

# **Sociology of development: sociology, development studies or already dead?**

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## **Abstract**

The term 'sociology of development' refers to the existence of a more or less clearly defined sociological sub-discipline which emerged in the 1950s and 1960s. The sociology of development increasingly became a part of the interdisciplinary field of development studies, which for a long time was caught up in the debate on the 'grand theories' of modernisation and dependency. Exhausted by this theoretical debate which did not reach a conclusion, sociologists working on the Global South re-invented the sociology of development in the 1980s with an 'empirical turn'. However, the discussion on post-development started at the same time, and this critical view was later supported by post-colonialism. Sociologists working on the Global South participated in all these debates and quite a few became outspoken critics of the development concept, while others still carry the flag of sociology of development against all odds. This leads to the question whether the sociology of development still exists as a sub-discipline, or whether there are just a few institutional artefacts left, such as sections in sociological associations, which provide a playground for elderly scholars who still live and work in yesterday's world.

## **Introduction**

Social change and modernity are crucial topics of sociological classics. Especially the works of Durkheim and Weber focus on processes of modernisation with a wide-angle perspective that includes pre-modern societies. They develop their theories to analyse the change from pre-modern to modern societies. In their books they refer to available knowledge on societies in all parts of the world, and include historical and socio-anthropological findings. However, this openness and inclusiveness lost importance, and during the further development of sociology the core topic of the discipline became the modern societies of Europe, and later also of North America. Sociology is often unders-

tood, or least practised, as the study of modern industrialised societies, with a focus on the North Atlantic. This includes processes of change related to industrialisation and the change to post-industrial societies.

When sociology became more diversified after World War II, one of the new sub-disciplines that emerged was the sociology of development. It gained importance from the 1960s onward, and brought together researchers interested in social change in the developing countries, the then popular term for the Global South. Sociological associations founded sections or research committees for development sociology, and since then it has been part and parcel of sociology. In contrast to most other sub-disciplines, the core topic of these sections or research committees, development, is now under scrutiny. It is questioned whether the development of the Global South is still an adequate field of research, because the whole concept of development is at stake, and the sociology of development is criticised as a typical example of the arrogance of theories from the North that ignore views from the South.<sup>1</sup>

The question is whether there is still something like development sociology, or whether there are just a few sociologists doing development studies while development sociology is already dead, and only formally alive because nobody has yet decided to dissolve the more or less useless sections or research committees in sociological associations. To answer this question, we will give a short overview of the history of the sociology of development, review the post-development concept and the critique of the term development and the consequences of this critical debate, and discuss the post-colonial critique. Against this background, we can re-visit the role of the sociology of development and the label ‘sociology of development’ in the light of the new concept of ‘Global Sociology’.

I am well aware that such an enterprise is much too big to be discussed in detail in a short article; this chapter is also written with a certain German and African Studies bias. To develop my argument I have chosen the format of an essay. I will shorten and simplify the different positions presented here and refrain from a detailed analysis of the literature.<sup>2</sup> I know that this will trigger criticism but this will not deter me, especially if it leads to a general discussion of the role of development sociology.

## The history of sociology of development

When the sociology of development emerged in the 1960s, it was closely connected to the newly emerging interest in the societies of the Global South and their ‘development’. The notion of development was first politically expressed in the famous speech by the

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- 1 It is remarkable that despite the existence of research committees or sections in sociological associations, there is no article on “development sociology” in the English version of Wikipedia. The articles in the French and German versions are very short compared to other contributions related to sociology. Despite the contested reliability of Wikipedia articles, this is an indicator that sociology of development is not part of the current field of popular and scholarly knowledge that is of wider interest.
  - 2 I will draw on earlier overviews by Neubert (2003), Schrader (2010) and Dannecker (2013) that include also further references.

American president Truman when he proclaimed the need for a “bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas” (Truman, 1949). At that time, the sociology of development was more or less closely linked to the then dominant theories of modernisation (e.g. Inkeles and Smith, 1974; Rostow, 1971; Smelser, 1973) and to debates on development policy. The first publications and edited volumes included contributions by sociologists from different sub-disciplines. However, step by step, the sociology of development became a new field of research and sociologists interested in the field started to work on theories of development and on different areas in the Global South. Topics of interest were processes of modernisation of society, questions of political change, urbanisation, changes of economy with regard to agriculture and industrialisation, new forms of association (especially trade unions), changes in family life, and a debate on the new elites, to name just a few of the most important themes. The theoretical debate intensified when modernisation theory was contested by dependency theory. Dependency theory, as developed by Latin American economists (Prebisch, 1962; Singer, 1949), was soon adopted in the social sciences, and in sociology of development in particular (e.g. Amin, 1976; Arrighi and Saul, 1973). The main point was a critique of international capitalism, with reference to theories of imperialism, class analysis, analysis of expropriation of the ‘Third World’, and analysis of the development of ‘under-development’ (Frank, 1966) or of the ‘modern world system’ (Wallerstein, 1974, 1980, 1989). For more than a decade, the sociology of development engaged in the debate on grand theories.

Both camps, modernisation and dependency theorists, based their position chiefly on theoretical contributions, with some statistical data and general observations to illustrate their main arguments. Modernisation theory was still quite close to development policy, and they often combined their findings with recommendations for policy programmes. Dependency theory led to different conclusions, like a claim for radical policy changes under the heading of ‘self-reliance’: development should be based on capabilities, with dissociation from the world market and its capitalist expropriation. This goes together with a more socialist understanding of development, sometimes with a particular twist, as in the case of Julius Nyerere’s “African socialism”. In this theoretical and programmatic debate, there were only a few studies that were based on detailed empirical research. However, even when the findings contradicted the theoretical approach, authors often tried to stretch the theory to accommodate their contradictory findings (e.g. Leys, 1975).

These competing theoretical approaches shared an important commonality. Their notion of development was closely linked to economic development and industrialisation. This included the question of inequality in the countries of the Global South, but with different answers. Conventional development policy based on modernisation theory hoped for a ‘trickling down’ of wealth. Dependency theory was often linked to socialist models of economy and society.

In the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, sociology of development was closely connected with new interdisciplinary fields, area studies and development studies, which contributed to development policy. The dominant theoretical debate on the grand theories (modernisation vs. dependency) did not reach a conclusion, and left more ques-

tions open than it solved. Especially the camp of Marxist dependency theory became more and more differentiated, with new grand theories like Wallerstein's world system approach, and became engaged in internal conflicts (Foster-Carter, 1978). In the end, the theoretical debate led to a stalemate (Menzel, 1992) and many protagonists lost interest in carrying on. While some sociologists completely lost interest in the Global South, others made an empirical turn (Neubert, 2001). Empirical findings, often based on field studies, were seen as the starting point for a more nuanced analysis not influenced by theoretical assumptions. This led at the same time to a re-invention of sociology of development with a clear sociological perspective in contrast to the still vivid field of development studies. As a consequence of the empirical turn with its interest in field studies, sociology of development moved closer to social anthropology. Some scholars became interested in the transition of the former socialist bloc, and joined political scientists in transition research. As in the sociology of development, these studies were also based on empirical data, and widened the regional perspective of the sub-discipline. Against this background, the sociology of development was re-established with three main components:

*Sociology of countries of the Global South and the former socialist bloc* with close links to area studies. New topics of research included ethnicity, democratisation, civil society, conflict studies, gender, urban sociology, business activities, local knowledge, land grabbing, and globalisation. In the case of transitional countries, topics such as the introduction of a market economy or changes in labour relations attracted interest. Sociological area specialists often worked on several of these topics. Compared to other sociological sub-disciplines, development sociologists still had a sociological generalist's view of society. This was not intentional but a consequence of the limited number of sociologists working on the Global South (including researchers from the Global South).

*Sociology of development policy* as a new field in development studies. It focused on the development industry with the different aid organisations and administrative structures from a critical perspective.

*Sociology of processes of development and change.* Researchers in this field were, and still are, interested in processes of change, but are more open to empirical findings. The new point of orientation was the notion of globalisation. This included an interest in global and transnational processes, but also a view from below, with an interest in agency in the context of globalisation.

All three components of the sociology of development re-connected in different ways to general sociological debates in diverse sub-disciplines. At least in some cases, findings, concepts and middle-range theories from the sociology of development also reached the general sociological debate. Examples are the concept of ethnicity or the notion of 'glocalisation' (Robertson, 1995). At the same time, the level of interest in more general sociological theories was relatively low in the sociology of development. Interestingly, the more recent debates on reflexive modernity or multiple modernity developed separately from development sociology. Even when the term 'multiple mo-

ernity' (Eisenstadt, 2000) attracted some interest among scholars in the sociology of development, it did not trigger a wider theoretical debate.<sup>3</sup>

## Post-development and the critique of the development concept

Like the critique of modernisation theory, a more radical reaction to the debate on grand theories came from Latin American scholars (often teaching in the US). It started with Escobar (1995, 2010) and others followed (e.g. Esteva et al., 2013; for an overview, see Ziai, 2004, 2010). They pointed to the second common feature of the grand theories: the economic notion of development as industrialisation. They doubted that this understanding could be transferred and applied all over the world. They underlined the fact that this notion of development is an invention of the Global North, made directly after the Second World War following the Truman speech. According to the post-development critics, the dream of world-wide improvement of living conditions became a nightmare. In the end, the alternatives to the original modernisation theories, such as dependency theory, were bound to the notion of development according to a Western understanding. According to this view, the biggest part of the world is not developed, or under-developed, and needs to be helped to follow the Western path of development. The seemingly self-evident notion that 'development' is similar to 'progress' sets the path to be followed in all parts of the world. The consequence is that the world is divided into 'developed' and 'developing countries'. The latter are deficient, weak and in need of support. Against this background, the development industry promises a solution for a problem that has been invented by the development industry itself. People who were able for ages to care for themselves are now marked as poor, needy and even helpless. At the same time, their control over their resources is contested by capitalist development measures that interfere with established communal ways of controlling and using resources. Even in those cases where development aid is based on well-meaning intentions and benevolence, the 'target groups' are reduced to their assumed needs and presented as reliant on help and support. This is obvious in the debate on 'Third World Women' who are characterised as victims of oppression (Spivak, 1999). This links the post-development debate to the post-colonial debate. People in the Global South appear in these debates as passive and are mainly described via deficits that are a consequence of the assessment of their living conditions against the benchmark of Western development.

The post-development critique underlines that the Global South cannot be seen as a reservoir of tradition and backward thinking, as assumed by modernisation theories, and often in development policy. People and societies in the Global South are dynamic and they create social movements that express their local aims in respect of change. Often this includes a critique of capitalism, most obvious in cases of 'land grabbing', and in the replacement of subsistence and smallholder production by capitalist agriculture and inclusion in the capitalist world market. All in all, post-development theory deconstructs the notion of development and marks a clear distinction from Western ideas

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3 One of the few exceptions is Korff (2016).

of knowledge creation. This is combined with a plea to respect and use local knowledge, and local aims in respect of change. This goes far beyond the idea of self-reliance and socialist concepts of development (such as African socialism), because they are linked to Western patterns of industrialisation.

The most popular protagonists of the post-development concept still come from Latin America, but they are supported by Indian scholars (Rahnema and Bawtree, 1997). This offers a link to the post-colonial debate that originated from Indian cultural studies scholars which will be discussed later. Post-development is not a closed theoretical approach, but the common ground for a radical critique of the Western notion of industrial development and of the development industry. It involves the more or less vague notion that social movements in the Global South express the local understanding of a good life (Escobar, 2007). The reference to local knowledge and local notions of change relate very well to the environmental and ecological critique of development, debated inside development studies and in the North in general.

Together with more conventional critical studies of the development industry with its international and national organisations, the scepticism in respect of the notion of development has gained more and more support from social movements in the North that criticise globalisation and the world wide domination of capitalism. These movements are still active (e.g. Attac, Occupy) (Daniel in print; Graeber, 2012; Walk and Boehme, 2002)). Once the post-development critique gained the attention of the wider public, at the latest in the 2000s, 'development' became a non-word. From this critical perspective, development was, and still is, more or less identified with modernisation or naïve industrialisation, an expression of Western hubris and colonial arrogance. It is seen simply as an out-of-date concept.

## **Consequences of the post-development critique**

The loss of interest in 'development' is only partly a result of post-development critique. In the early years of the sociology of development, there was a certain optimism that scholarship could contribute solutions for development. Typical basic problems and challenges to development were widely described and analysed. At the same time, the high expectations in respect of development policy were disappointed, and there was a growing awareness that there are no simple solutions. Development is not just a technical challenge, and processes of change are intertwined with policy processes and international economic processes. The grand theories proved inadequate for explaining or understanding processes of change in a single comprehensive framework. Thus, questions of development policy were seen as a matter for political analysts but not as a topic for systematic sociological research. The notion of development attracted less scholarly interest and to some sociologists it seemed outdated. Research on the transition of the former socialist bloc also lost its attraction. New topics gained importance, especially globalisation. Today, sociologists who are still interested in the Global South, or transitional countries, use their knowledge of particular areas and countries and adopt the perspective of other sub-disciplines, such as political sociology, urban sociology, social structure and others.

In the realm of development policy, however, the notion of development is hardly questioned. Despite growing scepticism in the scholarly discussion, the concept is still used and accepted as a label in development studies. This is not just a consequence of ignorance in respect of the scholarly debate. In the countries of the Global South, in policy and in everyday life, the notion of development is omnipresent. If the local perspective is relevant, then development is still an issue in the empirical field. The main critique of post-development comes from development studies which miss alternatives provided by the post-development concept. The reference to social movements in post-development theory sounds fine. But what is the particular consequence? Development studies also promotes and studies participative approaches (Hickey and Mohan, 2004; Mikkelsen, 2005; Neef, Friederichsen and Neubert, 2008). These authors show that local communities do not all work together for the same purpose, but are often engaged in conflicts, some supporting radical change while others oppose any alteration of the status quo. Discussions of social movements ignore these conflicts. The questions are whose voices are expressed, who decides at the local level? Post-development theory has had the effect that local concepts are at least considered as alternatives for development.

The most well-known 'local' concept is 'buen vivir' (living a good life), originating from post-development studies in Latin America. 'Buen vivir' represents an alternative to the 'foreign' concept of development. It defines a good and desirable life according to a local perspective not dominated by the development system. It includes material well-being (food, housing, health), and culturally specific ideas of community, with access to resources for subsistence and smallholder production. The notion of living in harmony with nature, and thus an element of ecology and sustainability, is also important. It promotes a society based on solidarity with strong local communities and participation in the economy and in politics for a group that is usually marked as 'the poor'. It expresses the goals of social movements, and influences political decisions, especially in the Andean states of Latin America (Caria and Domínguez, 2016; Gudynas, 2011; Vanhulst and Beling, 2014).

Sometimes, other concepts are also presented as local alternatives, such as the South African 'Ubuntu'. However, 'Ubuntu' is less elaborated; it is a political catchword rather than a strategy (Matthews, 2018). A deeper look into 'buen vivir' shows that there are similarities in the concepts of basic needs or secure livelihoods, both part of the more recent development policy debate. At least for poor people, the improvements aimed at are similar to classical development ideas. Even the strategies for change on community level resemble the strategies of development policy, especially the above-mentioned participatory approaches. However, they do not solve the questions of how to regulate conflicts over local priorities and aims, how to protect minorities, or how to deal with micro-nationalism or notions of village autochthony. At the level of practice, 'buen vivir' and other concepts are caught in a trap where that any change or non-change is linked to crucial political decisions and power questions: who decides for whom, and whose interests are pursued? Thus, the dilemmas of development policy and practice are also significant in respect of alternatives to development.

We should not overemphasise the similarities between development policy and post-development ideas. In development policy, we find a wide range of political aims, from a radical liberal capitalist market approach to ideas of local participation and

goals of equality. In post-development, the radical critique of liberal globalised capitalism is a common ground. Thus, post-development still challenges the mainstream of economic development policy.

## The post-colonial critique

The post-colonial critique is the other pronounced and radical opposition to conventional social science and thus also to the sociology of development. The origins of post-colonial critique are as old as post-development theory. However, it reached sociology and the sociology of development much later. One reason for this is that the post-colonial critique was first articulated by Indian literature scholars. The starting point is that the cradle of Eurocentric science is enlightenment and modernity, both of which were deeply linked to colonialisms and colonial thinking (Mohanty, 1988; Spivak, 1999). Claims of the universalism of science ignore its Western roots. Western notions of modernity are imposed on the whole world. According to post-colonial thinking, this amounts to ignoring particular contexts and local perspectives. There are obviously similarities to post-development here, but post-colonialism is a fundamental critique of science in general. This concerns not only the view from the North that is taken as 'the' only view, but also the dominance of Northern scholars and Northern scholarly institutions which patronise the debate. Gender studies was one of the first fields in social science to take up the post-colonial critique. Sociology in general reacted much later. One important example is the book by Gurminder Bhambra (Bhambra, 2007) which triggered a wider debate in sociology on post-colonial ideas. This includes another element of critique that refers to the entanglement of North and South. The histories and the 'development' of the North are closely linked to colonialism. Bhambra also criticises Eisenstadt's widely discussed thesis of multiple modernities, usually understood as the critique of a simplifying notion of modernisation according to the Western model. She underlines that the notion of multiple modernities still ignores the colonial enforced relationships. This points at the entangled histories of North and South as part of colonisation (Randeria, 2006).

The post-colonial critique has also reached the sociology of development, and led to a similar rejection of a separate analysis of the Global South. Inequality needs to be analysed from a global perspective (Boatcă, 2015). From a post-colonial perspective, the sociology of development is just a henchman of the normative hegemony of the political and economic interests of the North and the continuation of colonial ethnocentrism. At first sight, this links with dependency theory. But dependency theory is based on a kind of container model of separate societal entities and fails to challenge the basic Western idea of modernity, including industrialisation.

The first conclusion to be drawn from the post-colonial critique is that there is a need to provincialise Europe (Chakrabarty, 2000), or rather the North Atlantic with North America and Europe, as the dominating empirical fields that fuel sociological research and understanding. Another conclusion is that theories must be developed in the South detached from Northern scholarly thinking (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2012). Whether this is possible, and what kind of theories might be developed in the South, is

still an open question. If we think this to the end, it would lead to scholarly theories that are always linked to particular contexts. This means a consistent plea for relativism. The post-colonial debate points in a more radical way than the post-development debate to shortcomings in theory and in epistemology in general. Questions of social change are not in the focus of the debate. However, both post-development and post-colonialism require a new way of thinking. Even for those who do not accept the post-colonial conclusions, it would be too simple to ignore the critique completely. It reminds us that a simple one-to-one transfer to other contexts of categories and theories developed for particular cases in Europe or North America will inevitably lead to shortcomings and simplifications and misunderstandings. The question is, what is the consequence for sociology? The relativist position would mean the end of comparative study and thinking, and even studies reaching beyond one context might be impossible. Obviously, the larger part of sociology does not follow this path.

### Re-visiting the 'sociology of development'

Development studies as an interdisciplinary field of research is still stable, either via inclusion in development policy or as a critical view on development policy. But sociology is no longer prominent in these debates. This part of the sociology of development seems to be dormant.

Both critiques – post-development and post-colonial – are directly relevant to the sociology of development, because it is closely linked to the notion of development, while the theories and concepts it uses come from the North and have been applied to the Global South (or to transitional countries). Together with the more or less accepted end of the grand theories, and disappointment with regard to development policy, the notion of development has lost its attraction for scholars. Even though some topics from the sociology of development have been taken up in various other sociological sub-disciplines, the sociology of development in its former shape is hardly visible anymore. The sections or research committees still exist, but development topics are no longer at the centre of their work. Some may even ask, what is the *raison d'être* of these committees or sections? The topics discussed there could be discussed by other committees and sections, where research on countries of the Global South or transitional countries is now also considered. The sections and research committees devoted to the sociology of development may be seen as institutional artefacts used for different purposes. They are also a field of experimentation, with topics relating to societies in the Global South, or particular topics from other sociological sub-disciplines. It seems that mainly older scholars push the topic of development. Does the sociology of development represent a former world that ignores current scholarly debates? If so, is this a problem?

At least one development in sociology may be seen as a success and not as problem. The Global South is now increasingly included in general sociological thinking. Sociology no longer focuses exclusively on the industrialised or post-industrial countries of the Global North. Seen from afar, this situation is comparable to the 1950s and 1960s when the Global South was a topic for general sociology. This is still true today with reference to the limited interest in the Global South as a topic in the different sociological sub-

disciplines. The difference is that today there is much greater in-depth empirical knowledge of countries counted as belonging to the Global South, including awareness of the post-colonial critique with regard to entanglements under the conditions of former colonialism, globalisation and transnational relations. Despite the critique of Eurocentric sociological concepts, the debate on the transferability or the development of such concepts has just started.

In the understanding of radical post-colonial thinkers, general theories that reach beyond a particular context are impossible. Another option, especially in sociology, is a new sensitivity to the transfer of concepts, and the development of concepts that can be adapted to fit various contexts. This could be the starting point for a global sociology based on the classics (Weber, Durkheim), with one important difference: awareness of colonialism and a fundamental scepticism towards modernisation as the teleological goal of development.

There are already examples of this understanding. It started with gender studies that integrated from the beginning studies from the Global South and the Global North. The discussion in development sociology started already in the 1970 (Boserup 1970; for more recent developments see Dannecker 2010). In science and technology studies based on actor-network theory, the Global South is a field of research, as at least some studies on Africa show which refer to the translation of concepts or travelling models (Behrends et al. 2014; Czarniawska and Sevón 1996). Another field where sociology has developed an interest beyond the Global North is neo-institutionalism with its concept of a 'world society' or 'world polity' (Drori et al., 2003; Meyer et al., 1997). This approach argues that the seemingly universal socio-political structures do not dominate simply because of their functionality, but are linked to patterns of international legitimacy set by the countries of the Global North. The concept of 'de-coupling' helps to understand and conceptualise the still existing wide variety of day-to-day political practices (e.g. Helbardt, Hellmann-Rajanayagam and Korff, 2012). From a similar perspective, actor-centred institutionalism builds a bridge between studies of settings in the Global North (Scharpf, 1997) and settings in the Global South (Long, 2001). Both debates link very well with the (former) sociology of development policy and critical analysis of development projects and programmes (Elwert and Bierschenk, 1988; Sabbi, 2017). Another example is the current middle class debate triggered by economists that is being critically reflected on by sociologists and anthropologists in the Global South (Daniel et al., 2016; Darbon and Toulabor, 2014; Kroeker et al., 2018; Melber, 2016; Wieman, 2015). This critical re-assessment of the transfer of class concepts to the Global South may lead to a more nuanced understanding of the analysis of social structure in general.

All these approaches have at least one commonality: they link theoretical thinking with empirical findings from the South and try to widen the perspective of sociology in general. As a consequence of the post-colonial critique, the question of post-post-colonial scholarship and science turns up in literature studies (O'Connor, 2003) or in education (Luke, 2005). The post-postcolonial claim refers to the post-colonial critique but does not give up theorising and searches for ways to develop categories that face the challenge of contextuality and try to overcome the limitations of Eurocentrism. These changes may build a bridge to a new term currently being discussed in sociology: 'global sociology'. One element of this is the idea that sociology needs to consider the global

entanglement of social processes and thus focus on global problems, global structures and global changes (Cohen and Kennedy, 2012). This global sociology goes beyond the criticism of globalisation and lays the foundation for sociological research that does not only refer to one quarter of the world (the Global North or the North Atlantic) but includes the larger part of our world which is changing even more dynamically. This widened perspective overcomes the simplifying division into Global North and Global South, which always has an undertone of modern, developed, industrialised, post-industrialised versus less modern, less developed, less industrialised or not yet post-industrialised. There is no doubt that we need a global and inclusive perspective, but we still need to solve the problem of developing adequate categories and concepts that can be applied in radically differing local contexts. To tackle this challenge, we need a new methodology, we need to develop and adapt concepts created for the Global North, so that they are capable of analysing the empirical variety we are facing. This will be an important task in the future: creating a sociology that combines a global and a local perspective at the same time.

One possibility is to take seriously the old distinction between *etic* and *emic* concepts (Pike 1967). Pike presents different ways to describe behaviour. One way is to follow the perspective of the respective context and culture and to use the terms and points of view of members of that culture. His model here is phonemics, or analysis of the meaningful sounds in a particular language. This is the '*emic*' (phonemic) perspective. The other – opposite – way is an abstract description from outside that claims universal validity across different cultures. His model here is phonetics, a system that can be used to describe the sounds of all human languages. This is the '*etic*' (phonetic) perspective. Berry, a comparative psychologist, uses this distinction and shows how to develop *etic* concepts via a multistage process (Berry, 1969). Concepts developed in a particular context tend to represent *emic* views. To come to an *etic* view, these concepts need to be confronted with different contexts. We may add that they also need to be confronted with open or hidden hegemonial claims and power differences. To include these findings, the concepts need to be revised, extended and re-formulated in a more abstract way to include different views. With the inclusion of more and more different contexts, including power differences, this leads to a '*derived etic concept*' that relates to real empirical findings and is applicable and useful in different contexts. If we take this as model, the question is not so much whether we theorise from the South or from the North, but how we develop our concepts and theories across different parts of the world. This also applies to transnational and global entanglements, because they operate in different ways in different parts of the world. This transnational and global dimension is another contribution to considering rationality as an important element that constitutes our reality. In the framework of this kind of global sociology, the former development sociologists with their particular knowledge of areas outside the Global North are no longer representatives of a sub-discipline, but sociologists with different kinds of empirical knowledge.

However, the critique of the dominance of Northern scholars, and even more of Northern research institutions, still holds true. Even when sociology involves colleagues from the Global South (whatever definition we apply), this does not guarantee an equal footing, because more often than not the funds for joint research come from the Global

North. When scholars from the South and Southern institutions have the same opportunities as those from the Global North, this will be a big step forward. This would mean that Southern scholars and research institutions would be able to carry out studies of contexts in the North. However, we should not overstretch this idea. Inequality as part of our globalised world will not be overcome by better organisation of research, more resources for Southern institutions or scholars, and new epistemological concepts. We may improve our methods of analysis, but this will not change real inequalities. Finally, we need to be aware that in sociology the interest in empirical data collected in the Global South, and the willingness to question established concepts based on new empirical findings, is still limited. This kind of 'global sociology' is a goal, or a research programme, rather than an established reality.

Let us assume this global sociology really exists: is this the end of development sociology? Yes and no! 'Yes', because all empirical studies by development sociologists would fuel this wide concept of global sociology. The particular field of sociology of the Global South would no longer exist if all parts of the world were included in sociological debates. All sociologists would be 'area specialists', whether for Europe, North America, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Africa, South America, or different countries, such as the USA, Canada, Russia, Germany, Kenya, Burkina Faso, Chile, Mexico, Syria, Iran, India, China, Bhutan, Indonesia, etc. All places of research would be provincialised, while at same time being globally entangled. Sociology will then acknowledge that all sociological knowledge is contextualised and that extra steps are needed to derive *etic* concepts and insights. Sociologists working on the (former) Global South would participate in particular sociological discussions in the respective sub-disciplines. A side effect would be that with the end of the sociology of development, those sociological generalists who work on a variety of topics across sociological sub-disciplines, still to be found in the sociology of development, would no longer exist. This is something one may regret, but it simply reflects the differentiation of sociology.

There is also the answer 'no' as a reaction to the question of the end of the sociology of development. Development as a societal issue is still at stake in many countries of the Global South. Critique of the concept should not lead to ignoring this part of public debates and real policies. The sociology of development policy and the development industry is still a sociological topic. This includes accepting the normative load of the concept of development and the discussion and analysis of the different aspirations and notions of development. In a more general way, development is still linked with the question of social change and the question of modernity, following not the simple understanding of modernisation, but the idea of reflexive modernity in the sense proposed by Giddens (Giddens, 1990), or second modernity as suggested by Ulrich Beck (Beck et al., 2003). The question as to how societies change under the influence of the capitalist economy, technological changes and conflicting social and political ideologies is still at stake, and needs theoretical and empirical analysis. This is a core topic relating to all societies in the world, and this question has definitely come back to Europe and North America. The sociology of development as the sociology of processes of societal change is still an important topic. It involves a critical analysis of the actors who try to influence and organise change everywhere in the world, whether in the Global South or in the Global North. But this topic needs a fundamental re-orientation. Changes in

the Global South cannot be analysed on the basis of the more or less open assumption that they are just a consequence of change in the Global North. We need to include a global perspective in this field of research that takes into account the entanglements of all parts of the world, especially as the already blurred distinction between the Global South and the Global North is likely to become more and more unclear. This sociology of development might be re-named as the sociology of global change, but the basic question that is addressed remains the same.

Global sociology does not yet exist as a general orientation in sociology and we do not know whether it will really come. What is clear is, that we need sociologists from all parts of the world with knowledge and competence in respect of areas beyond the North Atlantic. If we give up denominations in sociology that are related to areas and topics that reach beyond the mainstream, then global sociology might never become a reality. Sociology would return to a restricted understanding of societies based on the view of a small part of the world where the majority of well-established and funded research institutions are based, the Global North.

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