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Distorted universality – internationalization and its implications for the epistemological foundations of the discipline

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It is a common observation today, to state that at least parts of the international community of scholars in sociology have recently been developing far reaching communication structures and extending their international contacts through organizational, associational, personal and institutional networks. The International Sociological Association (ISA) can be considered one of the major forums pushing for the internationalisation of the discipline¹. The fact that the last World Congress of Sociology was held at Durban, South Africa, with a considerably higher participation rate of African scholars than any former world congress, suggests that its networks are slowly integrating the Southern intellectual communities.² This distinguishes the present internationalisation of the discipline from earlier forms of inter-European and cross-Atlantic exchanges which had been going on from the beginning of the discipline's history³.

This move towards growing global interconnectedness in the scholarly arena accompanies the much debated globalisation of society. These two developments seem to be at the origin of recent debates around the possible or factual globalisation of sociology itself and have motivated some to proclaim the need and possibility of "one sociology for one world" (Archer 1991). But at the same time, there is contestation and resistance against this "one" and "truly global" sociology (see Adésinà 2002 for a direct, sharply critical response to Archer) while, at the opposite extreme, some fear for the final fragmentation into localised, nationalised or "indigenized" sociologies⁴.

Obviously, the articulation between the common core of the discipline and its local manifestations is becoming increasingly problematic (see Berthelot 1998). It might seem paradoxical that this call for more local or "indigenous" sociologies appears at the very time of globalization. However, I will argue in this paper that this present double move of the internationalisation of the scholarly community on the one hand and of the localisation of specific claims on the other hand is not as ironic as it might appear at first sight. On the contrary, it seems that this recent development has its foundations in the very history of the discipline, in the realities of its worldwide spreading and in the forms of its international constitution.

The international constitution of sociology: inequalities, stratification and the North-South divide⁵

Historically, sociology as a scholarly discipline within modern specialized institutions – as opposed to social thinking, which is probably as old as humankind and present

all over the globe – emerged in Europe. Like the whole of the modern scientific system, it expanded through colonialism and imperialism, i.e. sociology in the global South originated as a subordinated, dependent and exogenous sociology. After decolonization, structures of dependency more often than not remained intact.

At present, this historically subordinated integration into the discipline has some continuity in the persisting centre-periphery-relations between the global South and the north-Atlantic sociologies⁶. Two sets of factors account for this situation. At the extra-scientific level, lack of the necessary material infrastructure (Waast 2001, Bako 1994, 2002) and academic freedom (Diouf/Mamdami 1994) are the main causes in many cases and do not require further explanation⁷. However, there are numerous cases of rather well-developed sociologies in terms of their infrastructural, institutional and personal basis, that nevertheless do not gain any recognized international status (for the example of Japan seen Koyano 1976; Lie 1996). The reason here seems to lie at the intra-scientific level, i.e. in the international constitution of the discipline, whereby Southern sociologies remain marginalized from the core business of the discipline due to a variety of factors to be introduced briefly⁸.

An adequate indicator for marginalisation – and certainly not for scholarly production per se, as the conventional use of bibliometric indicators pretends – at the global level is the use of the so-called international databases (see Keim forthcoming). Analyses regarding the visibility of national sociological production in three such databases, the “Social Sciences Citation Index”, “FRANCIS” and “Sociological Abstracts” reveal a highly polarised picture: US-American texts take the lion share of publications covered by these databases, whereas the rest of the world is relegated to extremely limited visibility. Cross-checking with the alternative UNESCO-database DARE clearly shows that the low degree of visibility of, for instance, African social science journals, does not reflect objective degrees of underdevelopment in the publication sector, but that major well established journals of the continent remain ignored by these databases. None of them accounted for even 10% of the titles included in DARE. In the same vein, UNESCO data for books publication reveal that China is worldwide the first producer of social sciences literature, a reality that is not in any way reflected in any of the three indices. These databases thus prove to be not only an indicator of marginality, but also an instrument of marginalisation.

Furthermore, unequal institutional relations are still a reality. African and Latin American sociologists get their PhDs in the prestigious universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Sorbonne or Harvard, make use of their libraries, and aspire to getting published in British, French or US-American journals. Even cooperation at the personal level is often marked by a deeply unequal division of labour. Thus, African sociologists complain that through so-called “cooperation programmes”, researchers from the North look for contacts only to gather the necessary local data for their own scholarly work, while the conceptualization of the research, as well as the evaluation, comparative analyses, interpretation, theory-building and publication is being done back in the North (see González Casanova 1968, Hountondji 1990a, 1990b, 1994, 2001/02, Sitas 2002).

Another feature inhibiting relationships on a more equal footing is the disciplinary structure of the social sciences channelling discourses, personal and finances and keeps the southern social sciences away from the core of the discipline. Typically, ethnology/social anthropology and orientalism are the disciplines focused on studying

societies outside of Europe, completed by “area studies” since the Cold War. An analysis of the activities of invited speakers at the “Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales” (EHESS), one of the most prestigious French social science institutions in Paris, reveals that an invited African or Latin American sociologist most probably ends up in the Department of African or Latin American Studies, which means that s/he relates to regional specialists, not to general sociologists. The same applies for publishing opportunities, whereby regionally specialized journals are more accessible to sociologists from the South than prestigious general sociological journals. Thus their contributions remain largely invisible for the Northern and international sociological community.

These problems resulting from an unequal institutional division of labour already hint at another form of the North-South divide in the international constitution of sociology: the unequal cognitive division of labour, expressed aptly by McDaniel: ‘ “Place matters only to those for whom Great Truths are not an option. The local is local for those without the power not to make it matter” (McDaniel 2003: 596). As Alatas observed, there is a global division of labour between those who work on their own countries and those who work on countries other than their own, do comparative research and arrive at considerably higher degrees of generalization. More often than not, the Southern social sciences remain limited in scope and perspective; they focus on the local level, produce case studies applying theories produced elsewhere, or provide first hand empirical data that may later on feed into comparative and more generalizing work done in the centre of knowledge production (for empirical evidence, see Andrade Carreño 1998; Baber 2003; Keim 2006). In addition to that, a specific and particularly limiting form of locality is the pressure to define oneself as exotic, experienced by Southern social sciences when confronting an international audience:

... there is a serious pressure to define ourselves as ‘different’ in the world context of ideas. Trying to be more than peripheral exotica in the ‘global cultural bazaar’ of social science we are bumping up against the niche trading tents we have been offered. ... Of course we can be cynical and say that even here very few of us are considered good enough to be included, like Ali Farka Toure and Youssou N’Dour in the category called ‘world music’, as decorative additions (Sitas 2002: 20).

Finally, marginality is also related to the inherent evolutionist thinking in the social sciences which, despite post-modern deconstruction and disillusion, still prevails and creates hierarchies between objects of research as well as between locations of sociological production. Although the bluntest versions of modernization theory, like, for instance, Rostow’s model of “stages of economic growth” (1960) are largely seen as obsolete today, the assumption that all regions and societies will go through the same stages of development, with the rich nations of the North actually representing the peak of human development and the rest of the world “catching up”, continues to affect the perception of social scientific production. Sociologists of supposedly backward societies are perceived and perceive themselves as not being able to inform those of the “advanced societies” in any meaningful way, but as only being able to learn from them. This was clearly expressed by a South African scholar in an interview passage about the lack of interest for South African sociologies abroad: “(...) it is because they are the vanguard of development, they don’t have anything to learn from us here. We can’t inform them on the questions they are dealing with now” (Johann Marée, Interview 3.3.2004).

The problems outlined in this paragraph lead to north-Atlantic domination within the international sociological community and within the discipline as such. The next paragraph will discuss how far these disciplinary, institutional, personal and cognitive issues in the international constitution of sociology affect the epistemological foundations of the discipline.

Implications for the epistemological foundations of sociology: the problem of distorted universality⁹

Sociology, as the “*science of society*”, from the beginning, has defined itself as a nomothetic discipline. This means that it pretends to produce generally valid, universal statements, concepts and theories. However, I will argue here that the outlined north-Atlantic domination in sociology leads to a strongly distorted form of universality. Distorted, because the claim for universality, up to date, has been formulated from a Eurocentric perspective. Many of the classical approaches have thus formulated universalistic aspirations without reflecting their particular social location. It relies at the same time on radical exclusion and on radical inclusion.

Radical exclusion refers to the fact that sociology, despite its self-understanding as “science of society”, due to the traditional disciplinary division of labour has never had to deal with the larger part of humanity and human societies, the study of which was outsourced to the regionally specialized disciplines. The so-called “general theory building”, until today, has been happening on a very reduced empirical basis, as Lander points out: “As the notion of universality was constructed on the basis of the particular (or parochial) experience of European history, and the totality of time and space of human experience was apprehended from that particular standpoint, a radically exclusive universality was created” (Lander 2003: 16/17)¹⁰.

Furthermore, radical exclusion refers to the fact that the above mentioned structural, institutional and disciplinary mechanisms of marginalization keep the sociological production of the South apart from the core business of the discipline. Gaillard (1987), among others, confirms that scholars of the southern countries share the widely hold view that general theorizing is the most prestigious and valued endeavour within the disciplines. Related to this is the fact that the persisting cognitive division of labour as well as the evolutionist assumptions inherent in sociology and affecting the definition and perception of its object matter, reduce the time, space and social experience of peripheral sociologies to the status of case studies. Due to their geographical and social localization, Southern sociologies are seen as not being able to make original contributions to general theory building.

But at the same time, the historically developed Eurocentric universality is radically inclusive. General sociological theory, per definition, encompasses in the scope of its statements any society, North or South, and claims to be valid for all of them equally. The social realities in the southern hemisphere are thus always thought of as fitting into a universally valid scheme produced elsewhere¹¹. This tendency of radical inclusion blurs the distinction between the universal and the particular, equalling the north-Atlantic particular with the universal. It is seen by Waldenfels as “the most dangerous form of Eurocentrism”, namely the one that “hides behind the language of

the Total” and thus “reduces any argument of the opponent to barely nothing” (Waldenfels 1997: 88).

North-Atlantic domination thus exerts “tendencies of appropriation”, to remain within the vocabulary chosen by Waldenfels. Epistemological Eurocentrism “realizes the miracle of encountering the particular Own in the General and the General in the particular Own”¹². To exclude the majority of humankind with its social experience and its sociological reflections out of sociology, and to simultaneously include the “rest of the world” into general, universal theory, represents a fundamental epistemological problem for the discipline of sociology as a social *science*.

Discourses of resistance against north-Atlantic domination and Eurocentric universality ...

In recent years, several attacks have been launched against north-Atlantic domination in the social sciences: critiques of Eurocentrism (Amin 1988, Fals-Borda/Mora-Osejo 2003), deconstruction of orientalism (Said 1978), attacks on anthropology and area studies (Mamdani 1997, Mafeje s.d.). S.F. Alatas (2001) has conceptualized how far imported approaches may be irrelevant for the analysis and understanding of local societies, and proposes a set of criteria necessary to render Southern sociologies more relevant to their own context. At the same time, the constructive approach of the indigenization project attempts to develop sociological concepts from social knowledge contained in oral poetry (Akiwowo 1986, 1999, Makinde 1988, Lawuyi and Taiwo 1990, Adésinà 2002).

But these reclamations from the global South weren't successful in real terms, i. e. they haven't had a decisive impact on the hierarchical structures of the international social scientific community (for a critique of the indigenization debate, see Keim 2007). Furthermore, these projects have appeared as political critiques in the first place, while their attack on the very epistemological foundations of sociology has seldom been recognized as such (for an appropriate discussion of “contemporary epistemological challenges to the discipline of sociology”, see Berthelot 1998. For a recent, valuable contribution to the debate, see Connell 2006).

These problems can be attributed to three causes. First of all, the theoretical and deconstructive efforts as well as the indigenization project remain limited to the level of theories and texts and do not take into account material inequalities and institutional and power factors. Second, the mentioned theoretical critics rely on the dominant “arena of competition” (Shinn 2000¹³). The main idea underlying the concept of arena of competition is that the problem of marginalization in international sociology – i.e. the marginality of the Southern and the centrality of the north-Atlantic sociologies – is a problem of reciprocal recognition. This recognition happens in two steps. In the first step, everybody has to agree upon a common arena of competition, i.e. the mainstream international community with its platforms, its international journals, its prestigious institutions etc. Only in a second step can the battle for recognition and prestige within this common arena of competition begin. The mentioned theoretical attacks thus rely on the dominant arena of competition, which they are actually trying to attack, in order to receive recognition and to develop their critical potential. Third, the critical and deconstructive attacks emerged at a time when post-modern laissez-faire characterises large parts of sociological activities in

the centre. This is especially true when it comes to unveiling scholarly discourse as a discourse of power. In that case, any effort for deconstruction is welcomed and apparently the need to defend positions is no longer felt in the scholarly community¹⁴.

If the mentioned discourses of resistance against north-Atlantic domination were realized at all, more often than not they have been taken for political arguments in the first place. And indeed, in heated and sometimes polemical debates the refusal of hegemony, of domination, of hierarchies and intellectual colonialism or dependency appears in the forefront of the discussion. The epistemological doubts contained in these criticisms regarding the project of a nomothetic discipline, i.e. of a social science claiming the ability to produce general, universal statements, are seldom taken up in the debate. Berthelot, in his article on contemporary epistemological challenges to sociology, one of which he sees in the up-coming localized claims within the scholarly communities of the South, seems to be one of the few who recognize the scope of the critique: "(...) it is the very epistemic project of sociology, its pretension to construct scientific knowledge – whichever is the criterion that defines this scientificity – that is questioned. It seems like hundred years after its birth as an autonomous scholarly discipline, sociology has become the object of a radical questioning of its project"¹⁵ (Berthelot 1998: 2).

What is new about this debate that could at first sight be mistaken and reduced to a new explosion of rationalism versus relativism, however, is its spatial, topographical dimension, as Berthelot points out: "(...) most importantly, since the last decade, the articulation between national sociologies and the common corpus of the discipline (...) has become a problematic link". He continues: "The postulate of universality of sociological theoretical models can be differently affected by the adopted position and the status attributed to the national location of sociology (...). The political denunciation of hegemony might contain direct or indirect questionings regarding the very pretension of sociology to elaborate a universalisable discourse"¹⁶ (Berthelot 1998: 2/3).

... as a consequence of the international constitution of sociology

That this happens precisely in the famous „era of globalization“ is not as surprising or paradoxical as it might appear at first sight. Those colleagues who are convinced of the possibility of a global, or globalised, and thus finally truly universal, sociology for one global, globalised world, may be irritated by such dissident voices (Archer 1991). But their ontological assumption has been radically rejected by sociologists from the global South, for reasons that Adésínà highlights:

This is precisely the problem. The ‘unicity of humanity’ that requires that we have ‘a single discipline’ for ‘a single world’ is in the imagination of the conventional western sociologist. It is one thing to defend foundationalism in sociology (at least some basis for epistemic adjudication) against the anarchist tendencies of postmodernism. It is an entirely different thing to assume that the dominant traditions in western sociology can pretend to speak for the global community of sociology. The nomothetic design that Archer saw in what she called ‘the international endeavour with sociology’ is one that has advanced not because of its universality but as an idiographic narrative of (a section of) the West, often part of the imperial agenda that has been called the

'triumph of the West'. The 'single humanity', that Archer pitches for, assumes its 'unicity' by denying a voice to the non-western voices (and the non-dominant in the West, as well) (Adésinà 2002: 94).

Following the last two paragraphs, it appears that the tensions between local or national and general sociologies should, on the contrary, rather be seen as a direct consequence of the growing international communication of the sociological community. Through increased international exchange and discussion and through the slow but gradual accession of peripheral sociologists to central forums, for the first time scholars who until now saw themselves as practising universally valid sociology are confronted with the problem of north-Atlantic domination, formerly distortedly declared as universality, as well as with its consequences for sociological activity and production on the southern continents.

Quick and uncritical proclamations of an "internationalized", "global" or "globalised" sociology threaten to put a premature end to fundamental discussion for the constitution of the discipline as such. In this sense, in the foreword to the edition of a selection of articles from *International Sociology*, entitled "Globalization, knowledge and society: readings from International Sociology", Albrow (1990: 6/7) proposes a sequencing of tendencies within sociology, from the universalism of the classics to the current globalisation. The last phase, his model suggests, is thought of as having already surpassed the former phase of "indigenization". Such assumptions are met by protests against new forms of "occidental hegemony", as Oommen argues:

However, even as Indian sociology is absorbing the relevant corpus of knowledge produced elsewhere, one fails to see any reciprocal response from other nations, continents, societies or civilizations. This is the Achilles heel of the ongoing process of internationalization of sociology (Oommen 1991: 81).

The internationalization or globalization as proclaimed up to date is seen by Oommen as a reintroduction of north-Atlantic domination. He underlines his concern having a closer look at realities in Indian sociology. Here as in other former colonies, the author sees a danger in premature attempts of internationalization, given the fact that international exchange relationships of these countries are highly unequal. The reasons for these inequalities are, in his view, the underdevelopment of national sociological traditions and the generally unilateral flows of communication between these countries and Europe. He argues:

Therefore, the process will have to be initiated with great caution and circumspection. Let me list the main reasons for the advocacy of this cautious approach. First, internationalization, given the present predicament of sociology, would in effect mean the spread of Western sociology to non-Western countries (...). Second, while Westernization is instantly recognized as a current which flows from the West, internationalization, although a camouflage for Westernization, passes on in a more respectable garb. This gives apparent autonomy to the non-West which is misleading. However, it is possible to transcend this misconception by recognizing that internationalization as it stands is essentially a Western construction (...). Finally, internationalization to be authentic and fruitful should consciously design for a multidirectional flow of sociology, particularly strengthening the

flow from the weak to strong centres. The project should not simply aim at 'educating' the non-Western but *learning* from them (Oommen 1991: 81/82).

Theoretically relevant contributions from the global South – some examples

If examples were to be mentioned of theoretically relevant contributions to the discipline emerging from the South, a historical example – and one of the few successful ones, leading to the emancipation of the whole of a continental community from the international mainstream – was the role cepalism¹⁷ and then dependency theory have played, introducing a paradigm shift away from the then dominant, rather euro-centric modernization theory, into these emerging approaches, that were later on to be integrated into world systems theory (for a contextualisation and evaluation of the importance of dependencia, see, among others, Andrade Carreño 1998; Briceño-León 2002; Lander 2003; 2004; Osorio 1994; Sonntag 1989). It is noteworthy that the formation of this current did not start as a purely theoretical argument. On the contrary, it was very much grounded into local concerns for the developmental problems of the region that came to be of major importance after the Second World War for economists, political leaders and social scientists alike. The connection to extra-academic actors and the implementation of social scientific results through economic and developmental policies was, in some cases, even embodied in the very personalities of intellectuals at the forefront of the debate, who appeared to be protagonists in both fields (for example, the first author of the programmatic text in the domain, Cardoso/Faletto 1969).

The same is true of two recent publications emerging out of the field of South African labour studies, a research community that has developed in continuous contact and debate with the non-academic protagonists of the anti-apartheid movement and later on the transition and reconstruction process, first of all the labour movement itself. Out of this active local community, von Holdt (2003) has published a remarkable book, that combines in-depth empirical analysis in the form of a workplace ethnography of a steelwork near Johannesburg, with far-reaching theoretical conclusions that should feed into labour studies literature at large as well as into transition theory. The author, himself engaged in labour support activities, former editor in chief of the popular journal "South African Labour Bulletin" and therefore enjoying access and insights into the worlds of work and workers, is today a researcher at the national trade union confederation's research institute NALEDI (National Labour and Development Institute). His "Transition from below" (Holdt 2003) makes a fundamental contribution to transition theory that was initially developed with regard to the transition processes taking place in Eastern Europe and from there transposed and applied, among others, to the South African case. Von Holdt, however, challenges the conventional view of a double transition – economically, from a closed economy to liberalisation, politically, from authoritarianism to democracy – adding a third dimension, namely the socio-cultural transition from colonial to post-colonial society. This modification might be of relevance to historical or contemporary transition processes in other countries of the global South, especially other settler colonies, and ought to gain appropriate recognition internationally.

Another representative of the South African community recently produced a book in general sociology (Sitas 2004). The publication can be seen as a prolongation of the

earlier indigenization debate, but goes beyond it at several levels. Methodologically, Sitas uses oral texts – reworked and brought into the form of “theoretical parables” – as a basis, attributing them a “theoretical plus value”. This methodological choice arises out of his personal experience as a university-based intellectual involved in community activities that encouraged him to lower the distance between academic and non-academic discourses:

I argue, instead, that the fence between the citadel of knowledge and science and the fields needs cutting. The problem contexts of the questions we need to answer will have to be a negotiation with the Mshengu, the Shelelembuzes and others, learning is everywhere and theorising too. (The parables’ project, W.K.) asks of knowledge and reliability to be people-centred, generously abstract and contextually moral (Sitas 2004: 69).

The parables project’s aim is to produce sociological knowledge through the parables and through discussion processes of these short texts in and outside of academia. The author, in his own interpretations and theorisations of the parables, takes up basic sociological assumptions, discusses and criticises different theoretical approaches and proposes alternative concepts. At the centre of the debate are the realities of a modernity that did not come about with the transition from feudalism to capitalism, but with colonialism.

A central issue in the parables is that modern institutions – factory, prison, university – have disciplinary power over people, and that the actors’ navigation systems, their cognitive capacities, language and forms of interaction can collapse, as in the case of this young woman who migrates from her rural home place to the city:

The girlwoman (in one parable, W.K.) experiences disoralia – an inability to establish parameters for meaningful communicative practice; disvaluation and degendering – she is not only a notwoman she is a new thing. She had already been told that the curse of her line was to visit her. In transgressing values and norms, in following the sounds of the letters (of her lover, W.K.), she is leaving a significant value system (Sitas 2004: 90).

This can lead to disoriented, traumatised, mad behaviour. Nevertheless, Sitas and the parables show that there is always to some degree a dissonance, an asymmetry, a resistance to institutions, structures and systems in the agency and subjectivity of individuals and communities. Considering the hardship and efforts the humans in the parables undergo to face institutional pressures, the post-modern assumption of a decentred subject, according to the author, appears to be a “privileged piece of superficiality”:

Such a conception confuses roles, strategies and behaviour with the struggle to ‘centre’ our navigating mechanisms, to steer through a maze of pressures and processes. The active, refracting and recoiling agency (...) must not be confused with the autonomous subject of bourgeois enlightenment, but (...) when it ‘gives in’, the result is fragmentation, a dispersal into meaninglessness and de-rangement, infraction (Sitas 204: 102).

The author leads a similar theoretical discussion that challenges the current canon of the discipline with regard to the relation between power, freedom and the social

conditions of emancipation in contexts where an ideal communication community in the sense of Habermas does not exist, and where the mere possibility to verbally express discontent has already to be seen as an achievement.

The parables project challenges a series of sociological assumptions taken for granted in the established literature. Indeed, the status of the parables itself is disturbing. They are not to be taken for “authentic” pieces of social reality that we usually expect from far-away countries in order to expose them in ethnographic collections. The parables are an experimental and theoretical elaboration of social knowledge in narrative form. Didactically, they are meant to encourage intellectual discussion. They form part of the process of knowledge generation, but also of social reality, containing symbolic capital for future actions. They do not establish the one truth as conventional parables do, but contain diverse analytical consequences. The parables project, in a very experimental way, brings together activities and functions that we are used to separate. At the same time, this strategy lowers the distance between sociology and its object, this separation from the “pre-notions” on which sociologists have relied since Comte and Durkheim, not in order to point to power relations between the researcher and his “object”, but in order to enhance a common process of reflection. This is also in part motivated by the author’s experience as an engaged intellectual:

We have been convinced that the ‘researched’ is different from a piece of chalk. (...) The ‘researched’ talked back, argued, resisted the classifications and pointed out that the researcher, professor sir or madam, was also part of the field (...) (Sitas 2004: 41).

Sitas engages with classical as well as with post-modern theory, criticises them alike and confronts them with a sociology, that aims at being “neither pre-modern, modern, nor post-modern”, “universally comprehensible but arrogantly local” and “communally accessible” (23).

It remains to be seen in how far these challenging contributions will manage to penetrate into the core of the discipline and get the chance to deploy their potentials. The mentioned examples should encourage the international community to realise, at least, that the on-going marginalisation tendencies, which the South African authors were inclined to confirm in a series of interviews, have strongly counter-productive and limiting effects on the development of the discipline as such.

In this regard, it is important to note that the majority of critiques of north-Atlantic domination as well as the proponents of alternative approaches in the global South question the international constitution of sociology at the present stage in the first place, rather than the general possibility of sociology as a social *science*. However, in order to make this possibility a reality, a lot remains to be done. As long as structural and political problems in the international scholarly community (i.e. developmental problems in the South, as well as personal, institutional, disciplinary and cognitive mechanisms of hierarchisation and marginalization), are not addressed and resolved, a meaningful discussion on equal terms around the possible globalisation and around a possible claim for universality in sociology can not be thought of. It is certainly in this sense that Burawoy’s idea of a “reconfiguration” of the global social scientific division of labour is to be understood within the framework of his project to “provincialise the social sciences” (Burawoy 2005: 16).

Apart from decisive structural and institutional shortcomings and distortions of the discipline, it also depends on every single researcher to question their perceptions of colleagues, scholarly communities and their production here and there, in order to achieve a more inclusive view of sociology that allows for a variety of voices and viewpoints. Current endeavours in the area of theories of modernity, with emerging concepts as such “multiple modernities” and with huge projects of global communication on a more equal footing might be a further step in the right direction.

Endnotes:

¹ See Gingras 2002 for a discussion and empirical evidence on internationality in science; see Genov 1991 for institutional factors in the internationalization of sociology. For a differentiated definition of “internationalization” in sociology, see Smelser 1991: 21-24.

² The “global South” is here to be understood as a broad geographical and geopolitical category including mainly Africa, Asia and Latin America. An operational definition is given by given by Shinn, Spaapen and Krishna: “For analytical purposes we write about South and North as broad categories. We realize that by doing that we do not justice to the large socio-economic and cultural differences that exist between countries within these spheres. Moreover, it is arguably the case that some countries in the geographical South belong to the conceptual category of the North (Australia, New Zealand) and *vice versa* (some of the East European countries). Nevertheless, the above distinction between North and South is now broadly used”. (Shinn/Spaapen/Krishna 1997: 28).

³ However, the outcomes of the ISA presidential elections at this occasion show that the call for more geographical representativity of the association has rather limited success up to this date when it comes to positions with decision-making power.

⁴ The term “indigenization” is here used in quotation marks to keep in mind the very valid criticism of some African scholars hinting to the fact that any sociology is indigenous to its own context and that the exclusive use of the term to refer to Southern sociologies reinforces tendencies of exotization: „It is, therefore, important to recognise what is idiographic about western sociology – regardless of the attempts to substitute it for global sociology. Insights rooted in other idiographic contexts cannot, therefore, be defined as indigenous sociology, or worse still, ‘teaching sociology in the vernacular’, which has been the dominant response to attempts to infuse non-western discourses into global sociology“. Adésinà 2002: 91. For a detailed critique of the indigenization debate, see Keim 2007.

⁵ The following is based on my doctoral research in which I give a series of empirical analyses, statistical as well as some qualitative indicators: Keim 2006.

⁶ This is to be understood as a very macro-level perspective on the discipline. Elsewhere I develop the concept of counter-hegemonic currents in order to account for developments happening at smaller scales, i.e. the development of integrated and locally connected scholarly communities that challenge north-Atlantic domination through their social scientific practice and socially as well as theoretically relevant scholarly production. See Keim 2006: 136-156. For an empirical example of such counter hegemonic currents, see my study on the development of South African labour studies, in: Keim 2006: 157-402. Furthermore, the specific status of scholars who would have to be defined as “hybrid individuals”, i.e. who are moving between several local communities such as renowned representatives of post-colonial studies (Spivak, Said), falls out of the picture. In the empirical analyses realized on the topic of marginalisation (Keim 2006), I pragmatically decided to categorise scholars not according to the colour of their skin or passport, but according to their institutional affiliation. However, this methodological pragmatism does represent a problem in itself and would require more detailed research in order to determine the scope and impact of these hybrid scholars on the several local or national communities they are interacting with.

⁷ Recent examples from the African continent show that scientific development in terms of the building of material and institutional infrastructures and of a functioning, active scholarly community, is not a one-way endeavour and long-term achievements can be reduced to little more than nothing within a few years only through destructive policies and under difficult economic conditions. See for a general, empirical characterisation of the situation in many African countries today, the text on a “free liberal market for scientific labour” by Waast (2001). See for an account of the implementation of specific structural adjustment measures to one of the formerly most important higher education sectors of the continent the example of Nigeria: Bako 1994, 2002. An extreme case of peripheral status due to material and political development problems is Palestinian sociology (Tamari 1994).

⁸ Detailed analyses and empirical evidence of the following are contained in: Keim 2006: 86-123 and Keim, forthcoming. It was in order to allow for an isolation of tendencies of marginalisation from effects of de facto scientific underdevelopment, that I chose two examples of rather well-developed social science systems for the case studies I dealt with in my thesis: South African labour studies and Mexican migration studies.

⁹ Several of the arguments outlined in this paragraph have aptly been dealt with in a recent publication by Connell (2006) who bases her critiques on detailed analysis of the works of three general theorists, namely Bourdieu, Giddens and Coleman.

¹⁰ “Al construirse la noción de la universalidad a partir de la experiencia particular (o *parroquial*) de la historia europea y realizar la lectura de la totalidad del tiempo y del espacio de la experiencia humana a partir de esa particularidad, se erige una universalidad radicalmente excluyente”. Translation W.K.

¹¹ This criticism is not limited to the activities in the North. S.H. Alatas conceptualized the problem as the “captive mind”:

“The habit of using general concepts such as ‘modern’, ‘achievement’, ‘goals’, ‘planning’ and so forth has given birth to a body of scholars’ literature (...) comparable to Diner’s Club cards. They can be used everywhere. It is the preoccupation of the captive mind to indulge in the use of such imported concepts without a proper and meaningful linkage to the objective situation”. (Alatas, 1974: 695).

African, Asian and Latin American sociologists, in many cases, seem to have assimilated the same vision, as Sitas points out:

“The only way out for many southern sociologists is the quietism of borrowing from antinomial and critical concepts from discourses incubated in the Centre (...). Without an alternative ground for thinking, these borrowings, however ‘progressive’ or ‘critical’, consolidate a culture of application (...). But a culture of ‘application’ turns the peripheral sociologist’s ‘space-time’ particularity and locality into a ‘case-study’ and a variation within a ‘same-ness’”. Sitas 2002: 11.

¹² “Aneignungsbestrebungen gehen mit bestimmten Formen der Zentrierung einher; dem *Egozentrismus*, der vom individuellen Eigenen ausgeht, dem *Ethnozentrismus*, der sich auf das kollektiv Eigene versteift, und dem *Logozentrismus*, der auf ein Eigenes und Fremdes übergreifendes Allgemeines setzt. (...) in letzterem Falle werden Eigenes und Fremdes einem Allgemeinen eingegliedert. Im Hintergrund steht eine spezifische Form des *Eurozentrismus*, der das Wunder bewerkstelligt, im Eigenen das Allgemeine und im Allgemeinen das Eigene wiederzufinden“. Waldenfels 1997: 49. “Tendencies of appropriation are accompanied by specific centrisms: egocentrism, which insists on the individual Own, ethnocentrism, which insists on the collective Own, and logocentrism, which relies on a General that encompasses the Own and the Other. (...) in the last case, the particular Own and the Other are subsumed under a common General. The underlying specific form of Eurocentrism miraculously encounters the particular Own in the General and the General in the particular Own”. Translation W.K.

¹³ Shinn, in his analysis of French science, talks about “arenas of diffusion” or “arenas of competition” referring to „traditional arena“ on the one hand – specialized journals, scientific conferences etc. – and alternative arena like the “industrial arena of diffusion”, i.e. the diffusion of scientific knowledge into industry (Cf. Shinn 2002). I adopt his concept of “arena“, which allows for an appropriate distinction between orientations and priorities in social scientific production and communication at a local, regional and international level, between scholars and non-academic actors and audiences.

¹⁴ Considering the limited success of the mentioned deconstructive and critical projects, I propose elsewhere to reorient the attention towards less explicit and rather practical forms of challenging north atlantic domination, in the form of what I conceptualise as “counter hegemonic currents”, see endnote vi.

¹⁵ “(...) c’est le projet épistémique même de la (...) sociologie, sa prétention à construire une connaissance scientifique – quel que soit le critère retenu pour définir celle-ci – qui semble contesté. Tout se passe comme si, cent ans après sa naissance comme discipline scientifique autonome, la sociologie était l’objet d’une remise en cause radicale de sa visée“. Translation W.K.

¹⁶ “(...) surtout, depuis la dernière décennie, l’articulation entre sociologies nationales et corpus commun de la discipline a cessé d’aller de soi pour devenir un lien problématique (...). Le postulat d’universalité des modèles théoriques sociologiques peut être différemment affecté selon la position adoptée et le statut attribué à l’enracinement national de la sociologie (...). Derrière la dénonciation politique de l’hégémonisme peut se profiler, directement ou indirectement, la remise en cause de la prétention même de la sociologie à élaborer un discours universalisable“. Translation W.K.

¹⁷ “Cepalismo”, a theoretical current named after the institution out of which it emerged: CEPAL, „Comisión Económica para América Latina“, a UN think tank established in 1948, with its headquarters in Santiago de Chile.