Towards Internationalism: Beyond Colonial and Nationalist Sociologies

Sujata Patel

Introduction

In this paper I ask two sets of questions. First, given the organic links between power-knowledge, what frames of hegemonic social sciences organize global/international knowledge? Second, what are the protocols to be mobilised in order to displace these hegemonic trends in global/ international social sciences?

Before I answer these questions, I feel it is important to recall a principle guiding the history of the growth of social sciences in the world. Since its emergence in the nineteenth century Europe, social science theories and perspectives have been constantly confronted and challenged by those who have questioned its hegemonic orientation and thus its conservative and establishment oriented approach. Such challenges have not only presented a new approach to the study of change and transition to modernity but also attempted to map out theories that grasp the intimate and organic link between knowledge and power.

Marxism inaugurated this project when on one hand it presented an analysis of capitalism as a mode of exploitation and opened up for debate the nature of capitalist modernity and on the other hand elaborated a theory that explored the links between class knowledge and bourgeois power. In the mid twentieth century, similar roles were played by feminism and racism as it restructured Marxist and non-Marxist perspectives to assess and examine how gender and race organised inequalities. These perspectives deconstructed the "male" and the "white" representations of power within social sciences in order to make visible the presence of the many "other(s)" as oppressed groups. In this endeavour, structuralist and post structuralist perspectives have played a seminal role.

A new trend in this legacy has articulated itself as social sciences

found its presence in different parts of the world. Its incipient formulations have been aided by anti-colonial nationalist ideas. The latter planted a seed of a new analysis when it argued that colonialism and now contemporary global geopolitics has structured the corpus of social science knowledge. This developing idea has found its professional expression and language with the linkages it has established between Marxist and structuralist perspectives of power. These linkages have elaborated two theories, that of Eurocentrism and Orientalism as the definitive modes that are organising the frames of hegemonic social sciences.

The first part of the paper elaborates how Eurocentrism and Orientalism have framed social science language globally. In its discussion of these theories, it highlights how the binaries of the universal-particular have been organised in context to the geopolitics of global/international-national.

The second part of the paper shifts the focus to methodological nationalism and maps out its two avatars-the first in the North and the second in ex-colonial nation states. In this section I indicate how methodological nationalism's positive orientation as an articulation of the project of new nation-states helped to destabilise (to some extent) the hegemonic orientation of Northern/global social science. In both these sections, I use the case of India to illustrate the issues. I also elaborate some of the problems in this strategy.

The last section develops the ideas elaborated in section two to indicate how the strategies developed by methodological nationalism in ex-colonial countries (such as India) can be used as a guidepost for evolving the protocols necessary for displacing hegemonic global social sciences. In the course of this discussion I indicate the reasons for using diverse instead of universal and international instead of global as key concepts in this project.

Colonialism and the Episteme of the Universal-Particular

Eurocentrism and Orientalism are inter-connected cultural and epistemic logics of capitalist imperialism. They incorporated themselves in the disciplines of history and sociology to make Europe the central point of narrative of the analysis of the growth of modernity. Not only did these argue that Europe's superiority and its control of the world had provided the conditions for Europe's ascendance, but these created a scientific language that justified and legitimized this perspective and made it a

universal truth（Amin 1989）.

European modernity analysed its own birth（through a linear conception of time）and suggested it was produced through the values and institutional system that were universalised in Europe in the last five hundred years, in its own backyard. It incorporated two master narratives: the superiority of Western civilisation（through progress and reason）and the belief in the continuous growth of capitalism（through modernisation, development and the creations of new markets）. These master narratives, which Charles Taylor（1995）calls a culturist approach, is recognized now, as ethnocentric in nature. This ethnocentrism assessed its own growth in terms of itself（Europe）rather than in terms of the other（the rest of the colonised world）which was its object of control and through which it became modern. It was a theory of interiority - that is, a perspective that perceived itself from within rather than from the outside（Dussel 1993）. Dussel（ibid.: 65）has said:

> Modernity appears when Europe affirms itself as the 'centre' of a *World* History that it inaugurates; the "periphery" that surrounds this centre is consequently part of its self-definition. The occlusion of this periphery ⋯.leads the major thinkers of the 'center' into a Eurocentric fallacy in their understanding of modernity. If their understanding of the genealogy of modernity is thus partial and provincial, their attempts at a critique or defence of it are likewise unilateral, and in part, false.

A notion of linear time affirmed a belief that social life and its institutions, emerging in Europe from around fourteen century onwards would now influence the making of the new world. In doing so, it silenced its own imperial experience and the violence, without which it could not have become modern. These assumptions framed the ideas elaborated by Hegel, Kant and the Encyclopaedists and were incorporated in the sociologies of Durkheim, Weber and Marx. No wonder these theories legitimized the control and domination of the rest of the world through the episteme of coloniality（Quijano 2000）.

This discourse of modernity presented a universal set of axioms in which time as historicity defined its relationship to space. To put it differently, because it saw its own growth in terms of itself and defined it through its own history, that which was outside itself（the place）was perceived in terms of its opposite: lack of history, particular and thus

inferior. Henceforth all knowledge was structured in terms of the master binary of the West (which had history, culture, reason, and science, all of which were universals) and the East (which was enclosed in space, nature, religion and spirituality and were particular). This binary linked the division and subsequent hierarchisation of groups of the globe within geo-spatial territories in the world in terms of a theory of temporal linearity: the West was modern because it had evolved to articulate the key features of modernity as against the East which was traditional (Lander 2002).

These binary oppositions constructed the knowledge of the two worlds, the West and the East and placed these as oppositions, creating hierarchies between them and thereby dividing them in terms of I and the other; positing an universality for I and particularities for the other. "Maintaining a difference under the assumption that we are all human" (Mignolo 2002: 71) was part of the normative project of modernity and subsequently of its sociological theory. These were the truths of modernity and the modern world; these truths were considered objective and universal.

These seminal assumptions of Eurocentrism-Orientalism were embodied in the framing of the disciplines of sociology and anthropology in late eighteenth century. Sociology became the study of modern (European-later to be extended to Western) society while anthropology was the study of the Orient (the non-European and non-Western) traditional societies. Thus sociologists studied how the new societies evolved from the deadwood of the old; a notion of time and history were embedded in its discourse. Contrarily anthropologists studied how space/place organised "static" culture that could not transcend its internal structures to be and become modern (Patel 2006; 2011a).

I now take the case of India to indicate how the particular were organised by colonial anthropologists and administrators as academic knowledge in the context of colonialism. They used the same binaries to further divide the East that they were studying in separate geo-spatial territories with each territory given an overarching cultural value. In the case of India, it was religion: Hinduism. The discourse of coloniality collapsed India and Hinduism into each other. The collapse of India into Hindu India is not new. The genealogy of the collapse goes back to the nineteenth century colonial constructs which assumed two principles. The first assumption was geographical and distinguished between groups living in the subcontinent from the spatial-cultural structures of the West, thereby creating the master binary of the West and the East. Later those living in

the subcontinent were further classified geographically in spatial-cultural zones and regionally sub-divided (Patel 2007).

The second assumption related to the internal division and relationship between these groups within India. All groups living in the subcontinent were defined by its relationship with Hinduism. Those that were directly related to Hinduism, such as castes and tribes were termed the majority and organized in terms of distinct hierarchies (castes were considered more superior than tribes who were thought to be primitive), while those, that were not, were conceived as minorities, these being mainly groups who practiced Islam and Christianity. Evolutionist theories were used to make Hinduism the Great tradition and anchored into a timeless civilization and its margins, the folk cultures, and the little traditions (Patel 2007).

Anthropologists/sociologists researching on South Asian religions have oftentimes uncritically accepted this logic, and thereby become trapped in this discourse. No wonder Dirks (2001: 13) has argued that the colonial conquest was sustained not only by superior arms and military organization, nor by political power and economic wealth, but also through cultural technology of rule. Colonial conquest and knowledge both enabled ways to rule and to construct what colonialism was all about – its own self knowledge. The British played a major role in identifying and producing Indian tradition that is the belief and customs, of those living in the region. Thus Cohn states that:

> In the conceptual scheme which the British created to understand and to act in India, they constantly followed the same logic; they reduced vastly complex codes and associated meaning to a few metonyms. . . . [This process allowed them] to save themselves the effort of understanding or adequately explaining subtle or not-so-subtle meanings attached to the actions of their subjects. Once the British had defined something as an Indian custom, or traditional dress, or the proper form of salutation, any deviations from it was defined as a rebellion or an act to be punished. India was redefined by the British to be a place of rules and order; once the British had defined to their own satisfaction what they constructed as Indian rules and customs, then the Indians had to conform to these constructions. (Cohn 1997: 162)

The geographically vast subcontinent of South Asia with its thousands of

communities having distinct cultural practices and ideas have lived and experienced existence in various forms of unequal and subordinate relationships with each other. In fact, ancient and medieval historiographers now inform us that those whom we identify as castes and tribes were groups that were shaped by political struggles and processes over material resources. In precolonial India, multiple markers of identity defined relationship between groups and were contingent on complex processes, which were constantly changing and were related to political power. Thus we had temple communities, territorial groups, lineage segments, family units, royal retinues, warrior subcastes, little as opposed to large kingdoms, occupational reference groups, agricultural and trading associations, networks of devotional and sectarian religious communities, and priestly cables. Those who came under the name caste as defined by the colonial powers were just one category among many and one way of representing and organizing identity (Dirks 2001).

In the nineteenth century, anthropological/sociological knowledge dissolved these distinctions and re-categorised them into four or five major religious traditions thereby constructing a master narrative of the majority and minority. This logic homogenised distinctions between groups but it also naturalised the Orientalist-Eurocentric language as the only language to comprehend the unequal distribution of power and resources. To this end, they mobilised Orientalist theories of race and linguistic classification (Patel 2006).

Henceforth Orientalist theories of race and linguistic classification were used to produce hierarchical divisions between groups white, superior Aryan races called castes and black, inferior non-Aryan races, now termed tribes. What is of interest is the fact that while castes were defined in the context of Hinduism, as groups who cultivated land, had better technology and a high civilizational attribute, tribes were defined in contrast to castes, who practised primitive technology, lived in interior jungles and were animistic in religious practices. Such classifications and categorization were not peculiar to India. They also found manifestation in the African continent, as British officials used this knowledge to construct categories of social groups in Africa and retransferred these newly constructed classifications back again to India, as happened in the case of the term tribe as a lineage group based on a segmentary state. It is no wonder that these colonial categories helped to legitimise the power of the existing internal elites, in this case of the upper castes and particularly the Brahmins (Patel 2006; 2011a). In the next section I elaborate the ways and means through

which anticolonial nationalism aided to dismember this colonial episteme.

The Two Avatars of Methodological Nationalisms

In the context of creating a global cosmopolitan theory, social theorists have critically examined the methodological assumptions of the first wave of sociological theory. Calling this critique, methodological nationalism, they have deliberated the ways on which it has framed and organized sociological knowledge and carried with it assumptions which work to structure sociological inquiry. They argue that though sociology was structured through the prism of the nation, nation-state and that of nationalism, (European) sociological theories ignored these intellectual moorings and universalized its language disregarding this history (Beck 2000).

In its most straightforward usage, methodological nationalism implies coevalness between society and the nation-state i. e., it argues that a discussion on modern society (which sociology does) entails an implicit understanding of the nation. Or, in other words, the nation is treated as the natural and necessary representation of the modern society (Chernillo 2006). Methodological nationalism is the taken-for-granted belief that nation-state boundaries are natural boundaries within which societies are contained. This ignorance and/or blindness is reinforced through a mode of naturalisation; sociological theories take for granted official discourses, agendas, loyalties and histories without problematising these. Ultimately this error leads sociologists to territorialise social science language and reduce it to the boundaries of the nation-state. Methodological nationalism recognizes that it is embedded in Eurocentric positions (Rodríguez, Boatcâ, and Costa 2010).

It is my argument that what were considered as methodological errors by European sociologists became in the case of ex-colonial countries an advantage in the historical moment that defines the decades of post-independence epoch. Thus, in the case of India, as in other ex-colonial countries, methodological nationalism was a self-conscious embrace of a place/territory to create a set of guidelines to confront colonial discourses of social sciences. Identification with the place allowed national intellectuals to build intellectual solidarity against dominant colonial knowledge. Second, the recognition of this place-bound solidarity facilitated the growth of an alternate discourse. This then became the principle for organizing the institutionalization of knowledge systems

through a gamut of policies and regulations. These policies determined the protocols and practices of teaching and learning processes, establishment and practices of research within research institutes, distribution of grants for research, language of reflection, organization of the profession and definitions of scholars and scholarship (Patel 2011d).

For example the initiation of sociology as a discipline (against anthropology) allowed some departments in India to inaugurate the teaching, learning and research of a modern Indian society rather than as a traditional one. In this it was aided by the legacy of nationalist ideologies which wished to see India as a modern nation-state. This advantage got a further fillip with the initiation of a nationalist modernist project, by the post-independence state and its use of higher education for creating a new India (Patel 2011a).

No wonder, this sociological knowledge discussed, debated and represented social changes occurring within one nation and territory - India. Sociologists saw their project as that which analyses one's own society (India) in one's (indigenous) own terms, without colonial and now neo-colonial tutelage. This project allowed for the institutionalisation of a particularistic *problematique* in a new way- an assessment of how modernity and modernization were changing India's characteristic institutions - caste, kinship, family, and religion. This particularistic problematique also influenced Marxist perspectives as radical sociologists interrogated and set aside revisionist Orientalist theories and elaborated the distinct nature of class and class relations in India and theorised its differential modes of production (Patel 2011b).

These developments took place in a context wherein social sciences were engendered to play a critical role in conceptualizing development and planned change. This agenda entailed a need to professionalise the discipline and organize it within the territory of the nation-state. In this context, two strands of methodological nationalism mentioned above, that of territorialisation and naturalisation became in new ways, symbiotically linked with each other to become an integral part of the traditions of sociological thinking in India. Sociology not only interrogated (even if partially) the received inheritance of colonial theories and methodologies, but also promoted a new language with new perspectives and methodologies that defined itself as Indian sociology (Patel 2011a).

Rather than restricting an understanding of international sociology, nationalist sociologies from ex-colonial countries have enlarged it. On one hand, these have asserted alternate ways of assessing contextual processes

thereby underlining the many particularities that have structured the world and on the other, have highlighted the inequalities that structures international sociology. This heritage has relevance today and cannot be washed away（Patel 2011c）.

However both Syed Hussein Alatas（1972）and Paulin Hountondji（1997）have also raised cautionary arguments about these nationalist projects and have suggested that these have not necessarily restructured social sciences in the ex-colonial countries nor have displaced the hegemony of global social science knowledge. There are two sets of arguments raised here and these relate to two strategies that have evolved for displacing hegemonic tendencies in global social science. These can be conveniently termed the strong version and the weaker version. While the first strategy of nationalist social science would postulate a need to create an alternative national sociology based on indigenous and national cultural and philosophical positions, the weaker version would argue that there are some experiences historically distinctive to the nation state and its culture which needs to be analysed and examined in its distinctive attributes. In order to do so, one need not create a separate social science for a nation-state or for that matter for the South. Hountondji（1997）would argue that such culturist projects which he calls ethnoscience remain part of the colonial and neo-colonial binaries of the universal-particular and the global-national. Rather there is a need to evolve a strategy displace these binaries.

How can one do so? I would argue that we have to look towards the weaker strategy to answer this question. This strategy incorporates two steps: First, a need to deconstruct the provincialism of European universalisms and locate it in its own cultural and national contexts. Second a need to go beyond the "content" of the social sciences（the explanations they offer, the narratives they construct）shaped as it is by a genealogy that is both European and colonial. Rather we need to analyse their very "form"（the concepts through which explanations become possible, including the very idea of what counts as an explanation）. We cannot argue that the social sciences are purely and simply European and are therefore "wrong." We cannot dispense with these categories, but that they often provide only partial and flawed understanding（Seth 2009: 335）.

Alatas and Hountondji have discussed these as the captive mind syndrome and extroversion respectively. These relates to the culture of doing social science globally. This culture has been defined by Northern social science and is held out as a model for the rest of the world. It is

backed by sheer size of its, intellectual, human, physical and capital resources together with the infrastructure that is necessary for its reproduction. This includes not only equipment, but archives, libraries, publishing houses, and journals; an evolution of a professional culture of intellectual commitment and engagement which connects the producers and consumers of knowledge; institutions such as universities and students having links with others based in Northern nation-states and global knowledge production agencies.

Behind these cultures and practices are the unequal political economic processes that organise the production and reproduction of international social sciences. In the fifties and the sixties intellectuals in the ex-colonial nation-states used a nationalist strategy to confront colonial dependencies. Today there is a need for a multi-dimensional strategy for displacing such hegemonic social sciences. There is a need to ask whether the above mentioned nationalist strategy remains significant and if so in what form. For, the nationalist strategy dominated and universalised its local subalterns and muted their voices. In these circumstances, can the nation-state be the site for creating knowledge that organises particularities against its binary opposite, the universal? Can it become a location to consolidate the many particulars within the nation-state and thereby attempt to displace hegemonic knowledges? In the next section I discuss some of the complexities that organise our interventions and suggest that the journey has to surmount many obstacles.

Challenges and Pathways

The paper has argued that the reduction of society to national territory within nationalist sociologies of the ex-colonial countries, have created methodological and theoretical problems. It is clear that nationalist sociologies have made invisible and/or discounted the place bound voices and experiences of the local, weak, and the marginal subalterns within their territory. Over time, social sciences have also become closely associated with the official discourses and methods of understanding the relationship between nation, nation-state and modernity. If sociologies of the end of the twentieth century questioned the supra national, it also dominated and universalized its own infra local. The moot question is: What kinds of frames are needed to create an international sociology that can include in its analysis these conflictual and contradictory processes of dominance-subordination that have organised its differential epistemes and silenced

the many others in the world? A need for a comparative framework outside the universal-particular and global-national is necessary.

Sociologists across the world are trying to theorise a way to combine the global demands without neglecting the many local and subaltern voices. Some have it called this theory global modernity (Dirlik 2007), others have termed it entangled one (Therborn 2003) and yet others have called it cosmopolitanism (Beck 2000). They have highlighted that since the seventies and particularly after the nineties the dynamics of the world has changed.

Though it is difficult to come to an agreement as to what globalisation implies, most would agree that the openness inherent in this process subsumes a free flow of ideas, information and knowledge, goods, services, finance, technology and even diseases, drugs and arms. Contemporary globalisation has opened up possibilities of diverse kinds of transborder movements, widened the arenas of likely projects of cooperation and that of conflicts and brought about change in the way power is conceived and consolidated. Inequalities and hierarchies are no longer a characteristic of colonial and ex-colonial countries. These are being reproduced the world over and are being differently organized in uneven ways by the global dominant form of modernity. Lack of access to livelihoods, infrastructure and political citizenship now blends with exclusions relating to cultural and group identity in distinct spatial locations. This process is and has challenged the constitution of agency of actors and groups of actors (Patel 2010).

However, it is clear to keep in mind that globalisation entails multiple, complex and contradictory processes that incessantly continue to unfold with the passage of time. For example, while it encourages trends towards global integration of the erstwhile nation states to become a region, such as ASEAN and BRICS, it also promotes trends towards regional and nation-state disintegration, such as that of the erstwhile federations former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. Also in some regions the nation state, which was the crux of all political theory, has witnessed a political and an existential crisis. On one hand these nation-states are being pressurized from above by international regimes such as World Trade Organisation and on the other hand they are also been afflicted by sub-nationalist processes inspired by ethno nationalist movements. This is not true in the case of the USA wherein the ideology and politics of insularity has increasingly privileged it against internationalism.

It thus needs to be recognised that globalisation creates trends that are

unevenly organised across the world and that its impact with the many local and regional processes are distinct, different and various. And in some rare cases, the contemporary global process has not even imprinted itself across the world either economically politically and/or culturally. These developments create challenges to connect the global/international with the national regional and local without embedding them in the binaries of universal and particular inherited from the nineteenth century sociology.

I had argued earlier that social theory needs to assert the principle of diversities. I use the concept of diversities because it connotes more meanings than other concepts in use, such alternate, multiple and cosmopolitan. In many languages within ex-colonial countries (including colonial ones such as English), the term diverse has had multivariate usage and its meanings range from a simple assertion of difference to an elaboration of an ontological theory of difference that recognizes power as a central concept in the creation of epistemes. Symbolically it also implies a dispersal rather than homogenization. They present and define their own theories to assess their distinct and different perspectives of sociologies and its theories and practices. Individually these manifestations are neither superior nor inferior and collectively they remain distinct, variate, universal but interconnected. Its usage exhorts them to consider these interconnections not as equal but distinct having its own histories of mutualities. Also, in its effects, (as an ontological theory), its usage allows its practitioners not to place the many manifestations that they are outlining in a single (linear) line.

The term diversity suggests a need to access the ways knowledge is organised and structured by various levels of space/place dynamics within a matrix of power. There is a necessity to give an epistemic location to the constantly evolving dynamics of space/place and voice that is organising the contemporary world in order to integrate the social science disciplines to new actors, institutions and processes. Given the received vertical linkages of dependencies (organised during colonialism and continued after through the systematic inequalities that organise the North against the South) it is important to link and interface space/place-voice articulations at horizontal levels (South-South). For if we agree that the colonial and post colonial dependencies of domination and control need to be combated these have to be done politically.

Thus, social sciences need to promote the many voices of sociological traditions-infra local and supra national with its own culturist oeuvres, epistemologies, and theoretical frames, cultures of science and languages

of reflection, sites of knowledge production and its transmission across the many Souths. In order to do so, social theory, needs to ontologically assert the necessity of combining space/place with a voice（Patel, 2010, 2011d）. The challenge today is in creating a political language and the intellectual infrastructure that can interface the many Souths, dissolve the markers of distinction between and within them and made their various voices recognize the matrix of power that has organised these divisions.

There are many sites wherein these dialogues can take place: classrooms and departments and within campaigns, movements and advocacies. Such a dialogue would entail academic exchange and joint research programmes, joint formulations of syllabi and evolving South-South protocols of professional codes. This project needs to involve actors of various kinds: scholars and researchers, publishers and publishing houses and the larger epistemic communities together with activists and political interlocutors. They need to assess, reflect and elucidate issues that define the teaching and learning and the research processes so that an effort is made to organize and systematize knowledge that is outside the heritage of earlier and received dependencies.

Can we accept this strategy to countervail hegemonic tendencies of the nineteenth century social sciences which continue even today?

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