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“NOT DROWNING BUT WAVING...”: REMAKING MODERNITY AND ITS DUTCH CRITICS

With *Remaking Modernity*, our foremost goal was to engage historical sociologists in a conversation about where our enterprise has been and where it might lead. This exchange alone shows that the book has succeeded.¹ Yet, as with all conversations, an exchange of views often involves misunderstandings, some of which uncannily reveal new issues and possibilities. These disconnects are particularly likely when linguistic differences are added to those of theory, method, and substantive expertise. Precisely because we do not always recognize our project in these thoughtful reviews, we begin with a short restatement of our understanding of the volume. *Remaking Modernity* should be understood above all as an exercise in stock-taking and, we hoped, bet-placing. By mapping the current state of historical sociology – as it has been practiced within the United States and within the discipline of sociology – we sought both a baseline for understanding our own collective genealogy and an assessment that would inform discussions of analytical paths yet unexplored. These discussions are intimately tied to particular places, times, and exchanges, and Dutch historical sociologists are likely to engage such a project in very different ways than have their U.S. or other national counterparts.² Ultimately, we hope that new, potentially shared, possibilities are illuminated by the contrasting situations of Dutch and American scholars engaged in historical sociology. This symposium is a productive beginning.

The multiple purposes of the volume inform both our editorial introduction and the individual chapters focused on specific research fields. As historical sociologists, we began by reflecting on our own scholarly lineages within various intellectual projects. The version of historical sociology that many of us encountered in the 1980s and early 1990s – the ‘second wave’ of historical sociology – represented the efflorescence of scholarship that had been marked by the encounter of the New Left with the complexity of historical change. Although there were predecessors to this movement, as well as contemporaries who marched to other theoretical drummers (Adams, Clemens and Orloff 2005: 7), the collective project associated with Theda Skocpol, Charles Tilly, Immanuel Wallerstein, and many others powerfully constituted

the context for subsequent cohorts of recruits to historical sociology in the u.s. academy. This collective project not only defined specific problematics – revolutions which ‘should have’ happened but didn’t; large-scale transformations in political economy; states which were formed and became ‘strong’ or ‘weak’ – but it also constructed its own theoretical lineage.

This construction involved, above all, a selection of ancestors. Karl Marx and Max Weber headed this purposively-assembled family tree. Émile Durkheim was deemed more problematic, and many other great thinkers of previous centuries were largely bypassed. Because the first wave was constructed by the second wave as a legitimating and guiding canon, Nico Wilterdink misinterprets the omission of theorists as our (Adams, Clemens and Orloff’s) evaluative judgment rather than as an analytical description of how the leaders of second-wave historical sociology represented their own theoretical predecessors. Thus we pay little attention to Auguste Comte in the relevant section of our Introduction precisely because the second-wavers paid little attention to Comte in mobilizing historical sociology as a collective project in the 1970s and 1980s. This is not to say that Comte might not be a source of new inspirations for historical sociology, but the recovery of those excluded in moments of canon formation is another kind of enterprise. Inevitably this canon formation reflected the most influential texts on sociological theory and, consequently, the imprint of Talcott Parsons’ reconstruction of sociological theory, in *The Structure of Social Action*, on generations of American graduate students was evident even in the worldview of scholars who were in many other respects staunchly anti-Parsonian.

This selective reconstruction also acted upon the more recent past and foreclosed attention to the historical sociology of earlier American sociologists, particularly those working within the post-war modernization paradigm and its political variants. The latter ultimately faltered in the face of the encounter with historical complexity, a conjuncture exemplified by *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (an influential 1975 volume edited by Charles Tilly for the *Studies in Political Development* series). Many other important works were conceptualized before or outside the pairing of Marx and Weber by the resurgent historical sociologists of the 1970s. But rather than being constructed as a distinctive collective contribution – a ‘wave’ in our terminology – the ripples of important work by Neil Smelser, Robert Merton, and Marion Levy (who, by the way, was not an early female feminist pioneer in sociology but rather a man known for both his expertise on China and a pair of notably robust sheepdogs) were smoothed over and merged into the indeterminate interval between the newly reconstructed first wave and the second, the classics of nineteenth century sociology and the revival of the 1970s and 1980s.

Our intention in the Introduction was to understand our own ‘family history’ – as well as the family lore – as a prelude to assessing the current state of

historical sociology and the paths that might be taken. This is a critical step, we argue, because many important theoretical commitments are embedded in that custom-made lineage: a tendency to treat actors as instrumental and intendedly rational; a lack of attention to categories and actors typically associated with the non-rational and non-instrumental (e.g. culture; women); a Eurocentrism linked to a particular established understanding of world history. Only by reflecting on our own unconscious adoption of these theoretical commitments, extracted from readings of work that we found – and still find – enormously inspiring, would we be able to consider why there are important ‘white spaces’ on the evolving map of contemporary historical sociology. Many of us had found ourselves moving into these territories, our writing often representing efforts to bring gender or culture or Africa back into a scholarly conversation constituted around quite different commitments. Given that contemporary historical sociology enjoys a greatly expanded range – geographical, conceptual, and topical – the possibilities of a more coherent conversation would require rethinking some of these foundational elements.

One of our greatest surprises has been the reception of this claim regarding motive. Despite our protestations to the contrary, some American commentators have presumed that Adams, Clemens and Orloff simply wanted to overthrow their symbolic fathers and mothers. Yet rather than embracing the role of Young Turks, we respond, our generative concern was to understand a felt sense of loss, a nostalgia for the coherence of the second-wave project of historical sociology as well as a need to rethink that project in the present moment. To some of our Dutch readers, apparently, our covert motives are less toppling our academic mothers and fathers than a project of imposing a unitary solution upon the field as a whole. Against that imputed standard, Nico Wilterdink, for example, quite rightly judges that we have failed. But *Remaking Modernity* is not intended as a one-stop shop but rather *as* a survey of a range of possible approaches to common intellectual problems. Indeed, we would insist that the conditions of possibility for such a hegemonic solution probably do not exist.

What would those conditions entail? At a minimum, concentrated control over recruitment and promotion within the discipline would be necessary. Yet in the United States, the number of important institutions of graduate training has grown in recent decades and few sociologists would venture to identify single individuals as towering over the field (and being granted authority in proportion to their prominence). In addition, one journal – or perhaps a handful of like-minded publications – would have to monopolize gate keeping for scholarly publication. Here again, however, the trends in the United States are just the reverse, with ever-more outlets for publication and increasingly few shared signals of what is important to read. Given these objective circumstances, we would argue that the prospects are poor for a tightly

bounded cadre of historical sociologists to succeed in dominating the field. Some do attempt such feats. As we have discussed through many encounters with James Mahoney, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and many of the contributors to *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (2003), a methods-driven conception of historical sociology may produce a more programmatic agenda, but it remains agnostic with respect to the issue of ‘what questions are worth answering?’ given limits of personnel and time. Furthermore, by bracketing concerns, most notably culture, because they are not amenable to particular methodological commitments, the result is a false tidiness.

While we are not opposed to analytic convergence in the service of more powerful explanatory models, we believe that such theoretical developments must follow from a grounded understanding of scholarship, rather than being imposed *a priori*. To repeat, the imposition of a dominant solution was not the point of our Introduction or the volume and, we would wager, not even a possibility at this historical juncture. Thus Clemens’ finding of pattern in the arguments was not a ‘desperate attempt’ to find unity but rather an effort to discern whether any common orientation could be found in the diversity of work that we both recognize and admire. To the extent that there are emergent points of – even partial – convergence, this provides important orienting information for the field.

We have learned a great deal from this mapping of existing scholarship, and have also been enlightened by the pattern of response to *Remaking Modernity*. For a hefty tome from a scholarly press, it has ‘flown off the shelves’, according to our publisher, particularly into the arms of younger scholars and graduate students. This is not to say that the volume has been greeted with unmitigated applause. (For yet more lines of critique, see the review symposium in the *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, Adams et al. 2006). Whereas authors who are themselves part of the second wave generation have tended to focus criticism on how we characterized that second wave, younger voices have chided us for not being more programmatic and expansive. We agree wholeheartedly that this is worth doing and urge these critics to take up that very job. Their response testifies to a hunger for a mapping of the field and uncertainty as to how to locate research projects within a set of theoretical conversations. Our hope is that *Remaking Modernity* has provided a provisional yet reasonably accurate map.

But we have not mapped *all* historical sociology, we underline. It should be obvious that this effort to reassess American historical sociology is rooted in a particular place and time. So much of the broader enterprise of American sociology is u.s.-centric, and moves in a rhythm with American society. In this respect, historical sociology in the States has always been an anomaly – so Eurocentric in its origins that a case had to be made for the importance of studying the genesis and historical development of ‘the United States’ – and therefore its developments can be more difficult to track. Scholars engaged in

assessing the trajectory of Dutch historical sociology would adopt a different starting place than we did, and presumably one in which there didn't have to be arguments for incorporating the Netherlands itself! Nevertheless we believe that a conversation across our very different national situations is both possible and valuable, not least in helping all of us recover some intellectual possibilities that have been lost in each national disciplinary formation and constituting a more international one.

Undoubtedly there will be continuing challenges of cultural translation. For example, some Dutch historical sociologists feel quite beleaguered by rational choice theory. This is simply not a problem in the United States, where rational choice theory is only weakly established in the discipline of sociology. It is a forceful, even dominating presence in some of the major subfields within political science (particularly American politics and international relations), but is challenged even within economics, notably by the rise of the decidedly sociological 'freakonomics' focused on explaining phenomena that appear anomalous to any rational actor model. Within American historical sociology, utilitarian forms of reasoning are increasingly being integrated with non-utilitarian ones, rather than displacing them. We think that by explicitly recognizing the limitations of the assumption of actors' instrumentalist rationality that characterized the classics of the second wave, sociologists can do a better job of grasping how rationality is historically and conceptually constructed. Rationalities themselves, and constructions of actors, are historically formed – and that is important to analysis of particular epochs.

We also expect translation challenges to flow from substantive differences in the histories of the social systems that u.s.- and Dutch-based scholars occupy. The distinctive histories of Dutch property (Wilterdink 1984) and of Dutch versus American political pluralism – the former pillarized, the latter not – are salient differences that can be expected to have a significant impact on the specificity of Dutch historical sociology. In general, just as we think that different developmental trajectories/revolutions/welfare states/democratic regimes operate differently, so do different historical sociologies. There will be some similarities and interactions, but we would in no way expect any Dutch or European 'wave' to mimic its American cousin.

Perhaps there are also institutional academic differences to be taken into account. American historical sociology is generally organized in an institutionally non-hierarchical way, not along 'Big Man' lines. This is frequently misperceived from Europe, where the few exceptions – e.g. Parsons, Merton, Tilly, Skocpol, Wallerstein – may appear to European readers to tower over the surrounding field. But in American scholarship the majority of scholars operate more independently, acknowledging and advancing but not being governed by the programmes of these and other figures. Perhaps this is different in the Netherlands – we would like to know. Take, for example, Norbert

Elias, who is referenced in our Introduction, but who had a very different reception in the u.s. than in the Netherlands, in part because his major works were not translated into English until the 1970s and beyond. This shaped the distinctive American and European receptions of figurational sociology, and is one key cause of the differences in the development of Dutch and American sociology in which we are all interested. To what extent does Elias qua meme and model continue to have a lineal structuring effect on Dutch historical sociology, and to what extent not? We hope for enlightenment from our Dutch colleagues on this and other points. But not, we hasten to add, under the sign of reinstituting any Big Man or Big Name schools of thought. Our predilection should not be surprising. There are two basic modes of having an intellectual impact, lineage and recruitment, and the recruitment model is far more important in the u.s. academy. Nor are the lineages that do operate tightly controlled. In fact they are recombinatorial, such that graduate students are often trained by pairs of contrasting intellectuals. The typical way that young sociologists distinguish themselves within an American historical sociological lineage is by cross-fertilization with another. The second wave itself, which as we wrote returned Weberian answers to Marxist questions, was an example of this pattern in the largest sense. How much more so is this now in the United States, given that the lineages are more plural, the third wave less concentrated than the second.

Another issue evident in some of our interlocutors' responses puzzles us. Why are things so bleak with respect to conversations between Dutch sociologists and historians? (Presumably this symposium, which includes Marjolein 't Hart's astute introductory remarks, is an exception. 't Hart's [1993] work on fiscal structures and state formation is itself an exemplary dovetailing of history and sociology.) For whatever reason, these conversations are happening in the United States. Cross-disciplinary journals like *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, *Social Politics*, and *Studies in American Political Development* (to name only three where we have served as editors) as well as interdisciplinary associations such as the Social Science History Association make this possible, as do ongoing workshops on work in progress that bring together historians and social scientists (see, for example, the Transitions to Modernity Workshop at Yale University and its French counterpart at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, among others).³ In part because of these wonderfully fruitful ongoing interactions, it has been important for American historical sociologists to reflect on disciplinary identity within an interdisciplinary field of practice, and to think about what is distinctively sociological about their work. We take it that things are – in this case unfortunately – are different in the Netherlands today.

Meantime, and more happily, American historical sociologists benefit from other forms of interaction with Dutch historical sociology and will continue to do so. Some of these interactions involve interpersonal networks. Others are

evinced in the now recognized specificity and importance, in u.s.-based historical sociology, of the 'Dutch case'. The history of the Netherlands was not a formative presence in the work of second wave historical sociologists, but on these shores it is now recognized as a key case that has provoked substantive theoretical reorientation (see, e.g., Adams 2005; Gorski 2003). Third, and not least important, is the work of Dutch historical sociologists themselves. In Johan Goudsblom's 1992 'cool book about fire', for example, he investigated the really, really long *durée*. This is something that until very recently has been missing from u.s. social science and historical work, revived primarily by talented outsiders to the social sciences such as Jared Diamond with his *Guns, Germs, and Steel* and *Collapse*. That is now beginning to change and we predict that Goudsblom's and others' long-range vision will be inspiring new work on this side of the Atlantic.

But what about still larger historical sociological goals? According to Goudsblom, all sociology should be historical sociology. In other scholarly exchanges, we have acknowledged this as the 'maximum programme' for the historicization of sociology. However the conditions for realizing this programme are not present in either the Netherlands or the United States. (In fact it is our sense from reading the contributions that Dutch historical sociologists feel more marginalized and beleaguered in their national academy than do their American colleagues in theirs.) So though we don't expect the maximum program to be realized in either the us, or for that matter the Netherlands, for reasons we laid out in the original introduction, we do expect that other subfields in sociology take on board many of the crucial conceptual and analytic advances of historical sociology – e.g. context-dependence, path dependence, institutional effects, the problematic character of social change (and therefore not easily progressive character of social change). This is quite clearly happening even in the less historically sensitive discipline of American political science, where concepts of path dependence and policy feedback have become absolutely mainstream. We also expect a continued incorporation of a more historical sensibility into American social science, even as, as we say in the book, sociology and history remain distinct formations of knowledge. Perhaps Goudsblom would retort that we should retain the maximum programme as utopian vision and inspiration. That might well be right.

Even from a more pedestrian platform, there is much to be done. We hope that *Remaking Modernity* enables the next steps. One direction would involve addressing absences, which are manifest both in the volume and our collective intellectual traditions. We take our Dutch critics' suggestions regarding bringing in demography, technology, etc. to be very much in the spirit of this ongoing disciplinary project. Our point was that 'bringing things back in' (by now a well-worn trope) needs to take place within a consideration of why they were excised, in this case from the second wave of historical sociology, or at most carried on in a sort of parallel play. What is bracketed out shapes

knowledge. And of course some things simply cannot be towed back in as they were, and that can be a good thing. George Homans could launch a call to ‘bring men back in’ his 1964 Presidential address to the American Sociological Association. But nobody could do that now, at least not with a straight face. One would need to bring ‘people’ back in, or actors, or men understood as shaped by assumptions about masculinity back in – because of the intervening gender revolution. (The ongoing revolution, that is... for as Marjolein ‘t Hart notes, most of the contributors to *Remaking Modernity* could have gone farther in that regard.)

The same holds for the disproportionate focus on Europe. We recognize the U.S. as a parochial intellectual space, in need of an opening. The same is true of the place of Europe in the array of European historical sociologies. In the individual contributions to *Remaking Modernity*, Ming-cheng Lo, Zine Magubane and Nader Sohrabi most clearly articulate some of the consequences of this urgent insight, which is really a call to globalize the historical sociology of the future.

As the possessors of a grand and unique intellectual tradition, we expect Dutch historical sociologists to make important contributions to this future. And after all, if any nationally located group of historical sociologists can be expected to ride big waves without drowning, and canalize them productively, it must be the Dutch.

Notes

1 We are glad that, in the words of the famous Stevie Smith poem, we weren’t thought to be ‘much too far out’ and (the title) ‘not waving but drowning.’

2 See for example the nine comments on *Remaking Modernity*, to which were devoted a special 2006 issue of *The International Journal of Comparative Sociology* (vol. 47 #4).

3 For links, see <http://www.yale.edu/macmillan/transitionstomodernity/> for the Yale workshop and <http://www.ehess.fr/ue/2007-2008/ue1326.html> for the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales. There are many other examples.

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The choice to rhyme every other line in "Not Waving But Drowning" lifts up the very dark tone of the poem to something that is slightly more lighthearted. The rhymes allow the reader to enjoy the reading of the poem, without being too distressed by the dark subject matter. On the other hand, the contrast between the rhyme scheme and the discussion of death and unintentional neglect, only draws more attention to the most somber elements of this piece. You can read the full poem here. Summary of Not Waving But Drowning. "Not Waving But Drowning" by Stevie Smith describes the emotional situation of a man who is drowning, coming together in 1983 as a duo with Bridie and guitarist John Phillips are impossible to pigeon-hole with sounds blending rock, pop, ambient and world music. In the late 80s David formed My Friend The Chocolate Cake, an outfit that ventured down the path of a more accessible pop sound releasing seven critically acclaimed albums. Over the years David has been a supporter and promoter of indigenous music particularly that from New Guinea, Melanesia and Australia. Nobody heard him, the dead man, But still he lay moaning: I was much further out than you thought And not waving but drowning. Poor chap, he always loved lar Nobody heard him, the dead man, But still he lay moaning: I was much further out than you thought And not waving but drowning. The best Not Waving but Drowning study guide on the planet. The fastest way to understand the poem's meaning, themes, form, rhyme scheme, meter, and poetic devices. Not Waving but Drowning Summary & Analysis. by Stevie Smith. Upgrade to A+. Not Waving but Drowning Summary & Analysis. by Stevie Smith. Summary. "Not Waving but Drowning" Vocabulary. Select any word below to get its definition in the context of the poem. The words are listed in the order in which they appear in the poem. Moaning. Metacritic Music Reviews, Not Waving, But Drowning by Loyle Carner, The English hip-hop artist follows his Mercury Prize-nominated 2017 debut with his second LP. And it's perhaps the first rap album in history to fe... Summary: The English hip-hop artist follows his Mercury Prize-nominated 2017 debut with his second LP. And it's perhaps the first rap album in history to feature a song about celebrity chef Yotam Ottolenghi. Collaborators include Sampha, Jorja Smith, Jordan Rakei, and Tom Misch. Buy On. Record Label: AMF. And not waving but drowning. Perhaps the death of the man has acted as a kind of wake up call for the speaker, as she sees his suffering resulted in suicide and is worried that her own life might end the same way. Assonance there isn't a full rhyme scheme, but certain words connect via sound "waving" / "drowning" sound very similar, for example, so it's easy to see even through the sound as well as the visual image of these how they could get confused.