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Introduction
Public Sociology in the Making

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10 Sociology, like some of its disciplinary neighbours, seems to be often regarded 10
11 by others as an unhappy endeavour. Even some of its practitioners complain 11
12 occasionally about failed achievements and the lack of acknowledgement. 12
13 Sociologists just do not, so the complaint goes, get the credit they deserve. Politics 13
14 and the larger public do not seem to pay attention to sociology's recommendations 14
15 of how best to solve the pressing social problems of our societies. Occasionally 15
16 insights from sociology are even regarded to be beyond consideration. Why is it, 16
17 one may ask, that other scientific disciplines are treated much more favourably? 17
18 And looking at the tragic-comedy side of things, sociologists do not even seem 18
19 be able to recognise themselves in fictional figures as they appear for example in 19
20 David Lodge's and Malcolm Bradbury's novels. Are we that humourless? Do we 20
21 not deserve better? 21

22 When in May 2012 the Library of Congress awarded former president of Brazil 22
23 Fernando Henrique Cardoso the John W. Kluge Prize for the Study of Humanity 23
24 the Executive Officer of the American Sociological Association, Sally T. Hillsman, 24
25 claimed that "sociologists are constantly making important contributions to 25
26 society and the selection of Cardoso reinforces the significance of our efforts". 26
27 What she failed to say was that Michael Burawoy's presidential address "For 27
28 Public Sociology" presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological 28
29 Association made more headlines than the prize winner Cardoso, at least in the 29
30 sociology community. What was even more remarkable was that Burawoy's speech 30
31 actually conveyed the very same message, namely that sociology was of use and 31
32 indeed contributes to society in many ways and on a regular basis. Seldom had an 32
33 ASA presidential address received so much attention. Ever since Burawoy delivered 33
34 his public sociology address, the discussion about sociology's role, its functions, 34
35 impact and broader meaning has not abated (Burawoy 2005). The discussion 35
36 peaked two years later with a full-length academic publication dedicated to the 36
37 topic, including a longer version of Burawoy's speech together with responses 37
38 from more than a dozen prominent American sociologists (Clawson et al. 2007). 38

39 In retrospect its success and perhaps its broad appeal at the time may also have 39
40 obscured some of the 2007 collection's more problematic aspects. For example, 40
41 it was almost impossible to understand Burawoy and the other discussants' 41
42 contributions without knowing something about the peculiar American conditions 42
43 to which most chapters referred, either directly or indirectly. To be fair, most 43
44 participants were aware of this limitation, yet, the remarkable thing was that they 44

1 decided not to do much about it. Rather, the majority of contributors thought it 1
 2 more useful to simply appeal to the sociological community to be more inclusive, 2
 3 cosmopolitan and international. Enlightened attitudes, so the argument went, 3
 4 would, at least in the long run, help to de-provincialize American sociology 4
 5 departments and liberate them from their narrow national perspective and their 5
 6 often all-too narrow specialisation. Apart from such well-intended, yet presumably 6
 7 hopelessly ineffective appeals, only a few attempts were made to look beyond 7
 8 American borders. 8

9 While Burawoy himself hinted at least at the possibility that his intervention 9
 10 could be seen as appealing only to American circumstances and conditions – 10
 11 implied here is that his discourse could also be interpreted as one that presented 11
 12 itself as if it were a universal problem – this suggestion was, we suggest, never 12
 13 picked up by the respondents. Apparently, the rest of the world was something 13
 14 to be referred to in passing, a complex matter that was better left to linguists, 14
 15 students of comparative politics or social anthropologists than to American 15
 16 sociologists. Globalism, yes – showing some interest in the world, maybe 16
 17 less so! 17

18 Burawoy's speeches have been understood, quite correctly, as a call to arms, 18
 19 or to put it in a less bellicose fashion, as an appeal to fellow sociologists to enrich 19
 20 their role set by paying more attention to their broader potential public impact. In 20
 21 contrast to other scholarly communities, sociologists seem to be somewhat unhappy 21
 22 with their own peers and become even unhappier if their attempt to reach out does 22
 23 not receive as much applause as they think it should. Sociological activists scorn 23
 24 fellow sociologists who are satisfied with a restricted reception by their own peers 24
 25 and limited public. To stay with our prominent example, Burawoy's four-fold table 25
 26 of professional, policy, critical and public sociology automatically presupposes 26
 27 that 'true' sociologists must reach out to extra-academic audiences, something that 27
 28 other social scientists would refuse to accept as part of their professional identity. 28
 29 Instead, for the latter such engagement is left to the self-definition of what it means 29
 30 to be a citizen outside the republic of knowledge. Some sociologists would call it a 30
 31 case of under- or better over-developed role crystallization while others might be 31
 32 more prone to subscribe to Erving Goffman's dry remark about some sociologists 32
 33 "who ... combat false consciousness and awake people to their true interests" and 33
 34 who, in any case, will surely have their work cut out for them "because the sleep 34
 35 is very deep". To this, obviously ironic remark, Goffman added that he did not see 35
 36 it as his task "to provide a lullaby but merely to sneak in and watch the way the 36
 37 people snore". It is obvious, that such a detached attitude is miles away from the 37
 38 *weltanschauung* of today's engaged sociologists. 38

39 Looking at some of the current debates about public sociology one can get the 39
 40 strong impression that institutional political amnesia seemed to have befallen its 40
 41 advocates and practitioners. For example, while obligatory references are made 41
 42 to the interventions of a Robert S. Lynd, a C. Wright Mills or an Alvin Gouldner, 42
 43 the discussion showed little or no awareness of some of the most important 43
 44 twentieth-century experiences and related debates. Not one attempt was made to 44

1 comprehensively contextualise sociological debates about public sociology. This 1
2 is even odder when we consider that the declared aim of the advocates of public 2
3 sociology is to reach out beyond the academic milieu and disciplinary boundaries. 3
4 Granted, the usual suspects, Pierre Bourdieu and Jürgen Habermas for example, 4
5 were briefly mentioned – we presume mainly because of their attempt to analyse 5
6 the public and its structures and the role that the reception of enlightened ideas 6
7 plays in their work. But Burawoy and almost all of the other discussants totally 7
8 missed out on any serious discussion about the more socially ambiguous and 8
9 historically complex dimension of the relationship between intellectuals, power 9
10 and the public sphere from the past. Relevant contributions that discussed the 10
11 public role of intellectuals in more critical terms, particularly those stemming 11
12 from the European sociological tradition, were totally ignored. It was as if Max 12
13 Weber, Raymond Aron, Ralf Dahrendorf and Wolf Lepenies had never existed. 13

14 But it was not only the case that any non-American debates were obliterated, 14
15 the omission of references to any past American debates that reached beyond 15
16 politically correct left-wing causes must give cause for concern. True, Thorstein 16
17 Veblen, John Dewey, C. Wright Mills and Lewis A. Coser were seen as being 17
18 worth a passing remark, however, as significant scholars they were sold short, 18
19 their names serving only as keyword prompters for the radical public sociology 19
20 agenda. Others like Talcott Parsons, Edward Shils, Daniel Bell, Jeffrey C. Goldfarb 20
21 and Jeffrey Alexander, who have all discussed the complex connection between 21
22 ideas, power and society but who would obviously not be allowed to ride on the 22
23 left-wing ticket, were equally blanked out, not to mention the numerous other 23
24 contributions that would fill a small library: about the nature of totalitarianism, the 24
25 Cold War, imperialism and decolonization and the Fall of the Berlin Wall and how 25
26 intellectuals (including sociologists) reacted to each of these events or historical 26
27 constellations. The obliteration of these experiences in a debate about public 27
28 sociology suggests that not a few of its most prominent advocates not only seemed 28
29 oblivious to some of the most important twentieth-century debates but also of the 29
30 history of their own discipline. This does not bode well for any future debate about 30
31 sociology and its publics. 31

32 One may speculate on why the discussion of the nature of public sociology 32
33 contained no convincing concrete examples or why there was no reference 33
34 whatsoever to historical and sociological cases that would have helped the 34
35 interested reader to understand some of the complexities involved. To put it 35
36 bluntly, the public sociology discussion lacked sociological imagination. It 36
37 never explained or elaborated on how exactly a sociologist can become a major 37
38 intellectual or public sociologist; there was nothing or very little about reputation 38
39 building, nor about the finer points of the sociology of ideas or how men and 39
40 women of ideas communicate with different publics. No example was given of 40
41 how sociological discourse has impacted on the functioning of social institutions 41
42 and local and state governments. The absence of any historical references and the 42
43 lack of any detailed discussion of the complexities and contradictions involved 43
44 made the discussion about public sociology a somewhat sterile and problem-free 44

1 exercise. To paraphrase Robert K. Merton, it made society appear as if it were a 1
 2 body without an appendix, and it turned sociology, a discipline that claims to study 2
 3 societal relations, into little more than an ambitious yet in the end failed public 3
 4 relations exercise. 4

5 Was it a mission impossible? That one could do better than Burawoy and his 5
 6 sympathetic discussants is demonstrated by Robert S. Lynd, author (together 6
 7 with his wife Helen Lynd) of the famous Middletown studies. On the death of 7
 8 C. Wright Mills (one of Michael Burawoy's heroes), Lynd, a colleague of Mills 8
 9 at Columbia, warned the sociological community of the dangers of selling the 9
 10 publicly engaged sociologist short. He argued that it would be a serious mistake 10
 11 to portray C. Wright Mills solely as a sociological muckraker and radical Texan 11
 12 but not pay respect to the serious sociologist and intellectual that he also was. It 12
 13 seemed almost as if colleagues were only perceptive of Mills' political and public 13
 14 interventions, particularly his media appearances, the Cuba book *Listen Yankee!* or 14
 15 his *The Causes of World War III*, but not the subversive and enlightening quality of 15
 16 his many other academic works, such as his essays on the sociology of knowledge 16
 17 or *White Collar*. Indeed, if there is one thing that characterises the trials and 17
 18 tribulations of C. Wright Mills, it was his attempt to identify the larger tendencies 18
 19 in society – tendencies which he attempted to understand in order to change them. 19
 20 How successful he was in his undertaking is open to debate; however, it would not 20
 21 be unfair to the late Mills to say that he had put the will to change and influence 21
 22 society before the attempt to fully understand it. 22

23 From Lynd's warning not to sell Mills short to the contemporary debate about 23
 24 public sociology is but a small step: Indeed, it appears as if the current call for a 24
 25 new public sociology is caught in exactly the same trap that Lynd warned against. 25
 26 There is of course nothing wrong with the attempt at making sociology more 26
 27 relevant by catering to the public's interests or by producing and offering more 27
 28 'useful' knowledge. However, and this may be the lasting legacy and importance 28
 29 of Lynd's message, we should always bear in mind that 'the cause' should not be 29
 30 allowed to become more important than the explanation. 30

31 Indeed, we could argue that Lynd was onto something. Much earlier, actually 31
 32 almost 23 years before Mills' death provoked the comments referred to above, Lynd 32
 33 had given a series of talks at Princeton University, which were later published as 33
 34 *Knowledge for What? The Place of Social Science in American Culture*. Its author 34
 35 addressed the complications and potential risks that a publically engaged social 35
 36 scientist was facing, particularly when confronted with a systemic crisis (Lynd 36
 37 wrote his book on the eve of the Second World War and at a time when the effects 37
 38 of the Depression could still be felt). Lynd regarded social scientists as trustees 38
 39 who were part of the culture they were studying. Consequentially "(t)he social 39
 40 scientist finds himself caught ... between the rival demands for straight, incisive, 40
 41 and, if need be, radically divergent thinking, and the growingly insistent demand 41
 42 that his thinking should not be subversive" (Lynd [1939] 1986, 7). Lynd concluded 42
 43 that, stuck between the demands of the well-being of a social institution – in the 43
 44 social scientist's case the university – that appears to be increasingly controlled by 44

1 special business interests and by ideologies concerning the greater good of society, 1
2 it had indeed “manifest disadvantages” for the social scientist to put “one’s head 2
3 into a lion’s mouth to operate on a sore tooth” (ibid.: 8). 3

4 Put differently, the social scientist is found in a dilemma. Knowledge, morals 4
5 and interests appeared to be connected. But how exactly? Lynd drew attention 5
6 to the fact that the social scientist had to make sense of that web called culture 6
7 of which the social scientist was also a part. According to Lynd, the twentieth 7
8 century social scientist faced an even more challenging task in that this culture 8
9 was driven by specialisation and marked by an extremely sophisticated division 9
10 of labour. If that was true and if this also applied to academia we were unlikely 10
11 to get a comprehensive answer by solely looking at one particular discipline, 11
12 one specific political, social or economic problem. In contrast, Lynd conceived 12
13 an enlightened social science as one which was aware of disciplinary limitations 13
14 and one that also attempted to address the common good. For Lynd the answer 14
15 lay obviously not in an ever-increasing division of labour but in attempting to 15
16 understand the entire society – an impossible task if you just look at its constituent 16
17 parts. We must, argued Lynd, break with our specialised habits and attempt instead 17
18 at being more comprehensive: “Specialization and precise meaning”, he noted, 18
19 “must continue, for without them science cannot grow. But if human institutions 19
20 form a continuation of sorts, all parts of which are interacting all the time, and if 20
21 specialization and the refinement of measurement are not to continue to operate in 21
22 effect to prompt us to ignore these vital continuities, there is need for an inclusive 22
23 frame of reference for all the social sciences. Each specialist would then state 23
24 his problems with reference to the inclusive totality in which they operate. This 24
25 totality is nothing less than the entire culture” (ibid.: 19). Lynd, so it seems, had 25
26 a very modern notion of culture. For him, culture was not a specific realm in the 26
27 way we see for example art and literature but “all things that a group of people 27
28 inhabiting a common geographical area... do, the way they do things and the ways 28
29 they think and feel about things, their material tools and their values and symbols” 29
30 (ibid). Culture, Lynd argued, was not a separate sphere on top of the political, 30
31 economic or social spheres, but something that ran through all aspects of life. It 31
32 is this modern notion of culture that allowed Lynd to see the wood for the trees. 32

33 Contemporary advocates of public sociology would be well advised to take 33
34 Lynd’s insights seriously. As it currently stands, the notion of public sociology 34
35 appears to be of a rather instrumentalist kind with little or no appeal beyond the 35
36 discipline. This does not make for good advertising. The attempt to reach out and 36
37 distribute knowledge seems to resemble the mechanical way in which water is 37
38 distributed from a water sprinkler. It makes sociology look narcissistic and as 38
39 being the one discipline which knows ‘the truth’. It presupposes that sociologists 39
40 have the knowledge but only lack the means or access of distributing it more 40
41 widely. It makes sociology look desperate, insecure and anxious about its status. 41
42 It is a discipline that seems to be apparently unaware of its cultural dimensions in 42
43 the way Lynd talks about it. 43

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1 It is but a small step from Robert S. Lynd to Lewis A. Coser, a sociologist and 1
 2 radical German-Jewish exile who had not only a good knowledge of the American 2
 3 and European sociological publics but whose own life was also marked by the 3
 4 ideological wars of the twentieth century. In a foreword to the 1986 edition of 4
 5 Lynd's *Knowledge for What?* Coser noted that its author appeared as somebody 5
 6 who had come too early and was therefore punished with obliteration – “the penalty 6
 7 for taking the lead” (ibid.: xii). It should not come as a total surprise to the reader 7
 8 to learn that only a few years before Coser wrote the lines just quoted he himself 8
 9 had tried to map the relationship between intellectuals and publics. Coser's *Men* 9
 10 of *Ideas: A Sociologist's View* was the attempt to make sense of the plurality of 10
 11 contexts in which intellectuals (and sociologists) operate (Coser, 1965). While 11
 12 some of the conditions have obviously changed since he first formulated his ideas, 12
 13 many descriptions still ring true today. Coser observed for example “(u)niversities 13
 14 have been a haven for intellectuals over the last few centuries to the extent that they 14
 15 allowed them to one degree or another to stand apart from the world of everyday 15
 16 affairs. They protected men of ideas from the insistent pressures of the market place 16
 17 and the political arena” (ibid.: xvii). Coser warned also “if the boundaries that in 17
 18 the past separated the world of the university from the world at large are broken 18
 19 down, if the university can no longer provide a shield protecting its members, 19
 20 the life of the mind in America will be in mortal peril”. With special reference 20
 21 to the 1960s student movement he noted critically “a politicised university ... 21
 22 cannot provide the environment in which intellect flowers” (both quotes ibid.: 22
 23 xvii). Much of Coser's comments were indeed directed against a somewhat naïve 23
 24 conceptualization of the relationship that existed between intellectuals and their 24
 25 publics. Coser also alerted fellow sociologists to be careful about what one wishes 25
 26 for: naïvely calling for a new public sociology without taking specific historical 26
 27 and social contexts into account was, in Coser's view, not only careless but could, 27
 28 on occasion, turn out to become a tunnel effect with detrimental consequences for 28
 29 the discipline itself. 29

30 Like Lynd, Coser came too early and as we know by now, the ‘punishment’ 30
 31 for this is obliteration. Today *Men of Ideas* is almost forgotten. This is regrettable 31
 32 because Coser was in an almost ideal position to explain to us why the American 32
 33 context differed from that of Europe. In the US, modern universities no longer 33
 34 just catered to an elite but had to attempt to educate a mass of students. With 34
 35 increased size came increased differentiation, leading American universities to 35
 36 fulfil ever more specialised functions. The academization of the intellect was a 36
 37 direct outcome: quite a few intellectuals who before then had operated outside the 37
 38 university environment were now drawn into academia. As Coser puts it, “There 38
 39 are few major university departments in the social sciences or the humanities in 39
 40 which we do not find radicals or ex-radicals who at one time attempted to make 40
 41 livings as unattached intellectuals in the interstices of official universities (ibid 41
 42 267)”. According to Coser, this shift could not only be observed in universities but 42
 43 also in government and the media. In such a situation not all the people dealing 43
 44 with ideas could be identified as fulfilling *per definitionem* the role and function 44

1 of intellectuals. The net result was that “today intellectuals may play a role within 1
2 the university, they may benefit from affiliation with it, but they can no longer be 2
3 the university” (ibid.: 280). 3

4 To be sure, there have been some considerable changes since Coser identified 4
5 some of the major patterns in modern higher education. The need for extra 5
6 legitimation *vis-à-vis* the taxpayer has perhaps increased, performance indicators 6
7 have put on extra pressures, and impact factors now try to measure the output and 7
8 reception of ideas. But overall Coser’s observation describes drifts that can still be 8
9 observed today. The compartmentalization of knowledge continues. But it seems 9
10 now as if modern higher education wants to have its cake and eat it as well. The 10
11 deeper irony in all of this is that the call for public sociology does not appear to be 11
12 that far away from what it criticizes. In terms of diagnosis it ironically resembles 12
13 Veblen’s ‘captains of higher learning’. The difference is only that the captains 13
14 are in power and steer the ship while the others receive the orders. If there is 14
15 anything new at all, it is perhaps that the balance has clearly tipped towards more 15
16 bureaucratisation and mindless pseudo-academic exercises. Control and fear have 16
17 now become major driving factors. Whether a new public sociology that deserves 17
18 its name can provide protection against such developments remains to be seen. 18

19 So far we have argued that some of Mills’, Lynd’s and Coser’s structural 19
20 arguments, particularly their insights as to the broader context and culture, still 20
21 provide food for thought. However, evoking Mills, Lynd and Coser, we have also 21
22 argued for the importance of paying attention to changing contexts. Thus, we do 22
23 not believe in the return to yesterday; rather, we insist in zeroing in on the many 23
24 contexts and constellations and their changing meaning. 24

25 What changes in particular do we have in mind? First and foremost we would 25
26 argue one has to take into consideration some radical demographic changes. The 26
27 worldwide expansion of the universities and the establishing of modern mass 27
28 universities had consequences both for the professoriate and its standing within 28
29 the public. The growth of the numbers of professors, students, and the related 29
30 explosion of the role of scientific papers and scholarly books, has challenged the 30
31 traditional understanding of the role of the professional academic. The changes 31
32 happened in several parts of the world but came about in a staggered way. The 32
33 expansion of the system of higher education started first in the United States, 33
34 followed by the Soviet Union and its satellites and occurred in Western Europe 34
35 much later. To some degree it has been spurred by the so called Sputnik Crisis, 35
36 when the Soviets launched the first Earth satellite in October 1957, very much to 36
37 the complete surprise of the Western world (the next time the West was caught on 37
38 the wrong foot was when the Soviet empire imploded). Immediately the American 38
39 government reacted with an increase in the budget for research and initiatives to 39
40 expand the country’s university programs. 40

41 However, the system of channelling government money into academic research 41
42 had actually started much earlier as a reaction towards the supposed superiority 42
43 of a military enemy. America’s World War II involvement was accompanied 43
44 by an awareness of having been surprised and accordingly the US entered the 44

1 war somewhat unprepared. To avoid such a crisis ever happening again the US 1
 2 government increased the federal budget for research, which was distributed mainly 2
 3 via the Department of War and its branches. However, the Army, Air Force and 3
 4 Navy did not only spend huge amounts on militarily relevant research. Nothing 4
 5 could illustrate this better than a footnote of one of the earliest papers of that well- 5
 6 known critic Noam Chomsky: In 1955 he acknowledged the support of the Army's 6
 7 Signal Corps, the Air Force's Office of Scientific Research and Air Research and 7
 8 Development Command, as well as the Navy Office of Naval Research. All of the 8
 9 mentioned and the Eastman Kodak Company gave Chomsky, then affiliated with 9
 10 MIT's Department of Modern Language und the Research Laboratory of Electronics, 10
 11 money for his study "Three Models for the Description of Language". In Chomsky's 11
 12 case the funding by the "military-industrial complex", which President Eisenhower 12
 13 had warned of in his farewell address in 1961, did not silence the author. Rather 13
 14 Chomsky became inclined to expose the beast that had once fed him. Others, less 14
 15 convinced persons might have subordinated themselves more. 15

16 Another example of the problematic relationship between academics and 16
 17 their publics took the form of incorporation by former freethinkers usually by 17
 18 means of appointment or promotion, two possible pathways by which independent 18
 19 intellectuals became university professors. From the 1950s onwards writers, who 19
 20 had made their living earlier in their careers by contributing to some magazine or 20
 21 journal, were hired by the newly established universities. Changing places might 21
 22 not have led necessarily to a change in attitudes but the disappearing world of 22
 23 the little magazines definitely closed that channel for the next generation. One 23
 24 of the consequences was that young graduates were no longer obliged to spend 24
 25 some time in jobs outside academia but instead continued to live inside the ivory 25
 26 tower, if only on the ground floor. The new academic cohort did not have to go 26
 27 any more through a stage of life where they had to reach out to a wider, less 27
 28 academically educated audience. Instead, they could just produce texts for readers 28
 29 like themselves. 29

30 While a new cohort went through normal academic career paths, some 30
 31 established members of the professoriate followed a different route by starting their 31
 32 career outside the campus, for example as experts in governmental advisory groups. 32
 33 The new differentiation processes led to a re-definition of roles and agendas. Seen 33
 34 from an international perspective, the changes in the higher education sector did 34
 35 not all occur simultaneously. For example, the British university system remained 35
 36 up to the middle of the 1960s unchanged, whereas in the US a new hierarchy of 36
 37 colleges, universities and research universities has been established much earlier, 37
 38 not least due to changed admission policies like the G.I. Bill. 38

39 The knowledge production inside academia became affected by what has been 39
 40 called "scientification". Whatever social scientists produced was now evaluated 40
 41 according to what were assumed to be the standards of international scholarship. 41
 42 What the public thought no longer played any important role. The natural sciences 42
 43 increasingly influenced knowledge production, at times parodying the physical 43
 44 sciences to a point of utter absurdity. Carving out big theories lost its appeal and 44

1 testing clear-cut hypotheses became standard. Increasing competition between 1
 2 scholars was accompanied by new funding regimes that generally encouraged 2
 3 short-term deliveries of results. Both led to the slicing of the findings into the 3
 4 smallest publishable units, submitted to a growing number of highly specialised 4
 5 scholarly journals. An assault on the learned book was the inevitable result. 5

6 In the US, McCarthyism, the hysterical prosecution and expulsion of purported 6
 7 communists caused a climate of apprehension, where professors worried about 7
 8 exposing students to ‘critical’ texts. In Europe, perhaps even more so than in 8
 9 the US, the Cold War reached a peak when the Congress for Cultural Freedom 9
 10 organized public events in which disillusioned ex-communists fought Stalinist 10
 11 expansionism. The irony of it all was that Arthur Koestler and his compatriots 11
 12 did not get much support from university professors who preferred to remain 12
 13 apolitical. Actually, the deployment of atomic bombs at the end of World War II 13
 14 in Hiroshima and Nagasaki mobilized many more physicists and other scientists. 14
 15 In contrast, only a handful of social scientists joined the so-called Pugwash 15
 16 movement, named after a gathering in a small Canadian village, in the aftermath 16
 17 of the Russell-Einstein Manifesto (1955), which called upon scientists to assess 17
 18 the dangers of weapons of mass destruction. 18

19 During the 1950s and early 1960s European intellectuals either sided with the 19
 20 Communist Parties or the Congress for Cultural Freedom; in-between the space 20
 21 narrowed. In particular French and Italian intellectuals seemed to have been 21
 22 affected by this civil-war like positioning. Perhaps Raymond Aron’s *L’opium* 22
 23 *des intellectuels* has been the most outstanding contribution from a sociological 23
 24 viewpoint. The other academics who were unwilling to join the heated debate 24
 25 secured a niche, usually by turning into experts for applied social problems. Their 25
 26 special competence ranged from the sexual behaviour – Alfred Kinsey comes to 26
 27 mind here – to the supposed devastating consequences of the new mass media, 27
 28 associated with the name of Paul Lazarsfeld and his team. Whereas Kinsey filled 28
 29 football stadiums and appeared on the cover of *Time*, researchers of the Lazarsfeld 29
 30 type catered to media networks, the government or local administrations by 30
 31 providing project reports about whatever else clients were asking for. 31

32 By way of the cunning reason of history both Kinsey’s and Lazarsfeld’s 32
 33 approaches came to symbolize what would eventually be called “the average 33
 34 American”. It seemed as if proclaiming a distribution of particular sexual practices 34
 35 affected ordinary people the same way as the announcement of voting preferences 35
 36 before an election. Many years before, at the beginning of the twentieth century 36
 37 Georg Jellineck, a legal scholar from Germany, had coined the formula of the 37
 38 “normative power of the factual”. Jellineck thought about it in the context of 38
 39 law and its effects. However, from the 1950s onwards the normative force of the 39
 40 factual increasingly applied to other realms, like the sexual behaviour or media 40
 41 consumption patterns. Visions of the good life became eclipsed by reports on the 41
 42 distribution of habits, preferences, etc. As a consequence the space for critical 42
 43 commentary shrank. Theodor W. Adorno lamented this new conformist mood by 43

1 proclaiming that “there could be no good life in one that is false”, a statement 1
 2 which became a slogan for the emerging youth and student movement. 2

3 The Sixties saw a huge number of sociologists entering academia, perhaps more 3
 4 so in Europe than in America. In the US the expansion of the higher education sector 4
 5 had started much earlier and had almost come to an end when the cohorts of the 5
 6 disobedient generation entered professional life. The contrast manifested itself in 6
 7 throughout academia and the distinct development of sociology was no exception 7
 8 to this rule. The segregation and isolation of academia was less pronounced in 8
 9 Europe. In the old Continent sociologists got much more attention outside the 9
 10 universities than in the US. Ralf Dahrendorf, Jürgen Habermas, Raymond Aron, 10
 11 Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu and Anthony Giddens, to name just a few, became 11
 12 public intellectuals whereas very few American sociologist managed to reach a 12
 13 wider public. Especially from the 1970s onwards Europe produced more influential 13
 14 thinkers with a sociology background than their counterparts across the Atlantic. 14
 15 A part of American sociology’s current unhappiness seems to be rooted in the 15
 16 noticeable decline of public figures in the discipline. Our suspicion is that some of 16
 17 the broader resonance of European public intellectuals can be explained by access 17
 18 to various media. The European intellectual uses public appearances in newspapers, 18
 19 radio broadcasts and TV talk shows, but remains, despite all this, primarily a writer. 19
 20 This has changed only in recent years. Today members of the chattering class 20
 21 seldom come from an academic background. Authors like Stéphane Hessel with his 21
 22 *Indignez-vous* appeal have come to occupy the public spaces formerly populated by 22
 23 authors of an academic background. The irony seems to be that some international 23
 24 convergence seems to have taken place because the same observation could be made 24
 25 with regard to the American Occupy Wall Street movement. 25

26 The purpose of this volume is to do what sociologists do best: not drawing up 26
 27 imaginary publics but analysing those publics and concrete contexts and specific 27
 28 meanings that do exist and that are of relevance to our work. We need to know 28
 29 more about the discipline but from a perspective of a public sociology that has no 29
 30 ‘imperialist’ notions or tendencies and that avoids the pitfalls discussed above. We 30
 31 need to get a more rounded picture of how sociological ideas and publics work 31
 32 in different contexts around the world. Of course, this volume cannot cover all 32
 33 aspects, nor can it analyse what is going on in all parts of the world. What it can 33
 34 do, however, is to look at a few examples that highlight some of the tensions and 34
 35 contradictions discussed above. 35

36 Our title evokes Lynd’s discussion of the usefulness of knowledge. However, 36
 37 we give it a slightly different direction by asking *Knowledge for Whom?* instead 37
 38 of *Knowledge for What?* The qualification in the subtitle *Public Sociology in the* 38
 39 *Making* makes clear that we have no quarrel with a new project that favours more 39
 40 productive encounters between academics, ideas and various publics. However, in 40
 41 contrast to Burawoy and other advocates of public sociology we hypothesise that it 41
 42 might be helpful to employ the tools of the sociology of ideas in a wider and deeper 42
 43 sense. We would like to understand public sociology as a delicate undertaking and 43
 44 achievement, full of the contradictions and tensions that Lynd and Coser alerted 44

1 us to. More specifically, we are guided by three major questions: (1) How does 1
2 one become a public sociologist and prominent intellectual in the first place, and 2
3 can one think about prominent examples and eminent scholars, perhaps by going 3
4 beyond the traditional sociology of knowledge approach? (2) How complex and 4
5 complicated do the stories of institutions and professional associations become 5
6 when they take on a public role or tackle a major social or political problem? 6
7 (3) How can one investigate the relationship between individual sociologists and 7
8 intellectuals and their various publics without falling into the traps of uni-linear 8
9 narratives like that of Burawoy? 9

10 Accordingly our book is divided up into three parts. In the first part, “Public 10
11 Intellectuals and their Afterlives: Biographies, Reputation Building and Academic 11
12 Disciplines”, Marcel Fournier addresses the question of how difficult is it to write 12
13 a biography in social sciences by discussing the cases of Durkheim and Mauss. 13
14 Having written the biographies of both, Fournier was faced with a number of 14
15 difficulties, which he discusses in greater detail in this chapter: the marginal status 15
16 of biography in the field of social sciences, the relation between the study of a 16
17 life and the study of a work, and the theoretical perspective which often supports 17
18 descriptive presentation of life and work of the authors in question. Fournier also 18
19 asks whether there is something that can be said about the relative roles the private 19
20 and the public play in the life of a scholar? What exactly is a work (*oeuvre*) in the 20
21 social sciences? Are we looking at coherence from beginning to end or should we 21
22 stress oppositions or contradictions? 22

23 Andreas Hess elaborates on the argument about biography and looks at the 23
24 new sociology of ideas which is trying to distance itself from other attempts that 24
25 have tried to address the complex relationship between ideas and individual life 25
26 stories. But how successful is this new approach, both in theory and in practice, 26
27 when compared to the more traditional sociology of knowledge and the intellectual 27
28 history approach? Hess argues that the sociology of knowledge, intellectual history 28
29 and the new sociology of ideas have all tried to find answers to the challenge of 29
30 finding a plausible way through the complex constellation of social environment, 30
31 the making of ideas and that intellectual ‘surplus’ that is generated through 31
32 individual life trajectories. Yet, despite all theoretical sophistication, these attempts 32
33 have remained somewhat incomplete. This incompleteness, he concludes, is not 33
34 due to the lack of theoretical awareness or sophistication but can be explained by 34
35 looking at the complex ways in which individual creativity plays out under often 35
36 challenging social conditions. 36

37 Daniel R. Huebner investigates scholarly publishing projects in the Great 37
38 Depression, projects which he treats as cases of the economic structuring of 38
39 knowledge. Huebner has some doubts about previous research results, which 39
40 documented the impact of economic downturns on scholarly publication, most 40
41 often by demonstrating the overall decline in books and journals sold and produced 41
42 during such periods. While such research highlights the large amount of competent 42
43 scholarship that goes unpublished in times of economic hardship, it had little to 43
44 say about what impact, if any, downturns have on the content of the works that do 44

1 manage to get published under such circumstances. In order to assess whether this 1
 2 claim is actually true, he selects as case studies two series of proposed monographs 2
 3 that were under consideration at American scholarly publishing houses during 3
 4 the Great Depression, the so-called “Payne Fund” studies at Macmillan, and the 4
 5 “Works of George H. Mead” at the University of Chicago Press. Huebner finds 5
 6 that in both cases the order of publication of the series volumes was determined 6
 7 in part by estimates of sales potential and that there was pressure to reduce and 7
 8 reformulate the text of the volumes in order to ensure publication and sales. These 8
 9 decisions, made under especially pressing conditions, affected the subsequent use 9
 10 made of the volumes. In particular, the order and content of the Payne Fund studies 10
 11 had a decisive impact on film censorship debates in the United States and helped 11
 12 popularize social attitude survey methods. Equally, the order and content of the 12
 13 Mead works popularized a particular understanding of his thinking that became 13
 14 influential in the social sciences. 14

15 Marcia Consolim looks at developments in France but does so as a Brazilian 15
 16 sociologist who is interested in the history of European sociology and particularly 16
 17 French sociology. Her chapter aims at contributing to a better understanding of 17
 18 standpoints taken by the *Revue Internationale de Sociologie* in the first 20 years 18
 19 of its existence (1893–1912). The journal aimed both at disseminating the social 19
 20 sciences and legitimizing a certain view of these subjects and their relationship 20
 21 with sociology. Consolim shows that the journal’s principal contributors and 21
 22 editors belonged to two identifiable groups: law and economics on one side and 22
 23 pedagogy and teacher training for secondary schools on the other. Despite the 23
 24 official rhetoric which supported sociology, in practice the emerging discipline 24
 25 and some of its exponents were regarded with suspicion. More specifically, 25
 26 Consolim argues that the struggle between collective psychology and sociology 26
 27 for hegemony explains much of the standpoints the *Revue* took. Despite the 27
 28 ‘organic’ defense of sociology, the work of Gabriel Tarde was used to position the 28
 29 journal against Émile Durkheim and his journal *L’Année Sociologique*. 29

30 Jarosław Kiliński discusses Czech and Polish narratives and what they tell us 30
 31 about the construction of sociology’s past. Kiliński points out that the texts that 31
 32 he discusses were actually not written by historians but by sociological theorists 32
 33 without any historical training, and, in one case, a renowned historian of ideas. 33
 34 However, this apparently did not influence the validity of the argument in any 34
 35 significant way. More surprising is perhaps that the narrative structure of all four 35
 36 books under consideration was rather loose; none of them exhibits narrative 36
 37 patterns typical for historical narratives. According to Kiliński, such a development 37
 38 can be explained not only by the growing time distance from the described 38
 39 phenomena, but also by the formation of classical sociology as an autonomous 39
 40 sub-discipline of sociological theory. 40

41 The second part of our book deals with the question that any public sociology 41
 42 faces, “Serving the Public or the State?” This section of the book opens with Daniel 42
 43 Gordon who takes a closer look at some of the fundamental tensions that have emerged 43
 44 in universities, especially in the United States since 1945. While recognizing the 44

1 often discussed dilemmas of teaching versus research and general education versus 1
2 specialized education, he focuses on the contradiction between discipline formation 2
3 on the one hand, and a democratic service ethos that tends to morph over time into 3
4 consumerism on the other. Gordon offers us some critical thoughts on how the trends 4
5 described in his piece impact on the discipline of sociology. 5

6 With Barbara Hoenig's chapter our attention moves to Europe. While recent 6
7 global changes in higher education and research evoke differences due to peculiar 7
8 processes of institutionalization in the different nation-states and a variety of 8
9 disciplines, not much research has been conducted on its impact in the European 9
10 context and on sociology as a discipline in particular. Hoenig's concerns are with 10
11 both the supra-national institutional framework of European science policy and the 11
12 impact it has on a re-definition of the so-called European Research Area (ERA). 12
13 Hoenig argues that it is highly likely that we will be faced with new inequalities 13
14 and processes of monopolization in the European research system. 14

15 Sally Shortall argues that in order to understand how evidence is used to inform 15
16 policy, we must critically reflect on the organizational culture of the civil service 16
17 and how it differs from the academy. She examines the hierarchical rule-based 17
18 structure of the civil service, where authority is linked to office. Shortall considers 18
19 the role of the civil servant as a generalist, who does not have specialist knowledge 19
20 of his or her policy area, but instead has specialist knowledge of the workings 20
21 of the civil service and how to minimize uncertainty. Shortall also examines the 21
22 culture of anonymity in the civil service. Academics who provide evidence to civil 22
23 servants may have little knowledge of the structure of the civil service or how it 23
24 differs from their culture. The academic is a specialist whose academic authority 24
25 comes from questioning normative knowledge and publicly disputing accepted 25
26 beliefs. Such an approach is anathema to the civil service. She concludes that 26
27 the difference in values and ideology of the civil service and the academy has 27
28 implications for how academic research is used to formulate policy and how it 28
29 positions itself in knowledge power struggles. 29

30 From Europe we move to South-East Asia: Albert Tzeng takes a closer look at 30
31 the emergence and state of the public sociology debate in Taiwan, Hong Kong and 31
32 Singapore where the idea of 'Public Sociology' has attracted extensive theoretical 32
33 debates. However, very few empirical surveys exist that look at the actual practices 33
34 in these countries in a more systematic way. Starting from a critical revision of 34
35 Burawoy's scheme, Tzeng develops an elaborated template which allows him to 35
36 look at the targeted audience, epistemological style and the level of engagement. 36
37 Based on his empirical material Tzeng offers some critical reflections regarding the 37
38 notions of critical mass, intellectual traditions and political-institutional factors. 38

39 From South East Asia we make a big jump across the Pacific Ocean to Latin 39
40 America. Márcio de Oliveira looks at a chapter in Brazilian sociological history 40
41 that might not be known outside of Brazil: the UNESCO research about racial 41
42 relations and the unexpected racism against Poles in Curitiba (Paraná). As 42
43 Oliveira points out, the history of Brazilian sociology has been very influenced 43
44 by UNESCO's fight against racism just after the Second World War. In Brazil 44

1 this fight culminated in a research program about racial relations, which took 1
 2 place between 1951 and 1952 in the cities of Recife, Salvador, Rio de Janeiro 2
 3 and São Paulo. UNESCO saw Brazil as a country that had a successful model of 3
 4 harmonic racial relations. In this sense, it would be a paradigm for other racial 4
 5 conflictive countries all around the world. Nevertheless, Brazilian history and 5
 6 society disappointed UNESCO's officials because the Brazilian research team had 6
 7 discovered that the model of democratic racial relations – as described by the 7
 8 most famous Brazilian anthropologist, Gilberto Freyre (1900–1987) – was widely 8
 9 overrated. So, after the initial UNESCO research, a new Brazilian team – headed 9
 10 by the most important sociologist of this period, Florestan Fernandes (1920–1995) 10
 11 – engaged in new research about racial relations in Southern Brazil. This area was 11
 12 left out of the first UNESCO research apparently because of the small number, or 12
 13 even total lack of, black people. As it turned out, in the city of Curitiba (capital 13
 14 of the state of Paraná) they were surprised by discovering a new type of racism: 14
 15 racism against white people, particularly those of Polish descent. Oliveira intends 15
 16 to recover the details of this unexpected discovery by taking a closer look at a 16
 17 number of neglected dimensions and by putting the case in the proper context of 17
 18 Brazilian sociological history. 18

19 The third part of the book discusses “Individual intellectuals and their 19
 20 audiences”. The first case study by Matteo Bortolini deals with the US sociologist 20
 21 Robert Bellah. Bellah started off in the mid-1950s as a specialist on Japanese 21
 22 religion and a general theorist in the sociology of religion, working squarely 22
 23 within the twin frameworks of structural-functionalism and modernization theory. 23
 24 Around 1965, however, he abandoned Parsonian jargon and championed a radical 24
 25 approach to the study of religion, which he termed ‘symbolic realism’. Describing 25
 26 his new stance as a politics of imagination and religion, Bellah wrote that the best 26
 27 guides might not be systematic theorists, but poets and ecstatic aphorists. In the 27
 28 autobiographical introduction to his first collection of essays, *Beyond Belief* (1970), 28
 29 Bellah explained his intellectual shift as the result of a personal *coupure*, born 29
 30 out of disillusionment with American political and cultural life and the influence 30
 31 of a counter-culture. Bortolini intends to complement Bellah's autobiographical 31
 32 explanation by showing that the structural and intellectual roots of ‘symbolic 32
 33 realism’ and its meaning lie also within a disciplinary and interdisciplinary context. 33

34 Studying open-editorial pages in two Austrian dailies, Philipp Korom attempts 34
 35 to determine who exactly it is who is doing the talking, who the public is and what 35
 36 the possible motives of each are when it comes to the relations between the two. 36
 37 Korom identifies the authors and their professional roles but he is also interested 37
 38 in establishing a debate about the deeper political, cultural and social meaning of 38
 39 this public deliberation process. 39

40 Ragnvald Kalleberg takes a closer look at the roles of academics and the media. 40
 41 Usually dissemination has the function of making specialized knowledge and 41
 42 insight relevant for and understandable to an interested public outside a particular 42
 43 research area. However, on occasion academics also take part in public discourse 43
 44 and contribute with specialized knowledge to democratic discourse. How exactly 44

1 is this task understood and practiced nowadays? Is it adequately institutionalized? 1
 2 What are its problems and prospects? Kalleberg focuses particularly on Norwegian 2
 3 academics and uses them as a case study in order to illustrate a more general 3
 4 phenomenon in modern media-dominated contemporary society. 4

5 Jonathan Roberge and Thomas Crosbie discuss the changing role of the 5
 6 intellectual as critic and what distinguishes old forms from new forms of intervention 6
 7 in the public sphere. They argue that many discourse communities gather around 7
 8 the thoughts and actions of social movement intellectuals, that is, individuals who 8
 9 are closely identified with the meaning of the community as a whole. However, 9
 10 new media technology has changed the communicative interaction patterns of 10
 11 many of these groups. Social movements have become balkanized and ever- 11
 12 smaller grained communities are the result of this. Skilled critics have taken the 12
 13 place of social movement intellectuals by defining the internal meanings of the 13
 14 group as well as projecting those meanings onto a broader public. 14

15 Andrew Abbott's text is an attempt to take stock. What does it mean for a 15
 16 social scientist to reason and to be passionate about the society he or she is a part 16
 17 of? That this is not just something that only American sociologists think about 17
 18 becomes clear once we expand our horizons and take a closer look at how other 18
 19 cultures and societies function and how their respective social scientists have tried 19
 20 to explain them. The University of Atlantis and the work of Barbara Celarent 20
 21 provide an excellent viewpoint to look at this aspect of world sociology in an 21
 22 imaginative fashion. 22

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 24 have commented on draft chapters and made a number of editorial suggestions. 24
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29 29
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