
Western Sociological Heritage, Modernist Paradigm, and the Crisis of Sociology in South Asian Countries

Gamage S.

University of Western Sydney

Email: gamage.siri@yahoo.com

Introduction

South Asian sociologists argue that the sociology discipline and its practice in South Asia are facing a 'crises' and/or an 'impasse' due to a range of reasons including the dominance enjoyed by Western colonial-imperial heritage, i.e., theoretical and methodological, engrained within the scholarship, practice, institutions, and research. The rapid growth in the number of universities and colleges teaching sociology without achieving the required standards is also contributing to this crisis. The reproduction of the Western disciplinary heritage by contemporary sociologists who are not grounded in their own scholarly traditions is causing considerable damage to the discipline and to the intellectual growth of new cohorts of students who follow sociology courses in growing numbers in university-affiliated Colleges in India, Bangladesh and elsewhere. Against this trend in the sociology discipline, some sociologists even talk about the end of sociology (e.g., Nazrul Islam 2004). There are stronger pleas for an autonomous or indigenous sociology along with the need to pluralise and globalise the discipline.

It is being argued that there is an unequal relation in the global division of labour relating to social science knowledge production and dissemination. Thus, the world social science powers in Europe and USA enjoy an advantage over these processes in other countries. This relationship has created dominant-subordinate epistemic

frameworks. Utilisation of such frameworks has compelled sociologists in South Asia to turn a blind eye to their own historical, cultural, philosophical, and intellectual traditions and knowledge. The teaching practices and resources influenced by Western sociological heritage also perpetuate this unequal relationship. Moreover, various binaries created by the modernist paradigm during the colonial era have been reconstructed under the conditions of globalisation to serve the interests of Western social science powers.

If this is so, sociologists in Asia/ South Asia have an obligation to interrogate this unequal and dependent relationship and to explore socially relevant knowledge paradigms, theories, and concepts from their own societies with a view to formulating alternative sociological discourses, theories, and methods. However, this is not a call for wholesale rejection of Western sociological heritage in Asia/South Asia.

Methodology

The paper is based on selected review of publications pertaining to Sociology and anthropology in south Asia as well as those relevant to Southern Theory, Critical discourses in sociology and anthropology, global south perspective, and academic dependency. Such critical discourses were used as a frame of reference to examine the status of sociology and anthropology in South Asian countries. Additionally, author's insights in teaching sociology both in Sri Lanka and Australia were used to formulate the arguments in the paper.

Western Sociological Heritage and its Dominance

Sociological knowledge is Eurocentric as it emerged out of the particular social condition of Western modernity. 'The social sciences took their modern institutional form in the second half of the nineteenth century, at the high tide of European imperialism. Imperialism had become the condition of existence of metropolitan society by the time the new sciences made 'society' an object of systematic study'

(Connell 2007: x). Unequal academic hierarchies and privilege are produced by such a system.

According to Selvadurai et al, 'social science discourse and knowledge in developing societies appear to be dominated by Western knowledge of a particular kind i.e., Anglo-Saxon tradition. Selvadurai et al investigate the general development of social science discourses in the West and response from the developing societies, particularly on the impasse in social science as it relates to domination of Eurocentric knowledge and the marginalization of local knowledge' (Selvadurai et al 2013).

Patel (2006) explains how sociology taught in the USA came to dominate the world of sociological knowledge even though after the Second World War sociology was institutionalised both in Europe and USA. According to her, 'The study of sociology came to be coterminous with the Parsonian school, which elaborated generalized concepts, gave little respect for the study of social change and instead emphasized integration and consensus' (Patel 2006: 387). This new sociological language was diffused to other parts of the world along with its perspectives, theories, concepts, and methods. Some states gave priority to economics rather than sociology. Patel argues that 'the binaries put into practice during the colonial period were refashioned in the context of tradition-modernity thesis' (2006: 387). Modernization theory created earlier binaries in new ways with a presumption that there was a common path for all nations, peoples' and areas. Thus, orientalist binaries were reframed to 'legitimize the colonial project of modernity that divided the peoples of the world into two groups, the traditional and the modern' (Patel 2006: 388). Sociologists tried to fit the data from the ex-colonies with such perspectives without much reflection on their applicability.

The idea of the dominant social science powers such as UK, France, and USA - metropolitan 'core'- structuring systems of thought in the colonial peripheries and its critique is known in the critical Social Science and Humanities circles. Such

criticisms started with the onset of imperialism, colonisation, orientalism, and Western modernism. While such critique is gaining ground in social science circles in South Asia, sociologists elsewhere have formulated arguments on how modernist knowledge exercised dominance through social science disciplines, and through English language and modernist education, over knowledge production and dissemination processes and institutions in the colonial peripheries in the last 200 years. They further show how this was further extended after countries of the colonial periphery obtained independence and developed sociological teaching and research with a nationalist-developmental orientation¹.

According to Alatas, the social sciences were implanted in the colonies and other peripheralized regions by the colonial powers in the 19th century onwards, ‘without due recognition given to the different historical backgrounds and social circumstances of these societies. (Alatas 2006: 24-25). Those who introduced social science disciplines failed to sufficiently indigenize, domesticate, or nationalize so that they could be more relevant. Despite political emancipation, the intellectual dependence of the former colonies on Western models continued. Leading theoretical perspectives originating from Europe and America are still present in University syllabi and journal article bibliographies. Due to the wholesale adoption of Western educational systems and philosophies formally, lack of creativity and originality emerged in the knowledge production, utilization in research and dissemination. This intellectual dependency is in both structures and relevance of ideas derived from alien settings (Alatas 2006: 25). Though ruptures have occurred in the relationship between Asian sociology and the Western sociology, academic dependency has continued in one form or another. The situation of colonial

¹ For information on the concepts operational during the colonial period in India, see *Imagining Sociology of South Asia: 1840-1870, Wiles lecture Series, UK.*

mentality experienced by Asian sociologists has been described by the term ‘captive mind’².

Western Modernity, its Influence and Critique: Santos, Connell, Comeroff & Comeroff

As a paradigm that emerged in the global north and influenced thought and action in the colonised periphery, we have to explore the basic features of Western modernity paradigm and the manner of its export to colonised countries. According to Santos (2014), Western modernity is characterized by abyssal thinking. ‘What is usually called Western modernity is a very complex set of phenomena in which dominant and subaltern perspectives coexist and constitutive of rival modernity’s (Santos 2014: ix-x). Santos argues that the paradigm of modernity consists of two forms of knowledge: knowledge-as-emancipation and knowledge-as-regulation:

This social and epistemological paradigm suffered a historical accident... from mid-19th century onward, the possibilities for the implementation of this paradigm of modernity were reduced to those made available by world capitalism. This accident created enormous turbulence between social regulation and emancipation, which eventually led to the cannibalization of social emancipation by social regulation. This led to a double crisis, each feeding on the other. We find in this situation today. (Santos 2014: 139).

The fundamental problem confronting us today is ‘the failure to acknowledge the presence of abyssal line dividing metropolitan from colonial societies decades after the end of historical colonialism’ (Santos 2014: 70-71). Santos believes Western modernity ‘underlies the hegemonic knowledge, whether philosophical or scientific, produced in the West in the past two hundred years’ (Santos 2014:165-166). It emerged in the context of ‘the consolidation of the liberal state in Europe and North America, the industrial revolution and capitalist development, colonialism and

² Syed Hussein Alatas developed this concept in the early 1970s. For a discussion of the concept and its meaning, see (Alatas 2006: 30-31).

imperialism' (Santos 2014:166). Western modernity is based on lazy reason and its constructed dichotomies. Lazy reason created the framework for the philosophical and epistemological debates in the last two hundred years. There was no restructuring of knowledge as lazy reason resists change (Santos 2014:166-167).

Sociology and social sciences in this century have developed as disciplines with the master narrative - structure and agency in sociology and anthropology (2014: 81). However, this modern equation that guided us to think about social transformation 'is undergoing a process of profound destabilisation' (2014: 81). According to Selvadurai et al, contestations from within the Western realm as well as developing societies appear to provide a remedy to the contemporary situation, but somewhat at a slow pace and operating in the margins. The nexus of knowledge and power that reins in favour of the Western discourse appears to be numbered, in view of the critique from within and without' (Selvadurai et al 2013: 104).

Santos criticizes dominant (northern) epistemologies and present an epistemological proposal for the South consisting of 'a set of inquiries into the construction and validation of knowledge born in struggle, of ways of knowing developed by social groups as part of their resistance' (Santos 2014: x). It is 'an emancipatory project free from the idea of both progress and universalism' (2014:73). Santos calls for a paradigm shift in both epistemological and societal terms because 'the understanding of the world promoted by modern reason is.... not only partial but very selective' (2014: 168). 'Western modernity, controlled by modern reason, has limited understanding not only of the world but also of itself' (Santos 2014: 168)³. Santos proposes a different reason called 'subaltern cosmopolitan reason'.

Santos talks about the lines drawn by dominant Western thinking of our time (abyssal thinking) through which human and non-human realities on the other side are made invisible. This line divides social reality profoundly. This division

³ For a critique of what he calls lazy or metonymic reason, how it ended up having primacy in the last 200 years by creating totalizing discourse and dichotomies and consequences, see (Santos 2014: 167- 175). Such criticism is a prerequisite to recuperate the wasted experience.

affected by abyssal line into metropolitan and colonial societies is such that the ‘other side of the line’ vanishes as reality, becomes non-existent. ‘Whatever is produced as non-existent is radically excluded because it lies beyond the realm of what the accepted conception of inclusion considers it to be its other’ (Santos 2014: 118). ‘Modern knowledge and modern law represent the most accomplished manifestations of abyssal thinking. They are mutually interdependent’ (Santos 2014: 118). He describes ‘(t)he logics and processes through which modern reason produces the non-existence of what does not fit its totality and linear time are various’ (Santos 2014: 172). In the way Santos describes it, the sociology of absences focuses on ‘the social experience that has not been fully colonized by modern reason’ (Santos 2014: 172)⁴.

Importantly, ‘abyssal thinking consists in granting to modern science the monopoly of the universal distinction between true and false, to the detriment of two alternative bodies of knowledge: philosophy and theology’ (Santos 2014:119). ‘This monopoly is at the core of the modern epistemological disputes between scientific and non-scientific forms of truth’ (Santos 2014:119). According to this logic, what exists on the other side of the line ‘are beliefs, opinions, intuitions, and subjective understandings, which, at the most, may become objects or raw materials for scientific inquiry’ (Santos 2014: 120). This is an important distinction about two knowledge types.

He argues that today ‘we must start from the verification that the theory of history of modernity is untenable (and) human initiative rather than any abstract idea of

⁴ *He describes five forms of non-existence i.e., 1. Monoculture and rigor of knowledge, 2. monoculture of linear time, 3. logic of social classification that distributes populations according to categories that naturalizes hierarchies, e.g., capital-labour, 4. Logic of dominant scale (universal and global), and 5. Logic of capitalist productivity according to which ‘capitalist economic growth is unquestionably rational objective’ (Santos 2014:172-174).*

progress is what grounds hope' (Santos 2014: 89). We need to replace modernity paradigm with another paradigm (Santos 2014: 88). While 'the paradigm of Western modernity postulates a dialectical tension between social regulation and social emancipation', in Santos's view, 'the most important problem is the collapse of social emancipation into social regulation' (Santos 2014: 71). Hence as social scientists our challenge is to regenerate emancipation. 'Because science and hence the social sciences as we know them are part and parcel of the project of Western modernity, they are much more part of the problem rather than the solution' (Santos 2014: 72). To face this challenge social sciences must undergo radical change.

He further says, the structure of modern knowledge has 'led to total primacy of knowledge-as-regulation' (2014:139). Modern science has become the privileged form of knowledge-as-regulation and it has deserted knowledge-as-emancipation (2014:156). Thus, 'global social injustice is intimately linked to global cognitive injustice (and) the struggle for global social justice must therefore be a struggle for global cognitive justice as well' (2014:124). This statement has profound implications for sociology theory and practice.

Connell clarifies the respective roles of anthropology and sociology in historical context by stating that anthropology became 'the designated intellectual container for primitive societies' (2007: x) and argues,

The rest of social science formed itself on ethnocentric assumptions that amounted to a gigantic lie- that modernity created itself within the North Atlantic world, independent of the rest of humanity. Models constructed based on that lie, such as functionalist sociology, modernization theory and neoclassical economics, were then exported to the rest of the world with all the authority of the most advanced knowledge, and all the weight of First World wealth and power (Connell, 2007: x).

Though there are attempts made to correct this, metropolitan sciences continuously

update at home and are exported. Furthermore, ‘Metropolitan theory is distributed through a global network of institutions including universities, scientific organizations, journals and—as Arturo Escobar (1995) has eloquently shown—development institutions from the World Bank down’ (Connell 2007: xi). A point Connell makes is that ‘(t)o the degree that the making of modernity has been a world-historical process, it can as well be narrated from its undersides as it can from its self-proclaimed centres—like those maps that, as a cosmic joke, invert planet earth to place the south on top, the north below’ (Connell 2007:117).

Comaroff & Comaroff (2012) also question ‘the universal premises of Euro-American social theory founded on modernity and enlightenment’ (2012: 116). They believe that ‘(a)s an ideology, it has never been dissociable from capitalism’ (Comaroff & Comaroff 2012: 116). Moreover, ‘Other modernity’s are treated as transplants of the Euro-original’ (2012:114). The meaning of modernity however ‘is dependent on context, serving to put people in particular times and places on the near-or-far side of the great divide between self and other, the present and prehistory, the general and particular—oppositions that are mobilized in a range of registers from theologies to party platforms’ (Comaroff & Comaroff 2012: 119). The positivist social sciences, modernist sociological theory ascendant from the 1950s, deployed this grammar of oppositions such as foundational contrasts as mechanical versus organic solidarity, status vs. contract, pre capitalist vs. capitalist (Comaroff & Comaroff 2012:119). Though ‘Colonial/postcolonial studies ... has taken pains to transcend the assumptions and methods of modernization theory’ (2012: 119), the question remains as to whether Sociologists in the global south, in this case South Asia have done so sufficiently?

In view of these observations on the historical unfolding of dominant epistemologies and theories emanating from the global north, as social scientists we have a duty to critically investigate ‘the concealed contradictions of capitalist modernity’ (2012:117) and the role of metropolitan theory in the context of South Asia in relation to knowledge construction in sociology and other social sciences.

Crisis of Sociology in the South Asian Context

Several critical reviews exist on the introduction and institutionalisation of sociology including social anthropology and resulting practices, issues, and challenges in South Asian countries. These include Patel (1998, 2006, 2010, 2014), Sengupta (1997, 1999), Vasavi (2011), Modi (2010), Srinivasan (2010), Kais (2010), Sabir (2010, 2016), Perera (2012), Hettige (2010), Gamage (2015), Islam (2004), Thakur (2015), Misra (2005), and Karim (2014). There are also some book reviews by South Asian sociologists and social anthropologists that contain contemporary observations. Speeches by Presidents of Sociological Association of India and some conference reports on sociology in South Asia also provide further clues on the evolving nature of the subject and the challenges it faces.

There is a strong line of argument in these writings emphasising the fact that sociology practice in South Asia is excessively embedded in the Western hegemonic knowledge and methodologies. When European and American perspectives and theories were exported to other countries, they have become dominant universal models (Patel 2010: 3). Citing Alatas (1974), Patel observes that ‘such domination organized an array of sociological practices, including those that dealt with teaching, such as import of syllabi and textbooks, and research’ (Patel 2010: 3-4). Imported models included ‘what to study, how to study and what is considered best practice in research, including the evaluation of research projects and the protocols of writing, and presenting empirical and theoretical articles in journals’ (Patel, 2010: 4).

However, a corresponding argument in relation to the later phases of discipline’s development is that it is not sufficiently embedded in global sociology due to the way sociology was institutionalised in South Asian countries after the nationalistic phase of development, i.e., use of local languages, regional university cultures and practices as well as factors such as the brain drain of region’s sociologists who had their training in Western higher education institutions. Both these arguments need critical scrutiny.

The state sponsorship of higher education, politicization of university administration and the academia, creation of institutional impediments for the growth of sociology relevant to the South Asian context are other themes discussed in the literature. This resulted in the methodological nationalism. Sociologists in the region claim that today, sociology research and practice are embedded in nationalistic and developmentalist sociology and anthropology guided and funded by the state, multilateral development agencies and international NGOs that employ local social scientists as consultants depriving of their time and energy for producing social theory relevant to the South Asian context. Some of their practices are not only nationalistic but also nativist. Sociology research, practice and teaching have been subjected to the developmentalist agenda of the governments, neglecting deeper epistemological work. In Nepal, 'the developmentalist and functionalist vision, which remains dominant, has de-emphasised the teaching and research on frameworks and themes such as politics, conflict, struggle, resistance, etc.' (Misra 2005:101).

A significant rupture has been created between local sociology practices and those of the metropolitan sociology or indeed global sociology. Some confess that there is a lack of innovation, creativity and application of Western derived sociological-social anthropology knowledge frameworks/paradigms properly by the new generation, which is disconnected from Western-oriented knowledge to the local context compared to the previous generation of sociologists and social anthropologists trained in Euro-America e.g., Sri Lanka (Perera 2012, Hettige 2010). These sociologists see such a rupture as the cause of stagnation in sociology's forward march.

Many local sociologists in the region do not even link up with global sociology or active sociology associations in their own countries - not to speak about producing globally relevant sociology from the periphery. Instead, they are playing the role of semi-colonial academics in the internal academic milieus. They are removed from the social and cultural contexts they live in while functioning as middle-class

academics whose positions are secured by the state funded universities supplemented by NGO research and consultancies⁵. Those affiliated with political parties are even pretending to be intellectuals in the political and social space while seeking legitimacy not from the sociology profession but from the politicians and significant others in the national affairs.

Misra also discusses the de-linking of the Global and the national-local by South Asian sociologists (Misra 2005:101). He states that ‘despite the growing importance of globalisation, some aspects of society and changes have been neglected by sociologists. These include ‘The sociology of the interconnectedness of the global, the national and the local, the dynamics of this interconnection, and the implications of this interconnection has on the present and future lives of different social categories such as regions, classes, genders, ethnic groups, caste groups, the poor’ (Misra 2005: 101). Sociologists and anthropologists in Nepal often visualise ‘the evolution of specific structures and processes which shape the polity, economy and culture’ as local products. The macro and the long run remain highly underemphasized both in the syllabi and the research agenda’ (Misra 2005: 101). This is a trend observed by others like Vasavi and Patel in relation to sociology in India.

Some sociologists point out that there is a crisis in the practice of sociology – teaching, research, and policy work - due to the existing academic dependency on metropolitan knowledge (concepts, theory and paradigms and methods) on one hand and the internal developments and changes in the organisation and practice of sociology on the other, i.e., institutionalisation of the teaching especially in the post-colonial, nationalistic phase. Numerous reasons are cited for this crisis including the Eurocentric nature of disciplinary knowledge/theory, methodology, language of teaching, divergences between elite centres vs. regional centres of teaching and learning, non-integration of sociology knowledge produced in local languages in the

⁵ *There are country specific variations in such practices in the region, meaning that this happens more in some countries and less in others.*

teaching of sociology in English, concentration of research in certain parts and the exclusion of others, over reliance on imported sociology and anthropology concepts, theory and methods and lack of efforts to develop more autonomous kind of ‘indigenous sociology’ relevant to the South Asian context and its cultural-intellectual traditions⁶.

Writing a review of the proceedings of a conference on *Sociology in South Asia: Heritage and Challenges (1998)*, Patel (1998) refers to three issues that characterise the crisis in sociology as articulated by Partha Mukherji: the universal applicability of concepts, theories, and methodologies; the positive-normative methodological aspects of analysis of complex social systems; and problem-oriented theoretical research vs. solution-oriented applied research. Claiming that ‘sociology in South Asia is caught up in these questions, may be even trapped in them’ (Patel 1998: 339), she argues that ‘all these issues are related to the larger question of the role of sociology in the modern world, as well as the differentiation of South Asian sociological concerns from those of the North and the world at large’ (Patel 1998: 339). More importantly, Patel argues that ‘the paradigm crisis in sociology coincides with a similar crisis in higher education. Issues of pedagogy, the learning process, the quality of curriculum, infrastructure, and financial autonomy are entangled with “what to study” and “how to study”, issues that concern us as sociologists’ (1998: 339). According to her, ‘Paradoxically, these challenges are embedded in the very institutions that had encouraged sociology’s formation and defined its conceptual map: the institutions of the nation-state that advocated development, macro level agendas, and uniform policy implementation’ (Patel 1998: 340). Almost 17 years after making these remarks, they are equally applicable to the crisis of sociology in South Asia even today.

⁶ *This is not a comprehensive list of the issues and challenges found in the reviewed literature. For more, readers are urged to access the listed publications directly.*

Vasavi's view about Indian sociology and anthropology is that today they have reached an impasse. She believes that 'the SOI seems fragmented and diluted, unable to forge an identity of its own, respond to changing times, and generate new schools of theory, methods, and perspectives' (Vasavi 2011: 402). Among the factors contributing to this situation 'are the institutional contexts, the politics of knowledge production, the state of discipline's syllabi and pedagogies, its limited methodologies, the entrenchment of some approaches and theories, and the inability of sociologists to engage with and contribute to public debates either in the vicinity or at the national level' (Vasavi 2011: 402). She in turn reviews each of these factors in some detail.

In her review of the conference proceedings noted above, Patel observed that 'Sociologists in South Asia are attempting to move beyond the assumed frame that has always defined the terms of their discussions and research agendas' (1998: 339). However, some sociological traditions 'have not evolved perspectives and theories to assess their relationship with dominant universalized traditions, although they have been recognized' (Patel 2010: 17). The question remains as to what extent a paradigm shift has occurred in South Asian sociology?

Referring to the Indian context, Vasavi further points out that most departments of sociology and social anthropology - apart from a few institutions such as Delhi University and ICSSR-affiliated institutions - are in a moribund state. Moreover, 'the discipline's literature, pedagogy and engagement with the society at large remain inadequate' and it 'has been unable to generate new and comparative theories' (Vasavi 2011: 401). As a result, 'the SOI compares poorly with some of the more innovative and creative social science and humanities in India' (Vasavi 2011: 401). 'Sociology's poverty of concepts and theory is more conspicuous when compared to the literature generated by the 'subaltern school' of historians and political theorists and 'post-colonial' studies from India that have synergised political science, history, and cultural studies' (Vasavi 2011: 401).

Sociology in Bangladesh is also confronting multifaceted challenges (Kais 2010:337 citing Khan 2008). These challenges relate to teaching of sociology and research. Kais believes that ‘the course curricula seem to be boring, uninteresting, and sometimes irrelevant’ (Kais 2010: 339) and the ‘acute shortage of quality textbooks in the country is another dimension of the crises in teaching sociology’ (Kais 2010: 339). Kais believes that ‘In the absence of quality home books, teachers and students have to rely on European/American books. With this come two related problems. First, there remains a gap between the issues discussed in these books and the real social issues of Bangladesh where these books are read. Second, these books are costly and fairly unavailable to those who need to consult them’ (Kais 2010: 339).

According to Sabir who explores the status of sociology in Pakistan from its introduction in 1954 and the structurally imposed dependency on the global north characterizes it ‘by quasi-isolation, outdated knowledge, and as cognitively and institutionally static’ (2010: 2). He says, ‘it is yet to attain the status as something more than an inconsequential, beleaguered and belittled scorned and unproductive academic discipline’ (2010: 2-3).

Sociologists in South Asian countries have also been de-linked from local knowledges, epistemology, indigenous knowledge traditions (philosophical, cultural, literary, oral) to the extent of not being able to produce social theory relevant to the local contexts. Sociologists and anthropologists are not capable of connecting intellectually with indigenous intellectual, philosophical, religious traditions due to the inherited colonial-modernist mindset and associated practices or they are consciously neglecting such possibilities due to their intellectual and epistemological dependencies on the dominant modes of knowledge production and dissemination inherited from the Western colonial-modernist paradigm. Writers like Vasavi and Patel have discussed the non-inclusion of local intellectual traditions in mainstream Sociology due to definitional and disciplinary reasons.

Conclusion

This paper discussed various dimensions of the Western social science domination, modernist paradigm, and its critique as well as the nature of the crisis facing South Asian sociology. The paper noted that sociologists in south Asia have not yet evolved adequate perspectives and theories to critically assess their relationship with the dominant Western social science traditions –though this dominance and dependency have been recognised by the sociological and anthropological community of scholars. It further noted that the questions of what to study, how to study and where to study are deeply connected with the Western modernist education framework, associated institutions and processes that perpetuate the same even under the post national conditions prevailing in South Asia. As much as the Western Social Science domination involves tools and methods, developing counter hegemonic discourses in sociology and anthropology requires the development of relevant tools and methods from the global periphery, in this case south Asia. To secure cognitive justice, South Asian sociologists, anthropologists, and other intellectuals with a Southern or Subaltern consciousness can play a critical and re-invigorating role by distancing themselves from the metropolitan theory based on Western modernity and re-focusing on their own intellectual traditions and practices whether they correspond to Western social science terminology and expectations or not.

Whether sociology of South Asia is playing a liberal, progressive, and emancipatory role as it did in the European context during its origin and evolution is a significant question emerging from the various reviews. While there are differing perceptions about sociology among the key stake holders such as the states, NGOs, religious authorities, students and the public, and sometimes negative reactions also, practitioners themselves seem to be caught in a time wharf when it comes to the theoretical paradigms and methodological orientations being used in teaching and

research⁷. If as Comaroff and Comaroff state (and denied by other social scientists from the West) the emergence of Western modernity was the result of north-south collaboration, the question remains as to whether the emergence of non-Western modernity or indeed South Asian modernity can be the result of north-south collaboration as well? More profoundly, the emergence of alternative sociology (and social science) discourse from South Asia/Asia can be the outcome of a north-south collaboration designed on a different footing by seriously taking the suggestions and critique contained in the work reviewed in this paper.

Given the crisis of the discipline discussed what is needed is a network of sociology intellectuals spread across the region and beyond that can think beyond the box, think long term with a historically informed social consciousness. They ought to be able to read the local tradition and how modernity and education built on modernity principles and values have deformed what we do and, in the process, alienated us from the very people and traditions that inform attitudes, values, norms and actions in everyday life? We ought to be able to map out a path for South Asian sociology and anthropology or rather South Asian Sociology that is relevant, applicable, rooted, and cutting edge. Without doubt, constructing alternative knowledge from the ashes of old sociology and anthropology and drawing from the local intellectual, philosophical, and cultural traditions are the urgently required tasks for re-imagining sociology and anthropology in South Asia.

References

Alatas, S.H. 1974. The Captive Mind for Creative Development, *International Social Science Journal*, 36(4): 691-9.

⁷ *The liberal and progressive tradition of sociology at early stages at Dhaka University faced challenges from a certain quarter of people. It even incurred the wrath of the Martial Law government of erstwhile Pakistan. This government tried to close the department and compelled the department not to enroll undergraduate students at a session three years after its birth (F.R. Khan 2008). (Kais 2010: 345)*

- Alatas, S.F. 2006. *Alternative Discourses in Asian Social Science: Responses to Eurocentrism*, New Delhi, Sage.
- Comaroff, J & Comaroff, J.L. 2012. 'Theory from the South: Or how Euro-America is Evolving Toward Africa', *Anthropological Forum: A Journal of Social Anthropology and Comparative Sociology*, 22(2): 113-131.
- Connell, R. 2007. *Southern Theory: The Global Dynamics of Knowledge in Social Science*, Crow's Nest, Allen & Unwin.
- Gamage, S. 2014. 'Changing Patterns of Anthropology and Sociology Practices in Sri Lanka in the Context of Debates on Northern and Southern Theory', *Social Affairs: A Journal for the Social Sciences*, 1(1): 1-29, Fall
- Hettige, S. 2010. 'Sociological Enterprise at the Periphery: The Case of Sri Lanka', in M.Burawoy, Mau-keue Chang, and Michael Fei-yu Hsieh (eds.) *Facing Unequal World: Challenges for a Global Sociology*, Vol.2 Asia, Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica & Council of national Associations of the International Sociological Association. Taipei.
- Islam, N. 2004. 'Sociology in the 21st Century: Facing a Dead End', *Bangladesh e-Journal of Sociology*, 1 (2) July
- Karim, A.H.M.Z. 2014. 'Anthropology in Bangladesh: its Emergence and Relevance to Global Context', *Anthropologist*, 17(3): 937-957.
- Kais, S.M. 2010. 'Fifty Years of Bangladesh Sociology Towards a "Hybrid Sociology"?' *Facing an Unequal World: Challenges for a Global Sociology*, M. Burawoy, Mau-kuei Chang, M. Fei-yu Hsieh (eds.), Vol.2 Asia, Institute of Sociology at Academia Sinica, Council of National Associations of the International Sociological Association, and Academia Sinica.
- Mishra, C (2005). 'Sociology in Nepal: Underdevelopment Amidst Growth'. *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, 32(1): 93-128.

- Modi, I (2010) 'Indian Sociology Faces the World'. In M. Burawoy, Mau-kuei Chang, M. Fei-yu Hsieh (eds.) *Facing an Unequal World: Challenges for a Global Sociology*, Vol. 2 (Asia): 316–325.
- Patel, S. 1998. Whither South Asian Sociology? Book Review, *Contemporary Sociology*, 27(4): 338-340. Accessed 08.02.2016.
- Patel, S. 2006. 'Beyond Binaries: A Case for Self-Reflexive Sociologies', *Current Sociology*, 54(3): 381-395.
- Patel, S(ed). 2010a. 'Introduction: Diversities of Sociological Traditions', S.Patel (ed) *The ISA handbook –Diverse Sociological Traditions*, Los Angeles, Sage.
- Patel, S. 2010b. At Crossroads: Sociology in India, in S. Patel(ed) *Diversities of Sociological Traditions, The ISA handbook –Diverse Sociological Traditions*, Los Angeles, Sage.
- Patel, S. 2014. Afterword: Doing global sociology: Issues, problems and challenges, *Current Sociology Monograph*, 62(4): 603-613.
- Sabir, M. I. 2010. 'From Academic Dependency to Self-Ostracism of Intellectual Labor: The Case of Sociology in Pakistan', *Cahiers de la recherche sur l'éducation et les savoirs*, 9: 73-88 <https://cres.revues.org/374>, Downloaded on 25.02.2016
- Sabir, M.I. 2016. *Sociology in Pakistan: Origin and Development 1955-2014*, Dissertation submitted for Doctor of Philosophy, Université Paris – Saclay.
- Perera, S. 2012. 'Notes from an Anthropological Wilderness: A critical Self-assessment of Sri Lankan 'Anthropology'' in A.K. Danda & R.K.Das (eds) *Alternative Voices of Anthropology; Golden Jubilee Symposium*, Indian Anthropological Society, Kolkata.
- Santos, B de S.S.2014. *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide*, Boulder, Paradigm Publishers.

- Selvadurai, S. Choy, E. A. Maros, M. & Abdulla, K. 2013. 'Shifting Discourses in Social Sciences; Nexus of Knowledge and Power', *Asian Social Science*, 9 (7): 97-104.
- Sengupta, C. 1997. 'Future of Sociology in South Asia: Challenges and Prospects', *Economic and Political Weekly*, July 26.
- Srinivasan, K 2010. 'The Social Science Imagination in India: Deconstructing Boundaries and Redefining Limits', *Sociological Bulletin*, 59 (1): 22-45, Indian Sociological Society.
- Thakur, M. 2015. 'The Politics of Indigenous Social Science: Invoking a Lucknow Sociologist, Society and Culture in South Asia', 1(2): 109-126
- Downloaded from scs.sagepub.com at University of New England on March 10, 2016.
- Vasavi, A.R. 2011. 'Pluralising the Sociology in India, *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 45(3): 399-426.