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► **To cite this version:**

Wiebke Keim. Locating the History of Sociology: Inequality, Exclusion, and Diversity. The Palgrave handbook of the history of human sciences, pp.865-892, 2022, 978-981-15-4106-3. 10.1007/978-981-15-4106-3\_66-1 . halshs-03909286

**HAL Id: halshs-03909286**

**<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-03909286>**

Submitted on 21 Dec 2022

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Wiebke Keim

## Locating the history of sociology: Inequality, exclusion and diversity

*Contribution to Handbook on the History of Human Sciences*

### Keywords

Places of knowledge production; circulation of knowledge; centres and peripheries; global Souths; canonisation; decentering the history of sociology;

### Abstract

The history of sociology, until recently, has been the history of sociology in a few countries – France, Germany, Great Britain, the US, and perhaps Italy. A review of a local library selection of history of sociology books illustrates this statement. Recent efforts have started to discuss why this is so. These deconstruct the self-sufficient narrative of sociology as being a reflection of an exclusive and self-contained European modernity characterised by moments such as the Enlightenment, the French or Industrial Revolutions. The argument is put forth that the discipline has remained strongly divided into centres and peripheries of knowledge production and circulation; that North-Atlantic hegemony has been fostered by the introduction of bibliometric indicators based on ISI Web of Science; and that teaching and the socialisation of new generations of sociologists into the discipline have a decisive role in perpetuating unequal perceptions of knowledge. Thorough critiques of the limited scope of the history of sociology have been accompanied by attempts to highlight counterhegemonic potentials and to diversify its legacy.

Academic knowledge aspires to certain degrees of generality, even in the social sciences. This chapter deals with the fact that despite the epistemic pretension to produce generally valid bodies of knowledge, the places of production and circulation of knowledge as well as unequal relationships between those places has shaped the history of sociology. Furthermore, location has an impact on the way this history is written, as well as the way in which this history is perceived by scholars. This chapter outlines the extent to which, and how the mechanisms of place have shaped the history of sociology, the epistemic effects they have produced, and the resistances which have emerged against the established perception of the discipline and the writing of its history.

### [A local attempt to locate the history of sociology](#)

This attempt to locate the history of sociology shall begin from the author's own location. The closest sociological library is at the Sociology Institute of Freiburg University in Germany. Its collection shall provide us with a first impression of the localisation of the history of sociology. Dedicated shelves display 14 books that promise a general history of the discipline: Among them one in four and one in three volumes, as well as one that appears twice as an updated and extended reedition: Wiese ([1926] 1971); Becker and Barnes ([1938] 1961); Barnes ([1948] 1961); Schoeck ([1952] 1964); Naumann

(1958); Mills ([1960b] 1966); Aron ([1965] 1968); Jonas (1976) (since volume one of the first edition was inaccessible, the following relies on this new edition that is identical with the first edition. Jonas (1968a-69); Klages (1969), Käsler (1976b, 1978), Lepenies (1981a, 1981b, 1981c, 1981d), Hauck (1984), Käsler (1999a, 1999b), Kneer and Moebius (2010). Ten are by German authors, three by Anglophone authors (one in German translation), and one by a French author (in German translation). The first thing to catch one's attention is that all the books were either written or edited by men, that nearly all contributors to the edited volumes were also men, and that all those men were based in either Germany (in one case Germany and Austria), France or the US.

We can see where and how they locate the history of sociology in their books by searching through the "content"-pages. Again, *all* persons who appear with their names in the "Contents" are men, i.e., the history of the sociology was not only written but was also made exclusively by men. (On the reasons for the absence of women from the history of sociology, as well as selections of women to be included because of their contributions to the development of the discipline, see Honegger and Wobbe (1998); Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley (1998). Thomas and Kukulian (2016) argue that in teaching classical sociology, the reception of female sociologists has started slowly). Altogether, the names of exactly 200 men appear on the content pages. Only 29 appear three times or more (M. Weber, Durkheim: 11; Comte: 10; Spencer, Simmel, Marx, Pareto: 8; Tönnies: 7; Mannheim: 6; von Wiese: 5; Michels, Sombart, A. Weber, Giddings: 4; Freyer, Sorel, Parsons, Homans, Merton, Lazarsfeld, Habermas, W.G. Sumner, Troeltsch, Tarde, Hobhouse, Hegel, Engels, Scheler, Mosca: 3) and none are black or coloured (On the exclusion of black sociologists, see the tireless work of Morrison on W.E.B. du Bois, e.g. Morris [2015]; on recovering Ibn Khaldun, see Dhaouadi [1990, pp. 319–320]; Soyer and Gilbert [2012, p. 27]; Alatas [2014]). It comes as no surprise, given that we are in a German library, and that most books are in German, that most (15) were German sociologists (R. Michels could count as German and Italian), followed by six US-Americans (Lazarsfeld could count as US-Austrian), four French, two British and two Italian. The selection of books therefore suggests that the history of sociology has happened basically in those five countries, since the men who are considered to be its main representatives were based there.

However, the early books, up to the end of the 1950s, do not speak about this localisation. They do not question *where* sociology started. Instead, they are busy arguing *when* it started. Reference to place remains random: if at all, it is used as a mere encyclopaedic ordering principle. The earliest book titled "History of sociology" by Leopold von Wiese ([1926] 1971), addresses the question of timing explicitly. For von Wiese, sociology started with the works of Comte and Spencer and this was a matter of social evolution: sociology emerges when "the national spiritual culture of a single people has reached a certain level of development" (Wiese [1926] 1971, pp. 14–15; translations of works in languages other than English are by the author), something that, he seems to assume, has happened only in four countries so far. His book then presents the history of British, US, French and German sociologies, but without reflection on the geopolitical implications of this localisation.

Several authors separate a "prehistory" of sociology, one that is very long (e.g., 3000 years for Barnes [1948] 1961; 2500 years for Schoeck [1952] 1964), and often much more inclusive in terms of non-European traditions of social thinking; from the history of the discipline proper, which is mostly timed around Comte's successful suggestion of the discipline's current name, "sociology", and from that time is presented as an exclusively European endeavour (note, however, that the term "sociology" was not

invented by Comte but by Sieyès: Guilhaumou 2006). The significance of other traditions of social ideas is not considered. For Barnes ([1948] 1961), who briefly mentions the situation in Spain, Novicow and Kovalevsky for Russia as well as Cornejo, are the most successful representatives of systematic sociology in Latin America, the relevant caesura separates predecessors from *systematic* sociology. For Schoeck ([1952] 1964), as for von Wiese, it is an evolutionist assumption which explains the European founding moment, in as far as the temporal horizon was delimited within the "occidental *Kulturkreis*". There, the French Revolution, social and political crises caused the development of a "modern consciousness" (Schoeck [1952] 1964, p. 31). Naumann (1958) relates the emergence of sociology proper, defined, as opposed to former social thinking, by its distinctive method, directly to the industrial revolution. Interestingly, Naumann does ask the question of location:

"If one looks at sociology as an academic discipline, one can easily confirm that until the middle of the 19th century, it was in the most proper sense of the term, homeless (...) For one century, sociology enjoyed a right to hospitality in many places" (Naumann, 1958, viii-avii). What he means, however, is not geographical location, but disciplinary and institutional anchoring: "Only a small part of those who accepted it [sociology] were based at university" (1958).

One of the early books on the shelf offers a slightly different perspective: Becker and Barnes' 1938 history of sociology ([1938] 1961). After presenting an extremely broad, global "pre-history" to sociology, the authors include, in the main part on the history of the discipline itself, developments in a wide variety of places –from Eastern European or Russian sociologies to India, China and Japan. Becker mentions Gökalp as one of the first academic sociologists. He is also the only one who includes, for instance, Ibn Khaldun not only as a predecessor, but as a contributor to sociological conflict theory, or Novicov as a sociological critic of Darwinism. Despite this inclusiveness and diversification of locations, in this book as well, location appears as mainly a structuring principle in a very broad-based overview on global sociology. Becker, like Naumann, does not provide any reflection on place.

From the 1960s, as opposed to the rather encyclopaedic accounts prior to that point, histories of sociology in the consulted library start to include sociological reflections on the history of the discipline. At the same time, the process of canonisation is set into practice (insert cross-reference: see contribution on canonisation in the same volume) Mills is the first in the chronological row to speak about the "classics" of sociology as the those whose "work represents the best that has been done by later 19th and earlier 20th-century sociologists, and remains directly relevant to the best work that is being done today" (Mills, 1960c, p. 2). In this argumentative context, Mills includes a reflection which appears today as highly problematic, as outlined below: "In some part, I think, one's intellectual heritage is rather arbitrary, and must be. The order in which one comes upon various books, and the phase in one's development at which the exposure occurs - these are not entirely controllable. And, of course, not everyone is especially concerned with the origins or the conceptions he comes to use. Nonetheless, the conceptions of some men do continue to inform social inquiry and reflection" (Mills, 1960c, p. 2).

We shall see in more detail below that the order in which one discovers sociological books, for instance during our undergraduate studies, is by no means random; there is today intensive debate, contestation and negotiation regarding the origin of concepts that sociologists use; and the fact that "the conceptions of *some men* do continue to inform social inquiry and reflection" has become a problem.

Aron (1965), whose focus is on a few individual theorists (Montesquieu, Comte, Marx and de Tocqueville), and then turns to social thought after 1848, reflects, in his introduction, on the cold war-divide between US and Russian sociologies, without further problematising the geopolitics underlying this divide. Despite this globally observable divide, he still argues that the history of sociology started from a common moment, i.e., modernity and the singular capacity of modern society to be reflexive about social change.

Jonas (1968a-69, 1976), presents a very elaborate history of sociology in four volumes. He dates the emergence of sociology to a specific moment in European history, the Enlightenment. Jonas includes an argument around the significance of studying the history of the discipline: it serves not only as a convenient way into sociology theory, but also a means to locate current social theory within its own tradition. At this point, what happens to the non-North Atlantic traditions? Interestingly, after the main chapters on the core countries that we have defined above, Jonas includes a section on Latin American sociology (Jonas 1968b-69, 154 ff.) as well as a "Digression on other countries" (Jonas, 1968b-69, pp. 158–163). France and Great Britain are identified as the two locations where sociology has a long tradition, because these two countries, as early as the 18<sup>th</sup> century, put forth the idea of autonomous laws inherent in society and made them an object of study. Germany, in turn, represents, for Jonas, the only country, on the grounds of its tradition of idealism, where there was productive intellectual grounds for an innovative reception of French and British sociological debate. As opposed to these three exceptional situations, any other country in the world is marked by mere reception of sociology produced elsewhere. In Italy, the development of sociology only occurred once the ideas of Comte and Spencer had replaced the ancient Italian sociological endeavours that remained too limited within the tradition of antiquity, according to the author. While decolonisation in Latin America provided fertile grounds for British and French reflections on social emancipation and some original thinking has occurred (e.g., Sarmiento Facundo, Mejia, de Hostos, Quesada, Colmo, Alvarez, Cornejo), the ultimate judgment is that Latin American sociology remains within the stage of reception of theory produced in Europe.

Similarly, Klages (1969) assumes the history of sociology to be naturally European because of the specific historical context of emergence characterised by modern crises. He does reflect upon the point that sociology could be of particular importance for the countries of the Third World, not only as a means of self-understanding, but also as a vehicle for self-empowerment. However, in contrast to Aron, who tentatively indicated a sensitivity for the global geopolitical context, Klages fails to acknowledge the meaning of US hegemony when he states "countries that still have to struggle with the problems of a specific traditionalism, still considered as largely legitimate, rely, in their sociological theory-building, much more often than the big industrial nations on Parsons" (Klages 1969, pp. 13–14).

Käsler (1976b, 1978) is the first on the dedicated book shelf to codify the "classics" for German readers at the end of the 1970s. The lengthy "prehistories" that we frequently find up until the 1950s have by now disappeared. The narrative begins with Comte, and is followed by Marx, Spencer, Pareto, Tönnies, Simmel and Durkheim in the first volume and features Mead, M. Weber, Scheler, Michels, Geiger, Mannheim and Schütz in the second. The will to insist on the German thinkers because the book is directed to a German audience is explicitly voiced. The interest in reading the classics, according to Käsler, is a practical one: finding one's "identity" as a sociologist in "being knowledgeable

about the historical 'grounds' on which we stand" (Käsler 1976a, p. 11). While the construction of a "mausoleum" of past thinkers, a history of heroes or monumental figures has to be avoided, Käsler favours the use of the classics to discuss problems, theoretical or methodological, of relevance today. For this author, the specific characteristic of the "classics" is that they continue to be relevant beyond their historical context and can therefore still inform sociological work. Moreover, they set the standards by which current work is still measured. Käsler, in writing this, is very much aware there is no "born classic", but only "made classics" through the current needs and concerns of sociology (Käsler 1976a, p. 15). He is aware, for instance, that some of the German "classics" were turned into "classics" through their US-American reception. What all this means for the discipline outside the core countries is not reflected upon. We shall see below what the 1999 edition tells us about these questions.

Until this point, all works have structured their history of sociology chronologically, combined, in many cases, with a spatial ordering. This is a basic lexicon-approach and does not contain any reflection on the meaning of geography. A few books also simply feature important representatives of the history of sociology. Lepenies (1981), inspired by advances in science studies, is the first in the row to propose an alternative book structure. He focusses on institutions and includes a reflection on the construction of the history of the discipline through the scholarly community. On both accounts, however, the confinement to Europe remains unquestioned in his work. The issue of "national traditions" and "internationalisation" is raised, perhaps explicitly for the first time, reaching back to the failure of Worms' early attempts at internationalisation, to the contemporary endeavours on behalf of the ISA. Truly international social science organisations – in the sense of representing a large variety of national associations and research communities - emerged after 1945 under the auspices of UNESCO (Heilbron et al. 2008). Alongside international associations in anthropology, political science, economics, legal science and psychology, all created between 1948 and 1951, the International Sociological Association (ISA) was founded in 1949. Initially representing a small number of national associations from the core countries, it increasingly gained in international representation: associations from several Eastern European countries joined in the late 1950s, throughout the 1960s and 70s associate members from Latin America and Asia joined. Decolonisation led to increasing membership from southern countries, and after 1989 the regions under former Soviet-domination joined. However, this discussion remains again limited to transnational exchanges, in particular, to the migration of scholars, between three countries – France, Germany and the US.

Hauck (1984) may have offered a challenging intervention in the course of the history of sociology so far, since he explains in his foreword that his book directly relates to his teaching activity at the University of Jos in Nigeria. His aim was to systematise sociological theory by means of a critique of ideology. In relating the emergence of sociology to bourgeois society, Hauck produced a Marxist critique of evolutionism and modernisation theory. Disappointingly, the Nigerian context of production does not seem to have left any impact on the author, since there is no reference to, or reflection on, the Nigerian teaching experience, apart from the mention in the foreword.

Käsler revisits his "Classics" in an updated edition more than 20 years later (Käsler 1999a, 1999b). The selection of early figures, presented in volume I, remains exactly the same as in the first edition, although several chapters are written by different authors. There are three additions: Park, a chapter on the Durkheimians, Mauss and Halbwachs, and on Elias. The second volume adds a selection of

more recent "classics": Lazarsfeld, Parsons, Adorno, a chapter on Freyer, Gehlen and Schelsky, also Aron, Homans, Merton, Mills, Goffman, Luhmann, Habermas and Bourdieu. The criteria for this selection remain the same as in the first edition. The editor's introduction is virtually unchanged, but preceded by several new sections that, finally, explicitly address the problems inherent in the localisation of the history of sociology as we have traced it to this point: Käsler uses the metaphor of "the house of sociology" to structure its history. He identifies Comte as its founding architect. However,

"[t]he concerted scholarly project of sociology, encompassing cultures and epochs, and initiated by scholars of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Occident, became a construction of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its creators were white-skinned Europeans who had grown up in the Judeo-Christian Occident during early modernity" (Kaesler 1999, p. 11).

The way this reflection on the origins and their location is framed is telling of the way a renowned historian of sociology from a core country envisions what are, for him, new challenges, first and foremost of which is the ongoing internationalisation of the discipline:

"International sociology represents today such a breadth that it is constantly necessary to self-critically *locate* anew its research questions, fields of study and methodology. If the sociological approaches of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century already did not formulate a disciplinary identity that reached consensus, the current appearance of international sociology is more and more diffuse. This lack of unity increasingly leads to a situation where sociologists from different camps can hardly communicate on their scholarly progress, since they seem to lack a common language – or maybe even a common object" (Kaesler 1999, pp. 11–12, author's emphasis).

This is precisely why the study of the classics is necessary: "In order to bring it down to an (allegedly) simple denominator: scientific sociology lacks the authoritativeness/binding character [Verbindlichkeit] of a *canon*" (Kaesler 1999, pp. 11–12, emphasis in the text). Käsler's ambition, as he declares, is not to canonise the given set of classics, but rather engage the scholarly community in a negotiation around "what is important and good, what one should read and discuss", since it is only through collegial negotiation that the permanently necessary revisions, additions and eliminations from the canon can be achieved. Nevertheless, the fear of a loss of disciplinary unity and identity, if not ultimately of control over the shape of the discipline, is more than evident in Käsler's account, when he confirms that:

"here, the contributions of sociological classics are of essential significance: They provide us with exemplary, standard texts, they represent the cultural memory of the discipline and in their historical succession they represent its life history" (Kaesler 1999, p. 14).

Clearly, Käsler reacts at this point to the ongoing debates within the ISA at the time, namely to a series of articles in the ISA Journal, *International Sociology*, on the challenges of the internationalisation or globalisation of the discipline, where the indigenisation debate initiated by Akiwowo, among others, generated debate. Contributions to this debate, provoking Archer's presidential speech "Sociology for one world: unity and diversity", were republished in the edited book "Globalisation, knowledge and society: readings from International Sociology" (See the presidential address Archer [1991] as well as the edited volume featuring the debate within the ISA journal *International Sociology*: Albrow and King [1990]). After the 1989 turning point, the voices from a multiplicity of places finally stirred up an

international debate about the contours of the discipline. The limited role for the history and presence of places outside the core countries is clearly announced by Käsler:

"Of course, this house [of sociology] must not become a closed-up fortress, but has to always remain open and hospitable; but it will need to remain conscious of its intellectual core, otherwise it will fall into ruins" (Kaesler 1999, p. 18).

Admitting other locations into the discipline clearly represents a threatening scenario.

The final book on the library shelf, by Kneer and Moebius (2010), offers a unique approach to the history of sociology: instead of starting from a fixed definition of the discipline, from a chronological order or from its representative figures, it builds a history from the discipline's defining controversies. Unfortunately, despite the general title of the book – "Sociological controversies. Contributions to a different history of the science of the social" – , it remains explicitly limited to German-language sociology.

To sum up, throughout the early decades following von Wiese's pioneering attempt, with the exception of the remarkable volume by Becker, histories of the discipline remain limited to four to five countries. They relegate the rest of the world's intellectual traditions – which they do include! – to its prehistory, with no consequences for the subsequent development of the discipline. 'Place' does not matter, if at all, and appears merely as an encyclopaedic structuring principle. Instead, the authors discuss the timing of sociology's emergence and date this through a narrative of European exclusiveness and exceptionalism.

From the 1950s, the "prehistory" and thus the majority world disappears almost completely. Historians proceed towards the codification of a canon and ascribe a specific, practical role to the study of the "classics": finding one's identity as a sociologist, and placing current theory into a long intellectual tradition. Place largely remains a structuring device and refers to four countries only. If at all, other places feature merely as places of reception of sociology produced in the core.

Lepenies (1981a,b,c,d), inspired by advances in the sociology of science, is the first to reorganise the history of sociology around specific themes, making it a social (and not merely intellectual) history. If he refers, for the first time, to "internationalisation", it is exclusively to exchanges between three of the core countries. At the end of the 1990s, Käsler's introduction to his second edition of the "Classics" (whose structure and contents remain otherwise nearly unchanged, if extended), realises that place matters. Through the ISA, the existence and claims of sociologies outside the core countries has become visible – and threatening. The "classics" have a unifying role to play here.

The following sections present recent approaches that help us understand the observed role of place in the history of sociology. Of course, we assume that the place from which the history of sociology is told affects the way it is told and, in particular, the way it is located. The location and positioning of the historian of sociology has an impact on the shaping of the narrative. It therefore may be expected that a library in a German university primarily harbours books by German and North Atlantic scholars who tell the history of their discipline from a German and North Atlantic perspective. However, from ongoing debate amongst historians of sociology, and within the Research Committee 08 of the International Sociological Association, we know that the broad picture presented in this chapter, would be similar in many libraries around the globe. The following sections will help explain the history

of sociology as it is told by historians in a limited number of places, and why it remains focussed on these places, thus becoming recognised as *the* history of sociology. There are several reasons for this.

### 1) The history of sociology is embedded in a broader history of European modernity

The emergence of modern science has long been presented as deriving directly from the indigenous development of European modernity, reduced to a vision of the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution. The significance of those developments for the rest of the world, and the contribution of extra-European scholars to the achievements of modern science, have long been omitted. This has changed only rather recently, through debates in global, connected, entangled (science) histories that have harshly criticised the Eurocentric limitations of prior history writing.

Attempts to write a more global history of the sciences, with a sensitivity to colonial or imperial science, have grown over the last decades (see for example, MacLeod 1982; Petitjean et al. 1992; Raj 2006; Todd 1993). Polanco (1990, 1992) has proposed a general model for the distinction of characteristic traits of central and peripheral science, rather than social science specifically. He can be distinguished as the author who most clearly conceptualises this historical approach in theoretical terms. In analogy with Braudel's "world-economy", Polanco apprehends the development and global distribution of modern science since the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century as "world-science". Its historical centre had been shifting within Europe, and more recently toward the US. The concept of world-science highlights the spatial dimension and geographical location as an explanatory factor for the constitution of the sciences internationally. World-science is defined by Polanco as the largest expansion of a coherent and autonomous science system, divided into centre, semi-periphery and periphery, and thus exerts "domination effects". The formation of scientific communities on the periphery, as a result of the expansion of world-science, is characterised by its exogenous character.

Similar to Polanco's paralleling of world economy and world science, Hountondji (1990, 1994b) draws a connection between historical subordination and the present situation of the sciences in the global South. Drawing on dependency and world systems theory, he understands underdevelopment in the South as a consequence of their historical annexation from the world market and transposes this explanatory scheme to the domain of scientific development:

"In other words, we need to identify the specific, inevitable and structural shortcomings of scientific activity in Africa, and, perhaps, in the Third World as a whole. To such analysis, I wish to contribute the following hypotheses: scientific and technological activity, as practiced in Africa today, is just as 'extroverted', as externally oriented, as is economic activity; its shortcomings are, therefore, of the same nature. That is, they are not cognate or consubstantial with our systems of knowledge as such. On the contrary, they derive from the historical integration and subordination of these systems to the world system of knowledge and 'know-how', just as underdevelopment as a whole results, primarily, not from original backwardness, but from the integration of our subsistence economies into the world capitalist markets" (Hountondji, 1990, p. 7; see also, 1994a, p. 2).

Similar revisions have been proposed for the discipline of sociology given that it has been legitimated as the discipline of modernity *par excellence*. The history of sociology, until recently, was integrated into a broader, Eurocentric narrative of the development of European societies which single-handedly reached the peak of human development. The irresistible attraction of European modernity, to put it bluntly, then pulled the rest of the world in the same direction. Any other elements that would call for a more global, entangled history of the discipline, were left to one side. The history of the discipline was written as one chapter in the broader history of European modernity. We could see this clearly in the attempts to date and contextualise the origins of the discipline in the selection of literature analysed in the first section of this chapter. In the large majority of books, historians of sociology explain the emergence of the discipline as an offshoot of the internal and self-contained emergence of European modernity, including the development of "societal self-consciousness", which was to become sociology's task.

Underlying this narrative is the idea that Europe took the decisive step into modernity single-handedly. Connell's "Northern theory: the political geography of general social theory" (2006), integrated as the first part of her book "Southern theory" (2007), presents an alternative account of the development of sociological theory in historical perspective. It analyses and reflects on the teaching of the canon in US-American study programs, an issue she had previously presented (Connell 1997). There she summarised:

"The familiar canon embodies an untenable foundation story of great men theorising European modernity. Sociology actually emerged from a broad cultural dynamic in which tensions of liberalism and empire were central. Global expansion and colonisation gave sociology its main conceptual frameworks and much of its data, key problems, and methods" (Connell 1997, p. 1511).

Connell delves into the origins of sociology and closely scrutinises the writings of a variety of early "classics" – a practice which has become increasingly rare, an adverse effect of "canonisation". From Connell's reading of early sociological texts, the significance of the colonial project that European thinkers – were justifying to some extent appears as crucial. This aspect of many historical writings has been excluded from the narrative. Many early writings contain reflections on societies outside Europe, social realities that had become known through colonial adventures and needed to be known and controlled to ensure colonial conquest. Those early social scientists often reasoned on extra-European societies within "grand ethnography" or evolutionist frameworks. Empirically, early sociology was often quite global in scope. Yet the direct impact of colonialism on European social theorising is completely omitted in the series of books we have analysed above.

Connell's works shed a different light on the location of "northern theory" within the history of sociology as well as on the process of canonisation and the omissions and distortions of large bodies of sociological literature it promoted. It can be a first element in rectifying the narrative given in the selection of literature analysed in the first section. In it, Europe appeared as the place where modernity emerged, and therefore also as the place where sociology as a societal self-reflection on modernity, is historically located. Because other world regions lag behind in social development and have entered modernity with delay, or have still not fully achieved the modern stage, they can, by implication, only copy Western European sociological production. By implication, they become secondary or subordinated places of knowledge production.

## 2. The history of sociology is embedded in geopolitical power structures

The way the history of sociology is written is not only embedded within a broader history of European modernity. Broader geopolitical power structures also affect the historical perception and representation of places outside of Europe. Global political, economic and ideological power relations have impacted the ways in which the discipline has developed in different places, as well as the way those local developments are perceived by historians of sociology. Several scholars have tried to come to grips with the global constitution of the discipline of sociology, and in particular the unequal relationships between the identified core countries, or global centre, on the one hand, and the manifold peripheries to it, on the other hand.

One of the first attempts to understand the global geopolitics of the discipline of sociology was presented in 1985 by Gareau. We had seen in our selection of literature that some authors commented on the global divide within the discipline with regards to the Cold War. Gareau's article "The multinational version of social science with emphasis upon the discipline of sociology" (1985) distinguishes three social scientific "blocks": Western social science in the US and Western Europe, soviet Marxism-Leninism, and the peripheral social sciences of the South. Gareau empirically sustains his assumption that the three blocks communicate in hierarchical relationships. Basing himself on citation analysis and questionnaires, he comes to the following conclusion:

"The system has been exposed as one which features vertical relations; from the United States to the other Western social science powers and to most of the Third World; from the Soviet Union to the other socialist countries (except China) and to selected Third World countries; and from the middle range social science powers, mostly in Western Europe and elsewhere as well to their peripheries. The centres send out messages, but receive little inflow in return. The peripheries can have more than one centre, but it seems that they have a chief centre. A crucial feature of the system is the lack of communication among the peripheral states; their ties are with the centre. This is notably the case among the Third World states, although an exception – and this only to some extent – is Latin America" (Gareau 1985: 107).

Gareau thus confirms the ethnocentric perspective of Western social science and the intellectual dependency and subordination of the South. Scholarly communication between the West and the South is unilateral and hierarchical. Gareau assumes a purely external determination of the observed intellectual hegemony: US-American social science is not that widely spread and recognised because of its "intrinsic value", but because of the political, economic and cultural domination of the US. Social scientific power corresponds to and relies on economic and political power, because the social sciences are part of a "knowledge industry".

## 3. The discipline of sociology is internally divided into centres and peripheries

A later conceptualisation of centres and peripheries within global sociology seeks to overcome the somewhat crude unilateral economic and geopolitical determinism inherent in Gareau's approach.

Indeed, his perspective neglects the fact that conceptual, institutional, relational and prestige factors *within* the social sciences cannot be exclusively reduced to the global economic and geopolitical situation. Other conceptual tools are required to handle the existing inequalities and divides between places and how they affect the production and circulation of social science knowledge.

One of the innovative aspects of the centre-periphery-approach at the time of its emergence was its conceptualisation of the relationships between, and the reciprocal conditioning of, the global centre and periphery. The three-dimensional model that has been developed within dependency theory for the global expansion of capitalism (Cardoso and Faletto [1969] 1978) can be transposed to the domain of the social sciences, in only partial analogy, for sure, as we are dealing here not with material goods but with knowledge. Three dimensions have thus to be distinguished for the sake of analytical clarity: a dimension of material and institutional infrastructures and internal organisation, where we can distinguish developed from underdeveloped sociologies; a dimension related to the conditions of existence and reproduction, where we can distinguish autonomous and dependent sociologies; and a dimension of international position and recognition, where we can distinguish central and peripheral sociologies (Keim 2009).

First of all, the development of the social sciences requires an appropriate material, institutional and personal basis. Lack of the necessary material infrastructure, but in some cases also the suppression of academic freedom, seem to be major causes for the peripheral status of many southern places. A strongly developed sociology shows a high degree of institutionalisation, with specialised centres for research and teaching, journals and associations. Institutional development requires stable positions and sufficient funding opportunities for academic researchers, as well as a broader academic institutional framework and further infrastructure such as editing houses, a book market, information and communication technologies, well equipped libraries etc. These statements are congruent with Gareau's account. Furthermore, however, a developed sociology is characterised by its *internal* division of labour that covers and continuously develops all domains of sociological activity from empirical data collection and the realisation of case studies at a low level of abstraction to conceptualisation, methodology and theory building. It therefore requires a functioning scholarly community, i.e., a "critical mass" of peers, that constantly communicates, cooperates and critically discusses results, in a thematic as well as cognitive division of labour. The production of scholarly knowledge is always a collective endeavour. Furthermore, the scholarly community determines and maintains the requirements for accession and exclusion from the profession – curriculum development, teaching contents, examination and certification. A developed sociology can thus be defined as a system of autonomous production of knowledge. Consequently, an underdeveloped sociology lacks one or several of the above mentioned characteristics. This first dimension, scientific development, is mainly determined by external factors such as the availability of funding, depending on national economies and government support in the first place, scientific and higher education infrastructures. But the historically evolved hierarchies and inequalities in the production and circulation of social scientific knowledge remain intact even in countries with comparably strong local social sciences (e.g. the case of Japan, Koyano 1976; Lie 1996).

A second dimension of the centre-periphery problem is often, but certainly not always, related to the state of development. At the level of this second dimension, referring to the conditions of existence of given sociologies, we can distinguish autonomous or dependent sociologies. An autonomous sociology

has the capacity for self-reproduction and autonomous development at the level of its staff, institutions and knowledge. Research results are communicated internally and can circulate more widely. On the contrary, dependent sociology requires a steady import of theories and concepts, teaching material and research devices, and requires its staff to have academic degrees bestowed by the universities of the centre. Moreover, it relies on a methodological-theoretical as well as personal basis to which it is unable to contribute. Autonomy is not to be confused with autarchy, in the sense that scholarly activity is in itself always internationally constituted. The difference lies in the fact that autonomous sociology benefits from international exchange and communication, whereas these are an essential requirement for dependent sociology. The problem of dependency has been aptly described by S.H. Alatas (1974; 2006) and S.F. Alatas (2001, 2003, 2006).

The third dimension, centrality and marginality, represents essentially an intra-scientific problem referring to the position and function of given sociologies within the international arena. The terms centrality and marginality are used here to describe the relationship between different places of academic activity. Centrality refers to internationally visible sociologies that enjoy prestige in the international community and that are recognised as the core of the discipline. This applies to their institutions and scholarly authorities, teaching programmes and degrees, prestigious journals and editing houses. Their particular position confers on them the power of setting the dominant research agendas and teaching content, and fashionable methodological and theoretical approaches. Referring to a phenomenon of mutual recognition, definitions of marginal and central science are always somewhat tautological. Central science is often defined as the mainstream in the sense of the international bibliographic databases. However, these databases *are* the mainstream and they *set* the mainstream at the same time.

The hypothesis of such abstract, structural, global centre-periphery models is that sociologies outside the North-Atlantic core countries occupy a marginal position within the international arena. They lack international recognition, and not only are they largely ignored in the rest of the world, but ignorance of their sociology is not even considered a problem. Non-hegemonic sociologies rely on the institutions and scholarly production of the centre, either because they have no local alternative – in this case marginality combines with underdevelopment and dependency – or because they remain oriented, despite local alternatives, to the more prestigious locations in the international field. Empirical analyses help to understand more detail about the impact of those centre-periphery structures on global sociology as well as on the practices in different places (Keim 2008a, 2010a, 2010b, 2011, 2017; Keim et al. 2014; as well as the two world reports on social sciences: International Social Science Council 1999, 2010). Centre-periphery frameworks allow us to approach the hierarchies and divides between places of knowledge production in an analytical, systematic and integrated way. The observed centre-periphery structures within sociology at a global scale account for the way the history of sociology is narrated and for the visibility or invisibility of given places within that narrative.

#### 4. Mechanisms of marginalisation have been historically established within the discipline

Recent scholarship has identified empirically grounded, and analysed, constitutive mechanisms, that have historically evolved and consolidate the inequalities between locations of academic activity. The following briefly presents three examples of such mechanisms: bibliometric databases, the role of

academic libraries, and teaching practices. Other such mechanisms would include, for instance, the disciplinary divides within the social sciences (Wallerstein et al. 1996), publication (Collyer 2016), mobility and migration of students and scholars (Gérard 2013; Jeanpierre 2010; Karady 2002).

Bibliometric databases are not only used by scholars for literature research. They also play a crucial role in institutional or national science policy, research evaluation and promotion, as well as in the production of international university rankings. As such, they play a crucial role in producing and reproducing global divides between peripheral and central locations.

Gareau had already realised that the situation in Latin America was somewhat different from that in other southern world regions. In the meantime, Beigel (2010, 2013a, 2013b) has produced detailed empirical analyses that confirm the particular realities of Latin American social sciences and their history in a long-term perspective. At the same time, the author sheds light on a powerful mechanism of production of centres and peripheries as well as of "segmented circuits": bibliometric databases and their use as evaluation indicators (Beigel and Salatino 2015).

In her work, Beigel shows that international circuits of publication, recognised by academic institutions in the region, have existed since the 19<sup>th</sup> century at the level of Latin America. They have been reinforced with the creation of regional bodies of research and teaching from the 1950s (e.g. Flacso, CLACSO). Today, Latin America has four publication circuits that allow for the construction of scholarly prestige and recognition within the region: first of all, the mainstream circuits with their impact measures and ranking of journals (ISI-Web of Science [ISI-WoS], former Social Science Citation Index; SCOPUS). This mainstream circuit is internationally recognised, but remains limited in circulation in as far as access to those publications is expensive and therefore limited. It remains also limited in terms of indexation of high quality academic journals from peripheral countries and in languages other than English. Second, the transnational open access circuits, such as Google Scholar or DOAJ; third, the regional open access circuits such as SciELO, Latindex or Redalyc, all of which are highly valued within the Latin American social sciences and humanities. Finally, local circuits of non-indexed journals that are often published only in hard copy but confer prestige to university-based academics. Latin America has also produced several national classification systems for journals (Núcleo Básico de Revistas CAICYT/CONICET in Argentina; Publindex in Colombia; QUALIS/CAPES in Brazil; and CONACYT in Mexico, see Beigel 2017, p. 850). Perhaps the most interesting observation is that regional publication circuits pre-existed the introduction of the largely Anglophone mainstream with the rise of *ISI Web of Science* and that they have partly remained resilient to its introduction. In the course of its global imposition for the evaluation of scholarly production anywhere on the globe, this mainstream has marginalised the pre-existing Latin American circuits.

Over the past 40 years, ISI Web of Science has monopolised the accumulation of scholarly prestige. It has penetrated national academic systems everywhere and been established as the single most important measure of "scientific excellence" (also see on the Arab regions e.g., Hanafi 2011). While some scientific disciplines and geographic regions have benefitted from this process, it has marginalised scholarly production in languages other than English, the social science and humanities disciplines and peripheral regions (Beigel and Salatino 2015, p. 13). The existence of Latin American circuits before the introduction of the global mainstream, however, has largely been ignored because the history of the social sciences has often used national boundaries to structure and limit (see above), whereas the Latin American case has been one of international communication from the outset. This internationalism,

because it happened in a peripheral area, has not been perceived as such in the historiography of the disciplines. What needs to be taken into account is the pioneering role of Latin America in terms of alternative bibliometric databases, in particular in their open access version, that make the kind of research that Beigel has conducted possible. Beigel's research confirms that the bibliometric mainstream is not only an instrument to measure marginality (and not: productivity), but that it simultaneously produces marginality (Keim 2008b, 110 ff.). Highlighting the structuring impact of bibliometrics on the way different places of knowledge production are perceived is a crucial contribution to redressing the established narrative on the history of sociology as outlined in the first section of this chapter.

### 5. Academic libraries provide unequal access to literature from different places

The academic library appears as a key factor in reproducing global divides between places. Empirical studies confirm, for instance, that it keeps important parts of globally published literature undiscoverable within Europe (Schmidt 2020). Indeed, as the first section of this chapter has shown, from a European perspective, published research results are unequally discoverable depending on their place of origin. Schmidt focusses on the hard structures that steer global scholarly communication, i.e., the (technical) systems of scholarly publishing and indexing, collections and discovery systems. In line with the preceding section, Schmidt states that an important embodiment of those technical systems is the citation database, most prominently the Web of Science (WoS), as well as scientometrics more broadly. Academic libraries increasingly rely on scientometrics to constitute their collections. This consolidates the marginalisation of literatures from peripheral places. Such "unjustified neglect" is a structural problem inherent in the institutional logics of libraries and of collection management.

In order to address the logics at play within European academic libraries, which is the location from where current research practices could be changed towards more democratic ways of doing research, Schmidt looks into academic library ethics and operations. At the institutional level, she does this through an analysis of collection policies, and at the actor level and professional values, through a survey on the self-perception of librarians. The key problem she identifies is that collection management is largely outsourced to commercial aggregators and vendors who base their strategies on mainstream scientometrics:

"Vendor-preselection products [...] decrease the libraries' agency in arranging records of knowledge, and support the maintenance of colonial power structures, since they seem to undermine the discoverability of small, 'local' or independent publishers' programmes" (Schmidt 2020, p. 248).

This practice has led to an immense influence of commercial actors over the entire research information landscape.

This development combines with the professional ethos of librarians, "neutrality", that is largely apprehended as passive neutrality: the users' information needs guide the library' activities, the task is to provide access to what the user wants to access. But since the user cannot discover literature that is not indexed, this leads to a vicious circle. Schmidt instead advocates that the role of the library is "to

counter existing biases through proactive acquisition of resources that confront dominant positions with whatever they tend to marginalise" (Schmidt 2020, p. 283).

Schmidt's book illustrates this point with a study on South East African scholarly production. African scholars are confronted with specific problems. They are caught between contradictory demands for internationalisation on the one hand and local relevance on the other. The discussion about the current distinction between "international" and "local" journals, in the sense that international journals often count as more prestigious and central, is particularly interesting. It shows that different, incoherent definitions circulate and that it is actually unclear what makes a journal international or local. Furthermore, African scholars bump up against a generalisation barrier because their contexts are framed as "cultural differences" with regard to general social theory. Therefore, they are also faced with "area studies incarceration" (Schmidt 2020, p. 147), i.e., their research is seen as being relevant first and foremost to African Studies, rather than to the social sciences' and humanities' core disciplines (on this, also see Wallerstein et al., 1996, as well as the empirical analysis of invited scholars in Keim 2010a).

"Decolonial scientometrics", similar to Beigel's approach mentioned above, confront mainstream scientometrics with alternative means of accounting for the scholarly production in peripheral places, combining university rankings, database indexing, researchers' CVs and institutional records to construct an alternative database. Schmidt provides a thorough description of the African publication market and indexing landscape and complements the results for the region with an affiliation-based approach, zooming into one single institution, the University of Mauritius. The results reveal a substantial quantity of publications: around 2000 journal titles exist in sub-Saharan Africa. We also find here concretely what has been outlined theoretically, e.g., the area studies incarceration in the form of an index of African published literature exclusively included in the AfricaBib bibliography, managed by the African Studies Centre Leiden Library, i.e., SSH research from Africa channelled into African Studies in Europe. The WoS coverage is insufficient, and with the ceasing of Africabib, the discoverability of African journals has worsened. An original insight generated through Schmidt's alternative citation analysis is that "local journals" are not limited to Southeast African authors, and that publishing locally is as important as publishing abroad: "These findings confirm that 'local' journals or publishers are, in fact, very 'international', not only in terms of authorship, but also in terms of where they are read and cited" (Schmidt 2020, p. 226). This means "local" publication does not automatically lead to a local audience, a result that contradicts authoritative studies like Mosbah-Natanson and Gingras (2014), who found that "Global South" scholars prefer to cite "'central' research". Schmidt demonstrates that this claim only holds when the underlying data is based on a "Global North" index. Overall, the poor coverage and limited discoverability of Africa-based research confirms the hegemonic bias in the global research system.

## 6. Teaching socialises new generations of sociologists into the existing biases within the discipline

Let us get back to Mill's ([1960a] 1966) statement that the order in which one reads books and the moment in one's biography when one comes across certain books is overall random; that, furthermore, not everybody engages intensely with the origins of the concepts used. Recent research shows those assumptions to be fundamentally wrong, and particularly for those in peripheral places. A qualitative in-depth study, not on sociology but on political sciences in Argentina, demonstrates how Argentinian

representatives of this neighbouring discipline strategically use foreign knowledge to structure their careers (Rodríguez Medina 2013, 2014b). The author develops a conceptual framework based on approaches from science and technology studies to understand the role of knowledge circulation for peripheral scientific practice.

Indeed, the place of production of social science knowledge matters. It is particularly the unequal relationship between local and foreign knowledges in *teaching*, i.e., the hierarchy of taught knowledge, that makes a huge difference in peripheral places in comparison with central places. It is because the European canon, for instance, is included in the very first semesters of the political science curriculum that Latin American students follow certain mobility patterns: the places that appear as central in the history of their disciplines are the most attractive ones for exchange programs, reinforcing what has been described as 'academic dependency by choice'. Rodríguez Medina's research confirms the same logic in an analysis of the reception of Luhmann amongst Latin American sociologists (Rodríguez Medina 2014a, 2014c). Because of the prestige of authors imported from the centre, a first generation could establish themselves as Luhmann-experts in their home countries by canonising Luhmann in the teaching curricula of their respective institutions. This paved the way for two subsequent generations of Luhmann-specialists who built their careers on acquiring expertise in Luhmannian theory and, later, in adapting and applying it to their own contexts of research.

The innovative aspect of Rodríguez Medina's work is that he provides an analysis of mechanisms that are put into place in peripheral places and which reproduce the asymmetries between centres and peripheries locally. In departing from the hypothesis that knowledge always travels in materialised form, he approaches its circulation as a technology rather than, as historians of the discipline had done previously, as a decontextualised and detached intellectual exercise. His most critical conceptual intervention is certainly the concept of "subordinating object":

"My working hypothesis is that materialised knowledge coming from metropolitan centres – which I call subordinating objects – has the capacity (1) to organise curriculum and to canonise ideas, (2) to define conference themes, (3) to determine research agendas and (4) to regulate academic mobility. Through those capacities, subordinating objects attain a broader capacity to structure peripheral academic fields" (Rodríguez Medina 2014b, p. 13).

Rodríguez Medina's results converge with those of others. Gérard, for instance, analyses how student mobility transforms the disciplinary structuring of Mexican academia and creates hierarchies between researchers depending on their place of study (Gérard 2013; Gérard and Grediaga Kuri 2009). An analysis of the effects of the language of teaching on the reception and production of social science knowledge in Arabophone countries shows that language can have a similar effect as a subordinating object in peripheral places (Hanafi and Arvanitis 2014). Those insights rectify Mills' naïve assumption and shed a different light on the significance and functions of the established "canon". The location of sociological theory and traditions as they are taught worldwide has strong effects on the perception of different places of sociological knowledge production and continuously perpetuates the existing centre-periphery divide.

### The centre-periphery divide has epistemic effects

There is no doubt that the scope for scholarly, international communication, including the global interconnectedness of social scientists, has increased considerably in recent decades. This interconnectedness, combined with social-scientific interest in globalisation, has led to ongoing debates on the internationalisation of the social sciences - something that Käsler (1999a) essentially perceived as a threat at the end of the 1990s. Optimistic voices, for example within the International Sociological Association, talk confidently about the internationalisation of their discipline, a favourite topic at world congresses. However, these developments have also led to fierce contest, and to resistance to the idea of a single, unified and 'truly global' sociology. Arguments against the vision of a globalised discipline have in turn provoked fears of the fragmentation of the discipline into localised, nationalised, or indigenised sociologies, as expressed by Käsler in the re-edition of his "Classics", discussed above.

The implication is that the articulation between the commonly accepted and shared idea of the discipline and its local realisations is becoming increasingly problematic (Berthelot 1998). However, it is not paradoxical that the call for more local sociologies, often emerging from the global South, appears at exactly the time of ever-increasing globalisation. We need to take the dissident voices' backgrounds into account in order to understand that they come as no surprise. They are specific challenges to a North Atlantic domination that has to be resisted in order to develop an independent scholarly tradition, one that speaks from the context of origin.

Besides political challenges and resistance to North Atlantic domination, there is a fundamental epistemological problem. General social theory *per se* purports to produce universally valid statements, concepts and theories. But this does not happen unless these statements have first, engaged seriously with the sociological knowledge produced outside the identified core countries, and second, have been adequately tested against empirical realities outside Western Europe and North America. This has hardly ever been done. The North Atlantic domination therefore leads to a strongly distorted form of universality. It is distorted because to date, this claim of universality relies on both 'radical exclusion' and 'radical inclusion.' These supposedly general theories do not take into account the experience of the majority of humanity, living in the global South. Nor do they recognise the social theories produced in the South. This can be called 'radical exclusion'. In turn, 'radical inclusion' means that despite these multiple radical exclusions, general social theory is regarded as universally valid. The social realities in the southern hemisphere are thus subsumed, without further thought, under the claims produced in the North. This tendency, which only starts to be reflected upon, blurs the distinction between the universal and the particular, and the North-Atlantic particular is thought to have universal validity. This is a fundamental epistemological problem for social science, i.e., for disciplines aiming at the formulation of generally valid claims about society (Keim 2008a).

### Challenging the established history of sociology and the status quo - counter hegemonic potentials

In recent years, several attacks have been launched against the North-Atlantic domination of the social sciences. These have included critiques of Eurocentrism (Amin 1988), the deconstruction of orientalism (Said [1978] 1994), attacks on anthropology and area studies (Mafeje 2001; Kwaschik 2018), calls for the provincialisation of Europe (Chakrabarty 2000), the decolonisation of sociology (Gutiérrez Rodríguez et al. 2010), and critiques of the coloniality of knowledge and epistemic

hegemony (Bhambra 2010; Lander 2003; Mignolo 2004; Quijano 2000). At the same time, constructive approaches call for alternative discourses (Alatas, S.F. 2006), and have developed sociological concepts from knowledge contained in oral poetry (see the debate involving Akiwowo, Makinde and Lawuyi/Taiwo, in Albrow and King 1990; also Adésínà 2002; Sitas 2004).

The ISA has put considerable effort into representing more equally the diverse traditions within sociology (Burawoy et al. 2010; Cruz e Silva and Sitas 1996; Patel 2010). Alatas and Sinha, in "Sociological theory beyond the canon", suggest the need to push its boundaries, to include "other" voices and to read conventional "classics" and alternative ones together (2017). Connell (2007) presents a selection of "southern" sociological traditions, namely from Africa, the Muslim-dominated countries, Latin America and India. Each chapter traces the specific regional theory development, highlighting discussions of local realities versus imported theoretical frameworks, and thus the struggles for intellectual emancipation from the dominant paradigms of Europe and North America. It seems important to note that "Southern theory" is not a call for fragmentation into localised, indigenised or endogenised sociologies, but a powerful argument for a serious international debate on an equal footing, where the experiences and perspectives emerging from the South have to be fully acknowledged and might correct, complete, amplify or supplement existing general theory, where necessary:

"It is helpful to think of social science not as a settled system of concepts, methods and findings, but as an interconnected set of intellectual projects that proceed from varied social starting points into an unpredictable future" (Connell 2007, p. 228).

In this context of debate, "counter hegemonic currents" (Keim 2011) are understood as implicit challenges to North Atlantic domination. They include socially relevant, social science research and teaching, which has the potential to develop into theoretically relevant fields of knowledge production over time in the countries of the global South. An historical example is the emancipation of an entire continental community, Latin America, from the international mainstream through dependency theory, introducing a paradigm shift away from the then dominant, rather Eurocentric, modernisation theory. The Latin American approaches have reached considerable prominence, if not even domination of the German field of development studies, for instance (Ruvituso 2020). Another example is the development of South African labour studies into an autonomous scholarly community, which has recently produced publications relevant to the field of labour studies (Keim 2017). The edited volume "Global knowledge production in the social sciences. Made in circulation" (Keim et al. 2014), deals with the issue of circulation between and across places that occupy unequal positions within the international scholarly community. There the authors argued:

"(t)he so-called 'rise of the South' in international relations and the global economy, accompanied by considerable increases in the research and higher education sectors in the more affluent emerging countries (China, India, Brazil, Turkey, etc.; see Royal Society 2011), is certainly one of the reasons why issues of international circulation and knowledge production are on the agenda today. Changes in circulation patterns within the social sciences as well as in perceptions thereof

are also related to their institutionally fostered internationalisation, here in particular in sociology, through the creation of international scholarly associations, conferences and publications" (Keim et al. 2014, p. 2).

Contributions to this edited volume argue that the ongoing debate on internationalisation or globalisation of the discipline could gain from having a closer look at the experience with alternative forms of cooperation, especially involving South-South networks. The above-mentioned critiques of Eurocentrism and the coloniality of knowledge as well as the calls for alternatives often remain at a very abstract level. In the edited volume, Keim et al. sought to highlight, through engaging with colleagues from five continents, concrete examples of sociological research, of traveling theories and concepts, of precise studies discussed in the framework of international cooperation, i.e., to provide empirical, concrete examples. Ultimately, the book argues that social science knowledge as produced in circulation, i.e., through continuous international exchange, could indeed look different from established mainstream social science.

### Conclusion

It appears the present double movement, in which the scholarly community becomes more internationalised while specific local claims also gain in status, is not as paradoxical as it might appear. On the contrary, it seems this recent development has its foundations in the very history of the discipline, in the realities of its worldwide spread, and in the forms of its international constitution. Tensions between local and general sociologies could be regarded as a direct consequence of growing international communication. Increased international exchange and the gradual accession of peripheral sociologists to central fora confront scholars, who have to date regarded themselves as practising universally valid theory, with the problem of North Atlantic domination. However, the expected internationalisation of the disciplines cannot be achieved on a more equal footing between North and South as long as this problem is not recognised and adequately discussed. Taking the social experience and theoretical production emerging from the global South seriously will enrich the disciplines and enable scholars to reflect upon the possibilities of generalising their claims beyond the local context to a broader empirical basis. Departing from a more critical vision of the discipline's history and the role of different places in it, this remains the major task for the current and future generations of social scientists.

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