chair’s corner

As we approach the ASA meetings, we Global & Transnational sociologists have a lot to anticipate. Great panels and dynamic roundtables scheduled for the Sunday of the conference. Terrific new leadership in our incoming chair Ann Swidler and chair-elect John Lie, both of whom will be involved in next year’s ASA section mini-conference in San Francisco. Wesley Longhofer, Sadia Saeed, and Nick Wilson did a fantastic job organizing panels and roundtables.

In New York, our special event is a Grad Mentoring luncheon, joint with the Comparative & Historical Sociology section, and underwritten by Yale CHESS (Yale Center for Historical Enquiry & the Social Sciences). The luncheon was announced as open to all grads in either section, on a first come-first-served basis, and it quickly filled up, with a waiting list. Special thanks are due to Chris Muller and Nick Wilson, without whom ASACHS chair Julian Go and I could not have organized this event, and to the Global and Transnational Council and others who will be there as faculty mentors.

All interested grads, whether or not they are able to attend the luncheon or make this year’s meetings, will be linked up with other grads and faculty with related academic interests. The Global & Transnational section is new, and we are all still getting to know one another better. So please, spread the word!

Our section has, I think, a particularly vibrant intellect profile. Perhaps all section chairs think the same, but the many wonderful books and papers that our Awards (sub)committees considered this year bear me out. Thank you all for nominating such excellent work and giving our readers intellectual pleasure and confidence in the future of global and transnational social science scholarship.

Award winners are announced in this Newsletter. Please do come to our ASA Business Meeting and Reception to celebrate everybody’s achievements. (You all know about NYC prices, so there will be a cash bar and a total of two celery sticks per person at the reception, exhausting our entire treasury, but hey ... it’s New York! All is forgiven.)

Cheers, and see you at the meetings!

Julia Adams
Professor of Sociology & International and Area Studies
Yale University
editor's note

After three years of editing Global Review newsletter, A. Aneesh decided to step down. He’s currently on sabbatical in New Delhi beginning a new project on citizenship. We look forward to hearing about the research and thank him for his dutiful service to the section and the G&TS community.

So that leaves you with me. I’ll mostly try to emulate Aneesh’s good work as the newsletter will continue to serve as a valuable space to share publications, announcements, & news with section scholars. The section chairs and I would also like to use the newsletter as a vehicle to understand where we are as section.

To that end, this issue features a number of pieces graciously contributed by section members on a host of topics. They are thoughtful and insightful and provide unique perspectives on what global & transnational sociology, in fact, is. We welcome contributions for future issues of the newsletter, so please contact me if you have any ideas.

We’d also like to congratulate the winners of the section’s book and article awards, which are featured on pages 7-8. Additionally, there is a listing of all section sessions and roundtables for next month’s conference on the next few pages.

Thank you for reading and take care,

Shehzad Nadeem
Assistant Professor of Sociology, Lehman College, City University of New York

Global and Transnational Sociology will hold a Graduate Student Mentoring Lunch jointly with the Comparative Historical Section at ASA!

On Monday, August 12, from noon to 2 pm, in the Dakota Hub at Convene, located at 810 7th Avenue, close to the convention hotel, the event is supported by both sections and by Yale CHESS (Center for Historical Enquiry and the Social Sciences). Lunch will be served.

Section chairs Julia Adams (Global & Transnational) and Julian Go (Comparative & Historical) and section members and co-organizers Chris Muller and Nick Wilson emailed all graduate students affiliated with the sections and invited them to attend, with spots allocated on a first-come first-served basis. Faculty from both sections also volunteered to participate.

We’ve had a wonderful response, and are at this point full up. But we’re keeping an active wait list in case spots come open. If you are interested, please feel free to email Julia (Julia.Adams@yale.edu), Julian (Julianago@bu.edu), Chris (mullerchristoph@gmail.com), and Nick (n.wilson@yale.edu).

We look forward to seeing you at ASA!

introducing shehzad nadeem, scholar, teacher, and newsletter editor

by Julia Adams

The Global/Transnational Section is lucky to have Professor Shehzad Nadeem, who teaches at Lehman College, CUNY, as the editor of our newsletter. Professor Nadeem (or Shehzad, as he prefers) teaches urban and global sociology; his research interests revolve around the intersection of meaning and global capitalism. His fascinating recent book, *Dead Ringers: How Outsourcing Is Changing the Way Indians Understand Themselves* (Princeton University Press), was a finalist for the 2011 C. Wright Mills Award, given by the Society for the Study of Social Problems. His current work explores the culture of yoga in the West and is tentatively titled ‘The Karma of Capital: What the Yoga Boom Tells Us About Capitalism and Culture.’ Shehzad’s academic work masters the challenging conjunction of cultural history and sociology; the analysis of contemporary capitalism, and searching ethnographic and interview methods, which he has deployed both in the U.S. and in India. He has also written for the *Guardian* newspaper, and his work has been featured on interviews in a variety of media. His webpage is at: [http://shehzadnadeem.wordpress.com/](http://shehzadnadeem.wordpress.com/)

Shehzad is happy to hear from either people with related research and teaching interests, or ASA Global and Transnational section members who want to discuss possible contributions to the Newsletter.
Invited Session: Rethinking the Global and Transnational in Power and Politics

Sun Aug 11 2013, 10:30 to 12:10pm
Session Organizer: Julia Adams (Yale University)
Presider: Jennifer L. Bair (University of Colorado)
“Building Counter-Hegemony: South-South Intercultural Translations,” Boaventura De Sousa Santos (University of Coimbra - Portugal)
“Borrowing across Borders: Gender Equality Policies in Sweden, the United States and Beyond,” Ann Shola Orloff (Northwestern University)
“The Colonial Origins of British and French Sociology, 1940s-1960s,” George Steinmetz (University of Michigan)
Abstract: The sociological analysis of power and politics, long skewed toward methodological nationalism, is now becoming truly global and transnational. Across a variety of topics, this panel offers four distinctive and cutting-edge approaches to that important task: globalizing political sociology.

Critical Approaches to Global Action at the Edges

Mon Aug 12 2013, 8:30 to 10:10am
Session Organizers: Wesley Longhofer (Emory University) & Sadia Saeed (Yale University)
Presider: Sadia Saeed (Yale University)
“Entrepreneurs and Consumers: Complicit Masculinity on the African Periphery,” Jordanna Chris Maton (Institute for Advanced Study in Toulouse)
“Self-Reliance beyond Neoliberalism: Rethinking Autonomy at the Edges of Empire,” Diana Mincyte (New York University), Karen Hébert (Yale University)
“The Neoliberalization of Racial Capitalism,” Andrew James Clarno (University of Illinois-Chicago)
Discussant: Julian Go (Boston University)

New Approaches to Diffusion and Global Flows

Sun Aug 11 2013, 8:30 to 10:10am
Session Organizer: Wesley Longhofer (Emory University)
Session Organizer: Sadia Saeed (Yale University)
Presider: Shawn Pope (Stanford University)
“Cultural Diffusion on the Longest Street in the World,” Tamara Kay (Harvard University)
“Decoupling and Recoupling in Corporate Social Responsibility in Asia,” Alwyn Lim (University of Southern California)
“Global Diffusion through Collective Learning. An Integrative Approach to Bottom-up and Top-down Diffusion,” Anne K. Krueger (University of Potsdam)
“Sex Laws and Sexuality Rights in Comparative and Global Perspectives,” David John Frank (University of California-Irvine), Nolan Phillips (University of California-Irvine)
Discussant: Kiyoteru Tsutsui (University of Michigan)
Organizing and Disorganizing the Global System
Sun Aug 11 2013, 12:30 to 2:10pm
Session Organizer: Wesley Longhofer (Emory University)
Session Organizer: Sadia Saeed (Yale University)
Presider: Thomas Hannan (University of California-Los Angeles)
“Globalization and Corporate Political Unity,” Joshua Murray (Vanderbilt University)
“Mapping Global Fields of Practice: The Case of Humanitarian Relief Organizations,” Monika Christine Krause (University of London-Goldsmiths)
“Membership has its privileges: Shared international organizational affiliation and foreign aid flows. 1978-2010,” Liam Swiss (Memorial University)
*Wesley Longhofer (Emory University)
“Taxing Questions: The Politics of Revenue within Late Merchant Colonialism,” Nicholas Hoover Wilson (Yale University)
Discussant: Rachel Sullivan Robinson (American University)

The Failures and Challenges of Global Financial Governance (co-sponsored with the Section on Sociology of Law)
Mon Aug 12 2013, 4:30 to 6:10pm
Session Organizer: Terence C. Halliday (American Bar Foundation)
Presider: Terence C. Halliday (American Bar Foundation)
“Accounting for the Financial Crisis,” Matthias Thiemann (Columbia University)
“Law & Society Approach to Corruption: Beyond Neoliberalism in the Study of Informal Economies,” Marina Zaloznaya (Northwestern University)
Discussant: Jens Becker (Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies)

ROUNDTABLES
Sun Aug 11 2013, 2:30 to 3:30pm
Organized by Nicholas Hoover Wilson (Yale University)

Table 1: Othering
Presider: Carina A. Bandhauer (Western Connecticut State University)
“Radical Black and Chicana feminism in the the 1960s and 1970s and transnational intersectional thought,” Peeter Tammeveski (University of North Dakota)
“Working, Covering, Sex, and Smoking: Gender and the Other in German Citizenship Education,” Jessica Autumn Brown (University of Houston)

Table 2: Interstices
Presider: Damon Mayrl (Universidad Carlos III de Madrid)
“Global Borderlands: A Case Study of Subic, Philippines,” Victoria Reyes (Princeton University)
“Globalisation and Sociology, Influences of Globalisation Challenges and its Consequences on Sociological Development,” Lejla - Mušić (Faculty of political Sciences)
“The Global Exposed, Locals and In-Betweens: Comparative Analysis of Japan, South Korea and Taiwan,” Ming-Chang Tsai (National Taipei University)
“Redefining “Empathy” and “Sympathy” in Intercultural Settings,” Satoshi Maeda (Tokyo Metropolitan University)

Table 3: Expertise
Presider: Christopher Robertson (University of Texas-Austin)
“Where do international board members come from?: country-level antecedents of the transnational business elite,” Kees van Veen (University of Groningen), Padma Rao Sahib (University of Groningen)
“Experts, States, and Field Theory: Learning from the Peculiar Case of Terrorism Expertise,” Lisa Stampnitzky (Harvard University)
“Exports and the Acceleration of University Foundation,” Matt Pearce (University of California-Irvine)
“Online Voluntary Distributed Computing: Scientists at the Frontline of Institutional Transformation,” Anne M. Holohan (Trinity College Dublin)

Table 4: Cultural Objects
Presider: Jeffrey Guhin (Yale University)
“Recursive Flows: How Cultural Products Move Across and Beyond Boundaries,” Heidi Elizabeth Rademacher (State University of New York-Stony Brook)
“A Cosmopolitan Perspective of Globalization; Cultural and Aesthetic Consumption among Young People,” Sylvie Octobre (Ministère de la culture et de la communication), Vincenzo Cicchelli (University of Paris-Descartes)
“Invisible Laborers of Transnational Cultural Production: How to Make Japanese Manga American,” Casey Brienza (University of Cambridge)
“Trends in globalization in pop music charts. A multilevel analysis of nine countries, 1960-2010,” Marc Verboord (Erasmus University Rotterdam), *Amanda Brandellero (University of Amsterdam)

Table 5: Cultural Flows
Presider: Jonah Stuart Brundage (University of California-Berkeley)
“From Cultural Ambassadors to Global Human Capital: International Student Policies in Japan,” Ryoko Yamamoto (State University of New York-Old Westbury)
“Reconstructing a Nation: Youth Mapping Somalia and the
Table 6: The Global Imaginary
Presider: Thomas A. Crosbie (Yale University)
“Imagining the Nigerian Audience: Ethnic Stereotypes and the Production of Nigeria’s Sesame Square,” Naomi A Moland (New York University)
“Effects of Globalization: Sport Participation and Preference,” Andrew Breidenbach (University of New Mexico)

Table 7: Migration 1
Presider: Candas Pinar (Yale University)
“Brokering Narratives of Migration Control: Symbolic Domination and Resistance in Ghana’s “Migration Dissuasion” Campaigns,” Lindsay Bayham (University of California-Berkeley)
“State Promotion of Labor Migration: The Relationship between Policies and Remittances,” Amanda Wyant (North Carolina State University)
“Kurdish Diaspora: A comparison between Europe and the United States,” Nazan Bedirhanoglu (Binghamton University)

Table 8: Gender
Presider: Christine Slaughter (Yale University)
“Subjective Well-being and Adaptation of Chinese Immigrants in Japan,” Jie Zhang (Waseda University)
“Choosing White Women: A Case Study of White Immigrant Domestic Workers in the Global City”
“The Perceived Discrimination and Social Exclusion of Chinese Immigrants in Japan”
“Transnational Migration, Immigration Reforms, and Migrant Domestics’ Human Rights: Our Collective Responsibility as Global Citizens”

Table 9: Political Economy
Presider: Yingyao Wang (Yale University)
“Dairy Conglomeration, Social Institutions, and Social Cost Theory: Developing a Model for International Comparative Analysis,” Eric J. Krieg (Buffalo State College)
“Legitimacy and Coerciveness of the Law and Legal Compliance in China,” Wenjie Liao (University of Minnesota)
“The Transformation of State-Business Relations in an Emerging Economy: The Case of Brazilian Agribusiness,” Kristen Hopewell (University of British Columbia)
“Why Walmart succeeds in some places but not others? Variations in East Asia 1970 – Present,” Solee Irene Shin (University of Washington)

Table 10: National Identity
Ben Herzog (Harvard University)
“Do Citizenship Policies Affect One’s Attitudes on National Membership?,” Naeyun Lee (University of Chicago)
“Nativism under Capitalism: The Struggle between Business and Nativists,” Daniel Alvord (University of Kansas), Brock Ternes (University of Kansas)

Table 11: Global Governance
Presider: Vida Bajc (Methodist University)
“Re-centering State-Centered Theory: Public Sector Workers and the 21st Century Developmental State in South Africa,” Ben Scully (Johns Hopkins University)

Table 12: Modeling Development
Presider: Kristin V. Plys (Yale University)
“Global Cities in Africa? The Role of Consumption-Oriented Development in the Globalization of Accra, Ghana,” Deborah Hobden (University of California-Santa Barbara)
“Transnationalism in Iran’s Architecture Profession,” Shawhin Roudbari (University of California-Berkeley)

Table 13: The U.S. and its Fragments
Presider: Xiaohong Xu (Yale University)
“Religion and Well-being in Japan in comparison to the U.S.,” Kimiko Tanaka (James Madison University), Jeong-Hwa Ho (Ajou University)
Table 14: A ‘New’ India?
Presider: Vani Kulkarni (Yale University)
“Globalization and State Accountability: Significance of Local Protests in India,” Preethi Krishnan Ramaswamy (Purdue University)
“Making Sense of Illiberalism in the New India,” Patrick Inglis (Grinnell College)
“Networking Arranged Marriages on Websites: Does the Anonymity of the Internet help Indian Divorcees?,” Nilanjan Raghunath (Singapore University of Technology and Design)

Table 15: Migration 2
Presider: Elisabeth Becker (Yale University)
“Korean Migrant Workers’ Migration Patterns and Their Life Experiences in the U.S.,” Eunbi Kim (University of Pennsylvania)
“Nepali Migrant Women, their Husbands, and their Transnational Lives: Power and Paradoxes,” Shobha Hamal Gurung (Southern Utah University)
“Politics of the Temporary,” Parthiban Muniandy (University of Illinois)

Table 16: World Society
Presider: Elizabeth Roberto (Yale University)
“The Structure of the International Organization of Woman in World Culture, 1870-2005,” Rachael Russell Chatterson (University of California-Irvine)
“World Society, International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs), and Political Participation,” Jasmine Karrissey (University of Massachusetts-Amherst), Evan Schofer (University of California-Irvine), Beth Gharrity Gardner (University of California-Irvine)
“At the Margins of the World Polity: Disconnect between Globalized Laws and Local Values,” Louisa Roberts (The Ohio State University)

Table 17: Global Environments
Presider: Justin Farrell (University of Notre Dame)
“Alternative to Urbanization: Life after the City,” Nikita E. Pokrovsky (Higher School of Economics)
“Reduction or Transfer? Global Environmentalism and Carbon Dioxide Emissions across the World-System,” Kristen E. Shorette (University of California-Irvine)
“Renewable Energy and Development in Kenya: The Emergence of a Global Assemblage,” Brian J. Dill (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)
“The Green City Paradox: Environmental Rhetoric, Unsustainable Realities During Delhi’s Commonwealth Games,” Dana Nicole Kornberg (University of Michigan)

Table 18: Glocality and Global Culture
Presider: Roland Robertson (University of Pittsburgh)
John Bolli (Emory University)
Gili Drori (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)
Pertti Alasuutari (University of Tampere)
Sigrid Quack (Max Planck Institute)

Table 19: Segmented Globalization
Michael Mann will be workshopping a paper entitled "Segmented Globalization." The paper is available in advance from Michael Mann at mmann@soc.ucla.edu.

GLOBALIZATION SESSIONS
Globalization and Macroeconomic Structures
Mon Aug 12 2013, 4:30 to 6:10pm
Session Organizer: Christine E. Bose (State University of New York-Albany)

Globalization, Collective Action, and Social Movements
Mon Aug 12 2013, 2:30 to 4:10pm
Session Organizer: Christine E. Bose (State University of New York-Albany)

Discussants: Aaron Major (State University of New York-Albany) and Jason Beckfield (Harvard University)

Discussant: Christine E. Bose (State University of New York-Albany)
**Best Book**


Michael Mann delivers the third volume of his study of power “from the beginning” to our own time. The current volume explores the major European colonial empires, Communist revolutions, the rise of American empire, the Great Depression, fascism, and the two major wars of the 20th century. Across these volumes, Mann has argued for a quadripartite approach to power, stressing its ideological, economic, military, and political forms and rejecting the notion that any one of them has ultimate primacy. In developing his history of power, he has rejuvenated the classical tradition in social thought by insisting that we must understand the varied combination of these types of power in order to adequately interpret different historical periods. This book comprises another lasting contribution to global and transnational sociology, stressing especially the role of racism and “the great divergence” -- the industrialization of the West and Japan and the relative stagnation of the rest -- in shaping today’s world.


Jackie Smith and Dawn Wiest make a major contribution to the scholarship on modern social movements. They examine how institutions define the opportunities and constraints on social movements by introducing ideas and models of action that help transform social activism as well as the overall system itself. They highlight the importance of struggles for decolonization, the rise of national independence movements, and the founding of the United Nations. One important effect was to shift the context in which states and other global actors compete and interact. This is an exciting text that broadens our understanding of the relationship between social movements and global/transnational institutions.

**Best Article**


Nitsan Chorev’s article makes an important contribution to our understanding of global diffusion processes. She offers a new theoretical model according to which international agreements (or by extension: any kind of global normative framework) are adapted in a transformed manner by individual states; this modified version then diffuses across other states (with additional modifications); finally, this accumulated transformations influence the global norm itself, thus concluding a cycle of recursive transformations. The usefulness of this model is demonstrated empirically, using newspaper reports and interviews, with the case of international patent law and AIDS drugs. The article represents a brilliant example of how to combine analytical precision with solid empirics and, more specifically, how to move the field of transnational sociology towards an equally rigorous and sophisticated understanding of global processes.


Lim and Tsutsui’s article represents a prime example of what quantitative research can achieve for the study of global processes and more specifically for our understanding of de-coupling—the adoption of institutional templates without their realization in everyday organizational routines. Combining standard measurements of international global pressure with a series of other indicators relating to alternative causal mechanisms, the authors arrive at the surprising conclusion that de-coupling between corporate responsibility commitments and actual corporate behavior is strongest in highly developed countries with a liberal economic order and much lower in the developing world. This represents an interesting corrective to the prevailing wisdom that de-coupling is a phenomenon confined to institutionally weak states in the global periphery. The article is also valuable for its use of measures reflecting international economic ties, in addition to standard measures in the world society literature.
best scholarly publication by a graduate student


The committee was impressed by the richness of the historical case study and its persuasive emphasis on the legacy of the modernist period (rather than post-Fordist globalization) in urban planning. The article offers an excellent example of how our understanding of urban development in the context of globalization does not stand apart from prior colonial and postcolonial influences. It is a great contribution to the global cities literature, carefully analyzing both market and cultural factors, and showing the consequences modernist urban planning had for stratification and segregation.

best scholarly publication by an international scholar award


Min Zhou examines the role played by international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) in the global promotion of human rights. He studies the transnational networks formed by these INGOs, their range across states, and the extent of citizen participation within them. While it is commonly acknowledged that participation in INGOs varies across countries, few scholars have focused on determining the sources of this variation. In this excellent article, Zhou seeks to explain the cross-national variation found in the human rights field by using a large dataset on national memberships of human rights INGOs across 162 countries from 1966 through 2006. He identifies two dimensions, democracy and state capacity, as key in determining the effectiveness of INGOs in promoting human rights globally. Broader implications of the findings include (a) recognizing the importance of national state institutions in determining the structure of the global human rights field and (b) enabling global civil society to determine where attention needs to be focused in order to have the most impact.

other honors

Enrique Pumar, associate professor and chair of the Department of Sociology at Catholic University, has been chosen as an Outstanding Author Contribution Award Winner for the Literati Network Awards for Excellence 2013 by Emerald publishing. Pumar’s article “National Development, Capability, and the Segmented Assimilation of Hispanics in Washington, D.C.,” was part of a larger volume Hispanic Migration and Urban Development: Studies from Washington, DC, that he published in October 2012. http://publicaffairs.cua.edu/releases/2013/pumar-literati.cfm

Robert D. Woodberry, National University of Singapore, received four outstanding article awards for “The Missionary Roots of Liberal Democracy,” American Political Science Review, 2012, 106: 244-274: three from the American Political Science Association (the Luebbert Award for Best Article in Comparative Politics; Best Article in Comparative Democratization; and runner up for the Wallerstein Award for Best Published Article in Political Economy) and one from the American Sociological Association (Distinguished Article in the Sociology of Religion).

Many thanks to the awards subcommittee members for their wisdom & hard work: Tim Bartley, Frank D. Bean, Claudio Benzecry, Gurinder Bhambra, Mounira M. Charrad, Ho-fung Hung, Andrew Junker, Alondra Nelson, Tasleem Padamsee, Anju Mary Paul, Raka Ray, Saskia Sassen, Anthony J. Spires, & Andreas Wimmer
new series: mapping research of G&TS members worldwide

by Sigrid Quack

The Global and Transnational Sociology Section of the ASA has become the home not only of scholars from different regions of North America but also of scholars from all over the world. As an international member of the G&TS Council, it is a pleasure to respond to Julia Adams’ kind invitation to present a short profile of my research group’s work in the G&TS newsletter. Perhaps this could be the start of a series of contributions in which colleagues might present their research centers and thereby contribute to a mapping of G&TS members’ research institutions around the world. The invitation is open for others to follow.

Research Group: “Institution Building Across Borders” at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies in Cologne, Germany

In a world in which economic, social and political developments in one place are increasingly affected by developments in others; in a world where opportunities and threats to people are no longer exclusively the responsibility – if they ever were – of governments of sovereign nation-states; in a world where nevertheless local and national actors and developments still matter to how globalization unfolds; in such a world as we now live in, there are more reasons than ever to reflect critically on the various ways in which actors from different backgrounds and locales engage in efforts at institution building across borders.

It is against this background, that the research group Institution Building Across Borders was formed in 2007 at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies in Cologne, one of the leading German research institutes in the field of economic sociology and political economy. Projects start from the theoretical conjuncture that transnational institution building is driven by historically contingent processes of cross-border elite and civil society mobilization rather than by functional requirements alone. A key theme is how cognitive and cultural frames – narratives, stories and projections – shape recurrent sequences of social and political contestation, cooperation and coalition building and how these sequences lead to temporary institutional settlements. History, timing and sequence represent another key dimension of research. The transnational sphere is seen as a fruitful laboratory for studying how institutions emerge and evolve in the face of strategic uncertainty, polyarchy, and a multiplicity of actors with different goals.

The research group uses longitudinal and cross-sectional comparison within and across transnational governance fields as heuristic tool to depict different trajectories of cross-border institutional development. Longitudinal studies of four issue fields, chosen to maximize variance in political salience and technical complexity, are under completion: accounting standards, copyright rules, forest certification and labour standards. The aim is to work towards a typology and explanatory framework for trajectories of transnational governance. In cooperation with Olga Malets, I have applied a first version of such a typology to a comparison of accounting standardization and forest certification in a co-authored book chapter entitled “Projecting the Local into the Global: Trajectories of Participation in Transnational Standard-Setting forthcoming in Organizations and Managerial Ideas: Global Themes and Local Variations”, edited by Gili Drori et al., Routledge.

Another common thread that runs through the work of the research group is the concern with how transnational rules are implemented on the ground, how they are monitored by civil and public actors, and whether there is any learning from local experiences going on, or not. As Peter Evans once stated in his article on Development as Institutional Change, there is a danger that belief in “one-model-for-all” will lead to ‘institutional monocropping’, particularly when the transfer of models from the Global North to the Global South is involved. Two additional research projects on the implementation of nature conservation programs within remote rural Southern European areas and on the financialisation of poverty through microfinance in Andhra Pradesh/India point to the negative social impacts of such top-down implementation driven by powerful actors.

These and similar questions, which all too evidently elude analysis constrained by national borders and disciplinary boundaries, are addressed by the group, currently composed of myself, four doctoral students, one post-doc fellow, three international guest researchers and two student interns. The group also runs a research blog (http://www.mpifg.de/projects/govxborders/projects_en.asp) on which its current and former members write about topical events such the diffusion of international accounting standards in Africa, how “fair use” rules in a global digital world are still shaped by national jurisdictions, and transnational labor activism in China, to name just a few themes. A blogbook with selected contributions has just been published and is
available as open access PDF, ebook and in print. The group cooperates closely with Marie-Laure Djelic at the ESSEC Research Center on Capitalism, Globalization and Governance in Paris (http://center-for-capitalism-globalization-and-governance.essec.edu).

Marie-Laure Djelic and Sigrid Quack are co-editors of “Transnational Communities” (Cambridge University Press 2010) and “Globalization and Institutions” (Edward Elgar 2003).

Recent publications


Recently completed PhD dissertations (University of Cologne, Germany):


The police will not be able to restore my honor,” one rape victim responded to a police inquiry [2]. This pattern of patriarchal resistance to women’s changing status is global; the more severe the patriarchy, the more extreme the backlash against the integration of women in the job market, education or, for that matter, against women’s autonomy in areas from clothing choice to marriage.

Women have made extraordinary strides in recent decades, from education to integration in the labor market. During the last decades of the twentieth century, millions of new factory jobs were generated in the developing world. Historically, men far outnumbered women in the formal manufacturing sector. Women reached parity or beyond in many countries in just one to two decades. Women are now a significant part of the working class, especially in countries that went through rapid industrialization.

Sometimes the gains in education are not met by an expected advancement in the labor market due to patriarchal resistance. This is notable for example in the Middle East and North Africa, where, together with parts of South Asia, patriarchal resistance is severe and marked. This is why for example the education gains of women do not lead to the same extent of labor market gains (though some progress is being made even in those regions). This same pattern plays out even among subsets of some immigrant communities even in the second and third generations.

Having gained a modicum of control over their very bodies, women gain control over their self-representation, from consumerism to careers to fashion. The role of fashion—and aesthetics—cannot be understated. We unfortunately often see fashion and aesthetics more broadly as trivial issues, unconnected to the greater social and political issues of the day. But this is mistaken. It is through fashion that individual autonomy is declared, and claims to social and cultural capital, and even erotic capital, are announced. Rather than sequestered, hidden or covered up to varying degrees, their scripts in life from work to marriage determined by family and community; these newly unfettered women partake in the public square, literally and figuratively.

Note fashion does not necessarily mean westernized dress, or even dispensing with traditional forms of dress and religious affiliations, but rather that modes of identity becomes predicated on individual agency. It is no accident that many of the conflicts with patriarchal elements are over dress.

This pattern of women’s assertion in educational, economic and social life, followed by varying levels of patriarchal resistance, is indeed international. More moderate versions of these engagements take place in Western societies, on issues from abortion to debates on monogamy. These conflicts, from civil to violent, are reflective of a profound phenomenon: We are witnessing the first global struggle over the nature of the self; and in that struggle, gender and sexuality, so crucial to people’s understanding of themselves and their cultures, lie at the very center. A critical factor here is the notion of “self-possession,” or who owns and control’s one’s body, especially when it comes to women: the individual herself, or the community, through enforced practices of honor, virginity, veiling and marriage. As a result, women are now at the heart of the world’s most dangerous quarrels.
Let us quickly dispense with notions that this is some kind of clash of civilizations. These debates are domestic struggles though, of course, the forces of patriarchy can be much more pronounced in some societies, or regions, than others. But if the courageous protests in New Delhi and Cairo show us anything, it is that these are deeply felt quarrels within India and Egypt, among many other countries. Yes, western ideas can inform the debates over women’s rights and constitutional norms. But it is important to understand that these ideas are as much (if not more) imported by nationals of these societies as they are exported by western media, academics and the like. And, of course, many of the ideas animating these protests are local.

Patriarchal resistance cuts across all religions as well—from conservative Hindus in India, Orthodox Jews in Israel, conservative Muslims in Egypt to some Christian groups in the United States. It is a resistance that is primarily cultural in character and reflected in civil politics. The resistance of Islamist groups, particularly by the militant groups, is distinct in that they view the threat not just of individuals but all the institutions they view as supporting these changes. More broadly “the West” is a corrupting force, and the danger is seen to extend from churches to global media, and of course the United States and other western governments.

Natalie Deckard (now a PhD candidate at Emory) and I have developed an index to measure levels of patriarchy cross-nationally. This allows us to more quantitatively measure levels of patriarchy, as well as allows us to make statistical analysis. It is from such a study that the levels of patriarchy becomes evident, markedly so in the tribal-patriarchal contexts from North Africa through the Middle East through to countries like Pakistan and Afghanistan.

What is striking however from this study, discussed in my recent book, is the extent to which Islamist violence is predicated more on patriarchy than “Islam” per se. Even the non-violent Islamist movements do better in the highly patriarchal Middle East than in moderately patriarchal Indonesia—though the latter is the largest Muslim country in the world. Islamist parties won close to 70 percent of the vote in Egypt. They reach the teens in Indonesia elections.

One final comment: I do think we need work to better integrate what has traditionally been termed in sociology as the “macro” and the “micro”—though I recognize much outstanding work has been done at the micro-macro nexus. It is clear, however, when one sees the challenges and conflicts around issues of gender, that the personal has become the political to an extent that is unprecedented on the global scale.


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For interviews with the author, see in Salon.com: http://www.salon.com/2013/01/05/the_war_on_femaleosexuality_is_globalization_to_blame/; and (in German) in the Süddeutsche Zeitung: http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/vergewaltigung-in-indien-der-derzeitige-kampf-um-fragen-der-sexualitaet-ist-einzigartig-1.1572730
Explaining the Prevalence of Rape in Delhi NCR

by Vani Kulkarni and Kristin Plys

This past December, a physiotherapy student was gang raped in a moving bus in South Delhi and later brutally murdered. This incident stunned India, leading to massive protests in Delhi and other cities, and soon became a global headline. The question on everyone’s mind in coming to terms with this gang rape and its sheer brutality (along with the numerous other rapes that occur on an extremely frequent basis in Delhi NCR) is: what are the social conditions in Delhi under which rape is so recurrent?

Appadurai (1998) notes that bodily violence is one of the most acute forms of violence that human beings can perpetrate on one another. Power can be imposed most strongly through bodily violence. As rape involves invasive bodily violence, it is an expression of power in its most acute form. But what kind of power is at play - class, caste, gender, military, region (urban vs rural)? That is do upper class, caste, semi-rural or semi-urban men rape lower class, caste and urban women?

We contend that rape is foremost an expression of power exercised by men over women. The public outcry in response to December rape is a testimony to this. People protested because they all saw it as a women’s issue, an issue of gender power unfavorable to women irrespective of class, class and regional differences. While the discussion of rape and sexual violence has been linked to discussions of sexuality, the prevalence of rape in Delhi, we argue, has little to do with repressed sexuality in North Indian society. Rape, harassment, stalking and other forms of violence against women are issues of gender power. The biggest issue facing Indian women is not that there is not enough room to express one’s sexuality, although sexual repression is an important social issue that deserves analysis. The biggest issue facing women in Delhi is the fact women feel unsafe leaving their homes, because of the extreme and routine violence they face on a daily basis.

Such gender power, however, does not exist in isolation and is mediated through class, caste and regional variations. In other words, gender power is conditioned by or is contingent upon other social conditions particularly class and caste. So each of these conditions gives a different meaning to the gender power and subsequently gives a different meaning to the rape experience.

For instance, gender power is different when an upper caste woman is raped by lower caste man and when lower caste women are raped by upper caste men. Similarly, class differences give a different meaning to the gender power and the rape experience. It is, therefore, not accurate to say that upper class women are exempt from unfavorable gender power and do not experience rape at all or it is not as unfair. The meanings and experiences are just different.

While caste differences are difficult to discern and its exhibitions are rather subdued, class differences are by contrast, easily visible. For instance, fashion, neighborhood and geography of residence, mode of transportation and in consequences for the rapist and the victim all exhibit glaring class differences in Delhi and hence give different understanding and meanings to the rape experience.

Caste is important in understanding how patriarchy is enforced and reinforced. Upper caste men systematically rape women of low caste in order to reinforce systems of caste and patriarchy. This is a common practice in North Indian villages that has existed for centuries. But in the instances where men of lower caste rape a woman of an upper caste, it becomes a crime that will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law, as it violates social norms. While men of low caste raping women of a higher caste engenders most outrage, the converse is far more prevalent, and therefore, it’s best to understand rape in the urban context as primarily a gendered issue, albeit structured by notions of caste. Men of all social classes harass, stalk, and rape women to enforce traditional patriarchal norms, and high caste men use rape to discipline low caste women.

There is a popular conception that men committing crimes against women in Delhi are of a disadvantaged class background and therefore vent their class-based frustrations against women who defy patriarchal norms through their participation in the labor force. Even though they may make up the majority of the men accused of crimes against women, class has little to do with who commits crimes against women. Men of more advanced class-backgrounds are not taken to task through the legal system. Certainly, there is a tension in Delhi between women who work outside of the home and the traditional patriarchal norms in India, but this tension is found among all social classes.

Place of residence, mode of transportation and fashion are some other ways through which class distinctions change women’s experiences of gender power and rape incidents. Thus, while women’s understandings of their everyday life in Delhi reflects the social structures that make South Asia one of the places where violence against women takes an extreme form, not all women experience the geography of the city in the same manner and this too effects their everyday experiences with gender discrimination and gender-based violence. How women dress and the transportation options at their disposal either restrict or tend to increase their exposure to potential violence. Women who have access to their...
own private mode of transportation are far more mobile and feel comfortable wearing a range of fashions, both western and Indian. However, women who have to walk, take public transportation, an autorickshaw, radio cab or taxi are far more restricted in their dress, since these forms of transportation put them in close proximity of an unknown man, and it’s well-known that most rapes in Delhi occur in moving vehicles. This is where class becomes significant. Upper-class and upper middle class women are therefore the only women who can safely wear western style dress (including jeans, skirts and dresses), high heeled shoes, and forego a dupatta[2]. Once safely in a mall, restaurant or shop, it’s safe for women to wear whatever they like, and so, fashion choices then reflect a woman’s class status in a culture where her perceived modesty becomes a matter of her personal safety in public spaces. This also begs the question of the relationship between the very geography of the city and the safety of its female residents. As Delhi is about 3 times the size of New York, travel times are much longer between work and home, and the Delhi traffic makes these distances even longer in terms of travel time. Significant portions of Delhi residents’ days are spent in transit. Furthermore, the infrastructure in terms of sidewalks, street lighting and other amenities that would make the city safer for women is lacking. Therefore, individual women and their families rely on particular modes of transport and restrictions in women’s dress, along with family enforced or self-enforced curfews in order to ensure their safety in such an urban geography.

We have argued that rape is first and foremost an expression of gender power. However, the question remains as to why this is the case. That is why is rape by men of women used to exercise power and discipline? Understanding of cultural meanings and values provide a window into this. In much of the discourse on rape in India, cultural notions of honor are central. The rape of a sister, daughter, wife, mother or other female relative is seen as a source of dishonor to the elder males within the family structure. For that reason, preserving family honor is often seen as the primary cause of women not reporting rape. While honor clearly plays an important role there are other reasons far more salient to the urban Indian woman. Delhi women often lament the indifferent attitudes of the police who reluctantly register women’s complaints of harassment, stalking, rape, and violence. In fact, police are widely believed to verbally abuse, physically abuse, or harass rape victims who come to the station to report crimes against them. It’s also widely believed that police will question the veracity of the report, and the credibility of the woman filing the report and frequently salivate for juicy details[3]. But in the event that one does file a report, it’s widely believed that regardless of how a woman personally feels about the crime committed against her, she must frame her rape as a matter of family honor in order for the police to take her, and the complaint, seriously. Thus, while men rape to attack the family honor and feel powerful, women also use the same discourse of honor to take the power back by framing it in terms of family honor. Therefore, family honor matters in terms of discourse, but not as much in how urban women frame the trauma of their harassment, stalking, rape, or violence. The latter is framed in terms of self-honor. Going to the police is in hope of getting the culprit punished and getting that self-honor back. If they really believed in the family honor, they would not go public with their experience.

Issues of gender inequality and power in a nation raise questions and concerns of the quality and health of its democratic institutions. The Delhi rape incident raised these linkages in a big way. India’s democracy was at its weakest point. However, despite Delhi being named the rape capital, and despite the caste and class inequalities that exacerbate the gender power balance and rape experience, we would like to leave the readers if not on an optimistic note but certainly a less somber mood by pointing out the overwhelming public outcry to the December rape case. If rape indicated failed democratic state machinery in relation to women, the outcry in Delhi looked as if another kind of democracy was at work. It not only demonstrated that people from all classes and castes have the potential to laudably organize themselves into action and activism in reaction to rape violence. The power of mobilization was strong and effective enough to also provide hope for future that all cases of rape and violence against women will be brought to justice. Surely, there is good reason to be optimistic about balanced gender power and democracy at large in India.


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in print


How do companies sell life insurance in a country where death is a cultural taboo? In Marketing Death, Cheris S.C. Chan explores how and why the life insurance industry has managed to emerge in China, a country with an entrenched cultural stigma against the very topic of death. Drawing on extensive ethnographic fieldwork and engaging with current scholarship, Chan explores the processes and micro-politics by which foreign and domestic companies have negotiated local cultural resistance and created a market in spite of it. In doing so, she asks larger questions about how different societies view and value life and death, what is meant by “cultural values,” how they interact with a set of fragmented cultural tools to compellingly organize individuals’ practical daily lives, and how the market is influenced by them. Through in-depth study of the expansion of an industry whose unique “product” - gambling on one’s own sudden death - has always met with a measure of resistance, but never more so than in China, this book provides a new lens for understanding how modern capitalist enterprises are diffused to regions with disparate cultural traditions. WINNER of the Best Book on Globalization Award from the Global Division of the Society for the Study of Social Problem in 2012.

Patricia Leavy, Essentials of Transdisciplinary Research: Using Problem-Centered Methodologies (Left Coast Press, 2012)

Leavy presents an overview of transdisciplinarity as a problem-centered approach to research. Transdisciplinarity is a social justice oriented approach to research and may provide a pathway for addressing major contemporary challenges such as sustainability, violence, unequal development and health and well-being. Transnational research collaborations are also reviewed. Essentials of Transdisciplinary Research provides a user-friendly guide to the key principles and research design strategies needed for building a transdisciplinary project. This book can be used by researchers, graduate students designing thesis projects and undergraduate courses in research methods, qualitative research, mixed methods, service learning or community-based research as well as any courses that emphasize critical thinking, problem solving, problem-based learning and/or research.

Jackie Smith and Ernesto Verdeja (eds.) Globalization, Social Movements, and Peacebuilding (Syracuse University Press, 2013)

“Jackie Smith and Ernesto Verdeja have produced a compelling and timely volume calling for an epistemic shift in peace research and policy. Detailing the structural violence of neoliberal globalization and its framing of approaches to conflict and post-conflict situations, the authors switch focus from elites and their security interests to civil society and social justice movements as the foundation for enduring peacebuilding. This volume effectively redefines the field of peacebuilding as an emancipatory process instead of a legitimation of extant power relations.” — Philip McMichael, professor of development sociology, Cornell University

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ARTICLES


Sociology in Latin America: Does historical sociology exist?
by Manuel Antonio Garretón & Naim Bro-Khomasi

In September 2013, the Latin American Sociological Association (ALAS) will hold its 29th Congress in Santiago, Chile. Of the 33 working groups being held, not one will be on historical sociology. Is the historical perspective missing in Latin American sociology? In this article we address this question by reconstructing the development of the discipline in the region and reviewing how sociologists have approached historical change.

Although there has not been a process of differentiation and institutionalization of historical sociology, we argue that the historical perspective has been central to mainstream Latin American sociology since its inception. Traditionally this implied both a focus on global processes of historical transformation and the understanding of contemporary social phenomena as closely linked with the colonial and independency heritage and their aftermath. The series of dictatorial regimes and the neoliberal transformation in the 70s and 80s created a rupture in the intellectual imaginary between contemporary processes and long term historical roots. Consequently the characteristically processual, historical focus of Latin American sociology remained strong, but it was increasingly framed in the middle term duration. In the post-authoritarian period, a number of historically-oriented intellectual communities have emerged that highlight the role of culture and agency in historical change and expand the range of research topics. Finally, there are signs of the development of a differentiated historical sociology in Latin America. The merits of this differentiation are uncertain, for it may imply a more systematic reflection on socio-historical methods and a more extensive use of historiographical material to produce social theory, but also a tendency of the broader discipline to abandon its traditional pretention of comprehending the social and historical totality.

Foundational period

As early as 1882 there has been courses of sociology in Latin American universities (Blanco, 2005), but it was not until the 1930s in Brazil and Mexico and after Second World War (mainly in the mid1950s) in most of the other countries of the region that sociology became fully institutionalized in universities and in regional organizations – CEPAL (1948), FLACSO (1957), and CLACSO (1967). Given the weakness of political science in this period, sociology occupied most of the academic spaces of the social sciences. The development of the discipline was symbiotic with central political and economic trends of this period, namely Import Substitution Industrialization and the process of gradual social and political inclusion in the context of highly ideologized societies. Sociology unfolded as the science that analyzed the process of transition towards industrialized modern societies and its central problématique was development, either from a capitalist or a socialist perspective. Within the foundational period two sub-periods have been identified: one is characterized by the predominance of modernization approach and the other by dependency approach (Trindade et al, 2007).

A first critical stance towards modernization theory came in the late fifties from CEPAL’s “historical-structural” perspective and its related “integrated” approach. In opposition to the predominantly ahistorical modernization perspective, historical-structuralism emphasized the need to attend to historical context in the search of explanations, while the integrated approach stressed the need to consider economic, social, political and cultural factors beyond the limits of particular disciplines. An early work within this perspective was “El desarrollo social de America Latina en la postguerra” (CEPAL, 1963), which raised the challenges of urbanization and industrialization in the region and the role of the middle classes in championing this process. While some of its main themes were still part of the modernization theory agenda, this work went further by urging social scientists to look into social history in order to analyze social processes:

... The adequate application and reinterpretation of scientific, economic and sociological models require a comprehensive vision of the complexities and tendencies of social processes. This synthesis can only be achieved by using the approaches and analysis of modern social history. 

The combined effect of the Cuban revolution in 1959 and the dramatic increase of social mobilizations in the sixties boosted critical – mainly Marxist – positions within Latin American sociology. A milestone in this intellectual and political turn was Rodolfo Stavenhagen’s “Siete tesis equivocadas sobre América Latina” (1972 [1965]), which refuted some of the central tenets of modernization theory and indicated that development and underdevelopment were two faces of the same coin. Along with Pablo Gonzalez Casanova (1963), Stavenhagen used the term “internal colonialism” to point out the exploitation that rich regions exerted towards poor regions inside Latin American countries. The second half of the sixties and the seventies also witnessed the heyday of dependency theory, which unfolded around the idea that poor countries could not develop in a world context in which their key economic decisions were made outside of their frontiers by more powerful countries and corporations. A remarkable book that combined the analytical tools of dependency and CEPAL’s historical-structuralism was “Dependency and development in Latin America” (Cardoso & Faletto, 1979 [1968]), which described the historical development of the region as a function of the ability of national bourgeoisies to control the productive structure of their economies. Based on this key variable, the authors delineated the different trajectories and stages of historical development of Latin American nations since the colonial period.

The historical debate raised by dependency theory revolved around questions on whether Latin America was capitalist from its inception, on the stages of development in the region, on the ability of specific social actors to change the course of history, and on the historical possibilities of becoming socialist societies. History was seen as a sequence of internally coherent stages leading towards socialism and the contradictions within the structures of political economy were pointed as the main driving force behind this transformation. In line with the grand theories of the period, society was conceived as a system of articulated structures that were ultimately determined by the economy. Societies were seen globally as capitalist or socialist, modern or traditional based upon this underlying factor (Trindade et al, 2007). The North American historical sociologist, Barrington Moore, and the French Annales School were extremely influential in this period.
Dictatorial rupture

The series of dictatorial regimes that afflicted the Southern-Cone in the sixties and seventies and the neoliberal structural reforms that followed in the entire continent changed both the material conditions under which sociologists had to work and their intellectual priorities. Sociology was seen with hostility by the military regimes, therefore most of academic programs in this field were censured or directly eliminated and funding was drastically reduced for those remaining. Many scholars were exiled or auto-exiled and many of those who stayed had to find a living outside of academia. As a surviving strategy, some established Independent Study Centers funded by foreign agencies, which in the Southern-Cone became the main organizational space for sociological research during the dictatorial period.

Through the following decades, the political and economic rupture produced by the dictatorial regimes became the great intellectual issue of Latin American sociology. In Chile, Arturo Valenzuela (1978) applied Juan Linz’ theory of democratic breakdowns to describe the historical development of the party system in the twentieth century, indicating that the attrition of the political center and not the radicalization of left and right wings was the cause for the coup d’etat of 1973. In Peru, Julio Cotler (1978) used the analytical framework of dependency to explain the incapacity of dominant classes to become hegemonic over other social classes and to create a strong state, a structural weakness that combined with increasing popular mobilization in the fifties and sixties led to military intervention in 1968. In justifying the need to use a historical perspective, Cotler asked rhetorically: “Why is it that to understand the ‘rupture’ that the military attempted in 1968 we have to refer to the colonial constitution of Peruvian society?” (p. 15).8 His answer is illustrative of a generalized belief within Latin American sociologists that past and the present are intimately linked:

Since the 16th century, [Peru] has not had a historical rupture that could have generated a new and different period in its social formation, or conditioned its following development. That is to say, Peruvian society carries, with no interruption, a set of characteristics that are a product of its colonial constitution...9

The new sociopolitical context had the effect of strengthening political science – which with the except of Mexico and Brazil had been a weak academic discipline in Latin America – and eroding the previous “monopoly” of sociology over the social sciences. Sociology itself became more political10 and, to some extent, cultural and less focused on development and revolution. There was a general consensus among intellectuals and social scientists on the deficit of theorization of the state in general and the Latin American state in particular. Within the Marxist tradition there was a movement in the direction of retrieving the work of Antonio Gramsci, and of understanding military regimes as capitalist revolutions from above, in the line of Barrington Moore. These intellectual transformations reinforced the socio-historical analysis of political regimes.11

As military rule started to weaken as a result of the opposition of social movements, sociological production began addressing the problem of democracy and democratic transitions. An important amount of research was done comparing the cultural, political and social aspects of the evolution of military regimes and democratic transitions in Latin America and other regions of the world. Two good examples of this research are the four volumes of Transitions from authoritarian rule (O'Donnell, Schmitter, & Whitehead, 1986) and the two volumes Política, cultura y sociedad en la construcción democrática (Barba, Barros, Hurlado, eds, 1991).12 Based on socio-historical grounds, the works included in these books distinguished the specific features of Latin American democratization process, both in terms of regimes and the actors involved. This set of works, however, was contested by several authors whose main critique was precisely the absence of socio-historical roots in these countries necessary for a western type of democracy (Franco, 1998).13

At this point, the characteristically Latin American processual approach to social phenomena remained strong. Nevertheless, the combination of repressive military rule (mainly in the Southern-Cone) and neoliberal structural reforms was strong enough to create a rupture in intellectual production between contemporary processes and long-term historical roots. Although analysis on middle range historical duration continued to be central, rarely did sociologists in this period go as far as the

nineteenth century or colonial periods to compare post-authoritarian trajectories of political or economic development, a very common practice in the past. The justification for using long term historical development seemed less valid. As we will see below, it was only with the development of a more culturally oriented sociology that the colonial constitution of Latin American society became relevant again.

Post-authoritarian period

Once military regimes in the Southern-Cone ended by the mid-80s and early 90s, sociologists returned to academia and student enrollment increased. The problem of democratization continued to be a central topic but the thematic range of the discipline diversified as the dual processes of globalization and emergence of new actors based on identity opened new frontiers for research. In this context, grand narratives started to cede their place to middle range theories, interdisciplinary work increased, and a more actor-oriented social science gained ascendency. The discipline also experienced a process of internal differentiation amongst its intellectual, scientific, and professional dimensions (Trindade et al, 2007).

This period witnessed the emergence of a number of explicitly historically-oriented intellectual communities. One of these is the Postcolonial school, which is an interdisciplinary group of scholars with strong connections to North American academia that achieved its greatest expression under the “Modernity/coloniality” group of Aníbal Quijano, Walter Mignolo, Edgardo Lander, and others.14 Its main object is the colonial encounter of Europeans and Americans and its consequences for the formation of modernity, both in terms of the development of capitalism and the creation of a classification of the world population based on the idea of race. A central aim of this school is to indicate and criticize Eurocentric ways of thought within the social sciences. In opposition to previous economy-centered accounts, the postcolonial school considers culture as an autonomous and causally efficacious sphere. As an example, when Aníbal Quijano – an active contributor to dependency theory in past decades – asks why wage labor concentrated almost exclusively in Western Europe during colonial times, he finds no inevitable economic reason; it was rather the colonial system of racial classification
Another line of thought concerns Latin American identity and modernity. Latin America is probably the world region where thought on its own identity has been the most prolific. This century-old intellectual tradition did not reach sociology until the 80s and 90s, particularly after 1992, but it soon became a fertile space from which to connect with more theoretical discussions on the nature of modernity in non-western societies. To name a few sociologists only in the Chilean context. Pedro Morandé (1987) and his followers (Cousiño & Valenzuela, 1994) proposed that the founding element of Latin American identity was the encounter of “baroque” Catholicism and indigenous ritual culture. Latin America’s type of modernity, therefore, should be characterized as baroque, as opposed to the rationalistic modernity of Europe and North America. Jorge Larraín (2000; 2005) criticized this “essentialist” approach by reconstructing several key periods – independence, the crisis of oligarchic society in the 1930s, the crisis of developmentalism in the 70s, globalization in the 90s – in which Latin Americans redefined their auto-perception with important contributions of rationalism. Owing to Peter Wagner’s theory of modernity, Larraín indicated that the two constitutive elements of modernity – rational mastery of the world and personal liberty – were vague enough to allow different societies to interpret and institutionalize them differently and therefore to constitute different types of modernity.

Other intellectual communities within contemporary Latin American sociology that use elements of historical sociology include those around memory, war, indigenous movements, and gender. The scholars of memory work closely with historians and focus on the cultural trauma caused by the dictatorial regimes and on the ways in which memories of this period are socially constructed. Other Latin American sociologists have used Charles Tilly’s theory of national state formation in Europe to explain how warfare influenced state formation in 19th-century Latin America. As indigenous, gender and other social actors became central to Latin American politics in the 90s, some sociologists, along with anthropologists and historians, turned their attention to the historical roots of these movements. The impact of these culturally based social movements in sociological thought is synthesized by the relevance that the concept of civil society has come to play in recent decades, in opposition to the emphasis on the economy and institutional politics of the previous periods.

While very different from each other, these intellectual communities all share a criticism of some of the assumptions of previous socio-historical traditions. Although the refutation of Eurocentrism has always been central to Latin American sociology, the post-colonial school extended it to new arenas, criticizing the colonial system of racial and cultural classification that became constitutive of modern knowledge production. Theorists of Latin American modernity criticize the account that describes European civilization as the only model of modernity. New generation of sociologists have extended the range of relevant actors for inquiry beyond social classes to include ethnic and gender groups in the reconstruction of history. And the thematic range is also widened to include identity, memory and emotions. At a more theoretical level these changes imply the recognition that society is constituted by multiple dimensions, which relate amongst them in a non-deterministic manner. More generally, although there are current attempts to perform analysis of society from a holistic perspective using ideal types, contemporary Latin American sociology as a whole seems to have no longer a central problem articulating its diverse branches. Thus, the role of thematic articulation that development, revolution, and democracy played in the past has been replaced by diverse problems, irreducible to each other, that target to different spheres of society.

Conclusion
If we understand historical sociology in a broad sense, as the study of the temporal, processual dimension of human societies, then most of Latin American sociology has always been essentially historical. Whether it is the movement from traditional to industrial societies, the prospects of transitioning towards socialism, the historical rupture of military regimes and neoliberal reforms, and the transitions to democracy, its core problems have always been transitions and ruptures – two quintessentially time-based phenomena. Additionally, Latin American sociologists’ belief in a strong continuity between the colonial past and the present, especially in the foundational period of the discipline, reinforced its historically-oriented core.

Contrary to its traditional development, a general concept or theory that illuminates both the general trends of society and its desired future is missing. In this sense, the intellectual environment that made Latin American sociology essentially historical is no longer as strong as it used to be. Paradoxically, the absence of an overarching or central problématique may ease the emergence of a differentiated and institutionalized historical sociology. This could be a positive trend if it implies a deeper reflection on socio-historical methods and a more systematic use of historiographical material to produce social theory, but not if it implies the abandonment on the part of the broader discipline of its pretention of grasping the historicity of society as a whole.

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[1] We thank David Lehman for his comments on a previous draft of this article.

[2] Some restrictions of our analysis: first, we do not present an exhaustive list of historically-oriented Latin American sociology texts, but only a few selected works to support our argument. Second, we include mostly analysis for the whole region rather than specific countries or sub-regions, for which there is a vast bibliography on national state formation, persistence of traditional agrarian structures, origins and evolution of social classes and class struggle, constitution of different social actors, etc. As an example, for the case of Central America see Torres-Rivas (1993 [1969]; 1998; 2011). Finally, although there is a rich socio-historical literature on Latin America produced in the United States and in Europe, for this paper we consider sociologists working mainly in Latin America.


[4] The main representative of the modernization approach in Latin America was Gino Germani. His main work, “Política y sociedad en una época de transición” (1965), applies Parsons’ pattern variables to periodize Latin American history after independence.


[6] The sociological debates of this whole period are illustrated by two important seminars held in Mexico (Mérida, 1971 and Oaxaca, 1973) that brought together many of the most prominent sociologists, along with anthropologists and historians, turned their attention to the historical roots of these movements.
sociologists of the region. The works presented at these seminars were compiled in two books. See Benítez Zenteno (1973, 1977) and Labastida (1985). For other excellent example of historical sociology in this line see Zermeño (1977).

Our own translation from the original Spanish version.


[9] One of the first and most influential works characterizing the new military dictatorship that made a clear link between sociology and political science, a crucial feature of the period, is O’Donnell (1977).

[10] All these tendencies are well expressed by a seminar in Mexico (Morelia, 1980), of the same characteristics of the ones mentioned in footnote 9, that includes the analysis of class hegemony and new military regimes. See Labastida (1985).

The first book is based on a large international Project initiated at the Wilson Center, Washington DC. The other is based on an international conference at Guadalajara, Mexico, in 1991, organized by FLACSO and the University of Guadalajara.

A balance, among others, of the democratization process in Latin America in Garretón (2003).


See Jelin, 2002.


For indigenous movements, see Rivera, 1987; Bengoa, 1999, and for gender based movements see Giordano, 2007; Lamadrid, 2008; Brito, 2005.

See for example two important contributions on the civil society dimension Panfichi (2002) and Dagnino, Panfichi, Olvera, (2006) eds The other is based on an international conference at Guadalajara, Mexico, in 1991, organized by FLACSO and the University of Guadalajara.


[19] According to Skocpol (1984, quoted in Adams, Clemens, and Orloff, 2005, p. 10) historical sociologists “ask questions about social structures or processes understood to be concretely situated in time and space... address processes over time, and take temporal sequences seriously in accounting for outcomes...attend to the interplay of meaningful actions and structural contexts, in order to make sense of the unfolding of unintended as well as intended outcomes in individual lives and social transformations.”

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The Section on Global and Transnational Sociology seeks to facilitate communication, expand networks, and provide a forum for intellectual exchange and debate among global and transnational sociologists, scholars, and teachers. Appropriate to its name, the Section also seeks engagement with scholars from all parts of the world and from disciplines other than sociology that address global and transnational issues. The Section welcomes members of all theoretical persuasions and substantive interests that are encompassed by the broad rubrics of global and transnational research.

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