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Introduction

Connected Sociologies is about the disciplinary formation of sociology and its understandings of the global world. It addresses the historical narratives that inform sociological conceptions of the contemporary world order and argues for the necessity of their revision and, therefore, of the revision of sociology itself. This conclusion is arrived at in the light of sustained critiques from a variety of positions contesting the narratives that continue to structure sociological imaginations. As such, the book is an argument for the reconstruction of sociology that works backwards, to bring to the surface other historical understandings, and then forwards, to think about how we might configure sociology differently. The fundamental issue at the heart of this book is the ways in which the global has been understood in a variety of sociological approaches and an examination of how these understandings go on to inform wider sociology. Alongside the epistemological argument, this book also makes a methodological argument against the dominance of a comparative historical sociology based on ideal types, making the case instead for ‘connected sociologies’ as a more productive approach.

Sociology is not just one discipline among other social sciences. It frequently claims, as Habermas (1988) argues, to be central to their organization and, in particular, to the specification of the relationships among the disciplines. For example, it differentiates politics and economics as disciplines concerned with the system and the rational individual and leaves for itself, that is, for sociology, the realm of the social and the cultural, as well as the overarching account of

these distinctions (see Holmwood 2000a). This division – between what Habermas calls the processes of system and social integration – however, is posited alongside a more profound division, and one not remarked upon by him. This is the division between sociology and anthropology; or, in other words, between the social sciences, whose remit is the modern world, and anthropology, whose remit is the traditional. Significantly, anthropology has not been able to avoid direct reflection on the geopolitical circumstances of colonialism and empire that made other societies objects of inquiry for Europeans (see Trouillot 2003).¹ However, the very separation of anthropology and sociology has facilitated sociology's self-understanding as brought about in the European production of modernity distinct from its colonial entanglements. This demarcation, I suggest, is central to the maintenance of particular conceptions of how the history of modernity ought to be understood. This is because the disciplinary divide also maps onto a division of the world which is itself based upon particular (racialized) hierarchies. My argument is that understandings of modernity, as a largely European and/or Western phenomenon at its inception, are predicated on a deficient epistemology that is in urgent need of displacement.

This continues and extends the argument of my previous book, *Rethinking Modernity: Postcolonialism and the Sociological Imagination*, where I took issue with the historical narratives at the heart of sociological understandings of modernity, that is, with the standard histories of the Renaissance, the Industrial Revolution and the French Revolution that are generally regarded as core to the emergence of modernity in Europe. I drew upon the global and postcolonial histories that have been missing from standard sociological accounts to show how they require us to rethink those accounts and the conceptual

¹ Of course, these are not the only subject areas at issue. Geography, like anthropology, is a subject strongly formed by colonialism (see Driver 1992). However, in terms of representations of disciplinary knowledges, most arguments are associated with 'analytic' disciplines (economics, sociology and political science) and their interrelations. It is in the relation of anthropology to sociology that the construction of knowledges in these terms is most clearly seen (see Asad 1979).

frameworks based upon them. In deconstructing the histories of modernity that are placed at the core of the sociological endeavour, I hoped to open up space to think about sociology differently through an acknowledgement of other histories and experiences as well as to enable a reconsideration of the relations between disciplines. In this way, *Rethinking Modernity* pointed to the reconstruction that was necessary if we were to establish a sociology in the present that was different from the sociology of the past and, indeed, enable us to put that earlier sociology into the past.

Connected Sociologies seeks to deliver upon that call for reconstruction. It extends the earlier arguments to offer an alternative way forward, both in terms of the substance of what is recognized as sociology's past and a consideration of how this would alter the way in which we think about sociology in the present and the future. It points to the historical connections generated by processes of colonialism, enslavement, dispossession and appropriation, that were previously elided in mainstream sociology in favour of narrower understandings, as well as to the use of 'connections' as a way of recuperating these alternative histories, and, therefore, sociologies. If *Rethinking Modernity* addressed the parochial character of the histories at the heart of sociology's understanding of the emergence of the modern world, *Connected Sociologies* takes issue with the ways in which the global has come to be reconceptualized, across a variety of sociological traditions and perspectives, after a 'global turn' in the wake of a perceived recent phase of globalization. The past and its sociological forms of misrecognition, I argue, continue to constrain our ability to imagine different futures.

I

The perspective of 'connected sociologies', from which the book proceeds, starts from a recognition that events are constituted by

processes that are always broader than the selections that bound events as particular and specific to their theoretical constructs. It is inspired by the call, by historian Sanjay Subrahmanyam (1997, 2005a, 2005b), for 'connected histories' which, he argues, do not derive from a singular standpoint, whether that be a putatively universal standpoint – which postcolonial theorists have demonstrated as being in fact a particular standpoint linked to colonialism – or a standpoint of the generalized subaltern. Indeed, both a particular standpoint and a universal standpoint in historical sociology tend to be strongly associated with a methodology of ideal types whose constructions are derived from particular value-relevant selections. Their disagreement is over the values deemed relevant, not over the form of the theoretical constructs to which they give rise. To understand events in terms of ideal types is to argue that they are knowable in terms of processes represented as internal to the type. Connected sociologies, in contrast, seek to reconstruct theoretical categories – their relations and objects – to create new understandings that incorporate and transform previous ones.

While knowledge can never be total, the selections we make have consequences for its ordering. That ordering is always open to challenge in the light of different selections and re-orderings. In the standard accounts of ideal types, the consequence is a plurality of processes that are disconnected precisely because the function of ideal types is to separate some events and 'entities' from others and to represent their internal relationships, thereby making other entities and events mere contingencies from the perspective of those relations. The approach of connected sociologies is different. It recognizes a plurality of possible interpretations and selections, not as a 'description', but as an opportunity for reconsidering what we previously thought we had known. Mere contingencies from one perspective become central features in another. This is not an argument for relativism (that is already implicit in standard ideal type methodology), but an argument for the reconstruction of concepts and the reinterpretation of histories in the light of that reconstruction.

The different sociologies in need of connection are themselves located in time and space, including the time and space of colonialism, empire and (post)colonialism. They will frequently arise as discordant and challenging voices and may even be resisted on that basis (a resistance made easier by the geo-spatial stratification of the academy). If some scholars experience their cherished sociological approaches to be under attack by new forms of particularism and localism, it is no response to assert a hegemonic particularism, now represented as 'our tradition'. The consequence of different perspectives must be to open up examination of events and processes such that they are understood differently in light of that engagement. Put another way, engaging with different voices must move us beyond simple pluralism to make a difference to what was initially thought; not so that we come to think the same, but that we think differently from how we had previously thought.

This is the push to reconstruction central to my conception of 'connected sociologies', whereby understandings are reconstructed as a consequence of the significant new connections identified. To put it most strongly, there is no connection where there is no reconstruction; and no understanding remains unchanged by connection. To understand events through their connections is to acknowledge from the outset that addressing particular sets of connections leads to particular understandings which are put in question through choosing other sets of connections. This is not a choice guided by whim, but through an argument for why certain connections were initially chosen and why choosing others could lead to more adequate explanations.

It is perhaps understandable that those challenging dominant positions are most clear about what they bring to the epistemological encounter, while those experiencing themselves under challenge often experience it only as loss of meaning and not the gain of an interlocutor. However, as has frequently been pointed out by postcolonial writers, those who encounter a hegemonic position are formed by it at the same time as they challenge it. What is unrecognized by those who are challenged is the asymmetry of recognition that this involves. So, while

this is explicitly a book of critique, in the light of connected sociologies, it is nonetheless a work of sociological reconstruction formed by the positions it criticizes as well as by the critiques it mobilizes.

II

From its inception, classical sociology was less interested in the delineation of understandings of the global than in examining what were understood to be the European origins of global processes. Both Karl Marx (1976 [1867]) and Max Weber (1905), for example, sought to outline the peculiar conditions of Europe vis-à-vis the rest of the world that they believed to have given rise to the world-historical processes of capitalism (for discussion, see Bhambra 2011a). Indeed, as Eisenstadt puts it, the main issue of the comparative historical sociology that classical sociology inaugurated was to understand ‘the peculiar “qualitative” and “descriptive” characteristics of pre-modern European and non-European societies in relation to, and especially in contrast with, modern (initially European) societies’ (1974: 225). Classical sociologists, then, may have differed in significant aspects of their approaches, but they shared a common core emphasis on the European origins of capitalist modernity.

For Marx (1976 [1867]), capitalism was to be understood in terms of the specific changes in the ‘local’ social relations of small-scale production (so-called ‘primitive accumulation’) that contributed to the emergence of industrial societies in Western Europe, later to spread across the rest of the world. The same topic was approached by Weber (1905) through a comparative historical sociology of world religions that sought to identify a specifically European development, the Protestant Reformation, which gave rise to the ‘spirit’ of capitalism. This unique economic motivation, together with other favourable material conditions, was seen to have brought about the development of a capitalist world order. For both Marx and Weber, the global was

something that came into being as a consequence of the diffusion of ideas and practices whose origins could be identified in Europe. Their starting point of what has been called 'European exceptionalism' led them to examine social and economic processes in other parts of the world in terms of their differences from Europe and as obstacles to the development of capitalism locally – for example, as in the Asiatic mode of production for Marx, or Chinese cultural constraints for Weber. Further, there was little to no consideration of how the already existing historical connections between parts of the world might be implicated in developments that were perceived as endogenous and independent processes exported to other parts of the world. Broader connections were discussed only as consequent to the future diffusion, spread and entanglement of the processes separately identified.

The 'global', insofar as it can be inferred from the writings of Marx and Weber, was the space in which processes initiated in Europe *came to play out as 'world-historical'*. There was little discussion of how the global might be understood in terms of processes not directly identified as *capitalist* but nonetheless contributing to modernity (for example, colonial settlement, dispossession, enslavement and other forms of appropriation). Their attention was, very firmly, on understanding developments of social relations within Europe, where the rest of the world served as a foil to such understandings, and working out the consequences *for* global others as they became 'world-historical'. The failure to recognize prior global connections, or to regard them as significant for capitalism, can be attributed, in part at least, to the elision of colonialism and empire to capitalism within their approaches. This was an elision that saw colonialism as not integral to the emergence and development of capitalist modernity, but as a distortion of it, similar, perhaps, to the obstacles identified with pre-capitalist modernity, while empire was barely addressed as a geopolitical form. The consequence of this for the classical tradition in sociology is that what needed to be explained were the particular conditions within Europe that had enabled its dominance upon the world. Once dominant, the rest of the world could simply be subsumed

within Europe, or more properly, within European understandings which were thereby universalized.

Given the presumption of European exceptionalism and actual European dominance, it was held within classical sociology that, while there might be historically interesting societal and cultural variations, there was not anything to be learnt from the rest of the world, at least not contemporaneously. Slavery, for example, was allowed to appear as a significant topic in terms of its empirical manifestation in Atlantic societies, but it was not generally understood to be sociologically interesting from the perspective of the construction of the core categories of modernity. The leading post-classical theorist, Talcott Parsons (1966, 1971), for example, did not make any reference to slavery in his account of modern societies notwithstanding its role in the very society he deemed to be the new 'lead' society of modernity. Indeed, in common with social and political theorists who had lived contemporaneously with chattel slavery, slavery, when discussed conceptually, was an issue of pre-modern, 'ancient', societies not central to the emergence of modern ones. This is in contrast to the work of W. E. B. DuBois (1935) – and other largely unrecognized African American pioneers of US sociology such as Oliver Cromwell Cox and E. Franklin Frazier (see Saint-Arnaud (2009) – where chattel slavery is made central to the understanding of the modern US and to modernity more generally. The failure to acknowledge this tradition of scholarship as central to the self-understanding of sociology is a displacement both of the specifically African American contribution to sociology and of the processes of enslavement and colonization from modernity.²

Colonialism, then, had both created an effective global space and an elision of its continued role in the determination of social processes within that space. European hegemony, not being in question, would lead the way either to a global iron cage of modernization or, eventually, to contradiction, transformation and world Communism. Even if there

² A more thorough-going discussion of the implications and consequences of this displacement, for sociology in general, is given in Bhambra (2014).

was critique of specific colonial practices and sympathy for those subject to it, at least in the writings of Marx, there was nonetheless a justification of colonialism as hastening the development and spread of modern capitalism en route to the subsequent stage of world history and human emancipation. As a 'stages' theory of history was dominant, 'progress' was believed to be uni-directional and irreversible so the focus on Europe was further justified as it was to show the way for the rest of the world. While colonial expansion had constituted the global, it was not regarded by Marx or Weber as significant to the key relationships integral to the historical development of modern European societies or their subsequent (successful) trajectories. For example, while the expansion of the market was crucial to the development of capitalism and was driven along the tracks of colonial expansion, it was the relationships held to be intrinsic to the market that were the focus of attention, not the conditions under which it was expanded. With colonial expansion displaced from the construction of the core sociological accounts of modernity, it was also deemed to be of little relevance to the subsequent development of sociology. With modernity and modernization (whether capitalist or post-capitalist) as the only possibility, the rest of the world was to be drawn into the worlds created by Europe and Europeans and was to be understood in those terms.

III

The dominance of Europe, then, contributed to the invisibility of the global as subsumed under Europe, where Europe and modernity were one. Of course, the empirical reality of colonialism could not be denied despite its bland representation as resolved through processes of 'normal' development. The societies that were addressed via modernization theory were societies subject to colonial domination, even if that domination and resistance to it was not a major feature of sociological accounts. It was not until the global order constituted

by colonialism visibly fractured that these other societies came into (European and North American) view in their own right. The convulsions in the early-to-mid twentieth century of the two world wars and, in particular, the emergence of the competing regimes of fascism (defeated) and Communism (resurgent), together with the movements of decolonization, dramatically reconfigured the world. The beginnings of a decline of western European hegemony and the shift in the landscape of the global, from being organized in colonial terms to being organized around (the desire for) nation states, necessitated developments within sociology in order to address the limitations of post-classical accounts of modernity (see Eisenstadt 1974).

Whereas previously an easy division had been made between modern, industrial societies and traditional, agrarian ones, this division was now perceived to be complicated for a number of reasons. In part, this was a consequence of traditional societies now being located within their own national states as opposed to within the ambit of broader colonial regimes (and the self-understandings of their implicit developmental teleologies). Given the similarity of political form, the nation state, this also blurred the boundaries between commonly accepted understandings of the traditional and modern. National elites within traditional societies, for example, were commonly seen as 'modernizing elites' and so new problems related to the relationship between modern states, modernizing elites and traditional societies (masses) were posed for the social sciences. Further, the explicit ideological break among what were understood as modern societies that became embodied in the Cold War division between the Communist Soviet Union and the capitalist United States meant that there was no longer simply one acknowledged route to modernization. Modernizing elites, in what came to be called the Third World, were faced with a choice of pre-established routes. Or they could choose to articulate their own visions for development as many of the countries signing up to the Non-Aligned Movement sought to do (see Prashad 2007). Decolonization and the establishment of independent nation states had not only brought the unevenness of development across

the globe into sharp relief, but also pointed to the different routes to modernity that might be available to 'traditional' societies.

Modernization theory was one attempt to address these issues, but, given the political situation, it was closely followed by underdevelopment and dependency theory reflecting a more critical approach to alternatives. This was so, not simply within the Western academy but also in terms of the emergence of theorists of decolonization and then postcolonialism located in, and addressing, a variety of other contexts. Even if 'currently existing' Communism was identified by few scholars as the true alternative to capitalism that Marx had envisaged, its very presence as an alternative created the space for thinking of different alternatives. It also acted as a 'goad' to liberal democracies in terms of indicating the necessity of addressing issues of inequality, including racial inequality, exclusion and civil rights. As Dudziak argues, in the context of the US, the international focus on racial segregation and the political, social and economic subordination of African Americans contradicted the espousal of American democracy as enlightened and egalitarian – that is, as modern – and hampered 'their ability to sell [their version of] democracy to the Third World' (1988: 62–3). Notwithstanding any limitations attributed to modernization theory's view of convergence as a process of modernity, then, convergence did at least also imply the further modification of the societies associated with the exemplary form. In this way, not only was modernity understood to be differentiated, but its 'exemplary' form was regarded as unfinished and, in principle, reformable. The meaning of modernity was at stake and 'Eurocentric'³ accounts did not seem to hold all the cards.

From the perspective of developments in mainstream sociological theory, however, this critical moment in approaches to the idea

³ In this book, the term 'Eurocentric' refers generally to the understandings of the global north and its southern 'outposts'. For example, the dominant understandings of North America are continuous with those of the Europe from which it claims a substantial part of its heritage and for whom North America was part of its imaginary. Of course, Europe as a geopolitical entity is diverse, but the idea of Eurocentrism is associated with a particular way of representing a unifying set of characteristics across that diversity; a set of characteristics that even those proclaiming the diverse histories of Europe nonetheless generally sign up to as the framework within which diversity is expressed.

of the 'global' – a moment when dominant Western ideas were under challenge – passed. The collapse of Communism in Europe in the late 1980s dramatically altered the context for sociological self-understandings of the discipline and its worlds. With the absorption of Communist Europe to its 'other', the moment of alternatives, of non-alignment, and even of reform was ostensibly over.⁴ This moment both heralded a new phase in sociological theory oriented to a future of globalization, notwithstanding the globalized nature of what preceded it, and a consciousness of the limitations of current sociological theory. These limitations were associated primarily with critiques of modernization theory, but the proposed sociological reconstruction – 'multiple modernities' – came to look very much like modernization theory rebooted. As I shall argue, theorists of multiple modernities associate all positive normative substance to the European idea of modernity where the multiple other possibilities of (mostly non-European) modernity are seen to be largely authoritarian in nature and, unlike the European idea, not universalizable.

With multiple modernities, the authoritarian nature of 'European modernity' itself, deriving from its colonial origins, is once again displaced. The critiques by theorists of decolonization and postcolonialism are dismissed as having no real purchase on contemporary issues in light of the new sociological reformulations. To the extent that any significance is attributed to them, it is in terms of acknowledging the limitations of previous sociological understandings, but without contributing in any way to the critical substance of those reformulations. As such, in arguing for the continued significance of postcolonial histories and critique, both in their own terms and in terms of how these histories continue to structure the present, I am not posing an alternative modernity outside a trajectory common to the West; rather,

⁴ To take the US context again, the commitment of the government to achieve racial equality, as Dudziak presciently noted, is 'diminished by the degree to which Cold War motives were satisfied' (1988: 119). More recent scholarship confirms this view (King and Smith 2011).

I am arguing for a reconstructed understanding of modernity inclusive of its colonial histories and their consequences.

What is also absent from the account of multiple modernities is any address of the change in the nature of the form it holds to be exemplary and the implications of this for the standard normative understandings of modernity. Whereas earlier modernization theorists had argued for a *reformed and reformable* modernity, theorists of multiple modernities, who otherwise stress endogenous processes, have little to say about the internal processes giving rise to widening inequality and the dismantling of the achievements that the previous generation associated with modernity. Further, a reduction of the 'social' to the economic – the neo-liberal global project, for example – is seen to be the product of processes of globalization external to Europe and no longer the process Europe inaugurated. As we shall see when considering Beck's arguments about cosmopolitanism in a later chapter, any negative change in the normative content of modernity is associated with external processes, whereas all positive content derives from endogenous European processes.

IV

The previous section has set out the broad context for the book, though, of course, the specifics of the different theories are more complex. The purpose of the book is to get behind these complexities in order to understand the deeper structures of thinking that characterize the hegemonic sociological account of modernity despite its appearance of variety.

The first section of *Connected Sociologies* addresses the way in which ideas of the global have figured within two dominant modes of sociology: theoretical and historical. It addresses the former in terms of the approaches of modernization theory, underdevelopment and dependency theory, and multiple modernities, and the latter through

a focus on Marxist and Weberian forms of historical sociology. The idea of the global, within the first chapter, is understood in theoretical terms, that is, it is given definition by the frameworks of the approaches under consideration. Modernization theory, for example, effectively understood the global as a contested space within which not-yet-modern countries were faced with the choice of modernizing along the lines of the United States or the Soviet Union. So, in this sense, the global was an empty space to be populated and defined according to the ideological commitments of newly modernizing countries. This is contrasted with underdevelopment and dependency theories which saw the global as the uneven terrain created as a consequence of the processes of capitalism and to be accounted for in these terms. While these modes of thought were dominant within mainstream sociology in the 1960s and 1970s, they fell out of favour by the 1980s and, after the collapse of Communism within Europe, were largely replaced by the approach of multiple modernities. Within this approach, understandings of the global were framed through a theoretical commitment to civilizational analysis.

The second chapter, in contrast, looks at the way in which the idea of the global has been articulated within sociology through a direct address of the historical record by writers concerned with the 'formalism' of modernization theory. This chapter examines the work of Fernand Braudel, a historian with social-scientific sympathies, and of two historical-sociologists, the Weberian Michael Mann and the Marxist Immanuel Wallerstein. It examines their respective projects of writing a world history (as opposed to a history of the world), of delineating the sources of social power, and articulating an understanding of the emergence of world systems. All three seek to develop an understanding of the global and global processes through a consideration of historical sources and this chapter discusses the extent to which their 'world-histories' or 'world-historical-sociologies' are cognizant of the worlds of which they speak. While the first two chapters focus on attempts by sociologists either to articulate a theoretical framework within which the global could be understood, or to delineate a

historically informed understanding of the global, the second section addresses work by sociologists who seek to rethink sociology in light of a more recent 'global turn'.

The calls by Immanuel Wallerstein and colleagues to 'open the social sciences' and by Ulrich Beck for a cosmopolitan social science are the focus of the third chapter. Both start from the position that recent transformations in the world are necessitating radical transformations of the ways in which we examine and seek to understand that world. There is general agreement that the social sciences emerged in the nineteenth century to address the problems and challenges associated with the newly formed nation states. While the social sciences were seen to be adequate in those terms, and times, it is suggested that with the shift to the global and the potential dissolution of nation states, the social sciences themselves need to be transformed. The difference between Wallerstein and Beck is that while Beck regards the social sciences to have been appropriate for their time, that is, the nineteenth century, Wallerstein wishes to argue for a more substantial transformation. The focus of Wallerstein and Beck is on the necessary transformation of the social sciences in the context of globalization, but, I suggest, they remain tied to specific European genealogies.

The following two chapters look at other calls for 'global sociology' made from various locations around the globe and in relation to traditions of social thought other than those usually associated with Europe and the West. The first of these, Chapter 4, looks at the development of a specifically global sociology as argued for by scholars associated with the International Sociological Association. The Association, both through its meetings and its journals, provides an important space for the articulation and wider dissemination of ideas of 'global sociology' from scholars based in geographically plural locations. This chapter addresses the contributions of Akinsola Akiwowo in arguing for a re-examination of the relationship between indigenization and the internationalization of sociology. It is followed by a discussion of arguments around dependency and subversion made in the Latin American context and also addresses calls for the development of

autonomous social science traditions as argued for by Syed Farid Alatas and others. Chapter 5 continues this discussion by looking at related arguments for Southern theory and against Northern epistemologies as articulated by Raewyn Connell and Boaventura de Sousa Santos respectively. It also addresses the work of Sujata Patel and Michael Burawoy, who have been actively promoting ideas of global sociology and arguing for a 'provincialized' or subaltern social science through the International Sociological Association and other such venues. These chapters close the specific engagement, on the one hand, with sociological understandings of the global and, on the other, with the way in which sociology is itself shaped by its particular understanding of the global.

The argument of the book, across the first two sections, examines the insufficiencies and limitations of standard sociological understandings of the global from a variety of perspectives. The final two chapters present a possible alternative to the standard accounts, drawing upon the traditions of postcolonial and decolonial thought. The penultimate chapter establishes the resources provided by these traditions for both a different historical understanding of the global and a different mode of understanding the global. The implications of this for sociology are established in the final chapter further articulating the epistemological and methodological contours of 'connected sociologies'.

The point I shall be making throughout is not simply that there is a series of alternative histories to be acknowledged, but that in doing so, what is involved is a reformed understanding of the processes represented within dominant histories. To the extent that the latter reinforce particular sets of concepts as central to the understanding of modernity, this will also involve a displacement and reformulation of those concepts. 'Connected sociologies', I suggest, are not simply articulations of different narratives, but are the means of understanding sociology and its tasks differently, an endeavour which is pressing in the light of the global issues that confront us.