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Production of truth as reduction of complexity. Understanding society with peripheral critical sociology

Philipp Altmann

Universidad Central del Ecuador

Truth is always a reduction of complexity. The various aspects of an observed phenomena are reduced to only those that relate to how truth is defined by the observer. In this sense, social sciences create society by applying theories that define what is truth to it. This logic becomes a problem when the social sciences in question do not reflect a wide range of different theories that can complement and criticize each other, providing a more complex observation and, thus, a more complex truth. This is the case with some social sciences of the Global South, especially, in early stages of their institutional and organizational development. However, decisions made in early stages of a system can only be changed with considerable effort later on. There tends to be an effect of path dependency, especially in organizations engaged in social sciences in the Global South.
This article will explore the mechanisms of production of truth and thus of reduction of complexity by Marxist critical sociology in Ecuador, between the 1960s and 2010. A focus will be the institutionalization of these mechanisms in organizations and the augmentation of complexity within critical sociology, usually connected to certain ideas of politics and sciences.

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1. Introduction

Truth is everywhere. Everybody considers things true or false. Truth has become, at least since the begin of modernity, a universal semantics in society. This could happen because of a background structure that defines what truth is: it is a symbolical generalized medium of communication, determined by the functional social system science. Knowledge is, thus, structured by truth and not a value on its own. So, discussions about what is true and what is not tend to end with a call for scientific expertise – let's look what is true after all (following the mainstream debate in science on the topic at hand and what of it is accessible for the general public). That means that truth is produced by science and diffused in society by certain mechanisms, such as mass media. Science works as an invisible background: you don't know how it works, how it produces truth, you just have access to (some) findings or arguments that are as such only understandable to scientists that are experts in the field. Of course, this corresponds with a reduction of complexity: science in its specific set-up defines truth – and nothing else.

If truth is produced by science, it would be worthwhile to study the processes involved in the production of truth. At this point, a further differentiation of science is needed: it is not science as such, but concrete sciences or disciplines that produce knowledge concerning certain topics. In this sense, "disciplines are considered to be the primary unit of internal differentiation of the modern system of science and, as such, vital to any analysis [...] of scientific developments." (Stichweh, 1992, p. 4) And it is more complex still: science is not only the functional system with its disciplines, but also affects and is produced by organizations, such as universities, and interactions, such as concrete individuals producing and communicating concrete research – all working in different logics, reducing complexity further.

This article will explore the mechanisms of production of truth in Ecuadorian sociology. In this sense, it would be "the re-entry of the observer into the observed [that] re-enters the observer." (Luhmann, 1997, p. 77) It works with the intersection of the three different levels of sociality: functional systems -science- that are necessarily global, organizations and interactions that are local or multilocal. The focus will be the School of Sociology and Political Sciences that was created at the Central University of Ecuador in Quito in the 1960s. As first institutionalization of social sciences in Ecuador, it had an important influence in the Schools of Sociology that were created later on in other universities. The formation of and relationship between different understandings of sociology was a crucial element of this institutionalization. The development of Ecuadorian sociology will be the case study that allows to understand the mechanisms of production of truth in one clearly defined field, delimited both considering space and time and considering the three levels of sociality in systems theory.

In the following parts, first the conceptual possibilities of a local truth within systems theory will be explored. This allows, in another chapter, to trace the development of Ecuadorian sociology as an enterprise of production of truth that is marked by breaks and interruptions.

2. Local truth in global science

Modern science is a universal and global functional system. At least since the 19th century, in parts already much earlier, it is only defined by scientific communications and their connection within science – and not by class, region, or other factors external to science itself (Luhmann, 1982, p. 132). "For the development of science, only work that is effectively perceived and utilized by other scientists, then and there, matters." (Merton, 1968, p. 59-60) External factors can be observed within science as causal influences, but they cannot be scientific communications themselves. The internal relationship between scientific communications is based on the distinction between true/untrue defined by programs that would be theories and methods within the system of science (Luhmann, 1990, p. 197). A book or a presentation at a conference is deemed true or untrue and leads to corresponding communications based on the theoretic or methodological background of the book or presentation. It could be criticised for a wrong conception of theory A or applauded for innovative contributions to theory B, for a correct use of a given methodology or innovative data. A series of successful and true communications with sufficient impact within sciences can lead to reputation. You become known for being an expert in this or that topic, a given university can become notorious in participating in research on certain topics. Reputation would be a secondary code within the system of science, derived from truth and academic performance – it helps to concentrate attention to those communications that with a high probability deserve major attention than others (Merton, 1968, p. 59; Luhmann, 1990, pp. 245-247). It is assigned by fellow scientists (Merton, 1968, p. 56) mainly for achievements in theory and multidisciplinary research (Luhmann, 1990, pp. 249-250) and "affects the flow of ideas and findings through the communication networks of science." (Merton, 1968, p. 56) As earlier achievements are understood as the promise of greater achievements later on,

those academics with a certain reputation receive more attention and can communicate their findings with greater ease than researchers that could not yet accumulate reputation – the Matthew effect in science (Merton, 1968, pp. 57-58). This effect is central in the production of truth superseding true communications with well-known ones. The complexity of a great mass of true communications is reduced by reputation that highlights only some of those true communications.

At least since the 19th century, the system of science is linked through the organization university to the system of education, a fact that influences both research and teaching (Luhmann, 1998, pp. 784-785). Autonomy was always a central aspect of the university, already since earlier times and always connected to the intromission of the givers of autonomy in the universities, generally in instances of control (Stichweh, 2014, pp. 34-35). It is in the university where the differentiation of science into different disciplines is furthered (Stichweh, 2014, p. 36). The scientific disciplines develop from "a classificatorily generated unit of the ordering of knowledge for purposes of instruction in schools and universities, […] into a genuine and concrete social system of scientific communication." (Stichweh, 1992, p. 3) As such, disciplines turn into subsystems of the social system science (Stichweh, 1992, p. 4) and, therefore, central elements of the development of science as such. Scientific publications were a main part of this differentiation as they were able to bring together a wide community of scientists with similar interests since the late 18th century. This led to a specialization and more restrictive conditions on what communications were acceptable for publication. "In a kind of feedback loop, publications, as the ultimate form of scientific communication, exercised pressure on the scientific production process (research) and were thereby able to integrate disciplines as social systems." (Stichweh, 1992, p. 11) Science is thus defined by a structural coupling between the functional system and a variety of organizations with universities at their core. This allows to combine the universal inclusion of the functional system (all scientific communications can be part of science) with the general exclusion of organizations (that only accept very few persons as members and exclude everyone else), universities are therefore the tool for science to manage its own openness and treat persons differently even if all have the same access (Luhmann, 1998, p. 844). They, also, take part in the production of truth.

Science, as every other functional system, "presupposes equality and creates inequality." (Luhmann, 1982, p. 134) The tendency to increase inequality by the assignation of reputation and higher probabilities to provoke connecting communication because of it strengthens differences. The inequality between participating organizations is just another factor that contributes to a fundamentally unequal social system of science. The production of truth and -as a consequence- reputation does happen both in science as a functional system that only works with codes and programs and in universities and other organizations of science that include other factors in their communicative autopoiesis. This is how a global functional system such as science is localized and defined, at least in part, by regional boundaries insofar as politics and other systems define how universities can work (Luhmann, 1997, p. 72). The influence in science by politics, law, and other systems through the universities corresponds with "regional differences [that] are going to be transformed into different degrees of participation within the framework of one global society, and, therefore, we have a problem of `underdeveloped countries´." (Luhmann, 1977, p. 43) Politics or economy can push for certain concentrations in teaching or research, universities may have to fulfil requisites that are not part of science or education.

The meeting points of the diverse logics of functional systems, organizations and interactions - people interacting academically in concrete universities, journals, etc.- are affected by those differences and inequalities, especially in the Global South. As soon as particular communities start to impose their norms and mechanisms, the universal access is obstructed and the "distance between the cosmopolitan principles of universal inclusion and the dispositions of administrators or

particularistic communities increases." (Mascareño & Chernilo, 2012, p. 53) Therefore, every communication has to follow both the principles that each functional system defines and the rules of the informal networks in place (Mascareño & Chernilo, 2012, p. 53). This can lead to conflicts that favour one or the other logic. Informal actions can become formal ones via mechanisms of influence within organizations (Mascareño & Chernilo, 2012, pp. 53-54). You can, for instance, publish an otherwise unpublishable text if you engage in an exchange of favours with the editor of the journal in question. Thus, "the system operates informally but under a veil of formality." (Mascareño & Chernilo, 2012, p. 54) Those informal networks, to be understood as interaction systems, are the third main factor that influences the production of truth. The result is a particular conception of science determined in large parts by non-scientific factors:

"Academic research and debate is often understood not in terms of disputing explanatory or interpretative propositions, but as a contribution towards a political project or towards generalized positive societal change in order to achieve inclusion in politically guided processes of resource distribution." (Kleinschmidt & Gallego, 2017, p. 13)

At the same time, there are exclusionary practices in the academic organizations of the Global North, related, above all, to reputation as the secondary code of science. This is visible in the citation practices. As the most recognized researcher -those to be cited- generally work in the Global North, "knowledge workers locate their arguments in texts that arise within a specific and objectively definable historical and geo-socio-political space." (Connell et al., 2017, pp. 24-25) This "structure is sustained in the post-colonial world by differences of wealth and institutional support, but also by the practices of knowledge workers in the periphery." (Connell et al., 2017, p. 25) Amongst those practices are what we came to call programs – theories and methodologies that are defined in the Global North and that have to be discussed to avoid exclusion from the scientific means of communication: journals and conferences, above all.

"In knowledge-production work, methodology – though usually discussed in abstract terms – is materially part of the steering of labour. Methodology prescribes rules for the gathering of data, or rules for legitimate interpretation and communication. At this level, extraversion is a remote, impersonal steering of knowledge-producing labour. Through its very impersonality, it may be effective in subordinating knowledge work in the South to models and norms developed in the North, which appear simply as definitions of best practice, scientificity, or modernity. The conditions that might disrupt this steering, or introduce rival principles – for instance, responsibility to local communities – are important in understanding relations between knowledge formations." (Connell et al., 2017, pp. 27-28)

Connected to those practices of exclusion related to the production of truth are the mechanisms of diffusion. Fernanda Beigel distinguishes three different circuits of publication of academic findings in Latin America that "cross the national academic fields segmenting the processes of consecration." (Beigel, 2016 p. 3) The mainstream circuit is defined by the big publishing houses and services around Thomson Reuters and Elsevier and provides international prestige. This circuit is completed by alternative transnational circuits that are engaged with open access and regional circuits, especially in the Global South around platforms such as LATINDEX or SCIELO. Those circuits provide lesser prestige, generally connected to a certain region. Finally, there are local circuits that are outside the global databases and indexes and generally distributed in print only by local universities, publishing companies or research institutes. Here, the prestige is strictly local, albeit not necessarily academic. These circuits are differentiated "in function of a principle of hierarchy build on the base of inequalities in relation to economy, discipline and the capacity to write in English." (Beigel, 2016, p. 10) Latin American academia is separated into internationalized scientists

that concentrate on foreign journals and university professors that follow the local agenda and publish locally. With them, the culture of evaluation within universities split into two: academics are evaluated in function of the local circuits that are hardly connected "and many times dominated by endogamous criteria" (Beigel, 2016, p. 14) or in function of the norms of universal science and separated from "the local agenda of socially relevant problems." (Beigel, 2016, p. 14) As Burawoy says, the modes of publication produce a situation where "national sociologies lose their engagement with national problems and local issues." (Burawoy, 2005, p. 22) This diagnosis is shared widely in Latin American social sciences. For instance, Eduardo Gudynas understands the mainstream circuit as follows:

"In order to enter this type of journals, it has to be done in English and almost always it is necessary to adapt to the fashionable topics in this sphere, to cite the authors present in this space, and to be functional to a conventional Cartesianism. Many national and even local questions do not fit this frame." (Gudynas, 2017, p. 54)

In other words, both the local and the international orientation tend to define their own mechanisms of production of truth – theories or methodologies that are accepted or not. The preference for one or another circuit is not only based on personal preferences, "the incidence of the circuits in the construction of academic careers and agendas depends to a certain degree of the historical process of professionalization of each scientific field and the characteristics of each region." (Beigel, 2016, p. 11) Connell and her co-autors have a more pragmatic view on this phenomenon. They show that a number of researchers in the Global South have publication strategies that combine publications in the mainstream circuit with publications in more local journals. The basis of publications are not material exclusions -nor language- but rather a constant negotiation "influenced by the economic and institutional situations of knowledge workforces." (Connell et al., 2017, p. 31)

Truth is produced in science. However, the possibility to participate in this production is defined by the institutional logic of the organization and the personal networks one belongs to. Science is a global system, but science is made locally – as is truth. Therefore, a concrete case study is needed in order to understand this more complex production of truth in the nexus of science, university, and personal network. The production of truth in Ecuadorian sociology could be a good way to understand the interactions between the different systems.

3. Development of truth in Ecuadorian sociology

Truth is produced at the intersection of the functional system science, different organizations engaged with science, and interaction systems of scientists and non-scientists. It works differently in each system, connecting (or not) with other true communications, providing influence (or not) within universities, or leading colleagues to talk about something else (or not). While truth itself is part of science, the production of truth -the same thing is true for the diffusion of truth- is therefore clearly local and has to be studied locally (Connell et al., 2017, p. 26). This is why it is important to make a distinction between the different levels that constitute the local and analyse each in itself and in relation to the others.

3.1. A brief history of Sociology in Ecuador

In Ecuador, there is a considerable delay in the formation of sociology as a proper academic discipline. The first chair of sociology, as part of the Law Department of the Central University of Ecuador, was created already in 1915 and connected first to "a social thought linked to the project of radical liberalism." (Campuzano, 2005, p. 419) Teaching corresponded with a general introduction into social sciences and lacked specialization (Sarzoza, 2014, p. 62). Instead of engaging with

sociological theory and methods, the different professors for sociology worked on different takes on social reform, including racial improvement (Campuzano, 2005, pp. 413-414). The rare references to contemporary sociologist did not influence systematically the research undertaken (Campuzano, 2005, p. 419, 421). So, this first sociology does not constitute itself as a sociology with a defined research field and distinct methods. It is a mere auxiliary science for the law school that is defined by narrative strategies and political effects (Campuzano, 2005, pp. 426-427). There is no operative closure, the few publications remain on a strictly local level, the programs used are connected to a local version of philosophy of law (Jácome, 2005, pp. 135-136) and mostly not even academic (but political) – in short, this is an activity not connected to sociology as academic discipline.

This started to change during the 1950s . In 1950, the Latin American Association of Sociology is founded and organizes its first conferences in 1951 in Buenos Aires, 1953 in Rio de Janeiro and 1956 in Quito, at the Central University (Campuzano, 2005, p. 439). In 1957, the first conference of Ecuadorian sociology took place in Cuenca . At least the two conferences in Ecuador lacked conceptual and methodological work in favour of "individual genialities" (Sarzoza, 2014, p. 84) within a positivistic panorama. Nevertheless, those conferences were key to push for an institutionalization of sociology on the continent and within Ecuador, concrete recommendations for teaching were elaborated (Campuzano, 2005, p. 439). The first tangible change after those conferences was the creation of two new chairs at the Central University: American Sociology and Ecuadorian Sociology (Sarzoza, 2014, pp. 62-63) The institutionalization was finally undertaken after the year 1960, pushed by Manuel Agustín Aguirre, Vice-president of the Central University in 1961 and President in 1966 (Polo, 2012, pp. 44-45), and Francisco Salgado, dean of the law department, who created the School of Political Sciences between 1960 and 1962 as a part of his department. The main reason for the creation of that school was "the need to train academically the administrators of the state." (Campuzano, 2005, p. 440) The 1960s are marked by several close-downs of the Central University by the government (in 1963, 1964 and 1966) that led to changes in faculty and leadership of the university (Campuzano, 2005, p. 437) and the foundation and re-foundation of several schools in the field of social sciences. In 1963, a School of Sociology and Anthropology was created that in 1967/1968 was integrated with the earlier School of Political Sciences as School of Sociology and Political Sciences under the leadership of Agustín Cueva (Sarzoza, 2014, p. 57). This happened during an agreement of academic and infrastructural support between the Central University and the University of Pittsburgh that went from 1963 to 1968. As a part of this agreement, the School of Sociology and Anthropology was created with a teaching program based on structural functionalism – and met with heavy rejection by students and professors that led to the end of the agreement in 1968. This might explain the strict rejection of North American sociology in the School of Sociology and Political Science since 1968 not because of internal theoretical critique -using, for instance Wright Mills against Parsons- but because of the "automatically established association between this tradition of thought with the national dictatorship and with the US-American cultural imperialism." (Campuzano, 2005, pp. 442-443) This phase did not permit the constitution of a sociology that works properly – the constant intromissions from outside, especially, from the state, created a chaos and not an organization that participates in functional systems.

It is only after 1968 that a proper Ecuadorian sociology can develop within the university: an independent faculty is created and the courses in the law school are excluded from the teaching program. The new professors are engaged with the creation of a space of reflexion within a broadly understood political left, connected, at least in part, with political work (Campuzano, 2005, pp. 444-445). This first proper sociology defines itself as Marxist and rejects structural functionalism (Sarzoza, 2014, p. 50) and other streams of thought that are considered bourgeois. However, these bourgeois currents of sociology were never really part of the university. Instead, they did dominate

the social thought of the state during the 1960s and 1970s where they did specialize further and pushed for the creation of Schools of Sociology at the universities . At the same time, the sociology of the left that institutionalizes after 1968 had roots not in the universities but in extra-academic spaces related to worker unions. Therefore, many of the new sociologist understand themselves as organic intellectuals (Sarzoza, 2014, p. 53). This could be the reason for a persisting anti-academic attitude that defined the School for Sociology at least until the 2000s (Campuzano, 2005, pp. 441-442). The new sociologists were mainly part of a movement called tzántzicos : young middle-class men that in the 1960s engaged in politically critical reflection and literary production (Polo, 2012, pp. 42-43). Most of them had studied philosophy and were politized at the Central University (Polo, 2012, pp. 44-45). The influence of then president of the Central University Manuel Agustín Aguirre made them return to that university in order to systematize their critique (Polo, 2012, pp. 47-48). One result of this was that the Communist Party was quite prominent in the School during the 1970s and the major part of the 1980s (Ramírez, 1999, p. 276).

Until the first years after 1970, the School was mixed between remaining bourgeois and positivistic thought and diverse Marxists – only later, between 1971 and 1975, the bourgeois part moved completely into state institutions, above all the planning institute (Sarzoza, 2014, p. 55). The result was a sociology that -at least in part- was a variation of Marxism (Campuzano 2005, p. 403) but that did engage with research and at least some of the important theories (Jácome, 2005, p. 137). The rejection of bourgeois sociology and the discussion of Althusser, understood as Marxist sociology, led to a conception of critical sociology that excluded many texts even within Ecuador itself (Polo, 2012, pp. 138-139). The `tzantzic moment´ produced "a break in the order of truth, that is, a discontinuity that creates possibilities, that produces a different rhythm in the coming of processes and that demands a different language." (Polo, 2012, p. 92) The sociologists educated in this new paradigm were integrated into the school as professors after 1973 and allowed for a stabilization of the changes until the late 1990s. Teaching was organized around the possibilities of a profound revolutionary change and therefore directed towards political economy, historical materialism and the analysis of Latin American societies (Jácome, 2005, p. 138). However, the variety of sociological theories and schools of thought was excluded, especially those not related to Marxism (Jácome, 2005, p. 139). Jácome refers to some authors as the centre of teaching and thought at that time: Althusser, Poulantzas, Marcuse, Goldman -understood as structural Marxism (Campuzano, 2005, p. 445)- and several thinkers of dependency theory (Jácome, 2005, pp. 139-140). Gramsci, the Frankfurt and the Birmingham School were integrated only later (Campuzano, 2005, p. 446).

The School of Sociology of the Central University was a pioneer and their version of a critical sociology spread "to other spheres within the university" (Jácome, 2005, pp. 139-140) and formed "a condition of the institutional development of Sociology and Politics as sciences in our country" (Quintero, 2005, p. 7). While there is proof of this as early as 1970, with a letter of Cueva, then director of the School to the University of Guayaquil that was in the process of creating its own School of Sociology, the systematic diffusion of a more or less coherent model of sociology happened since the second half of the 1970s. Of crucial importance are the National Congresses of the Schools of Sociology of Ecuador that started with a first congress in 1976 in Quito. It is here where the debate over critical sociology receives major definition. One concrete product was the journal Ciencias Sociales published by the School since this year (Polo, 2012, p. 140). It reproduced the most relevant presentations of the conference and tried to academize further sociology in Ecuador (Campuzano, 2005, p. 446). However, this attempt, both in the conference as the journal, had limited success:

"the dispute on the theoretical level in this debate is not oriented much towards the discussion of the fertility of certain categories for the understanding of a specific historical problem, but rather

towards the claim of exclusivity of the right understanding of `what Marx really meant to say´.” (Campuzano, 2005, p. 447)

A consequence was that sociology in Ecuador could not specialize as a discipline but remained a rather vague complex of Marxist social sciences and humanities focussed on the social totality and not on concrete sociological topics (Campuzano, 2005, p. 449).

3.2. Interaction systems within Ecuadorian sociology

With this, we have enough material to sketch the three systems that connect in this very concrete time and place – the School of Sociology and Political Sciences of the Central University of Ecuador, between the first half of the 1970s and -at least- the 1990s. The interaction system is the one with less material and has been hardly studied until today. There are several informal groups that are superposed and connected to each other. Those groups are represented in the most relevant members of the School of Sociology and Political Sciences but extent to other academic and non-academic spheres. The most important groups would be on the one hand the tzantzicos that separated in the late 1960s “into a literary stream and an essayistic and political stream.” (Polo, 2012, p. 94) The centre of the essayistic stream were Agustín Cueva and Alejandro Moreano who influenced heavily the practice of the School and who did maintain contact with the literary stream. The other important group within the School, it major representative being Rafael Quintero, was connected to the Communist Party and other political parties of the left. While there are many disagreements concerning politics, the conception of sociology, teaching, and research, is relatively coherent during the time studied – as are the groups that only disintegrate after the year 2000. The multiple and open conformation of those groups is visible in the constant relationship between the School and political actors, especially, worker unions:

“The decision to turn Marxism into the organized axis of the intellectual life of the School was a political decision. The first transformation of the curricula of the School happened in 1971 in the heat of a strike of the Frente Unitario de Trabajadores (FUT). The second, in 1974, in the middle of a wave of strikes that led to the first national strike of October 1975. In those social processes, students and professors participated actively.” (Moreano, 1984, p. 279)

The result was a state-centred view on society with the nation-state as the main actor of political change (Ramírez, 1999, p. 281). The political aspirations of the main groups that formed the School determined their view on society in a way that led to a reduction of topics and ways of thinking. Truth was, for those groups, connected to politics and not science. This might explain that their influence in politics was considerably greater than their influence in science. Their view on science was influenced by the simplistic Marxist idea of superstructure that is determined by material relations – science was, therefore, but an expression of the structures of production within society. This would correspond with a first reduction of complexity: science is reduced to some streams of Marxism, everything else remains outside.

On the level of formation of reputation, the importance of the mentioned thinkers is central. They, in fact, did “play a charismatic role in science. They excite intellectual enthusiasm among others who ascribe exceptional qualities to them.” (Merton, 1968, p. 60) The result is the institutionalization of charisma within the School of Sociology and Political Sciences based on the idea of organic intellectuals and their political actions and not on concrete academic achievements. Maybe this is why it was defended later on by means that went against the logic of science. Following Franklin Ramírez, at least in the 1990s, there are no academic communities in the Schools of Sociology in Ecuador. Sociology at that time was not characterized by discussions or even exchange of bibliography or ideas. “Silence is the norm.” (Ramírez, 1999, p. 280)

3.3. Ecuadorian sociology as (part of) a functional system

The newly institutionalized sociology did understand itself since the beginning as a critical sociology. Critical sociology usually is the attempt to criticise the professional sociology in place that consists of and produces "true and tested methods, accumulated bodies of knowledge, orienting questions, and conceptual frameworks." (Burawoy, 2005, p. 10) This set of ideas and practices is examined by critical sociology in the traditional sense. However, in the case of Ecuadorian sociology, there was no professional sociology to be criticised. Sarzoza (2014, p. 63) claims that the critique rather went against the proto-sociology run by lawyers that was into place until the 1960s. This may be one part of the critique, however, the main critique to be found in the programmatic texts of the School goes in another direction. The new Marxist sociology is understood as "rigorously rational" (Quintero, 1976, p. 13) and dedicated to "the demystification and destruction of all pseudo-scientific bourgeois sociology" (Quintero, 1976, p. 13). This went against the "juridical-political phase" of the School in the 1960s when it worked "as a School for Public Law badly amalgamated with an ideological stream of bourgeois sociology." (Moreano, 1984, p. 278) Social sciences were seen as under the control of the dominant classes that used them in order to further their class-interests and try to "block the development of a scientific knowledge of our society [...] hiding the true mechanisms of the functioning of our society." (Quintero, 1976, p. 14) This "`bureaucratic sociology´ [...] `classifies´ our reality without developing rigorous rules of thought." (Quintero, 1977, p. 131) It is understood as `untrue´ in the sense of the negation of what sociology should be for Quintero and the other leaders of Ecuadorian sociology at that time. This demarcation allows the correction – "a recognized error is no longer an error." (Luhmann, 1990, p. 202) Therefore, the definition of bourgeois sociology is not a mere rejection but an orientation for further research and teaching (Luhmann, 1990, p. 170). As reduction of complexity of many different streams of thought into one, it leads -negatively- the development of sociology. Quintero detected the need to "fortify the critical currents in the Social Sciences within our universities" (Quintero, 1977, p. 129) as part of the political fight in Ecuador. For the leaders of Ecuadorian sociology, this attempt brought about "important theoretical and political fruits." (Moreano, 1984, p. 279)

On the level of the functional system science and the subsystem sociology, both to be understood as global systems, a marginalization or exclusion of Ecuadorian sociology can be observed (Altmann, 2017). Relevant theories are not or only partially discussed, research and publications stick mostly to the local level – if not, they tend to be related to migration, as in the case of Cueva or Bolívar Echeverría , both developed their though in Mexico. Professional sociology in the sense of Burawoy is hardly existent and the relatively strong critical and public sociology –that "brings sociology into a conversation with publics" (Burawoy, 2005, p. 7)- are left without a point of reference. They cannot criticise or diffuse research or debates within professional sociology, because there are none. This could explain the tendency to dogmatism that Burawoy (2005, p. 16) predicts as pathology of critical sociology (and faddishness in the case of public sociology) – the debates about who understands Marx better expressed in the desire to turn the School of Sociology and Political Sciences into a place "of re-elaboration of Marxist thought" (Ramírez, 1999, pp. 275-276). The production of truth under these circumstances leads to communications that cannot be used in sociology elsewhere. The strict locality of Ecuadorian sociology may not be so special (Knorr Cetina, 1992, p. 411), however, the separation from the logics established in sociology as global functional system condemned it to remain local. This is, of course, not a problem of sociology as such (Luhmann, 1990, p. 431) but rather something that pre-determines the development of sociology in Ecuador. The reduction of truth through a certain brand of Marxist sociology makes Ecuadorian sociology blind for the complexity of global sociology.

As we have seen above, various media take important roles as liaison media in societal governance. As societal governance has no central organizer and coordinator, it needs the liaison media that play intermediary roles. In a sense, societal governance is nothing more or less than the efforts of building the social order. From Talcott Parsons to Niklas Luhmann, "how social order is possible" has been a fundamental question of sociology. In this respect, to study the question "how societal governance is possible" is almost equivalent to tackling the fundamental sociological question. However, there is a small but important difference between the two questions. The former does not include private or personal problems because societal governance copes with only public problems that are advocated in the name of the collective interest, while the latter includes private affairs such as intimacy. The distinction between the public and the private draws this fault line. On the private side of the distinction, people create and develop their relationship through social media. On the public side, societal media can contribute to societal governance through setting goals, brokering resources and facilitating collaborations. If we want to maintain and develop the level of social diversity and complexity that modern society has attained, developing the centreless societal governance is a necessary task. The wave of societal media will provide flexible and helpful contributions for us. Emerging societal media have begun to show a new horizon of the development of societal governance.

3.4. Sociology and organization

More relevant to grasp Ecuadorian sociology is the treatment of the effectively localized sociology in the School of Sociology and Political Sciences of the Central University of Ecuador. It is here, on the level of one concrete organization, where the decisions are taken that define what sociology is in Ecuador. The moment when a vaguely leftist thought enters academia is also the moment when it has to academize itself – the new critical sociology has to adapt to the mechanisms of the university (Campuzano, 2005, p. 446). This becomes visible in the insistence of the main actors on the rational and systematic character of the new sociology that supposedly was absent in the earlier bourgeois sociology. The new sociology is thus presented as able to leave the speculative or merely theoretic level behind, given that it acknowledges the class struggle as fundamental characteristic of modern society and therefore it can place the sociologist in a clear relationship with society. The subject of sociological research is understood to be the working class which allows to stick to scientific objectivity – understanding society as an object for the working class (Quintero, 1976, pp. 13-14). The university is seen as a "centre of fight" (Quintero, 1976, p. 15) for the political left and against itself as reproducer of the "hegemonic ideologies" (Quintero, 1977, p. 129) within society. The old university "is nothing more than the space of circulation of a class knowledge produced within the ˋtheoreticalˊ matrix of the dominant ideology." (Moreano, 1984, p. 277) The solution, at least for a time, was to admit leftist organizations in the School of Sociology and Political Sciences where they could "develop their politics with the help of the institution and its resources." (Quintero, 1977, p. 129) These organizations could also influence the academic development of the School, criticising teaching in order to fortify a thinking of the vanguard (Quintero, 1977, p. 137). One result of this politicization was that the School was considered by some a "school for political cadres" (Quintero, 1977, p. 131), a political party or -as such- "an organic intellectual of the working class" (Moreano, 1984, p. 279). The rejection of those adscriptions led to an increasing militancy of students and professors in leftist organizations outside university which -in turn- weakened the scientific research efforts (Moreano, 1984, p. 280). If the School of Sociology and Political Sciences can be considered an organization in the sense of Luhmann, the production of decisions through decisions (including decisions over members) (Luhmann, 1998, p. 830) becomes visible. The first decisions are the recruitment of the permanent members, the compromise with Marxism and the push for a critical sociology, and the openness towards leftist organizations to the degree of having them participate in

decisions concerning the curriculum. Those decisions produce further decisions. A harsh break is impossible – at least not within the organization itself. The decisions portrayed until now show this clearly: in the second half of the 1970s, a series of decisions are taken that will define the development of the School until after the year 2000. After this year, membership starts to change (because of the retirement of members) and the organization has to adapt to influences from its environment (like laws of higher education or institutional pressure for publications).

But let's review some concrete decisions and their outcome. The compromise with social reality in the attempt to change it through class struggle led to an academic program around historical materialism as intellectual weapon (Granda, 1977, p. 216). This was one of the major areas of study until the late 1990s. It was about "the recognition, within the process of class struggle, of the formation of Marxist theory, and, in a second stage, to achieve the research of imperialism and our social formation." (Quintero, 1977, p. 137) A second key area of study is history of social thought that was dedicated to "a critical analysis of the conditions that allowed the apparition, constitution and development of the social science of the bourgeoisie as class consciousness." (Granda, 1977, p. 217) Here, the "exclusive institutional design" (Ramírez, 1999, p. 276) becomes clear: central thinkers and streams within sociology like Max Weber are largely invisibilized. The style of teaching can be described -at least in part- as "(sometimes prophetical, sometimes textual) transmission of the central contents of culturally prestigious texts. [...] Interpretation is relegated to a second level." (Ramírez, 1999, p. 279)

While research was a main concern of the School -connected to the hope to "awaken, through its publication and knowledge, the class consciousness of the workers." (Granda, 1977a, pp. 219-220)- it could never fully institutionalize. Existing channels, like the journal Ciencias Sociales, suffered a lack of resources, others, like a Research Institute, were never created (Granda, 1977, p. 218). This led to a pessimistic view on publications as they represented "only an indication -and [...] a late indication- of the variety of research activities in an academic institution" (Quintero, 1977, p. 139) that generally are distributed only several years after the research itself. Therefore, the view on research and its impact is rather pragmatic: "the influence of this activity flows immediately into teaching, that might be seminars, classes or conferences, or into informal channels through discussions inside the School as an intellectual community that shares theoretical interests." (Quintero, 1977, p. 139) There could not develop a culture of research with continuous effort of academic discussions within and without the School. Effectively, the research produced was result of isolated efforts of some individuals and could not turn into an institution or even a continued work (Ramírez, 1999, p. 279). A major part of the research done happened in thesis (Jácome, 2005, p. 126). This weakness in research and theoretical reflection is yet to be overcome.

The reduction of the scope of teaching is result of decisions taken in the 1970s – decisions that do not concur with the proclaimed criticality that would include a critical lecture of Weber and others. The problems with publications and the institutionalization of research led to a considerable weakness of the School in this respect – and to a further "decoupling of teaching and research." (Jácome, 2005, p. 129) Research was done and published – but in other universities that supported the effort of the professors of the School of Sociology and Political Sciences. Thus, a path dependency is created that links the School as organization to other organizations like unions or political parties. And their crisis during the 1980s and 1990s brings about a crisis of the School in the Central University and other schools of sociology influenced by it. The end of the Eastern Block was a central cut in the theoretical production and the cooperation with leftist parties (Ramírez, 1999, pp. 276-277). At the same time, the 1980s and 1990s are marked by an internal crisis of the schools of sociology that led to a reduction in the number of students, a de-actualization of the curricula and a weakening of research (Jácome, 2005, p. 119).

The result was "a theoretical gap of the schools of sociology of the country with relation to the intellectual production to the hegemonic academic centres" (Ramírez, 1999, p. 277). International debates on sociological theories were largely ignored and innovations arrived, if they did, in a personalistic manner, through researchers that did postgraduate studies abroad. The participation in the global circulation of knowledge was low, Ramírez speaks of "(self)islolated niches" (Ramírez, 1999, p. 278). Therefore, the 1990s saw an unstructured opening of sociology that turned into something self-destructing where "research [...] seems to collapse irremediably." (Ramírez, 1999, p. 277) Conceptual and theoretical (and not communicative) closure leads to self-destruction. As science can only observe what is observable through existing concepts (Luhmann, 1990, p. 225), the theoretical closure and lack of actualization could be another reason for the breakdown of research – new phenomena could not be described adequately with old theories.

Another result is related to prestige. Organizations, like the School of Sociology and Political Sciences, can reward academic performance (Merton, 1968, p. 56) following their own decisions. What for Merton was the fear of a growing concentration of the big thinkers at centres of excellence (Merton, 1968, p. 57), could become also a tendency to not reward thinkers that move outside the currents of thought deemed relevant by the organization. Universalism as scientific norm would be violated like that – by a selected few thinkers that use their prestige against others and function as gate keepers (Merton, 1968, p. 62). They define what is true and what not. This is the moment when researchers can start to use their reputation outside the organization against the organization (Luhmann, 1990, p. 680) – for instance, changing to another organization that offers better conditions or pushing for changes within the organization itself. Given the long history of migration of sociologists from Ecuador and the common practice until the 2000s to work at several institutions at the same time, this function of reputation seems to be at work in the School of Sociology and Political Sciences. The result is a further weakening of the organization. So, maybe the clash between internal and external reputation is another factor for the crisis of the 1980s and 1990s.

3.5. Forced re-institutionalization

The 1990s saw a strengthening of development politics related to non-governmental organizations. This change in society meant a change in sociology that increasingly adapted to the need created by the significant number of development projects. It became less theoretical and more technical in teaching and research (Ramírez, 1999, p. 286). The work of the schools of sociology turned into "the search for instruments capable to realize a work of marketing" (Ramírez, 1999, p. 287). Both teaching and research became tied directly to the market constituted by NGOs and other development actors (Ramírez, 1999, p. 291). The 1990s were therefore marked by several reforms of the curricula. Now, the School of Sociology of the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador, created in 1975, seemed to be more active than the School of the Central University – albeit both engaged in several reforms in the 1990s and 2000s (Jácome, 2005, pp. 127-128). In this context, teaching was opened to other theoretical currents beside Marxism, such as Weber, Parsons and microsociology (Jácome, 2005, p. 131) and, later on, discussions about modernity and identity (Jácome, 2005, p. 150), while, at the same time, a specialization in applied sociology became more relevant (Jácome, 2005, p. 134). The background of those reforms was not a more or less coherent movement among professors and students, but external pressure -by the market and the universities themselves in the 1990s, by the state in the 2000s. That led to a weakness in the direction of the reforms, the efforts changed continuously depending on what external entity could exercise pressure more effectively (Jácome, 2005, p. 146). Maybe, this moment could be described as a breakdown of the autopoiesis of the Schools of Sociology as organizations – they were not longer able to produce decisions from decisions and suffered from a direct intrusion by external organizations. In the same sense, the modes of reduction of complexity ceased to function. As a result, critical sociology enters in crisis.

The reformed institutional sociology is marked by "a form of domination in which instrumental knowledge prevails over reflexive knowledge." (Burawoy, 2005, p. 17) The growing relevance of policy sociology, understood as "sociology in the service of a goal defined by a client" (Burawoy, 2005, p. 9), and the inability to react to this trend within institutional sociology, would be major outcomes of this development.

Now, the mechanisms of (self-)exclusion from the global production of knowledge become apparent – universities, through pressure of the state, decide to turn them into the logic how research is to be understood (Espín, Amezquita & Chávez 2017, pp. 123-124). A formal adaptation to the imagined global logic -by converting old teaching material into `new´ power-point-slides, receiving post-graduate-degrees from dubious universities, or publishing irrelevant material in journals or publishing houses without ability to diffuse this material (Espín, Amezquita & Chávez 2017, p. 124)- blocks both a real integration into global social sciences and a locally relevant development of sociology. The loss of somewhat stable scientific communities and the persistent absence of systematic scientific communications beyond a local level (Stichweh, 1992, p. 3) did push Ecuadorian sociology back to a state where the operative closure is fragile, and production of truth is fragmented and coincidental.

4. Conclusion

Sociology needs self-observation. It needs to observe itself as observer of society (Luhmann 1997, p. 78). This necessarily goes beyond a mere history of sociology. It is about an analysis of the conditions of operation at different times and how those conditions evolve. At each moment of this evolution, sociology produces an identity "for re-impregnating recurring events." (Luhmann 1997, p. 71) So, it is not only about breaks, but about a continuously produced identity with at least two sides. And this happens always at three distinct levels of sociality: sociology as subsystem of the functional system science, sociology as part of a concrete organization, and sociology as something produced in interactions. So, sociology is not only the functional system but also the organizations and groups involved. Of course, the later ones are mere environment for the former one – sociology as a system perceives organizations and groups that participate in sociology as noise. However, this noise can be transformed into meaningful marks, for instance, into prestige. Truth does exist only in science. But it needs a certain environment that allows for a production of truth that can be accepted in science – or at least that does not hinder this production. This helps to understand the effective inequality in sociology (and the other sciences) – it is always tied to organizations and groups that are not only sociology, but also subject to other logics. Under certain circumstances, they do not engage in a scientific production of truth or a production connected to only a few of the theories that exist. Therefore, sociology can only be understood in the matrix of the three levels of sociality.

This becomes clear when tracing the development of Ecuadorian sociology. A group of young thinkers formed sociology on an organizational level as critical sociology. Truth was defined as leftist and Marxist approach to social reality with the expressed aim to change it. The slow disintegration of this group and the growing external pressures on the organizational structure left this project without basis. At least for a while, sociology was present at neither of the three levels – it became a buzzword that worked only on the organizational level but lacked concrete interactions to back it up and a systematic participation in the functional system of science and sociology. There were basically no attempts to create a new definition of truth. Ecuador -at least partly- was excluded from sociology. Sociology as a locally present activity had to be re-constructed – something that might succeed with the latest support for institutional sociology at the Central University. What is needed is a reduction of complexity via the production of truth – certain dominant theories or approaches to

reality that are discussed on the different levels and allow for an integration within the levels of organization and interaction.

Different moments of institutionalization within organizations and thus connections to the functional system sciences are defined by different programs of the application of truth – in each moment, something else is true or not. This effort of reduction of complexity determines to a certain point what future developments can be possible. However, the moments of crisis correspond with crisis of all or some of the three different systems. In this sense, an organizational crisis like the one that marks Ecuadorian sociology since several years, cannot lead to a further inclusion in sociology as functional system – but rather to organizational conflicts or inactivities.

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