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# The Fabric of Post-Western Sociology: Ecologies of Knowledge beyond the "East" and the "West"

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**Post-Western Sociology :  
from Asia to Europe**

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**Introduction**

For several centuries, the history of the West has merged with the history of the world. According to Achille Mbembe (2018), the West, which has given the world so much and taken an equal share in return, has become the subject of strong criticism over the past two decades. This was initiated by Edward Saïd, Dipesh Chakabarty, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Homi Bhabba and Syed Farid Alatas, among others. Social science has been profoundly affected by the history of multiple imperialisms, colonialisms and capitalisms over the last five hundred years. The global economy of knowledge is structured around epistemic inequalities, hegemonies and dominations, and there exists a clear division of scientific practices developed between “peripheries”, “semi-peripheries” and “centres”; the invisibility of the coloniality of knowledge (Connell, 2019). Rajeev Bhargava (2013) challenges the situation in which, in various parts of the world, the analytical categories are derived from the Western experience and argues in favour of putting an end to "*the epistemic injustice produced by the West*". The question of epistemic injustice, which includes the indigenisation of knowledge, was posed very early in the 20th century in China, Japan and Korea without being linked to that of coloniality, which was the case in Indian sociology. From the production of an epistemology shared with Chinese sociologists, we proposed a *Post-Western Sociology*<sup>1</sup> to enable a dialogue – on a level footing – on common concepts and concepts situated in European and Asian theories, to consider the modes of creation of continuities and discontinuities, the conjunctions and disjunctions between knowledge spaces situated in different social contexts, to work on the *gaps* between them (Roulleau-Berger, 2016). We will describe an ecology of knowledges in the Western-West, the non-Western-West, the semi-Western West, the Western East, the Eastern East and the re-Easternised East located on an epistemological continuum. We will introduce the idea of the demultiplication, the complexification and the hierarchization of new epistemic autonomies vis-à-vis Western hegemonies in sociology and the new epistemic assemblages between European and Asian sociologies (Roulleau-Berger, 2016 ; Roulleau-Berger, Li Peilin, 2018). While Chinese

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<sup>1</sup> In 2013 Professor Li Peilin, and Professor Laurence Roulleau-Berger have decided to create with the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) and the Ecole Normale Supérieure de Lyon an International Associated Laboratory (LIA) “Post-Western Sociology in Europe and in China”. They are co-chairing this International Laboratory for China and France respectively. In the scientific organization of the LIA, in China the sociology departments of the Universities of Peking, Tsinghua (Beijing), Shanghai and Nanjing are partners of the Institute of sociology, CASS.

sociology constantly oscillated between indigenisation and universalism and epistemic autonomies are diverse, Chinese sociologists agree that Western sociologies should not be considered as being hostile to it. We will then discuss several theoretical heritages of Western sociology and their forms of circulation and appropriation in Asia. We will consider Confucian heritage as an Eastern one and examine how it is revisited today in Chinese, Japanese and Korean sociology. We will give a definition of Post-Western sociology and demonstrate how it apply it in a theoretical and methodological way. Then we will identify some transnational theory, theoretical discontinuities and continuities, located and common knowledge in Western and non-Western context.

## 1. From the global turn to non-Western West

After de-constructing the de-provincialisation of European universalism, various theories have been advanced: Arif Dirlik (2007) proposed the theory of global modernity, Ulrich Beck (2000) the theory of cosmopolitanism. Samuel Eisenstadt (2000) produced the theory of “multiple modernities” to describe through a comparative civilizational perspective the plural forms of modernities in the diverse historical and structural contexts. However, for Ulrich Beck and Edgar Grande (2010), following in the footsteps of Samuel Eisenstadt, Göran Therborn (2003) has considered the different varieties of modernity and non-modernity; he looked at the ways these do not simply co-exist and challenge each other, but also at how they are *entangled* with each other in various ways.

More recently we have to take in account the construction of “non-Western Wests” by different Western scholars in social sciences (Santos, 2014 ; Dufoix, 2013; Bhabra, 2014 ; Brandel, Daas, Randeria, 2018 ; Koleva, 2018 ; Roulleau-Berger, 2011; 2016). Epistemologies of the South have been produced by social scientists based in the global South but also in the global North, looking for recognition of the epistemic and cultural diversity of the world. Epistemic injustice also invites us to an epistemology of absent knowledges and absent intellectual figures. It means to do « a decolonial break » from Eurocentric epistemologies, to consider a plurality of knowledge spaces (Savransky, 2017), and what Raman (2017) called « subaltern modernity as a process of epistemological-spatial/temporal/agential-coalescence constituting a transverse solidarity politics », in demonstrating how resisting subjects are producing livelihood-environmental resistance. In another closed way, Bonelli and Mattar (2017) have purposed a « sociology of equivocal connections » between a plurality of sensory worlds.

Santos (2017) purposed to develop *Epistemologies of the South* (2014) which concerns the production of ecologies of knowledge anchored in the experiences of resistance as the anti-imperial south. For him the North-centric and Western-centric thinking is abyssal and he distinguished abyssal exclusions and non-abyssal exclusions. Santos considered the return of the colonial and the return of the colonizer and called subaltern insurgent cosmopolitanism to describe the global resistance against abyssal thinking. Santos invites us to move from an epistemology of blindness to the epistemology of being is based on the creation of solidarity as a form of knowledge and the mutual recognition of the Others as equal. So three

epistemological demarches are purposed to produce; a new constellation of knowledge and the transformation of the mystified conservative common sense in a new emancipatory common sense, and open a space for a non-colonial or decolonial order : the epistemology of absent knowledges, the epistemology of absent agents, the revisitation of representations and limits (Santos, 2014). So it means to define an anti-imperial South space where a plurality of epistemological Souths structured around counter-knowledges born in struggles (Bhambra, Santos, 2017). Bhambra (2014) purposed ‘connected sociologies’ in arguing for recognition of the historical connections generated by scientific hegemonies, colonialism, dispossession and appropriation. It means using connected histories for a revision of sociology and social sciences.

In dialogue with Santos, for Bhambra (2017) ‘connected sociologies’ is a way to reconstruct theoretical categories and create new understandings that incorporate and transform previous ones. Both Santos and Bhambra are asking the question of aiming a singular global sociology or several alternative global sociologies. Andrew Brandel, Veena Das and Shalini Randeria (2018) propose to unravel the concept of “world anthropology” and to deconstruct the category of the “global South” in demonstrating that different regions of the world have not carried the same value for the making of cosmopolitan disciplinary traditions. For these authors, in anthropology and in sociology, the theme of American hegemony resonates in different locations in different ways, and they advocate being attentive to the multiple contestations and employments of concepts within transnational circulations, the plurality of traditions and styles of thought to move behind the clichés binaries of Eurocentrism and Orientalism. This means producing sociological knowledge in a pluricentric world and asking whether a secular and democratic nation could be built on concepts and institutions of colonial provenance.

If global entanglement (Randeria, 2015) and interconnectedness are the conditions required to understand the assemblages and dis-assemblages between Western and non-Western societies, we can take into account new forms of methodological nationalism from non-Western societies. For example, Manuela Boatcă argues that rethinking Europe from its Atlantic and Caribbean borders successfully challenges the Occidental notion of Europeanness and the modern Nation-state. She advanced the notion of Europe as a creolised space by taking into account the regional entanglements to which European colonialism and imperialism have given rise since the sixteenth century (Boatcă, 2014, 2015). We must also call attention to the subaltern Westerners by disseminating the work of social scientists in the “European semiperiphery”, such as those who have witnessed the rise and fall of different political and social regimes and are aware of the arbitrary and contingent nature of societal institutions. Marina Blagojevic (2019) demonstrated that social scientists in European semiperipheral countries are trapped in a vicious circle of exclusion and marginalisation in the centres of international academic life. They are caught in a series of contradictions – described here as the Catch-22 syndrome. In order to be included in international scientific arenas, they are invited to abandon their original interests, deform their knowledge and original theoretical presuppositions and distort the definition of their native context by cloning Western theoretical models. In the face of pressure from their peers, they defer to Western centres of

science in a context of hierarchical power and resource dependency between strong Western countries, mostly the USA and the UK. Marina Blagojevic wrote : “*What is new is that Western parochialism is being re-packaged and reconstructed as a universal science of the social*”. In semiperipheral countries like Eastern and Central Europe Svetla Koleva (2018) has developed a non-hegemonic sociology in reestablishing continuities with the past of the discipline, and she argues the view of an existing unity of totalitarian experiences of Eastern European sociologies, a unity that is due to the “community of shared destinies” formed by the Central and Eastern European countries after World War II; then she questions the diversity of knowledge productions both within the separate national sociologies and across them. In Central and Eastern Europe the entire post-war history of sociology in communist countries shows that, despite the hostile conditions in which it was practiced, it succeeded in maintaining the scientific tradition of production of knowledge. After the hibernation of sociology during the first half of the 1950’s, Svetla Koleva show how the restoration of sociology was reorganized in different research field from mid 1950s to late 1960s around three tendencies : a Marxist theoretical perspective ; a non-Marxist approach on different theoretical schools and empirical sociology inspired by American one ; an orthodox marxism. Then after the Prague Spring the research fields were reconfigured, methodological reflexion in empirical sociology gradually emerged as Easternization of the Westernized East and plurality of epistemic autonomies.

In Western countries , some scholars are opening their theoretical spaces separating from Western hegemonic knowledge and breaking the dichotomy between the North and the South, West and non-West, modernity and tradition. So in the sense of Lisa Tilley (2017) any decolonial knowledge production must involve to consider a political economy of knowledge. It means a resisting piratic method by doing research otherwise and a mean of returning our work to the intellectual commons ; so she has criticized the linear and static conception of time and space in European epistemologies and has suggested in the process of construction of alternate theories of modernity (Patel, 2010) to scrutinise the ethics of method in taking in account diverse indigeneous conceptions of time.

## **2. Re-easternization of the Westernized East**

In East Asia, the creation of the East Asian Sociologists Network (EASN) in 1992 by Chinese, Japanese and Korean sociologists to produce connected sociologies represented a major challenge. In their preface to “*A Quest for East Asian Sociologies*”, published in 2014 Kim Seung Kuk, Li Peilin and Shujiro Yasawa affirm that the EASN was an initiative to construct a new East Asia and a radically reflexive sociology calling into question the concept of Western modernity. Today in Asian regional forums, intellectuals from China, Korea and Japan continually discuss the modes of producing epistemic autonomies.

### *Epistemic autonomy between Western theory and Korean reality*

According to Park Myoung-Kyu and Chang Kyung-Sup (1999), Western sociology was introduced in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in a specific historical context during which Japanese

colonialism, the Korean War and the Cold War had a strong influence on Korean sociology. From 1910 to 1920, Korean sociology was suppressed under Japanese colonialism, leading to a blank in Korean intellectual history; Korean intellectuals turned to Marxism to criticise Japanese imperialism in the period following the 1930s. Between 1946 and 1996, Korean sociology was a history of constant exposure, accommodation and criticism with regard to Western sociology and the issues of universalism/particularism. While American sociology was very influential from 1953 to 1970, in the 1970s Korean sociologists reintroduced the issues of Western hegemony and the indigenisation of knowledge. Faced with the singularity of the Korean experience characterised by economic growth, individualisation and democratisation, the 90s saw a fundamental change in the relationship between Korean sociology and Western thought. Figures such as Shin Yong-Ha invited sociologists to rebuild a theory that accounted for Korean history, such as Japanese colonialism and North-South national division.

Then, after the 90s, in South Korea, the necessity of an epistemic autonomy affirmed itself rather early. In political science, Kang Jung In (2006) analysed the dependence of the Korean academic world with regard to American political science, which led to the marginalisation of the Korean experience through Western ethnocentrism. Kwang-Yeong Shin (2013) identified three modes of hegemonic social sciences constructed in a double indigenisation of social sciences : the development of paradigms in the West; the dominance of located concepts and theories associated with institutional power; the third one is the contested hegemony that refers to unavailable alternative theories. Kim Seung Kuk (2014) spoke of an “East Asian Community (EAC)” and introduced the idea of the invention of an “East Asianism” to propose the orientalisation of an East Asia westernised from hybridisations of “Western” and “non-Western” knowledge, and to move towards a cosmopolitan society by constructing transnational regional identities. In an in-depth dialogue with Ulrick Beck, Hang San-Jin and Young Hee Shim (2010) also supported a “bottom-up” methodological cosmopolitanism, by putting East Asian identity, history and culture to get over the ‘risk society’ and develop the idea of reflexive modernization. So it means to reappropriate the Confucianism in working out this new vision as an alternative to the Western theory of hegemonic instrumental rationality (Han Sang-Jin, 2019). In the same perspective Chang Kyung-Sup (2010) developed the theory of “compressed modernities” and of the “internalized reflexive cosmopolitization” : « *compressed modernity as a civilizational condition in which economic, political, social and/or cultural changes occur in an extremely condensed manner in respect to both time and space, and in which the dynamic coexistence of mutually disparate historical and social elements leads to the construction of a highly complex and fluid social system* ”; he explained the extreme changes, rigidities, complexities, intensities and imbalances in South Korean society and Asian societies. Chang Kuyng-Sup (2020) , has extended the Eisenstadt’s thesis and Therborn’s thesis to the internal multiplicity of modernities across varying units or agencies of modernity in each national society in distinguishing *colonial dialectical modernity, post-colonial reflexive institutionalist modernization, postcolonial neo-traditionalist modernity, cosmopolitan modernity and subaltern liberal modernity*. Then he has analyzed the variations of compressed modernity and internalized reflexive

cosmopolitization in advanced capitalist societies, transition societies and under-developed societies.

### *Unstable epistemic autonomy in Japan*

In Japanese sociology, the development of an epistemic autonomy is being constructed in different terms. Yatabe (2015) recalls that the Japanese intellectual history for 150 years has been organized around a double process of pendulum oscillation between passion of the West and exaltation of the Japanese and/or Asian spirit on the one hand, of going beyond modernity, on the other hand. For Yasawa (2014), Western sociology was shifted to Japan in the context of a process of cultural translation adapted to the Japanese academic field. Until the 1960s, in the context of the development of capitalism, Japanese sociologists were subjected to the influence of American positivism, then to that of Parsons and Marx. Yasawa then explains that, after 1980, a Post-Modern Japanese sociology was developed, with the reappearance of forgotten pre-war authors such as Takada, Ariga, Suzuki, and an indigenous sociological theory began to form, especially the critical theory from Takeshi, Torigoe in the sociology of the environment, and Hoshikawa in the 2000s about the public space.

Then in Japanese sociology, the theory of individualisation then rallied many sociology scholars (Elliott, Katagari, Sawei, 2013). Yamasaki (1984) distinguished the “hard individualism” in industrial society, the “soft individualism” in post-industrial society and the “individualisation of misfortune” during the decline of the Nation-State. In a post-war context, Saeki (1997) defined individualisation as a process of emancipation from local and traditional communities. Masataka Katagari (2014) described three selves in different periods of Japanese society: the individualised self, the private self and the psychological self. Shujiro Yasawa (2013) showed how a reflexive sociology organised around the production of a transcendental subject is developing – resulting in a post-reflexive self, a hermeneutic self, and a pre-reflexive self. Yasusuke Murakami (2013) distinguished a transcendental approach focused on a post-reflexive self which is disjointed from the world of life.

In this unstable epistemic autonomy, the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami have changed the vision of sociology and anthropology by redefining their status in the public and political space. Today the sociology of social movements, especially anti-nuclear movements, has taken a central role in Japanese sociology. Shujiro Yasawa (2018, 2019) is developing a theory of risk culture instead of risk society following the East Japan Great Earthquake and tsunami disaster to understand non-institutional, emergent sociation, horizontal orders and reflexive communities. Yoshiyuki Yama (2017) has demonstrated how disaster-affected communities that have collective traumatic memories can move forward to recovery, putting forward the concept of “symbolic recovery”. Koichi Hasegawa (2015, 2017) introduced the problematic of continuities and discontinuities of political activism in sociology of social movements following the Fukushima disaster. Daishiro Nomiya (2019) opened a theoretical perspective on social movements as “networks of meanings” by creating a mental map from

Hiroshima to Fukushima to understand the change in mentality. Takakura (2016) suggested that disaster salvage anthropology should be conducted among many stakeholders (anthropologists, government, NGOs and the people affected) in a perspective of intangible cultural heritage.

### *Coloniality and indigeneization in India*

In India, social sciences were born during the English colonial period, with sociology emerging in 1919 at the University of Bombay. In the sociological tradition, Sujata Patel defined two broad epistemes: colonial modernity and methodological nationalism. Ghurye, the father of Indian sociology, developed an orientalist approach to understand Indian society by focusing on the continuities of traditions in social practices and institutions in modern India (Patel, 2010). T.H. Madan (2011) explains the history of the construction of the discipline – a methodological nationalism constituted an intellectual and political resource in India to distinguish itself from the dominant colonial knowledge and to develop an alternative voice; notably, in Calcutta in the 1920s and 1930s, Lucknow and Mumbai, the only universities where sociology and anthropology were taught, saw the appearance of radical nationalisms that encouraged the study of the poverty of peasants, artisans and marginal groups. In Lucknow School, according to Sujata Patel, being Indian was defined in considering simultaneously modernity and traditional/local/indigeneous. According to T. N. Madan, Mukherjee developed a rather universalist perspective and Mukerji a culturalist perspective to construct social science categories; at the beginning of the 1970s, M. N. Srinivas, director of the Department of Sociology at the University of Delhi, proposed a social anthropology, or rather a situated sociology, based on the study of communities and castes from the posture of an “insider” in Indian society; in Srinivas’s perspective the discourse of colonial modernity was paroxistic. During the post-independence period, the sociology produced a replica of anthropological theories and struggles to combat the production of a colonial state discourse on the Indian, or “Sinhalese”, society, as a non-modern society (Madan, 2011). Desai, a Marxist, criticised Indian nationalism by developing perspectives on nation and class in the colonial period and studying new social stratification in rural India and its

Today, some Indian intellectuals support the idea of de-constructing the provincialism of European universalisms by recognising a genealogy of knowledge that is both European and linked to the colonial history. Some Indian sociologists are rethinking earlier themes such as marriage, family, caste and religion (religious rights, pogroms against Muslims and other minorities) and are reframing these subjects by way of intersectionality, exclusions, identities, queer positions... (Patel, 2017). Sujata Patel wrote : *“the heritages of the epistemes of colonial modernity and methodological nationalism entangled our scientific practices and professional cultures in non-modern practices and legitimised traditionalist perceptions and*



*practices*”( Patel, 2017, page 143). We can clearly see how a form of epistemic autonomy was developed in India in composition with a form of methodological nationalism.

Materially, these forms of epistemic autonomies join up in the context of networks of forums, of colloquiums. In China, Japan, Korea, India, different forms of cosmopolitan imaginations are developing, translating differences and diversities of traditions and cultural influences. The political, historical, social and economic contexts affect the production of intellectual epistemic autonomies that defend positions, sensibilities, relationships to different worlds in the scientific field and depending on margins of action and liberty that vary from one country to another.

### **3. Chinese Sociology between indigeneisation and universalism**

In a context of scientific globalization, the presence of changing hierarchical hegemonies, the confirmation of the invisibility of some academic spaces, and even the marginalization of some other academic spaces bring the issue of indigenization of scientific practices back into the spotlight. The issue of the production conditions of the Sinicization of social sciences lies at the heart of the indigenization of sociological knowledge.

In China, the issue of epistemic autonomy vis-à-vis Western sociology was first raised in the 1930s by Sun Benwen. Indeed, within a short range from historical materialism he developed a sociology of the individual which played a decisive role in the Sinicization process of Chinese sociology. Epistemic autonomy can be observed from the moment Sun Benwen, president of the Chinese Society of Sociology, launched the movement of indigenization of sociology, with the aim of producing independent thinking while mobilizing Western methods and theories. At the time of renewal of the discipline in 1979, the issue of the Sinicization of the discipline resurfaced, and in particular whether it should be rebuilt *next*, *with*, or *against* the Western thought by affirming the refusal of hegemonic postures, seeking benchmarks in past or present times of Chinese civilization, as well as in filiations, displacements, hybridizations with European and American ideas (Rouilleau-Berger, 2008a). The question of the epistemic autonomy of sociology via its Sinicization in China has always existed in the idea of producing sociological knowledge emancipated from the hegemonic thoughts related to "Western" sociologies. Thus, contemporary Chinese sociologies appear to find themselves in a sort of partially non-Western mosaic of situated, contextualized and revised constructivisms, linked to historical and civilizational contexts. In Chinese sociology, epistemic autonomies develop in different theoretical perspectives and show a real internationalization of the discipline and the consolidation of new borders.

In 2019, the publication of two articles written by Xie Yu (2018) and Zhou Xiaohong (2020) sparked controversy and raised passionate debates in the field of Chinese sociology. Indeed, this allowed to question American hegemony, which imposes standards of international scientific legitimacy such as the necessity to publish in the American Journal of Sociology as a supra-norm of scientific recognition.

According to Xie Yu, who considers the indigenization of sociology a non-issue, Chinese researchers often use the concept of indigenization with three different meanings:

1. A spatial and temporal contextualization of concepts which appear specifically linked to Chinese society such as the *hukou* (house arrest certificate), the *cha xue ge ju* (a type of association among individuals), etc.
2. The use of Western theories and sociological methods and their reinterpretation in local situations in China
3. Some researchers believe that Chinese sociology must develop new theories and methods based on traditional culture (such as Confucian ethics, the differential association model and the traditional Chinese cognitive system), and even form a new paradigm rooted in Chinese history and culture at the epistemological level. Indigenization means “rethinking and criticizing foreign systems of sociological knowledge”.

Zhou Xiaohong (2020) sees indigenization of sociology as containing the issue of the power of Western hegemonies in the output of the discipline and as taking differentiated shapes in different historical periods. For instance, when the Chinese Society of Sociology was founded in 1930 by Sun Benwen, Xu Shilian, Wu Jingchao, Wu Zelin, Chen Da, Tao Menghe, Quentin Pan, You Jiade and Qian Zhenya, the main issue was integrating Western sociology and testing it within Chinese society with the objective of creating a sociological theory through the creation of the Synthesis School(He Jiyin, 2018).

For instance, at the time of the refoundation of the discipline in 1979 the issue of the Sinicization of sociology was not explored in the same terms, as it was urgent to import and integrate all the Western theories before reinterpreting them, refusing them or synthesizing them with pre-1949 Chinese sociologies. The matter today would rather be that of the reinvention of hybrid paradigms, in which the approaches related to Chinese thinking occupy a central position. For Zhou Xiaohong the main issue is the universal value of sociological knowledge beyond the borders within which it is produced. In a close perspective Liu Wenbin and Wang Yalin (2017) propose a controlled Sinicization of Chinese sociology going beyond the opposition between the universalism of sociology and indigenization as passive resistance to scientific colonialism. Although Chinese sociology, from the point of view of these authors, remains influenced by Marxism-Leninism, by traditional Chinese culture and by Western rationalism, they still suggest to focus on “what makes society”, to think about public life, and to mobilize a historical and civilizational perspective.

Chinese sociologists agree in considering that Western sociologies should not be thought as antagonistic to Chinese sociology. Unlike Post-Colonial Studies, which invite to a de-Westernization of colonial knowledge, Western sociologies and Chinese sociology are not analyzed in a mutually exclusionary relationship. Nevertheless, between 1920 and 1952 several sociological Schools already existed, and they held different conceptions of Sinicization (Li Peilin Qu Jingdong, Yang Yabin, 2009): in the Synthesis School, Sun Benwen studied the foundations of individual behaviors and social environment from the standpoint of a sociology of the individual (Sun Benwen, 1935); in the Rural Sociology School Yang Kaidao (1930) imported the notion of community in Chinese studies to develop the idea of a common local society by going back to the historical foundations of the tradition

of an autonomous rural Chinese society; Pan Quentin (1931) revisited an evolutionist Western theory and proposed a new reflection on the practices and rites of the Chinese tradition, trying to overcome the East/West dichotomy.

At the time of the refoundation of sociology in 1980, the issue of Sinicization was strongly debated in the theoretical framework of two different traditions: 1. Indigenization through the sociology in Hong Kong and Taiwan region. 2. Indigenization through the reconstruction of the discipline in Chinese Mainland. Then, starting from the years 2000, the main wave of Sinicization of sociology defined itself in contrast with both hegemonic Western thoughts and an “excessive indigenization”, so to find a strong place in the international academic environment. For instance, Liu Neng and Wu Su (2019) plead the notion that social and cultural practices in China are in part universal and refuse the idea of an exaggeration of the Chinese exception.

#### **4. Diversification of epistemic autonomies in China**

If Chinese sociology has developed epistemic autonomy before 1949 and since 1979 without facing the issue of the relationship between the colonist and the colonised, modern Post-Colonial Sociology witnesses the development of a multitude of epistemic autonomies in different theoretical perspectives, thus demonstrating a real internationalisation of the discipline and the consolidation of new boundaries. Today, many Chinese sociologists draw from the history of Chinese thought the intellectual resources which are necessary to the reinvention of a sociology which can both be fed by and emancipated from Western influences.

The renaissance of sociological thought in China represented a fundamental moment in the history of global thought. There was a type of epistemological, ethical and political indecency in Western worlds that ignored the sciences of Chinese society, which constitute a practice as ancient as in the West. Although the Chinese language could form a barrier, it was above all the orientalisms that fixed the frontiers of perceived, lived, knowledge – represented as more legitimate than other knowledge. Today in Chinese sociology we could distinguish four forms of epistemic autonomy: *historic epistemic autonomy*, *alternative epistemic autonomy*, *local epistemic autonomy*, *low epistemic autonomy*.

What about an *historic epistemic autonomy*? It means the re-establishment of continuities with epistemic frameworks which had been constructed before 1949 then forgotten. In Europe most intellectuals ignore renowned pre-1949 Chinese sociology; Li Peilin and Qu Jingdong (2011) in *A History of Sociology in China in the First Half of the Twentieth Century* have demonstrated how Chinese Sociology flourished in a context of intellectual blooming comparable to that of the spring and autumn periods and to that of the warring States. This is a context of social reform in which intellectuals defend pragmatic positions. Li Peilin and Qu Jingdong note that, in his 1923 conference "A history of thought in China during the last three centuries", Liang Qichao considers that Chinese thought, since the 16th century, has been a

pragmatic one which has developed in reaction to six hundred years of Taoism; Li Peilin and Qu Jingdong have distinguished in the scientific history of Chinese sociology in the first half of the 20th century five currents of ideas: historical materialism, rural construction and the social survey campaign; the “Chinese School”; the “academic school” or “scholastic school”, and the study of social history. Then the “social survey movement” corresponds to an important movement hatched at the beginning of the 20th century. Qu Qingdong considers *“The inspiration of classic sociology made us realize that the structure and transitions of modern Western society have different traditions, structural conditions, and senses of real-life experiences. The evolutionary trend of history is by no means purely unified. The modernity we see today is one of the possibilities that was derived from modernity; furthermore, different civilizations and communities make their adjustments, transformations, and reconstructions between tradition and modernity»* (Qu Jingdong, 2017, p140)

The production of a *relative epistemic autonomy* could be represented by He Yijin (2018). He has used the concept of the “captive mind” from Syed Hussein Alatas (1974) to analyse the lack of autonomous social sciences in Asia and to explain the monopoly of social sciences that remains intact in a context of abandoning Eurocentrism in social sciences; he is considering if the tense relationship between the West and Post-Colonial Sociology cannot be found in the Chinese context, if Chinese sociology has produced historical materialism as its own counterpart. In the continuity of a long history of sinicisation, Chinese sociology could produce an epistemic autonomy by walking through the “post-colonial fog”. He Yijin proposed the notion of alternative autonomy in analysing the self-adaptations of Chinese sociology in the 1950s. In a novel approach he is showing how Chinese intellectual people remained relatively silent in the debate about Post-Colonial Studies. The production of an alternative epistemic autonomy means to take into account the past, the present and the future of Chinese sociology; so revisiting the historical trajectory of sociology does express an intellectual voice. He Yijin analyses how, on one hand, sinicisation of sociology has been proposed by native scholars to indigenise Western sociology and, on another hand, unlike post-colonial sociology which treats Western sociology as an object to debunk or overthrow, Chinese sociology absorbed Western sociology in producing hybridisations, reformulations and readjustments to Chinese society. The real challenge is how Western sociology can be sinicised and, conversely, how the Chinese interpretations of Western sociology have been changed.

In the affirmation of a *local epistemic autonomy* we will mobilize here the theory of “oriental modernization” by Li Peilin (2015) and the sociology of action by Zhou Feizhou.

Li Peilin largely introduced the concept of "Oriental modernization" to open a space where theoretical thinking together and not separated manner, as has often been the case between Chinese society and modernization. Oriental modernization is an important topic for the Post-Western sociology ; proposing "oriental modernization" is because "oriental society" almost had no relation to modernization in the past several centuries, it seemed to many people that the possibility of "oriental modernization" can only be a "suspension". So, the "Oriental modernization" is not exactly a concept of regional regulations, it should include all

development paths of new experiences in providing world modernization deferent from the West (Li Peilin, 2015).

We also can illustrate *local epistemic autonomy* with Zhou Feizhou (2018) who advanced a sociology of action based on a society of *guanxis*, referring to the concepts of “lun” and “li”. These notions describe the structure of traditional Chinese society and its organisation principles that rely on Cha xue ge Ju forms of association (Fei Xiaotong), or the familial and personal ties which extend to political, economic and social relationships. He distinguishes Western society, characterised by a social structure based on the production of individuals, from Chinese society, structured on family relationship models.

Finally Xie Lizhong has defined Post-sociology as a pluralistic discourse analysis, we cannot believe that all the controversy occurred in a field of social research are only some discourse disputes but all social realities constructed by people have their own objectivity and social phenomena have not « essence ». Post-Sociology is a new perspective in China based on the abandon of “given realism”, “representationalism”, “essentialism”, “fundamentalism”... and the promotion of a multidimensional, dynamic, processual and plural space for sociology (Xie Lizhong, 2012 a,b). Post-sociology is opening an epistemological space on a plurality of theoretical paradigms. Post-Sociology is a Chinese way to establish theoretical assemblages, conjunctions and continuities beyond Western and non-Western theory and do produce Post-Western Sociology. From Post-Sociology, Xie Lizhong (2020) developed a theory of discursive pluralism, distinct from geographic pluralism, to describe Western and non-Western societies beyond epistemic borders linked to indigenous sociological theories. While “geographic pluralism” favours an indigenisation of sociological thought by producing a discourse in a specific time and space, “discursive pluralism” appears to be linked to a form of universalism containing a wide range of discourses that may be applied to any time and space. Moreover, geographic pluralism includes the idea that sociological discourses in non-Western societies cannot be used to understand Western societies. Here we can discuss *low epistemic autonomy* which will become foundational for the construction of Post-Western sociology.

## **5. Legacies and sociological imagination**

In this section, we will firstly discuss the multiple heritages of Western sociology in Post-Western Sociology and their forms of appropriation in Asia, notably Marxism, the theory of Durkheim and Weber, the Chicago School and phenomenological theory. We will then examine how Confucian heritage is revisited in Chinese, Japanese and Korean thought through a sociological imagination.

### ***Western heritages and transformation***

#### ***a. Marxism as sociological tradition***

In China, where Marxism was and still is very influential, Sun Liping, Guo Yuhua and Shen Yuan (Shen, Guo, 2010) from Tsinghua University formulated the sociology of

transformation based on a sociology of practice inspired by a Marxist perspective in the relation between the upper-class and the working class. They suggested that Karl Marx was concerned with the formation of classes and class conflicts under capitalism, Max Weber theorised the cultural foundations of capitalism and Emile Durkheim focused on the capitalistic division of labour. In this way, they emphasise that communism, like capitalism, is a way of life - a civilizing process which exists in everyday practices. Sun Liping, Guo Yuhua and Shen Yuan borrowed from Pierre Bourdieu's sociology of practice by focusing on processes and practices rather than structures. As for Li Lulu (2002), he has remained more faithful to Bourdieu and Marx by focusing on the phenomena of the reproduction of social inequalities in China.

In 1945 in Korea, the post-liberation era saw disputes emerge between Marxists and non-Marxists, with Marxist narratives spreading throughout Korean society to fight against Japanese coloniality. Marxism was recognised as one of the great sociological traditions. Then from 1980 to 1990, young scholars considered Marxism to be a viable alternative in the social sciences to analyse Korean capitalist society (Park, Chang, 1999).

In another way, in India, Desai mobilised Marxist theory to consider social classes, the nation and the state in a radical Indian nationalist language. As director of the University of Mumbai's Department of Sociology, A. R. Desai was considered by D. N. Dhanagare as having produced a real critical thought emancipated from Marxist Western sociologies.

#### *b. Durkheim's and Weber's theory in China*

Durkheim's theory was introduced very early in China. In 1925, Xu Deheng, after studying in France, translated *the Rules of Sociological Method*; he played a major role in the translation of French works, but he will take a new orientation and become interested in Marxist theories. In 1930, Cui Zaiyang translated *Moral Education*, Wang Li *Division of Social Work*. Throughout this period, several theses were supported on French sociology: that of Xie Kang in 1931, that of Xie Zheng Ru the same year puts the theories of Durkheim in the field of social psychology, that of Wu Wenzhao in 1932. During this period, Yang Kun (1932a, b) will play a decisive role in spreading French sociology in China and structuring the sociology of religion. Alongside Yang Kun, other Chinese sociologists including Cui Zaiyang, Hu Jianmin, Ye Fawu, who studied in France, will fuel the debate on the Durkheimian theory in China between 1925 and 1934 (Roulleau-Berger, Liu Zhengai, 2012). Today, intellectual legacies and specific theoretical approaches are still intertwined in Chinese sociology; Durkheim's theories have been developed for the first time in 1949, they had been twice after 1979 and now are revised, for example by Wang Hejian, Chen Tao, Qu Jingdong, Zhao Liwei. For example Wang Hejian (2005) proposed to revisit Durkheim by taking an interest in the production of moral goods in the modern Chinese economy. In a perspective of economic sociology, this involves linking economic morality and the social structure, based on an analysis of professional relationships. Chen Tao (2013) is also interested in the contractual society described by Durkheim, where morality is generated by communal life and where the autonomy and freedom of action of individuals, constrained to social facts, are based on the respect of social rules to produce a "normal" society. For Qu Jingdong (2017b), for example, in Durkheim's perspective, collective life transcends individual existence. If studying the moral and social order requires starting from the production of norms in everyday life, the

relationship between society and state cannot be thought of as antagonistic, but rather as a continuum in which the ethics of professional groups and civic morality link individuals to the state. Lastly, for Zhao Liwei (2014), Durkheim's "theory of suicide" appears to be a major contribution that remains very important to understanding modern societies. In this sense, one could say that Durkheim's study of suicide as a general social fact explains the modern "human condition".

Weber's theory also had a very strong influence in China. Research on China ("Confucianism and Taoism", "The Religion of China") occupies a prominent position in Weber's research system. Firstly Weber's China studies were regarded as eurocentric and hegemonic studies. According to He Rong (2019) Weber's theoretical ambition is to understand the various types of rationalism contained in the world's civilization systems mean that the world's civilization systems are a rational regulatory system of equality, juxtaposition and coexistence, she has considered Max Weber overcame the cleavages between western and non-western civilizations. His research on China is part of the grand system of economic ethics of the world's religions. It is by no means a single process with the West as the only model and teleological orientation, but should follow the inherent logic of each civilization system and have its own characteristics. It can be said this research strategy in his method can avoid Eurocentrism. "Confucianism and Taoism" is not only a study of the spiritual temperament of Confucianism rationalism, that is, the part of dialogue with Protestant ethics, but more than half of the work is devoted to the topic of sociology.

#### *c. Chicago School's heritage*

If in the European urban sociology that developed from the 80s the localized approach could be privileged as in the "community studies" linked to the Anglo-Saxon tradition, we can observe the same movement in Chinese urban sociology since the 80's linked to the influence of Fei Xiaotong. It should also be remembered that the representatives of the Chicago School, Robert Park and his son-in law Robert Redfield, came to teach sociology in China in 1931-1932 and in 1948. Fei Xiaotong in the refoundation's process of Chinese sociology, was strongly inspired by them. The Chicago School is one of the most important scientific community in the history of sociology, has played a major role in the history of Western sociology but also has a continuous influence in non Western countries, especially in China. Urban sociology and what Zhou Xiaohong (2004) identified as social psychology, the two major fields in Chicago school influenced so much the first generation of Chinese sociologists. The remobilization of Chicago School in China in twentieth century is very important has produced *shequ yanjiu* (community studies).

#### *d. Phenomenology in Asia*

In Japan, phenomenological theory was highly influential in the 1990s (Nishihara, 2013). In China however, it is quite a recent phenomenon led by young scholars. For example, in order to solve the basic question "how can we understand each other", Sun Feiyu (2013) first referred, to prominent Chinese scholars of Fei Xiaotong's generation. He then used Schütz's theory, choosing the concept of lifeworld based on the we-relationship and intersubjectivity. This approach is connected to Chinese tradition. While the concept of subjectivity is barely

developed in Chinese sociology, the issue of intersubjectivity is dealt with in terms of sociologies inspired by pragmatism and interactionism. However, intersubjectivity is also connected to the notion of *guanxi*—a very strong concept throughout the entire Chinese sociological field—and Sun Feiyu gives a “Western sense” to this Chinese concept. While Sun Feiyu’s (2018) posture is highly inscribed in Chinese intellectual tradition from a new perspective of sociology of knowledge, he explores rationalisation in sociology as a modern phenomenon of knowledge and its internal dilemma in the development of social science in China. In European theory, most sociologists do not combine psychoanalysis and social theory, so this approach appears to be very fruitful in order to define the boundaries of Post-Western sociology.

### ***Confucian legacy, reactualization and reinterpretation***

In China, Korea and Japan Confucianism appears as a common heritage and is revisited in different ways. In Korean sociology Confucian heritage and Western sociology are mixed but in Chinese and Japanese sociology Confucian heritage is embedded in Chinese or Japanese tradition.

In Korean sociology, Han Sang Jin (2019) defended a post-Confucian approach—in which there is balance between individuality and social relations—into reflexive modernity by bringing community back to human rights in the age of a global risk society. This author draws the link between Confucianism as an Asian tradition and reflexive modernity—sourced from Beck’s concept of conceiving individuality, community solidarity and “communal autonomy” in a hybrid way—in order to understand the agency of social change and build a kind of cosmopolitan Confucianism in the development of public citizens in risk societies. Han Sang-Jin wrote: *“the ultimate goal of the post-Confucian participatory approach to community-oriented human rights lies in the possibility of ‘unconstrained overlapping consensus through an inter-cultural discourse between the East and the West’ (2019, p 46).* Finally, he opened dialogues with Anthony Giddens, Jürgen Habermas, Scott Lash, and Ulrich Beck in particular, on the subject of what makes modernity and the definition of cosmopolitanism. So it means to reappropriate the Confucianism in working out this new vision as an alternative to the Western theory of hegemonic instrumental rationality (Han Sang-Jin, 2019).

In China, Confucian ethics has gradually entered social sciences in the history of modern Chinese academic history. Among them, the “*guanxi* standard” has become the core of sociological research. (Zhai Xuewei, 2020). In China, with the aim of revisiting Confucianism, Qu Jingdong (2017) also proposed to come back to historical views, reconstructing the sociological imagination to understand the reality of Chinese society, it should be return to the theme and context of modern transformation of Chinese social thoughts. According to Qu Jingdong by re-interpretation on Kang Youwei’s theory of the Three Eras - ‘Era of War,’ an ‘Era of Good Governance,’ and an ‘Era of Peace- from classics,.



Thus, Kang Youwei made an explicit judgment that the modern period is an Era of War the Idea of Cosmos Unity should be established as the universal value for world history, and Confucius Religion should be built for cultivation of mores. Kang Youwei blended Buddhism and Confucianism to initiate changes in the political system by adjusting individuals' belief structures, sparking changes in customs to trigger institutional changes. Good governance can only be brought into "cosmic unity" in a Sinicised religion, through Confucianism. Added Buddhism into his history of Three Epochs Today, some social scientists are calling Confucianism a force for transformation in the process of modernizing Asian societies

In Japanese sociology, Yoshiyuki Yama and other scholars demonstrated that sociological thought had also existed in pre-modern Japan since the Meiji period. In this period *Kogaku*, which criticises the neo-Confucianism of the Edo period, and *Nativism* were born. Post-Confucianism and a "sort of sociological thought" have their origins in these two approaches. This perspective of Confucianism and Nativism in the Edo Period in Japan has been largely ignored in Western sociology. This author combines the Western sociological theory of ritual by Durkheim, the Japanese Confucianist theory of ritual by Ogyu Sorai (1666-1728) and the narrative theory of Motoori Norinaga "knowing an empathy toward things" to produce a non-Western hybrid or sociology of "narration" and "narrative".

## **6.What is Post-Western Sociology ?**

The publication of Saïd's work *Orientalism* represented a very important moment in the history of post-colonial thought. Orientalism signified the establishment of systems that would intercept, capture and orient gestures, discourses and viewpoints. This process of interception was particularly selective; by making active knowledge invisible, by seizing "inert" knowledge – like the knowledge associated with ancient philosophies – to incorporate and contain it in sub-fields. The imperial and post-imperial global economy of knowledge is structured and restructured by power and epistemic injustices; according to Raewyn Connell (2019) "within the routine practices of hegemonized sociology in the periphery, crucial features of colonization and colonial society are normally overlooked....so we can understand coloniality of knowledge". Furthermore, we can consider that hegemony is not static and while "old hegemonies" are disappearing, new hegemonies that are emerging.

The post-colonial discourse based itself on the idea of provincialising Europe with (Chakrabarty, 2000), to consider the "subaltern histories" according to their own value, and played a key role over the last thirty years in the international debate on the "global turn" and the end of Western hegemonies. However, as stated by Achille Mbembe (2006), post-colonial studies are characterised by their heterogeneity but not their originality, thus, it is difficult to talk of post-colonial theory. Although, in the context of post-colonial studies, the "post" does not mean "after" but "beyond"(Kilani, 2009) – if the concept of a third space was proposed by Bhabba (2007) to enable heterotopian thoughts to appear – a significant challenge for today's sociologists is to invest in different types of third spaces, both situated and globalised, by creating epistemological conjunctions and disjunctions.

According to Sujata Patel (2017), Eurocentric knowledge is based on multiple and repeated divisions and oppositions, but here Post-Western knowledge is constructed through continuous continuities and discontinuous continuities, discontinuous discontinuities and continuous discontinuities between located knowledge. Post-Western Sociology means working towards displacement and the construction of planes of epistemic equivalence between the conjunctive and disjunctive borders of knowledge to struggle against any form of “epistemic injustice”, to quote Rajev Bhargava (2013) who considers that there are three forms of epistemic injustice: 1) the imposition of a change affecting the content of the epistemic frameworks; 2) the alteration of fundamental epistemic frameworks; and 3) the damaging or loss of the capacity of individuals to maintain or develop their own epistemic frameworks.

How to define Post-Western Sociology? Post-Western Sociology does not only mean encouraging a multiplicity of non-Western narrative voices but also, and above all, identifying the theories they contain and seeing how these can assist us in revisiting and reexamining Western theories. Post-Western Sociology proceeds from the decentring and the renewing of a “discursive pluralism” (Xie Lizhong, 2020) originating in Western West, non-Western West, semi-Western West, Western East, Eastern East and re-Easternised East spaces. Post-Western Sociology cannot be conceived according to a binary mode; it is, above all, relational, dialogue-based and multi-situated. Contrary to global sociology, Post-Western Sociology refuses term-for-term structural comparisons and favours intersecting viewpoints concerning registers of understanding, agreement and disagreement as well as the scientific practices of the co-present actors. Post-Western Sociology can also be defined as a global critical sociology. However, in order to progress towards a global critical sociology, we have opened intercultural spaces for active dialogue between Western and non-Western sociologies (Rouilleau-Berger, Li Peilin, 2012, 2018) .

In Post-Western sociology based on epistemic justice, we are not replacing the Norht’s hegemony of epistemology by another dominant epistemology, we are producing an ecology of knowledges where diverse forms of knowledge may enter into dialogue and are articulated in cosmovisions and emancipatory practices (Pleyers, 2011). I am referring to the following ecology of knowledges in the Western West, non-Western West, semi-Western West, Western East, Eastern East and re-Easternised East. Post-Western sociology is developed in a continuum of assemblages, tensions and the cross-pollination of different segments of this ecology of knowledges. This continuum, through academic and institutional translations, can rapidly be exposed to forms of coloniality which will vary in intensity and create epistemic hierarchies, as we have seen above.

Post-Western Sociology relies on different knowledge processes (Rouilleau-Berger, 2015):

- “knowledge niches” – which appear to be located in western West, non-Western West, semi-Western West, Western East, Eastern East and re-Easternised East;
- intermediary epistemological processes which encourage the partial transfer of sociological knowledge along the continuum of Western West, non-Western West, semi-Western West, western East, Eastern East and re-Easternised East;

- legacies and epistemological spaces in which western West, non-Western West, semi-Western West, Western East, Eastern East, re-Easternised East knowledges are placed in equivalence.

Post-Western Sociology is elaborated from the connections between field practices and the intersecting exploration of what individuals in different situations do, say and think. It utilises not the differences but the *intervals* between the perspectives, practices and concepts of Chinese/Asian and European sociologies to co-produce new knowledge. This is the starting point of the construction process of Post-Western Sociology, and as such, it precedes the conception of theoretical and methodological combinations and assemblages. International sociology and global sociology do not imply this erasing of epistemological boundaries: this is precisely where the distinction between Post-Western Sociology, international sociology and global sociology lies (Li Peilin, Roulleau-Berger, 2018).

How to produce non-hegemonic, Post-Western knowledge? In the Post-Western Sociology *doing with or doing together* looks still central in the fabric of sociological knowledge in taking account alternative political economy of knowledge and *anti-piratic way* (Tilley, 2017). Finally, in according with Vincenzo Ciccelli (2018), *cosmopolitan imagination* is necessary to develop sociological studies of cosmopolitanism in different fields and to define the matrices of singularity and the places of the plurality. In Post-Western Sociology we will be considering both the local and transnational dimensions of academic research as part of our attempt to analyse the effects of societal context on the production of theoretical methodologies based on local research situations. However, we will also be analysing transnational flows between the various contexts of knowledge linked to research methodologies and considering both the processes involved in the production of sociological knowledge and cultural variations in research practices. Theories, knowledge and methods cannot circulate until these equivalences have been established and appear to be relatively stable and framework is based on common conventions and norms governing academic research have been put in place. Practices give rise, in these very different contexts, to sociological knowledge obtained in response to questions that are similar but ‘situated’ in sociologists’ own societal experiences; we will be posing questions about the universal value of sociological knowledge.

This signifies the implementation of multi-situated and contextualised tools to account for assemblies and disjunctions between the narratives of societies, which are all legitimate, as well as to produce a “methodological creolization”. In this instance Post-Western methodology is here federated around dynamic and non-hierarchical combinations of societal contexts, structural processes, individual and collective actions and situational orders. The Post-Western conceptual space is relayed by a methodological space in which sociologists conceive a plurality of temporalities, places, contexts and situations in the construction of tools for field investigation in order to access the plurality of the narratives of society and the multivocality or polyphony (Roulleau-Berger, 2012; Bastide, 2015). Post-Western methodology leads to a multi-situated sociology and a methodological pluralism which does not

necessarily mean fields of investigation in several countries, but rather in several differentiated places.

In the world, in a context of globalization the production of big datas has become a strong scientific and political issue. In China, the quantitative survey in the form of the social survey is presented as very important to understand why differences in scales play a decisive role here. In Chinese sociology, very large quantitative surveys are produced in different places to produce multiscaled national statistics about China's transformation in terms of social structure and social development in thirty years. For example, Chen Guang Jin (2017) examined transformations in the social structural conditions of society in ten dimensions such as demographic, family structure, urban structure, regional structure, employment structure, occupational structure, organisational structure, ownership structure, class structure and income distribution structure. In Europe we have more and more measured and compared quantitative and qualitative surveys in a longitudinal perspective, like the European Panel. The launch of the European Panel in 1994 marked a significant step forward in the French Statistics on the Observance of Household Living Standards. It brings three dimensions: longitudinal follow-up, European comparability and the approach of several themes from the same source. We also developed multi-methods analysis and international comparison.

But we are faced with a surge of social, economic, political, ecological and moral risk situations which transform the lives of individuals and groups in every country in the world. As a result, in sociology we have had to synthesize and diversify an increasing number of quantitative, qualitative and anthropological methods to produce and invent complex approaches that grant access to close and familiar territories, territories that are "mined" and perceived as "dangerous" and distant territories. Liu Neng (2018) proposed to come back to space-based sociology developed by Fei Xiaotong in relying on the methodological concept of "spatial contextuality" connected with Andrew Abbott's sociological theory focused on the analysis of social life and social actions in a specific time-space context. Liu Neng also considers coming back to space-based sociology as a way to counter-balance the "decontextualization error" of modern quantitative sociology. In order to define "spatial contextuality", Liu Neng identified four methodological strategies: pure qualitative space-based sociology; qualitative space-based sociology, such as a pilot study; qualitative and quantitative space-based sociology, single level unit analysis; qualitative and quantitative space-based sociology and multi-level unit analysis. "Spatial contextuality" appears to be a Post-Western concept to practice fieldwork in glocal contexts.

Post-Western methodology is based on *transnational ethnographies of recognition* and moral economies (Roulleau-Berger, 2012). We have considered that both the people we met during our surveys and our- selves have the same bases of competencies at our disposal. In an anti-piratic way (Tilley, 2017), we have adopted an approach which rejected "methodological irony", otherwise known as scholarly knowledge to produce a concurrent analysis, which even sometimes corrects the attitudes of the members of ordinary society (Watson, 2001). For example, we have considered the *nongmingong* (peasant-workers) requests for recognition in China (Roulleau-Berger, 2009) and similar requests of the young French-Maghrebi who live in working-class suburbs in Paris, Lyon and

Marseilles (Rouleau-Berger, 1999). The definition of the framework of the research experience can thus be developed around the production of moral economies, or the transaction, circulation, and exchange of moral and symbolic goods such as confidence, reputation, and consideration. The production of moral economies is the foundation of the interactions between the researcher and the individuals they meet in various societal contexts and local situations where the sociologist is increasingly confronted with an increase in demands for social and public recognition by populations in situations of vulnerability, poverty and social or economic disaffiliation. It is thus necessary to think about the diversity of multi-situated fields by referring to places of social conflict and to requests for recognition.

Producing an ecology of knowledge depends on the competencies of individuals and groups, as well as those of the sociologist who constructs them from honour systems, adjustments, links of the meaning given to the action in the research process, and produces moral economies. Here, the production of knowledge imposes negotiation competencies between the sociologist and the actors which will give rise to cooperative knowledge, abilities to exchange and share competencies, and to correct and readjust action. More precisely, it is about mastering systems to return knowledge upon which configurations of the actors' experiences and activities are based, to understand the grammar of situations and interactions to which the experiential and pragmatic engagement of the actors conform (Cefai, 2007).

## **7. Post-Western space, common and situated knowledge**

In this part, we deal with the continuities and discontinuities of sociological theory of some major theoretical issues. This approach, although not exhaustive, is rather eloquent regarding what remains of common and situated knowledge in Post-Western Sociology. We have identified three following topics as illustrations of shared post-western space :

- Migration and integration
- Ethnicity and space
- Ecological change and global risks

### *Migration and integration*

The process of urban integration in sociology is often related to the question of migration that we will introduce here. First, the assimilation approach characterising the Chicago School's studies of immigration (Park, Burgess, Mc Kenzie, 1925) described how migrants could use adaptation strategies to be settled in urban enclaves; then they would usually leave these places, be involved in competition for space with other social groups, and develop their own social trajectory. Burgess dealt with the concept of urban integration and segregation. The question of upward social mobility among second-generation migrant communities was broached: the assimilation theory initially showed how the children and grandchildren of migrants gradually acceded to the social statuses of the host society and that this process had an element of irreversibility about it.

In the neighbourhoods of European cities, particularly in the working-class suburbs of French cities, spatial, social and economic segregation have increased over the last twenty years. In 2011, young people of North African origin took more than eleven months to get their first job, compared with six months or seven months for those of French descent, and twenty-four months on average to access a stable employment contract, compared with fifteen months for those of French descent. After three years of active life, youths of North African origin occupied more precarious jobs than those of French descent. For children of immigrants, intergenerational mobility seems to be increasingly less linear and may give rise to “segmented assimilation” (Min Zhou, 1999) that reflects the irregular, reversible, unexpected, multidimensional and differentiated aspects of urban and economic integration (Roulleau-Berger, 1999; Roulleau-Berger, Giraud, 2019).

In China, sociologists are interested in understanding the process of social mobility of Chinese migrant workers (Li Peilin, 2012; Li Chunling, 2013) and also of new immigrants in big cities, for example, successive waves of Arab and sub-Saharan traders in Guangzhou. Young Chinese less-qualified migrants form a new urban underclass and experience a new poverty in “urban villages” (Lian Si, 2012), or in new urban areas which appear on the outskirts of megalopolises; some of them are forced to leave big cities and go back to their *laojia*. Second, young migrant graduates gain access to skilled jobs in Chinese mega-cities as technicians or executives in private or public Chinese enterprises and in international enterprises, but most of them remain migrants and are in situations of dequalified job and housing insecurity. These young people, the majority of whom do not have an urban *hukou*, are victims of employment discrimination and social disqualification by local authorities: young graduates with a rural *hukou* cannot easily get to an urban job, some of them are forced into informal jobs or situations of unemployment (Roulleau-Berger, Yan Jun, 2017).

Chinese sociologists are using the concepts of social structures, *guanxi* and individual strategies (Li Peilin, Li Wei, 2013) to understand the migratory experience in Chinese cities. For example, they analyse how the less endowed migrants, in terms of social capital and economic and symbolic resources, are subjected to the forces of political and economic measures; they consider available networks of trust and community solidarities the strategies to find social and spatial anchorage in economic spaces. French sociologists are more using the concepts of structural processes, individuation, agency. For example, we have noticed a proliferation of biographical bifurcations in trajectories structured in the conjunction of professional mobility and spatial mobility, where migrants are using individual and collective capabilities to exist in the city. So we can draw *discontinuous continuities* between Chinese and French sociologies in this case.

### *Ethnicity, space and religion*

In Chinese sociology, just like in European sociology, the deconstruction of the ethnic entity should take the societal and historical contexts into account, such as colonialism and nationalism, which produce classifications, fixed moral and social borders. This signifies the deconstruction of ethnic categorizations and classifications in a constructivist approach,

interethnic relationships according to Frederic Barth as well as ethnic boundaries, globalised religions and transnational spaces. In China, the term "ethnic group" is a foreign concept. Before the 1960s, studies of ethnic groups were rare in Chinese social sciences. Since the 1970s, the theory of ethnic boundaries conceived by Frederik Barth has had broad repercussions in Chinese academic circles and has been widely cited. So around the theory of ethnic boundaries has produced *continuous continuities* between Western European and Chinese sociologies.

In France, according to Jean-Louis Amselle (1990), ethnicity was a fiction or an illusion produced under the influence of imposed identities in a colonial situation. For Alain Tarrus (2000) ethnicity is a resource mobilised by entrepreneurs of identities in inter-group struggles. The public affirmation of ethnicity and tensions between history and memory was also founded by the struggles of postcolonial migrants (Boubeker, 2003); the children of postcolonial immigration would cling to their cultural and religious traditions. Transnational space and transnationalism are strongly linked to local specificities that need to be analysed to understand the plural modes of vernacularisation of South Asian Islam in Western Europe and Southern Africa (Sadouni, 2019).

Turning to ethnicity and religion in France, Abdellali Hajjat and Marwan Mohamed (2013) demonstrated how French elites created the "Muslim problem", and how Islamophobia constructs stigmatizing discourses, with discriminatory practices and physical aggression becoming the weapon of racism which is more or less visible.

Through analysis of the Sinicisation of Islam introduced under the Tang Dynasty, Chinese scholars generally believe that the spread and development of Islam in China has its regional specificities. The Sinicisation of Islam is closely related to the "double identification" of the Hui people: identification with both Islamic culture and traditional Chinese culture (Ding, 2005).

In a constructivist approach, Fan Ke (2017) conducted an in-depth field study of the two main Hui peoples in the Quanzhou region, the Ding clan and the Guo clan. He described the process of "localising" Islam through the activities of the Hui clan and the "reappearance" of Islamic culture. Finally, Mi Shoujiang (2010) developed the concept of "urban Islamic cultural ecology" showing the broad difference between the weakening of urban traditional Muslim communities and rural Muslim communities.

Chinese scholars, following in the footsteps of French scholars, have come to adhere to a constructivist approach to ethnicity (Fan, 2017). They conceptualise the dynamic relationships between ethnicity and cultural identity in order to study ethnic interactions, the relationships between ethnic groups and State and the moral boundaries of ethnic groups (He, 2017). Nevertheless, the question of ethnicity and religion, Islam in this case, is formulated differently in French and Chinese sociologies. For example, situated concepts can be found in Chinese studies such as the process of "localising" Islam or even "urban Islamic cultural ecology", we can see *discontinuous discontinuities* between Western European and Chinese sociologies.

## *Ecological change and global risks*

Environmental sociology began in the 1980s and 1990s with the emergence of environmental problems. In Europe, Anthony Giddens and Ulrich Beck's reflexive modernisation theories inspired the notion of *ecological modernisation* (Mol, Spaargaren, 2000; Mol Sonnefeld, 2000) as "the social scientific interpretation of environmental processes at multiple scales in the contemporary world". More recently, the concept of *environmental justice* has become increasingly central (Nygren, 2014), referring to inequalities in the spatial distribution of risks. Certain authors suggest that we should consider the interaction between environmental justice and vulnerability (Walker, 2009). It is now necessary to consider the environment and *Global Health* issues collectively. As we can see with Covid-19, the epidemic and its fields constitute places of encounter for different ontologies and categories such as the notions of environment, risk, nature, both human and non-human (Le Marcis, 2016). The issue of zoonoses and emerging diseases lies at the heart of what is now Global Health (Biehl 2016). In a transnational health governance, humanitarian interventions are based on a dual imaginary: eschatological (the advent of a future global epidemic) and technological (confidence in the ability of technologies to respond to this risk).

Wang Yusheng (1999) shows that there was a deterioration of the ecological environment in agriculture in the 1980s. Environmental sociology was only introduced as a discipline in China in the mid-1990s. Hong Dayong (2001, 2010) has analyzed the social factors of environmental destruction in contemporary China: 1. the transformation of the social structure of which industrialization, urbanization and regional differentiation 2. the transition of economic and political systems and market economy 3. decentralization, reform and change of control 4. new values with moral decline, consumerism, and the intensification of social mobility. Hong Dayong (2017) now considers that environmental sociology should provide an understanding of China's social transformations by looking at social subjects' perceptions of environmental problems, their reactions, institutional arrangements and changes in cultural values. A body of research has shown how rapid urbanisation, industrialisation and economic liberalisation—that is, compressed modernity—has led to the emergence of environmental problems (Bao Zhiming, Chen Zhanjiang, 2011). Mistrust, more fundamentally, is one of the great challenges in Chinese society. Zhao Yandong and Shi Changhui (2016), distinguished interpersonal trust including the trust in both acquaintances and strangers, and institutional trust including the trust in both governments and social institutions. Several researchers (Huang Jialiang, 2009; Jing Jun, 2009; Luo Yajuan, 2010) have shown how peasant struggles and resistances are organized to defend environmental rights.

In Japan after Fukushima accident, distrust, anxiety and "protest in the street" characterize Japan's civil society. Koichi Hasegawa (2015, 2017) analysed which resources can be mobilized and under what conditions, on another hand how interests, values and beliefs of citizens and activities of social movements can be adjusted and brought into alignment.

In European sociology in a broader perspective, the forming of emergent "public arenas" (Cefaï, 2007; Lascombes, 2018; Poulain, 2019) raises the issue of their democratic nature, as assessed by the modes of participation and the nature of democratic processes involved in the



reconstruction period. The process of emergence of “public arenas” and of different commitment regimes pertains to distinct institutional actors, their forms of mobilization and coordination to produce “interactional citizenship” (Colomy and Brown 1996).

In China, Li Peilin and Wang Xiaoyi (2016), in a political context of an « ecological civilization construction » have shown multi-governance is constructed around ecological migration organized by local and central governments. Jiang Pei (2019) is doing research on the issue of the rural environmental governance in combining rural interest, karma, and kinship. Zhang Qian (2019) considered socio-economic system, natural ecosystem, local culture to analyse how institutional arrangements and ecological knowledge are tested and revised in the fabric of adaptive governance and climate change. Zhang Jieying (2019) introduces the issue of waste governance and green activism in China in showing how a ‘civic’ governing space is expanded by intermediate actors under the radar of State regulation. Recently, the work of Chen Tao and Xie Jiabiao (2016), starting from the question of the environmental resistance of the peasants, show that the question of collective mobilizations in China is built today through processes of influence, diffusion, diffraction between distinct forms of action that can mobilize new types of intermediate actors.

European, Japanese and Chinese sociologists are invited to revise the way of defining inequalities and to conceive their plurality around social and ecological change. Environmental inequalities and injustices could generate a new perspective for both social and spatial justice within a cosmo-political perspective. Reproduction theories and theories of transformation could be combined to understand the complexity of the social construction of risks and disasters by bringing to light *continuous continuities* between Western European, Japanese and Chinese sociologies. If, according to Ulrich Beck (2013), reproduction theories (Atkinson, 2007; Bourdieu, 1979) produce a “narrative of continuity” concerning the unequal distributions of goods, they miss the cosmo-politicization of the poor, their multi-ethnic, multi-religious, transnational life-forms and identities. So we are invited to combine critical sociology and pragmatist sociology (Boltanski, 2010) to apprehend the continuities and discontinuities in the reproduction and production of social inequalities in local and global risk societies. Concerning present day East Asia, Ulrich Beck (2013) spoke of a cosmopolitan risk community (or “Cosmo-Climate”). He has distinguished “cosmopolitan empathy” and the subpolitics of “cosmopolitanism from below”.

In China Li Peilin, in Japan Shujiro Yasawa, in Korea Chang Kyung-Sup consider that we cannot conceive the risk issue in the same terms in Europe and in Asia because different “compressed modernities” mean complexities, diversities and heterogeneities of risks that people face in East Asia today overtake those faced by the Western world. Here we can speak again about *discontinuous discontinuities* between Western Europe and Asian sociologies.

## **Conclusion**

What does the future of sociology and social sciences resemble? With Covid-19 we must invent a new future for social sciences in an increasingly uncertain world by protecting sociology. According to Raewyn Connell (2019), we can avoid both an “oligarchic sociology” - which serves the purposes of dominant powers, transnational corporate managers, financial oligarchs - and a “residual sociology”, in which researchers would be relegated by neo-liberal powers to produce a science of the losers while simplified neoclassical economics takes charge of major policy issues. It is a question of promoting a democratic sociology to contest Northern hegemony in the global economy of knowledge. Post-Western sociology could be defined as a “knowledge of hospitality” . In this ecology of connectedness, local and indigenous theories become alive, visible, active and are mobilised to produce alternative or heteropian canons of knowledge. However, we are still taking in account the control of academic knowledge, the disciplinary divides and gate keeping within certain European and North American scholarship circles, including the hierarchisation of non-Western scholarship and their relegation into area studies (Patel, 2019). In fact, epistemic autonomies become plural and diversify, even hierarchize among themselves, without this dynamic of recomposition of the geographies of knowledge in the social sciences being really perceived on the side of the Western worlds. The question of Western hegemonies continues to arise through the process of recognition, visibility and legitimacy of this plurality of epistemic autonomies. Today, with shared, cross-disciplinary and multi-situated fieldwork practices, we can improve the relations between the hospitality of knowledge and political geography by formulating non-hegemonic sociological perspectives. Furthermore, we can build a “new” ecology of knowledges in the Western-West, the non-Western-West, the semi-Western west, the Western east, the Eastern East and the re-Easternised East in order to understand our common condition in the world.

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