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ARTICLE

Sjoerd Hofstra's foray into the sociology of knowledge and science: Why a promising prewar programme ultimately failed

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Abstract

In 1937, the Dutch ethnologist and sociologist Sjoerd Hofstra sketched a programme for a new sociology of knowledge and science in which he combined insights from Mannheim's sociology of knowledge, the anthropological study of "primitive" thought, and the Marxist-inspired views of leftist British natural scientists on the social role of science. Hofstra's programme looked promising at first but ultimately failed to become established. In this essay I will try to account for this failure by comparing Hofstra's programme with Robert K. Merton's contributions to the sociology of knowledge and the sociology of science. The essay also offers an explanation for the long delay of almost 40 years before the sociology of knowledge systematically began to study the social genesis of scientific knowledge.

Keywords

Sjoerd Hofstra, Robert K. Merton, sociology of knowledge, sociology of science, social anthropology

INTRODUCTION

The sociology of knowledge is more than a century old. It can be dated back to the 1920s when Max Scheler and Karl Mannheim staked out the field of *Wissenssoziologie* in Germany, or even earlier when Emile Durkheim and his French pupils launched the *sociologie de la connaissance*. In subsequent decades the new discipline would usually take the nominal object of its analysis, "knowledge", in a very broad sense, so that religious representations, philosophical worldviews, political ideologies, and common-sense convictions of everyday life all fell within its scope. The general aim was to inquire into the "existential determination" or social genesis of such ideas and views. But there was one type of knowledge that was left untouched by this endeavour: scientific knowledge, that is, as here understood, knowledge obtained by the exact and natural sciences. For epistemological reasons it was thought that scientific knowledge was not amenable to social explanation and thus beyond the jurisdiction of the new sociological speciality. The irony, therefore, was that the sociology of knowledge was about almost everything except what might be considered knowledge in the most preeminent sense. Hence the complaint that the sociology of knowledge

"failed to live up to its name" (Barnes and Edge 1982: 65). The *sociology of science*, which was to be developed by Robert K. Merton (1910-2003) in the postwar decades, would by no means remedy this deficit. It confined itself to the study of science as a social sub-system in which practitioners were competing for credit and recognition but excluded the content of knowledge from its explanandum. It was only in the 1970s that any remaining epistemological scruples against an investigation of the social genesis of scientific knowledge were overcome and a vigorous Strong Programme was launched, which finally inaugurated a genuine sociology of scientific knowledge. In retrospect, the question has been raised why it took so long for the sociology of knowledge to realize, as it were, its true mission (Kuklick 1983). Why the decades-long apparent hesitation? Was it simply a matter of "lack of nerve", as one of the founders of the Strong Programme, David Bloor, suggested? (Bloor 1991 [1976]: 11).

In light of this historical conundrum, a prewar contribution by the Dutch sociologist and ethnologist, Sjoerd Hofstra (1898-1983), deserves special interest. In 1937, he published an interesting booklet titled (in Dutch) *The social aspects of knowledge and science* (Hofstra 1937). In it he sketched the outlines of a research programme for a new sociological speciality that could be designated as the *sociology of knowledge and science*. By using this designation, I want to indicate that the speciality Hofstra had in mind differed from the existing sociology of knowledge (especially Mannheim's *Wissenssoziologie*), on the one hand, and from the postwar (Mertonian) sociology of science, on the other. Hofstra's aim was to bring the sociology of knowledge and the sociology of science (in the customary sense of the study of the social relations among the practitioners of science) together under a single theoretical umbrella. His programmatic proposal was balanced, well-considered and systematic in intent. Yet looking back in 1978, Hofstra had to admit with regret that his promising first foray into this new sociological speciality had ultimately come to nothing and that the entire field of the sociology of knowledge and science had hardly been cultivated in the Netherlands (Hofstra 1978). In this article I want to investigate why Hofstra's bold first step looked so promising and why this promise ultimately remained largely unfulfilled. I will put the vicissitudes of his remarkable initiative in a broader historical perspective by also paying attention, for comparative purposes, to the academic career of the American sociologist Robert K. Merton, who in the 1930s made his debut with a paper, *Science, Technology and Society in Seventeenth Century England* (Merton 1938), a study that was arguably undertaken from a sociology of knowledge perspective, and published in 1970 as a monograph. After the Second World War, he would however, abandon this approach and develop a new paradigm in the sociology of science, which became influential and remained the dominant approach well into the 1970s. This so-called Mertonian paradigm put the content of scientific knowledge beyond its purview.

Through a comparative analysis of Hofstra's and Merton's contributions, we can also shed light on the role of historically contingent factors that help explain the emergence (or non-emergence) of new specialities in social science. Thanks to the *benefit of hindsight*, we may be better placed than Hofstra himself in 1978 to more fully assess the new developments in the sociology of knowledge and science that could already be discerned during the 1970s.

THE EARLY DISPUTE ON THE SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE

Under the rubric of *Wissenssoziologie*, the sociology of knowledge was definitively put on the map in the 1920s by Max Scheler and Karl Mannheim. The central theme of the new speciality was what Mannheim called the *Seinsverbundenheit des Denkens* or the "existential determination of thought" (Mannheim 1949 [1936]: 239), that is, the dependency of knowledge in its various guises on the social ("existential") backgrounds of its bearers and protagonists. In 1859, Karl Marx had already

preluded the birth of the sociology of knowledge by famously declaring, "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness" (Marx 1904 [1859], 11).

While from 1929 on, a fierce dispute raged in Germany on the legitimacy and pretensions of the sociology of knowledge (Meja and Stehr 1990), the battle was fought less vehemently in the Netherlands. Nevertheless, during the years 1936-1938, a genuine polemic was conducted on the pages of the journal *Mens en Maatschappij* (Man and Society) between the legal philosopher Johan Jacob von Schmid (1895-1943) and the communist neurologist Gerrit Willem Kastein (1910-1943) about the significance and main thrust of the new speciality (Schmid 1936; Kastein 1938). This debate provides some clues about the place taken by, or assigned to, the new subdiscipline within the wider panorama of academic disciplines and socio-cultural currents. It should be noted in this connection that the parent discipline of sociology was not fully established at the time. In his contribution, Von Schmid introduced the "sociology of thought", roughly following Mannheim's views. Rather surprising for the modern reader, however, is that he conceived of this sociological speciality as a part of philosophy and characterized it more particularly as a form of life-philosophy:

> The sociology of thought, then, is a philosophy, which views reason as a product of social life [...] It is a philosophy of life, which lays claim to a higher and more general validity than the rational philosophy (Schmid 1936: 259).

Von Schmid held that the old rationalist philosophy, which took the autonomy of reason and the timeless character of its insights for granted, was finished and had to make way for a new approach. In his critical response to Von Schmid, Kastein contested precisely his view of the sociology of knowledge as a form of life-philosophy (he himself advocated a Marxist oriented sociology of knowledge, although he referred with approval to Mannheim's well-known analysis of conservative thought). Kastein did allow that the "irrational" aspects of life can be an object of rational scientific inquiry but emphasized that affective factors should not themselves serve as an "organon" of scientific analysis. His appreciation of the philosophy of life was rather negative; he took it as a symptom of decay, pessimism, and a sense of decline: "The philosophy of life is therefore no sign of a flourishing life" (Kastein 1938: 94). To substantiate this thesis, he commented (by way of example) on Heidegger's thought, an indication that in the 1930s the latter's philosophy was often seen as a variety of the philosophy of life (Heidegger had not been mentioned by Von Schmid, however).

Across the North Sea, prominent left wing natural scientists like Hyman Levy, Lancelot Hogben, J.B.S. Haldane, John Desmond Bernal, Joseph Needham, Patrick Blackett, and Julian Huxley had meanwhile become deeply interested in the role of science in society and especially in the limitations and restrictions for scientific research that appeared to arise from capitalism. This leftist current would become known as the Social Relations of Science movement (Werskey 1988 [1978]). To support their critical reflection, the leftist scientists – especially the radicals among them (communists and left wing socialists) – did not seek guidance from Mannheim's sociology of knowledge (even though Mannheim himself had fled to Great Britain after the Nazi takeover of Germany in 1933), but harked back to Marxism, which paid more attention to the social function of the natural sciences. The Marxist view on the relation between the economic base and the ideological superstructure can indeed be seen as an embryonic form of the sociology of knowledge. An important source of inspiration for the leftist British scientists was the contribution by the Russian physicist and Marxist, Boris Hessen, to an international congress on the history of science and technology held in London in 1931, titled 'The social and economic roots of Newton's *Principia*' (Hessen 1971 [1931]). Hessen put Newton's scientific work in the socio-economic and political context of 17th-century

England. His theories, according to Hessen, had been informed by the economic and technical problems of the mercantile capitalism of that age and by the ideological and political struggles of the rising bourgeoisie. For most attendants at the congress, such an analysis virtually amounted to lese-majesty vis-à-vis Newton's genius, but to the leftist scientists it was an eye-opener (Needham 1971). In subsequent years there would be no dearth of critical studies in the UK about the role of science in society.

Hessen's analysis was also a source of inspiration for the young American sociologist Robert K. Merton in writing his thesis on *Science, Technology and Society in Seventeenth-Century England*, which, as mentioned above, was subsequently published as a very extensive article in the science history journal Osiris (Merton 1938). Yet another source of inspiration for Merton was Max Weber's well-known monograph *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Weber 2001 [1904-5]). Merton argued that the new, experimentally oriented science of the 17th century was religiously sanctioned by the prevalent Puritan ethos (a variant of the so-called Weber thesis which would become known as the Merton thesis) and directed its attention in no small measure to the solution of technical problems thrown up by economic life and the demands of warfare. In this way he subtly combined a "materialist" angle (stressing the role of the economic base) with an "idealist" angle (stressing the religious factor). While his dissertation does not lack occasional references to Scheler and Mannheim, Merton had not explicitly presented it as a specimen of the sociology of knowledge – though it surely can be classified as such. In 1937, however, at the request of his Harvard mentor George Sarton, he published a critical review article on the new sociological speciality in the science history journal Isis (Merton 1937). In this, he argued Mannheim had entangled himself in various contradictions and aroused sterile philosophical controversies precisely because he adamantly tried to draw epistemological conclusions from his findings in the sociology of knowledge. Only by resolutely shutting off this avenue and strictly maintaining the distinction between the social genesis and the validity of judgments, Merton held, was it possible to develop this speciality as an empirical research programme. In a later criticism, Merton asserted Mannheim had simply *assumed*, and wrongly so, that the natural sciences (in contrast to the social sciences and the humanities) are completely immune to social, "extra-theoretical", influences (Merton 1968 [1940]: 552). In this connection, he referred to his own dissertation and to Hessen's work to combat this view. Nonetheless, in Merton's conception, the influence of social factors was still relatively limited; they were held to affect the choice of problems but not the nature of the solutions found.

HOFSTRA'S SKETCH OF A SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE AND SCIENCE

For Hofstra, the *Seinsverbundenheit des Denkens*, or the general relation between socio-cultural background factors and the content of knowledge, was an important theme for the sociology of knowledge and of science. Arguably, a sociology of knowledge à la Mannheim had to become a key component of the new speciality, but to make it fit for purpose the component had to be revised. Hofstra commented that Mannheim had insufficiently specified the nature of the relationship between social factors and knowledge (Hofstra 1937: 49-50) – a similar criticism as would later be brought forward by Merton, a sociologist who at the time was probably still unknown to Hofstra (Merton 1968 [1940]: 552). Hofstra furthermore stripped Mannheim's sociology of knowledge of its more controversial aspects by putting less emphasis on the criticism of ideology and studiously avoiding the epistemological reflections in which Mannheim had indulged. Hofstra also opined that the traditional distinction between the social genesis and the validity of judgments should be strictly maintained to prevent the new speciality from entering controversial channels. In this respect there was a remarkable similarity with Merton's criticism that was published in the same year (Merton

1937). By rigorously adhering to the distinction between genesis and validity, the competence of the sociology of knowledge could be more narrowly circumscribed (Hofstra 1937: 45-46).

The revised version of Mannheim's sociology of knowledge is just one component of the broader sociology of knowledge and science that Hofstra had in mind. The two other components are the insights into the thought of "primitive" peoples as developed by social anthropology, on the one hand, and views on the role of science in society and the social responsibility of scientists as developed by the British Social Relations of Science movement. Hofstra held that these three components, despite the apparent divergence, could be forged together into a meaningful synthesis: "After all, all three, each in its own way, occupy themselves with the social aspects of knowledge and science" (Hofstra 1937: 3).

It is remarkable that Hofstra shared his curiosity about the leftist British scientists with Merton, who also developed an active interest in the Social Relations of Science movement (Mendelsohn 1989; Turner 2007; Enebakk 2007; Somsen 2001). Hofstra tried to fit the materials derived from those scientists into his own sociology of knowledge and science, although he failed to mention the work of their Russian inspirator, Boris Hessen. Prominent among the sources cited by Hofstra was a survey on British science published by Julian Huxley in 1934 (Huxley 1934) and a volume of essays published in 1935 under the revealing title The Frustration of Science (Hall et al. 1935). All this publicist activity would culminate in 1939 – too late to be included in Hofstra's analysis – in the classic study of the physicist and avowed communist John Desmond Bernal, *The Social Function of Science* (Bernal 1964 [1939]). The progressive scientists were united in the conviction that as a group they had too little influence on political decision-making. They fiercely opposed the cuts on research expenditures that were carried out in the 1930s. They were also outraged by the suggestion that the preceding decades might have spent too much on science (as was characteristically expressed in Aldous Huxley's dystopian novel *Brave New World*). The scientists would not let their faith in progress be so readily taken away from them. When applications of scientific findings led to unemployment, it was not the science that was to blame, but rather an irrational political and economic system. At any rate more effective and more comprehensive planning was needed – and wasn't planning after all, as Julian Huxley said, "an attempt to apply the scientific method all round" (Huxley 1934: 149). So, the problem was not, the progressive scientists argued, that too much science was being done and applied, but rather too little (in this regard, the biologist Julian disagreed with his literary brother Aldous). Hence the emphasis on the numerous promising scientific developments and potential beneficial applications which could all be realized if only they were not blocked by impediments that the existing system put in their way (such as the profit motive, vested monopolistic interests, political resistance, misplaced austerity, patents, secrecy, etcetera). Thus, the progressive scientists were convinced that their cherished science was being thwarted. Hofstra did not fail to put his finger on the tacit assumption in this widely shared complaint about the "frustration" of science: "The authors are [...] inclined to implicitly equate the possibility of applying scientific results with the desirability of such application [...]" (Hofstra 1937: 64).

The third component in Hofstra's synthesis consisted of anthropological insights into the character of "primitive" thought. It is not surprising that he considered these to be relevant to a sociology of knowledge and science. After all, the French school around Emile Durkheim had developed their *sociologie de la connaissance* on the basis of all kinds of ethnographic materials. Hofstra could also fall back on his own ethnological expertise. He had defended an academic dissertation in African ethnology in 1933 and worked from 1934 to 1937 as a research assistant to the famous anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski. In the first part of his brochure, Hofstra went out of his way to refute the then

well-known thesis of the French ethnologist Lucien Lévy-Bruhl on the so-called "pre-logical" mentality of indigenous peoples. He fiercely contested the idea that natives, in all their daily activities, would be captive to a mythical haze that would make them lose sight of simple natural regularities and causal relations. Following his mentor (Malinowski 1955 [1925]: 87), Hofstra argued that indigenous peoples dispose of a considerable amount of empirically adequate knowledge; if it were otherwise, they simply would not have survived (Hofstra 1937: 25-26). He appealed to the results of his own anthropological research among the Mende (or Mendi) in Sierra Leone, who as an agricultural people knew quite a lot about, for example, rice and oil palms (see the reports posthumously collected in Hofstra 2014). Hofstra thus emphasized the continuity between the "primitive" and the modern mentality.

HOW VIABLE WAS HOFSTRA'S PROGRAMME?

Hofstra's sketch for a new sociology of knowledge and science may have looked promising in the 1930s, but it was mainly a programmatic proposal. Was there any chance at the time for the programme to be fruitfully elaborated, or was it hardly viable from the outset?

An indication that the programme may have lacked sufficient coherence is the fact that the expected contribution from anthropology stands largely isolated from the rest. The argument yields no more than the conclusion that "positive knowledge" already exists in indigenous cultures (Hofstra 1937: 34). Hofstra's opposition against Lévy-Bruhl's ideas about a "pre-logical" mentality may have been fully justified, but he nonetheless failed to use the opportunity to apply his ethnological expertise for a sociological scrutiny of *modern* forms of thought. That such use is possible in principle is suggested by the intriguing thesis of Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss that the natural classification or the cosmology of an indigenous tribe reflects their social organization (Durkheim and Mauss 1963 [1903]). Classifying is an elementary and ubiquitous cognitive activity which bears a communal character and is therefore, arguably, subject to social influences. It calls, as it were, for an analysis from a sociology of knowledge angle. Where to draw the boundaries between various sorts of things and how to deal with recalcitrant cases ("monsters") are extremely interesting questions on which the Durkheimian-inspired anthropologist Mary Douglas has shed an illuminating light in her book *Purity and Danger* (1966) and in her later works. Her group-grid theory on the relationship between group properties and typical methodological styles (monster assimilation, monster adaptation, monster embracement and monster expulsion) has been applied in modern science studies in various areas (Caneva 1981; Boon 1979; Bloor 1978). But we do not need to refer to this rather late development. In the 1930s, the Jewish-Polish serologist Ludwik Fleck felt inspired by Durkheimian anthropology to develop his own sociological view of science, using a case study on the Wassermann test derived from his own medical specialism: *Genesis and Development of a Scientific Fact* (Fleck 1979 [1935]). Even so, Fleck reproached Durkheim and his pupils to have failed to extrapolate their sociological approach to contemporary scientific knowledge (Fleck 1979 [1935]: 47). It is for this reason that their *sociologie de la connaissance* did not develop into a genuine sociology of scientific knowledge. But Fleck's pioneering work went largely unnoticed in the 1930s.

Hofstra had rightly criticized Mannheim for insufficiently specifying the relationship between social factors and the content of knowledge (Hofstra 1937: 49-50). What Hofstra's own programmatic proposal however, sorely lacked, were *exemplars* or suitable didactic illustrations (an essential part of a flourishing paradigm, according to Kuhn), showing in what ways socio-cultural factors can be related to (the content of) scientific knowledge. There was of course Mannheim's classic study on conservatism (Mannheim 1984 [1925]), but this example relates to social and political thought. Hofstra explicitly declined to limit the idea of "existential determination" to political ideas and

worldviews (Hofstra 1937: 47), but he did not mention any particular field of science that would be a suitable object for sociological scrutiny. Biology might have been a promising candidate. An obvious example was the often-alleged influence of the capitalist economy as a social background factor in the formulation of the theory of evolution, postulated among others by Karl Marx, Charles Saunders Peirce and John Maynard Smith (Maynard Smith 1958: 33).

For a sociology of knowledge and science, it thus seemed that an extensive domain of study lay open to investigate various possible relations between social and political positions and substantive biological views, as held, for example, in the nature-nurture controversy (Pastore 1949). Naturally, these investigations would also require critical attention to the question of how such relations can be plausibly established and how the direction of causality can be determined. It is regrettable that in his brochure Hofstra did not mention anything substantial about these issues. Nor were other Dutch sociologists at the time very eager to turn their critical gaze to developments in the natural sciences. Until the late 1970s, they shied away from applying a sociology of knowledge perspective to other disciplines like economics or psychology, let alone the natural sciences.

THE ROLE OF NATURAL SCIENTISTS

As a matter of fact, however, many natural scientists were interested in the questions of concern to a sociology of knowledge and science. We have seen that both Hofstra and Merton made deliberate use of the insights obtained by natural scientists allied with the Social Relations of Science movement. These scientists had their own reasons to take an interest in questions related to the role of science in society and they tackled these questions with improvised conceptual means of their own making. After all, they could hardly have waited until the sociologists would be ready to offer more thorough and empirically founded sociological theories about such issues. This also means that the development of a sociology of knowledge and science is not an internal affair for the parent discipline of sociology, the more so because the speciality occupies the periphery of the discipline. In other words, the task is too difficult and too large to be carried out only by sociologists. In an otherwise laudatory review of Bernal's *The Social Function of Science* for the American Journal of Sociology, Merton fully admitted this fact:

> The book contributes a great body of substantive materials in a field which has long needed cultivation. It would be ungracious to suggest that the physicist-author has failed to interpret these materials sociologically or has done so in an excessively simplified fashion – *ce n'est pas son métier*. This task may rather be conceived as a challenge to the sociologist of science who has all too often divorced theoretical speculation from empirical investigation (Merton 1941: 623).

After the Second World War, in 1952, Merton wrote a preface to Bernard Barber's book *Science and the Social Order*. From the select bibliography it transpired that more than half of the cited literature had been written by natural scientists, a quarter by historians and philosophers of science and only a small part by sociologists. From all this Merton drew a clear conclusion about the track record of the sociological speciality:

> [...] the sociology of science has been nudged into being, not so much by sociologists as by occasional physical and biological scientists who occupy their leisure hours by working on this subject. [...] [N]ot many persons cultivate the field altogether and those that do are for the most part physical and biological, rather than social, scientists (Merton 1973 [1952]: 212).

From the point of view of an effective career strategy, it would not have made sense for a young social scientist just before or just after the war to devote all his or her efforts to the further elaboration of a sociological speciality when the parent discipline itself could hardly lay claim to an established academic status. This is reflected in the careers of both Merton and Hofstra. Both had done pioneering work in the field before the war, but in order to gain a solid academic position they had to engage with a wide range of theoretical and empirical issues in general sociology. It was only later in his career that opportunities opened up for Merton to return to his old love. Thus the famous "Mr Sociology" became the prominent "sociologist of science". We can read this transformation in the two collections *Social Theory and Social Structure* (Merton 1968) and *The Sociology of Science* (Merton 1973). We should note, however, that Merton had not been able to save all of his youthful legacy. In fact, he had abandoned his old interest in the sociology of knowledge by excluding the content of scientific knowledge from the scope of his new "sociology of science". The new Mertonian paradigm focused instead on the normative ethos of science and the operation of its reward system (recognition and reputation). Hofstra had (or created) fewer opportunities to revisit his old interest. He was preoccupied with theoretical problems in general sociology (he published, among other things, on the notions of function and normality), his contributions to African ethnology, and his directorship of the Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals (Noordegraaf 2017).

Apart from career pressures influencing Merton's and Hofstra's choices of problems, the general Cold War atmosphere in the early postwar period may have also made it less attractive to further pursue the older lines of inquiry into the social genesis of scientific knowledge. Karl Popper's influential attack upon the "enemies of the Open Society" (mainly but not only targeting Marxists) had included a forceful criticism of the sociology of knowledge (Popper 1974 [1945], 212-223), although his biographer later deemed his reading of Mannheim's work "ungenerous" (Hacohen 2000, 514 note). The notorious "Lysenko affair" of 1948, when Soviet leader Stalin suppressed the entire field of Mendelian genetics as "bourgeois" science, graphically illustrated the dangers of a crude Marxist reduction of scientific thought to socio-economic factors (Huxley 1949). By taking appropriate methodological precautions, the sociology of knowledge could arguably distance itself from unwelcome associations with such extreme views, but it might still be perceived as dangerously close to this anti-scientific approach.

HOFSTRA'S RETROSPECT IN 1978

Looking back in 1978, Hofstra noted that, in contrast to the sociology of religion, "the sociology of science, since Hofstra's first beginnings in 1937, has hardly been systematically cultivated any further in our country (for other countries I remind the reader of Merton's studies)" (Hofstra 1978: 34-35). And he continued: "It is true that also in our country contributions to relevant parts of such a sociology have appeared, such as about the responsibility of science. A renewed interest in the problem of values can also be mentioned here (Köbben) and more recently in the sociology of knowledge (Zijderveld) as well" (ibid.: 35). The tenor of Hofstra's brief remarks is rather cryptic. In the first place, he now spoke about the sociology of science, while his own initiative in 1937 covered the broader area of the sociology of knowledge and science. One also wonders what his reference to Merton's studies was meant to imply. Did Hofstra want to suggest that thanks to the sociology of science developed by the latter it would no longer be necessary to develop this speciality any further in the Netherlands? But Merton's sociology of science, as we have seen, involved the abandonment of lines of inquiry into social influences on the content of knowledge, which had also been part of Hofstra's original programme. In this respect the old programme remained unrealized. The reference to Anton Zijderveld's so-called "sociology of knowledge" is also rather curious. Zijderveld

(1937-2022) conceived of the sociology of knowledge not as a special subdiscipline of sociology, but as a particular way of treating general sociology (Zijderveld 1974). In this regard he followed in the footsteps of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, who in their well-known book *The Social Construction of Reality* (1966) advocated a redefinition of the object of the sociology of knowledge:

> […] the sociology of knowledge must first of all concern itself with what people 'know' as 'reality' in their everyday, non- or pre-theoretical lives. In other words, common-sense 'knowledge' rather than 'ideas' must be the central focus for the sociology of knowledge. It is precisely this 'knowledge' that constitutes the fabric of meanings without which no society could exist (Berger and Luckmann 1971 [1966]: 27).

The paradoxical effect of this broad redefinition is that it would leave the original problem of *Wissenssoziologie* completely aside. Even if this effect was not logically inevitable, in practice it did follow from widening the scope of the discipline. Berger and Luckmann, and Zijderveld in their footsteps, were so much absorbed by investigating the common-sense 'knowledge' of everyday social reality acquired and possessed by ordinary members of society, that in the end they lost all interest in the formation of knowledge within the specialized domain of science. In the prewar period Hofstra would have resisted such a dilution of the sociology of knowledge, as he explicitly confined the object of analysis to "knowledge, which has a more or less expressly rational character and can be reckoned to belong to the manifestations of intellectual life" (Hofstra 1937: 5).

NEW INITIATIVES FOR A SOCIOLOGY OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

It is striking that in his retrospect from 1978 Hofstra passed in silence over the radically new initiatives which had arisen during the 1970s in the wake of Thomas Kuhn's paradigm theory (Kuhn 1970 [1962]) and increasing criticism of the all too modest ambitions of postwar Mertonian sociology of science. After the long dominance of the latter school, according to Dutch sociologist Bé Cornelis van Houten in 1977, the outlines of a new sociology of science gradually became visible:

> Within sociology a rapprochement is approaching between the sociology of science and the sociology of knowledge […] The development of the sociology of science as a discipline was based on the – meanwhile problematic – presupposition that scientific knowledge is immune to societal influences (Houten 1976/1977: 234).

In Edinburgh, Barry Barnes and David Bloor had already laid the foundations for the so-called Strong Programme in the sociology of science, which amounted to the precept that this discipline had to be conducted as a sociology of knowledge. Barnes had advertised a book published in 1974 as "a study in the sociology of scientific knowledge" (Barnes 1974), while Bloor formulated in 1976 the radical tenets of this new approach, the famous principles of symmetry and impartiality, causality and reflexivity (Bloor 1991 [1976]). Somewhat later the acronym SSK for "sociology of scientific knowledge" came into vogue. Similar tendencies occurred in the history of science (Shapin 1982). Ethnologically inspired students of science like Bruno Latour gathered sufficient courage to step inside laboratories with the aim to examine the esoteric performances of lab researchers as if they were the mysterious rituals of some native tribe (Latour and Woolgar 1979). At the end of the 1970s, the half-forgotten pioneering work of Ludwik Fleck from 1935 on thought styles and thought collectives became available as an English translation (Fleck 1979 [1935]) and a German re-edition (Fleck 1980 [1935]). In the Netherlands an important turning point was marked by the appearance in 1979 of a special issue of the journal *Kennis en Methode* (Knowledge and Method), titled (in Dutch) "Society or method", which was devoted to the debate on internalism and externalism. Contributors to this issue included not only philosophers and sociologists, but also several natural

scientists who were affiliated with the so-called Science and Society movement, a kind of reincarnation of the old Social Relations of Science movement. Another sign of growing interest in the sociology of knowledge and science on the part of progressive scientists was the book *Wetenschap als mensenwerk* (Science as a human endeavour), written by the chemist-philosopher Arie Rip (1978). The involvement of natural scientists in the new developments is finally demonstrated by the fact that prominent representatives of the Strong Programme in Edinburgh like David Edge, Barry Barnes, and Steven Shapin originally trained in the natural sciences, while Bloor had been active as an experimental psychologist (Shapin 1995: 296).

What was new about the new initiatives in the 1970s was that the content of scientific knowledge no longer remained out of range but was also held susceptible to sociological analysis. Investigators went beyond programmatic declarations and put the new tenets (especially the defining principles of symmetry and impartiality) to work in numerous empirical case studies. Gone were the days that natural scientists were fodder for sociologists of knowledge only when they unambiguously went beyond the bounds of propriety and reason (as with the Piltdown skull forgery in Great Britain or the Lysenko affair in the Soviet Union), in accordance with the blunt adage of philosopher of science William Newton-Smith: "sociology is only for deviants" (Newton-Smith 1981: 238). The sociology of knowledge would finally live up to its name and no longer *de facto* pass its days as "sociology of error". At long last, it seemed, the "Copernican Revolution" was finally consummated – a revolution that, remarkably enough, had already been proclaimed by Merton in 1945:

> The "Copernican revolution" in this area of inquiry consisted in the hypothesis that not only error or illusion or unauthenticated belief but also the discovery of truth was socially (historically) conditioned. As long as attention was focused on the social determinants of ideology, illusion, myth, and moral norms, the sociology of knowledge could not emerge. It was abundantly clear that in accounting for error or uncertified opinion, some extra-theoretic factors were involved, that some special explanation was needed, since the reality of the object could not account for error. In the case of confirmed or certified knowledge, however, it was long assumed that it could be adequately accounted for in terms of a direct object-interpreter relation. The sociology of knowledge came into being with the signal hypothesis that even truths were to be held socially accountable, were to be related to the historical society in which they emerged (Merton 1973 [1945]: 11).

Reading this passage, one would almost believe that Merton was already formulating here, more than 30 years before Bloor, the defining principles of symmetry and impartiality of the Strong Programme. We saw above, however, that the "social accounting for truths" in Merton's prewar monograph was confined to the selection of the problems which scientists would investigate. The new sociology of scientific knowledge went much further and did not hesitate to make the entire content of knowledge, including the nature of the answers given to the chosen problems, into a topic for sociological scrutiny. To make that extra step, one probably needed, as Bloor suggested, some courage and sangfroid (Bloor 1991 [1976]: 11). In this connection it will certainly have been helpful that several protagonists of the new approach had background training in the natural sciences, so that they could confront the phenomenon of science in a sober, matter-of-fact, almost "naturalistic" manner, as if it just concerned a manifestation of nature. But perhaps the general social situation in the 1970s had become ripe for this postponed Copernican Revolution. The aftermath of the Vietnam War, the emergence of the environmental movement, the controversy about nuclear energy, the incipient debate on recombinant-DNA, and many other developments, all entailed that science was removed from its former pedestal and no longer enjoyed an unassailable status.

AFTERTHOUGHT

One anonymous reviewer has suggested that the above account is not just a history of the sociology of knowledge but should rather be seen as a first step toward a sociology of knowledge of the sociology of knowledge. I find this an intriguing suggestion, but I must confess that I have reservations about "going reflexive" and taking up a higher, meta perspective. My scepticism relates to the cognitive gains to be expected from such a change in perspective. It is often held that by adopting a meta point of view we can somehow correct for the distortions and blind spots contained in the theories under investigation. I do not believe this to be possible. Simply engaging in a reflexive mode of discourse does not provide us with the stronger tools of reasoning that we need to warrant such a claim. If the cognitive resources of the sociology of knowledge are deficient to begin with, we do not make them better by moving them to the meta level. There is no miraculous Munchausen bootstrap operation. It takes time and critical effort to find out about our mistaken assumptions, prejudices and blind spots. That's why in writing history we must exploit the benefit of hindsight.

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ARTICLE

Making and Remaking a Social Science: Croatian Sociology from Socialism to Post-Socialism

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Abstract

In this paper, I give an account of the history of Croatian sociology under socialism and I explore how the discipline underwent the transition to post-socialism, attempting to shed light on some of the effects that the Yugoslav breakup had on its institutions and its practitioners. Drawing on written and oral sources, also relying on data about authors who were active in the main sociological journal of the country, I argue that in the early 1990s Croatian sociology underwent a process of "republicanization/nationalization" and became detached from developments in other former Yugoslav republics. I also show that the nationalist and conservative political turn in the country translated into the decline of research institutions that the new authorities saw as representatives of the Communist era.

Keywords

history of sociology, Croatia, Yugoslavia, socialism, post-socialism

INTRODUCTION

During the early 1990s, following the fall of the Communist regime, the breakup of the Yugoslav federation and the onset of war, Croatia became the site of manifold political, economic, and social transformations. The impact of such changes was inevitably felt in social sciences, among others, in the field of sociology. A discipline that had come of age and acquired its modern shape in socialist times, with a strong institutional fabric in Croatia but also in constant dialogue with developments in other Yugoslav republics, sociology was affected by the dissolution of all-Yugoslav bonds of cooperation following the end of the common state. Political and ideological changes taking place in Croatia in the first years of the post-socialist period also translated into difficulties for certain institutions and individuals that the new authorities identified as agents of the *ancien régime*, while new educational and research institutions were created and promoted in what could be seen as a form of political meddling in the social sciences.

In this paper, I give an account of the history of Croatian sociology under socialism and explore how the discipline underwent the transition to post-socialism. The article does not revolve around questions of conceptual and methodological change in the disclipline, a subject to which I have devoted previous works (Cosovschi 2022; 2018). Instead, it focuses primarily on networks of

institutions and authors, and their transformations over the years, showing that the Yugoslav breakup had an impact on how the practitioners of Croatian sociology were organized as a scientific community. By doing so, I aim to make a contribution to the recent literature that deals with the history of social sciences in Central and Eastern Europe during socialism and after (Gouarné and Kirtchik 2022; Hîncu 2022; 2021; Karády 2021; Hîncu and Karady 2018), and more particularly to the scholarship on the history of Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav sociology (Spasić, Pešić, and Babović 2022; Krbec 2008; Trajanovski 2024).

My analysis draws on diverses sources and methods. I primarily rely on written testimonies and reflections by Croatian sociologists, a limited number of archival sources, and more than twenty personal interviews with social scientists who were active in Croatia during the 1990s. The subjects were identified and selected through what could broadly be termed "snowball sampling," in other words on the basis of contacts and personal recommendations across diverse research institutions in Croatia, also attempting to keep a measure of generational diversity and gender balance. Interviews covered a wide range of topics, but the primary focus were the personal trajectories and professional experiences of researchers throughout the socialist and post-socialist period. Following principles more akin to oral history than to sociological research, and with full awareness of the extreme caution required when using oral sources in historical analysis, I used these interviews not as hard data, but rather as hints, and I did not accept any statement at face value without collating information with other sources.

Moreover, to examine changes in the fabric of Croatian sociology I also rely on structured data. My primary source is a relational database of more than two-hundred authors who published in the journal *Revija za sociologiju*, the official publication of the Croatian Association of Sociology, during the period 1986-1996.[1] The production of Croatian sociology went certainly beyond what can be seen through this journal. Yet, analyzing and visualizing changes in the authors and institutions involved in what was effectively the most important sociological publication of the country gives meaningful hints about the changing composition of the discipline during this period. Mindful of the limits of data derived from historical sources that are not exhaustive nor without bias, I interpret such hints in light of other written and oral sources.[2]

The article is divided into two sections. In the first part, I examine the history of Croatian, and by extension, Yugoslav sociology, during the socialist period and through the late 1980s. I especially stress that the development of Croatian sociology relied to a great extent on networks and endeavours involving scholars from all Yugoslav republics, and I show how this inter-republican fabric persisted until the very end of socialist times. The second part of the article examines developments in Croatian sociology in the early 1990s against the background of the Yugoslav breakup and war. I especially underline how the end of the common state and the onset of military conflict translated into the dissolution of cooperation between Croatian scholars and scholars from other former Yugoslav republics, leading to the discipline becoming "republicanized/nationalized." I also show how political shifts taking place in the country during the first years of the post-socialist period had an impact on the institutional fabric of sociology at the expense of institutions that the new authorities saw as representatives of the *ancien régime*.

[1] The database was developed on the basis of information available on *Hrčak*, website and electronic database of the major scientific journals in Croatia.

[2] For a discussion of the uses and limits of network analysis as a tool for historical research, see Lemercier (2005) and Ahnert et al. (2020).

SOCIOLOGY DURING SOCIALIST TIMES

The history of sociology in the Croatian lands dates back at least to the early 20th century, with the establishment of the first Chair of Sociology at the Faculty of Law of the University of Zagreb under Ernest Miler in 1906. Following World War I and in the context of the first Yugoslav state, the discipline continued its expansion thanks to the work of Sociological Association in Zagreb, an organization that promoted sociological thinking, publication, and teaching. The spread of sociological theory among Croatian scholars, the multiplication of sociological courses at the university level, and the creation of a new Chair in Sociology and Statistics in 1934, ensured that sociological thinking had acquired solid roots in Croatian soil before the second World War. These first steps in the institutionalization of the discipline notwithdtanding, the postwar years brought significant setbacks to the practice of sociology. In the new, socialist Yugoslavia established by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (*Komunistička partija Jugoslavije*, KPJ), comprising six republics in a federal and multinational arrangement under the central government in Belgrade and following in many respects the guidelines of Soviet socialism, orthodox Marxist thought became the predominant matrix for social analysis. In the late 1940s, historical materialism was reinforced in universities; translations of the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin into Serbo-Croatian were promoted; and Yugoslav philosophers such as Dušan Nedeljković and Boris Ziherl waged a war against the intellectual traditions of previous years (now seen as bourgeois and reactionary). All of this had an impact on the practice of sociology, which lost the theoretical diversity of previous years and became subsumed in a broader field of philosophical and social studies ruled primarily by the principles of historical materialism (Голенкова 2022: 51-52; Batina 2008; Županov and Šporer 1984).

The turn of the decade, however, brought about a new turn in the history of sociology, which would rapidly recover its vitality and receive significant institutional endorsement. The driver was Yugoslavia's split with the Soviet Union in June 1948, which pushed the Yugoslav leadership to embark upon an unprecedented path of reform and liberalization. The introduction of mechanisms of workers' democracy in factories under the banner of "socialist self-management," the decentralizion of the Yugoslav federation, and the relaxation of censorship and ideological control paved the way for a process of intellectual and artistic reawakening (Miller 2007; Cosovschi 2015; Gabrič 1995). Changes were also drastic in foreign policy, with Yugoslavia establishing economic and military cooperation with the West and increasing its exchange of goods, people and ideas with the United States and Western Europe, while simultaneously establishing relations with the rising Third World (Rajak 2017). By the late 1950s, by virtue of its officially neutral position in the Cold War, enjoying financial support of the West and having also resumed trade with the Eastern bloc following the normalization of relations with the Soviets, Yugoslavia entered a period of remarkable stability, notable economic expansion, and social modernization. By the turn of the decade, the country could boast remarkably high growth rates, with expanding industrialization and urbanization, as well as what could be characterized as a process of cultural Westernization (Vučetić 2012; Lampe 2000: 274-75).

Sociology was much invigorated by these developments, which Croatian sociologists Josip Županov and Željka Šporer referred to decades later as the time when sociology became "a discipline in itself" and "was granted its right to citizenship" (Županov and Šporer 1984: 15). Following the break with the Soviets and in a general atmosphere of more open and critical Marxist thinking, the discipline underwent a phase of institutional expansion. In 1956, the Yugoslav Association of Philosophy and Sociology was created in Novi Sad, Serbia, and the first major journal of Yugoslav sociology came out

three years later under the name *Sociologija*. In 1960, Yugoslav sociologists acquired their own and separate organization at the federal level with the creation of the Yugoslav Sociological Association. Institutions were also created at the level of the republics: the Sociological Association of Croatia was established in 1959 under the presidency of Juraj *Hrženjak and gathered approximately fifty members,* while a Department of Sociology was created at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Zagreb in 1963.[3] In the following decade, sociological courses started to be taught in Ljubljana, Belgrade and Zagreb, while major centers of sociological research were founded in Serbia, Slovenia and Croatia: namely, the Institute of Social Sciences in Belgrade (*Institut društvenih nauka*, IDN), the Institute for Sociology and Philosophy at the University of Ljubljana (*Inštitut za sociologijo in filozofijo pri Univerzi v Ljubljani*, ISF), and the Institute of Social Research of the University of Zagreb (*Institut za društvena istraživanja Sveučilišta u Zagrebu*, IDIS) (Bogdanović 1990; Mirkovic 1976).

Although the practice of sociology was still under the influence of diverse varieties of Marxist thought, Yugoslavia's singular foreign policy resulted in sociologists coming into contact with other theories, concepts and methods. Belgrade's tilt to the West facilitated academic exchange with Western Europe and the United States, while its non-aligned position also paved the way for limited, but still significant exchange with African, Asian and Latin American countries, as well as with the Communist countries of Eastern Europe. Funding from the Ford Foundation, together with the work of the Fulbright Commission for Yugoslavia (the first one to be established in a Communist country, and the second largest in Europe after West Germany), led to significant academic exchange with the United States. During the first five years of the Fulbright program, 254 Yugoslav citizens were given funding to conduct study and research stays in the United States, most coming from universities in Ljubljana, Zagreb and Belgrade. Networks connecting Yugoslav scolars with Western European states, particularly with universities in France and West Germany, were also meaningful and had a significant impact on the development of local social sciences (Perišić 2008; Konta 2020: 130-131; Lampe 2000: 292-293).

Sociology reaped the benefits of these emerging global academic networks. As stated by Croatian sociologist Rudi Supek decades later, "Yugoslav sociologists had the possibility to participate in a broad exchange of scientific experiences and have personal discussions with sociologists of the most developed scientific communities, since the scientific policy of the country at the time sought to transfer the experience of developed countries to ours" (Supek 1989: 7). During the 1960s and 1970s, several generations of Yugoslav sociologists, primarily from Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia, would get some form of training in universities or research centers in the United States. Among them was Josip Županov, often considered the father of modern Croatian sociology, but also younger scholars like Silva Mežnarić, Vjeran Katunarić and Vesna Pusić (Cosovschi 2018). The Yugoslav case was not unique, and similar trends developed in other Eastern European socialist countries, increasingly aware of the advantages of securing training for their sociologists abroad (Hîncu 2021; Karády 2021).

The internationalization of Yugoslav sociology was perhaps clearest in the case of the group that gathered around the journal *Praxis*. Inspired by Marxist humanist ideas, the journal became a major node for modern social theory in Yugoslavia, capable of attracting leading scholars and students from the East and the West through their summer schools on the Adriatic island of Korčula and thanks to their leading role in the international events of the Yugoslav Association of Sociology (Blagojević

[3] From here on, I translate the term *filozofski fakultet*, common in Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian as a label for faculties teaching a broad set of human and social sciences, as "Faculty of Arts."

2022; Sher 1977; Stefanov 2013). *Praxis* was a symbol of Yugoslavia's integration into global academic networks, but also of the multinational character of the country's cultural and intellectual fabric. The composition of the journal's editorial team and its intellectual core were revealing of the inter-republican bonds that made up the fabric of Yugoslav sociology, joining authors from Croatia such as Predrag Vranicki, Gajo Petrović and Rudi Supek with others from Belgrade such as Mihailo Marković, Zagorka Goluković and Svetozar Stojanović, and also involving scholars from Ljubljana as in the case of sociologist Veljko Rus.

The review's strong Yugoslav penchant was also expressed in the ideas of its members, who were openly critical of all forms of nationalism and who often found themselves condemned by more nationally oriented colleagues in their respective republics. This became especially meaningful in the late 1960s, as nationalist demands gained ground in Yugoslavia, often fueled by the Communist leaders of the respective republics, who sought to instrumentalize nationalist mobilization to increase their power of negotiation at the federal level. Croatia was to become the main site of such nationalist waves, epitomized by the mass movement called Maspok (contraction of *masovni pokret,* i.e. "mass movement"). The movement demanded increased autonomy for Croatia vis-à-vis the federal government in Belgrade, and it gradually took over the republic in the turn of the 1960s with the tacit approval of the Croatian communist leadership. The Zagreb members of *Praxis* such as Rudi Supek, Milan Kangrga and Danko Grlić remained critical of the Maspok, which led to their often being labelled anti-Croatian by their detractors and criticized for having adopted such positions even decades after the events (Jakšić 2011). In 1971, the leaders in Belgrade responded to the Maspok by intervening in Croatia, purging the Croatian communist party, and substituting its leadership for a more loyal one, while also ordering the incarceration of numerous members of the nationalist movement.

The remainder of the 1970s brought a tidal change to Yugoslavia, with increased repression on intellectuals, academics and artists. The journal *Praxis* was closed down. As Belgrade had been the center of student revolt in the late 1960s, the Belgrade members of the group were expelled from the University. In Slovenia, sociologist Veljko Rus was ousted from the University on account of his political position. Croatia also felt the weight of ideological rigour, being named "the silent republic" by the Yugoslav media due to the loyalty of its new leaders (Čuvalo 1990: 206-207). Croatian communist leaders insisted on ideological purity, with sociologist Stipe Šuvar, as Minister of Education of the republic in 1974, carrying out reforms aimed at reinforcing the values of the working class, which many saw as a strategy to reduce the influence of critical intellectuals (Bacevic 2014). The introduction of general courses on social theory in high schools and universities such as "Theory and Practice of Self-Management Socialism," which to a certain extent sidelined traditional courses in sociology and aimed to reinforce Marxist thinking, was perceived by some researchers as constraining the discipline's independent development (Županov and Šporer 1984). Yet, sociology was overall relatively spared from repression: the Zagreb members of *Praxis* were not targeted by the government to the same extent as their Belgrade colleagues, the journal *Revija za sociologiju* kept publishing throughout the decade without any major intrusion from the authorities, and new departments of sociology were established in other Croatian universities (for example, Zadar in 1977), contributing to the expansion of the discipline to other regions outside the capital.

In the 1980s, the death of Tito and the advent of an economic recession shaped a new context of crisis. However, despite mounting nationalism and increased tensions between the respective leaderships of the Yugoslav republics, sociologists across the country still endeavoured to maintain unity and cooperation. The Yugoslav Sociological Association played a major role in this trend, with

Croatian sociologist Rudi Supek as its president regularly addressing letters to authorities to denounce the repression of colleagues from Serbia, Bosnia, Slovenia and Croatia.[4]

In Zagreb, the old members of *Praxis* gathered with critical intellectuals from other republics in a group discussion called "The Man and the System." Moreover, even in the politically and economically hard context of the late 1980s, and after more than a decade of economic stagnation, Yugoslav sociologists managed to secure one of the most ambitious projects in the history of the local social sciences: a broad empirical study on the structure of Yugoslav society led by Serbian sociologist Mladen Lazić, working then at the IDIS in Zagreb, and by Croatian sociologist Duško Sekulić. Labeled "Social Structure and Quality of Life in the SFRJ [Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia]," this endeavour was primarily supported by federal funds and carried out in 1989 by a consortium of more than twenty institutes of social sciences from all Yugoslav republics.[5]

Overall, in spite of the existence of vigorous sociological communities that functioned at the level of the republics, especially in Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia, much of the life of Yugoslav sociology by the end of the 1980s was conducted through inter-republican and multinational institutions. The inter-republican fabric of sociology in Yugoslavia was also noticeable in publications in the respective republics. A look at the institutional affiliation of authors publishing in the late 1980s in *Revija za sociologiju*, the official publication of the Sociological Association of Croatia, shows a clear primacy of Zagreb as the origin of its publications, but with Ljubljana and Belgrade ranking high, and even higher than other Croatian sites outside the capital. This information is displayed in Figure 1.

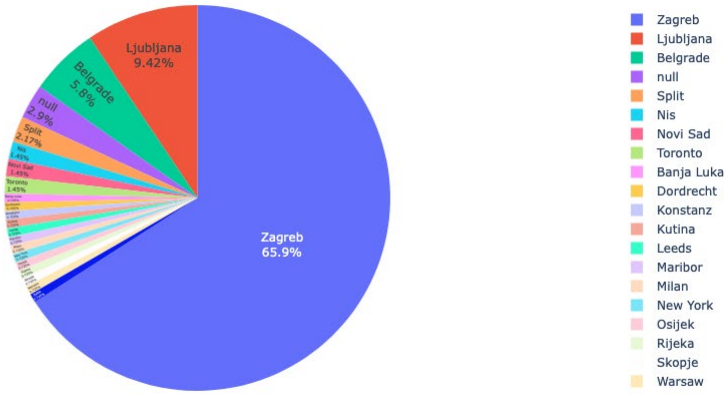

Figure 1: Location of authors publishing in *Revija za sociologiju*, 1986-1991. "Null" stands for authors with no reported location.

[4] Among others, see: "Letter to the Federal Secretariat of Internal Affaires of the SFRJ for the case of Laslo Sekelj, 31 December 1983," Arhiv Jugoslavije, Fond 668, fascicule 2 I-6, "Odbor za profesionalna pitanja" ; « Letter to the Presidency of the SFRJ and to the Socialist Republic of Serbia," 31 January 1984, Arhiv Jugoslavije, Fond 668, fascicule 2, I-6, "Odbor za profesionalna pitanja"; and "Letter to the Presidency of the Socialist Alliance of the Working People of Yugoslavia," 19 June 1984, Arhiv Jugoslavije, Fond 668, fascicule 2 I-6, "Odbor za profesionalna pitanja."

[5] More on this project in Hodžić (1991).

Moreover, a visualization of the network of authors participating in *Revija za sociologiju* in the late 1980s gives an idea of what the fabric of Croatian sociology was in those years. Figure 2 was developed on the basis of data about the articles published in the journal during the period 1986-1991, with their respective authors and corresponding institutional affiliation. This projection of the network shows authors connected to their respective institutions, and also connected to other authors by relations of co-authorship. While institutional affiliation is represented through simple edges, co-authorship is instead represented by edges that vary according to the number of publications shared by authors, allowing us to recognize intellectual partnerships and cliques.

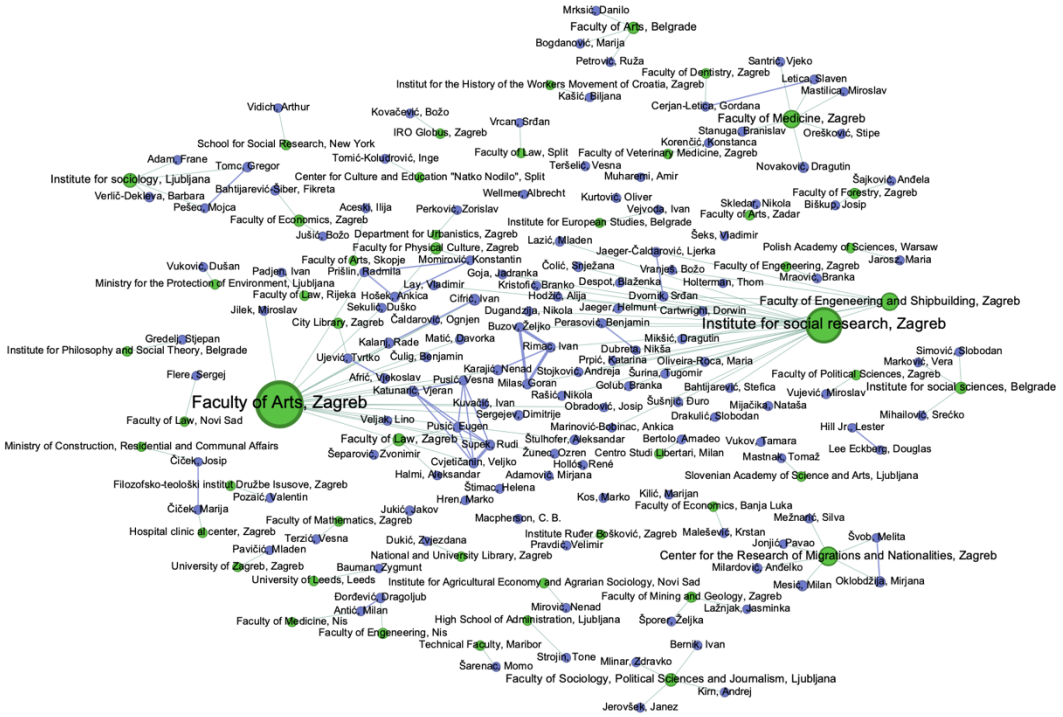

Figure 2: Authors (purple) in *Revija za sociologiju*, 1986-1991, and their respective institutions (green). Graph created by the author with Gephi.

The image also gives an idea of the relative importance of various institutions in the network. Institutions are sized by Eigenvector centrality, a specific measure of influence that assesses the importance of a node according to the importance of its neighbouring nodes. Hence, we can assess the influence of an institution as primarily determined by the importance of its affiliated authors. The Faculty of Arts and the IDIS clearly stand out as the main nodes of the network, with the former having a centrality score of 1 and the latter having a score of 0.7. In other words, authors from the IDIS and the Faculy of Arts participated extensively in the journal, and they were also the ones most connected to authors from other institutions through co-authorship. These were institutions that had been shaped since the 1960s by the policies of the Communist regime, and which were also important nodes of all-Yugoslav cooperation. As shown in the graph, the two were followed by smaller ones such as the Center for the Research of Migration and Nationalities, a young research unit established in 1984 which shows here a centrality score of 0.27, and subsequently by other

faculties and institutes in Croatia and in other republics which played a considerably lesser role in the network.

All in all, by the late 1980s, Croatian sociology was signficantly integrated with developments taking place in other Yugoslav republics. As underlined by other scholars, the high level of inter-republican integration of Yugoslav sociology was a result of its historical dependence on the policies of the Communist regime, and it had the effect of creating "a rather high degree of cohesion and solidarity within the professional community, making sociology more integrated across republic boundaries than many other areas of Yugoslav culture" (Spasić, Pešić and Babović 2022: 36). This was a remarkable feature of the discipline in Yugoslavia: sociologists from one republic regularly took part in developments in neighboring republics and several would often circulate between the main sociological centers in Ljubljana, Zagreb and Belgrade throughout their careers, as in the known cases of Serbian sociologist Mladen Lazić in Zagreb and Slovenian sociologist Sergej Flere in Novi Sad, shaping developments in multiple republics at the same time. Moreover, the IDIS and the Faculty of Arts, one of the most notable research centers in the country and the most important institution for higher education in the republic, held a certain primacy over sociological production. This would, however, change rapidly in the 1990s following the collapse of the Communist regime and the advent of war.

CROATIAN SOCIOLOGY IN THE CONTEXT OF WAR

The last phases of the Yugoslav crisis brought meaningful changes to the academic world, and their impact was felt in the field of Croatian sociology. After the dissolution of the Communist party in 1990, the first multiparty elections brought nationalist parties to power in almost all Yugoslav republics, and also in Croatia, where the nationalist, conservative and anticommunist Croatian Democratic Union (*Hrvatska demokratska zajednica,* HDZ) came to power under the leadership of Franjo Tuđman. A year of failed negotiations between the republics with the aim to find a new compromise for the Yugoslav union ended with the secession of both Slovenia and Croatia in June 1991, a decision that triggered an immediate response by the Yugoslav army and marked the onset of war in the country. Croatia found itself invaded by what had once been its own army; a major military power that aligned with Slobodan Milošević's authoritarian and nationalist regime in Belgrade and which also relied on the paramilitary forces of the Croatian Serbs, seeking to stop Zagreb from attaining independence. Hostilities in Croatia endured throughout four years until 1995, leaving a trail of destruction and tens of thousands of refugees (Calic 2009). As a result of the breakup of the Yugoslav common market and the war effort, Croatia's economy sunk into crisis, while economic reform and privatizations favored the concentration of property into few hands and the decline of the middle classes (Cohen 1997; Stojcic 2012).

Predictably, these developments had an impact on Croatian scientific production. As stated by Croatian sociologist Siniša Zrinščak, then a young researcher working in Zagreb, the hardship of war imposed considerable limitations to sociological research:

> Contrary to other post-Communist countries in which the transformation was intense and ultimately aimed at membership in the European Union, Croatia was in a kind of semi-isolation in the 1990s, with no developmental perspective. Isolation, coupled with the lack of money, affected scientific development. Empirical research was very scarce until the very end of the 1990s. Participation in international scientific life (conferences, comparative research…) was not an easy endeavor (2015).

Assessing the general state of Croatian sociology during the years of war, nevertheless, is not an easy task. Rajko Igić (2002) noted that, although war in Croatia did not directly affect the urban areas that were the main centers of scientific production, it did have an overall negative impact on Croatian scientific development in terms of publications when compared to the trends of the previous period. However, in the case of the social sciences, the number of publications does not suggest any significant changes taking place in the years of transition from socialism to post-socialism. As shown in Figures 3 and 4, the number of works published in the social sciences between 1986 and 1996 following the registers of Croatia's statistical yearbook, and also the number of articles published in *Revija za sociologiju* during that same period, indicate that the year 1990 marked a peak followed by a drastic reduction, but in fact the overall volume of production of the war years is not significantly different from that of the 1980s.

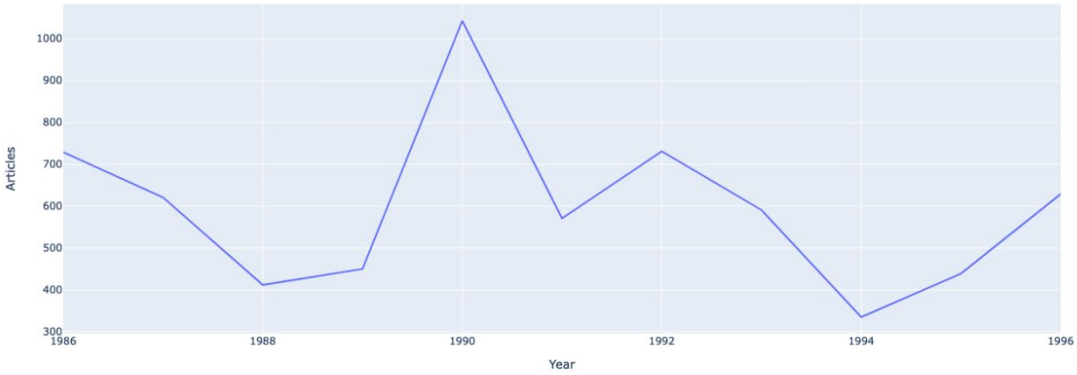

Figure 3: Number of articles published by year in the areas of social sciences in Croatia, 1986-1996. Source: Statistički ljetopis Republike Hrvatske, DZSRH, Zagreb (1988-1996).

Figure 4: Number of articles published by year in *Revija za sociologiju*, 1986-1996.

All things considered, the number of publications does not seem to be a reliable indicator of the general state of the discipline.[6] One reason is the instability of such figures, often affected by the politics of institutions and by incidental factors that can be independent from the political and social context. A second reason is that, as stressed by some of our interviewees, the lack of funding for empirical research in Croatia was often compensated for with an increased dedication to theoretical work.[7] All of this makes the total number of articles a rather opaque indicator of the general state of social sciences in those years.

Conversely, although the volume of production does not reveal much about the transformations of Croatian sociology in the transition from socialism to post-socialism, available sources suggest at least two processes that to a certain extent did restructure the discipline along new lines: a trend toward republicanization/nationalization, and a number of political shifts at the expense of actors who the new authorities considered ideologically unfit.

a. The Republicanization/Nationalization of Croatian Sociology

Besides isolation and a lack of funding, during the years of war Croatian sociology had to deal with what could broadly be termed "the dissolution of the Yugoslav academic community" (Cosovschi 2022: 109-111). The connections of Croatian sociologists with Slovenian colleagues naturally suffered as a result of the independence of their respective republics and the disappearance of common institutions. Yet, it was the relation with Serbia that deteriorated the most. Telephone and other forms of communication between both republics were interrupted due to the ongoing hostilities, and the war naturally rendered any form of mobility across the borders extremely difficult, or outright impossible. Moreover, Croatian authorities implemented on their own soil the UN sactions that were applied to Serbia following Belgrade's involvement in the war in Bosnia, banning any form of academic and scientific cooperation with citizens from the new Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (that is, Serbia and Montenegro).[8] All of this was especially fateful for a discipline such as sociology, which, as we have seen, had been shaped since the early years of socialism by networks of cooperation and mobility that cut across the Yugoslav republics and which relied on inter-republican endeavours, especially connecting sociologists from Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia.

Some of the oral testimonies I have gathered suggest the impact of these developments. For instance, after several years in Zagreb, Serbian sociologist Mladen Lazić resettled in Belgrade just before the onset of war. According to Lazić's testimony, his departure from Croatia made it difficult to coordinate the work to process the data resulting from the macro-project conducted some years earlier by the Yugoslav consortium of sociological institutes. At the same time, Lazić stated that he could perceive the emerging obstacles to common work with Croatian colleagues in the fact that many of them asked to withdraw articles summited recently to Serbian journals out of fear of being sanctioned by the Croatian government.[9] Other testimonies have also pointed to difficulties in keeping up with inter-republican endeavours, and have stressed how it became necessary to organize

[6] For our count of articles in *Revija za sociologiju*, all research and theoretical articles have been included, except for texts such as bibliographies, chronologies or institutional announcements. Conversely, there is no indication of what was considered a "work" by the Croatian Statistical Yearbook.

[7] Silva Mežnarić, personal interview, Zagreb, February 2017.

[8] Naredba za provođenje Rezolucije broj 757 (1992) Vijeća sigurnosti Ujedinjenih naroda u području znanosti, tehnologije i informatike, 3.6.1992. See: http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/slluzbeni/1992_06_32_799.html, (accessed on 23 February 2024).

[9] Mladen Lazić, interview in Belgrade, April 2017.

meetings with colleagues from former Yugoslav republics in third countries such as Hungary, or in Italy.[10]

A view at the landscape of authors publishing in *Revija za sociologiju* during the war years supports the notion that Croatian sociology lost touch with developments in other Yugoslav republics, including not only Serbia, but also neighbouring Slovenia. Compared to the period before 1991, the period 1992-1996 saw a major decrease in the presence of authors from former Yugoslav republics, leading to what can generally be seen as a "republicanization" or "nationalization" of Croatian sociology during the years of the breakup.[11] Moreover, it is worth noticing that the waning presence of such authors was not countered by a meaningful increase in foreign authors, which grew rather marginally and often due to translations of original pieces in English. Last, it is interesting to note that, at least in the main sociological journal of the country, these changes did not translate into a decentralization of sociological production. Zagreb remained the undisputed center of the journal, with authors from the Croatian capital even increasing their overall participation. This disparity is displayed in Figure 5.

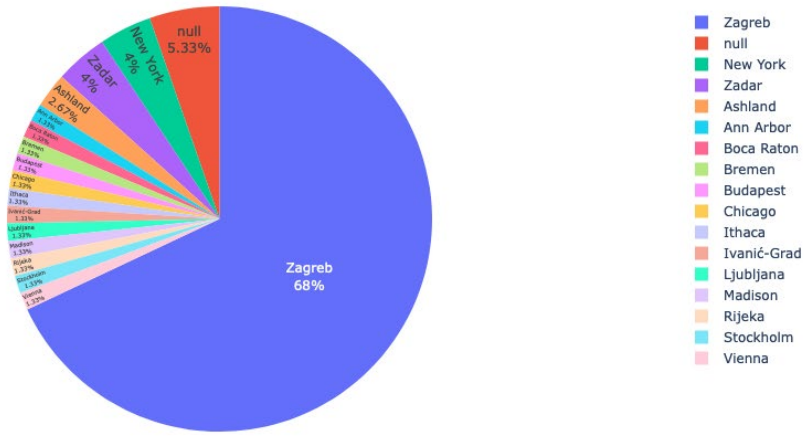

Figure 5: Location of authors publishing in *Revija za sociologiju*, 1992-1996. "Null" stands for authors with no reported location.

All in all, these sources suggest that Croatian sociology was more insular than previously, severed from networks of authors who had played a meaningful role in its development in previous years. During the 1990s, it effectively made a transition from being part of the field of Yugoslav sociology to becoming an autonomous and nationalized discipline. This was also expressed institutionally, with the Croatian Sociological Association joining the International Sociological Association as a new

[10] [10] Silva Mežnarić, personal interview, Zagreb, February 2017.

[11] Considering a normal time lag for academic publishing (that is, the fact that publications from one year are normally the result of research and work done in prior years), I analyze Croatian sociological production from the war years not through articles published in 1991-1995, but in 1992-1996.

and independent member in 1992. Yet, many years were still needed for Croatian sociology to become fully integrated into other, alternative academic networks. After Yugoslavia, the discipline would have to define and negotiate its new position in the global academic community. Two decades after the end of the common state, such process would still be subject to debate, with some authors scolding Croatian sociologists' "parochialism" and their insufficient presence in international publications (2010), and others stressing the dangers of academic imperialism and warning of the risk of researchers going global but losing touch with local realities (Petrić 2011).

b. Institutional Shifts in Croatian Sociology

The Yugoslav breakup and the ongoing war on Croatian soil had a meaningful impact on the general political and intellectual atmosphere of the country, reinforcing what Lenard Cohen once described as a "siege mentality."[12] The Yugoslav army's offensive against Croatia was interpreted by many as an existencial threat, and bolstered national solidarity in the country, often at the cost of political and ideological pluralism. As stated by sociologist Srđan Dvornik: "Even those who did not support Tuđman and his party considered that it was not time for public criticism of the government, and even less for any form of civil disobedience, not even a symbolic one (2009: 206)". Several of my interviewees characterized the political atmosphere of those years as having deteriorated with the rise of nationalism and the authoritarian proclivities of the new authorities, and some even declared having received anonoymous, hostile telephone calls. This is not dissimilar to the broadly known cases of intellectuals who were targeted as traitors to national unity, as in the case of Jewish Croatian intellectual Žarko Puhovski (Pilić 2016: 84) or the highly publicized case of the Croatian feminist intellectuals Slavenka Drakulić, Rada Iveković, Vesna Kesić, Dubravka Ugrešić and Jelena Lovrić, denounced by the weekly *Globus* in an article secretly written by sociologist Slaven Letica. As a consequence, they were compelled to leave the country.[13]

Although these cases suggest a general deterioration of the intellectual atmosphere, explicit censorship was rare. Yet, there were other, less direct ways in which political authorities could intervene in the academic world; not by outlawing publications, but rather by weakening certain institutions and reinforcing others in what can generally be seen as a scheme to swing the ideological balance within the field of social sciences.

One of the main strategies to refashion the academic world in line with the new, rather conservative and nationalist ideological coordinates of the time, was what Dolenec, Doolan and Žitko have labeled "institutional parallelism": that is, the establishment of new institutions, analogous to existing ones, in order to encourage ideological competition and broaden an academic market that was seen as being monopolized by left-wing and "Yugoslav" institutions (2015). In higher education, this was especially notorious in the growing influence of the Catholic Church. In 1991, the Theological Faculty was reinstated as part of the University of Zagreb, after almost forty years of its exclusion by the Communist regime. The Church also played a pivotal role in the development of "Croatian Studies," a catch-all field that was established at the University of Zagreb in the early 1990s, which rapidly went from being a one-year programme to a four-year degree, and which offered training in social and cultural studies focused on Croatian culture and nationalist intellectual traditions in parallel with the study programmes taught at the Faculty of Arts.

[12] Cohen, "Embattled Democracy: Postcommunist Croatia in Transition," 84.

[13] "Hrvatske feministice siluju Hrvatsku!", *Globus*, 11.12.1992.

Endeavors to change the institutional landscape of sociological research were perhaps best epitomized by official attempts to weaken research centers that the HDZ authorities saw as ideologically suspect. One of these was the Center of Socio-Religious Research created by sociologist Srđan Vrcan in Split in the late 1980s. This was closed in 1992 due to lack of financing (Zrinščak 2015), a decision that a former collaborator of the center described to me as politically motivated.[14] The clearest example of this trend, however, is the campaign that the new authorities launched against the IDIS.

As noted above, the IDIS was perhaps the most important center for sociological research in Croatia. Its history and ascendancy were closely tied to the policies of the socialist regime, and its activities were much related to scholarly endeavours in other Yugoslav republics, being among other things the main coordinator of the wide project on the structure of Yugoslav society that kicked off in the late 1980s under the direction of Mladen Lazić. In the early 1990s, however, the institute became the target of a destruction campaign by the new authorities, which Lazić himself described to me as a *coup*.[15] As reported by Antun Petak, researcher at the institute since the 1970s, the government implemented a dramatic reduction in funds for the IDIS, which forced the institute to downsize from forty employees in 1989 to a working staff of twenty-three in 1994 (Petak 2014: 47-48). The Scientific Committee of the institute addressed an Open Letter of protest to the government, with no effect.

Such actions by the government should be seen in tandem with the parallel decision to create a new institute for social sciences in 1991 that was to a great extent a competitor for the IDIS. Initially called Institut for Applied Social Research and later rebaptized "Ivo Pilar" in honour of a renouned Croatian nationalist intellectual from the interwar period who had been president of the Sociological Association of Zagreb in the 1930s; the new institute launched its own sociological journal titled *Društvena istraživanja*, and managed to recruit researchers working originally at the IDIS, such as Drago Čengić and Siniša Zrinščak. Many researchers saw these moves as political, and understood them as part of a wider scheme to weaken institutions that the new authorities identified as progenies of the Communist regime and to shift the ideological balance within the field of sociology (Zrinščak 2015; Bahtijarević 1994).

In fact, there are very few reasons to believe that the campaign against the IDIS was not politically motivated, the first one being that state officers in charge of managing scientific funding during those years openly expressed their scorn for the ideological orientation of researchers working at the institute. When in 1993 researchers Ivan Kuvačić, Vladimir Lay, Alija Hodžić and Branimir Krištofić, associated with the IDIS and the Faculty of Arts, applied for funding for a project to study the post-communist socio-economic transition, the respective officials at the Ministry of Science rejected their application with the following justification:

> The subject and goal of the research defined in this way seem to us to be insufficiently clear. The specific problem of the disintegration of the communist ideology and the socialist social system and their replacement by different values and socio-economic relations in the process of formation and consolidation of new democratic regimes in Eastern Europe, and especially in Croatia, is not seen enough. Research into material status, quality of life, relations in the sphere of work and the like are certainly not without interest. But it seems that these questions are posed more from perspective of the system of socialist values, than from the current need to

[14] Dražen Lalić, interview in Zagreb, February 2017

[15] Mladen Lazić, interview in Belgrade, April 2017.

> solve the problem of building new institutional frameworks that are compatible with the market economy and political pluralism. [16]

The IDIS was identified by the new authorities as an agent of the *ancien régime* and consequently starved of resources. The institute's crisis perhaps explains (along with the general economic hardship and with the breakup of all-Yugoslav cooperation), part of the drop in the number of publications in *Revija za sociologiju* in the early 1990s. What is certain is that the institute's crisis translated into a significant decrease in its contribution to the journal during the years of war, as seen in Figure 6.

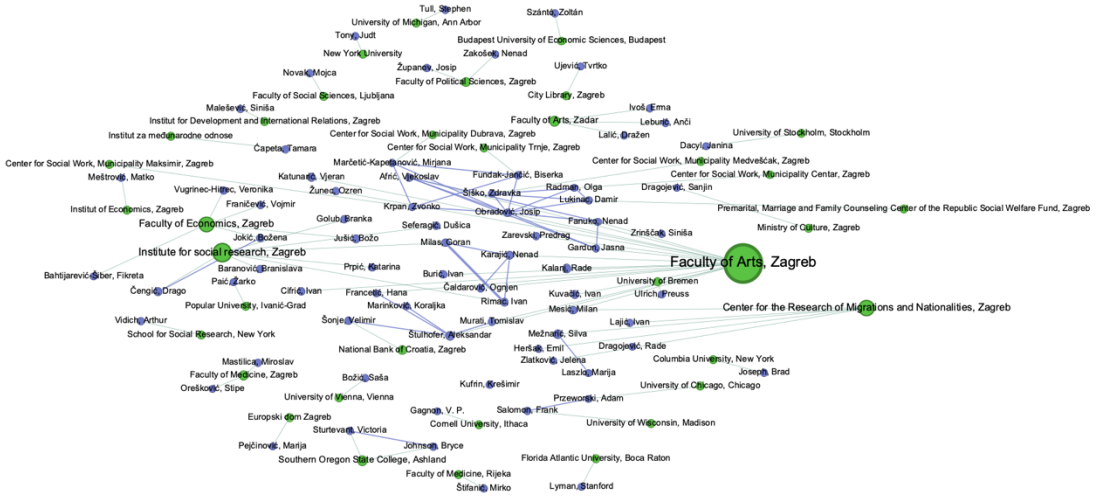

Figure 6: Authors (purple) in *Revija za sociologiju*, 1992-1996, and their respective institutions (green). Graph created by the author with Gephi.

After being a close second to the Faculty of Arts in previous years, the IDIS was now relegated to a conspicuously lower status. Its centrality score of 0.37 places it closer to the Center for the Research of Migration and Nationalities and to the Faculty of Economics, an institution that considerably enhanced its presence in the network during those years.

Overall, many of the changes and shifts taking place in Croatian sociology during the years of transition could potentially be explained on account of fortuitous factors, personal reasons, or uncalculated circumstances. The evidence, however, suggests that the decline of the IDIS was rather the anticipated result of a deliberate policy.

CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, I have set out to reconstruct the history of Croatian sociology under socialism and explore how the discipline underwent the transition to post-socialism. I examined the history of Croatian sociology in the wider framework of Yugoslav sociology, underlining its manifold

[16] «Mišljenje o financiranju znanstveno-istraživačkog projekta Institut za društvena istraživanja Sveučilišta u Zagrebu 'Tranzicija kao sociologijski problem', 1993, personal archive of Branimir Krištofić.

connections to scholarly developments in other republics, especially Serbia and Slovenia, and its reliance on networks cutting across republican borders. Moreover, I have shed light on some of the effects of the Yugoslav breakup on the institutions and the practitioners of Croatian sociology by stressing two phenomena: first, the trend toward the republicanization/nationalization of the discipline by which it became detached from developments in former Yugoslav republics, and second, a series of shifts stemming from the policies of the Croatian nationalist and conservative government, which resulted in the waning of institutions associated with the Communist regime, in particular the Institute for Social Research of the University of Zagreb.

Modern Croatian sociology was to a great extent an offspring of Yugoslav socialism, having been fashioned over several decades by policies and institutions that relied considerably on all-Yugoslav networks of cooperation. By showing that the end of socialism and the common state translated into novel, and oftentimes reversive trends for the discipline and its practitioners, I have primarily sought to show the impact of political, economic, and social change on the life of a scientific community and to make a contribution to the literature on the history of the social sciences in Central and Eastern Europe during socialism and after. Incidentally, and in consideration of present attacks on academic freedom in countries as disparate as Hungary, Russia and Argentina, this paper might also contribute to a wider debate beyond the singularities of the region, stirring reflection on the many dangers that the social sciences incur when governments identify their practitioners as actors in the political arena.

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ARTICLE

Émile Durkheim in the Pampas: The reception of his ideas in Argentina and Uruguay (1895-1947)

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Abstract

The present work aims to study the reception of Emile Durkheim's ideas and those of his disciples among the chairs of sociology at the Universities of Buenos Aires and Córdoba in Argentina, and the University of the Republic in Uruguay, between 1895 and 1947. This study recognizes three periods of reception: the first covers the initial appearance of Durkheim in the Río de la Plata from 1895 to 1915, when the approach to this sociological school was mainly limited to *The Rules of Sociological Method* and, secondarily, *The Division of Labour in Society*. The second period comprises the years 1915-1933, when the readings of Durkheimian sociology are extended to other works such as *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, although its most outstanding feature was its comparison with German sociologies. Finally, the third period (1933-1947) involves a re-interpretation of Durkheim's doctoral thesis in Argentina, creating a pre-functionalist thought, while in Uruguay this did not take place.

Keywords

Émile Durkheim, Reception, French Sociology, Argentina, Uruguay

INTRODUCTION

The present paper is framed within the reception studies conducted by authors in social sciences that, during recent years, made significant progress in the Río de la Plata (Canavese 2015; Losada 2019; Rodríguez Rial 2022; Tarcus 2016). Regarding the concept of reception, the theoretical developments of Tarcus (2016: 30) have been taken into account, where it is defined as a process of intellectual production/diffusion in which it is necessary to "analytically discriminate between producers, diffusers, receptors and consumers of ideas, although these processes may blur in practice and these roles can be assumed simultaneously by the same subject".

For Tarcus, each participant occupies a place in the successive "moments" he recognizes. In this way, they can be distinguished:

i. The "moment of production" of theories, carried out by "conceptual intellectuals" (a concept coined by Antonio Gramsci). In the case of the present work, it refers to Émile Durkheim's work on the division of social labor and his efforts to establish sociology as an autonomous

discipline. But, as will be seen later, the Durkheim of "collective representations" will also appear, as well as some of the proposals from the members of his school, such as Célestin Bouglé and Maurice Halbwachs.

ii. The "moment of diffusion" of a body of ideas through publication in books, papers, newspapers, magazines, conferences, reviews, lecture notes, summaries, etc. This task may be carried out by the conceptual intellectuals themselves, and undoubtedly, in the case of Durkheim, was true for the French context. In Argentina and Uruguay, the main venue for disseminating his ideas was the university, so the sociological production carried out by the course professors deserves consideration here.

iii. The "moment of reception" defines the diffusion of these ideas in a field of production which differs from the original. Here will appear mentions made by the receptors, that is, sociology professors from Buenos Aires, Córdoba and Montevideo regarding the work of the French sociologist.

iv. Finally, the "moment of appropriation" corresponds to the "consumption" of these ideas by a supposed "final" reader at the end of the circulation chain. The quotation marks remind us that the distinction is always analytical since there is never a "final" reader, as this reader may eventually become a new diffuser or receiver, even a producer.

As regards the time frame proposed for this study, it covers such a broad period that a concise presentation is necessary, which corresponds to the intention of demonstrating in the briefest, most precise, and most balanced possible way the readings made in the Río de la Plata about the father of French sociology during the first half of the 20th century. Consequently, it takes as a point of departure its first mention in 1895, even before the foundation of the sociology chairs, in both Argentina and Uruguay, and it is concluded in 1947.

During this final year there was a modification to the sociology teaching staff of both countries, although for different reasons. In Argentina, it was the rise of the Peronist government (1946-1955) and the intervention of the national universities. This led to a substantial reorientation of sociology towards Catholicism and anti-positivism (Blanco 2006). In Uruguay, it was the designation of Isaac Ganón after the retirement of Carlos M. Prando, the first professor of sociology at the University of the Republic. It was Ganón's work that led to the creation of the Institute of Social Sciences (1956-1958), thus bringing empirical sociology to the country (De Sierra 2017).

Having said that, as noted in point ii), the sources used have been those through which vernacular sociologists disseminated their ideas: lecture notes, articles, books, letters or course syllabi from professors like Juan A. García, Leopoldo Maupas, Ricardo Levene, and Gino Germani in Buenos Aires; Raúl Orgaz and Alfredo Poviña in Córdoba; Carlos Prando and Isaac Ganón in Montevideo. These sources are used to trace the reception of both Durkheim and some of his most notable followers.

Thus, the guiding questions of the present work are the following: When was Durkheim's work read for the first time in the Río de la Plata? What books were read and what was the interpretation of that work? How was the appropriation of such work modified over the years? Was there any creative appropriation for the analysis of the social national realities? And, in this sense, what are the differences between the interpretations of Argentine and Uruguayan authors?

IN THE LIGHT OF POSITIVISM (1895-1915)

The influence of positivism on Latin America, between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, has been studied on several occasions, both at regional level (Hale 1997; Terán 2008) and in the specific cases of Argentina (Biagini 1985; Soler 1968 [1959]) and Uruguay (Ardao

1968; Zum Felde, 1930). Thus, although the Río de la Plata was not an exception as regards the incorporation of this doctrine, there are some differences in the specific branches of positivism that each country adopted. In this way, while in Argentina the positivist readings of the intellectuals related to the social sciences included both their founders, Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer; in Uruguay, in general terms, the English version of this doctrine was apparently privileged.

However, in the context of the turn of the century, both countries experienced an economic crisis of great magnitude in 1890, and consequently the vernacular thinkers began to ask questions about their societies within this school of thought. In addition, it should be noted that during these years, massive migration occurred from Europe to the Pampas, leading to the emergence of what was then referred to as the "cuestión social", that is, a series of problems associated with the modernization of these societies (social inequality, poverty, labor conflict, accelerated urbanization, overcrowding, etc.). These became priority issues for the intellectuals of the time, and encouraged theoretical developments in sociology.

Nevertheless, Argentina experienced an earlier institutionalization process since, in this country, a series of chairs was established in several universities (Buenos Aires in 1898 and 1908, La Plata in 1906, Córdoba in 1907, Santa Fe in 1910), while, in Uruguay, the teaching of this discipline began in 1898 as part of the Philosophy of Law chair at the University of the Republic, headed by José Cremonesi, to finally become independent from it in 1915 (Poviña 1959).

Certainly, it should be noted that this period also coincides with Durkheim's first reception in South America, although showing significant variations among the different countries where sociology was institutionalized. For example, in Bolivia, the first sociology handbooks, written by Daniel Sánchez Bustamante and Roberto Zapata, showed little interest in Durkheimian sociology. Consequently, the "lack of success of the French professor in Bolivian sociology" became evident (Romero Pittari 1997:35).

Similarly, in Ecuador, Durkheim was read from the perspective of "individualist sociologies" or those emphasizing "the psychological", so he ended up being used more as a "punching bag" (Altmann 2023:3) than as an authoritative reference. The case of Peru is striking in the context of Andean countries, where Mariano Cornejo not only subscribed to Comte's positivism but "shared Durkheim's analysis of the division of labor and social solidarity" and "criticized Gabriel Tarde's individualizing approach" (Sulmont 2007:87).

In Colombia, "the first Durkheim" to enter was the one disseminated by Luis Eduardo and Agustín Nieto Caballero, and it was related to the education courses these intellectuals took in Paris (Cataño 2009). Finally, in Brazil, Durkheim's reception occurred towards the end of the 19th century, with Paulo Egídio de Olivera Carvalho, a lawyer who focused on Durkheim's analysis of "crime" (De Olivera 2013:82).

Considering these precedents, in the case of Argentina, various studies (Pereyra and Vila 2019; Vila 2017, 2021) have demonstrated that the first readings of Durkheim were basically related to two works: mainly *The Rules of Sociological Method* and, subsidiarily, *The Division of Labour in Society*. In this way, the first citation of Durkheim, by Juan A. García[1], appears in an 1895 letter sent to José

[1] García (Buenos Aires, 1862-1923) was part of one of the patrician families of the country, which is why he served as a Federal Judge and Minister of Finances (1890). García was also the first sociology professor at the Faculties of Law of La Plata (1906) and Buenos Aires (1908-1918).

María Ramos Mejía, referring to an article from the *Revue Philosophique,* where the distinction between "the normal" and "the pathological" appeared.

The level of interest in the French sociologist and his works is revealed in the handbooks published by other Argentine professors (Maupas 1911; Orgaz 1915). Eventually, this reaches its most refined expression in the interchanging of ideas between the years 1912-1913, in which Durkheim himself would participate and which occurred due to the publication of the book *Caracteres y crítica de la sociología* (1911)[2] by Leopoldo Maupas[3]. The discussion was focused on the characterization of the "social fact" and its different approaches.

Specifically, in Maupas's response to Durkheim's letter, he pointed out that his disagreement lay in the fact that, while for the French sociologist the "rule of conduct" was the expression that a social cause could be included in the explanation of a general human fact, he understood that the social fact to be explained was, precisely, the rule of conduct in itself. Hence the latter stated: "I also affirm that the social is the imperative rule: but in my mouth the phrase does not mean that the imperative rule is the sign of the social fact, but rather that this rule is the social fact itself, the data that the sociologist must explain" (Maupas 1913: 585)[4].

In the case of Uruguay, the late institutionalization did not mean the complete lack of awareness of the sociological ideas. On the contrary, as has been said, sociology had been studied as part of the syllabus of Philosophy of Law at the University of the Republic since 1898. Nevertheless, the most relevant authors in Uruguay were, without doubt, Spencer, Comte and Marx. Therefore, the first citation of Durkheim on this side of the Río de la Plata has to be sought outside the university, and will correspond to the Socialist Party leader, Emilio Frugoni, in a conference entitled "Socialismo y Marxismo" (1970)[5]. However, it is notable that reference is also made to the "social fact" as the most relevant aspect of the Durkheimian theory.

At the same time, it should be added that other investigations, which show the concepts of "solidarity" and "interdependence" (just as Durkheim would develop in his doctoral thesis), were part of the jargon of the theorists of the Law of the Río de la Plata from that period (García Bouzas 2011). Therefore, it can be said that, during these years, both in Argentina and Uruguay, the interest in Durkheim's work was centred on the two works mentioned.

More specifically, the emphasis was placed on the discussion surrounding the processes of social modernization and the autonomy of the object. This last serves as an indicator of these professors' interest in justifying the establishment of new chairs. In other words, the entry of sociology into the university required a certain degree of legitimacy. Therefore, those who occupied the new positions

2This book was published in Paris because at that time a publishing market for Latin American authors had been established there (Colombi 2008). By the way, Maupas had taken classes with Durkheim in the 1900s and, in 1914, Raúl Orgaz would do the same before the outbreak of the First World War.

3 Unfortunately, there is not much information available about Maupas's life. It is known that he was born in Buenos Aires in 1879 and that he was the son of French immigrants. He studied law and then took a trip to Europe, where he studied in Berlin and Paris. After teaching at the University of Buenos Aires from 1908 to 1921, there are no further details, except for the date of his death in 1958.

4 For a reconstruction of all the positions in this debate, see Pereyra and Vila (2019).

5This conference was published in 1970 by Cuadernos de Marcha in tribute to the author after his death. It does not have a date, but the texts cited by the author would indicate that his reading of The Rules of Sociological Method must have been carried out in the first decade of the 20th century.

had to gain institutional recognition from traditionalist sectors, which might criticize the inclusion of the subject in Law faculties.

ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS (1915-1933)

The outbreak of the Great War meant the end of the "Long Nineteenth Century", as defined by the historian Eric Hobsbawm, and the beginning of the "Short Twentieth Century". This resulted in a severe blow to the ideals of liberalism: Progress, (European) Civilization, Reason and Science (Funes 2006). It also had an impact on the thought of several Latin American countries, which brought about some important differences between Argentine and Uruguayan intellectual paths. In Argentina, the democratic opening of 1916[6] and the conferences, in the same year, organised by the international Spanish exponent of anti-positivism, José Ortega y Gasset, would result in critiques of positivism, which was at the peak of its glory at the time (Altamirano 2004).

The emergence of an anti-positivist movement would arrive a little later in sociology: in the second half of the 1920s. In particular, Raúl Orgaz[7] and Alfredo Poviña[8], sociology professors in Córdoba, were the ones who began a strong critique of French Sociologism. This was expressed in constant counterpoints between this tradition and the ascendant German sociology, in which the names of Georg Simmel, Alfred Vierkandt and Leopold Von Wiese were the most relevant for Argentine sociologists[9].

For instance, Orgaz said that Simmel strived to make sociology a special science, combating the encyclopedic character attributed to it by French positivists and replacing the category of "society" with that of "social relation". This explains the search for autonomy that Simmel, Vierkandt and Von Wiese posed in relation to "human relations". Ultimately, it is about "the proper subject matter of an autonomous social science, although autonomous in a different way from that conceived by Durkheim" (Orgaz 1932:41).

In the case of Poviña, he criticized the idea of "society" as being nothing more than a "fictitious reality". He argued that it was merely a product of human imagination that could be useful for discussing it as if it existed, "as Durkheim does (...) [but] such a fiction cannot be the main object of a science" (Poviña 1935:257). In short, it could be said that one of the key characteristics of the

[6]This was the first year in which there were presidential elections under the Sáenz Peña law, which ensured universal male suffrage, secret ballots and mandatory voting.

[7]Orgaz (Santiago del Estero, 1888–Córdoba, 1948) studied law at the National University of Córdoba and held significant positions at the university, particularly in the sociology chair of the Faculty of Law. He sympathized with political liberalism and maintained a consistent sociological vocation throughout his career. His legacy includes a significant body of work in sociology and history, making him a key figure in the Argentine academic landscape of the first half of the 20th century.

[8] Alfredo Poviña Padilla (Tucumán, 1904–Córdoba, 1986) graduated in law in 1926 and held important positions in the academic sphere of Córdoba since 1930. However, his approach diverged from the liberal reformist currents of the University of Córdoba, aligning more with conservative positions. In fact, his prominence in Argentine sociology, which was diminished after the establishment of the sociology program at the University of Buenos Aires by Gino Germani, was recovered during the 1970s, when he played key roles during the last military dictatorship in Argentina, as the deanship of the Faculty of Philosophy of Córdoba (1977-1981) and the presidency of the Superior Court of Justice of Córdoba (1981-1982).

9As Argentina was not a country that cultivated the German language, most of the works of these authors were disseminated through the translations into Spanish carried out by the Revista de Occidente, an entrepreneurial journal under the editorship of Ortega y Gasset. According to Blanco (2007:14), this journal "published around 205 titles between 1924 and 1936, distributed among the 20 collections it had. The collection 'Nuevos hechos, Nuevas Ideas', the most important in the field of philosophy and social sciences, published 39 titles between 1925 and 1935".

"relational school" (as Poviña called these German sociologists), is its assertion that sociology is an autonomous science with a content distinct from the other sciences.

Meanwhile, Uruguay shows a more complex situation, as the country did not experience an intellectual reaction against positivism, but rather what might be called an "improvement of positivism based on itself", which means "it was searched for and managed to improve it without establishing an essential antagonism in relation to it" (Ardao 1956: 17). This is explained by the fact that, for the Uruguayan intellectuals, the most attractive ideas, during that period, were "French and, secondarily, Saxon, with very little or no enthusiasm for the German thought of that period" (Ardao 1956: 23). In conclusion, it could be said that the fact that Uruguayans had rid themselves of Spencerianism did not mean they had shifted towards German philosophy[10].

In the case of sociology, the situation is accentuated. The coincidence between the date of the foundation of chairs and the moment of the decline of positivism seems to have played against the consolidation of a rejection of this doctrine. In other words, because there were no previous chairs there was no sociologist positivism against which to react and, therefore, the delivery of the new subject had to be in harmony with the education programme of the 19th century. Therefore, the sociology chair at the University of the Republic maintained the sociological systems of Spencer, Comte, Marx, Tarde, Durkheim, etc., in its teaching. In relation to the last of these, the preserved lecture notes show that Carlos M. Prando[11] gave central importance to *The Rules of Sociological Method*, a book in which he based his classes about the French sociologist, and, to a lesser extent, to *The Division of Labour in Society*.

Concretely, Prando noted a consensus that sociology's object is "society". However, he argued that breaking it down reveals two phases: the social fact itself (human association) and its manifestations or the "social product" (human activity). With respect to this, he stated that "for some, like Durkeim [sic], only the social fact should be studied" (Prando 1922: 10). Regarding *The Division of Labour in Society*, Prando suggested that the phenomenon's initial form was due to "the natural conditions of age and sex" (Prando 1922:140). Nevertheless, when population growth and "moral density" lead to new divisions, this resulted in the emergence of professional and specialized groups.

In summary, discussions about the object of sociology remained the most important, although in the Argentine case, German sociology gained greater significance. However, French sociology continued to be a necessary reference, even if only to differentiate it from "individualist sociologies". In contrast, sociology in Uruguay showed a delay in relation to the new ideas arriving into the Spanish-speaking world from Germany, maintaining by the 1930s the same understanding that could be found in Buenos Aires or Córdoba at the beginning of the 20th century.

[10]This does not mean there had not been any supporters of the phenomenological, existentialist or historicist ideas. In fact, Ardao himself dedicates a part of his book to the "philosophy of the culture", and identifies among his supporters Alberto Zum Felde and Juan Llambías de Azevedo. Nevertheless, with the exception of the Krausisim of German-Belgiam origin present in the Battlism section of the Colorado Party, there was not a widespread interest in the German ideas.

[11]Prando (Montevideo, 1885-n.d., 1950) was a member of the Colorado Party (Riverista) and participated in the Philosophy of Law chair and the Civil Law chair at the University of the Republic. He also served as Minister of Education (1925-1927) of Uruguay and Dean of the Faculty of Law (1934-1938).

REDIFINITIONS BEFORE THE SCIENTIFIC WAVE (1933-1947)12

The year 1933 was significant for both countries concerning changes among the teaching staff. On that date, Lincoln Machado Ribas became a substitute professor at the University of the Republic, and Alfredo Poviña was appointed chief of practical applications. Also, at this time, a new way of reading Durkheimian sociology emerged, aligned with the anti-positivism reaction, although it is also linked to the reception of *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* since the mid-1920s[13], aimed to position Durkheim as an exponent of an "idealistic sociology", with "collective representations" becoming the privileged object of analysis.

In this manner, for Orgaz (1950 [1933]: 45), Durkheim's ontologism was now of a "psychic character", which means that, since the "social being" is a "psychic being", the "ultimate ratio of Durkheimian doctrine", instead of the "social fact", would now be the "collective representations". That said, what were the other important changes regarding Durkheim's work and his school during the 1930s and 1940s in the Río de la Plata?

In Uruguay, Prando's classes do not have important variations until his distancing from the chair in 1942. As far as the object of study is concerned, the last lecture notes *Sociología General y Genética* (1943) only exhibit, for the first time, the inclusion of a new section dedicated to Célestin Bouglé, positioned as an heir of the School of Durkheim as it shares its characterization of "the social", which aligns him closer to a "collectivist" approach[14]. Strictly speaking, this is the most important dimension of Durkheim's thought among the sociology professors of the University of the Republic.

In this sense, the institutional victory of Isaac Ganón[15] and his designation as professor of sociology in 1947, defeating Machado Ribas, will not represent noticeable modifications related to the interpretations of the French sociologist. Such an issue becomes evident in the handbook *Sociología: objeto, métodos, orientación, didáctica* (1944), published due to a call for applications to fill such a position. In this book, the section dedicated to Durkheim maintained the format of Prando's classes. In it, Ganón discussed the different "rules" proposed by the author, and explained why Durkheim rejected the methods of concordance, difference and residues as inapplicable for social matters, accepting only the method of concomitant variations as valid.

Therefore, the most interesting readings will emerge on the other side of the Río de la Plata. In Buenos Aires, in a more feeble way, and in Córdoba, in a more noticeable way, between the end of the 1930s and the mid-1940s, a reinterpretation of the work of Émile Durkheim from a corporate

12 The idea of "scientific wave" was expressed by Germani in reference to the book Sociología. Teoría y técnica (1941), written by the Spanish sociologist José Medina Echavarría who, according to Germani's vision, laid the foundations for the Latin American sociological renewal of the 1950s.

13Juan Ramon Beltrán, a psychologist who worked at the Criminology Institute of the National Penitentiary, was probably the first Argentine reader of this book. For a reception of Durkheim in Argentina, beyond the sociology chairs, the reader can consult Vila (2021).

14By the way, Prando had already criticized this scope years ago, which he associated with Soviet statist politics, while valuing positively Gabriel Tarde, whose theory was akin to political stances that defended individual liberties (note that Prando was part of a liberal faction, opposed to Batllista statism, within the Colorado Party). In his words: "there is a great coincidence between the Durkheimian thesis of sociology and the political thesis of collectivism" (Prando 1929: 127).

15 Ganón (Salto, 1917-Montevideo, 1975) studied law at the University of the Republic, where he was professor of sociology until his death. He served as a lawyer for the Municipality of Montevideo and taught philosophy, sociology and economics at different higher education institutions. He was a founding member of the International Sociological Association and the International Political Science Association, both established in 1949. He was also president of the Uruguayan Association of Social Sciences and the Latin American Sociological Association, the latter from 1959 to 1961.

perspective, in particular of *The Division of Labour in Society*, will appear. In this way, it can be seen that the syllabus of the courses taught by Ricardo Levene[16] was updated in line with the Durkheimian School.

This influence is evident in Levene's teaching, as he incorporated into his classes an article by Bouglé titled "Los sociólogos y el corporativismo en Francia", published in the Buenos Aires newspaper *La Nación* in 1938. In it, Durkheim's disciple argued that society could not be "a dust of individuals"[17], and therefore it was necessary to create bodies that would perform regulatory functions and remedy the growing anarchy of the modern world. Bouglé mentioned that this idea was drawn from three lessons of Durkheim's course titled "Civic and Professional Morality" (1898), made public by Marcel Mauss in 1937, and that they should be connected "with the preface Durkheim wrote in 1902 for the second edition of his thesis on the division of labor", where one could find a doctrine that states "the most urgent task imposed upon our era (...) is the restoration (...) of professional power" (Bouglé 1938).

Likewise, the foundation of the Institute of Sociology of the School of Philosophy and Arts of the University of Buenos Aires in 1940 led to the publication of the first investigations of Gino Germani[18] (González Bollo 1999). These concerned both the social reality of Argentina, with special emphasis on the study of the middle class, defined from the theoretical developments of Maurice Halbwachs (Germani 1942), and some Durkheimian categories of analysis relevant to the study of the local social conditions. In the latter, there appeared attempts to relate some classic concepts such as "collective representations" or "anomie", to others developed by the North American empirical sociology.

Germani addressed the last concept mentioned in *Anomia y desintegración social* (1945), analyzing the effects of abrupt changes on social norms and objective situations[19]. He first examined Durkheim's use of "anomie" in *The Division of Labour in Society*, noting that it emerged when functional specialization increased without a corresponding rise in organic solidarity, leading to an abnormal division of labor.

However, in *Suicide*, and following Parsons' interpretation in *The Structure of Social Action* (1937), Germani observed that collective consciousnes was not only linked to mechanical solidarity, as it was in *The Division of Labour in Society*, but also organic solidarity, although with different content. In the latter, social life exists as long as there is a system of rules or values that guide human behavior. Nevertheless, as this framework weakens, people may fall into divergent behaviors or a state of

[16]Levene (Buenos Aires 1885–1959) held various teaching positions at the University of Buenos Aires and the National University of La Plata. At the former he was Professor of Sociology for many years (1911-1947) and founded key academic institutions such as the Institute of Legal History and the Institute of Sociology. At the latter, in addition to teaching Argentine history and sociology, he served as Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and as President of the University.

[17]This phrase is a translation of the original French expression "une poussière d'individus", used by Bouglé (and Durkheim) to describe an atomized society lacking social cohesion.

[18]Germani (Rome, 1911-1978) studied accounting in Rome and was involved in Italian socialism during Mussolini's era, which led to his arrest. Following his release, he moved to Buenos Aires in 1934, where he worked as an administrator in a family business and contributed to anti-fascist newspapers. In 1938, he enrolled in the philosophy program at the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts, and from 1940, worked with Levene at the Institute of Sociology. During Peronism (1946-1955), he was excluded from the University due to his political views, and it was only after the fall of this government that he was able to establish the sociology program in Buenos Aires in 1957.

[19] It should be noted that during the 1930s, Argentina experienced an accelerated industrialization process that generated internal migration to the outskirts of Buenos Aires and led to the formation of the working class, which in the following years would become the social base of Peronism. This is the context in which Germani writes.

"anomie". Thus, in societies with organic solidarity, although values differ from those in mechanical solidarity, individuals are still held together. In this case, the transition may fail if nothing replaces previously destroyed frameworks. Germani noted that his findings correspond with Halbwachs' work on the causes of suicide, reflecting a theoretical alignment between his concept of "anomie" and what William Thomas and Florian Znaniecki termed "social disintegration".

Having said that, and taking into account that Germani was still young and had little institutional weight, what is probably most relevant in that period is the construction of a *prefunctionalist* theory that Orgaz develops from the appropriation and re-elaboration of various sociological developments, external to the French sphere but combined with Durkheimian sociology. In particular, as has been said before, the author reinterprets the *The Division of Labour in Society* from a corporate perspective. Here, the concept of "social consciousness" is the key that allows thinking society as a "functional unity" in inter-institutional terms, since it refers to the "special functions" of societies where the social division of labour has been developed. In Durkheim's words:

> As the terms collective and social are often considered synonymous, one is inclined to believe that the collective conscience is the total social conscience, that is, extend it to include the whole psychic life of society, although, particularly in advanced societies, it is only a very restricted part. Judicial, governmental, scientific, industrial, in short, *all special functions* are of a psychic nature, since they consist in systems of representations and actions. They, however, are surely outside the common conscience (Durkheim 2008 [1893]: 171, author's emphasis).

It is worth pointing out that what in the mid-1920s existed as an "inter-individual functional unity", from the reading that Orgaz makes of Simmel, appears then at a social level, either between social groups (Orgaz 1935) or between institutions (Orgaz 1950 [1942]), after the appropriation of the thesis of Pitirim Sorokin developed in *Contemporary Sociological Theories* (1928). That, coupled with the holistic approach present in Durkheim's work, results in what could be called a prefunctionalist theory, as it anticipates some elements that will be present in works such as *The Social System* (1951), by Talcott Parsons, or *Towards a General Theory of Action* (1951), by Parsons and Edward Shils. Specifically, it was the use of the category "function" and the "organicist" perspective of society that will be emphasized in Orgaz's 1942 handbook.

Thus, in the chapter where Orgaz addresses the "regulated group in its functional unity", he states that "social consciousness" is what "designates the functional unity of regulated groups". In this manner, social consciousness would indicate the transition from "a physical aspect of society (comparison of society to an organism) to a psychic concept of society (comparison of the group to an organism of ideas, with a consciousness)", revealing "a remnant of the now devalued organicist doctrine of society" (Orgaz 1950 [1942]: 235). Consequently, Orgaz (1950 [1942]: 253) uses the concept of "social consciousness" as the symbolic ("ideal") translation of the functional ("material") unity of the regulated group (i.e. "society with organic solidarity").

On the contrary, Poviña never thought of society as a whole, and his rejection of sociologism, along with his sympathies for German sociology, becomes evident. Therefore, it is not possible for him to think that society exists outside and over particular individuals and, as a consequence, that it constitutes the effective cause of human conduct, which prevents a *prefunctionalist* theoretical. In this manner, if Poviña succeeds at incorporating the concept of "function" into his sociologist theory, he cannot think of a systemic functionality, in such away that it articulates the different spheres of action of the life of human beings and, therefore, the function that can be separately performed by

education, morals and religion, etc., does not necessarily entail the reproduction of the social system as a whole.

In this way, instead of considering the interaction of the various functions of the social organism, whether among individuals, groups, or institutions, Poviña (1945: 276) focuses on the increase in the "intersection of social circles", an idea developed by Simmel. Despite this, in the chapters of his handbooks *Cursos de Sociología* (1945) dedicated to the sociology of population, law, knowledge, and religion, some new references from the Durkheimian School will appear in the Argentine field, although further investigation of this matter would go beyond the analysis conducted for this paper.

CONCLUSIONS

The reception of Durkheim in the Río de la Plata during the period from 1895 to 1947 shows three distinct phases in its interpretation. However, some elements remained constant throughout this time frame. These include Durkheim's categorization as a "collectivist" theorist in opposition to "individualist" sociologies; the importance of his definition of the "social fact"; and the characterization of this fact as a distinct reality from the individuals who constitute society. As a consequence, The Rules of Sociological Method was considered a central work that encapsulated both his general thesis and the principles shared by the members of his School.

In Uruguay, this trend was more pronounced, as the sociology chairs of the School of Law of the University of the Republic did not modify the syllabus of the subject at all during this time. As a result, even after Prando's retirement in 1942, no changes were made in the interpretation of the French sociologist. This remained the case during the early years of Isaac Ganón, who would later lead a significant renewal of the Uruguayan sociological studies in the late 1950s.

In contrast, Argentine sociological thought, after the initial stage that broadly coincided with the Durkheimian approach discussed in relation to Uruguay, began to undergo significant innovations from the mid-1920s onwards. The reception of German sociology introduced an important counterpoint between the proposals of the Teutonic and French sociologists, with a relative affinity for the former in Córdoba and a stronger one for the latter in Buenos Aires.

Finally, the later period marked the beginning of certain developements that, after the Second World War, would prevail as a sociological tradition par excellence, namely, North American functionalism. Therefore, it is worth revisiting Gino Germani's early works within the framework of the Institute of Sociology, as he would go on to renew Argentine sociology from the late 1950s, by founding the sociology program at the University of Buenos Aires in 1957.

However, Raúl Orgaz and Alfredo Poviña most clearly illustrate the attempt to develop a new perspective of social analysis. In certain respects – such as the use of the notion of "function" or the organicist perspective (particularly in Orgaz's case) – this perspective prefigured some of the core elements of functionalism. These developments suggest that the most creative reception of the father of French sociology in the Río de la Plata during the first half of the 20th century took place within the School of Law at the National University of Córdoba.

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