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The article traces the contributions of Austrian social science in the inter-war period, comparing it briefly with the time after 1945. It shows how the response to local development was nevertheless closely linked to global ones and how the shift from politically relevant research to policy relevance occurred.

Marienthal and After

Local Historicity and the Road to Policy Relevance

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Local Historicity: In-between-ness and the Distinct Contribution of Austrian Social Science

Science, as we have come to understand in the last decade, is neither ideology-free nor gender-neutral. Nor is it, despite the claims to universalism, free from national constraints, as both the history of science during war times and the postwar history of national science policies convincingly demonstrates. In fact, the 'national components of scientific inquiry' are just beginning to surface (Jamison, forthcoming). Not only have military and economic interests played a leading role in promoting or neglecting certain fields of research, but national traditions, blending cognitive, organisational, and cultural features in a unique mixture, have provided powerful channels for the growth patterns of knowledge production. What holds for the natural sciences has never been doubted for their younger sisters, the social sciences. Too undisguised has been the connection between military and economic interests of European rulers from the eighteenth century onward, with the birth of statistics, demography, and political economy; too intimate has been the relation between the constant threat of disruption triggered off by the process of industrialisation and sociology's equally perennial

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concern with the problem of social order. But while a comprehensive history of national styles and components in scientific development remains to be written, this article wishes nevertheless to address itself to the entangled relationship between local and global historicity, illustrated by the case of Austrian social science in the interwar years. An attempt will be made to show how national contributions—conceived in a specific local political and economic environment—can form an innovative part of an international current of ideas and institutional trends. Furthermore, the general direction that the development of the social sciences took will be described in terms of a shift from politically relevant to policy relevant research; implying a concomitant rise of institutional structures articulating what policy relevance is about. Finally, questions will be raised about the often taken for granted presumed universalism in the social sciences which may turn out to be nothing but a cultural hegemony in disguise, linked to the dominance of a particular country that has taken the lead in shaping what passes for policy relevance through the structuring of its own policymaking institutions and the demands of its technological elite. Related to these questions, we will also ask whether the supposed universalism tends to flourish in times of economic affluence, while in times of recession a contraction and reorientation towards national issues and institutional traditions takes place.

A retrospective second look at Austria—a unique approach?—has the merit that one can follow the evasive shifts of the Zeitgeist while the shadows of history grow longer. What was once a great European power has become a small democratic nation state, situated at the periphery of Eastern and Western Europe. A once-distinctive national culture, in itself heterogeneous and conflict ridden, has joined the choir of other national minicultures after having learned the hard way how to manage conflict. According to Torrence (1981), the development of sociology in Austria proceeded along an original path, but was twice thwarted: its first contribution took place in the peripheral isolation of the provinces of the vast Austro-Hungarian Empire, while its second innovatory contribution, under the banner of Austro-Marxism, came to a brutal end when the clerico-authoritarian regime seized power (Knoll et al., 1981; Rosenmayr and Höllinger, 1969). What followed after World War II is, according to Torrence, merely the 'blossom of an artificial seed', an import from the other side of the Atlantic, even though the transfer came about under the sponsorship of a former Austrian, Paul F. Lazarsfeld. These claims have some merit, but they reinforce the

stereotype of 'the science that nobody wanted', while I will try to show that the Austrian contribution corresponded to certain stages in the overall societal development and its institutional framework.

What is undoubtedly the case is the strong focus of the early sociological tradition, associated with the names of Gumplowicz, Ratzenhofer, Ehrlich, and others, upon some of the most salient problems of the old Empire—foremost its ethnic problems, to which problems of class were added later and—as behooves a state with an strong bureaucracy and a well-articulated legal system—the development of a 'sociological method of jurisprudence', which laid the foundation for a sociology of law which indeed came to an end in the 1930s. None of the early sociologists, however, as Torrence makes clear, stood a chance, in their pursuit of a sociological pluralism, against the centralist conservative-liberal establishment of the Empire. A politically tightly controlled university system and a very modest degree of sympathy of the Court, even for the natural sciences (Broda, 1981), added obstacles to the establishment of a discipline which was far from being a professionalised field or of showing signs of social utility. It needed the downfall of the Empire and the breaking up of its ethnic diversity which had been unable to overcome their contradictions, to create that special and dense climate of a metropolitan setting which was to become 'the Vienna of the time between the wars'. This in-between-ness is not only a chronological one. Vienna and Austria at that period were literally in-between different cultural identities, born between a suddenly truncated nation state, plagued by doubts about its capacity to survive and the bourgeois nostalgia for the glories of the past which lingered on for quite some time. It was also politically in-between an increasingly polarised political spectrum which stretched irreconcilably from left to right until the situation exploded in a civil war. In-between-ness existed also in spatial terms: amidst the provinces dominated by conservative political majorities, 'Red Vienna' with its clear socialist majority stuck out like a sore thumb, a constant challenge and persistent threat, alive with its pressing housing and other social problems and the vigorous attempts of the municipality to reform housing and welfare policy, the educational system and the city's finances. In-between-ness was even more a pronounced characteristic of the socialist movement. Torn between its radical rhetoric, the constant talk about the impending revolution and its pragmatic, down-to-earth reformist strategies, it was caught in what proved to be a creative cultural tension, albeit one with disastrous political consequences (Leser, 1981).

Austro-Marxism—a term that was originally intended as insult—came to denote the theoretical work of a group of young academic Marxists, which was a regional variant of international Marxism characterised by its attempts to develop an alternative between reformism and bolshevism. It also become synonymous with the day-to-day tactics and political practice which the socialist movement deployed in building up its organisational network for restructuring the whole cultural life sphere of its members (Leser, 1981). The thrust of these efforts was directed, as is well known, towards creating parallel structures—literally a counter-world against the bourgeois lifestyles. Multiple networks and organisational ties were to encapsulate the entire life of party members (amounting to a third of the Viennese population) in their leisure and education, from childhood to funeral services. Lacking the political clout to effect changes in the sphere of production, the effort to effect any changes at all turned upon the building of an elaborate organisational network. In their temporal in-between-ness, the leaders of the movement saw this concrete, yet principled, takeover of the cultural sphere as an anticipation of a historical future yet to come. The blocked, politically not-feasible restructuring of work conditions and control mechanism was compensated by creating a borrowed future—in the life sphere outside work, which, however, led to isolation and a tragic underestimation of the real dangers that were to come from the political outside.

It is in this general and unique climate of in-between-ness where cultural efflorescence and innovations took place. The confrontation with Austro-Marxism and its own temporal in-between-ness is the underlying thread colouring also the rhetorical and institutional developments in the social sciences of that time. In the following, I will examine three examples: the debate between the Viennese School of economics and its Austro-Marxist counterpart; the strand of thought directed towards social planning and a rationalistic world conception, exemplified in the life and work of Otto Neurath; and finally, the beginnings of applied social research, in its Austrian form an anticipation of an institutional model, which Paul F. Lazarsfeld was to realise later in the American context. Although I will draw upon the work of individuals, this should, nevertheless, be interpreted as reconstruction of lines of development that transcend individual biographies.

Planned Economics, Scientific World Conceptions, and the Unemployed of Marienthal

Properly speaking, the fundamental works of the Viennese School of marginal utility, with their emphasis upon the subjective side of economic value theory, fell still into the period of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire, namely 1870-1890. Their continuing influence into the 1930s and—in a certain sense—even their survival well into the 1950s, justifies it, however, to treat the ever renewed confrontation with Marxist economic theory, in its specific Austrian variant, as an important contribution of the time we are dealing with (Marz, 1981). The two schools of economics literally lived in different problem worlds, but drew at least implicitly upon each others' work in their heated polemics. The acuteness of economic problems—above all the misery of massive unemployment, the social consequences of inflation, and the concentration of bank and industrial capital—added fuel to the debate about the feasibility, urgency, and questioned or asserted efficiency of a centrally planned and administered economy. Both schools wrote with an engagement and solid craftmanship which was never before and, unfortunately, never afterwards reached again (Marz, 1981). But although the actual problems were acute, the debate remained essentially a theoretical one; not only was economics a well-established academic discipline with a high reputation which set the standards of the debate, not only were the main proponents of Marxist economic theory well-educated 'academic Marxists,' but the political situation was far too unstable to allow anything like 'putting economic theory to a test', as we are witnessing today with Reaganomics. Schumpeter's brief interlude as Minister of Finance in Renner's cabinet illustrates this very well (Flos et al., 1983). It was overshadowed by personal and political conflicts with his colleagues and ended with his dubious involvement in a deal in which shares of one of the largest Austrian industrial enterprises were sold to an Italian group—which put an end to any serious nationalisation plans of the government. Thus, while the practical input remained low, the confrontation of two strongly opposed theoretical and practical programmes of economic dogma and policy received its special flavour and high standards from the academic context and the political brisance of the main issues alike.

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That the theoretical positions of Austro-Marxism were far from homogeneous can be seen when comparing such diverse intellectual orientations as those of Otto Bauer, Max Adler, and Otto Neurath. What united them was their streak of activism, but the 'practical utopia' reached its fullest and most creative expression in Otto Neurath's life

and work. His guiding vision was what he termed the scientific world conception. In a book of the same title, he blended Marx, Comte, and behaviourism into a kind of empirical sociology of the future which should provide the rational guidelines for all forms of personal and public life, for education as much as for architecture, for social life as well as economic life (Neurath, 1979). Sociology should become a synthesis of history and economics and since it was concerned with human behaviour, its scientific basis demanded to view life as temporal-spatial processes in which figurations of humans and their environment occurred. Since only science was capable of providing a unified system of statements with the help of which controllable forecasts about temporal—spatial processes could be made, Marxism became for him the scientific tool par excellence for planning history, since he saw in it the best example of a strictly scientific and unmetaphysical physicalistic sociology.

Neurath combined a unique set of interest and skills: he was an early and prominent theoretician of the so-called war economics, a term which he apparently coined himself, a social technician and expert for nationalisation questions, a leading member of the Vienna circle, and the founder of a popular version of visual statistics.[1] His early preoccupation with the conditions under which wars influenced population development, supply and demand, problems of monetary flow, organisation of food procuration, and their impact upon money and banking made him realise that during war times the usual allocation mechanisms of the market was replaced by administrative mechanisms, while money and monetary flow became a kind of macro 'natural goods' economy. Since he observed cases in which the general welfare of the population increased as a result of war economy, Neurath drew the conclusion that one had to transfer the planning features of his economy into peace time. The instruments which were created in war had to be utilised for a conscious life planning in peace.

His fascination with the practice of planning, derived from his theoretical work, made him a much sought-after expert on nationalisation questions, although his political fate as expert was bound up with the political fate of those whom he sought to advise (the Räterepublik in Bavaria). It also led him to what he considered to be the task of the new strategic age; to plan society, since everything should become transparent and controllable. He was a social optimist par excellence, a

proponent of socio-technics and the possibilities for steering social progress with technical means; culminating in the conviction

> that a significant part of our life order can be formed purposefully, that especially consumption and production can be determined quantitatively and controlled, even though we can not yet control with socio-technics ethics and customs, religion and love or do not wish to do so.

Comparing the performance of an economy in war and peace time had led him to believe in the greater efficiency of a planned economy; by extending his planning model into one of scientific rationality the 'scientific world conception' came to be the key for understanding the world and for controlling it. Socialism and the democratic planning of material production were for him the 'institutionalisation of strategic-technical thinking for the realisation of humane aims', especially in creating a more efficient and human economic order. The founding of various museums for the purpose of educating the masses in the basics of economic and social thought can also be interpreted as an education in cognitive skills deemed necessary for participation in the democratic planning process. But above all, it was the scientific world conception and the elaboration of its epistemological foundations through logical empiricism which should become the scientific basis for 'serving life', including the everyday life of ordinary people.

When Otto Neurath died in 1945, his life had been full of difficulties, but also intensity. His involvement with nationalisation issues brought him before a political trial for high treason and the academic establishment remained closed to one of the foremost protagonists of the scientific world conception. For a significant part of his life, he was a political refugee in exile, well acquainted with poverty. But he never seemed to have lost his belief into the possibility of designing effective strategies for bringing about collective happiness and he remained an adherent of 'utopistics as science': such a science would have to construct not only one utopia, but a whole set of them, comparing different designs of social order.

In her memoirs and reflections on the origins of applied social research in Austria, Marie Jahoda paints a vivid picture of the pervasive influence that Austro-Marxism and the social democratic movement had upon young intellectuals on the left: Austro-Marxism was not just a theory, but a world view. She singles out three aspects of significance for

the beginning of social science research: the belief into the possibility of a humanitarian, democratic socialism; the emphasis upon the present with its rich cultural transformations; and finally, the educational function of Austro-Marxism—i.e., its attempt to educate the workers and to render visible the historical dimension (Jahoda, 1981).

Not surprisingly, given the high priority attached to reform of the educational system in and outside school as well as the dominance of the socialist municipality in this domain, one of the early crystallisation points became the psychological institute of Karl and Charlotte Bühler. The other focal point, but apparently more devoted to 'social book-keeping' than social science research, was the Chamber of Labour, where a number of studies on the living conditions of deprived groups had been undertaken with the explicit aim to improve their condition. In Marie Jahoda's account, the naivité of the young researchers who wanted to undertake research in order to draw consequences for political action and their carelessness vis-à-vis established disciplinary boundaries gives them the fresh approach of highly motivated amateurs.

It was around the Bühlers' institute of psychology—a kind of third way between Freud and Adler—where the institutional genesis of applied social research took place. The Bühlers were internationally known and kept an open house for visitors from abroad. Much of the work pursued at their institute was done on a contract basis, most of it with the municipality of Vienna. When Lazarsfeld was able to found his 'Wirtschaftspsychologische Forschungstelle'—an institutional innovation which he considered among his greatest achievements—a new kind of organizational tie was established between what was later to become a worldwide practical model of contract research based on the relationship between sponsor, client, and researcher (Lazarsfeld and Reitz, 1975). Lazarsfeld's famous adoption of a well-known quote of the day 'that a coming revolution needs economics (Marx); a successful revolution needs engineers (Russia), while a defeated revolution has made social psychologists out of us (Vienna)' contains in a self-ironising way already the tension which would later become apparent with the mounting pressure of commercialisation upon this model. But in the early 1930s, the sociographic concerns, as the authors called them, were still very much tied to the social democratic movement; out of which arose the most important work of the group, the Unemployed of Marienthal (März, 1983). What was studied were not the individual unemployed, but the whole unemployed village, the changes and repercussions of

prolonged unemployment on lifestyles, perceptions and political morale. Its general conclusion was verified not much later by the success which Hitler scored also among social democratic workers—namely, that prolonged unemployment leads to resignation and not towards revolution. Highly original in its methodological conception, which was ironically partly due to the lack of a clearly formulated research design,

> Marienthal grew out of our will to know, out of our contacts with the unemployed in the political movement, out of numerous improvisations and out of a work team, the roots of which lay in the youth movement in which neither a formal division of labour existed, nor a systematic accounting procedure; out of our world view and out of an intellectual discipline, which we had slowly acquired through our university studies and through market research. Methods resulted from the concentration upon a problem, not for their own sake [Jahoda, 1981].

The importance of seizing upon a theme at a period where the empirical phenomenon under investigation was widespread, its political brisance, a highly developed sensitivity towards structural factors combined with an unusual mixture of qualitative and quantitative methodological principles, point towards what could have become the institutionalisation of a new school of empirical research, which would have combined scientific discipline and methodological innovation with reformist concerns of 'making the invisible visible.' The reasons this did not take place in Austria are known: Marienthal was published in 1933; the greatest part of the unsold copies were burned shortly afterwards.

Local Historicity and Global Developments: The Missing Link

What is striking about the three cases examined in the context of local historicity is the degree to which they partook in what was equally an international movement of ideas, concerns, and tendencies. As we have already seen, the continuing influence of the Viennese School of Marginal Utility was renewed by their equally continued confrontation with Karl Marx's value theory and the interpretation that the young Austro-Marxist economists made of emerging socioeconomic phenomena like monopoly capitalism, finance capital, imperialism and the

economic aspects of the ethnic conflicts. The influence of the Viennese school survived the actual life span of its founding members, and also of Austria—'their home country which had become narrow and poor' (Marz, 1981). At the end of the war, only von Wieser was still alive; among the next generation Ludwig von Mises, Hayek, Haberler, Morgenstern, and Machlup were soon to leave Austria in order to teach in more internationally minded universities of the North American continent. On the other side of the debate, Hilferding, perhaps the most original economist among the Austro-Marxists, had left Austria early for Germany, while Otto Bauer and Karl Renner became more preoccupied with their political work and legal studies, respectively. In an essay written in 1927, Joseph Schumpeter concludes that the influence of the Viennese School is still dominant, and Walter Schiff's 'Planwirtschaft und ihre okonomischen Probleme', published in 1932, testifies to the continued salience of the nationalisation issues. According to Marz, Hayek's 'Weg zur Knechtschaft,' which appeared after World War II, is but a continuation of von Mises's earlier work—part of the unrelenting debate about the fundamental irrationality of a planned economy functioning according to socialist principles. Thus, it is not only the fact that the main points of the controversy touched the essential theoretical and political issues of economic policy, but it is also due to the highly articulated and well-worked out positions of Bauer, von Mises, Schumpeter, and Oskar Lange that the debate reached high international standards and scope, well beyond the tragic fate of Austria at that time.

Turning towards the work of the Vienna circle, we can observe in a similar vein that the issues and the intellectual movement they were soon to engender lasted well beyond the actual survival of individual members. Logical empiricism became a worldwide philosophical movement already in the 1930s, with a string of international congresses organised around themes like those of the unity of the sciences or the fundamentals in mathematics. While the Vienna Circle has long ceased to exist in Vienna, its individual members having fallen victim to the authoritarian regime or fascism, assassination, death, or emigration, the movement spread worldwide and dominated philosophy for decades to come. Although the concerns with planning on a scientific basis took a personal form of expression in the work and life of Otto Neurath, the main thrust behind the scientific world conception, the epistomological foundation of a planned and highly rational design of 'forms of life,' have to be seen as part of a more widespread antimetaphysical stance which

was to be found in England as well as in the United States. The fascination that the Soviet Union exerted upon intellectuals of leftist or even Fabian persuasion at that time is well known—new fuel was added to the political imagination and utopian visions on an almost day-to-day basis.

Likewise, applied social research was of course not unique to Austria and was far from originating there. As Hans Zeisel makes clear in the methodological appendix to the Marienthal study, survey methods were practiced long before in England and in France, and Lazarsfeld would later show that empirical social research had an extensive history of its own.

The original contribution made by Lazarsfeld and his colleagues consisted in inventing a new organizational model, which, after its successful implantation in the United States, was re-imported to Europe in the late 1950s and 1960s. Jahoda remarks that the international atmosphere which prevailed at the Bühlers' institute taught her and her colleagues that 'national specifics in research can only be legitimate, if they can be justified before an international forum,' but this applies also to institutions: Lazarsfeld's Wirtschaftspsychologische Forschungsstelle became, despite its humble local origins, part of a worldwide movement of institutionalising applied social research.

It is therefore not primarily due to the emigration of some of the leading figures or their students to various parts of the world and their successful activity outside Austria that we can explain the international intellectual scope of the cases we have analysed. The point is rather that the Austrian contributions were part of a wider international movement of ideas, innovations, and institutional strategies that had their outposts also elsewhere, but to which the Austrian case added highly specific and unique features. This international movement lived on and incorporated the Austrian contributions, long after Austria had ceased to contribute anything. Although personal fates were often tragic, it probably aided the diffusion of the Austrian contribution that some of its proponents were able to amalgamate the more local features of origin with the new environment into which they had moved. But this was not the cause.

We therefore have to return to the question, how it is possible that a small country in central Europe, one that 'had become narrow and poor', was part of a worldwide stream of global developments? More precisely, what was the international character of the problems and underlying issues which were addressed also in the Austrian scientific vernacular?

The Road Towards Usefulness: In-between-ness and Pre-institutionalisation of Policy Relevance

The period we have been looking at cannot be understood properly without according Austro-Marxism its place and delineating its influence. Compared to other 'critical' theory systems like the Frankfurt school, Austro-Marxism was far more practice-oriented and, in a certain sense, was able to create the conditions out of which further theoretical work could evolve. The new group of what were for the first time 'academic Marxists'—who would draw Trotsky's ridicule[2]—were committed intellectuals, tied to each other through friendship and personal ties, and strongly motivated under the early leadership of Grünberg, to fight against the prevailing metaphysical spirit and what were considered obscurantist traditions. They were taught that 'categories and conditions . . . always belong together . . . to the present conditions their historical antecedents have to be added'. While theorising was undoubtedly directed towards practice, its actual function was largely to serve as legitimising political practice, until the tragic clash with an unruly political reality occurred. The more political developments narrowed the degrees of freedom for theory to guide practice, the stronger the urge became to use science in order to change reality. The scientistic streak is most obvious within the Vienna Circle, but divided therein between a kind of political abstinence and Otto Neurath's utopian vision to construct human happiness with the help of a scientifically derived 'rational practice of life'. The in-between-ness of Austro-Marxism expresses itself once more: since there were few real political issues which could be influenced directly, theoretical work and scientific inquiry took the form of being *about* a future social order, which was seen as having begun *already:* nationalisation, for instance, was not only debated in theory, but steps of how to bring it about and make it function were devised; adult education was one of the most important vehicles in bringing about a new and more humane future, into which Otto Neurath's visual statistics and pioneer efforts in the popularisation of economics fitted beautifully, while Lazarsfeld's early research on the occupational choice of proletarian youth could be seen as leading up to an expanding network of counselling services provided by the City of Vienna. Yet, in all these cases, the vision of a future was necessarily coupled with its historical past which Austro-Marxsm could not fail but to reanalyse. National and even local problems were the concrete exemplars, the 'Zuständlichkeiten' in the sense of Grünberg,

that were embedded not only in a theoretical framework, but above all in a wider historical *and* future-oriented perspective. It was not a hallow pseudo-universalism, as would become the case later when under the banner of a thinly disguised ethnocentric modernisation theory world models would be simulated with neither past nor present; nor was it the degenerate version of much of American commercialised applied social research, under which any problem would become immediatised under the pretext of policy-relevance.

In the time between the wars, policy-relevance was not yet born as a category, nor was it politically feasible. Of course, the theoretical tenet of Austro-Marxism, as of other world views, was that theory should guide action. The Vienna Circle even went so far as to postulate that the scientific world view should be made the fundament of any kind of individual or collective action. But these were not criteria of policy relevance as they would be understood later. Paradoxically, the state of in-between-ness provided a secure anchorage for the present, since it was thought to be known into what kind of future the past was leading. Practice orientation meant to move ideas in a somewhat diffuse political and personal network, mediated by chance encounters and indirect influences, which were nevertheless expected to exert an impact in one direction. There was no 'decision maker' yet to address, since no institutional framework existed that was geared towards soliciting, screening, and utilising policy-advice. The structures that existed were still in the highly personalised stage of a movement in which intellectuals played a leading yet relatively undifferentiated role. However, pre-institutionalisation as I have called it, of the modern relationship between applied social science and politics was already under way.

While pre-institutionalisation in the field of economic policy followed the established pattern of interelite advice and consultations with a number of finance ministers already under the old Empire coming from the leading ranks in academic economics, the precariousness of a fascinating new venture which in the end failed to materialise, is represented at its best with all its contradictions in the work and life of Otto Neurath. His attempt to bridge popular aspirations and popularisation of the sciences at the level of adult education with the pursuit of epistemological inquiries of a unified science at the highest level of academic standards contains a grandiose vision of institutional structures to create. They should allow of the big jump forward on the road to modernity which in his view meant socio-technics and the commitment of science to a rational politics in the service of human betterment. The

turbulence of the times and of his own life biography were too great to offer more than a chance for institutionalisation, but we may wonder why such chances are lost or diverted into far less inspired, yet apparently more stable institutional channels. Otto Neurath was one of the great practical utopians, whose vision of uniting practice and theory guide, and often misguide them, but who serve as active ferment in the overall changes of institutional structures out of which innovations emerge. His ideas about rational politics, still inspired by his version of socialism, were to reappear after his death the in form of the comparatively flat and uninspiring policy-sciences. Undoubtedly he would have approved of the use of computer models for forecasting and technological assessment, but he would have been the first one to demand that the public should have access to the new skills and be fully incorporated into planning their own future. In proposing his 'Lebenslagen-Kataster', he anticipated by almost half-a-century life style research and social accounting procedures; but who among the social indicator adherents would dare today to call statistics the fundamental of human sympathy or see in the proletariat the avant-garde of science without metaphysics?

The hero in my story of pre-institutionalisation is of course Paul F. Lazarsfeld, but he is a flawed hero. His and his collaborators' contribution came at a time when policy-prone institutions—the Municipality of Vienna, but also the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation and industrial firms, began to be interested in new consumption patterns which were needed for mass produced goods and services. It is significant that his 'Wirtschaftspsychologische Forschungsstelle' was not part of the existing academic framework and had no chance of being integrated there. But the marginal position of the new applied social research proved to be surprisingly strong, as it turned out when the institutional innovation was later successfully transplanted into the American environment.

Much has been written on the strength or weakness of Lazarsfeld's political engagement or—to put it into less personalistic terms—it has been asked what kind of socialism this was that enabled him to make his famous remark about the 'methodological equivalence of socialist voting behaviour and the buying of soap' (Gitlin, 1978). In my account, the underlying question is about the kind of political engagement as it was practised under the influence of Austro-Marxism and the kind of highly professionalised politically aseptic user-client relationship that claimed policy relevance later. It amounts to letting oneself become

confused by superficial differences in context and historical ideosyncrasies if one were to separate what is really a similar evolutionary mechanism in the emerging role of social science research in a changing societal structure. The rise of the social sciences in Europe was tied to the opportunities and vagaries of an essentially moderate political reformism. As Pollak has argued, reformist practice prevailed in the actual policies of all socialist-democratic parties in Europe since 1890, despite their radical rhetoric (Pollak, 1981). The visible transition from the concept of revolution to that of the 'social question' and social policy issues could not but affect a whole generation of party leaders and union functionaries who were already more accustomed to administration than agitation and who realised early the importance of social science information for their strategies, including the probing into the interest and needs of what happened at the grass-root level.

In the U.S. context, the broader societal changes were also clearly reflected in the rise and decline of 'schools' in sociology that played the leading role in the discipline at different times in history (Coleman, n.d.). The shift can be illustrated from the preoccupation with problems at the local level—for which the Chicago School was exemplary—directed in its proto-policy relevance at a diffuse audience of City Hall politicians, journalists, reform-minded honoric citizens, and philanthropists, to an entirely new set of problems which arose from structural changes at the national level. Selling to national markets, from breakfast cereals to radio programmes, and forging new communication structures on the political level akin to the commercial became the hallmark of the new corporate actors to whom sociology—epitomised by the Columbia school—would now address itself to. The earlier locality-specific interests were replaced by new social relations between the social scientists and the large corporate actors, who themselves needed and thrived on a national network of economic production, marketing, and control (Gitlin, 1978). Thus, social science research with its shifting yet guiding set of problems is neither immutable nor can it simply be grasped in a one-dimensional historical development. Rather, it changes its nature in response to and anticipation of changes in the societal structure that bring forth new social actors and their power to define a problem agenda, as well as the creation of new institutional arrangements. While the user-client model relationship of a highly professionalised social science research enterprise was clearly absent in Austria in the interwar period, just as institutions geared to the intake of policy advice were either entirely missing or in a nascent stage on the municipal level, the preconditions for the institutionalisation of the new

kind of research undertaking for which Lazarsfeld stands as a pioneer entrepreneur, were already there—providing the link between local and global usefulness of the social sciences.

The inevitable erosion of whatever illusions about the extent of political commitment might have lingered on and the increasing incorporation of social science research into the 'administrative complex' was certianly facilitated by the salience accorded to methodology. But in order to fully appreciate the extent of the shift from a politically relevant research to policy-relevance, we have to look at the real success of Lazarsfeld's institutional innovation—namely, its re-importation to Europe in the 1960s. The hegemony of American sociology after the war, and the victory of empirical sociology in particular which promised crisis management techniques to policymakers through its technical lead facilitated the institutionalisation of the kind of applied social research which was initiated in Vienna in the 1930s.

It provided an ideal vehicle with the help of which the intellectual and ideological 'modernisation of Europe, the strengthening of political pragmatism and the corresponding weakening of Marxism' played a key role (Pollak, 1981). In the wake of the successful transplantation of empirical sociology into contexts with different national traditions, the history of the discipline had to be rewritten also (Oberschall, 1981). In his survey article for UNESCO, Lazarsfeld speaks of sociology as 'an American science' and it is obvious that he believed that the sponsor-researcher relationship of social research would apply on a global scale. Indeed, as Pollak (1981) put it, the new institutional model offered something for everyone:

> In this holy alliance for the benefit of empiricism and applied social science research everyone could remain tied to their political ideology while referring to the increased utility for policy-makers that the new science would yield: for the American businessman the new science promised the improvement of marketing strategies, to the social-democratic politician a weakening of tradition-bound, but obsolete ideologies, to the conservatives the struggle against communist utopia and to all administrators the rationalisation of decisions.

The 'substantive implications of methodological procedures' about which Lazarfeld was fondly and wisely speaking turned out to be wider than he himself anticipated. Methodologies do indeed have substantive implications, but they also have institutional prerequisites and it is within a certain political arrangement that they are most centrally in

command—and commanded. The hopeful but naive slogan of the Enlightenment—*savoir, pour prévoir, pour pouvoir*—became the crux of the social sciences. In their self-inflicted usefulness, as Schumpeter once called it, they are moving along with those forces in society that want them to be useful—arranging at the same time the scene in such a way that they indeed succeed in proving their usefulness.

Marienthal and After: Is Scientific Mediocrity the Fate of Small Nations?

In Austria, his home country, Lazarsfeld, together with Oskar Morgenstern, became the founding father of the Institute for Advanced Studies which was intended to play a strategic role between Eastern and Western Europe and within Austria in opening the social sciences to formal methods and empirical techniques which the universities were ill-equipped to provide (1958-1964). This time, the institutionalisation of applied research met with corresponding political institutional structures, certainly in the field of economic policy. Intellectual modernisation with corresponding institutional structures in policy-making had finally reached Austria.

The rest of the story of the social sciences in Austria (from 1945 onward) is briefly told: in the reconstruction period of the universities, the social sciences proceeded only slowly, with old vestiges of ideological struggles lingering on for a long time. The main achievements after the war are not to be found so much within the universities, nor within any particular discipline or field of research, but lie in the field of institutional innovations. The 'Sozialpartnerschaft', a truly unique institution in the political arena, found its scientific policy analogue, for instance, in the 'Scientific Council for Economic and Social Questions'. This Beirat, founded at a time when economic policy was under assault of how to integrate Austria into the European market and under the internal threat of the coalition breaking apart, has been interpreted as the rise to power of a new technocratic elite, consisting mainly of young economists (Marin, 1982). The unanimous priority attached to a policy of economic growth contained the promise for an almost conflict-free satisfaction of all interest groups which could articulate their needs under the guidance of economic empirical knowledge. The new technocratic elite with its claims to monopoly on this kind of knowledge could draw upon concepts and symbols of programming, planification,

and Neo-Keynesianism that were internationally in good standing as part of a modern, concentrated economic policy within a reasonable middle-range orientation.

Other institutional innovations were less spectacular and more indirect in their policy relevant aspects. The establishment of a Ministry of Science and Research in 1970 when the present government came to power certainly helped in putting the social sciences on a firmer basis. The theoretical work performed at the Institute for Advanced Studies, especially in the area of economic forecasting, was fully incorporated into an already existing expert network of policy advice. Practically all other institutions in which social science research in one form or another is practiced were founded outside the university system with more or less direct ties to ministries or agencies interested in their services. In some instances, ministries started even to expand their internal capacity to initiate, coordinate, and utilise social science research. Characteristically, one of the most important funding agencies in social science research is within the sphere of influence of one of the main proponents of social partnership, the Jubilee Fund of the Austrian National Bank, which is controlled neither by the government nor through the universities, while institutions attached to the unversity system, like those of the Boltzman Gesellschaft, are operating on a rather low budget.

It is fair to say, I hope, that social research in Austria has followed patterns as they exist in other small European countries today: it exhibits a relatively low degree of professionalisation and exists in an elaborate extra-university structure of usually quite small institutes with a high degree of dependency upon a small number of concentrated financial resources. There are few signs of any formal or explicit science policy for the social sciences (apart from official statements, of course). Yet, social science policy is alive in a highly informal network, operating within institutional structures which follow closely the overall logic of the dominant political structures. With a few exceptions, social science research at the universities remains relatively segregated from the work performed in the more policy-oriented institutes, which also has its political reasons.[3] Local problems and relatively short-term policy orientations prevail. Spectacular and internationally renown achievements in the social sciences have become rare. Is this the price to be paid for intellectual modernity? Was Marienthal indeed, as Jahoda has maintained, the result of a unique constellation which has not occurred again in the life work of any of the collaborators of the original study—not to speak metaphorically of the chances for replication in the life of a

nation? Is the price to be paid for intellectual modernity—with its high degree of policy relevance and utilization—always scientific medoiocrity?

Conclusions

In order to answer this question, we have to look at two different kinds of relationships once more. One is the intricate connection between changes in societal development and the nature of social science research. We cannot start from the naive assumption that the pressing social and economic problems in any society are but the raw material to which an enlightened social science has but to address itself in order to come forth with solutions. Rather, the interplay between themes, conceptual and methodological tools of inquiry, and the problems which underlie them, is a subtle and complex one, mediated through the institutionalised forms which social science research has achieved in a particular time and place. There can be no doubt that in the 1930s a whole gaut of pressing social and economic problems were highly visible. There can also be no doubt that they were taken up and addressed by social science research, but this response still occurred in an institutionally unmediated way, the pre-institutionalization stage of policy relevance. Therefore, a major part of the answers lay in the search *about* the feasibility, efficiency, or rationality of nationalisation—for example, about ways how to address the problems of a faltering market economy fully exposed to the forces of the world market. Otto Neurath's vision of social engineering was *about* the proper strategies of coping in a rationalistic way with life, and about means and ways what would enable popular participation in scientifically derived coping strategies. The Marienthal study, although suggested by Otto Bauer as a theme, was not commissioned by any ministry or party functionary. Rather, it arose out of the enthusiasm of engaged researchers who wanted to effect change by making visible the invisible. It contains a codification of proposed principles for similar studies in which the authors laid down their proposals on what kind of data should be collected according to what principles; it is about the research strategy to be followed in the future.

We have examined a context in which the mediating structures of policy making and reserch oriented towards it were yet to be created. The sense of urgency and commitment, the premonitions and historical awareness which are so apparent in the works of that time, derives from

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their spanning the whole gamut from past to future, in which the present is simply a strategic place from which to influence the future. By contrast, present policy-research often lacks past and future orientation. It is fitted into an existing and well-functioning institutional framework, in which the future has been subsumed under the present. Its success, measured in its impact on policy making, derives partly from the monopoly a technocratic elite was able to establish worldwide on 'its' knowledge and to control its empirical basis; but partly it is also a function of the ability to de-politicise problems by turning them into technical ones, which are by definition open to expert advice only. The uniqueness of the Austrian post-1945 institutional innovation lies in the fact that it acknowledged that objective advice is impossible in politically sensitive areas, and of incorporating bipartisan advice in a carefully balanced system of political negotiations. The success of such a stretegy hinges, however, upon the prior consensus over which political questions are to be transformed into technical ones, and the maintenance of that consensus.

The other kind of relationship to be examined once more is the link between the national and the international dimension. When I emphasized the truly international scope of the Austrian contributions in the 1930s, this is more than a nostalgic nod. Rather, we have to ask how the affinity to the movement of ideas, themes, and tendencies, which also occurred elsewhere, came about and what were the mechanisms through which the main proponents took their stand in an international debate. Under the hegemony of American social science and empirical research after World War II, reinforced through the advance of computers, a certain pseudo-universalistic tendency was to spread; it was widely believed that the methods of applied social science research would provide the kind of neutral tools that could be put to use anywhere—analogous to the myth about the neutrality of technology. In the technocratic conception of social research, national differences are reduced to insignificant variations in a world system that claims to be neutral and universal in applicability. This myth was sustained in times of economic growth and affluence when many nations underwent a push towards modernising their elites and decision-making procedures and were able to afford the luxury of importing institutions from abroad that promised to contain the latest advance in scientific methodology. In times of economic recession, however, the supposed universality and neutrality of technocratic knowledge is undergoing a severe test. The problems with which many national economies are confronted—

including their social consequences—are how to maintain their advantage in a world economy. If all knowledge to do so would be readily available in a kind of big data bank, ready to be retrieved by whoever wanted to, everyone would be successful! This is blatantly not the case.

We can therefore assume that national differences in style and content of social inquiry are in the ascendance once more. Economic and social problems put on a national face, which is only reinforced through international dependencies. If the economic recession continued, social research will become more redirected again towards the peculiarities of its national problems and also reactivate national cultural traditions of inquiry. The slow but perceptible decline of American sociology, for instance, has not only to do with its waning hegemony in the world order. In times of crisis, the Zeitgeist also gets restless and moves on, hovering here and there in order to materialise in unexpected and peripheral places, provided—and this is a difficult condition to meet—that local historicity is bound up again in the right kind of mixture with global developments.

Thus, true universalism—as distinct from pseudo-universalism which only masks the hegemony of a particular national tradition or of a particular group, even if it is spread internationally, is by definition not only pluralistic, but even more important, can only be achieved when being constantly reinvigorated and infused with cultural diversity. While any local or national scientific culture is always in danger of falling into sheer provincialism or obscurantism when it missed to check itself against international standards, the conditions of universalism are much more difficult to meet. They presuppose that cultural diversity is both creative from its local origins and open to be integrated into a global development which does not negate diversity. Science has contained this duality all along and we are challenged once more to put it to creative use; for the benefit of local science and for the benefit of universal science alike.

Notes

1. Otto Neurath founded in 1924 in Vienna the 'Gesellschafts- und Wirtschaftsmuseum,' which he called an 'adult education institute for social enlightenment'. During his exile in the Netherlands, he initiated the International Foundation for the Promotion of Visual Education by the Vienna-Method and the Mundaneum Institute on The Hague.

2. Leon Trotsky, who spent 7 prewar years in Vienna, looked the prominent Austro-Marxists over and commented 'In the old imperial, hierarchic, vain and futile Vienna, the

academic Marxists would refer to each other with a sort of sensous delight as "Herr Doktor".' He went on 'they were knowledgeable, but provincial, philistine, chauvinistic.... These people prided themselves on being realistic and on being businesslike... but despite their ambition, they were possessed of a 'ridiculous mandarin attitude'.

3. According to Bernard Marin, in the beginning of the 1970s, two-thirds of all economic and social scientists in Austria were either conservative in their political affiliation or considered themselves to be 'apolitical'.

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