

That sociology is a child of modernity is now commonly accepted (Giddens 1990; Pertierra 1997). However, the specific conditions for the rise of sociology are only gradually becoming clearer. As Hegel pointed out, the owl of Minerva flies at dusk—understanding an age only becomes possible after its main features are starting to wane and a new age is beginning to dawn. It is the new age which provides a perspective and basis for understanding the old order. Some are claiming the end of the old order (Foucault 1987; Donzelot 1988) as a basis for understanding modernity and the more radical deny the existence of society except as a series of disconnected texts (Kirby 1997). Are we entering a post-sociological age? If so, what forms of post-sociological understanding might characterize it?

Sociology not only expresses a particular understanding of society. This form of understanding is only possible in certain societies. Heller (1990) argues that while philosophy and history were normally adequate ways of understanding society, the modern condition requires a new form of understanding: According to Heller, Aristotle achieved an adequate understanding of Classical Greece using philosophy. Much later, a new dimension was added to this philoso-

phical understanding of society by using history. Goldman (1981) suggests that the limits of this understanding of society were achieved by Kant and Hegel. More contemporary examples of this achievement are provided by Bergson, Cassirer and Dewey, all of them primarily philosophers exploiting a shrewd historical understanding of their times.

However, the latter's contemporaries such as Durkheim, Weber and Simmel introduced a new element in ways of understanding modern society. This was the view that society consists of simultaneously associated agents engaged in mutual interaction. Such a view employed a new sense of temporality in place of the earlier historical one. This new temporality was made possible by the recently introduced notion of standard time (Pertierra 1997) giving rise to the experience of a simultaneous present. This new experience of simultaneity was employed by theorists such as Durkheim and Weber, resulting in modern sociology. Simultaneity was the key for understanding modern society with its complex but interdependent parts and institutions. Modern societies are functionally organized such that differentiated structures and their corresponding agents, while synchronically linked, experience incommensurable lives.

This synchronic incommensurability produces the contemporary condition in which people, while no longer sharing common modes of life are, nevertheless, in the same society. This is possible because culture, while hitherto the product of a common life-world, becomes autonomous from the conditions which produce it. Culture detaches itself from the realm of practical significations to become the domain of signifying practices. Rather than culture arising from a mode of life it, instead, determines a life-mode. While previously being a representation of practice, contemporary culture assesses practice according to exemplary standards. It is these exemplary values which hold together and represent otherwise distinct life-modes. Their distinctiveness is linked through the notion of simultaneity. In this sense, synchronicity overcomes incommensurability.

In traditional societies, personal experience is, generally, a reasonable guide for understanding the social world. However, the modern condition fragments the experienced lifeworld, making it no longer a good basis for a social understanding. For this reason, an orientation of a common present is necessary to provide a coherent view of an otherwise incommensurable series of personal experiences. This orientation of a common present is provided by sociology. It assumes that in any given period, individuals are functionally related in particular ways, of which they are largely unaware.

Philosophy, history and other forms of understanding the social world, by contrast, assume that subjects are linked through a set of stable selves and common values or experiences. This commonality and stability provide the basis for a coherent personality and for a given cultural and historical orientation. Modernity does not preclude this latter perspective or understanding of society. In fact it presumes it. However, such an understanding is no longer an adequate basis for comprehending the modern condition. For this reason, as Heller (1990), Habermas (1984; 1989) and others have argued, a philosophical-historical understanding of modernity has to be supplemented by an empirically substantiated sociology. In this view, sociology does not replace earlier modes of understanding but, instead, links their metatheories with ordinary experience through an empirical understanding of simultaneity.

Even in modern societies, philosophy, history and the arts provide subjects with a framework for organizing and locating their position in the world. Sociology by itself is unable to provide this orientating role since it presumes already given subjects interacting in particular ways. Only metatheories found in philosophy, history or the arts can provide this orientating function. Sociological paradigms such as positivism and functionalism try to replace metatheories with empiricist techniques but, in the process, are

unable to account for a subject's experience of a coherent self and a stable world. Notions of a coherent personality and a stable world are part of a wider cultural-philosophical orientation which constitutes society through its transcendent phases.

Sociology is only possible by conceptualizing a common time linking distinct subjective temporalities. But, following Giddens (1984), other temporal concepts are necessary for notions of a stable personality (e.g. biographical time), for institutional continuity (organizational memory) and persisting civilizational orientations (e.g. religio-philosophical systems). These different temporal notions link particular spaces to form spatio-temporal contexts such as locality, nationality and globality. These spatio-temporal contexts are increasingly subject to deconstructive and decentering processes resulting in the postmodern crisis of identity formation (Sassen-Kolb 1991).

If sociology represents a particular understanding of the modern condition, how did it come about? How and why did modern subjects begin to see themselves linked through a common present? This was essentially brought about by both practical and ideological causes, in which capitalism and the nation-state played central roles.

Rapidly expanding markets, industrial production and modern communication significantly transformed

earlier ideas of space and time. While hitherto limited to locality, space-time became translocal entities linking vast spaces and distinct times. Rail and steam made modern travel possible while the telegraph and the telephone cancelled the constraints of space and time. Chronometric time and cadastral space replaced traditional concepts of locality and place. What had earlier been practical and commonsensical understandings of time-space were replaced by formal notions of standard time over a given territory. Many of these changes were essentially instrumental consequences of a modern economy whose markets required ever closer coordination.

While capitalism was organizing the economy to suit its needs, a modern political consciousness was developing alongside it, whose major expression was the nation-state. This political entity conceived of itself as a collectivity occupying a particular territory, whose members share fundamental horizontal ties linking them to earlier days. The sheer size of these political entities precluded their members from utilizing former notions such as kinship or locality to define their membership. Their horizontal links rejected earlier ideas of subjecthood to a monarch and replaced it with concepts of citizenship and the inalienable as well as supreme rights of the people. Such a notion of community was, in a fundamental sense, counterfactual, and powerful ways of experiencing it had to be devised for it to persist.

This community is counterfactual because it often negates ordinary experience such as persisting inequalities and instead celebrates episodial situations such as EDSA '86. While other communities base their trust on familiarity (e.g. kababayan, kailian) resulting from direct experience, the nation-state depends on civic-minded citizens who, while strangers to one another, nevertheless care for the common good. Furthermore, while traditional communities use the past to explain and justify the present, modern states look towards the future. This future is seen as a project expressing the people's collective will. It is this postponed general gratification which legitimizes the disciplinary practices of the state. Many of these expectations are rarely fulfilled but the structures for their reproduction are maintained by the nation-state.

Anderson (1983) has explored some of the ways such a community is imagined and argued that a print culture was essentially able to replace local experience, giving it the range and scope to constitute a nation-state. The power of literacy implemented through universal and compulsory schooling welded together hitherto disparate communities, each with its own local culture, into a modern nation with a homogenous culture. This imagined entity required a powerful state to centralize experience into standard units ensuring that its members recognize mutual rights and obligations (de Swaan 1988). The

requirements of school and an increasingly dominating economy ensured that members of a nation-state shared a basic compatibility despite equally real differences. Ranged against the nation-state were other nation-states eager to expand their territories and whose peoples willingly fought to defend their sovereignty.

Ernst Renan (1882) was one of the earliest social theorists to explore the constitution of a national imagination. He argued that for a nation to imagine itself it had to forget its past and deliberately fabricate its history. This was necessary, in Renan's view, in order to provide the nation with a homogenous narrative within which its distinct members can imagine themselves sharing a common tradition and therefore a common future. Renan argues that nationalism is built out of a deliberate deceit. It has to deny the reality of difference resulting from class, gender, ethnicity and locality in order to imagine a collectivity of equal citizens, all of whom are ready to die for the national interest. This national interest can be discovered by exploring the past, present and future needs of the nation's constituent people. Nationalism provided a powerful ideology enabling such self-sacrifice while sociology became an instrument for discovering people's needs.

The nation-state was formed during the 19th century under particular historical and economic conditions (Hobsbaum 1987; Gellner 1987).

These conditions gave rise to specific notions of society which stressed its boundedness and uniqueness as well as its cultural homogeneity and coherence. Nation-states were seen as well formed entities, each with its own values and interests distinct from its neighbors'. Their members owed undivided loyalty to their respective fatherland or mother-land and shared a deep horizontal comradeship overcoming their specific differences. These notions of national society drew on contemporary ideas of a chromometric time and a cadastral space. Society was conceived as a collectivity whose members shared a common culture occupying a well-defined territory. Landscape and history, both fictive and real, provided substantive markers, transforming society into patria or Inang Bayan.

This view of the nation sees itself as more than just a set of interacting individuals in a given locality. Citizens of a nation share a common destiny, a self-conscious project and history ensures their ultimate victory. Their land is defended through heroic sacrifices, often necessitated by the duplicitous deeds of traitors in collusion with foreigners determined to corrupt the peoples' freedom. This highly ideologized collectivity existed in the economic context of competitive markets, national capital and colonial expropriation.

The above constituted the context within which sociology developed its concepts and theories. Society and

culture were assumed to be real or natural objects defined through empirical techniques and amenable to scientific hypothesis. During the last twenty years, most of the ideas underlying the nation-state and sociology have come under increasing criticism. Colonialism was replaced by nations of the Third World who quickly succumbed to neo-colonialism and later to globalism. Their citizens were at most only nominally free, often subject to authoritarian rule and still bound by traditional beliefs. Transmigration, the global circulation of capital, the multi-location of production and the electronic revolution have, once again, radically transformed existing spatio-temporal structures. In this new context society and culture have to be deconstructed and re-theorized.

As Kessler argues (Pertierra 1997), over recent years one of the central underlying assumptions of the social sciences has demonstrably collapsed. We can no longer think of the world as consisting of an aggregation of discrete societies, each with its own culture, each managing and expressing its autonomous identity through the instrumentality of a nation-state that participates, as one of many, in a mosaic of nation-states known as international society. Instead, we now have to fathom how to understand global representations of the local and local experiences of the global. To do that, we need to rethink the very foundations, character, objectives and agenda of the social sciences. The

future of sociology and the sociology of the future will crucially depend on the results of this fundamental rethinking.

Appadurai gives us some suggestions as to how to rethink sociology. "No idiom has yet emerged to capture the collective interests of many groups in translocal solidarities, cross-border mobilizations, and postnational identities. Such interests are many and vocal, but they are still entrapped in the linguistic imaginary of the territorial state. The incapacity of many deterritorialized groups to think their way out of the imaginary of the nation-state is itself the cause of much global violence because many movements of emancipation and identity are forced, in their struggles against nation-states, to embrace the very imaginary they seek to escape. Post-national or non-national movements are forced by the very logic of actually existing nation-states to become antinational or antistate and thus to inspire the very state power that forces them to respond in the language of counter-nationalism. This vicious circle can only be escaped when a language is found to capture complex, non-territorial, postnational forms of allegiance" (1997:166).

Appadurai (1997) points out that the global condition does not necessarily result in greater homogenization because of its non-isomorphic flows. He identifies these non-isomorphisms as follows: capital investments and infrastructural developments do not

always coincide with sites for the production of knowledge. The politics of ethnicity is not always contained within a national narrative. The global location of production will have to take note of cultural specificities. A consumerist ethic has unexpected consequences for the notion of agency. These non-isomorphisms ensure a non-homogenous and in-determinate future for global society.

Castles (1997) makes a similar argument, pointing out major contradictions of globalization. It is both inclusive and exclusive; it creates a tension between markets and states; it produces both wealth and poverty; it opposes local interests to global interests or the particular and the universal; it creates a conflict between the interests of the economy and the environment; there is a hiatus between modernity and postmodernity, between systems-rationality and the rationality of the lifeworld; both increases and conflates hierarchy and equality. While other times and other places may have contained similar contradictions, globalization concentrates these dichotomies within a new totality.

Papastergiadis (1998) suggests that we have to reconceptualize the spatio-temporal parameters of the global condition. No longer sited in specific places nor drawing from common times the postmodern identity is spatially and temporally plural. How are we to conceive of social structures which generate such disparate

identities? Such structures must base their coherence on principles distinct from earlier views of socialization with their emphasis on social reproduction. In its place postmodern structures systematically reproduce difference. Based on representations at best loosely connected to their generating structures, a postmodern identity acts like a free-floating signifier carried by prevailing winds to settle in unpredictable places.

This situation was described by Williams (1983:177) to indicate the paradoxes of a contemporary national identity. We can re-write his description for the Philippines in the following way: There was this Filipino who worked in the Manila office of a multinational corporation based in the United States. He drove home one evening in his American car. His wife, who worked in a firm which imported German kitchen equipment, was already at home. Her small Japanese car was often quicker in traffic. After a meal which included New Zealand lamb, Taiwanese pears, Australian honey, French cheese and Spanish wine, they settled down to watch a programme on their television set, which was made in Korea. The programme, which was produced with the help of a grant from the Japan Foundation, was a historical re-enactment in Tagalog of the Philippine declaration of Independence in 1898. As they watched it they felt very warmly patriotic, and very proud to be Filipino. This feeling was presumably the programme's intent.

Williams used his original example to be ironic and possibly parodic but one only has to imagine a different (Filipino) viewer such as a Maranao or an Ifugao to compound the incongruity and subvert the intention. Under these conditions, the domain of signification is impossible to control. Hence notions of society and culture as carrying specific messages appropriate for the nation-state no longer apply.

Let me continue with other Philippine examples. A few years ago I attended a barrio fiesta in Zamora. Much was made of the presence of balikbayans (returnees) who were visiting from the United States, Canada and Italy. Another visitor who had left the village many years before and only returned for the fiesta was clearly upset at the attention the balikbayans were receiving. At one point in the festivities, he announced publicly that while he was not a balikbayan, having only moved to Manila, he had nevertheless done very well and could therefore match whatever donations the balikbayans had given. I was embarrassed by the situation but my village friends assured me that the man had acted improperly. He had chosen not to visit the village in the past, when he easily could have, so why did he now make a fuss about not receiving appropriate attention? The balikbayans on the other hand had made special efforts to return, which therefore merited mention. While there may well be other complex reasons for resentment, what struck me was the

insistence to celebrate the return of the balikbayans. It was as though the locals were celebrating their collaboration with globality and bypassing the nation-state. The man who had returned from Manila clearly felt culturally superior to his barrio kin. They, in turn, seem to be subverting this Manila superiority by claiming a close affinity with overseas kin. This was stated to me in other ways – No agyanak idiy Manila, nasaysayaat ditoy laengen, napinpintas ditoy ilik. Ngem no mapanak idiy abrod maballin ta padasek ken makitak iti sabali a lugar (If I can only go to Manila, I might as well stay in the barrio where life is better. But if I have a chance to go abroad, I'll try my luck so I can see other places). What we are seeing here is the rebellion of the local against the national through the former's identification with globality.

Several years ago I was taught to dance the macarena by Ilocano friends in Toronto. On my return to Zamora, I keenly displayed my dance skills only to be informed that my Toronto teachers had got it wrong. They, Zamorans, had learned the proper version from their kin who lived in Spain. Ilocanos in Toronto depend on their barrio kin to send them dubbed versions of Maria Mercedes and other Latin-American telenovelas. These examples indicate that the barrio is as much the source as the recipient of cultural flows.

The drastic reorientation of the spatio-temporal order mentioned earlier, resulting in the deterritorialization of culture means that the relationship between the local, national, and global no longer follow traditional hierarchies. In this new context, identities are no longer contained and reproduced in former structures, whether local or national, past or contemporary.

As Appadurai (1997) argues, the disjunctive features of globalization create new spatio-temporal conjunctions such that lived-relationships and their corresponding imaginaries or counterfactuals subvert dominant hierarchies or hegemonic claims. He uses the example of American popular music, particularly country and western which has been accepted by Filipino youth not as a sign of their cultural domination but rather as an example of cultural hybridity. For Filipinos, the nostalgic associations of country and western music which motivate American audiences are irrelevant. Instead, Filipinos and other non-American audiences subvert this genre by denying its past, relocating its present and playing on its future. Rosaldo (1989) has identified this condition which he calls borderland hysteria, a new colocation where the past coexists with the future through the present.

One could make a similar argument following the prevalence of American

films and the consequent rise of Italian westerns, Brazilian soapies, Indian musicals and Hong Kong detective movies. But what started as American inspired or influenced has now become an established genre in its own right and worthy of copying by others, including Hollywood.

What many of these creative innovations and hybridities share is a global experience of growing up watching American films or television shows. This globalization of adolescent experience, contrary to expectations, does not lead to universal, homogenous adult personalities or subordinated cultures. Instead, it produces a rich variegation of mutually communicative agents embedded in distinct and particular spatio-temporal orders. Their voices do not speak in unison but in deep polyphonic tones. In these communicative and material exchanges pasts, presents and futures, localities, places and territories are spatio-temporally reorganized, often with unpredictable consequences for identity formation. One of the most powerful examples of this new identity was provided by the Flor Contemplacion case (1995), a Filipino contract worker executed in Singapore. The national outrage represented the humble housemaid as hero, in contrast to the usual apologetic tone used for overseas maids. Contemplacion mythically encapsulated the nation's sufferings and indignities. Her death redeemed the injustices committed against others like her.

Under these conditions, the fundamental role of the nation-state has changed significantly. While it is still the primary site for a formal notion of collective sovereignty, it is no longer the primary factor for identity formation. The global circulation of capital, production and migration may still be partly determined by national boundaries but the communications media easily transcends them. Modern subjects are seen as autonomous individuals, free to form their own identities as well as their own patterns of consumption. Therefore, it is increasingly more difficult for nation-states, working with spatio-temporally bounded notions of society and culture to control identity formation. As Appadurai (1997) argues, the contradictions of postmodernity ensure 'non-isomorphic paths in the global flows'.

The global condition interposes localities and identities leading both to the deterritorialization and autonomization of cultures. This decontextualization of culture from its original source in lived experience encourages a view of it as autopoiesic and self-referential. No longer grounded in a common mode of life with its corresponding set of practices, culture becomes merely representation. This is particularly marked in exilic and diasporic cultures, but increasingly also defines a common condition where people only feel at home elsewhere.

Is sociology possible under these conditions? My answer is a qualified

yes. Just as sociology did not entirely replace earlier forms of social understanding, the postmodern condition does not totally eliminate society. In fact, certain forms of consociation are clearly reinforced by globality. The global economy ensures that social structures still operate according to the needs of the market and capital. The political system introduces the notion of global citizenship and encourages the evolution of new forms of civil associations such as environmental groups, feminist-gay rights, ethnic movements and a consumerist ethics stressing free and informed choice. All of these new forms of sociality can profit from a sociological understanding.

There are already clear signs of this new sociology, even if at times puzzling in their forms of expression. Perhaps the most predictable aspect is the greater internationalization of the discipline (Tiryakian 1986). While this trend is still predominantly metropolitan in form, its practice increasingly incorporates more centres. The days of a North American sociological hegemony are over as this tradition is challenged by other centres (e.g. Canada, Australia, Europe, Latin America, East Asia). These new centres introduce local adaptations and orientations, ensuring that sociological practice is less depended on singular or contingent perspectives. A further development of this trend is the rise of national traditions in sociology such as an Indian, Japanese or Filipino sociology.

These appear to contradict the globalization of the discipline but in fact simply point out that globalization must take account of existing differences to be truly international. Other attempts to further indigenize the discipline e.g. Fourth World sociology or an Ifugao ethno-sociology simply continue the previous process beyond the nation-state. While most of these approaches are consistent with globalization, they nevertheless also present challenges to its universalist logic. Some of these contradictions are mentioned by Appadurai (1997) and Castles (1997).

More interestingly, other challenges to the former sociology have emerged such as a feminist criticism, Cultural Studies and subaltern approaches. All of them reject at least one major feature of the old discipline such as gender blindness, materialist or over-empiricist techniques, the undervaluation of hegemony and domination. New approaches to the social are included such as the gendered subject, a textual and hermeneutic reading of society, the conscious subversion of dominant hierarchies in favour of marginalized groups. New methodologies either supplant or complement the old ones. Celebratory approaches (Weston 1991), biographical experiences (Geertz 1995) and carnivalesque moments (Bergman 1993), are preferred in place of sober and objective analyses, impersonal data or routine events. This new sociology more fully understands that society and culture are as often

characterized by disorder, inconsistency and incompleteness as by order, consistency and completeness. Functionalism represented this latter approach with its emphasis on law, normativity and totality. Society was seen as a homeostatic system where each part contributed to the stability of the totality. As Levi-Strauss pointed out – that society works is a truism but to claim that everything works is clearly false.

In place of the view of society as a machine or as an organism is the post-modern claim that it is a set of discursive practices (Foucault) or a text (Derrida 1984). This view is consistent with the notion of a deterritorialized culture (Papastergiadis 1998) and of borderland hysteria (Rosaldo 1989). Distinct voices, hybrid subjects, diasporic locations and minoritized perspectives capture the present cultural condition well. Whether it also describes the state of the social world responsible for generating this condition of culture is another matter.

The leading practitioners of this cultural view tend to be literary theorists (e.g. Bhabha 1984) rather than practising sociologists. Their preferred examples are drawn from novels and other literary works. They conflate the representation of culture with a culture

of representation (Perterra 1995). In this approach the effect of structures shaping contemporary life such as the market, local-global politics and social movements is often overlooked. While many of these new structural configurations are not yet sufficiently well understood, sociological models drawn from earlier structures are still useful (e.g. Touraine 1973).

In the final analysis, deterritorialized cultures and decentered subjects still involve empirical bodies linked to particular structures. Society as a set of observable human interactions involving agents sharing a common (cyber)world is still a viable perspective even if we have to be more sensitive of its interfaces, including its telelocalities. While spatial and temporal relationships are re-constructed, new configurations and rhythms are put in place. Even cyber-culture has its (evolving) rules and its (establishing) practices (Benedikt 1992). What these new configurations and rhythms are and how they relate to broader and more encompassing structures remain the task for a sociology of the future. As long as some notion of (tele)sociality and (cyber)sociability persist, however muted, non-determinate and multi-perspectival it may be, there will be a future for sociology.

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