

Who is the Social Scientist in the Twenty-First Century? Commentaries from Academic and Applied Contexts in the Mainstream and the Periphery

Hebe Vessuri

Introduction

Science and its social and historical reconstructions face particular problems in terms of their relationship with the public and policy-makers. Embedded in universities, industry and government, science is a powerful cultural and ideological force, with relatively autonomous and fairly atypical governance structures. An explanation for this situation is the specialized nature of scientific expertise and a strongly perceived need to protect scientific work from outside direction or “interference.” Structures from peer-review to policy-making supposedly linked to those broader domains have often been much more in the control of practitioners—that is, scientists—than is the case in other areas of public policy. Hence, policy and the public discourse about science have been largely shaped by scientists and other writers from within a relatively closed community, producing a radically simplified version of reality that emphasizes linearity, progress, and the intellectual and material products of science. This form of reconstruction has served a powerful ideological purpose, helping to maintain scientists’ control over public and private representations of their enterprise (Hughes, 2004).

With specificities of its own, social science has broadly shared the same form of social and historical reconstruction. In this paper, I briefly review the evolution of this general self-legitimizing aspect of social scientists’ outlook in their social-historical reconstruction and speculate on some of the consequences of this. I complement this brief analysis by

making reference to development studies and approaches. Today the long-delayed analysis of these different intellectual traditions within concrete dialogue spaces seems to be making some progress. Finally I consider the world expansion of social science in recent decades and its implications for the notion of international science. Indeed I make my argument in terms of three stories about the following: (1) the identity of academic social science; (2) the evolution of the development problematic that has existed since the early twentieth century; and (3) international social science in the era of globalization. I pose several questions that I mention briefly here but are part of a more ambitious endeavor in which I am engaged at present about the social sciences in the global era. What determines the degree of segregation or integration of academic social science and social problems? What conditions the relative dominance of one or the other? What kind of description results from Development/Dependence studies? What difference do these variable configurations make to the understanding of social reality in different contexts? What organizational changes will social sciences have to undergo to contribute more effectively to public debate and informed policy? Or will they become more marginal to society and social change?

The Identity of Academic Social Science

The first story is a commentary on the powerful socialization characteristic of the social sciences into the unique set of scientific values that grew closely linked to the university in the twentieth century. I call its sources the academic commentary. In the transition from traditional to modern societies a criterion of interpretation was used based on the norms and trends of the social values observed in the most advanced societies of Europe and North America. Since the mid-century there was a search for differentiation between “sociological” and “social” problems, by means of which social science would strategically distance itself from the turmoil of social reality to safeguard its “scientific quality.” This was to a large extent the basis for the “ivory tower” legend that views academia as aloof and removed from the heat of the struggles for power and resistance. Although such distance was contested at different times and places, on the whole it has been at the root of the ideology of the university teacher and researcher in both the global North and the global South.

The institutional and intellectual structuring force of science was so strong that in the early 1970s it was conceived as an activity carried out by

a human group (the *scientific community* or better *communities* specialized by disciplines), and a well-known social scientist could say that this group was “so totally isolated from the external world that to all practical effects it is not necessary to take into consideration the idiosyncrasy of different societies in which scientists live and work” (Ben-David, 1970). In the 1970s interest in the social study of science was concentrated in the social conditions of academic work. Often a comparative vision was adopted in the study of the constitution of professional teams in laboratories, organizations structured on the basis of disciplines, national plans, and scientific research institutes, as well as communication networks among scientists.

Scientific disciplines represent cognitive frameworks determining legitimate sets of problems for canonical scientific research and the methods, concepts and traditions to solve them. Social sciences present special features. Their disciplinary structure is a constraint for professors, scientists and students, while it is also a guide for learning and research. To some observers, however, recent trends suggest that social science will soon enter a post-disciplinary age. At different times and institutional locations, domains and objects of analysis have been reconfigured, which has led to moving some issues into the foreground while others seem to have receded. Depending on the author considered, current changes may trigger a new integration of the social sciences and the hard sciences, which have been separated for over a century; however, they may result in a new truly universal profile of social science. Yet this trend may mean that knowledge will be oriented increasingly towards local, context-dependent, problem-solving efforts integrated into epistemic “communities” with actors originating from different social activities outside science.

In academic social science disciplines, academic institutions, scientific societies, journals, funding mechanisms, and peer-review are all elements that help to structure the space and world of the academic scientist and serve in the global distribution of knowledge and values. In institutional and also in cognitive terms, there is no doubt that several countries, universities and disciplines have served as models to be emulated. A common intellectual matrix is recognized, which is reflected in national disciplinary research styles. Knowledge production is usually defined by the distance between the knowledge seeker and the object of knowledge, in constant tension to achieve the appropriate balance between “distance and commitment”. The topic of the adequacy of forms involving a greater distance or more engaged forms of social and human knowledge

continues to be controversial and varies with time. The social sciences provide tools allowing practitioners and critics to question the interpretations of social reality, the legitimacy of policies and the terms used by scientists themselves. Many recent academic and political debates share precisely those critical features that render the social sciences an important element in current tensions and antinomies.

Social scientists are changing their attitudes towards the hegemony of disciplinary departments and disciplinary research. Although disciplinary institutions continue to be important for undergraduate and graduate education, as well as for focalized research projects and new scientific hypotheses, traditional disciplines in the future will have to compete with interdisciplinary research and educational projects. Besides, the gaps between social sciences and other forms of knowledge are currently being challenged, as will become apparent below. In addition transdisciplinarity or interdisciplinarity are sought to handle complex problems.

Although it has been easier for natural and physical scientists than for social scientists to build a scheme of academic professionalization of research, social science has also become highly professionalized, exhibiting a steep ranking system. This first story asserts that the social scientist who did not stay within academia was second-rate, academically “impure.” A profoundly hierarchical view arose in which the most valued position was that of the academic scientist in the university context pursuing disciplinary research and teaching. The idea was that a young person took governmental or nongovernment organization (NGO) employment only because suitable academic careers were in short supply or too low-paid, or perhaps because he was not talented enough to pursue a life devoted to research and intellectual endeavor. This is, in fact, a story about “hierarchy” and “competition” between the academic values of free research and those of oriented, applied work, which has often been even denied the quality of research, being clearly debased in terms of prestige. The notion of the ethos of science and by implication social science was expressed by Robert Merton for the United States in early 1940s essays and was modified and developed by such students and colleagues as Bernard Barber (1952), Norman Storer (1966), and Warren Hagstrom (1965). It became institutionalized in the canon of American sociology of science as a “norm of science.” In its expansion into the different regions of the world, the newly institutionalized social science adopted many such normative prescriptions as revealed in the formal programs through which it was integrated into the world’s universities.

Among the social scientist's basic academic activities, publishing stands out. Its international dimension has grown considerably in the different regions, showing that regional social science is not exclusively oriented to local consumption; if we add to this the scientific literature that is translated into languages other than English, we get a glimpse of the importance that the international cognitive orientation has for the reproduction of the social sciences in the world at large. This dependence becomes evident with regard to thematic repertoires. These are key to insure a meaningful exchange between the academic world and the nonacademic one. A frequent source of anxiety for the researcher is how to approach a public audience when not thinking priority-wise about one's colleagues, feeling "vertigo" in the confrontation with the general public. From the vision constructed by academic social science of applied work in public agencies and NGOs, a *prediction* resulted that would confirm a matter-of-course state of affairs: scientists socialized into the academic value system would suffer the "pain of psychological conflict" when presented with situations that required or encouraged them to behave in ways that violated the norms they had acquired. These notably included the notion of distance from social reality and its entanglements, powerfully presented by Max Weber in his celebrated work in *The Politician and the Scientist* (2003). To avoid or free themselves of this "pain," it was "in the social scientist's interest" to conform to the ethos in which he had been socialized. Contrasting with political pressures, moral dilemmas and commercial temptations, the academic world offered intellectual and normative security, away from the complications of real life. In this first story, the scientist in a Development Program or institution or in a NGO is a frustrated, anxious and possibly awkward character who is in constant conflict with political or commercial values and organizational structures. By contrast, as a result of the academic scientists' unique pattern of socialization, their personalities are depicted as intolerant of organizational or political constraints: scientists are said to be quite independent and mindful of their individual integrity, too sceptical, too hostile to authority structures, too loyal to science and disdainful of local organizational values. Such persons are supposed to pose a major problem for the smooth running of development or entrepreneurial organizations.¹

The current double movement in which a research community becomes more internationalized while specific local claims also gain status is not as paradoxical as it might seem. In a recent revisit to this problem Keim (2010) comments that the tensions between local and general

sociologies may be considered a direct consequence of growing international communication. In her view the more frequent access of “peripheral” academic scientists to the “central” forums confronts researchers who regard themselves as contributing to universally valid theory, with a situation in which they are placed by the dominant Northern establishment in a position as specialists in developing peripheral regions, and their knowledge not being acknowledged as of universal value but only of regional or local validity and scope. This is part and parcel of the division of labor by which global Southern scientists continue to be relegated to data collection and empirical studies, while Northern scientists work out the theoretical implications.

The Development Turn

My second story refers to Development as a field of social inquiry and activity. Sources for it can be found in a wide variety of places. From early development programs and advocates in the aftermath of World War II we find arguments for the setting up of programs for the support of countries considered to be underdeveloped, working on the transfer of resources, technology and knowledge from the wealthy portion of the world to those lagging behind. The postwar years of progress were in more than one sense the culmination of a “modernization” process started in the mid-nineteenth

¹ An example of the kind of perception of the stratification and hierarchy induced by the academic community and its powerful values is the Chilean arrangement of traditional prestigious universities compared with public institutes of technological research (IPTs in the Spanish acronym), even though the latter fulfil important socioeconomic functions in society such as the following: “1) A solid administration of natural resources and environment; 2) Infrastructural provision for a modern economy; 3) Establishment of conditions for an innovating economy and 4) Promotion of development of key elements of the national economy” (Mullin *et al.*, 2000). One of the problems inhibiting a more constructive and fruitful dialogue between researchers in both settings has been the difference in social value of the two different kinds of institutional settings for career making in research. University scientists are better appreciated socially than their counterparts in the public institutes of technology. Despite their obvious achievements, a certain public image of IPTs has depicted them as costly and inefficient, quite disconnected from the sectors they are expected to serve. In addition, the research done is often judged as not of the best quality nor useful, with insufficient contact with international trends, obsolete equipment and libraries, underpaid poorly managed and unmotivated staff. Even the provision of services was perceived by some as being ill managed and with staff insufficiencies. The negative social perception of the technology institutes contributed to reinforce the vicious circle in which the valuable IPTs had to function.

century, by means of which a whole miscellany of cultures gave rise to the happy common world of modernity, conceived as a unique and homogeneous continuum.

A typical definition is found in The South Commission Report of 1990:

Development is a process which enables human beings to realize their potential, build self-confidence, and lead lives of dignity and fulfillment. It is a process which frees people from the fear of want and exploitation. It is a movement away from political, economic or social oppression. Through development, political independence acquires its true significance. And it is a process of growth, a movement essentially springing from within the society that is developing...The base for a nation's development must be its own resources, both human and material, fully used to meet its own needs...Development has therefore to be an effort of, by, and for the people. True development has to be people-centered (*The Challenge*... 1990).

The field of Development has been a powerful tool of social science, or better of social “engineering,” particularly with regard to decolonization and the South, promising to solve the problems of poverty and stagnation, although the solution has always appeared to recede like the horizon just as one thought to be approaching it. It has maintained an uneasy relationship with academic social science. Sometimes it was considered as being part of the social science platform of theoretical construction while on other occasions was deemed to be an inferior kind of social thinking and action. By the 1970s research had become an important tool for military and industrial technology. It was no longer necessary to convince states or big industry of the relevance of science to them; the issue was how to foster and use it for their own ends. In the United States and other countries specific agencies were created to support and stimulate it. The problems related to human and financial resources of science, including science for development, acquired as much importance as those of organization. Science and scientists enjoyed social prestige.

At different times a number of the most thoughtful social researchers, particularly in the non-Western world, have published books and articles on the subject of organizing development research facilities and administering development programs. These sources constitute the

“development/ist” commentary. In marked, if unsurprising, contrast to the academic commentary in our first story, “development” writing displayed no interest in making points of general disciplinary interest or in using the theoretical social science literature for any other purpose than coming to robust findings about recurring problems in and about the development program at hand and proffering some fairly plausible practical solutions to the problems in question. This, for example, comes out from the work by Calcagno (1990) in Latin America, when revising and updating development styles in the region (see also Frank, 1970; Rodriguez, 1983).

Despite a common origin in the social sciences, the two research communities remained largely separate. Curiously, the persistent and consequential problem of socialization so repeatedly identified in the academic literature is not found in the development commentary. Indeed, there are important and pervasive strands of such commentary that portray the daily realities of development work in ways that make the academically predicated role-conflict highly problematic. Although in government programs and in nongovernmental institutions, development social scientists may not be fully free since they are often “officers” in larger bureaucratic organizations, they frequently feel free from heavy teaching loads and from their academic colleagues’ lack of interest in research. They also tend to express a sociopolitical and/or moral satisfaction from participating in the improvement of the social conditions of people.

Freedom in the science context is linked to the notion of autonomy, historically a highly appreciated feature in the academic narrative. However, what does autonomy mean for a social scientist? It does not mean much—in the past or now—if you cannot get the time or the funds to do the research you want to do. The issue whether a development researcher has relative time and freedom (autonomy) to define his own research has been there since an early stage. Participatory research (Fals Borda, 1978; Chambers, 2007) illustrates the kinds of arguments and debates social commitment fostered, involving different ideas of autonomy and social responsibility.

We may distinguish between the *function* of research for Development over a certain period—that is, the organizing commitment to it and its place in social activities—and planning the actual “*act*” or “*conduct*” of research, in which considerable freedom of action is simply deemed necessary. The inadequacies often experienced by academic social scientists when dealing with concrete problems related to development can be illustrated with an example. From the beginning, ecological societies in

the United Kingdom and the United States acknowledged the importance of relating ecological studies with practical applications, mainly with productive activities such as agriculture, cattle-raising, and the management of natural resources (water, soils, and forest resources), all basic ingredients of development work. In this spirit, *The Journal of Applied Ecology* came into being in 1964. However, thirty years later, taking stock of what occurred in the journal during the three previous decades, the editors observed that the majority of the articles lacked indicators about practical applications of research and did not provide clear recommendations for management (Pienkowsky and Watkinson, 1996, in Castillo, 2011). In more recent years the journal has experienced an enormous increase both in the number of articles and their impact from a scientific point of view. Nevertheless, the editors also remarked the need that information reaches specific audiences, particularly those related to the management of ecosystems and forest resources, decision-makers and the public in general, through approaches more oriented to users (Freckleton *et al.*, 2005). In this story we notice that academic scientists find great difficulty in conducting research in a manner that is appropriate to their expressed development aims, even though they may be free to formulate their projects in those terms.

On the other hand, there is also the issue of development specialists publishing technical reports (gray literature), not publishing at all, or publishing in academic journals. Many development experts have vigorously endorsed a free academic publishing policy and have argued for the barest minimum of internal in-house documents, as a way to foster quality as a consequence of public exposure to peer criticism. The free flow of technical information, or at least the freest flow compatible with the kind of literature produced, was for a long time widely accepted if not universally acknowledged in these circles as a net benefit to all parties. Indeed, some of the best social literature emerging from Latin American social science has been on development theory and problems, as shown by ECLAC publications on development and the critical responses of dependency theorists (ECLAC, 1969; Cardoso and Faletto, 1972). It may be noted that by the 1960s the Development challenge was perceived to be so great that academic social scientists were already producing extended quasi-empirical studies of “development research,” defining a research agenda and methodological approaches from within the academic world itself (Cooper, 1973; Pavitt, 1984; Herrera, 1971).²

In Latin America, The Center of Development Studies (CENDES) of

the Central University of Venezuela became an attraction pole in the region at the crossroad of social science disciplines and sociopolitical concerns. With a research scope that extended from national planning to agrarian reform through science and technology, it kept a *sui generis* competitive relationship with the Social Science Faculty within the same university, which cultivated and defended the disciplinary boundaries in separate schools for sociology, anthropology, and economics. CENDES was closely connected to the education of several generations of planning experts and officials in government agencies and NGOs (Darwich, 2005). When CENDES emerged, it did so accompanying the construction of the modern Venezuelan state in the incipient democracy installed in 1958. The origin of CENDES may be seen as deeply imbricated in that process of social construction, and CENDES saw itself as the provider of technical knowledge to the State in its rationalizing role of society. This optimistic rationalist ideology promoted a particular view of the social sciences. Being located in a university context and not being a government unit, afforded it a larger margin of autonomy than it would have had as a school of cadres in the Ministry of Planning. In addition, this location allowed the emergence of social thought linked to the management and development of the dependency approach as well as to rethinking the need of the State's and society's transformation to produce the social changes perceived as necessary for reaching more equitable societies, with greater margins of freedom (Vessuri, 2005).

Of course, the rank-and-file development researcher combines a different menu of activities from that of his academic counterpart. Publishing in internationally refereed journals is not necessarily his target since he addresses his work preferably to local audiences, policy-makers, or decision-makers. Having said this, however, we must acknowledge that publishing is only one of his tasks, while there is a very rich variety of

² The Science Policy Research Unit (SPRU) in Sussex University, United Kingdom, became a hotspot for committed university scholars who wished to contribute to the new challenges of Development and social change. Forty years ago its *Sussex Manifesto* focused on the scale and location of scientific and technological activity becoming very influential. This earlier manifesto was of its time; it distinguished between so-called “developing” and “advanced” nations in a way that today is problematic. It argued that research agendas needed to focus on the world's “developing” countries and their needs, urging “advanced” nations to devote 5% of their own expenditure on research and development problems in “developing” countries...Recognizing that it would “be folly if there was no reform of the institutions for carrying out these activities,” the *Sussex Manifesto* highlighted the importance of organizational reform (STEPS 2010).

activities he engages in but fall outside the range of recognized publishing activities related to academic performance evaluation, such as inventories of biotic resources, community forest management planning, as well as different dimensions of participatory research.

In terms of values distinguishing development from academic research, it has been argued that academic values cluster around disinterestedness, autonomy, spontaneity, and openness, while development values center on concrete development outcomes, organization, planning, and the control of social goals. In academic institutions, it might plausibly be said that the “Mertonian” values (Merton, 1973 [1942]) can be publicly celebrated as institutional essence, while in development organizations values are more often asserted tactically as reminders to the uninformed that research is, to a great extent, an uncertain business, not to be subjected to the accountability regimes of other social activities. Yet, a theory of ideal-type differences between institutional cultures is one thing, and a description of daily realities in complex institutional environments is quite another. Those in the practical business of managing research enterprises have tended to acknowledge the intractable problems of distinguishing between these institutional environments, since theorizing essential differences has been of little concern to them.

For all that, certain obstinate facts remain:

- 1) In the second half of the twentieth century institutionalized social science underwent important changes that were identified under the banner of professionalization and mainstreaming. The new model was extended to the non-Western world through the expansion of the “international” curriculum, which served as a blueprint for new social science institutions and programs all over the world. However, one thing was the theory and a different one the practice of social science. The truth is that in many places in the global South the majority of academically-trained social scientists have not worked (full-time) in universities, while neither development nor government programs have had problems recruiting as many as they wanted, even with perpetual competition for the best and brightest.
- 2) Universities have not been universally regarded as natural homes for research: most have been under-resourced and have had a primary commitment to teaching. Furthermore, many have experienced cultural, political, and religious pressures that seriously compromised any notion that universities, as such, were communities of free and suitably resourced inquiries.

Social Knowledge in the Era of Globalization

The third story concerns the emergence of a new player in the social science field, social science in the non-Western world, with an increasingly stronger voice and presence through its sheer numbers. The *World Social Science Report* published by the ISSC and UNESCO in 2010 offered a comprehensive review of the state of the art of social science in the world, analyzing its dynamics, geography, and the institutional, material, and social structures that influence its production and circulation. The review also examined the gaps that reduce social science's ability to analyze trends in human societies and effectively face global challenges. The greatest efforts of the report were to show figures, magnitudes and forms, and mechanisms of organization including the Shanghai and similar university rankings in addition to the main bibliometric databases. Clearly a report of this kind could not cover all possibilities in a single volume. Important dimensions remained unconsidered, as is the case of the capacity of social science to interpret the reality of the heterogeneous sociocultural units that make up the world.

However, today there are significant research communities in countries like China, India, Brazil, South Africa, Korea, and Mexico, which include individuals who are critically rethinking the relationships between knowledge and power in the Third World, thus contributing to change the architecture of world social science and the structures of scientific power. Globalization begins to undermine the prestige of social theories developed in Europe and North America and helps to raise the relevance of intellectual thinking from other regions while generating anomalies with regard to classical social science concepts and theories in the West. More mature and ubiquitous, social science in different contexts begins to ask questions more frequently and systematically about social categories and thought traditions that until the recent past were ignored or relegated under the weight of canonical forms of social scientific knowledge created in the West, resuming the exploration of different concepts and methodological approaches.

Growing numbers of scientists, mainly from the non-Western world, argue that Western theories pretend universal validity although they do not adequately interpret phenomena in other contexts. In turn they question that in pretending to interpret reality through the lenses of the Western model the theories produced by social science in the rest of the world also fail to fully understand what happens. Despite these limitations, the notion

of science widened with its growing diffusion and also suffered deeper changes. Emphasizing the permeability of science to the external world became more common through the “market,” funding opportunities, demands from civil society or, more concretely, from anonymous or limited societies, private clients, etc. Far from being isolated, in this new narrative social science came to be perceived as being closely interconnected with the economic, political, and social structures. This implied a whole new series of limitations and possibilities. In the last quarter of the twentieth century there was an explosion of institutional studies about scientific activity in different countries. Never before had national and international science policy been so stimulated, nor had such large numbers of social researchers assessed scientific production and participated in the elaboration of indicators about science, technology, and innovation in the midst of a growing globalization.

In the 1960s and 1970s the dependency approach had offered an opportunity to critically examine the hegemony of the theory of modernization and its outgrowth of development theory. This was a time when Latin American social and “hard” scientists began to challenge the social theories developed in the West critically recognizing the economic and social reality of Latin America. The 1990s witnessed the explorations by East Asian social scientists keen to reconsider the validity of social theories based on European or North American experiences (Chakrabarty, 2000). While the classic social sciences in nineteenth century Europe had reflected European social changes, now Asian, African, and Latin American social scientists are rethinking social theories based on the social changes in East Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and South America. Although the research groups are not as large or as powerful in resources, they might come to challenge the strong influence of the West in the social sciences.

In 2001 in a special issue of UNESCO’s *International Social Science Journal*, of which I was guest editor about science and its cultures, I noticed that there were many signals that science and technology were already facing new challenges, this time of a global character. While *academic imperialism* had waned with the end of the colonial system, as we have seen in our first story a weak although penetrating version of the academic hegemony of the West persisted in several forms after the Cold War and in what already presented itself as the era of globalization.

Theories such as comparative research (Mahoney and Rueschemeyer, 2003), the indigenization of knowledge (Sillitoe, 1998; ICSU-UNESCO, 2002), subaltern knowledge (Chakrabarty, 1993), coloniality of power

(Quijano, 1997), Southern theory (Connell, 2007), cognitive and moral relativism (Lukes, 2008), multiculturalism (Inglis, 1995), and similar approaches question the validity of hegemonic science. It needs be explored, however, whether they afford paths towards a non-hegemonic scientific world and in such a case how. Whether these criticisms question the Western epistemological bases of theorizing and whether they help build non-hegemonic sciences is not at all clear. There are no sufficiently deep contributions in the theoretical dimension, especially in the construction of models by which world knowledge and globalization are conceived, as reflected by the World Social Science Report 2010 (WSSR, 2010). As soon as these views are expressed, one must admit the institutional weakness of social research outside the West. In general the social sciences in postcolonial contexts dissociated themselves from the nonformal and noninstitutional epistemological foundations of other cultured and popular wisdom. If the social sciences were ever related to those other knowledge forms, it was only to learn *about* them but never to learn *from* them (Rajagopal, 2012). In this they were part and parcel of the mistrust induced by those with power relative to other, foreign, or popular consciousness, customs, and mores that were perceived as being unscientific, “contrary to progress,” always confined to the “barbarian” and uncivilized pole. *Eurocentrism* and *orientalism* are cultural and epistemic logics interconnected with capitalist imperialism and embedded in the social disciplines to make Europe the central point of a narrative for the analysis of the development of modernity, silencing its imperial experience and its violence.

Nationalism, and particularly *methodological nationalism* in connection to social science in postcolonial countries, was a conscious embracing of a place/territory for creating a set of orientations wherefrom to confront colonial discourses in the social sciences. Identification with a place allowed “national” intellectuals in different countries to build intellectual solidarities against the dominant colonial/postcolonial knowledge (Patel, 2012). Nationalist modernist projects were started by the new modern states using among other things higher education to create the new India, Brazil, Korea, Argentina, Egypt, Taiwan, etc. Social knowledge came to discuss and represent the social change occurring within a particular nation and territory, the nation-state, and to allow the institutionalization of a particularistic problem agenda in a new manner: an assessment of how modernity changed the institutions (kinship, family, caste, and religion) that were characteristic to a particular country. Social knowledge also

participated in the social planning of the new societies. In doing this, though, the new “national” social sciences structured themselves within the frame of so-called international social sciences, increasing the latter’s relevance.

However, looking back into the history of social knowledge and arguing that national social sciences are purely European copies, and therefore “erroneous,” is not valid. We cannot dispense with analytic categories because of their Eurocentric and colonial genealogy, although they may on occasions afford only a partial and defective understanding. Clearly we need a multidimensional strategy to displace hegemonic science, including basic components of the institutional setup. On the other hand, in this new strategy the nation state seems to remain significant, although not as a site for creating “particularities” but for an intervention that displaces unlawful hegemonic knowledge pretensions. Reducing “society” to the national territory in nationalist sociologies from former colonial countries has created methodological and theoretical problems which render the voices and experiences of the “local weak” and “marginal” subalterns in their territory invisible and inaudible. With time disciplines in non-western contexts have also associated themselves too closely with the official discourses and methods of understanding the relationship between the nation, the nation-state, and modernity, which was carefully avoided in the first story through the mechanisms of “distancing.” However, the nation-state remains the site for making politics and defining identities. Thus it is a key site of intervention.

Discussion

The three stories sketched above involve descriptions of intellectual fields and the roles of individuals and collectives as subjects and agents of change both in science and in social reality. The three reflect particular ways of establishing boundaries and manners of social intervention. By means of the three stories, I have presented some elements of an analytical framework that aims to aid comprehension of how social science is part of the differentiations and transformations of society through its theoretical expressions and practices.

We have seen that there are problems with the empirical adequacy of the academic story, problems similar to those articulated in the late 1960s and early 1970s by such sociologists of science as Barry Barnes (1971), and Steven Cotgrove and Stephen Box (1970). In this connection criticism

of academic theorizing disengaged from empirical realities can be explained by a historical appreciation of the circumstances in which such a story emerged and secured credibility. In the 1960s some academic scientists, troubled by the changes accompanying the industrialization, commercialization, and politicization of science, nervously broached the idea that for the academic scientist it was dangerous to venture into the troubled waters of development, industry, or business, and that the academic context offered the best alternative of freedom, autonomy, and even social purity for some with progressive inclinations.

In our second story we have shown that a gap exists between the world seen by academic social scientists in the second half of the twentieth century when the professionalization of social research occurred in the university context and the same bit of the world observed by Development specialists with their lenses focused on economic and social dimensions. If the academic scientist tends to isolate himself by distancing himself from reality, the Development specialist tends to take technical truths for granted in packages elaborated without the significant participation of the subjects of Development. Although there is by no means a clear-cut division of labor, most of the latter are in the global South. Nonetheless, theoreticians or practitioners from northern and southern countries ultimately share the same academic culture, a common base of professional knowledge and a high formal educational level. These elements afford them a certain power and authority in the dialogue with others. Precisely many of the reactions and conflicts observed today against the dominance of mainstream social science involve scientists from the global South refusing to fulfill a role more linked to what they perceive as applied work, Development, or area studies than social science *lato sensu*.

The cultural and political junctures from which the academic commentary emerged had characteristics that made the story about role-conflict especially appealing to social scientists. Different from development and other applied specialists, the majority of social science researchers did not take the chance to leap from the university into other contexts; the university was their natural home. There they became entrenched and jealously guarded their intellectual disciplinary cultures and institutional bastions, sometimes against government interference with the proclaimed autonomy of academia. On other occasions, they demonstrated little interest in opening up even to collaborate with neighboring disciplines in the university context, while maintaining a feudal control of themes. Internal psychological barriers hindered a richer

dialogue from transpiring in the construction of new knowledge and solutions.

The professionalization of social science research and full-time regimes took some time to become established. Once achieved, researchers were often inclined to build ideal-type differences between university life and other possible lives outside academia, which were supposed to be inferior and damaging to the work ethics of academic social science. However, the actual description of daily activities in complex institutional environments always turns out to be difficult and does not adjust to constructing essential differences between them. Thus, the fact that social science research was a clearly minor endeavor in universities did not matter. In Latin America, for example, even today 90% of higher education institutions are only engaged in teaching activities. Most social science research is performed at the postgraduate level, where some public universities play a major role (Vessuri & López, 2010), and others (the majority) prefer to divert as little energy as possible from the business of teaching, which they regard as the primary function of the university.

The third story takes us to a different setting where social sciences are deeply involved in instrumentalized rational operations by states, corporations, and NGOs. In this new setting, consultancy work represents a new model of knowledge production, supported by mixed funding, which promotes interdisciplinary research and is sensitive to market demands; furthermore, projects of radical social transformation also make use of social science knowledge. The world expansion of social sciences means an enormous increase in the number of graduate and postgraduate students in social sciences. The sheer growth in the size of the social science community implies a great variety of visions and perspectives. The same global trend is seen differently in various societies, with the implication that responses to change are adapted to context. Nevertheless, although the axiom of “context matters” is not contested in theory, it continues to be so in practice. This thus reflects some of the divides identified by the WSSR 2010. Even though the report clearly supports the mainstream view of social science, it admits the existence of inequalities and asymmetries, which in its view undermine the capacity of social sciences to contribute answers to global challenges and to analyze trends affecting human societies.

Its concluding argument puts the emphasis on the persistent disparities in research capacities in the world at large and knowledge fragmentation. With regard to the former, the internationalization of knowledge seems to

have strengthened the existing big players. There are huge differences in funding for higher education and research that increase the gap. Consultancy work unduly politicizes knowledge production and lowers institutional and individual quality. The predominance of quantitative evaluation methods, particularly as concerns bibliometrics and university rankings, enlarge the divide. In addition, the brain drain and professional migration, present everywhere, have very deleterious effects on weaker countries. Other issues the report touches on concern theoretical and epistemological problems like the meaning and limits of the internationalization of social science knowledge, and whether or not it contributes to improving the quality and relevance of social science, as well as the multiplication of disciplines and their presumed lack of collaboration that might undermine their ability to respond to today's problems. But the report scarcely touches on the many attempts at exploration of the social on different epistemological and theoretical foundations.

The conditions of applying hegemonic social science to non-Western societies need to be revised, as well as the modalities of adaptation of the latter to the former. There are already attempts in the most disparate contexts, starting from indigenous objects that had been privileged through their appropriation by Western social science. By examining the modalities of choice of these objects, the logic presiding the delimitation of their boundaries and the logical and methodological forms that participate in the collection and treatment of data, we may reveal how Western social sciences have omitted dimensions that might be reinterpreted extending the explanatory power of the phenomena studied, phenomena that were distorted, taken up only partially, in a fragmented way, amputated. The resultant completed, reconstituted objects would be a way to begin to reconfigure the field of social science aiming at a better, more relevant, and truly international scope.

Conclusion

What kinds of frameworks are needed to create an international social science that may include in its analysis the conflictive and contradictory processes of domination-subordination that have organized its differential epistemes and silenced so many others in the world? It seems that we need a comparative frame beyond the universal/particular and the global/national. To assert the need of combining place (and not only that of the nation-

state) with multiple voices in the process of becoming organically interconnected among themselves is vital. A current challenge is to create a language and intellectual infrastructure that may recognize this complex matrix when promoting the many voices of infra-local and supranational traditions with their own cultural works, epistemologies and theoretical frameworks, cultures of science and reflexion languages, as well as sites of production and transmission of knowledge.

Social scientists have begun to conceptualize this perspective in many ways. Some have called it *global modernity*, others speak of “*entanglements*,” and still others of *cosmopolitanism*. Some speak of *diversities*, for what it suggests of dispersal, of difference, of de-homogenization. Since we cannot forget the power dimension, it is obviously not the case that all the “others,” the different ones, are in a same line and are equal in reciprocal terms. They remain in mutual relationships among themselves organized by the conditions of that mutuality. These conditions are structured at various levels of a space/time dynamic matrix.

The separation and autonomy characteristic of academic science that initially was a useful barrier against the threats to the curiosity-driven, free-knowledge search will be increasingly challenged by the consequences of knowledge policy for the scientific endeavor. Public debate already shows that in increasingly larger numbers scientists leave their laboratories and offices to participate in public debates about the future of science and the social consequences of scientific development. At the same time, more and more varied audiences in Western and non-Western societies alike discuss the social roles of formal science and of other forms of knowledge for their desired futures.

It is not a question of the economic experience, nor of the psychological or religious one, being cut into segments and studied in a separate manner, but of the whole human experience understood as life experience. As early as the 1960s, Eric Wolf (1964) stated that each segmented argument of man is a straitjacket for human understanding. He reminded us that the economist that uses a segmented model of *Homo Economicus* not only describes men as economic men; it also tells them how to be economic men. The psychologist who studies humans as a set of responses detonated by an appropriate stimulus, teaches his subjects to act as the experiment requires. These schemes have a simplicity, which makes them praiseworthy, and maybe we manage to redefine men to their image thus increasing predictability and order in human society. However, given the range of possibilities, we can more likely think of an affirmative image

of the variability and complexity of human life.

It would seem that so far the variants of criticism of a world hegemonic science based on the universalization of the Western model of science have remained within the premises of this science model and are not, therefore, true criticisms, but only variants of that science model (Kuhn, 2012). In the process of creating the science of mankind, social science might change significantly. Some of those changes are already under way.

References

- Barber, B. (1952) *Science and the Social Order*. New York: Collier Books.
- Barnes, B. (1971) Making Out in Industrial Research, in *Science Studies* 1, pp.157-175.
- Ben-David, J. (1970) Sociology of science: Introduction, in *International Social Science Journal* XXII, Paris: ISSC-UNESCO, pp.7-27.
- Calcagno, E. (1990) Evolución y actualización de los estilos de desarrollo, in *Revista de la CEPAL* Nr. 42, December, Santiago de Chile, pp.55-67.
- Cardoso, F. H. and E. Faletto. (1972) *Dependencia y desarrollo en América Latina*, Siglo XXI Editores, Mexico.
- Castillo, A. (2011) Comunicación e interacciones entre las ciencias ambientales (socio-ecológicas) y distintos sectores de la sociedad, in A. Argueta-Villamar, E. Corona M. y P. Hersch (coordinadores), *Saberes colectivos y diálogos de saberes en México*. Cuernavaca, Morelos: UNAM (CRIM) / Universidad Iberoamericana-Puebla.
- Chakrabarty, D. (1993) Marx after Marxism: History, Subalternity and Difference, in *Meanjin* 52 Nr. 3, pp.421-434.
- (2000) *Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton University Press.
- Chambers, R. (2007) Out of the Closet, Into the Open: Professionalism, Power, and the Personal in Development, in *World Review of Science, Technology and Sustainable Development* 4.4,11, Oct, pp.385-394.
- Connell, R. (2007) *Southern Theory: The global dynamics of knowledge in social science*. Polity, Malden, MA.
- Cooper, C. (1973) *Science, Technology and Development: The Political Economy of Technical Advance in Underdeveloped Countries*. London: F. Cass.
- Cotgrove, S. and S. Box. (1970) *Science, Industry and Society: Studies in the Sociology of Science*. London: George Allen and Unwin, London and New York: Barnes & Noble.
- Darwich, G. (2005) *Pensamientos plurales. Orígenes de los Estudios del Desarrollo en Venezuela*. Caracas: CENDES-UCV.
- ECLA [CEPAL]. (1969) *El pensamiento de la CEPAL*. Collection directed by F.H. Cardoso, A. Pinto and O. Sunkel. Santiago de Chile: Editorial Universitaria.
- Fals Borda, O. (1978) Por la praxis: el problema de cómo investigar la realidad para transformarla, in Simposio Mundial de Cartagena, *Crítica y política en ciencias sociales*, Bogotá, Punta de Lanza-Universidad de Los Andes, Vol. I, pp.209-249.

- Frank, A. G. (1970) Sociología del desarrollo y subdesarrollo de la sociología, in *Economía política del subdesarrollo en América Latina*. Biblioteca El Pensamiento Crítico, Buenos Aires:Ediciones Signos.
- Freckleton, R.P., P. Hulme, P. Giller and G. Kerby (2005) The Changing Face of Applied Ecology, in *Journal of Applied Ecology* Nr.42, pp.1-3.
- Green, J. F. and W. B. Chambers (eds.) (2006) *The Politics of Participation in Sustainable Development Governance*. Tokyo: United Nations University Press.
- Hagstrom, W. (1965) *The Scientific Community*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Herrera, A. (1971) *Ciencia y política en América Latina*. Buenos Aires: Fundación Bariloche.
- Hughes, J. (2004) The History of Science, the Public, and the “Problem” of Policy, in K. Grandin, N. Wormbs, and S. Widmalm (eds.), *The Science-Industry Nexus. History, Policy, Implications*. Nobel Symposium 123, Science History Publications/USA, pp.365-386.
- ICSU-UNESCO (2002) *Science, Traditional Knowledge, and Sustainable Development*. IC SU Series or Sustainable Development Nr. 4, Paris.
- Inglis, C. (1995) Multiculturalism. New Policy Responses to Diversity. Policy Paper Nr. 4, Management of Social Transformations (MOST), Paris: UNESCO), pp.47.
- Keim, W. (2010) The Internationalization of Social Sciences: Distortions, Dominations and Prospects, in *World Social Science Report 2010*. Paris: ISSC-UNESCO., pp.169-170.
- Kuhn, M. (2012) Hegemonic Science: Critique Strands, Counter-Strategies and their Paradigmatic Premises, Paper presented at the International Thinkshop Theories about and Strategies against Hegemonic Social Sciences. Center for Global Studies, Tokyo: Seijo University.
- Lukes, S. (2008) *Moral Relativism*. London: Profile Books, Ltd.
- Mahoney, J. and D. Rueschemeyer (eds.) (2003) *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge University Press.
- Merton, R. (1973 [1942]) The Normative Structure of Science, in idem, *The Sociology of Science*, N. W. Storer (ed.), Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Mullin, J. et al. (2000) *Evaluación de los Institutos Científicos y Tecnológicos Públicos de Chile*. Corfo-Ministerio de Economía de Chile y IDRC.
- Patel, S. (2012) Towards Internationalism: Beyond Colonial and Nationalist Sociologies. Paper presented at the International Thinkshop Theories about and Strategies against Hegemonic Social Sciences. Center for Global Studies, Tokyo: Seijo University.
- Pavitt, K. (1984) Sectoral Patterns of Technical Change: Towards a Taxonomy and a Theory, in *Research Policy* Volume 13, Issue 6, December 1984.
- Pienkowsky, M. W. and A. R. Watkinson. (1996) The Applications of Ecology, in *The Journal of Applied Ecology* Nr. 33, pp.1-4.
- Quijano, A. (1997) Colonialidad del poder, cultura y conocimiento en América Latina, in *Anuario Mariateguiano* 9, Nr. 9, pp.113-121.
- Rajagopal, K. (2012) Making Social Knowledge One-step Outside Modern Science: Some Cases of Social Knowledge-making Strategies from Peripheries. Paper presented at the International Thinkshop Theories about and Strategies against Hegemonic Social Sciences. Center for Global Studies, Tokyo: Seijo University.
- Rodriguez, A. (1983) Los científicos sociales latinoamericanos como nuevo grupo de intelectuales, in *Revista El Trimestre Económico* Vol. L (2), México: April-June, pp.939-962.
- Sillitoe, P. (1998) The Development of Indigenous Knowledge: A New Applied Anthropology, in *Current Anthropology* 39 (2), pp.223-251.
- South Commission (1990) *The Challenge to the South: The Report of the South Commission, under the chairmanship of Julius Nyerere*. 1990. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Thinkshop

- STEPS. (2010) *Innovation, Sustainability, Development: A New Manifesto*. The STEPS Centre, Brighton: Sussex University.
- Storer, N. W. (1966) *The Social System of Science*. Holt, New York: Rhinehart & Winston.
- Vessuri, H. (2005) Prólogo, in G. Darwich, *Pensamientos plurales. Orígenes de los estudios del desarrollo en Venezuela*. Caracas: CENDES.
- Vessuri, H. and M. S. López. (2010) Institutional Aspects of the Social Sciences in Latin America, *World Social Report 2010*. Paris: ISSC-UNESCO, pp.59-62.
- Weber, M. (2003) *El político y el científico*. Buenos Aires: Prometeo Libros.
- Wolf, E.R. (1964) *Anthropology*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs.
- WSSR. (2010) *World Social Science Report. Knowledge Divides*. Paris: ISSC-UNESCO.