



International Conference on “Circulating Social Science Knowledge”

27th - 29th September, 2012 - University of Freiburg - Freiburg - Germany



ABSTRACTS

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Niilo KAUPPI

Session I, Sept. 27, 13.30

Theoretical Approaches to the Study of the Circulation of Ideas

In this paper, I analyze some of the main approaches to the study of the circulation of ideas in the social sciences. Until recently, national and international approaches have been dominant. These have, to varying degrees, used an export-import model, in which ideas and symbolic goods are equated with material goods that some countries export and others import. The exporting country is at the origin of the idea and has, accordingly, a legitimate right to be called its 'owner'. Thus French ideas can be contrasted with and even opposed to German ideas for instance. Ideas are then linked to national cultural traditions and character.

Some countries are specialized in a certain domain in export or production activities while other import or receive these same ideas. In this way global hierarchies are created and reproduced. In Pierre Bourdieu's mind, ideas circulate without the context of their production. An alternative model underlines the transnational character of symbolic goods and the transnational as one of the conditions of possibility of the national. In this scenario, Symbolic goods cannot be equated with material goods and ideas circulate in a variety of material and immaterial forms on the internet or in the 'real' world. They are (re)assembled in a variety of contexts, and always travel with some elements of previous uses.

Shalini RANDERIA

Session I, Sept. 27, 13.30

Critical Regionalism through the Lens of Entanglements

The paper will pose some questions about the construction and use of units of analysis (nation-states, empires, villages, or ethnic groups) in various social science

disciplines. To this end it will address, on the one hand, the idea of “region”, which has come in for considerable debate in the context of a renewed scholarly interest in area studies (as reflected e.g. in Spivak’s recent book “Other Asias” or in Sivaramakrishna/Agarwal “Regional Modernities”) but also as a political project of place-making. On the other hand, it will discuss the idea of “entanglements”, a term I introduced some 15 years ago as an alternative to the conceptual nationalism of cross-national comparisons and transfers. The paper will delineate some of the theoretical and methodological implications of a study of entanglements.

Per WISSELGREN

Session I, Sept. 27, 13.30

Intersectional Peripheries: On the Circulation between Academic and Non-academic Contexts in the History of Social Scientific Knowledge

Historical and sociological studies of the social sciences have often been relatively narrowly focused on the disciplinary founding-fathers and their theories within nationally framed academic traditions in metropolitan Europe and the US. This paper argues for a broadened contextual perspective, which emphasizes the need to pay greater and more serious attention to different – social, institutional and geographical – “peripheries” involved in the discursive and practical making of social scientific knowledge.

The argument is empirically exemplified with four case studies, each of which is thematically focused on one such “peripheral” aspect and the ways in which different extra-academic contexts have been instrumental in the historical formation of social science in Sweden. The first case study analyses the active role of *the public* in pre-academic social research by the end of the nineteenth century. The second case highlights *the private and gendered* aspects of the subsequent academisation process around the turn of the twentieth century. The third case illuminates the Swedish governmental commission as an important extra-academic arena for *policy-relevant* social knowledge production during the interwar period. The fourth case, finally, more tentatively discusses the *organisational and geopolitical* aspects by drawing on Alva Myrdal’s role as Director at UNESCO’s Department of Social Sciences in the 1950s.

Based on these examples it is argued that a contextually broadened perspective enriches our understanding of the complicated processes that have shaped – and also been shaped by – the social sciences as we know them today. A final and more general question is in what ways these contextual aspects have intersected and reinforced each other in the history of the social sciences. It is suggested that "intersectional peripheries" may be useful as a conceptual tool to discuss this more general question.

Karl von HOLDT

Session II, Sept. 27, 16.00

Western Theory, Southern Engagement: Bourdieu, Social Order and South African Ruptures

My paper engages with the work of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu to argue that it may be more productive to think of southern theory formation as a process of engagement, critique and transformation of Western theory from a southern perspective, than as a process of alternative and autonomous theory formation. Bourdieu's work is profoundly concerned with questions of social order. His conceptual innovations – symbolic violence, habitus and field – provide the analytical tools for exploring the ways in which domination becomes invisible, and the prevailing social structures of power are experienced as the 'common sense world'. Missing is a theory of change. What happens when this theory of order, elaborated through analysis of the 'developed' West, is brought into engagement with a southern society undergoing multiple transitions and contestations?

This paper scrutinises those moments when Bourdieu briefly considers the possibilities for breakdown, resistance or rupture in the structures of social order. I explore in particular Bourdieu's iterations of symbolic struggle, in one of which he argues that symbolic order 'leaves a margin of freedom' for the play of political interpretation and imagination. Such a conception of symbolic struggle has the potential to radically alter the relationship between the key concepts in Bourdieu's theoretical universe, yet in Bourdieu it remains gestural and unexplored. The paper shows how this rudimentary element in Bourdieu's work can be elaborated into a fuller theory of the formation, contestation and breakdown of symbolic order through engagement with research into class formation and social protest in black townships in South Africa. Such engagement constitutes a double process of *both* enriching

analysis of a society of the global South, *and* challenging and transforming Western theory.

The paper poses the question whether such a transformed Western theory, in which the relationship between concepts has been substantially reconfigured, might be returned to societies of the West capable of fresh insights which may be increasingly relevant in Europe today.

Jimi O. ADESINA

Session II, Sept. 27, 16.00

Inducing Epistemic Dependence: The Making and Itinerary of 'Public Sociology'

In the period since 2004, Michael Burawoy's concept of "Public Sociology" has made significant in-roads into the lexicon of Sociology in several countries. Its heuristic capacity has been a major point in the challenge to its usefulness. Nonetheless, the concept has provided a discursive referent for, and given, many sociologists a new fillip on intellectual life. The focus of this paper is however different; it is a discussion of how the making and itinerary of Burawoy's 'Public Sociology' represents an exemplar of how seemingly progressive Northern scholars can embark on ventures that induce epistemic dependence among "Southern" social scientists – in this case, sociologists. Here, we make a distinction between Burawoy's idea of and merchandising of the concept of "Public Sociology" and Ben Agger's (2000; cf. 2nd edition of 2007) original idea and intent for the concept.

The paper illustrates is concerned with three separate but inter-linked projects – each with increasing significance for the author. The first explores the original concern of the idea of "Public Sociology" in Agger's (2000) proposition and explores how this inception work has faced erasure in the Burawoy's 'version' of the idea – beyond what Agger (2007) himself noted as the domestication and merchandising of his original idea. This in itself raises serious concern of intellectual practice. The second explores the itinerary of the idea in the hands of Burawoy and ways in which it breached the normal practice of the pet-ideas of the earlier presidents of the American Sociological Association. The itinerary and deployment of the concept represents a familiar case (for Southern scholars) of Northern scholars seeking to induce epistemic dependence. In this instance, it follows a well-worn path among a particular strain of "progressive" Northern intellectuals, in not simply telling their own

stories but in seeking to expropriate the voices and experiences of the South. South Africa is used to demonstrate how such efforts not only induce epistemic dependence but distorts local histories – a case of ‘revisionism’ arising in an attempt to give nomothetic credulity to ideas that have little fit with local histories. Even so, we explore how the Burawoy’s “public sociology” remains a moving target, further complicating its precise meaning.

The third project, closely related to the second, demonstrates the heuristic problems that arise from epistemic dependence and revisionism. The ‘good Sociology/bad Sociology’ distinction (Adesina 2005) that Burawoy’s taxonomy (rather than ‘typology’) create, we argue, is not simply problematic but fundamentally distorts the academic and political imperatives of constructing a post-Apartheid South Africa.

Mary E. JOHN

Session II, Sept. 27, 16.00

Feminist Vocabularies in Time and Space

This paper will address the vocabularies associated with feminism (women, gender etc) in historical perspective in India. It will do so by locating three broad frames or epistemes within which these vocabularies have been generated and circulated and the kinds of ‘problems’ that have been associated with them. The first, namely the colonial episteme, associated with the late nineteenth century and early decades of the twentieth century, examines the way in which ‘feminism’ came to be selectively identified as Western, in the context of debates on culture and modernity, which has cast a shadow right up to the present. The second moment, which may be identified as the ‘national’ episteme, corresponds to the post-independence period, especially the critical decades of the 1970s and 80s, also the time of the birth of a new women’s movement and women’s studies within the social sciences and humanities.

Here prior debates about the westernness of feminism are reworked, as more identifiably political orientations are taken up, and as the compulsions of development produce troubled relationships to feminism, as well as to the concept of gender. Finally, I will consider what I call the post-national episteme of the present, during which the subject of women has been more obviously fractured and interrogated from within the nation, and, secondly, when globalization is seemingly

enabling a frictionless movement of new vocabularies, such as those associated with sexuality or disability, as well as a host of developmental vocabularies related to marginalization and empowerment. Precisely at a time when prior critiques of feminism appear passé, what new dangers may be identified?

Türkay S. NEFES

Session II, Sept. 27, 16.00

Ziya Gökalp's Use of Emile Durkheim's Sociology in his Attempt to Create a Modern Turkey

Despite Emile Durkheim's sociology was used by the Turkish state elite in the early 20th century, there are no studies delineating the Durkheimian influence in Turkish politics. This presentation fills this lacuna by analysing how Ziya Gökalp, the founding father of Turkish sociology, used Durkheimian sociology to respond to the socio-political problems of the early 20th century Turkey. It suggests that: (1) Gökalp's culture–civilization distinction is at the basis of his attempt to create social unity in Turkey; and (2) Gökalp's culture–civilization duality is in line with Durkheim's distinction between magic and religion. The presentation concludes that Ziya Gökalp's adaptation of Durkheimian sociology is less original than has been suggested by the academic literature.

Syed Farid ALATAS

Session III, Sept. 28, 08.30

The Development and Abortion of an Alternative Tradition in Modern Sociology: The Case of Ibn Khaldun

That an obstacle to the development of a Khaldunian sociology is the Eurocentric nature of social science education today is a point that does not need to be restated over and over again. What is interesting to note is that something of a tradition in Khaldunian sociology did seem to develop in the nineteenth century in Europe but was later aborted as the canon took shape and became established. In the 1960s and 70s there reappeared attempts to develop Khaldunian political sociology but these efforts were discontinued into the 1990s and the 2000s. However, the recent so-called Arab Spring may see a resurgence of interest in the Khaldunian view of state decline. This paper offers glimpses into the examines history of the rise and

fall of interest in applying Ibn Khaldun and suggests what a Khaldunian alternative to historical theories of state formation might look like.

Fernanda BEIGEL

Session III, Sept. 28, 08.30

The politics of academic autonomy in Latin America during the 1960s and 1970s

While the 1960s' intellectual commitment phenomenon has been vastly studied, there is no systematic conceptual body to explain new specific forms of politicization that evolved at the same time within the academic world. Public interventions by writers, artists, scientists or scholars have been analyzed under the figure of "intellectuals" –in a genealogy marked by French debates that span from Émile Zola to Sartre (Bourricaud, 1990; Charle, [1990] 2009; Maldonado, 1998; Altamirano, 2005). The notion of *engagement* has been used to refer to the commitment assumed by intellectuals outside their specific *métier*, as a reaction to professionalization of politics and the role they were supposedly assigned in the times of the Dreyfuss affaire.

But very little has been said about the power struggles unfolding inside academic-scientific fields during the second half of 20th century. There is a very extended notion based on an inversely proportional relation between academic autonomy and politicization that has been hardly explored. In this light, politicization appears as a disruption that "denaturalizes" or undermines a scientific "illusio" supposedly deprived of all contaminants. In some cases, this academic "purity" turns into a professionalizing project that underscores the idea that all "non-scientific" practices should be deleted and "foreign" agents should be purged. As any abstract dichotomy, the politicization-autonomy controversy, thus, contributes to make everything a little more confusing.

In this paper, I argue that professionalization and academic autonomy have evolved in Latin America through the consolidation of three types of academic capital simultaneously at work: a) scientific prestige, b) militant capital, and c) academic [institutional] power. These latter can be analyzed as *forms of relatively autonomous politicization* occurred within universities or research institutes which are related to the particular nature of academic prestige in the 1960s and 1970s.

Finally, I intend to prove that politicization has been a central contribution to Academia-building and intellectual freedom in Latin America.

Ari SITAS

Session III, Sept. 28, 08.30

Narrative, Allegory and Sociology- a Critique of Post-Colonial Dispositions

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Edward WEBSTER

Session IV, Sept. 28, 11.00

Building a Social Science for the Global South: An Assessment of the Circulation of Social Knowledge in a South-South Research Network

Michael Burawoy draws a distinction between Sociology in the South, Sociology of the South, and Sociology for the South. Sociology in the South, he argues, is simply Northern sociology, presented as a universal sociology, transferred to the South. In my earlier work I have developed a Sociology of the South in which I argue that US sociology presents itself as a false universal in which I particularise by showing how Northern theory is either false when applied to the South or has very different significations. But, as Burawoy observes, this is a Sociology of the South but is not yet Sociology for the South. Particularising and even expanding Northern theory is not the end of the road, Burawoy argues, but a necessary step in the development of Sociology for the South – a sociology which is not content with a particular sociology of the South, but makes its own moves towards universality. It is a theory, he concludes, that binds the South to an emergent counter-hegemony that presents the interests of the South as the interests of all.

This paper will address this ambitious challenge by assessing the social knowledge produced in a South- South research network. The network was established in 2009 by the International Centre for Development and Decent Work (ICDD) and titled *“Work, Livelihood Strategies and Social Insecurity in the Twenty First Century.”*

Four workshops have been held to date. This has led to the publication of five articles and a number of others have been submitted for publication. It has also led to the circulation of concepts, new knowledge and policy innovations between researchers in India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA).

Three research themes have been identified to overcome social insecurity in the South :

- Urban and rural livelihood strategies: informal clothing, recycling, street vendors and the production of charcoal in rural areas.
- State responses to insecurity: Employment Guarantee Schemes and Conditional Cash Transfers
- Alternative paths to development: Green jobs, Solidarity Economy and Cooperatives.

The paper will examine the concepts, new knowledge and policy innovations that have emerged in this network and assess them in the light of a Sociology for the South. I will argue that any attempt to develop such a sociology will need to place the South within a world order of knowledge production dominated by the North but that selectively embraces theories from all regions of the world. It is only by grounding our research in historical and cross-national comparisons , that we can develop a Sociology for the South that can , in Burawoy's words" excite sociologists from Europe and North America as well as Asia , Africa and Latin America".

Teresa VALDES

Session IV, Sept. 28, 11.00

Social Movements and South-South Academic Cooperation: The Case of Gender Studies from Latin America

Gender studies in Latin America go hand in hand with women's movements emergence, and were institutionalized through NGOs and independent academic centers in a period marked by dictatorships and authoritarian governments. They absorbed the European and North American conceptual and theoretical contributions on gender that nourished the understanding of gender discrimination.

In the 70s, the UN agenda for gender equality and the resources allocated to Women & Development programs and later, Gender & Development, provided support and legitimacy to the institutionalization of this knowledge in academic realms and to the development of public policies. The circulation of such knowledge followed feminist and academic meetings from 1981 onwards and cooperation

within the region was increasingly active once democratic governments replaced the authoritarian ones.

The expansion of the academic cooperation to the Global South on gender issues is more recent and also marked by social movements' leaderships. It is the case of the debates on sexuality and politics, racial and ethnic diversity as well as multiculturalism. In fact in the global South, an intellectual tradition on rights, gender and sexuality has been gradually developing in the last decades. From different political, theoretical and methodological backgrounds, researchers, intellectuals and activists are beginning to discuss the links between sexuality, gender, politics, rights, social movements, health and structural inequalities.

Yet, these dialogues are only beginning to consolidate having a strong emphasis on how to articulate ideas and actions. It is the case of the projects "Inserting Sexualities in the academic agenda of Argentina, Chile, China, Mexico and South Africa" in which I participated. Once funding is guaranteed through a sustained period of time, it is possible to develop these connections. I will explore what can be achieved and the type of difficulties met in this collaboration.

Sumangala DAMODARAN

Session IV, Sept. 28, 11.00

Understanding the Relationship Between Art and Social Movements – Towards an Alternative Methodology

The methodologies for understanding the relationship between art and society and more specifically, art and social movements have been to a large extent centred around experiences in Europe and North America, where the foundational concerns of the relationship between aesthetics and politics are seen to have been thrown up. This comes along with a remarkable Eurocentrism in the analysis of works of art and their relationship to society. As a result, the understandings of the ideological, historical and sociological contours of cultural movements from non-metropolitan contexts have been either absent or in a wider sense been understood as derivative discourses from western canons. Even while post-colonial studies allowed for an understanding of cultural and historical phenomena that posed different questions and threw up different responses from those in the metropolis, even some strands

of postcolonial studies have treated radical cultural movements as derivative discourses and hence non-authentic to their contexts.

However, there is available scholarship from India, Southeast Asia, South Africa and Latin America that analyse the context and creative works of cultural movements from these areas and demonstrate that they constituted diverse responses to foundational concerns that might have been posed in the metropolis, but also, in fact, posed new concerns and questions. As a result, the theorisation of the relationship between art and politics acquires dimensions that are informed as much by the realities of the non-metropolitan areas as the metropolis and in fact, through practice, constitute a critique of mimicry.

This paper brings together the questions addressed by these experiences in order to point towards what, I believe, constitutes a wider understanding of the relationship between arts and politics.

Raewyn CONNELL and Nour DADOS

Session V, Sept. 28, 14.30

Theorising Market Society on a World Scale: Mbeki, Amin, Domingues, Boito

Contemporary social theory on market society is built on ideas from Europe and North America. But social theory derived from Northern experience cannot suffice for understanding market society globally. Neoliberalism centres on the restructuring of North/South relations as much as on changes internal to the global North, as can be seen from a consideration of world trade patterns and technologies. This paper is drawn from an ARC funded research project aimed at producing a sociology of market society that highlights the experiences and, crucially, the ideas of the global periphery. This paper addresses conference themes about the globalization of economic life and the localization of social life by examining the shift to market society on a world scale understood through intellectual contributions from the global South. We consider the analyses of neoliberalism in the work of two African intellectuals, Moeletsi Mbeki and Samir Amin, and two Brazilian, José Maurício Domingues and Armando Boito. Despite the diversity of their perspectives, some common elements of a picture of global neoliberalism emerge.

Epistemology in a Multicentric World

The end of Euro-American domination opens up a new assessment of epistemological issues. While epistemology has always been treated from an ethnocentric perspective, the exclusive focus on one's own traditions is no longer possible in an at once globalized and multicentric world. Chinese and Indians, Europeans and Americans are all in an equal position to claim possession of universal truths – and to back their claims with power. Universalism has already been under attack within the Euro-American tradition but in a multicentric world it seems no longer tenable.

The alternative, relativism, is no option in a globalized world, however. It is not possible any more to close the borders and retreat to oneself – whether this self is conceptualized as singular or as universal. Under these conditions, it becomes possible to revise an epistemology that is constructed around the alternative of universalism and relativism. The revision leads to a hermeneutic whose goal is not to understand one's own tradition but radically different traditions. It shows that we are always beyond relativism and never universal. Once we accept this, we can develop a more realistic epistemology that is adequate for a multicentric world. Its core is the concept of a relational configuration that has to be developed in a dialectical way.

Towards a Global Sociology: From Ethnocentrism to Connected Historical Sociologies

In recent years, sociology has come to engage with issues of 'the global' not just substantively, but also at an epistemological level, seeking to redress its previous neglect of those represented as 'other' in its construction of modernity. In this presentation, I shall address three main ways in which this has occurred: first, the shift to a multiple modernities paradigm from the earlier theories of linear modernisation; a call for a multicultural global sociology taking into account the work of scholars from other parts of the world; and an argument against the perceived methodological nationalism of much social science in favour of a cosmopolitan social science.

My argument will be that none of these responses is sufficient and that each falls back into the problems of the mainstream position that is being criticised. Specifically, I shall argue that a postcolonial approach, with its critique of Eurocentrism and its central concern with histories of colonialism and slavery, provides more adequate resources for making sense of our contemporary global world than the other approaches under consideration. This is primarily a consequence of the explicit recognition, by postcolonial theorists, of the historical role of colonialism and slavery in the making of the modern world and its associated concepts and categories.

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