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Introduction
Decolonizing European Sociology: Different Paths towards a Pending Project

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In 1990 Robert Brym asked "are we at the end of sociology?" This was at a time when postmodernism seemed to be challenging the epistemic boundaries of sociology and the demise of Communism appeared to be heralding the end of history (Fukuyama 1992). Now, more than a decade later, we envisage a new project that does not announce the end of sociology, but a revision of this "rusty" discipline, predominantly populated by the spectres of a line of white European erudite males. What could happen to Weber, Marx, Durkheim, Giddens or Habermas, to just mention a few, if they were reminded by authors like Gloria Anzaldúa, Audre Lorde, Patricia Hill Collins, Raewyn Connell or Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, of what they forgot to mention when they were analysing society, that is "the underside of modernity" (Dussel 1995)? This volume aims to read sociology against its grain – exposing and disposing of its conventional European genealogy of thought and revealing its national boundaries as limitations to knowledge of global interconnections. To this end, it brings together a critical set of essays that engage with the decolonial turn in European sociology from a "European" perspective. This might appear to be a paradoxical endeavour, as readers might be tempted to assume that, instead of de-centreing Europe, this project could produce the opposite effect. But, as this collection of essays demonstrates, sociology has evolved within the paradigm of "European modernity". To conceal or ignore this fact would be to disregard the basis on which this discipline still operates. This is therefore the starting point for our diagnosis as well as our critique.

Contesting European Modernity

Since its institutional beginnings in the nineteenth century, sociology, self-defined as a science of the modern (Western) world, has conceptualised modernity endogenously by taking the social norms, structures, and values characterizing the so-called Western societies as a universal parameter for defining what modern societies are and the processes of their emergence as the path to be followed by other, modernizing countries. Thus, under a sociological lens, "non-Western societies" appear as economically, politically and culturally incomplete and lacking in the face of *the* modern pattern, which is exclusively inferred from

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"Western societies". Processes taking place on all structural levels in the non-Western world are generally interpreted sociologically as steps towards a drawn-out Westernization. The dichotomous division of the world in Western and non-Western societies has also moulded the historical narrative adopted by sociology: It is a meta-narrative centred on the "Western" nation-state that reduces modern history to a gradual and heroic Westernization of the world, without taking into account that, at least since the Western European colonial expansion of the sixteenth century, different "temporalities and histories have been irrevocably and violently yoked together" (Hall 1996: 252). This analytical blindness to identifying evident (post-)colonial entanglements in the constitution of (global) modernity is also shared by contemporary attempts to create a cosmopolitan sociology beyond methodological nationalisms (Randeria 1999). As Bhambra shows in this volume, some authors engaged in the cosmopolitism project still start from a "centred universalism", thus failing "to recognize contributions made in connections of which Europe had no part, as well as connections suppressed in the history of European uniqueness".

The critique of sociology's inherent methodological nationalism, undertaken in world-systems analysis since the 1970s and several strands of globalization theories in the 1990s, has been responsible for opening up both conceptualizations of space and of time for a global sociological approach. It thus became analytically possible, though by no means sociological common practice, to distinguish between different and entangled historical paths to modernity as a worldwide phenomenon, instead of lining up parallel modernities corresponding to distinct nation-states or civilizations (see Therborn in this volume). At the same time, viewing (capitalist) modernity as a global phenomenon allowed for the possibility of disentangling the different geopolitical projects embedded in the agenda of area studies of allegedly non-modern regions (see the chapters by Cairo and Wallerstein).

An idealized distinction between Western (modern) cultures and non-Western (pre- or non-modern) cultures has also marked sociological efforts of interpreting contemporary cultural dynamics. The dominant sociological understanding of culture is that of a set of common properties (identity) shared by individuals who constitute an "imagined community" at the local, regional or national levels. As Pieterse (2007 and also in this volume) convincingly demonstrates, these interpretations misconstrue a crucial aspect of global cultural dynamics: the generalization of cultural diversity. The imagination of a "Creolized Europe" or "Black Europe" is still neglected in analyses of European societies that ignore Europe's cultural transformation triggered by a colonialist, slavery and imperialist past, conditioning today's migratory movements.

In the wake of Edward Said's (1978) seminal contribution, Postcolonial Studies have largely taken upon themselves the task of exposing the extent to which such representations of culture(s) as sealed entities foster Orientalist representations of the Other. The project of decolonizing European sociology however requires that we complement the necessary critique of Orientalism with a clear conceptualization and separate treatment of Occidentalism, defined as

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"the expression of a constitutive relationship between Western representations of cultural difference and worldwide Western dominance" (Coronil 1996: 57). In this understanding, Occidentalism does not represent the counterpart of Orientalism, but its precondition, a discourse *from* and *about* the West that sets the stage for discourses about the West's Other(s). Most importantly, it is not a pan-European, but a pan-Western discourse, that constructs and downgrades European Others to the extent that their "Westernness" becomes questionable, manifested in constant appeals addressed to post/migrant and migrant communities to "integrate". This leads us to consider the production of European sociological knowledge within Walter Mignolo's (2007) framework of border epistemology, setting Europe at the epistemic juncture of coloniality and modernity, a project that therefore demands "decentring Occidentalism".

Decentering Occidentalism – Other Europes

Critiques of Eurocentrism often neglect the fact that the Western perspective on knowledge as it emerged with the establishment of Western hegemony as a global model of power is not a mere synonym of Eurocentrism. While Eurocentrism is an essential component of Occidentalism, and both can be treated as interchangeable in terms of their impact on the non-European world to a certain extent, it is imperative to differentiate with respect to the distinct range of the two within Europe.

During early modernity, when the secondary and peripheral Europe of the fifteenth century became the conquering Europe in the Atlantic (Dussel 1995) and at the same time the first centre of the capitalist world-system (Wallerstein 1979), both the European territorial dominance and the extent of its epistemic power were still partial. In contrast, as of the eighteenth century, hierarchies that structured Europe according to principles similar to those applied to the colonial world gradually started taking shape. If, for Anibal Quijano (2000), the propagation of Eurocentrism in the non-European world occurred with the help of two founding myths, evolutionism and dualism, the same also served to propagate Occidentalism in Europe once the change in hegemony from the old Spanish-Portuguese core to the Northwestern one had been effectuated. On the one hand, the evolutionary notion that human civilization had proceeded in a linear and unidirectional fashion from an initial state of nature through successive stages leading up to a singular Western form of civilization justified the *temporal* division of the European continent: while the East was still considered feudal, the South had marked the end of the Middle Ages, and the Northwest represented modernity. On the other hand, dualism – the idea that differences between Europeans and non-Europeans could be explained in terms of insuperable natural categories such as primitive-civilized, irrational-rational, traditional-modern (Quijano 2000: 543) allowed both a *spatial* and an *ontological* division within Europe. By being geographically inextricable from Europe, and at the same time (predominantly)

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Christian and white, the European Southeast and especially the Balkans could not be constructed as "an incomplete Other" of Western Europe, as in the case of the Far East, but rather as its "incomplete Self" (Todorova 1997). Moreover, its proximity to Asia and its Ottoman cultural legacy located it halfway between East and West, thus giving it a condition of semi-Oriental, semi-civilized, semi-developed, in the process of "catching up with the West".[1] In the same vein, the European South, epitomized by the declining Spanish empire and its Moorish legacy, was gradually defined out of the Western core both for its proximity to Arab/Berber North Africa and for its reputation as a brutal colonizer of the New World, constructed as the opposite of England's own benevolent colonialism (Cassano 1995; Santos 2006).

Parallel to the construction of colonial difference overseas, we thus witness the emergence of a double imperial difference in Europe (stretching on to Asia): on the one hand, an external difference between the new capitalist core and the existing traditional empires of Islamic and Eastern Christian faith – the Ottoman and the Tsarist one; on the other hand, an internal difference between the new and the old capitalist core, mainly England vs. Spain:

> In this short history it is clear that the imperial external difference created the conditions for the emergence, in the eighteenth century, of Orientalism, while the imperial internal difference ended up in the imaginary and political construction of the South of Europe. Russia remained outside the sphere of Orientalism and at the opposed end, in relation to Spain as paradigmatic example of the South of Europe (Mignolo 2006: 487).

From this moment on, we have at least two types of European subalterns to the hegemonic model of power, as well as the first imperial map of multiple Europes (Boatcă 2010). In Spain and Portugal, the memory of lost power and the dominion of imperial languages induced the awareness of a decline from the core, i.e., an imperial nostalgia. Instead, in that part of the continent that had only emerged as "Europe" due to the growing demise of the Ottoman Empire – that is, Eastern Europe and the Balkans – the rise to the position of semiperiphery within the world system alongside the enduring position of periphery within Europe itself made the aspiration to Europeanness – defined as Western modernity – the dominant attitude.

Thus, the subdivisions underlying the imperial map of multiple Europes served to positively sanction the hegemony of the new core as "heroic Europe", the self-defined producer of modernity's main achievements: the Lutheran Reformation,

1 Maria Todorova speaks in this context of "Balkanism". Unlike Orientalism, which deals with a difference between (imputed) types, the European (Self) and the Oriental (Other), "Balkanism" as a discourse treats the differences within one type (Todorova 2004: 235), the civilized Western European and the semi-civilized, semi-Oriental Eastern European.

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the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, and the British Industrialization (Dussel 1995). France, England, and Germany, as epitomes of what Hegel called "the heart of Europe", thus became the only authorities capable of imposing a universal definition of modernity and at the same time of deploying imperial projects in the remaining Europes or through them. Northwestern Europe's gradual rise to economic prosperity during which hegemony was disputed among Holland, France, and England, would use the territorial gains of the Spanish-Lusitanian colonial expansion in order to derive the human, economic and cultural resources that substantiated the most characteristically modern achievements – of which the "Industrial Revolution" is a paradigmatic example (Moraña et al. 2008). However, this will occur without integrating the contribution of either the decadent European South or of the colonized Americas in the narrative of modernity, which was conceived as being both of (North)Western and of inner-European origin.

On the other hand, and especially as of the mid-nineteenth century, the Western European core of the capitalist world-economy benefited from the end of Ottoman rule in the east of the continent by establishing neocolonies in the rural and agricultural societies of the region. The subsequent modernization of the Balkans and the European Southeast through the introduction of bourgeois-liberal institutions and legislation, while pursuing the goal of making the region institutionally recognizable to the West and financially dependent on it, at the same time involved the shaping of political and cultural identities of countries in the region in relation to the Western discourse of power. Consequently, not only Austria, but also Poland, Romania and Croatia defined their contribution to European history as "bulwarks of Christianity" against the Muslim threat, while every country in Eastern Europe designated itself "frontier between civilization and barbarism" or "bridge between West and East", thus legitimizing Western superiority and fostering the same Orientalism that affected themselves as Balkan, not Christian enough, or not white enough (see Wallerstein in this volume).

From such a perspective – that of the instrumentalization of the geopolitical location of "the other Europes" for the purposes of heroic Europe in the long durée – it becomes easier to understand that the Occidentalism directed at the subalterns never represented an obstacle to the Eurocentrism that the latter displayed on their part toward the non-European world. It was quite the contrary. Samuel Huntington accused the Orthodox and Muslim parts of Europe of marginality and passivity with respect to the achievements of modernity, situating them on the other side of one of the fault lines in the future clashes of civilizations. Re-mapping Eastern Europe and the Balkans in the context of a hierarchical model of multiple Europes reveals that the blindness to coloniality prevalent in these areas' political and identity discourses rather makes them accomplices of the colonial project of power underlying the emergence of modernity. In this sense, our project aims to propose different paths to decolonization.

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Different Paths to Decolonization

The volume focuses on Europe as enduring centre, as subject of sociological production, on the one hand and as main point of departure, as object of theory-building, on the other. However, as our authors argue, this Europe is intrinsically a product of its colonial and imperial legacies, reflected in the discipline of sociology. The essays assembled here thus aim to "provincialize" (Chakrabarty 2000), deconstruct and de-centre Europe. This means confronting European sociology with its epistemological premises and complex societal movements, questioning it as a hegemonic centre.

Accordingly, the division of the book into five sections reflects the attempt to challenge disciplinary boundaries and voice submerged, marginalized or alternative proposals emerging from decolonial feminism and Queer Theory, Critical Migration Studies, Critical Geopolitics, World-Systems analysis, Postcolonial Critique, and the modernity/coloniality perspective. As they reflect ongoing and interrelated processes, the sections at times cross-reference each other in terms of content. Thus, in Part I, "Unsettling Foundations", the authors examine the challenges represented by postcolonial critique and/or the perspective of coloniality for sociology as a discipline. Concretely, Boatcă and Costa identify critical micro, meso and macrostructural approaches that, as a whole, entitle talk of an emerging, but as yet not unified field of postcolonial sociology with a clear decolonizing potential and a promising research agenda. For Bhambra, the Postcolonial Theories' promise of acknowledging the structural connections between core and periphery is best realized within a "provincialized", rather than global cosmopolitanism, and in a project of "connected sociologies", rather than in the currently advocated global or public sociology based on abstract universal categories. Gutiérrez Rodríguez discusses the pitfalls of the institutionalization of postcolonial sociology by asking how far a critical agenda can be pursued in the name of "Postcolonial Critique" at a time when the label has become merchandise in the competitive global market of Higher Education. Discussing the German and British situation, she addresses the paradox between the incorporation of critical thinking, which raises the question of global inequalities in an institutional setting, and the reproduction of these inequalities by the same institution. She argues for decolonizing sociology by starting with a stronger representation of Black and Ethnic Minority faculty, in particular, at professorial level, alongside fostering the access of local minoritized groups to Higher Education.

Following up on the discussion of the concept of modernity in the introductory section, the chapters in Part II, "Pluralizing Modernity", engage with one of the most prolific sociological debates of the past decade – the opening up of the conceptualization of Eurocentred modernity by such alternatives as multiple, global, or entangled modernities. Whereas all the authors in the section critique the label and the research programme behind the multiple modernities approach, their solutions and their respective focuses span a wide range. Göran Therborn denounces the notion of different modernities, defined on the basis of the set of

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institutions characterizing them, as a "descriptive cop out", and suggests instead conceiving of modernity as a time orientation tied to different modernist strivings. He consequently identifies four different historical paths to modernity function of their engagement with the colonial endeavour and goes on to examine the extent to which they still affect the social relations and the power asymmetries in the contemporary world.

Jan Nederveen Pieterse argues against current approaches that interpret the entire assortment of modernity models found in different world regions as varieties of *the* first, European modernity. Thus, he searches for framing new modernities in the global South as well as for disclosing entanglements between different modernities, finding out that Western modernity is merely a modernity among others and also includes "historical particularities that are not necessarily intrinsic to modernity per se".

Nilüfer Göle sees the challenge represented by Islam as the main critical potential for opening up understandings of European modernity, and at the same time for unsettling sociology's traditional disciplinary boundaries. In particular, Göle looks at how the current research interest in Islam and the corresponding consolidation of Islamic studies as an explicitly interdisciplinary field engaging political science, sociology, anthropology, and law, reopens debates about the universalist claims of secular modernity, European understandings of the relationship between religiosity and sexual emancipation, and the legitimacy of the nation-state as a unit of analysis of political dynamics.

Part III, "Questioning Politics of Difference", discusses the micro and macro politics of identity by unveiling the limits of dominant concepts of multiculturalism and cultural identity in the context of labour, migrant and sexual rights, queerness and raciality, global migratory flows, and the Communist collapse in Central and Eastern Europe.

Gregor McLennan opens this debate by critically reviewing new approaches concerning secularity and postsecularity, and multiculturalism in order to indicate an important turning point in postcolonial debates moving away "from the theory and politics of difference per se, towards a much more expansive humanism". This change expresses the ambivalent position of Postcolonial Studies to postsecularism highlighting the fact that sociology's modernist frame may well be (necessarily) limited, but perspectives that aim to be more receptive to "irreducibly plural" cultures and ontologies are typically stricken by conundrums stemming from their own continuing obligations to modernist thinking. McLennan recognizes a potential contribution of Postcolonial Studies for renewing sociology at the epistemological level but he emphatically rejects the idea of a postcolonial "revolution" aimed at reconstructing central analytical keys of sociology, as defended by Bhambra (2007).

From a different angle and focusing on "Muslim homophobia" in Germany, Jin Haritaworn traces the genealogy of a moral panic around "migrant homophobia" at two major construction sites – the Simon Study commissioned by the biggest gay organization, which compared homophobia among "migrant" and "German"

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school children in 2007, and the violent attack against a group of queer and transgendered people at the Drag Festival in Berlin in 2008. Engaging with the argument that "homophobic Islam" becomes the constitutive outside of a nation and a Europe which imagine themselves as intrinsically friendly towards gays, queers and transpeople, Haritaworn reveals the deep remaining ambivalences inherent in this discourse. The apparent discourse of liberation is very often underlined by the assumption of pre-modern attitudes, attributed to "Muslim migrants" impeding this process. A (con)fusion between homophobia and Islamophobia occurs, in which "Muslim migrants" are identified as unable to integrate into the "modern European society".

With the issue of the (re)creation of cultural boundaries within Europe, the section turns to the macro-structural dimension of the politics of difference. Rather than common cultural traditions, Immanuel Wallerstein argues, the subdivisions of Europe into Western, Central, Eastern Europe and the Balkans reflect the historical construction of a European hierarchy and its current geopolitical stakes at the global level. By culturally aligning themselves with (Western) Europe in the post-Communist era, Central and Eastern European countries not only reinforce the hierarchy, and, with it, the logic underlying the recurrent construction of European Others, but at the same time positively sanction Western Europe's geopolitical projects, thus siding with the North in the global North-South divide.

The section on "Border-Thinking" (Part IV) alludes to Mignolo's concept of border epistemology. Set within the confines of Europe, border epistemology as an analytical perspective interrogates the immanent colonial legacies and technologies of racisms operating in everyday culture. While Mignolo elaborates this concept within the analysis of Latin American coloniality, the translation of this analytical approach within the European context poses questions in regard to its "exteriority" (Dussel 1995) within its own borders. The exteriority of Europe within its borders is articulated by the discursive and institutional attacks on non-European and Eastern European migrants and refugees interpellated as the "Others" of modernity. These attacks are very often condensed in the appeal of "integration" and its institutional translation, an aspect that the essays of Kien Nghi Ha (in the case of Germany) and Sandra Gil Araújo (in the case of Spain) address.

While Ha discusses the violent effects of integration policies effected through the enforcement of German language courses and citizenship courses, Gil Araújo reveals how behind these programmes racialized and ethnocentric assumptions are in place through which non-European migrants are racialized and constructed as "uneducated", "unskilled" and "uncivilized". The construction of the nation's other as pre-modern, is also conceived in discourses on Black beauty, where the racialized Black body is projected as "nature". How Black women are supposed to style themselves is thus not a power-neutral question, but rather implies a thorough examination of its culturally racialized predication. Voicing decolonial voices within the midst of Europe, in Britain, Shirley Anne Tate demonstrates how beauty is territorialized and contextualized. While discourses on beauty seem to reflect an abstract concept of aesthetics, they represent a concrete, geopolitically

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and historically contextualized corporeality, confirmed by conventions of white beauty. In turn, discussing the representation of Black beauty reveals that we need to decolonize this discourse in order to perceive practices of beauty transcending the White/Black paradigm. In this regard, Tate illuminates an aesthetics departing from "the *epistemic priority* of the problem of the color line," (Maldonado-Torres 2008: 246) giving a preference to the voices of Black British women and their proposals on aesthetics and stylization.

Finally, the volume comes full circle with Part V, "Looking South". On the one hand, the authors in this section engage with the South as a metaphor for the global periphery and for an alternative epistemology of counter-globalization (Cassano, Sousa Santos). On the other hand, by literally looking (to the) South, they reveal structural hierarchies originating in historical subdivisions within Europe itself (Sousa Santos, Cairo), thereby pointing to the crucial insight that the process of decentering Europe must take into account the different colonialisms emanating from Europe, as well as the different processes of decolonization involving subordinated empires such as Spain and Portugal as opposed to hegemonic empires such as England and France. Heriberto Cairo, in particular, thoroughly dispatches the construction of an "Occident", "West", "Europe", what we mean by these divisions and what they imply in regard to the "East" or the "global South". Demonstrating how geographical labelling is a result of an imperial system of research, sometimes linked to military geopolitical strategies in the case of "Latin America", Cairo urges us to rethink the categorization of a world system in the light of a decolonial critique.

Rather than advocating one path to a uniformly defined decolonizing process, which we think would be reproducing the fallacy we criticize mainstream sociology for committing, our aim is to open up a space for a multiplicity of critical projects that may not use the same term for labelling themselves, but which pursue common goals. In this sense, we see the project of decolonizing European sociology as the mere beginning of a long journey in which such common pursuits can be negotiated.

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