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Global Sociology: Multiple, Southern, Provincial?

This chapter continues the discussion of global sociology focusing on the arguments made by scholars based, largely, in Western/northern locations. It looks first at Raewyn Connell's argument for 'southern' theory and Boaventura de Sousa Santos's related arguments against northern epistemology and for a theory from the south. It then goes on to address the work of sociologists Sujata Patel and Michael Burawoy, who have been actively promoting ideas of global sociology and arguing for a 'provincialized' social science.

I

Raewyn Connell (1997, 2007a) is unusual among sociologists for arguing that sociology, at its emergence, had a global sensibility which it then lost in its mid twentieth-century re-organization around a canon and preoccupation with ideas of modernization. She argues that at its inception as a discipline there was no sense within sociology that 'certain texts were discipline-defining "classics" demanding special study' or that there was a particular 'originating event' around which scholarship need cohere (1997: 1514, 1517). The approach was more encyclopaedic than canonical and, she suggests, the research focus of the early sociologists was organized around the theme of 'global difference' rather than understandings of modernity (1997: 1515, 1516–17). Their understanding of 'global difference,' Connell continues,

came about as a consequence of 'the process of economic and colonial expansion' and thus was a concept bequeathed by empire, rather than 'invented' by those sociologists (1997: 1519). As such, Connell suggests that sociology needs to be understood as shaped by imperialism and as embodying 'a cultural response to the colonized world' (1997: 1519). It is this global sensibility, she argues, that then gets lost and requires recovery. While there may be some truth in Connell's arguments, there are also a number of unresolved issues.

The focus of early sociologists on the difference of 'primitive' societies and the traditions of 'others' was less as an end in itself, as Connell herself admits, and more a demonstration of the difference of these societies from their own societies, which were understood as modern. Thus, it could be argued that their articulation of 'global difference' was precisely an attempt to understand the modernity of their own societies and, usually, the failure of others 'to modernize' even if this wasn't the language explicitly used. In this way, the early sociologists were as interested in ideas of modernity and, indeed, in differentiating between the modern and the traditional, as were the sociologists who came later. Further, understanding 'global difference' as a cultural response to colonization does not indicate a comprehension of the ways in which colonialism was implicated in 'metropole' societies, it simply indicates an awareness of difference between them. This, I would suggest, is not sufficient.

The 'global' in the work of these sociologists was simply the provider of resources for the development of their own understandings of themselves; there was little sense of the global being understood as a world-lived-in-common or the global as the condition for the developments they were witnessing. Instead, the global was a bifurcated world of the modern and the traditional where the dominant explanation for the divide was located in processes internal to the societies developing. The impact of imperialism and colonialism on the creation and maintenance of this divide was little regarded. This effacement was furthered in the 1960s shift from a concern with marking difference 'out there', between modern and traditional societies, to examining the

increasingly significant markers of difference *within* modern societies. It was this internal focus, Connell argues, that became the canonical subject matter of modern sociology and 'deleted the discourse of imperialism from sociology' (1997: 1545).

While I agree with much of what Connell writes in describing the intellectual manoeuvres within sociology since the late nineteenth century, I do disagree with some of her interpretations of these developments. Her critique of classical theory as exaggerating 'the importance of a few great men' is apposite; as is her call for 'better history – sociological history – and an inclusive way of doing theory' which goes beyond simply revising the story of great men now to include others (1997: 1546), though, as we shall see, this is precisely what she does in her subsequent book *Southern Theory* (2007a). The unresolved issues mentioned earlier remain to the extent that she understands the earlier sociologists to have correctly identified the global simply in their acknowledgement of the existence of other societies. The failure to address the global as implicated in, and as the condition for, the otherwise Eurocentred *histories* at the heart of sociology is what still requires address.

Nonetheless, Connell does go some way towards addressing these issues in terms of challenging the *contemporary* focus of theorists of globalization on Europe and the US. Taking issue directly with the standard sociological literature on globalization, Connell (2007b: 379) points out the different ways in which the 'northernness' of globalization theory is maintained. This occurs primarily, she suggests, by maintaining an almost systematic exclusion of voices from beyond the metropole. As she argues, it is astonishing that a body of work ostensibly committed to understanding the 'global' is so thoroughly and consistently parochial in its outlook and limited in its engagement with scholars from other parts of the world. Addressing the work of Ulrich Beck, for example, Connell suggests that his work on globalization 'is almost entirely about Europe' (2007b: 378) and, in common with many other scholars, erases the contributions of the world beyond the self-defined metropole. In an essay by Beck on 'The Brazilianization of

Europe', Connell notes that he does not discuss Brazil at all, but rather simply 'uses the name to evoke a horrific sense of social fragmentation, violence, and selfishness, which the European readers, surely, do not want' (2007b: 380).¹ This 'erasure' in contemporary globalization theory continues a long-standing pattern within Western social theory of refusing to engage with the '*social thought of the periphery*' (2007b: 380).

Connell (2007a) seeks to rectify this omission in her book, *Southern Theory*, which presents the thought of a variety of social theorists from formerly colonized and peripheral societies, including settler-colonial countries such as Australia. She argues that while data from the periphery have occasionally been included in the considerations of theorists at the metropole, it is rarer for them to make reference to the social thought or 'social experiences generated in the majority world' (2007a: 64). This is borne out in the discussion later in this chapter where it is noted that Sztompka (2011), for example, suggests that the place of sociologists outside the West is simply to supplement the truths of the centre by providing interesting new data to be added to the general pool of sociological knowledge (a general pool that pre-exists this data and is deemed to be adequate without consideration of it). Connell's primary objective, then, is recovering the 'deep prior experience of subjection to globalizing powers' (2007a: 65), that is consequent of colonialism, and integrating the instances of social thought that emanate from this into more generally accepted genealogies of social theory. She argues that 'the only possible future for social science on a world scale involves a principle of unification' (2007a: 223); that is, connecting 'different formations of knowledge in the periphery with each other' and with knowledge from the metropole (2007a: 213). However, this remains something of a promissory note with the book on *Southern Theory*

¹ This is repeated in later work, as discussed in Chapter 2, when Beck cautions the West against adopting non-Western standards *which do not bode well*. As I suggested, the point for Beck is that they do not bode well *for the West* since, in his own terms, they are the everyday conditions of existence for the non-West and are only criticized in their extension.

more concerned with opening the canon than with connecting the forms of knowledge it introduces. The latter is something that has been taken up explicitly by the ISA through the work of its regional conferences and, more recently, its National Associations Committee. Before turning to these endeavours, however, this chapter will address the work of Boaventura de Sousa Santos who has made arguments, similar to Connell, regarding the necessity of a theory from the south.

II

Santos (2001, 2006) situates his epistemological arguments in the context of a distinct understanding of globalization. He suggests that there are many forms of globalization and that our identification of such phenomena is always in terms of 'the successful globalization of a given localism' (2001: 189). He argues further that 'there is no global condition for which we cannot find a local root, a specific cultural embeddedness' (2001: 189). The issue is, however, that we have focused attention on the seemingly successful globalization of the West, as defined through the practices of global capitalism, to the neglect of counter-hegemonic globalizations. These latter are defined by the different modes of resistance to globalization as evident in grassroots movements, democratic mobilizations and new forms of international solidarity as expressed through the World Social Forum, for example. While the logic of hegemonic globalization seeks to keep these different movements and moments separate, Santos argues for the necessity of working through theories of union that would enable them to be productively brought together in contestation of the inequalities and injustices of the hegemonic forms. He outlines three main procedures for this: 'the sociology of absences, the theory of translation and *Manifesto* practices' (2001: 191). I shall address each in turn.

The sociology of absences refers both to the general silences *around* particular experiences and the way in which these silences are actively

created *through* particular processes. It enables an address of what is marginalized, suppressed and, going further still, of what has not been allowed to exist in the first place. It also focuses on the processes that obstruct connections to be made between different struggles and knowledges to demonstrate how the 'incompleteness' and 'inadequacy' of counter-hegemonic forms is produced. Santos suggests that hegemonic globalization overlays an understanding of the global upon the world that denies and erases local differences. In contrast, 'the universal and the global constructed by the sociology of absences, far from denying or eliminating the particular and the local, rather encourages them to envision what is beyond them' (2001: 191). In other words, the sociology of absences argues for understandings of the global to be created through the nonlinear accretion of local engagements; an endeavour that Santos (2006) has also called 'insurgent cosmopolitanism'. While the sociology of absences can be used to identify or locate this general issue, Santos's theory of translation provides the tools necessary for delivering upon the openness of communication that is advocated.

Santos argues for translation to be understood as the means by which particular or local struggles create 'mutual intelligibility' across their various differences; differences, which in other contexts, may have facilitated separation over unity (2001: 192; see also Demir 2011). The theory of translation enables common ground to be identified across a variety of struggles or movements, political and or epistemological, without subsuming or subordinating any of them given that it is envisaged as reciprocal and horizontal. As such, each movement maintains its autonomy of struggle, or difference, as a necessary condition for translation, since, as Santos argues, 'only what is different can be translated' (2001: 192). Once common ground has been identified and negotiated, Santos suggests, mobilizations need to occur on that basis, that is, 'by means of Manifesto practices' that enable the building of alliances (2001: 192). The avowedly political context of these three 'procedures', as Santos calls them, is underpinned by a further epistemological move. This is the excavation of 'the ruins

of the marginalized, suppressed or silenced traditions upon which Eurocentric modernity built its own supremacy' (2001: 193); a call for excavation that has much in common with the postcolonial and decolonial approaches to be addressed at greater length in the following chapter. Where he possibly departs from these other approaches is that he is not suggesting a turn away from what is generally understood as European knowledge.

As part of the project, 'Reinventing Social Emancipation: Toward New Manifestos', Santos edited a number of volumes including one titled, *Another Knowledge is Possible: Beyond Northern Epistemologies* (2007a). In the Introduction, co-written with João Arrisacado Nunes and Maria Paula Meneses, he argues for the necessity of engaging with 'concepts or forms of knowledge – such as the modern sciences, including the social sciences, and the humanities – that were originally elaborated in an Eurocentric context' in order to expose 'the biases associated with these concepts' (Santos *et al.* 2007: xxvi). Once the biases have been exposed, alternative concepts can be proposed to address the incompleteness and inadequacy of the earlier forms. As such, he is not arguing for indigenous or autonomous social sciences, but rather a working through of the limitations of what currently exists in order to develop more adequate understandings for the future.

Santos both advocates and undertakes projects that work from the ground up in identifying partiality and inadequacy in political and epistemological terms. This can be seen clearly, for example, in his consideration of whether human rights can be understood as 'an emancipatory script' (2007b). He argues that, given the long association of human rights with colonialism, simply 'learning from the South' is insufficient redress of Eurocentric conceptualizations, if we are not also cognizant of the ways in which 'the North has been actively unlearning the South all along' (2007b: 22). In this way, Santos builds on Connell's call for Southern theory and goes beyond it by acknowledging the south's implication, albeit silenced, in what passes for northern epistemology. His argument against northern epistemology is not a simple disavowal, and his call for theory from the south is not as replacement

or as additive. Rather, Santos goes further by seeking to uncover the relationships between both and to highlight the ways in which these have been silenced, suppressed and marginalized within dominant modes of knowledge (production). He also calls for mutual learning across traditions and histories, and cognizant of those histories, in the creation of 'an insurgent cosmopolitan politics' (2007b 35). The implication of this is that it would enable us to transform the 'constitutive suppression' of Western modernity, and its claims to universal knowledge, into a global project more worthy of the description 'global'.

III

The most recent examination of the possibilities for creating global sociology specifically comes in the wake of the two conferences of the National Associations Committee of the ISA. The first, held in Miami in 2005, was organized by Sujata Patel, the first vice president for National Associations, and resulted in the publication, in 2010, of *The ISA Handbook of Diverse Sociological Traditions*. The second conference, held in Taipei in 2009, was titled, 'Facing an Unequal World: Challenges for a Global Sociology', and was organized by the then vice president for National Associations, Michael Burawoy, together with Mau-kuei Chang and Michelle Fei-yu Hsieh from the Taiwanese Sociological Association. The papers from this conference have been collected into a three-volume set under the same name and were also published in 2010. Both conferences brought together sociologists from across the world in order to think through what creating a global sociology might entail. While the primary aim of the first conference was to address the diversity, and possibilities for unity, of sociological traditions globally, the second was more focused on the challenges and obstacles in the way of creating 'global sociology'. As such, the first conference focused on examining national traditions through 'a globalizing perspective

that examines the relationship between sociological knowledge and power' (Patel 2010b: 2), with the second examining the state of sociology 'through the bifocal lens of domination and inequality ... so as to create and embrace a global sociology that is equal to the global tasks we face' (Burawoy 2010a: 3). Beyond the individual contributions by scholars around the world, and their specific engagements with the theme of global sociology, the project of the two conferences stands as a testament to Patel's and Burawoy's vision of what a global sociology in practice could look like.

The volumes edited by Burawoy were reviewed in *Contemporary Sociology* by Piotr Sztompka, together with a response by Michael Burawoy, and have been followed by an, as yet, ongoing debate in the ISA bulletin and the ISA Facebook page on the nature of the claims for global sociology being put forward.² This debate draws on themes developed across both conferences and their subsequent publications. The key issue for Sztompka (2011) in his review is that this particular attempt to create global sociology is an attempt to create (yet) 'another sociological utopia'. As he reminds readers on a number of occasions, Sztompka became ISA president in 2002 running on 'a very politically incorrect slogan "Excellence rather than balance," and in spite of that was elected for a four-year term' (2011: 389). Notwithstanding his election, however, Sztompka believes that a particular ideology has pervaded the ISA – one which regards the hegemony of North American and European sociology as problematic; which believes in the existence of alternative, indigenous sociologies; and sees the struggle for global sociology as a way of contesting the hegemony of the dominant forms and creating a balanced unity of the discipline – and that this ideology is given full expression in these volumes. His key concern, following Archer's (1991) earlier comments, is highlighting the fact that 'there is, and can be, only one sociology studying many

² The debate consists of a series of interventions by prominent sociologists from around the world who have posted short articles (notes) on the ISA's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/International-Sociological-Association-ISA/180226035354843?sk=notes> (accessed 12 March 2014).

social worlds' (2011: 389). The place of sociologists outside the West, according to him, is to supplement the truths of the centre. He writes, for example, 'the most welcome contribution by sociologists from outside Europe or America is to provide evidence, heuristic hunches, ingenious, locally inspired models and hypotheses about regularities to add to the pool of sociological knowledge which is universal' (2011: 393). Interestingly, Sztompka identifies a pool of sociological knowledge as universal prior to universal engagement; whereas the very basis of Patel's and Burawoy's interventions is an acknowledgement of the material inequalities that enable some to argue that theirs is a 'universal' knowledge, while the knowledges of others are only particularistic supplements.

Both Patel and Burawoy borrow Dipesh Chakrabarty's (2000) resonant phrase of 'Provincializing Europe' and adapt it for their correlative projects in provincializing the social sciences. Patel (2010b), for example, argues that the commonly assumed singularity of global sociology is posited upon the universalization of, what ought now to be recognized as, the provincial experiences of Europe and later the US. In contrast to such understandings, she argues for the importance of starting from an acknowledgement that 'the claims of each of the traditions of sociological knowledge are *distinct and universal*' (2010b: 16; emphasis added). Their distinctiveness is said to rest in the different ways national traditions contested the claims of North Atlantic sociology and in the process came to articulate 'diversely universal' claims (2010b: 16). While this position might appear to be close to that of theorists of multiple modernities and alternative sociologies discussed in earlier chapters, it actually puts forward a different argument. Patel's focus on the development of national social science traditions locates that development in the context of its relation to dominant forms established by European and North American social sciences through the exercise of colonial and imperial power. By focusing on the constitutive relationships, she provides a more adequate basis from which to think about the development of different traditions, both in terms of their differences and their similarities. In

sum, she is sensitive both to the politics of knowledge production in different locations and across and between those locations.

Patel's (2014b) position is double-edged. She argues for the necessity of the global north to provincialize its knowledge and, at the same time, for the global south to build its own networks of endogenous (not indigenous) knowledges. She suggests that while the knowledge of the global south is already provincialized within nationalist frames, these nationalist frames must nonetheless be further decolonized. 'If social sciences of the Atlantic region promoted Eurocentrism,' she argues, 'those of newly independent countries valorized the nation and the state; the visions of its elite became the frames of doing social sciences' (2014b: 44). Further decolonizing these nationalist frames would involve engaging seriously with social movements and acknowledging the many other sites for knowledge production that exist outside the institutional hierarchies of the university. Patel acknowledges that her approach is methodologically nationalist, but argues that methodological nationalism has different implications depending on its location (see also Falola 2005). In formerly colonized countries, developing a specifically nationalist social science was part of the broader project to rebuild indigenous knowledges and traditions after the devastating effects of colonization, both politically and epistemologically. As such, according to Patel (2014a), while methodological nationalism in the global north can be seen to be embedded in a theory of colonial modernity; in the global south it was located in a contestation of colonial modernity and a desire to establish understandings of its own histories of modernity.

In arguing for the importance of recognizing the particularity of other (national) traditions in the face of universalizing processes originating in Europe and the US, Patel's primary argument is for sociologists to acquaint themselves 'with different ways to do sociology across the world' and 'to foster institutionalised dialogue' across different traditions (2010b: 17). With this, she is arguing for the need to compare contextually and to keep ourselves alert to differences, rather than similarities, when doing comparative work. And this, she suggests,

is only possible if we also keep open the processes of the production, distribution and consumption of knowledge across all levels – local, national and international. Part of her critique, then, is also a critique of the international institutional structures that continue to privilege knowledge from particular parts of the world, over knowledge from other parts. Patel (2014b) suggests that the uneven distribution of resources and of sites of institutional academic power, such as journal and book publishing, determine the international standards against which other traditions, and academics, of social science are judged. These differential conditions further constrain the possibilities for a truly global sociology, either intellectually or practically, to the extent that they reproduce long-standing (colonial) hierarchies and privileges. Patel's arguments, then, engage both with the intellectual problems of thinking social science globally as well as addressing the global institutional conditions that, in part at least, shape and determine it.

IV

Burawoy's conceptualization of global sociology, in turn, begins with a critique of the project led by Wallerstein to 'open' the social sciences (discussed in an earlier chapter). He suggests that Wallerstein's solution to the contradictions of the nineteenth-century paradigm of the social sciences is more an Olympian reconstruction of them than an address of their deficiencies. In particular, Burawoy points to Wallerstein's concern with developing an alternative 'unitary system' that transcends both disciplines and history as another form of 'unelaborated universalism' (2005b: 510). Further, in not addressing the material inequalities in the production of sociology in different locations, Burawoy suggests that Wallerstein simply presents 'a unity of the already powerful' (2010b: 64). In contrast, Burawoy argues for bursting 'the bubble of disinterested knowledge' and grounding the social sciences 'in their particularity and their specific context of production' (2005b: 508–9).

It is only by recognizing the different traditions as they have emerged in their particular social and historical contexts that, he argues, we can begin to develop a truly international sociology; one that is cognizant of existing hierarchies and seeks to address them from the ground up.

Burawoy's critique of Wallerstein, organized around Wallerstein's desire to create a 'grand synthesis' of social science, is matched by his critique of those who seek to defend the diversity of sociologies without due recognition of the inequalities that structure them hierarchically. In addressing the legacies of previous ISA presidents, for example, Burawoy remarks that they have generally tended to defend 'the plurality of co-existing sociologies' but without tackling 'their arrangement in a hierarchical order' or confronting the hegemony of Western sociology more generally (2010a: 13). He adds that the one president who expressed a more cautious welcome for the idea of any proposed unity within a global sociology was the one president to come from a recently decolonized country, T. K. Oomen. Oomen (1991) warned sociologists to be aware that any move towards internationalization did not simply result in weaker sociological traditions being subsumed under the hegemonic Western one.³ Scholars such as Syed Farid Alatas and Raewyn Connell have taken heed of such advice in advancing their own positions for recognition of autonomous sociological traditions and Southern theory. While Burawoy welcomes these initiatives 'for making the project of alternative sociologies imaginable', he suggests that the key issue is that 'now we must make them feasible' (2010a: 15). This, according to Burawoy, would involve not only resisting 'the false universalism of metropolitan hegemony' by 'provincializing' hegemonic sociologies, but also building robust national sociologies in countries where the traditions may be weaker (2010a: 23, 24).

³ Some historians have made a similar case against the enterprise of global history. Toyin Falola (2005), for example, has argued that it is the weaker countries that are being asked to subsume their national histories, their particular histories, to an overarching global history predicated on the national narratives of powerful Western countries. In his account, as global history is seen as a 'transitional narrative' to globalization, the space for African voices is lessened.

For Burawoy, then, global sociology consists of ‘engagements with and even the constitution of transnational publics’ (2005b: 524). It cannot simply be some version of ‘northern’ sociology globalized; instead, it has to be ‘laboriously constituted from below out of particular national sociologies’ (2010a: 25). This means that such an endeavour must start by examining the ‘the local production of knowledge and its division of labor’ internationally before addressing how our shared fate is implicated in these national and global structures, both materially and epistemologically (2010b: 57). Similarly, provincializing social science should not mean ‘a *reactive devolution* into scattered and defensive nativist particularism, but the *reconfiguration* of the existing global division of social science labor’ (Burawoy 2005b: 518). Burawoy’s call for a global sociology, then, builds on the alternative sociologies discourse by drawing explicit attention to the practices of creating a global sociology, globally, and the obstacles that are faced in such an endeavour. It nonetheless rests on a standard assumption of Western sociology as articulating a particular vision of sociology and national sociologies in other places representing other, separate and unconnected, visions.

Burawoy’s concern with how global sociology is actually carried out in practice marks his tenure both as vice president of National Associations (2006–10) and as president of the International Sociological Association (2010–14). Alongside his organization of the conference and volumes mentioned above, he has also established an online newsletter, *Global Dialogue*,⁴ published in 15 languages (with more continually being added), and co-organized teaching resources for a module on ‘Global Sociology, Live!’ together with Laleh Behbehani.⁵ While sympathetic to Burawoy’s intentions and his evident commitment to construct a global sociology through engagement with sociologists located across the globe, there are nonetheless problems with his understanding of global sociology that require address. These are most obviously highlighted in the abstract developed for the course on ‘Global Sociology, Live!’

⁴ <http://isa-global-dialogue.net/> (accessed 12 March 2014).

⁵ <http://www.isa-sociology.org/global-sociology-live/> and <http://globalsociologylive.blogspot.co.uk/> (accessed 12 March 2014).

Behbehanian and Burawoy (2011) start by recognizing that their attempt to create a module on Global Sociology, 'rather than being counter-hegemonic', instead takes place 'on the contested terrain of global hegemony' given that it seeks 'to develop a sociological understanding of global capitalism by exploring its instantiations in different parts of the world'.⁶ They start with David Harvey's work on neo-liberalism and go on to address the local and national consequences of third-wave marketization, that is, global marketization. The course is focused on an address of the 'global dynamics' of contemporary capitalism, its effects in specific contexts, and the possibilities of an emerging global civil society in response to these changes. The latter move they link to the development of global sociology, as will be discussed.

Behbehanian and Burawoy (2011) state that they 'approach sociology as the study of the world from the standpoint of society, understood as civil society – the institutions, organizations, and movements that are neither part of the state nor the market'. While this, they believe, has provided an adequate conceptual framework through which to understand modern societies, that is, national societies, it is more limited when thinking about global societies. This is because, as they suggest, sociologists have rarely 'conceived of the possibility of a *global* civil society that could become the basis of a global sociology'. If there is no global civil society, they ask, 'then what does this mean for the possibility of a global sociology?' They conclude the module abstract by identifying three ways forward. The first focuses on examining the forces which get in the way of developing a global civil society and the second investigates its nascent structures. The third, 'would involve sociology actively partaking in the construction of a global civil society' and, implicitly, resisting third-wave marketization. As such, global sociology would become 'a project of public sociology'.

The primary way in which Behbehanian and Burawoy (2011) introduce the 'global' into their module is by bringing together 'an

⁶ <http://burawoy.berkeley.edu/Global%20Sociology/Global%20Sociology%20Live.pdf> (accessed 12 March 2014).

internationally diverse array of scholars' who contribute 'their varied perspectives' to the topics under consideration. The global is used as descriptor of the contemporary world situation, in particular, in terms of looking at the manifestations of capitalism in different locations across the global; and is a qualifier to the extent that sociologists from parts of the world other than the US are brought in with their 'different' perspectives. While this opens up the possibilities of investigating the manifold consequences of capitalism in diverse global locations, the conceptual structure of sociology that predominates their understanding of the global, analytically, continues to be problematic. Along with the other authors considered earlier, Behbehanian and Burawoy replicate the standard narrative of a sociology of nation states coming to be superseded by a new global reality for which a new global sociology is required. This new global sociology is to address the new global conditions brought into being by third-wave marketization and is to be constituted by a diverse range of voices from across the globe. The one thing that this new global sociology does not do, however, is address the adequacy of sociological categories for thinking about the global.

Behbehanian and Burawoy (2011) implicitly accept the validity of existing sociology for its time, and argue simply for a revised sociology for the changing present. They accept that sociology is a discipline for the address of the world from the standpoint of civil society and they accept that civil society had previously been structured by the nation. What they do not address, however, is that most instances of civil society that they regard as 'national' were in fact colonial and/or imperial. And the societies that they regard as 'modern societies' from whose consideration sociology emerged and developed, were not 'modern' in contrast to other 'traditional' societies, but were rather colonizing as opposed to colonized societies. Using the language of colonization points to the relationship between these societies as well as the global context within which sociology emerged as a discipline focused on the national. Global civil society can only be considered as a new development today if the earlier global interactions constituted via processes of colonialism, imperialism and slavery are effaced from consideration.

V

This chapter and the previous one have perhaps been unusual in considering the development of sociological arguments in the context of disciplinary organizations such as the ISA. Given that the expansion of higher education in many locations has been facilitated by nation state projects and the latter have been most concerned with building education for employment and national citizenship, it is perhaps not surprising that discussions of the discipline should fall so readily into national expressions.⁷ ‘Civil society’ is the sociological concept that is most oriented to national contexts and, in consequence, it is not surprising that the association of sociology with civil society should reinforce the problem of methodological nationalism. However, it is disappointing that the explicit form of global sociology that has been developed in the dialogues generated by the ISA should remain so embedded in a debate between local traditions and (European) universalism (as expressed by Archer (1991) and Sztompka (2011)).

Global social relations have rarely been civil – expressions of voluntary associative activities – in the sense attributed to the civil societies of most sociological analysis. Transnational political domination has been sustained by force and membership in political communities stratified by the racial hierarchies established through colonialism and empire. Global sociology addressed to a global civil society must, at best, be a hope rather than an expression of the relations among current sociologies and the populations they address. The final section of the book now turns to a consideration of the work by theorists who explicitly acknowledge the construction of the global through processes of colonialism and imperialism.

⁷ See, for example, Singh (1979) and Patel (2010c) on the development of Indian sociology and various chapters in Burawoy, Chang and Hsieh (2010) for developments within other national sociologies.