student interest in the field has all but disappeared" (104).

Ginsberg's broad claim about the demise of sociology led me to consult the American Sociological Association's (ASA) website for information on disciplinary trends at US colleges and universities. The data indicated that the number of baccalaureate and master's degrees almost doubled between 1990 and 2004. An ASA update for 2001 to 2007 showed continued growth at most universities and colleges (Spalter-Roth, 2008). The number of freestanding sociology departments also increased, perhaps in response to an expanding student population.

The ASA reported three caveats to this recovery. First,
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doctoral degrees did not keep pace with these upward trends, and even declined in the early 2000s before staging a modest recovery. Second, concentrations in criminal justice gained ground at the expense of traditional sociology. Third, fewer tenure-track faculty members are being hired to teach these students. Part-time and full-time instructors are being employed instead as universities seek to contain costs and maximize profits, a national trend that affects other disciplines as well (Wilson, 2010).

The modestly optimistic picture in ASA reports can be contextualized within broader trends in US sociology. The figure indicates that the 1970s were a zenith for the discipline as sociology departments and programs were established or expanded nationally. However, by the 1980s, sociology appeared to fall off a cliff with enrollments and degrees declining so precipitously that many writers predicted the end of sociology (Summers, 2003). Dunlap and Catton (1994: 11) attributed the doldrums of the 1980s to resurgent free market fundamentalism and, as a related matter, to the Reagan administration's "severe attacks" on the social sciences that led to waning student interest in sociology. The decline was so steep that sociology has yet to fully recover or even keep pace with population growth in the United States.

Ginsberg might be correct about the lack of interest in sociology but I suspect that something else is at work here – students are being encouraged to enroll in majors that will land them a job in a shaky recovery. Once again, there is a general trend toward professional rather than academic degrees, perhaps for economic rather than ideological reasons. The first question that any student asks me about a career in sociology is "But what can I do with it?" I usually say, "Plenty" and explain why a sociology degree is useful. But given my own experience of teaching in a soci-

ology program whose viability is doubtful, I have to wonder.

A few years ago, I surveyed 1,000 undergraduate Criminal Justice and Sociology students about whether or not a major in sociology should be offered at the University. The emphatic answer was yes. Perhaps the lack of interest is not so much on the part of students as from parents and influential others who believe that a business, engineering, nursing, or teaching degree is more valuable and will lead to a well-paid job. Either way, sociology is still viable in 2012. We may never achieve the heights of enrollment currently enjoyed by professional degree programs, but traditional sociology has its place in critical thinking, social analysis, and broader cultivation for a well-educated and thus employable citizenry. I am hopeful that trends in sociology will swing our way once an appreciation for academic education over strictly utilitarian skills finds a comeback in US society. ■

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> The Balkans beyond Balkanization

by Svetla Koleva, Institute for the Study of Societies and Knowledge, Sofia, Bulgaria, and President of the Bulgarian Sociological Association

The opening of the Second Annual Conference of the Balkan Sociological Forum in the Aula Magna of Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, November 9, 2012. Photo by Hassan Berber.

Although for more than a century the Balkans have chiefly been synonymous with the kind of regional fragmentation that engendered the term "Balkanization," the Second Annual Conference of the Balkan Sociological Forum (Sofia, November 9-10, 2012) has shown that kind of history to be clearly past for sociologists in the region. The Balkan Sociological Forum was created in November, 2011 in Tirana thanks to the efforts of Albanian sociologists, and especially of Leke Sokoli, and with the participation and support of colleagues from Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Slovenia; it is the first ever institutional realization of the idea of building an association of Balkan sociologists – an idea first suggested in the early 1990s by the then President of the Bulgarian Sociological Association, Peter-Emil Mitev, but which long remained unfulfilled due to the war in the former Yugoslavia. Having understood the lessons of history and become aware of the inevitable need to work together in order to overcome their shortcomings and enhance their separate advantages, Balkan sociolo-

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gists created their own organization committed to promoting mutual knowledge and joint action in regional and international sociological activities. They gathered in Sofia to establish mutual dialogue and mutual understanding, to learn more about their close neighbors, to make the unfamiliar more familiar.

Of course, after the fall of the Berlin Wall there have been multiple meetings between Balkan sociologists and researchers in the social sciences in various countries, on various topics. Specific to the meeting in Sofia in November, 2012 was the topic – the Balkans as a social and cognitive challenge to sociology.

How should we characterize our Balkan neighbors as economic and political players, as stratified societies and united communities, as educational and cultural structures, as ways of living together and recognizing the other? How does the past impact on the present in each country and on the relations between countries? What part of the contemporary experience of each country could be useful for its neighbors, so that our presence in united Europe and in the world might be constructive, mutually enriching, and stimulating? As both partners and competitors, playing a non-hegemonic role in the international research area, how do we uphold our national sociological traditions, remain attuned to the importance of local problems, and observe the scientific criteria for the validity of knowledge, when we are faced with the imperative of immediate applicability of that knowledge? In brief, how do we, living in the Balkans, do sociology and produce valid and universal knowledge while avoiding a Balkanizing optic and self-Balkanization?

These questions guided the discussions in six thematic sessions and five thematic panels, involving more than a hundred sociologists from Balkan countries (Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Kosovo, Macedonia, Rumania) but also from Western Europe and North America (Canada, Finland, France, Belgium). Thus the dialogue was not limited to researchers living amidst Balkan reality and experiencing the contradictory trends of development of this region. Colleagues coming from countries that are more or less distant from the Balkans also took part.

Moreover, the Balkan Conference in Sofia confirmed a pattern well-known to sociology. Institutions can create the needed conditions for self-fulfillment of individuals and groups only if they are inhabited by people with a clear vision of that institution's vocation and mission. On the other hand, individuals can be a driving force of institutions only if the latter recognize individual and group efforts for the meaningful development of that institutional activity. While the will for cooperation and dialogue was the chief motor of the Sofia conference, its realization would have been impossible without the moral and financial support of ISA and the united efforts of the Balkan Sociological Forum (BSF), the Bulgarian Sociological Association, the Institute for the Study of Societies and Knowledge at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia University, and the French Institute in Bulgaria.

Balkan sociological cooperation was given an institutional form in Tirana in 2011, so that substantial dialogue transcending the boundaries of the Balkans could be undertaken in Sofia one year later. Dialogue will be further enhanced in Macedonia at the Third Annual Conference of the BSF in the Fall of 2013; and each successive year one of the separate national sociological associations in the Balkans will host further meetings. What more promising sociological format could there possibly be for dialogue as a "bridge and door" (to use Simmel's well-known metaphor) – dialogue that creates outward-looking perspectives, draws us out of our own separate worlds and builds bridges to the worlds of others? ■

> Interdisciplinarity: Conference of the Philippine Sociological Society

by Clarence M. Batan, University of Santo Tomas, Manila, Philippines, and Research Editor of RC34 (Sociology of Youth)

A photo opportunity after the first plenary of the Philippine Sociological Society's Congress at Ateneo de Manila University, October 19, 2012. From left Clarence Batan (PSS Treasurer), Emma Porio (ISA Executive Board Member), Michael Burawoy (ISA President), Filomin Candaliza (PSS Vice President), Leslie Lopez (PSS Secretary), Filomeno Aguilar (PSS President), Gelia Castillo (National Scientist) and Stella Go (PSS Board Member).

Last October 19-20, sociologists, practitioners, and students from the Philippines and other neighboring countries gathered for the 2012 National Conference of the Philippine Sociological Society (PSS) at the Ateneo de Manila University (ADMU), Quezon City. Almost 100 participants from various universities and some private and non-governmental organizations in the Philippines and abroad

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engaged in an exchange of ideas on the theme *Sociology and Interdisciplinarity: A Foregone Conclusion?*

Founded in 1952, the PSS is a professional organization that has survived six historical decades with the active involvement of local and foreign social scientists. This conference became an occasion to examine the disciplinary status of sociology. Dr. Filomeno V. Aguilar, PSS President, aptly summarized the core debate in his opening address: "Some contend that sociology should assert its core as an academic discipline and retain its professional boundaries; yet others argue that the complexities of our everyday lives, permeated by local and global forces, cannot be fully grasped unless we draw from the perspectives and analytical tools of other disciplines." His summary established the ground for two days of intense discussion, debate, and discourse.

Michael Burawoy, President of the International Sociological Association (ISA), delivered the keynote address under the title *Interdisciplinarity: The Promise and Danger*. Surprising the conference participants with his "out of the podium" technique, Dr. Burawoy offered preliminary ideas on how to critically think about interdisciplinarity for sociology. His ideas generated discussion points flowing through three plenary and four parallel sessions involving 35 paper presentations.

Similar highlights of the conference were the plenary for book authors, Dr. Erik Akpedonu and Dr. Czarina Saloma-Akpedonu, and Dr. Filomeno V. Aguilar; the session on the narratives of historical sociologists and social historians; the student colloquium; a forum with the well-known and respected sociologist, Fr. John J. Caroll, SJ, who discussed his life as a "priest/sociologist" as an oxymoron; and the launching of the 60th issue of the Philippine Sociological Review under the editorial leadership of Dr. Filomin Guetierrez-Candaliza and Dr. Maria Andrea M. Soco. Book exhibits, sumptuous food and creative programs were also organized under the leadership of Dr. Emma E. Porio, Chair of the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology of ADMU, and Leslie A. Lopez, PSS Board Secretary.

This year's PSS conference not only provided an occasion for Filipino sociologists to meet new and old colleagues but also asserted sociology's role in creating more meaningful, more relevant, and more pragmatic relations with other sciences, both social and natural. With global problems giving rise to new modes of conflict, confrontation, and transformation, engagement with fellow sociologists worldwide around issues rooted in Philippine social realities became the agenda for a sociology from the Global South. It was energetically advanced by a new breed of young Filipino sociologists who introduced multi- and inter-disciplinary perspectives motivated by aspirations for an active and engaged global citizenship. ■

> Sociology and Social Transformations:
11th Conference of APSA

by Leslie Lopez, Ateneo de Manila University, Secretary of the Philippine Sociological Society

The Department of Sociology and Anthropology and the Institute of Philippine Culture, both of Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines, successfully organized and hosted the 11th Conference of the Asia Pacific Sociological Association (APSA) last October 22-24 (2012). This year's theme, "Sociology and Social Transformations in the Asia Pacific Region," attracted 260 participants from 23 countries in Asia, Africa, the US, Europe and the Pacific region.

Distinguished lectures on public sociology, southern theory, gender, leadership, and knowledge mobilization were delivered by renowned sociologists from the Asia Pacific region, namely, Michael Burawoy (President, International Sociological Association), Raewyn Connell (University of Sydney), Dang Nguyen Anh (Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences), Vineeta Sinha (National University of Singapore), Michael Hsiao (Academia Sinica), Surichai Wungaeo (Chulalongkorn University), Emma Porio (Ateneo de Manila University), Filomeno Aguilar, Jr. (President, Philippine Sociological Society and Ateneo de Manila University), and Maria Cynthia Rose Bautista (Commission on Higher Education, Philippines).

During the three-day conference, 60 panels and 180 paper presenters tackled wide-ranging issues confronting the region such as gender, religion, globalization, education, climate change, and technology. The conference ended with a plenary session on "engaging the social science community in the Asia Pacific region" moderated by Michael Burawoy and Emma Porio with representatives from various national associations: Yazawa Shujiro (Japan Sociological Society), Dang Nguyen Anh (Institute of Sociology, Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences), Ruchira Ganguly-Scrase (APSA), Michelle Shieh (Taiwan Sociological Society and Academia Sinica), Mohamed Tavakol (Iran Social Science Association), Vineeta Sinha (National University of Singapore), and Surichai Wungaeo (Thai Sociological Congress). ∎

> Global Movements, National Grievances

by Benjamín Tejerina, University of the Basque Country, Spain, President of RC48 (Social Movements, Collective Action and Social Change), and member of the ISA Executive Committee, 2010-2014

An abandoned factory transformed into an education center in Barrio de Lanús (Buenos Aires, Argentina). Photo by Benjamín Tejerina.

Studies of collective action and social movements have received considerable impetus in recent decades, expanding our knowledge of their emergence, consolidation, impact, and decline. Facing their chameleon-like character sociology has developed new tools for their investigation.

Beginning in December 2010, we have witnessed a continuous series of protests, peacefully occupying public spaces and targeting regimes either of dubious democratic character or clearly authoritarian. Such countries as Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, Yemen, Bahrain, Israel, Spain and the US, have had the most intense experience of this wave of "occupying social movements." In some cases, the force of peaceful mobilization has been sufficient to produce substantial social change whereas in other cases the recurrent and escalating use of violence has prevailed. Everywhere the outcomes are uncertain and are being subjected to scrutiny by numerous experts. The movements have spread like a virus from country to country via social networks that amplify their impact through the dissemination of images worldwide on the Internet. Manuel Castells has rightly spoken of "networked social movements."

To examine this wave of social mobilization, RC48 (Research Committee on Social Movements, Collective Action and Social Change), in collaboration with RC47 (Social Classes and Social Movements), organized the International Conference "From the Social to the Political: New Forms of Mobilization and Democratization" in Bilbao in February 2012. Essays on the mobilizations in North Africa, Arab countries and Southern Europe have

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been published by RC48 and the University of the Basque Country. They can be downloaded from http://www.identidadcolectiva.es/ISA_RC48/

During the last year, the most important activity of RC48, from all points of view, has been the organization of almost twenty sessions of presentations, discussions, and roundtables at the ISA's Second Forum of Sociology, August 1-4 (2012) in Buenos Aires. These sessions created the opportunity to: learn about new trends and theoretical approaches in the field of mobilization and social change; explore the role of creativity, emotions, and body in acts of protest; analyze the visual representation of injustice and exclusion; understand the relationship between science, technology, and social mobilization; and, above all, hear the voices of the Latin American streets.

Here I want to stress the theoretical contributions of the papers that dealt with social movements in Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Bolivia, and Ecuador. These included movements of the *piqueteros* and of students, people with disabilities, family members of victims of political violence, young blacks, landless workers, homeless people as well as struggles in working-class neighborhoods, struggles for the recovery of abandoned factories, struggles by indigenous communities, and around human trafficking. The Buenos Aires meeting allowed us to listen and discuss, on a face-to-face basis, little-known movements beyond Latin America but that had important influences on democratization and the fight against social injustice. In addition, thanks to colleagues at the University of Buenos Aires and the Gino Germani Institute we were able to make direct contact with recovered factories and grassroots community organizations. Many of the papers presented in sessions organized by RC48 in the Buenos Aires Forum can be found in the book edited by B. Tejerina and I. Perugorría *Global Movements, National Grievances: Mobilizing for "Real Democracy" and Social Justice*. ■

> Youth Participation at the United Nations

by Jovanni Rodriguez, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, New York, USA

In 2012, I became the first youth representative for the International Sociological Association following the United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI) acted on the idea of the need for youth presence at the United Nations. As issues are debated and discussed, points of views vary due to national identity, race, and gender; however, diversity in age is rarely taken into account. Since extremely controversial issues are discussed as part of the goal for change and reform, the exclusion of youth can be detrimental to many of the initiatives the UN undertakes. The goal of involving youth is positive in itself because it creates future advocates for important NGO and UN causes. The younger generation can also help activists fight for their causes with the new technologies of reaching the public and raising awareness.

In March 2012 I attended a DPI/NGO briefing which featured a Felician College student on a panel discussion about using basic water sanitation to advance gender equality. Although the rare presence of a young person was inspirational, there was an immediate disconnection from the audience when she attempted to use Facebook. The audience was unresponsive to the instructions to "pull out" their cellphones and an older woman stated, "I don't even know how to text." While young people may be comfortable using social media as one way to achieve NGO goals, today's activists do not share the same familiarity with modern methods of developing issue-awareness.

It is important to motivate youth to get involved in UN movements as social media and technology can be used to benefit NGOs in countless ways. However, to successfully involve youth and use our expertise, we must first be able to relate to the issues. One of the first NGO events I attended discussed the sexualization of children, as certain organizations are attempting to establish sexual education as a human right. When negative opinions towards homosexuality and sexual education in primary schooling were presented, I realized how unlikely it was that this brief would attract my generation. There are two ways to lose the interest of youth: bore us, or lecture us.

The breakdown of this invisible wall separating NGO activists and rising youth movements could give the UN the best of both worlds that can only benefit humanitarian efforts for change and reform. ■

> The Real Bedik

by Eryn Snyder, Temple University, USA

Four to six times a day, Bedik women of South-eastern Senegal haul water from a nearby well back to their community. Their feet have cut trails into the red earth and worn smooth the rocks along the paths up to their mountain villages. On one torrid afternoon in the village of Indar, a few women invited me along to take photographs. Moving between them as they walked and chatted leisurely, I snapped this shot of Denise and Marie. The image was taken as part of a larger ethnographic project on cultural tourism in Bedik villages. Collaborative photography was used to explore how the Bedik wish to represent their culture to tourists and how they visualize Bedik identity. Villagers advised me to take pictures of Bedik women with traditional clothing and hairstyles, performing traditional tasks. Therefore, I was not surprised that this photograph of Denise and Marie was a favorite among the Bedik. Still, I was intrigued when villagers adamantly professed that these women are "le vrai Bedik" – the real Bedik.

This image sustains the perception, however illusory, that Bedik villages have remained uncorrupted by forces of globalization. Furthermore, the photograph echoes the fetishization of female labor, in which the motif of the female water-bearer has become indexical of African authenticity. In calling Denise and Marie the "vrai Bedik," the Bedik are also defining their authenticity in terms consistent with their cultural heritage, wherein women are respected possessors of cultural knowledge. The repeated posturing of their bodies with their backs to the camera creates a certain anonymity; they represent the strength of all Bedik women and, by extension, the endurance of Bedik culture. The image reveals that, while Bedik women shoulder the weight of gendered authenticity, they do so with agency and prowess. ■