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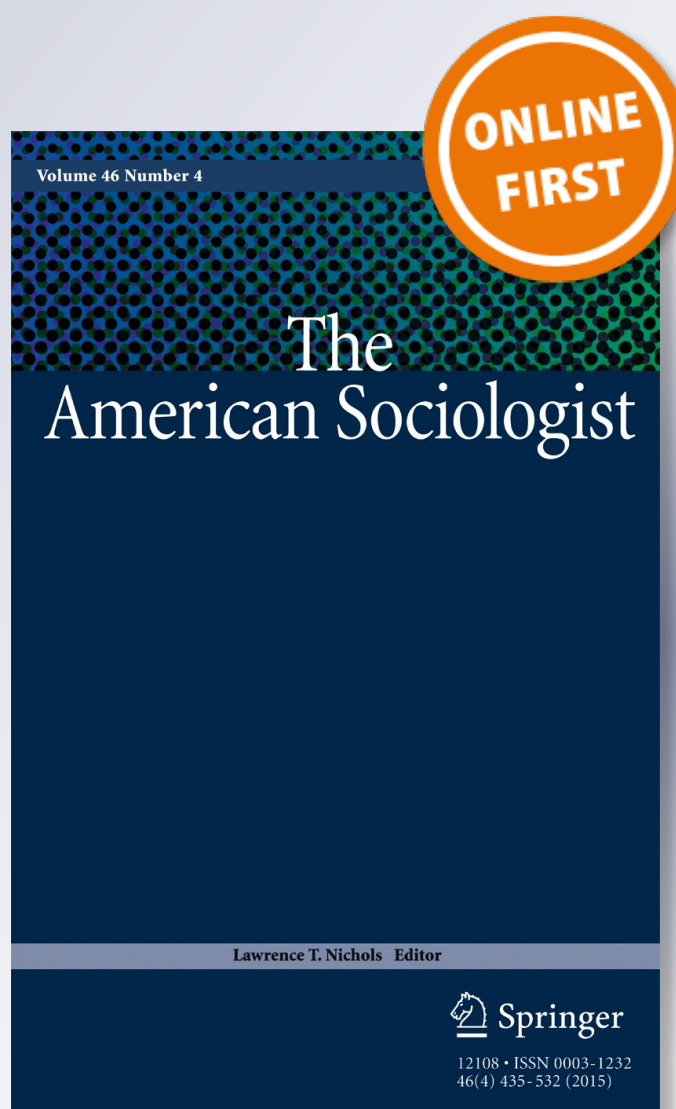
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Vision and Mission of Sociology: Learning from the Russian Historical Experience

Pavel Sorokin¹

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Abstract The present study demonstrates that the path of the “organic public sociology” (proposed by Michael Burowoy in his famous call of the 2004) as the dominating mode of sociological practice in the national context can be menacing with the serious pitfalls manifested in broad historical perspective. We reveal the four pitfalls basing on the analysis of the Russian experience through the last 150 years. First, the over-politicization and ideological biasness of sociological activities; second, the “personal sacrifice” of sociologist as a romanticized practice, potentially harmful for the discipline; third, the difficulties of the professional sociology institutionalization; fourth, the deprivation of the policy sociology development. Analyzing the history of Russian sociology in the context of the current international discussions, we give particular reference to the idea of the “Scientized Environment Supporting Actorhood” elaborated by John Meyer. We suggest the mode of communication between sociology and society, which, in our view, could be helpful for improving their interactions in various local, national and global contexts in the XXIst century. This mode escapes the political emphasis and ideological claims but rather concentrates on the more fundamental ethical issues. It also tries to overcome the limitations of the contemporary professional mainstream (instead of idealizing it). Finally, it presents itself to the publics in the understandable way, while remaining properly scientifically validated (however, avoiding the exaggerated accent on the statistical procedures and fetishization of the natural science’ principles (“numerology” and “quantofrenia”)). The public activities of the prominent sociologist Pitirim Sorokin in the American period of his career are a good example of this approach to the interactions with society.

Keywords Russian sociology · Methodology · Public sociology · Professional sociology · Sociology and society · Scientized environment supporting actorhood · Pitirim Sorokin · John Meyer

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Introduction

What is sociology? What is the main mission of our discipline and its place in the world? What is the primary aim of sociologist as a professional, a citizen, and a human? These questions are perennial for our discipline, determining the strategic visions of the discipline's future and the projects for its development (Turner 2005; Burawoy 2005; Back 2012; Gane 2011). The enduring acuteness of these issues is inevitable because of the scale of ambitions and the depth of internal antagonisms, inherent in the project of sociology since it first emerged in the US and Europe in the XIXth century. On the one hand, sociology took the role of “an angel of history... seeking to salvage the promise of progress” for the common good (Burawoy 2005: 260). On the other hand, instrumental and positivist “Comtean visions” made the discipline follow the narrow “path” of science (Burawoy 2005: 260), serving mostly not to the democratic rearrangement of the social order on the morally sublime grounds, but rather to its conservation with only limited improvement guided by pragmatic considerations and the interests of the dominating groups (Turner 2007). The internal contradiction between the moral impetus of sociological spirit (connected with the ethical questions “Why?”, “What for?”) and its commitment to the epistemology of science (dealing with the technical concerns “How?”) leads to continuous debates and clashes.

Possibly, the most inspiring answer to these concerns is the one, proposed by Michael Burawoy, the former president of the American Sociological Association in his presidential address of the 2004 titled “For the public sociology” (2005). The general success of this initiative in terms of the attention it attracted in various local, national and international contexts, is striking (Shrum and Castle 2014).¹ This triumph, in our view, is largely due to the strong reconciling spirit of Burawoy's vision suggesting the integration of the fragmented and often confronting modes of sociological practice and relating professional groups. The “professional sociology” (academic mainstream), the “critical sociology” (critical considerations of the theories, methods and the underlying assumptions of the mainstream, oriented towards peer professionals), the “policy sociology” (applied research in the interests of the client outside the academy), and the “public sociology” (voluntarily engagement with multiple non-academic publics in multiple ways) claimed the strategic partners holding shared interests, supporting each other, and devoted to the common final goal – defending the humanity (Burawoy 2005). What could be more attractive than such vision of our discipline, its structure and mission? Burawoy argues that “public sociology” is the most oppressed and underestimated form of sociological practice (at least, in the American context) but it is no less important than any other “sociology” and even necessary for the flourishing of the discipline. Even more, Burawoy puts “public sociology” in the center of his claim masterfully persuading us that it is vital for the fulfillment of the discipline's ethical obligation: improving the world and the people's lives (Burawoy 2005).

¹ For example, the meeting of the 2004 was so far the largest in the history of American Sociological Association and the relating article by Burawoy was cited more than 360 times in Scopus-listed sources by 16 April 2015. Interestingly, in the years 2010–2013 the number of cites has been steadily growing (from 27 in the 2010 up to 58 in the 2013).

The call by Burawoy has had strong international resonance, stimulating a large number of papers analyzing the state of the art, the accomplishments and the perspectives of the “public sociology” in the different parts of the world. (For example, India (Sundar 2014), China (Lee and Shen 2009), Latin America (Rodríguez-Garavito 2014), Africa (von Holdt 2014), continental Europe (Revers 2009), United Kingdom (Gabriel et al. 2009)). The Russian experience has also been subject to the several studies (Zdravomyslova 2008; Temkina and Zdravomyslova 2014; Sorokin 2015). However, after ten years of extensive debates, several scholars assess the discussions on the “public sociology” as “wrong-headed” (Shrum and Castle 2014). The key argument is that sociologists have focused on the questions of “political activism” and “disciplinary coherence” diverse for the central issue: the means for effective engagement with the publics in the XXIst century (Shrum and Castle 2014).

We believe that the debates develop directly as Michael Burawoy implied when announcing his influential call in the 2004. However, it is also true that the current discussions may seem confused due to their limited concern with the practical tools for approaching the multiple publics and the greater focus on the relatively narrow issue of political engagement. In our view, this results from the significant difference between the “declared” and the “implied” in the famous call by Burawoy of the 2004. The analysis of his Presidential address suggests that the central claim was not the integrity and balance between the four different “sociologies” and their fragmented elements, but rather the promotion of the single element of the particular type of sociology, namely, the “organic” form of “public sociology”.

According to Burawoy, the “organic public sociology” is the “essence of the discipline”, that makes sociology not just a science but also “a moral and political force”, implying that “the sociologist works in close connection with a visible, thick, active, local and often counter-public” (2005: 261–282). For Burawoy, “Public sociology is only possible at the intersection of two distinct fields – the academic field and the political field” (2014: 140). “Between the organic public sociologist and a public is a dialogue, a process of mutual education” (2005: 264). This makes “organic” “public sociology” different from what Burawoy calls the “traditional” form, where the sociologist as expert takes the authoritative stance, engaging in unidirectional dialogue with general public (2005).

Even though such interpretation of Burawoy’s call is not novel for the current discourse (see, for example, Adorjan 2013, Christensen 2013, Turner 2005) the very difference between the initial broad reconciling proposal by Burawoy and his central aim (promoting “organic public sociology”) has not yet been fully comprehended as the core reason for the certain inconsistency of the current debates. Indeed, those scholars focusing on the “declared” invitation may find the discussions on the “implied” issue “wrong-headed”, and vice versa.

Starting with this interpretation of Burawoy’s initiative, we continue by arguing that despite the large geographical scale and tremendous international enthusiasm in the research on “public sociology” in the last decade, the studies remain significantly limited (see also McLaughlin et al. 2005). The current literature tends to lose sight of the broad historical perspective of the development of “public sociology” as not the individual undertakings of the most prominent scholars but as the institutionally structured form of sociological activity influenced by the specifics of the historical context. As a result, it becomes very difficult to assess the impact of “public sociology”

(including its “organic” form) on the development of the discipline from the strategic point of view.

The aim of this paper is to overcome these limitation and to demonstrate effects of the “organic public sociology” on the discipline’s development (in terms of its structure, institutionalization, professional standards, underlying ethical impetus, internal relations and interactions with the outside agencies), manifested in the long-term historical perspective in the concrete national context. Our study focuses on the Russian experience in interaction between sociology and society from the middle XIXth century until present. We interpret the Russian disciplinary tradition as one with the domination of “organic public sociology” throughout the last 150 years. Thus, Russia is an interesting national context for the studies on “organic public sociology” and, in general, for the analysis of the interactions between the discipline and society. We explore the key acts of “organic publicism” in the history of Russian sociology and analyze their impact on the discipline development from the strategic point of view. This allows us to reveal several key “pitfalls”, manifested in the history of Russian sociology and originated from its “organic public” orientation. These pitfalls are, first, the over-politicization and ideological biasness of sociological activities; second, the “personal sacrifice” of sociologist as a romanticized practice, potentially harmful for the discipline; third, the difficulties of the “professional” sociology’ institutionalization; fourth, the deprivation of the “policy” sociology’ development (here and further by “professional”, “policy”, “critical”, and “public” sociologies we imply the interpretations by Burawoy (2005)).

The contemporary international literature offers a large block of studies analyzing problems closely relating to the issues discussed in the present paper, using various evidences from different historical periods and multiple locations (Sundar 2014; Lee and Shen 2009, Rodríguez-Garavito 2014; Misztal 2009, and many others). However, we believe that the Russian experience provides opportunity to examine the peculiar perils and dangerous threats, hidden on the path of “organic public sociology” in the novel and broad historical context, which helps to outline the four “pitfalls” indicated above.

In the final part of our paper, we summarize the results of our analysis and put it in the context of the current international discussions about the tendencies in the development of our discipline and society. In particular, we refer to the theory of the “Scientizd Environment Supporting Actorhood” by John Meyer (2010) offering a novel comprehension of the role of social science in the XXIst century. This gives us grounds to suggest several ideas for improving the interaction between sociology and society in the XXIst century using the example of the prominent Russian and American sociologist Pitirim Sorokin.

We hope that the results of the present study would be helpful for better understanding and improving the discipline and its relations with society in various local, national and global contexts.

Sociology and Society: In Search for the Place and Mission

Beginning with the XIXth century (when sociology emerged in the Europe and the US), each historical period and each culture puts the questions about the mission of

sociology and its place in the world in a new context, offering novel solutions. The diversity of points of view on these issues maintains throughout the decades, stimulating hottest disputes, which sometimes give birth to breaking ideas.

In the early XXIst century concerns with the perspectives of sociology, as a science and institutionalized practice, become especially serious (McKie and Ryan 2012, Gane 2011; Turner 2005). The significant part of professional community is dissatisfied with the state of the art in the discipline (McKie and Ryan 2012, Gane 2011; Savage and Burrows 2007). The large volume of critics relates to the development of the professional mainstream (Gane 2011; Back 2012; Crompton 2008; Zafirovski 2014, and others). Another alarming issue is the interactions between various fragmented forms of sociological practice (for instance, between professional mainstream, critical sociology and the applied research) (Turner 2005; Savage and Burrows 2007, McLaughlin et al. 2005).

These “internal problems” closely intersect with the difficulties in the communications between sociological community and the “external environment”. The current literature largely agrees upon the key role of the interactions with various institutions, organizations and agencies outside the academy for the prosperity of the discipline (McLaughlin et al. 2005; Shrum and Castle 2014, Nichols 2005). Among them: the neighboring disciplines (economics, politics, history, psychology, ethnography, and others) (Zafirovski 2014, Svendsen & Svendsen 2009; Sigelman 2010; Mironenko & Sorokin 2015); the institutions engaged in policymaking (state agencies, business structures, etc.) (Shortall 2013; Trigilia 2007; Clair et al. 2007; Turner 2005; Savage and Burrows 2007); the non-sociological public intellectuals (journalists, politicians, etc.) (Burawoy 2014; Sprague and Laube 2009; Wieviorka 2014); the dominated social groups (Burawoy 2005; Noy 2007, Brook & Darlington); the students involved in educational process in sociology (McLaughlin 2005; Shrum and Castle 2014), and others.

Literature demonstrates a large diversity of opinions concerning the interactions with each of these settings, which we regard here as the elements of the “society”. Indeed, the society has always existed as a multifaceted phenomenon for our discipline, appearing simultaneously in different manifestations. First, society is the field of competition for valuable resources, including funding, authority and power, where sociologists struggle with numerous powerful agencies: competitive disciplines, non-academic public intellectuals, media institutions, and others. Secondly, society is the primarily object of sociological scientific inquiry: the totality (or aggregate) of the phenomena and (or) processes, which sociology aims to understand and explain. Finally, society is the world that sociology seeks to improve. The latter is extremely difficult, as there are various complexly organized and competing actors, often holding contradicting interests, moral standards and formulating different demands.

The dominating view in the international literature is that, despite all the obstacles, internal and external antagonisms and inconsistencies, sociologist must engage more with the society (or “publics”) outside of the academy. Several authors point to necessity to practice simultaneously different approaches in interactions with multifaceted publics (for example, with the discriminated social groups, governmental officials and the academic peers) even if it will make sociologists “amphibious” or “schizophrenic” (Rodríguez-Garavito 2014; Sundar 2014; Adorjan 2013; Misztal 2009).

However, the questions remain about the general framework and the goals of these enterprises. What exactly should sociologists do with their publics? How should the

different forms of this communication relate to each other and to the professional mainstream? Should various undertakings in public interactions evolve independently or should they enhance and support each other? Which audiences are the most important for sociologists, and which are better prepared to accept our messages correctly? Do we have necessary qualities and moral rights for the particular types of public undertakings (for example, to stand as experts guiding policy interventions or to join the civil society's political initiatives)?

The literature review makes the impression that the international sociological academy is such highly diverse, largely disintegrated and exceedingly fragmented that the only common characteristic of the professional community in the current conditions is the general desire to become somehow more appealing to the "society". At the same time, the understanding of what the society is, what the sociology is, and what does it mean to become "appealing" is much obscured. Sociologists act in a multi-vocal style. Some stand on the radical positions, arguing for the breaking with the particular types of "sociologies" because "A discipline that speaks with so many tongues is not vibrant; rather, it is in chaos" (Turner 2005: 38). Others openly celebrate the diversity within sociology, believing it to be the advantage of the discipline, comparing with, for example, economics (Shrum and Castle 2014).

"Public Sociology" and the Reconciling Project of Michael Burawoy: The "Declared" and the "Implied"

Many colleagues would agree that Michael Burawoy in his famous Presidential address in 2004 suggested so far the most creative approach to understanding the place and mission of our discipline in the world (2005). His idea is a generous and reconciling invitation for all the fragmented modes of sociological practice and disintegrated professional groups all over the globe to unite in the morally sublime undertaking devoted to the common good and the prosperity of our discipline in the local, national and global contexts.

Burawoy reinterprets the division of sociological labor by outlining the four types of sociology. "Professional" sociology (practically, academic mainstream) "supplies true and tested methods, accumulated bodies of knowledge, orienting questions, and conceptual frameworks" (2005: 267). "Critical sociology" communicates with the academic peers, challenging the assumptions underlying the work of professional sociology (2005). "Policy sociology" is "sociology in the service of a goal defined by a client. Policy sociology's *raison d'être* is to provide solutions to problems that are presented to us, or to legitimate solutions that have already been reached" (2005: 266).

"Public sociology" is a more amorphous category: a multiplicity of undertakings aimed at bringing the tools or findings of sociological research into settings outside of the academy, inspiring the dialog and transformative social action. Possibly, the most distinctive definition is the one formulated in the abstract of the Burawoy's address, in which he holds that "the challenge of public sociology is to engage multiple publics in multiple ways" (2005: 259).

However, it is possibly not the division of the sociological labor per se, but rather the claims about relations between the four types of sociology that lie in the core of Burawoy's milestone contribution to the development of the discipline. Burawoy

argues that “professional sociology is not the enemy of policy and public sociology but the sine qua non of their existence – providing both legitimacy and expertise for policy and public sociology”...“There can be neither policy nor public sociology without a professional sociology” (2005: 267). “Between professional and public sociology there should be, and there often is, respect and synergy. Far from being incompatible the two are like Siamese twins” (2005: 275). Finally, “critical sociology is the conscience of professional sociology just as public sociology is the conscience of policy sociology” (2005: 268).

According to Burawoy, the important premise for the success of the “public sociology” is the expertise of “professional sociology”, which he believes to enjoy the best state of the art in the beginning of the XXI century. “We have spent a century building professional knowledge, translating common sense into science, so that now, we are more than ready to embark on a systematic back-translation” (2005: 261). “Far from being in the doldrums, today sociology has never been in better shape” (2005: 279).

Using beautiful metaphors and bright examples from the past and present Burawoy claimed that each type of “sociology” is equally needed, that each part in this beautiful disciplinary organism is necessary for the flourishing of the whole. Only as the productive integrity of the four types of sociological practice our discipline can successfully fulfill its moral duty: the defense of the humanity. What could be more inspiring and more engaging?

Naturally, sociological community could not resist discussing the new grand vision of the discipline. This vision promised not only the integrity and unity for the fragmented sociologists but also the novel moral impetus and the new career perspectives – something that definitely worth trying.

However, the debates stimulated by Burawoy’s proposal in the following 10 years showed little consistency. Shrum and Castle even call the current disputes about “public sociology” “wrong-headed”: concentrated on the issues of political activism and disciplinary coherence but not on the means for the efficient public communication (2014). Indeed, instead of searching for the ways to strengthen the organic connections between the different forms of sociological practice and improve the prestige and relevance of the discipline in the various publics, literature tends to discuss the problems of political participation and continue the endless classification battles concerning the eternal questions: which kind of sociology is the most “sociological”: “policy”, “public”, “professional”, “critical” or other?

The masterful communicative strategy used by Burawoy in his rhetoric on “public sociology” has been subject to descent research (Christensen 2013). The core problem, in our view, is that the actual proposals of Burawoy, when taken separately, are often much different from the underlying ideas that these proposals aim to promote. That is why it may seem that the discussions of Burawoy’s initiative are “wrong-headed” (focused on the relatively narrow questions comparing with the initially declared grand vision and integral project). We believe, that in reality, the debates are headed correctly towards the concerns, which are central to Burawoy himself. As we shall demonstrate, these are concerns relating to the development of “organic public sociology”.

Indeed, the address “For the public sociology” may seem an integrative claim for the organic solidarity and balance between various “sociologies” at first sight. Even in regards of the “public sociology” itself, Burawoy in the first pages delicately suggests

the promotion of the multiple “public sociologies”, including the “traditional public sociology” connected with the names of Giddens, Bourdieu, Mills and others, who has long become the inseparable and respectful part of the discipline, the true “celebrities” of sociology (2009). “The traditional public sociologist instigates debates within or between publics, although he or she might not actually participate in them” (2005: 264).

However, following the text of Burawoy’s address further, we find that his primarily aim is not the integrity and balance between the four different “sociologies” and their fragmented elements, but rather the promotion of the “organic public sociology, in which the sociologist works in close connection with a visible, thick, active, local and often counter-public. The bulk of public sociology is indeed of an organic kind”, making sociology not just “a science but as a moral and political force” (2005: 264).

Michael Burawoy argues that the major aim of the discipline is fostering and supporting the humanistic and democratic transformations by different instruments, including the direct participation of sociologists in the initiatives of the “civil society” (mainly seen as the dominated and discriminated groups suffering from the tyranny of the unjust state politics and increasing marketization) (2005, 2009, 2014). Hence, “organic public sociology” becomes inseparable from the political action of the civil society (and practically, the integral part of the latter).

In our view, the “organic public sociology” not only lies in the core of Burawoy’s idea of “public sociology” in general but is also the major goal of his whole “reconciling” initiative. Such interpretation of Burawoy’s call is not novel for the current discourse (see, for example, Adorjan 2013; Christensen 2013, Turner 2005). However, the very difference between the initial broad reconciling proposal by Burawoy and his central aim (promoting “organic public sociology”) has not yet been fully comprehended as the core reason for the certain inconsistency of the current debates. Those scholars focusing on the “declared” invitation may find the discussions on the “implied” issue wrong-headed, and vice versa. In our view, this helps to understand the current situation in the debates, when, as Shrum and Castle put it, the position justifying certain forms of political activism “has occasionally been conflated” with the motivation and practice of intervention in general, with unfortunate consequences for the fate of public sociology (2014: 415). (See also Brady 2004; Tittle 2004; Nielsen 2004).

Hence, it is not surprising that discussions on “public sociology” in the professional community focus much on the issues of political activism. This is not a misunderstanding of Burawoy’s call but on the contrary, the grasp of the very pivot of his idea. This interpretation of Burawoy’s proposal lies in the core of the present study.

The perspectives for the development of “public sociology” in the international level are in the center of Burawoy’s concerns, which comes naturally in the context of the emerged global systems of domination by resource-rich Northern countries (Burawoy 2005, 2009; Chase-Dunn 2005). Hence, the further development of “public sociology” and its “organic” forms in the international arena requires extensive knowledge about this type of sociological practice, including its history and present conditions in the different national contexts. The invitation for the study of various national cases is announced: «Mapping the different national fields of sociology would be a major undertaking!» (Burawoy 2009: 194). In the following section we analyze the current international debates and research on “public sociology”, outlining their limitations and perspectives.

Limitations of the Current International Research in “Public Sociology” and the Agenda for the Present Study

The initiative of Burawoy received tremendous international response. Since his call of the 2004, many papers has been published examining the relations between sociology and its diversified publics in various parts of the world (For example, India (Sundar 2014), China (Lee and Shen 2009), Latin America (Rodríguez-Garavito 2014), Africa (von Holdt 2014), continental Europe (Revers 2009), United Kingdom (Gabriel et al. 2009)). The Russian experience has also been subject to the several studies (Zdravomyslova 2008; Temkina and Zdravomyslova 2014; Sorokin 2015).

However, even though the geographical scale and international enthusiasm in the research of “public sociology” impresses, the studies are often limited in several important aspects. The dominating approach focuses on the contemporary experience of “public sociologists” or on the short and bright historical episodes from the past. The current studies usually concentrate on the most prominent figures in sociology and analyze their activities in the very curious but often narrow cases (see, for example, Misztal 2009). Hence, the literature on “public sociology” tends to lose sight of the broad historical perspective of the development of “public” sociological practice as not the individual undertakings of the most prominent scholars but as the institutionally structured form of sociological activity influenced by the specifics of the historical context. As a result, the leading approach in the studies on “public sociology” makes it very difficult to assess the impact that “public” sociological practice has on the development of the discipline from the strategic point of view and the long-term perspective.

In the present paper we undertake an effort to overcome these limitations in the analysis of the Russian experience from the middle XIXth century until present. We elaborate the comprehension of the Russian disciplinary tradition as the mode of sociological practice with the domination of “organic public sociology” manifested throughout the last 150 years. Our study will focus on the relations between sociology and society and the dynamics of their development throughout the Russian history. We will highlight the crucial moments in these relations, explore the key acts of publicity in the history of Russian sociology, and analyze their impact on the discipline development from the strategic point of view.

We frame our analysis of the Russian experience in the current international discussions about the relevant issues and concerns. We shall refer mainly to the following blocks of studies in the contemporary literature.

First, the writings of the advocates of “public sociology”, including Michael Burawoy (2005, 2009, 2014) and other authors who support this initiative in various venues including the academic journals like “Current Sociology” (Rodríguez-Garavito 2014; Sundar 2014, and others).

Second, the critical comments on the “public sociology” project (Turner 2005; McLaughlin 2005; McLaughlin et al. 2005; Shrum and Castle 2014 and others). The skeptical views on Burawoy’s initiative arose immediately after the announcement of his famous call, and remain quite widespread in the current literature (Turner 2005).

Third, the international literature of the broader scope, concerning the current tendencies in the development of sociology and society (Gane 2011; Back 2012; McKie and Ryan 2012; Zafirovski 2014; Meyer 2010, and others).

Literature suggests (Shrum and Castle 2014) that the current discussions about “public sociology” are somewhat narrow, usually focusing on the two limited blocks of questions. The first group of concerns targets the relations between the different forms of sociological practice (“professional”, “public”, “critical”, and “policy” sociologies) (for example, Turner 2005; Burawoy 2005; Sprague and Laube 2009, Holmwood 2007). The second block of issues focuses on the perspectives for the contribution of “public sociology” to the social and political transformations in the current world (Rodríguez-Garavito 2014; Brook and Darlington 2013, Morton et al. 2012; Turner 2007). We believe, the contemporary discussions should consider the public activity of sociologists in the wide context of challenges that the discipline currently faces. These challenges may go far beyond the problems of actual transformation of the world and relate to the internal inconsistencies in the development of sociological practice, including “professional sociology”, which becomes especially important in the context of the serious societal changes of the global scale (Meyer 2010). Aiming to overcome the limitation of existing literature, we refer to the theory of the “Scientizied Environment Supporting Actorhood” by John Meyer (2010) offering the novel comprehension of the role of the social science in the XXIst century.

We believe that “organic public sociology” (in its understanding proposed by Burawoy) is but one of the possible frameworks for interaction between the sociological community and its environments, having advantages but also menacing with several pitfalls. As we shall try to demonstrate, the critical considerations of “public sociology” (including its “organic” form) get new grounds in the Russian experience.

Thus, in the present paper we aim to not only describe and analyze the Russian experience of interrelations between sociology and society in the broad historical perspective, but also to put it in the frame of the current international debates and outline several ideas that might be helpful for the further development of the discipline in the global world of the XXIst century.

In the following section we briefly describe the key events in the Russian history since the XVIII century and then proceed to explore the “publicism” of the Russian sociological tradition revealing its historical roots and interpreting it through the prism of the Burawoy’s analytical framework as the “organic public sociology”. After that, we turn to the detailed study of the Russian experience in the interactions between sociology and society since the XIXth century until present.

The Historical Context of the Russian Sociology’s Origination and Development

To understand the development of sociology in the concrete national context requires the comprehension of the history of this particular society. Hence, before we proceed to the study of the Russian sociology’s paths, it is necessary to provide the general historical framework for the events, processes and figures, which we address further.

Even though sociology in Russia originated in the XIXth century, it is necessary to start with the events of the XVIIIth century, which had shaped the basic premises for the Russian sociological tradition (Sorokin 2015; Walicki 2010). In the 1700s the first

Russian Emperor Peter I (1660–1725) forcibly introduced high European culture to the Russian elites, compelling them to adapt Western educational standards, manners, and fashion. After the foundation of the first universities in Russia (Moscow University in 1755 and Saint Petersburg University in 1795) higher education of European standards became available for the Russian intellectual elites, contributing to the dissemination of the progressive foreign social thought (Sorokin 2015). However, the XVIIIth century was also the time of the unprecedented growth of the political power of the Russian Emperors in the domestic policy and the severe strengthening of serfdom (practically, slavery) of the rural population (Stanziani 2008; Sorokin 2015). These circumstances shaped the tendency among scholars, writers, artists and other intellectuals of the late XVIII/early XIXth century to perceive their homeland not as the object for the scientific inquiry or artistic admiration, but rather as a field for the practical intervention, improving the Russian society with its outworn institutional system, unjust social order, and inefficient economy (for example, writers Alexander Radishev,² Denis Fonvisin³ (in the second half of the XVIII century) and artist Pavel Fedotov (in the first half of the XIXth century)⁴).

The fail of the democratically oriented coup d'état called “Decembrist revolt” in the 1825 (Raëff 1966) and the following persecutions from the government did not stop democratic forces in their eager for the social transformations. In the 1840s the voluntarily and democratic self-organized groups called “circles” were initiated for discussing the perspectives for the social change, including the abolishment of the inhuman practice of serfdom (for example, the circles of Stankevich,⁵ Petrashevsky⁶ and others). Unlike the movement of the 1825, this time along with the upper classes wider social layers also engaged in the liberation initiatives, including the educated professionals and university students (so-called “*intelligentsia*” (Walicki 2010)).

The new wave of oppressions against the reformist-oriented thinkers in the early 1850s resulted in mass exile of many prominent figures connected with the liberation

² Alexander Radishev (1749–1802) – originated from the noble family and along with a group of young aristocrats was sent to the University of Leipzig, Germany, where he got acquainted with progressive European social thought. After returning to homeland he published the famous “A journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow”, in which he criticized the unjust social order and pointed to the severe hardships of peasants suffering from serfdom (see more Lossky (1951)).

³ Denis Fonvisin (1745–1792) – Russian writer, educated in Moscow university, suggested the introduction of the “fundamental laws” limiting the power of monarchs and reforming the serfdom (see more Spector 2005).

⁴ Pavel Fedotov (1815–1853) – the famous Russian artist, the founder of the “critical realism” in the Russian painting tradition. In his works, he demonstrated the dramatic social unjustness in the life of ordinary Russian people (Sarabianov 1990). The critical emphasis of his paintings reflected the concerns of the Russian society in the 1840s. He wrote, “My fame, which I made by the exhibition of my works, was not a thunder but a buzzing of a mosquito, because at this time the strongest thunder was really the thunder on the West... Everybody rich by origination hid their bags, like hairs would pin back their ears, with fear of the dissemination of the ideas of communism (Sarabianov 1990: 5).

⁵ Nikolai Stankevich (1813–1840) founded his circle in the 1830, inspired by the ideas of German philosophy. This circle united the young intellectuals, like Belinsky, Aksakov and others who later became the leaders of the Russian liberation movement (Kamensky 1980).

⁶ The circle of Mikhail Petrashevsky shaped in 1840s. It engaged Russian intellectuals seeking freedom for the peasants and democratic political transformations (Dolinin 1987). The famous Russian writer and philosopher Feodor Dostoevsky (see Mochulsky 1971) in his younger years actively engaged in the Petrashevsky circle, which resulted in exile to Siberia where he spent four years.

movement (among them were, for example, Fyodor Dostoevsky,⁷ Nikolai Chernyshevsky,⁸ and others).

The next stage of the struggle between the conservative and the democratic forces opened in the 1860s with the abolishment of the serfdom in the February 1861 (Zayanchkovsky 1954). Government initiated several other important reforms in the 1860s giving hopes for transformation and liberation of many areas in the life of stagnating Russian society. For instance, the government improved the legal system basing on the principle of equality before the law by introducing the independent jury. Also the reforms strengthened the system of the local self-government in the regions by establishing the new democratic institutions aimed at local development, so-called “Zemstva” (see more Troitsky 1997).

However, in their concrete implementations all these beginnings appeared overly cautious. The most striking evidence is the episode with the serfdom’ abolishment. According to the imperial Manifesto peasants became formally “free” but they did not receive land in their full possession and also had to continue working for their landlords. As a result, numerous revolts started all over Russia because people could not believe that this Manifesto was issued by the Tzar himself and suspected that officials had deceived him and announced a fake document (Zayanchkovsky 1954: 161, 166, 181).

In this context, the revolutionary movements entered the scene, taking the place of the former less radical “circles”. In the 1860s and 1870s these settings (“Zemlya I Volya” [“Land & Freedom”], “Narodnaya Volya” [“The People’s Will”], “Chernyi Peredel” [“Black Redistribution”] (Pantin et al. 1986)) engaged in various practices aimed at bringing radical political transformations. These practices were much differentiated ranging from moderate propaganda of liberation values to the terror (Saunders 2014). The interesting and specific form of propaganda at that time was the so-called “Narodnichestvo” (“Going into people”) (Belfer 1978). The intellectuals seeking democratic change left their comfortably furnished surroundings and traveled from one rural settlement to another. Their aim was, on the one hand, to disseminate ideas of enlightenment, democracy and humanism and, on the other hand, to restore spiritual complicity with ordinary Russian people and their lives.

In the March 1, 1881, Grenivitsky, the member of the revolutionary organization “Narodnaya Volya” (Vilenskaya 1979), killed the Russian Emperor Alexander II, the initiator of the reforms of the 1860s. Ironically, the Emperor was going to approve the project of the Constitution, introducing the limitations to the absolute monarchy, this very day (Medushevsky 2010). The death of Alexander II shocked the Russian society and the government responded with the severe measures (thousands of people were send to exile or executed). Most importantly, it suppressed all the initiatives related to the liberal transformation, leading to the further radicalization of the significant part of

⁷ Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821–1881) – the internationally acknowledged Russian writer, celebrated for his deep psychological analysis and broad philosophical considerations of the individual feelings and ethical concerns under various social circumstances (his most famous novels are: “The crime and the punishment”, “Idiot”, “Demons”, “Karamasov brothers”). Mochulsky (1971). Dostoevsky: His life and work. Princeton University Press.

⁸ Nicolay Chernyshevsky (1828–1889) – the famous Russian writer, the author of the novel “What should be done” promoting materialistic visions of the human life with humanistic and optimistic interpretation of the revolutionary ideas (Paperno 1988).

the reformist-oriented activists (Zayanchkovsky 1970). This brought to life the revolt of the 1905 resulted in the formation of the first Russian parliament (“Duma”). However, the “Duma” and the government could not establish productive cooperation. Terrorism and mass punishments continued (only by the court decision more than 1000 people were executed for political reasons in 1905–1907), until the parliament was dissolved by the Tzar’s Manifesto in the 1907 (Shanin 1986).

The First World War (1914–1918) was dramatic challenge for the Russian society, which lost from 750 to 1300 thousands soldiers and officers killed (Golovin 1931; Lieven 1983). The hunger and diseases resulting from the World War experience were the important factors contributing to the Revolution of the February 1917 (which forced Russian Tzar Nicolas II to abdicate the throne). After the revolution the Provisional Government established trying to reunite the Russian society divided into confronting parts supporting different political parties and programs. However, the Provisional Government itself consisted of political antagonists like radical Bolsheviks and conservative parties, which could not find consensus and work together (Browder and Kerensky 1961). This ended in the October Revolution of the 1918 when Bolsheviks took the power by the armed rebellion. This marked the end of the Russian Empire and the beginning of the new era opened with the Civil War between the supporters of the monarchism and the soviet regime. In the dramatic events between 1917 and 1923 approximately 10,500 thousands people died (Erlhman 2004).

The first years of the soviet rule begun with active debates about the strategy for the further development of the first regime in the world’s history guided by the Communist Party. The New Economic Policy, initiated by Lenin in the 1924, tried to stimulate entrepreneurship and economic initiative and was quiet successful (Davydov 2013). However, by the end of the 1920s the more radical position of Stalin took the lead, which resulted in the peasants’ collectivization (largely reminding the serfdom) (Rees 1987). The totalitarian regime fully established by the 1930s and manifested in mass repressions. Only in the 1937–1938 more than 600 thousands people were executed (Goldman 2007).

The Second World War (1939–1945) was triumphant for the Soviet Union but it also left the country exhausted. The late 1940s and 1950s were the periods of the rapid recovery of the national economy which proceeded successfully largely due to the changes in the political arena. The death of Stalin in 1953 marked the beginning of the so-called “thaw” in the Russian society and the awakening of the social movements, political discussions and cultural life (Prokhorov 2014).

The general enthusiasm, quick economic development, and active political debates (however, remaining in the mainstream of the Marxism-Leninism’ ideology) of the 1960s ended in the next decade when the soviet society under the rule of Brezhnev fallen in stagnation (Fürst 2013). In the 1980s the growing dissatisfaction with the economic performance and ideological irrelevance of the ruling regime resulted in the “perestroika”⁹ which manifested the break with the one-party political system and the establishment of the Russian Federation in the 1991 built with the declared desire to

⁹ “Perestroika” (directly translated as “restructuring”, “rearrangement” or “rebuilding”) was the general title for the policy of fundamental economic and governmental reforms initiated by the head of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, in the mid-1980s and lasting until early 1990s (Simon 2010). The word “perestroika” remains largely used in Russian everyday culture indicating the painful transition from soviet regime to multiparty political system and market economy.

adapt quickly the Western standards in the political and economic life (Desai 2014). However, the neo-liberal reforms, including the so-called “shock-therapy” brought not only capitalistic relations to the Russian society but also the drastic descend in the well-being of population, the severe political manipulations, and the formation of oligarchical system (Rutland 2013). The so-called “rakish” 1990s ended in the 2000s with the establishment of the President Putin’s regime, which provided the rapid increase in living standards along with the strengthened control over the political life and civil society (Petrov et al. 2014).

This brief historical overview gives the general understanding of the political, cultural and economic context in which the Russian sociological tradition originated and evolved.

The “Publicism” in the Russian Sociological Tradition as “Organic Public Sociology”

The Russian sociological tradition emerged in the second half of the XIXth century in the context of deep antagonism between the archaic social institutions and the progressive cultural canons co-existing in the society (Sorokin 2015). This shaped its key features (2015): *publicism* (an orientation to non-academic audiences and a desire to promote changes in the real world); *moral and ethical concern* (a clear expression of value orientations; the particular importance of ethical and moral issues); *problem orientation* (a focus on urgent social concerns with “problem” dominating over “method” in sociological research).

Since the “circles” of the 1830s and 1840s, the Russian social thought and emerging sociological tradition maintained inextricable connection with oppositional and revolutionary activities. Indeed, sociologists participated in all the varieties of the Russian liberation movements’ dramatic fortunes. For example, the undertakings of the first revolutionary organizations of the 1860s and 1870s; the revolt in the 1905 (leading to the formation of the first Russian parliament); the dramatic social perturbations of the 1917–1918 (resulted in the ruin of the Russian Empire and the origination of the soviet state); the reforms of the first decade of the soviet regime (filled with ambitious and morally sublime promises but ended with the shameful enslavement of the large part of the Russian people); finally, the oppositional movements of the 1960s–1980s contributing to the liberal reforms of the 1990s, which marked the end of the soviet era.

All these undertakings dramatically changed Russian history and, possibly, altered the trajectory of the whole humankind’s development in the global scale. Of course, not all the Russian sociologists were involved in oppositional activities, however, the participation in the social transformations has always been (and largely still remains) the core issue in the sociological practice in Russia (Sorokin 2015).

The key thesis in our research is the interpretation of the long-lasting “publicism” of the Russian sociological tradition as the unique example of the “organic public sociology” (Burawoy 2005). This concept lies in the core of Burawoy’s initiative, agitating for the direct involvement in the social movements and democratically oriented transformations. This “organic” orientation on the actual participation in the social change is the key difference from what Burawoy calls the “traditional public sociology”. The latter implies that “the publics being addressed are generally invisible

in that they cannot be seen, thin in that they do not generate much internal interaction, passive in that they do not constitute a movement or organization, and they are usually mainstream” (2005: 264). According to Burawoy, the “traditional public sociology” was the basic form of public sociological practice in Europe and the US in the XIXth and the large part of the XXth century. Now, in the new millennium it has to evolve into the more real, more efficient and more active “organic public sociology” closely interrelated with civil society and, practically, the integral part of the latter (Burawoy 2005).

We argue that the history of Russian sociology does not fit to this scheme. On the contrary, since its origination in the middle XIXth century, the norms and principles of “organic public sociology” dominated in the Russian sociological community, while the practice of “traditional public sociology” maintained positions that are more peripheral. In the present paper we explore the persistent, institutionally and historically determined character of “organic public” orientation of Russian sociology throughout different historical periods.

The Russian experience offers the valuable opportunity to trace the impact of the “organic public sociology” on the development of the discipline from the broad historical perspective. We shall address several questions relating to the strategic role and place of “organic public sociology” in the history of the discipline in Russia. For example, has “organic” orientation enhanced the relevance of sociology outside of the academic community? How had “organic” public activities contributed to the development of the other types of sociological practice (for example, “professional sociology” and “policy sociology” in their interpretation by Burawoy)?

In search for the answers to these questions, we shall carefully study the practices, forms and manifestations of “organic public sociology”, along with its consequences, in the history of Russian sociology since the XIXth century until present. We shall analyze the various undertakings of Russian sociologists relating to the engagement with multiple publics in effort to produce transformative political action and bring real social change. This will allow us to reveal several key “pitfalls” originated from the organic public orientation, which influenced the paths of Russian sociology in the peculiar and often negative ways. These pitfalls are, first, the over-politicization and ideological biasness of sociological activities; second, the “personal sacrifice” of sociologist as a romanticized practice, potentially harmful for the discipline; third, the difficulties of the professional sociology institutionalization; fourth, the deprivation of the policy sociology development.

This framework has conditional nature: originating from the same source (the domination of the “organic public sociology” in the national sociological tradition), all of these “pitfalls” are interrelated to some extent. However, each of them has a certain degree of independence and special significance for the understanding of the trajectories of the sociology’s development in Russia.

The contemporary international literature on “public sociology” and relating issues offers a large block of studies analyzing the problems closely corresponding with the questions discussed in the present paper (Turner 2005; McLaughlin 2005, Nichols 2009, Sundar 2014; Rodríguez-Garavito 2014, and others). However, we believe that the Russian experience gives valuable opportunity to examine the peculiar perils and dangerous threats, hidden on the path of “organic public sociology” in the novel and broad historical context filled with bright illustrations.

In the next section (consisted of the four subsections), we analyze the key characteristics, causes, and manifestations of each of the four “pitfalls” in the context of different periods in the history of Russian sociology since the middle XIXth century until present.

The Pitfalls of the “Organic Public Sociology”: Learning from the Russian Experience

Over-Politicization and Ideological Biasness of Sociological Activities

Pyotr Lavrov was one of the most influential figures in the Russian social thought in the 1860s–1870s, who largely contributed to the emerging of the national sociological tradition (Rusanov 1907). In the famous “Historical letters” (1868–1869) he defined sociology as the supreme science utilizing all the achievements of the human thought to address the most acute and radical social problems in the struggle against the capitalist system (Lavrov, “Historical letters”, Letter 16 (Lavrov 1965)). Such interpretation reveals the strong ideological spirit of the Russian sociology since its very origination. Socialistic ideas occupied central positions in the Russian social thought throughout the second half of the XIXth and the first decades of the XXth centuries. This comes naturally due to the special emphasis of socialistic ideology on the values of equality, freedom, and solidarity, which were so appealing for the Russian society suffering from the deeply embedded social and cultural antagonisms¹⁰ (see also Sorokin 2015; Efremenko and Evseeva 2012).

Since the very origination of sociology in Russia, social thinkers participated in the different forms of political action: from the radical movements (for example, anarchism of Bakunin and Kropotkin (D'Agostino 1977)¹¹) to the liberal initiatives (for instance, Mikhailovsky (Vilenskaya 1979)¹²). In some cases, the cooperation with the government also took place: for example, Maxim Kovalevsky¹³ was the member of the first Russian parliament (“Duma”), established after the revolutionary revolt of the 1905

¹⁰ The Russian prominent and internationally acknowledged writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1821–1881) brightly illustrates the prevalence of the socialistic ideas in the Russian society of the second half of the XIXth century in his famous novel “Demons”, which takes place in the Russian provincial town of the 1870s. When Stepan Trofimovich, an educated intellectual (one of the key characters of the novel) tells his friend, that he is scared of being persecuted by the officials for having the prohibited socialistic literature at home, the latter replies that it is ridiculous because everybody in the town has this literature (Dostoevsky 1994, Part 2, Chapter 9).

¹¹ Pyotr Kropotkin and Michail Bakunin were ideologists of the Russian anarchism. Bakunin (1814–1876) openly called for destruction of the state, and argued that capitalism is incompatible with the individual freedom. He actively participated in civil revolts all over Europe in the 1840–60s. Kropotkin (1842–1924) rejected the private property rights, the state legitimacy, and the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat (popular among revolutioners). He called for building the society on the solidarity principles. Both (Bakunin and Kropotkin) were imprisoned but managed to escape and emigrate to the West (in the 1861 and 1876 respectively).

¹² Nikolai Mikhailovsky is the prominent Russian sociologist, the founder (along with Pyotr Lavrov) of the “Subjective” method in sociology (Sorokin 2015). He called for the liberal reforms and criticized Marxism. (Vilenskaya 1979)

¹³ Maxim Kovalevsky – the internationally acknowledged Russian sociologist and expert in law. (Kovalevsky 1938)

(Timasheff 1966). Possibly, the most famous Russian sociologist, Pitirim Sorokin (1889–1968) participated in the Russian Provisionary Government of the 1917 (Nichols 2012). Chayanov¹⁴ and Kondratiev¹⁵ occupied important positions in the Soviet government in the 1920s (Durrenberger 1984; Louçã 1999). However, many sociologists and social thinkers of that time rejected to involve in political activities, often not accepting the morally questionable practices of the revolutionary movements (Danilevsky,¹⁶ Berdyaev, Bulgakov¹⁷) (Sorokin 2015).

The politicization of the sociological community left peculiar imprint on the organizational development of the discipline. The first official establishment of the Russian sociology appeared not in Russia, but in France. Paris was the beloved harbor for Russian emigration since the first political activists escaped there from the persecutions of the government after the Decembrist revolt in the 1825 (Miller 1986). Later Paris became the most popular destination for the Russian intellectuals and social scholars forced to leave homeland for the ideological reasons. Among them were the two former professors of Moscow University, Yuri Gambarov and Maxim Kovalevsky. There, in French emigration, they established the “Russian Higher School of Social Sciences” (1901–1906), which is known as the first formal institution of the Russian sociology (Boronoev and Ermakovich 1996).

The short but impressive story of this initiative brightly illustrates the inextricable connections between the political ideology and the public undertakings of the Russian sociologists.

According to its Statute, the School offered the “systematic courses on the various branches of social sciences” (the training was provided on a fee basis) (Gutnov 2001: 248). Sociological research was claimed the essential element of the educational process, which implied the preparation and defense of the two papers on sociological topics (Gutnov 2001). Pointing to the central role of sociology in the Russian Higher School of Social Sciences, Russian literature even argues that the School was the “first example of sociological faculty in the history of international science” (Sogomonov 1989).

However, despite the university origins of the School founders (Kovalevsky and Gambarov), it has not existed for long as the academic institution as very quickly it transformed into political club. The detailed analysis of the School archives, conducted by the Russian researcher Gutnov, shows that the School immediately attracted great interest of the general public (in the first year there were more than 400 students who

¹⁴ Alexander Chayanov (1888–1939) – the internationally acknowledged scholar in the field of peasant studies (Harrison 1979). He analyzed the basic differences between capitalistic rural production and traditional social organization of Russian peasantry. Chayanov pointed to the necessity of greater space for the individual initiative and competition in the rural cooperation (Durrenberger 1984).

¹⁵ Nikolai Kondratiev (1892–1938) – the author of the theory of “Big Economic Cycles” (Louçã 1999) which links the macroeconomic long-term cyclic development with the social transformations (this theory still gets credit in the international sociology (see, for example, Wallerstein (2000))). In his youth, Kondratiev served as personal secretary to the famous Russian sociologist Maxim Kovalevsky. In the 1920s, he was actively engaged in the policymaking in the field of rural economic and social development.

¹⁶ Nikolai Danilevsky (1822–1885) – focused on the analysis of Russia as a certain “culturally-historical type”, he believed Europe to be the major threat for Russia and criticized the ideas of Russian society’s modernization basing on western standards (Danilevsky 1962).

¹⁷ Nikolai Berdyaev (1874–1948) and Sergey Bulgakov (1871–1944) prominent Russian social thinkers and philosophers who grounded their ideas in the idealistic approach and religious considerations (Berdyaev 1944).

attended lectures on a regular basis) (Gutnov 2001: 246). However, the students openly complained about the too moderate critics of the Russian political system, expressed by the School professors. For example, one of the students wrote: “Russian professors, coming to the School, delivered their lections as if they were still within the Russian borders, that is, not calling for the revolution” (see Gutnov 2001: 254).

The lectures by Vladimir Lenin, delivered in the 1903, agitated the political discussions in the School, which by that time often used “unparliamentarily methods” (Gutnov 2001: 255). Since then the academic research took episodic character and the School functioned mostly as the club for political debates.

Finally, after one of the lectures in the second half of the 1905, the founder of the School, prominent and internationally acknowledged Russian sociologist Maxim Kovalevsky, received the note saying that the next time he ascends to the teacher’s chair in the auditorium he will be shot (Gutnov 2001: 257). Similar notes were addressed to many other professors. This put the story of the Russian Higher School of the Social Sciences to the end. The majority of professors refused to continue teaching in these circumstances and returned to Russia. The official newsletter of the School reported in the January 1906 that the School closed because of the political disagreements between the professors and the students (see Gutnov 2001: 257).

The inclination of the Russian sociology towards politicization and ideological biasness manifested itself also in the subsequent periods. Soon after the establishment of the soviet regime, the expression of the political protest by many Russian social thinkers led to their forced expulsion out of the country. Among them was Pitirim Sorokin who participated in the unsuccessful efforts of the Provisional Government to prevent the civil war in the 1917. Since the late 1920s, sociologists practically disappeared from the political arena, as the totalitarian rule of Stalin made ideological discussions and open political rhetoric impossible. However, in the late 1950s with the beginning of the “thaw” after the death of Stalin, the discipline enjoyed the “renaissance” (Osipov 2004).

The first soviet sociologists perceived their discipline as “the source and the symbol for the national modernization, and even more – as the instrument for improving the economy and enhancing the ideological work of the Party” (Firsov 2001: 100). However, very soon they grew disappointed with the insufficient attention of the government to their recommendations and comments, which sociologists regarded as the violation of the initial ideological commitment. As a result, the sociological research and practice transformed into the form of the “resistance to the system, but with the help of the scientific knowledge” (Firsov 2001: 115).

In the 1970s soviet sociologists continued their latent ideological confrontation with the regime and tried to deliver the “true” information about the society to the people. According to Batygin, in that time the sociology was not the academic discipline but rather the self-consciousness of the era (Batygin 2001: 248). Sociologists wanted “to feel the ideological postulate but not only to announce it” (Batygin 2005: 15).

The important consequence of the ideological biasness of the soviet sociology was the tendency towards the simplified understanding of the social reality. Dimke rightly notes that the “beholder of the ideological vision does not solve any puzzles. He already knows the answers and looks at the world as on the object for the practical intervention”... “from this point of view, the history of the soviet sociology is more the history of the heroes than the history of the thinkers” (Dimke 2012: 105).

Strong ideological emphasis maintained in the sociological practice in the post-soviet period. Zdravomyslova points to the ideological fragmentation in the Russian sociological community between, on the one hand, the advocates of the current political regime, and, on the other hand, the proponents of the critically oriented and democratically reformist sociology (Zdravomyslova 2008: 410). Radaev also claims that ideological biasness of Russian sociological community remains the key factor for its ongoing disintegration (Radaev 2013: 14).

As we can see, the tendency towards politicization can be traced throughout different periods in the history of the Russian sociology. Its origins lie in the strong desire of scholars to participate fully in the stormy political life of the society, which sometimes leads to the serious negative consequences for the discipline, making sociological community fragmented in internal and external ideological confrontations.

The history of the Russian sociology (including the short story of the Russian Higher School of Social Sciences in Paris) warns that the descent political stance of sociologist may attract ideologically driven publics seeking to use sociology exclusively for the promotion of their political interests.

The Russian experience suggests that the training of sociological qualification should be separated from the political agitation. This is what ruined the initiative of the Russian Higher School of The Social Sciences in Paris, so promising in its initial intentions. The exaggerated political concern in the sociological public practice may bring to the addressee the wrong understanding of the sociologist: not the scientist, helping to understand the problems in the political life, but the politician, manipulating with the sociological arguments in pursue of the ideological goals. Where this will lead? The analysis of the Russian history suggests that it would hardly strengthen the prestige and improve the relevance of sociology in the strategic perspective.

Our analysis confirms the arguments by Turner (2005); McLaughlin et al. (2005) and others about the risks relating to the political action and ideological debates inherent to the project of “organic public sociology”. As Turner puts it, “if the public finds out that the discipline is so left and so mired in political correctness, we could permanently hurt our chances of influencing anyone” (2005: 28). Many colleagues are concerned that public sociologists might let their political interests override their commitments to scientific standards (e.g., Braithwaite 2005; Inglis 2005; Stacey 2004; Tittle 2004). McLaughlin rightfully claims, “Political activism towards building a more egalitarian and just society always will play a central role in recruiting young people into sociology” (2005: 31). However, it is necessary to “separate our various “action agendas” towards change and our research and teaching which must adhere to the strictest of scholarly standards” (2005: 31, Alford 1998). Indeed, the Russian experience illustrates, how thin is the line between the “organic public sociology” and political ideology, and how easily sociology can be lost in the turmoil of ideological debates.

The Price for Being Public: The “Personal Sacrifice” as Romanticized Practice

The current literature readily admits that the engagement in the “organic” sociological practice is often highly demanding (Burawoy 2014). Indeed, it requires much time and energy to work with the fragmented publics embedded in the competitive discourses in which sociologists have to struggle with various powerful agencies (media institutions,

politicians, market forces, etc.). The contemporary studies provide many evidences from diversified national contexts describing the negative consequences of practicing the “organic public sociology” for the personal well-being of the activist. Among others, emotional burnout, energy exhaustion, the difficulties in the development of the academic career are mentioned (Temkina and Zdravomyslova 2014, Burawoy 2014; Sundar 2014; Rodríguez-Garavito 2014).

The current international discussions about these personal “outlays” of “public sociology” usually describe them as the kind of noble “sacrifice” (Burawoy 2005: 289), thus celebrating the “organic” public engagement as a highly moral challenge in the “minefields” (Rodríguez-Garavito 2014) of the civil society. However, such romanticizing of the “public sociology” might be misleading. While promoting the romantically attractive image it tends to underestimate the negative consequences of these “personal sacrifices” for the strategic development of the discipline. At least, this is what the Russian experience of the last 150 years suggests.

It is hardly possible to find a place in the world where public sociologists have experienced such severe and long-lasting persecutions, as Russia. These persecutions usually had political grounds and, in this sense, they are closely connected with the Russian “public sociology’s” politicization and ideological biasness (the pitfall, which we analyzed earlier). However, in the history of Russian social science the issue of the “personal sacrifice” has deeper moral foundations, which go far beyond the political ideology.

During the second half of the XIXth century and the first decade of the XXth, when sociology was officially prohibited for the Russian Universities and for the Russian Academy of Science, every social thinker had to take the risk of punishments only for the self-identification as “sociologist”. The “Historical letters” by Pyotr Lavrov (the first Russian paper defining sociology as the independent discipline) were written in exile, which was the punishment to Lavrov for his political activities. Many social thinkers were subject to different forms of persecutions at that time, depending on the degree of their misconduct. Those who promoted the most radical ideas, for example, theorists of anarchism (Kropotkin, Bakunin) were condemned to imprisonment. The more moderate critics and less active political behavior resulted in exile (Michailovsky) or in the deprivation of the academic positions in the Russian Universities (Kovalevsky, Gambarov).

The prominent Russian and American sociologist Pitirim Sorokin (see Nichols 2012) experienced the full range of hardships of this sort in his homeland. In his youth, he was condemned to imprisonment for supporting the revolutionary-socialists party. Later he was among more than 125 Russian intellectuals forced to emigrate in the 1922 because of ideological misconduct (Makarov and Hristoforov 2003).

Notably, since the very beginning of his career, Sorokin clearly understood the role of the personal sacrifice in the Russian intellectual culture (and, most probably, in his own life). In the essay, which he wrote at the age of 23 on the death of the Russian philosopher and writer Lev Tolstoy (see more – Nichols 2012), Sorokin writes:

“Glancing at our past history—and, in particular, at the history of the intelligentsia in Russia—we see that it is one of continuous self-sacrifice, a constant and incessant “devotion of the soul to its other,” a constant, bright love not stopping short of any sort of sacrifice (Sorokin 1914 [1912]; pp. 149–150 in Johnston 1998).

In the context of the dramatic events of the Russian career of Pitirim Sorokin, it is no surprise that the difficulties, which he faced in his American life, could not make him change his beliefs and public stance, even in the context of the hostile academic environment (Nichols 2012).

The damage caused to the Russian society and culture by the repressions of the Stalinist regime in the 1930s was so great that it would be incorrect to place particular emphasis on the privations suffered by the social thought (Goldman 2007). We shall mention only that, among the thousands of victims from “*intelligentsia*” (generally speaking, these were people having university background) were internationally acknowledged sociologists and economists Kondratyev and Chayanov.

The “renaissance” of sociology in the late 1950s brought sociologists back to the frontiers of the social life in the Russian society. However, instead of serving the instrumental role in ideological struggle with the Western capitalism (which government hoped for (Radaev 2013)), many soviet sociologists took a critical stance towards the regime. This resulted in the new persecutions. After the famous “lectures on sociology” by Yuri Levada, delivered in the faculty of journalism in Moscow State University in 1968, the personnel of the leading soviet sociological research organization (Institute of Concrete Social Research in the Academy of Science) were accused of disseminating bourgeois theoretical conceptions and views, and Levada was stripped of the title of professor (Osipov 2004:28).

The intrepid initiatives of the soviet sociologists continued in the following decades and became the important factor in the liberal transformations of the 1990s (Yadov and Grathoff 1994:3–5). In the XXIst century, after the political regime strengthened, “organic public sociology” in Russia remains connected with serious dangers and risks. The famous Russian sociologist, Elena Zdravomuslova notes: «During the 2000s, in the context of President Putin’s authoritarian rule over a ‘governable democracy’ sociologists are described as possible spies undermining national security» (2008: 407).

Zdravomuslova and Temkina complain about the challenges that Russian sociologists face in their public undertakings: «public sociology is very costly in terms of time and energy. We have to pursue a multiplicity of roles, which under a shortage of resources, creates problems of balance and professional burnout» (2014: 260). However, despite these difficulties and constraints, promoting “public sociology” is still seen as a key task for the Russian sociologists (2014: 260).

The Russian experience throughout the last 150 years demonstrates the multiple risks and various traps, menacing the activists stepping on the path of “organic public sociology”. Numerous evidences from the other parts of the globe suggest that in the context of transitional societies with authoritarian elements in the political regimes, this path becomes especially dangerous (Sundar 2014; Rodríguez-Garavito 2014)).

How do these societies, despite all the dangers, happen to generate such strong traditions of “organic public sociology”, sometimes superior to those in the Western countries (having, on the contrary, prosperous “professional sociologies” but often little achievements in public undertakings)?

Aside from the other possible explanations, the analysis of the Russian experience suggests one hypothesis closely relating to the issue of the “personal sacrifice”. Perhaps, the apparent, clear and obvious imperfection, discrimination, and injustice of the social world, which make the life and activities of “public” sociologists so hard and dangerous,

at the same time, become the greatest motivators generating the ethical impetus of “public sociology”. In the Russian context, the perspectives of severe punishments did not prevent sociologists from public engagement; on the contrary, the necessity of the personal sacrifice for the morally supreme ideal became the additional driver for the public initiatives of sociologists throughout the Russian history.

Notably, many Russian intellectuals were educated according to the traditions of the European liberalism and draw inspiration from the ideals of the French Enlightenment. Filling themselves lost and alien in the society (so different from their ideals), these intellectuals were seeking to transform Russia, even at the price of their lives. In our view, that is why many Russian sociologists participated in the oppositional movements, despite the threats of exile, imprisonment or deprivation of status. We believe, this helps understand better the Pitirim Sorokin’s words about the Russian intellectuals’ “continuous self-sacrifice, a constant and incessant “devotion of the soul to its other” (Sorokin 1914 [1912]; pp. 149–150 in Johnston 1998).

We are as far as possible from questioning the ethical grounds of the idea of the “personal sacrifice” for the moral ideals. However, when it becomes the widespread practice and even the core element in the discipline’s institutional functioning (which, in our view, happened in Russia), it might have a negative impact on not only the personal career, well-being and even life of the sociologist, but also on the development of the discipline itself. The Russian experience demonstrates that the practice of personal sacrifice may strategically undermine the social basement of the discipline, disrupting the process of knowledge accumulation and exchange, and breaking the reproduction of professional competence. When one part of sociological community (the most devoted) sacrifices itself to the highest moral ideals in the struggle with the powerful agencies (like the state), the other part would necessarily face serious difficulties in their professional activities. For example, such dramatic events in the history of Russian sociology, as the confrontations with the regime of the 1860s–1910s, the forced mass migration of the brightest Russian scholars in the 1920s, the repressions of the 1930s, the victimization of the 1960s, had inevitable negative impact on the development of Russian sociology, making it less consistent and integrated.

Our analysis suggests that it might be more fruitful for the development of our discipline in the various national contexts to try to reduce the risks relating to the “public sociological” engagements than to over-romanticize them. It will require the serious transformation of the “organic” public practices into the new forms, less connected with the political confrontation and, hence, less demanding the sacrifice from the sociologist (in terms of personal comfort, well-being, career perspectives and professional development).

The Difficulties in the Institutionalization of the “Professional Sociology”

In contrast to the problems of the excessive politicization of the sociological community and the blurring of its structure as a result of the romanticized practice of the “personal sacrifice”, the issues analyzed in this sub-section refer to the institutional problems that “professional sociology” faces when functioning in the context of the “organic” public orientation dominating in the sociological community.

Despite the claims about the possible mutually beneficial relations between the professional and public sociologies (Burawoy 2005), current international literature is rather

skeptical concerning their reciprocity. The prevailing view is that in the real life these two forms of sociological practice are more in the antagonistic relations than mutually supporting, which is due to the principal differences in the targeted groups of reference, in the strategic interests, and, in general, in the understanding of *what sociology is* and *what it should be* (see for example, Turner 2005). Burawoy himself admits that his “public sociology” has specific referent audience (civil society) and operates the special type of truth (having “dialogical” nature) which makes it very difficult for public sociologists to communicate in the field of professional mainstream (2005).

The majority of the papers, focusing on the interrelations between the “professional” and “public” sociologies, concentrate on the experience of the developed Western countries in which “professional” sociology remains the dominating form of disciplinary practice. For the better comprehension of interplay between the two types of sociological activities it is important to refer not only to the cases from the US or Western Europe, but also to study the experiences of the developing countries and transition societies. In these national contexts, the “public” element in the sociological practice may appear to be stronger than the “professional” element and become leading in their interplay (Burawoy 2005: 282).

Russia is an example of such context, allowing tracing the interferences between these two forms of sociological practice in the broad historical period of approximately 150 years.

Sociology in Russia made its first steps not as the university discipline generously supported by the private and governmental institutions, but as the voluntary initiative of the democratically and, often, oppositional oriented intellectuals. Hence, despite the obvious potential for exploring the frontiers of the social knowledge, the discipline became officially forbidden almost immediately after it emerged. Sociology was prohibited for the higher education and the attempts to promote it in auditoriums were punished by, at least, the deprivation of the university position.

Describing the state of the art in sociological practice in Russia in the late XIXth - early XXth century, Ermakovich and Boronoev, the former head of the sociological faculty of the Saint-Petersburg University, conclude, “the authorities did not allow the teaching of sociology under various arguments» (1996: 122).

Kovalevsky wrote in the 1910: “Sociology continues being expelled from the high school and having discredited reputation among the official teachers” (Kovalevsky 1910: 5). Ministry of Education in the 1908 characterized sociology as a harmful science, bringing the institution, where it is practiced, into disrepute (Vagner 1913: 5, 97). This marks the important difference in the process of the discipline’s professional institutionalization between Russia and the Western world (for example, in the US the first Department of Sociology officially existed since the 1892).

In the 1910s sociology was finally approved for teaching in the Russian universities (which was largely due to the merits of Sorokin, Kovalevsky, De Roberty,¹⁸ and others), but unfortunately, this did not last long. Very soon after the establishment of the soviet regime, sociology was again prohibited as the “bourgeois” pseudoscience (Batygin 1998). Even after sociology “revived” (Osipov 2004) in the 1950s, it still

¹⁸ Eugeniy De Roberty (1843–1915) – the Russian sociologist of positivistic views, who was largely criticized by the proponents of “subjective method”, Lavrov and Michailovsky. His writings were materialistic and anti-religious (Golosenko 1978).

existed under severe control of the Communist Party and was not approved for the university education until the late 1980s. This situation provided very limited opportunities for the further institutionalization of the discipline and for the professional development of sociologists in the soviet time.

The economic transformations of the 1990s led the academic science in Russia to the deep crises. The survival of “professional sociology” in that time was supported primarily by the Western funds (Davis and Erofeev 2011; Radaev 2013). However, in the XXIst century the situation changed, which inspired the new hopes for the possible flourishing of the Russian “professional sociology”.

In the context of the rapidly improved economy, in the late 2000s/early 2010s Russian government launched several large programs aimed at the integration of the Russian academic science (including sociology) in the frontiers of the international professional mainstream. (Radaev 2013; Yudkevich 2014).

The major target of these initiatives was stimulating the international academic publishing of the Russian scholars. Even though the programs are still in progress, it is already widely noticed that Russian sociology faces serious difficulties on the road to internationalization (Radaev 2013). It is argued that the large part of Russian sociologists have little or no chances at all to correspond to the current international professional standards.

Literature points to the insufficient level of the methodological standards in the current Russian sociology (Radaev 2013; Sorokin 2015; Romanovsky 2012; Efendiev et al. 2015). Sociologists are criticized for being focused on the accumulation of the new data rather than on its careful analysis with advanced statistical methods, and for being more oriented on studying the most acute social problems than on the consistent empirical testing of the sociological theories, which is typical for the current international mainstream (Burawoy 2005; Dimke 2012).

Russian authors largely complain about the little progress in overcoming these limitations and promoting Russian “professional sociology” on the international arena. As we have suggested in our previous paper, these characteristics are the integral part of the Russian sociological tradition (along with other features, having positive potential) (2015). Therefore, the transforming of the professional standards of the Russian sociology may take a long time (Sorokin 2015; Radaev 2013).

The analysis of the Russian experience demonstrates that the emphasis on the “organic public” orientation in sociological practice in the long-term perspective may lead to the degradation of the “professional sociology”. The problem is not only in the difficulties relating to the organizational development of the discipline, research funding and the access to the university education. The “organic public” orientation might bring the shifted professional standards of sociological research and even the neglect of the methodological accuracy (Sorokin 2015).

The Burawoy’s idea about the strategic mutual enrichment and the possible harmony between the “professional” and “public” forms of sociological practice (despite all the obvious contradictions between them, which Burawoy admits (2005)) faces little understanding in the current international sociological community (see, for example, Turner 2005; Shrum and Castle 2014). The present study of the Russian experience also provides numerous evidences of the serious problems in their interrelations, clearly manifested in the long-term historical perspective.

However, the “reconciling” initiative of Burawoy, in our opinion, should not be disregarded. We believe that sociological community in the strategic perspective has simply no other option but to look for the ways to bring together the “public” and “professional” functions of the discipline. Harmony between them in the local, national and global contexts could become the stepping-stone for the integration of the fragmented sociological community, which would open up a new stage in the development of our discipline. We believe that the search for this harmony should be one of the central goals for the contemporary international sociology, even if it requires significant changes, both in the dominating current “public” sociological practices and in the professional mainstream.

Another important “pitfall” associated with the dominance of the “organic public” orientation in the discipline, refers to the area of the so-called “policy sociology” (Burawoy 2005). Its analysis, basing on the Russian experience, is conducted in the following sub-section.

The Deprivation of the “Policy Sociology” Development

“Policy sociology” is one of the key instruments for enhancing the positions of the discipline in the society (Turner 2005). It is also the important tool for improving the world (Burawoy 2005). The success of the applied research strengthen the reputation of the discipline, secure its prosperity and provide it with necessary resources and status. For example, in the history of sociology in the US, the achievements of the large applied research projects of the middle XXth century were the key source of the discipline flourishing and high prestige in that time (Savage and Burrows 2007).

The Russian sociological tradition knows only limited accomplishments in the field of “policy” practice, which, we believe, is largely due to the high engagement in public activities by the Russian sociologists and the resulting institutional consequences.

The distinct oppositional, anti-capitalist and anti-monarchist rhetoric was the persistent element of the social discourse in the Russian society in the second half of the XIXth and the beginning of the XXth century. Sociologists and social scientists largely engaged in this discourse and often supported the critics of the regime. In this context, their chances to attract potential clients for the applied research (for instance, governmental or corporate institutions) were little. However, despite all the difficulties in the discipline’s institutionalization, there were those sociologists who engaged in the policy research in the period between the 1870s and the 1900s; and this experience had been quiet successful.

On the one hand, oppositional political movements initiated and supported numerous applied research projects (mainly, surveys). For example, the socialistic organization “The union for the liberation of the working class” elaborated, published and disseminated the “questionnaire on the conditions of workers in the enterprises” in the 1894 (see more Tolstova 2013). Russian sociologist Juliana Tolstova notes that opposition carefully studied the information received in the surveys. Basing on the analysis of this data they wrote books, articles, leaflets for workers, which played significant role in the development of the revolutionary situation in the 1905 (Tolstova 2013: 59–60). These projects were funded by the oppositional organizations (and in this sense, they can be attributed to the policy research). However, sociologists, obviously,

engaged in them not because of the material remuneration but for the ideological reasons, sharing the interests and goals of their clients.

On the other hand, the important pages in the history of “policy sociology” in Russia relate to the activities of the so-called “Zemstva” (Tolstova 2013). “Zemstva” were the elected bodies of local self-government in Russia in 1864–1919, responsible for improving the health care, education, constructing the local roads and bridges, providing charity, and other activities relating to the local development. These institutions had special budgets for their needs, which allowed them to initiate the large body of regional empirical studies all over Russia, monitoring the demographical, social and economic changes. The published results of these studies were highly valued by the Russian officials, politicians and social thinkers. For example, Lenin noted that the “statistics acquired by Zemstva offers the huge and detailed material about the economic conditions of the peasantry” (Lenin 1941:3).

Despite the obvious success and usefulness of the emerging applied sociological research in that time (Tolstova 2013), the image of sociology as a harmful science with distinct oppositional inclination did not allow the “policy sociology” in Russia become officially approved and institutionalized practice.

The soviet regime prohibited sociological activities until the revival of the discipline in the late 1950s, which had primarily applied tasks (first, enhancing the ideological influence of the Communist Party (Sokolov 2011) and, second, improving the organization of labor in the soviet enterprises) (Radaev 2013). However, soviet sociologists appeared incapable to serve properly and consistently the interests of the Communist Party because of the growing doubts concerning the official ideology and policy (Dimke 2012). In our view, this was due to the antagonism between, on the one hand, the historically determined traditions of the democratically oriented and critically reformist “organic public sociology” in Russia, and, on the other hand, the institutional frame of the “policy sociology”, demanding the obedience to the interests of the client (or, at least, the coerced acquiescence).

The so-called “perestroika” and the reforms of the 1990s opened the new stage in the history of the Russian “policy sociology”. Sociologists massively rushed in the applied research, mostly, in the fields of marketing and political studies (Radaev 2013; Zdravomyslova 2008). Today “policy” sociologists largely concentrate within various private institutions. However, literature suggests that these enterprises have very limited success. Radaev (2013: 11) argues that large international corporations (the key clients for the applied research) scarcely address Russian researchers and prefer to work exclusively with the foreign experts and companies. The remaining field for the Russian “policy sociologists” is the research for governmental structures, which often cannot entrust to the foreign agencies due to the legal reasons. Never-the-less, Russian sociologists express dissatisfaction with the existing modes of cooperation with the government, which continues to disregard their opinions and recommendations (Toshchenko 2013; Osipov 2009).

It may be that the important reason for such cautious relation is the ongoing concerns of the governmental officials with the historically inherent distinct oppositional inclination of the Russian sociology. Possibly, that is why they keep sociologists at a distance, escaping possible conflicts.

The other important problem of the “policy” research in Russia is its insufficient professional level. Even those Russian sociologists, who rejected the “public

orientation” and engaged in the concrete, non-ideologically-biased, applied sociological research, often lag behind their competitors having foreign training (Temkina and Zdravomyslova 2014, Radaev 2013). In the context of the emerging global market of applied sociological research, this becomes the key factor in the continuous crisis of the Russian “policy sociology”.

International literature claims that the “public” and “policy” domains of sociological practice are hardly mutually supporting or even compatible because “to serve agents of power is to serve those who threaten public life and perpetuate inequality” (Christensen 2013: 30) (see also Turner 2005; McLaughlin 2005 and others). The results of our analysis of the Russian experience throughout the XIXth-XXIst centuries confirm this opinion and suggest the presence of a powerful “path-dependency” effect, manifested in a broad historical perspective. The ongoing image of our discipline as the harmful science, bringing disrepute to the institution practicing it, seems to be quiet relevant even today, more than 100 years after the officials in the Russian Empire first formulated it.

Burawoy repeatedly points to the objectively caused tension in the relationship between the “policy” and “public” sociologies (Burawoy 2005, 2009). However, he believes that this tension may be reduced if sociologists unite their efforts in bringing democratic social change and improving the world. The current study of the Russian experience demonstrates that the obstacles that “policy sociology” faces in the long-term historical perspective are, indeed, very serious in the situation of the domination of the “organic public” orientation in the sociological practice on the national level. In our view, the effective cooperation and true harmony between the “organic public” practices and the “policy sociology” is hardly possible without significant changes in the very nature of the “public” undertakings of current sociologists.

In the present section, we highlighted and examined the four pitfalls of “organic public sociology” in the dramatic, diversified and historically broad Russian experience. Now we proceed to the summarizing of the results of our study and revealing its relevance for the continuing international discussions about the present and future of sociology and its interactions with society.

Interaction Between Sociology and Society: The Russian Experience

For Michael Burawoy, who announced in the 2004 the famous call for the “public sociology”, the mission of our discipline is to bring about the democratic social change by a variety of means, including the “organic” engagement: actual participation of sociologists in the movements of the “civil society” (2005). Since then many attempts of promoting “public sociology” took place in the different parts of the globe, but the results of these undertakings were often not optimistic (Nichols 2009a).

The present paper is inspired by the international call to study the public engagements of sociologists in the different national, historical and institutional contexts in order to understand better the perspectives of the “public sociology” and, possibly, to search for its possible alternatives (Burawoy 2005, 2009; McLaughlin et al. 2005). We focused on the experience of the Russian sociology, analyzing it in the broad historical context from the second half of the XIXth century until present.

We interpret the Russian sociology as a unique example of the long-lasting tradition of sociological practice with the dominating role of “organic public” orientation. We

revealed and examined the four “pitfalls” originated from this orientation, which negatively influenced the paths of Russian sociology in the strategic perspective. Firstly, over-politicization and ideological biasness of sociological activities; secondly, the “personal sacrifice” of sociologist as a romanticized and potentially harmful practice; thirdly, the difficulties of the “professional sociology” institutionalization; fourthly, the deprivation of the “policy sociology” development.

These findings generally confirm the skeptical assessments of the influence of the “public sociology” (and, mainly, its “organic” forms) on the development of the discipline, and particularly, on such forms of sociological practice as “professional sociology” and “policy sociology” (Turner 2005). Notably, Burawoy warns about the “pathologies” that “public sociology” is fraught with (2005). He argues, «in pursuit of popularity public sociology is tempted to pander to and flatter its publics, and thereby compromising professional and critical commitments» (2005: 277). Notwithstanding the importance of this problem, our analysis of the Russian experience demonstrates that the risks of the exaggerated enthusiasm with “organic public sociology” may be much more dangerous in the long-term perspective than the faddishness, which Burawoy focuses on.

We consider the “organic public sociology” as but one of the possible modes of the interaction between the discipline and society. The analysis of the Russian experience revealed serious “outlays” of this practice, which proves the necessity for the search of the other forms of communication with society. In the next section, we propose several suggestions concerning the interactions between sociology and society in the XXIst century, based on the results of our study and grounded in the analysis of the current international debates.

Communicating with Society in the XXIst Century: The Current Challenge and the Possible Response

The interplay between the professional expertise of sociologists and their qualities as public figures are in the center of the current international discussions (Burawoy 2005; Turner 2005; Shrum and Castle 2014 and others). Should the professional competence serve as the ultimate foundation in public undertakings of sociologists? Can it really guarantee the triumph of such initiatives? Should the “professional” and “public” sociological practices be separated as fundamentally incompatible? Moreover, what if these types of sociological practices need to be transformed before they can be fruitfully integrated?

Unfortunately, the current literature on “public sociology” (the leading international discourse on the interactions between the discipline and society) is limited in understanding of these issues. On the one hand, there is a tendency towards overly optimistic views. For example, Burawoy claims that “sociology has never been in a better shape” (2005: 279), which makes the achievements of “professional sociology” the key premise for the success of “public” undertakings of sociologists in the XXIst century. On the other hand, the critical considerations of the current professional mainstream are often focused on the negative impact of the “ideological fervor” and “moral debate” connected with the influence of the “public sociology” (Turner 2005).

Indeed, there are certain risks for the mainstream, connected with the negative effects of the “organic public sociology” (which we examined in the present paper

basing on the Russian experience). However, the growing volume of literature (unfortunately, remaining largely unnoticed in the current “public sociology” discourse) analyzes several different and, perhaps, more dangerous “diseases” of the contemporary professional mainstream (Gane 2011; Back 2012, McKie & Ryan, Crompton 2008; Zafirovski 2014, and others). In our view among most dangerous problems are the tendencies towards the senseless grand-theories and abstract empirism (Gane 2011) and the lack of focus on the relevant social problems (Back 2012). In other words, the key problem in the interactions between sociology and society may be not only in finding the right way to use the professional expertise of the discipline more efficiently but also in the critical review and improvement of this expertise.

The idea of the prominent American sociologist, John Meyer, about the “The Scientized Environment Supporting Actorhood” (2010: 7) seems especially appealing in this context. According to Meyer, through the last decades the fundamental transformations take place in the society, promising serious changes in the principal role of social science and its place in the world. He argues that the new era has come, the era of the “expanded human agency”, when social changes are initiated by the voluntarily “public organized action”, guided not by the self-interest, but by the abstract ethical principles legitimized by “the scientized environment” (2010: 8). This legitimization is provided, mainly, by the social scientists becoming the key figures driving social changes. It is particularly important that, according to Meyer, this legitimization is “little related to the immediately perceived functional or instrumental requirements” (2010: 8). It also “goes far beyond the actual competence of the scientific knowledge system” (2010: 8). However, Meyer argues that this “scientized environment” largely enables and directs the real social action in the XXIst century.

In the context of this theoretical frame, the considerations of the scope of the current “sociological scientific knowledge” as factor, restricting our public agenda, fades into the background giving way to the broader question about the potential applications of the “sociological qualification” and “sociological imagination” to the wide areas of the social life and social action. In the context of the, generally, faddish interpretations of the social world produced by the Media (Sprague and Laube 2009), the potential field for sociological communication with society becomes much broader than traditionally understood “applied research” and “scientific expertise” (see Townsley 2014). This approach gives new grounds to the current discussions on the need to rethink the meaning of the public sphere and that of the discipline of sociology itself (Misztal 2009).

This framework suggests a transformation of the position of sociologist in interactions with the contemporary society. Firstly, sociologist does not discredit him(her)self with the politicization and ideological biasness (which would be almost inevitable in the situation of direct participation in political action). Following the inherent moral impetus of the discipline, sociologist refers to the fundamental ethical issues and principles (instead of vulgar political clichés). Secondly, by implementing the sociological imagination and methodology (relieved from the “pathologies” of the professional mainstream like abstracted empirism), sociologist communicates to the wide and diversified publics new interpretations of the social reality. By these interpretations, presented in the understandable manner and properly empirically and logically validated, sociologist contributes to the transformative social action. We believe that this mode of communications might be

helpful in the current context of the pessimistic view of the status of sociology and mourning of the absence of public intellectuals (Turner 2006).

In our view, the public activities of Pitirim Sorokin in the American period of his career are a good example of this approach to the interrelations between sociologist and society.

Learning from the Past to Succeed in the Future: The Publicism of Pitirim Sorokin

By the time of his expulsion from homeland as a “*borgouis professor*” in the 1922, Sorokin had had large experience of participating in the revolutionary movement in the 1900s and serving in the Russian Provisional Government in the 1917. Perhaps, due to this dramatic experiences Sorokin did not sought to engage in direct political action any more, but, instead, focused on communicating with the general public outside of the political arena (Nichols 2012); and he much succeeded in this communication.

In the literature, Sorokin was regarded as the most published and most translated scholar in the history of sociology (Martindale 1975: 105–106). Jeffries argues that Sorokin’s papers are exemplars of public sociology directed toward the general reading public in an attempt to inform, heighten awareness, and inspire social action (2005). In his writings Sorokin tackled the most acute issues and social problems such as the cultural crisis (Sorokin 1962), the relation between power and morality (Sorokin and Lunden 1959), the social change (Sorokin 1964), the sexual revolution (Sorokin 1956).

Sorokin did not only analyze various social problems, but also outlined the alternatives, and inspired the transformative social action (Jeffries 2005: 82). He believed that the social science knowledge largely influences the fundamental cultural change (Sorokin and Lunden 1959). In this sense, Sorokin’s understanding of the role of the social knowledge is close to that of Meyer in his theory of the “*Scientizied Environment Supporting Actorhood*”(2010). Social knowledge becomes a call to action exceedingly influential in the global world (2010).

Sorokin’s public sociology of American period defines the nature of the key social problems in a way that is highly comprehensible for the variety of audiences with different statuses, occupations and beliefs. In the context of the current discussions about the relations between the “*professional*” and “*public*” sociology, extremely important are Sorokin’s critics of the negative tendencies in the sociological academy, which he witnessed in the middle XXth century (exaggerated scientism and over-inclination towards formal statistical methods missing the general comprehension of the social processes) (see Sorokin 2016). The integrative nature of his project implied not only enhancing the public orientation of the discipline but also the critical revision of its core professional competences (Jeffries 2005). For Sorokin “*public sociology*” should not be a separate form of the disciplinary practice or a section within the special “*division of labor*” in the academy, but rather the natural extension of the professional sociological research.

Nichols (2009b) demonstrates the promising perspectives for developing the “*public sociology*” agenda proposed by Burawoy (2005) basing on the ideas of Sorokin. In particular, he points that Sorokin’s perspective is broader than Burawoy’s understanding of “*justice*” (as the core value for sociologists) and “*political*” and “*economic*”

crises (as the central problems of the society) (Nichols 2009b). This approach suggests that the communicative action of public sociologists may be shifted away from the political agitation and engage with deeper moral and ethical foundations.

Notably, Sorokin does not disregard the importance of the scientific validity of sociological knowledge. He believes that sociology should serve as «logical and empirical consistent system» (Sorokin 1954). Sorokin fully embodied this understanding in his many writings, which we regard as classics today. However, he claims that our discipline should become more understandable for the various publics and focus on the relevant problems of the social life. His concerns with the growing “quantophrenia” and “numerology” in the academy of the 1950s remain highly relevant today, confirming Sorokin’s reputation of the prophet even in the XXIst century (Nichols 2012). Learning to become more comprehensible is, indeed, one of the key points of the current agenda for enhancing our disciplines’ public stance. As Sprague and Laube claim, contemporary sociologists “would like to have learned how to write clearly and accessibly, particularly given their immersion in literatures that are jargon-laden and highly abstract” (2009: 268). This is particularly important in the context of growing doubts concerning the adequacy of the direct implications of the traditional rational choice theory to the social science and the call to consider a more complex and realistic post-rational (and, we would say, ethical) understanding of a human (Zafirovski 2014).

Thus, in our view, Pitirim Sorokin embodies an interesting alternative for the dominating models of the interaction between the discipline and society, including the largely disputed “organic public sociology”. The publicism of Pitirim Sorokin (in his American career) is much different from the orthodoxy of “organic public” engagement (proposed by Burawoy (2005)) because it does not imply the direct participation in the social and political movements, and instead of political ideology refers to the more fundamental moral issues: love, altruism, family, etc. The Sorokin’s project cannot be regarded the pure example of “traditional public sociology” (Burawoy 2005) as well, because it brings the powerful critical element and calls for the transforming of the existing professional sociological practice (instead of idealizing its achievements).

This mode of sociological communication can potentially address various social groups, both, dominated and dominating, passive and active in their social actions and political undertakings. This is the important advantage in comparison to the “organic public sociology”, resting on a dubious premise about the public sociological practice as the “inconvenient truth” for the dominating classes. Developing the ideas of Pierre Bourdieu, Michael Burawoy argues that the dominating groups tend to be largely insensitive to the public sociological messages aimed at revealing the social injustice and inspiring the transforming social action (2014). That is why Burawoy directs his “organic public sociology” primarily towards the oppressed and discriminated social groups, which he calls the “civil society”. Marginalized communities are often believed to be particularly fruitful grounds for sociological engagement (Lipsitz 2008; Mendez 2008; Nabudere 2008).

However, the history of Russian revolutions and revolts, beginning with the Decembrist revolt of the 1825 and continuing with the revolutionary events of the 1905 and 1917–1918 (in which Pitirim Sorokin personally participated), and further, demonstrates the opposite example. Those activists, promoting the democratic social changes in Russia (often with a significant success), were largely the members of the

wealthy and educated layers driven by the morally sublime ethical considerations and not only by the narrow “class interests” (Burbank 1986).

In the XXIst century the mode of interaction with society embodied in the activities of Pitirim Sorokin in the American period of his career can become potentially even more effective if it uses the opportunities offered by the contemporary informational technologies, and, first of all, Internet (Shrum and Castle 2014, Kelly and Farahbakhsh 2013).

We believe that sociology will find the way to improve its reputation and enhance its influence in the different areas of social life and in interactions with various publics in both, the national and the global contexts. We hope that these new modes of sociological communication will escape the pitfalls of the “organic public sociology” outlined above. Perhaps, one of the potentially fruitful solutions for constructing the interactions between sociology and society might be discovered in the heritage of the prominent Russian and American sociologist, Pitirim Sorokin.

Conclusion

The present study demonstrates that the path of the “organic public sociology” (proposed by Burowoy in his famous call of the 2004) as the dominating mode of sociological practice in the national context can be menacing with the serious pitfalls manifested in broad historical perspective. We revealed the four pitfalls basing on the analysis of the Russian experience through the last 150 years. First, the over-politicization and ideological biasness of sociological activities; second, the “personal sacrifice” of sociologist as a romanticized practice, potentially harmful for the discipline; third, the difficulties of the “professional sociology” institutionalization; fourth, the deprivation of the “policy sociology” development. Notwithstanding these pitfalls and despite all the difficulties of public engagements, we believe, that, sociology should not reject its inherent orientation on communication with wide non-academic audiences, and not give up the desire to change the world for the better.

Our analysis of the history of Russian sociology in the context of the current international discussions suggests the mode of communication, which, we believe, could be helpful for improving the interactions between sociology and society in various national and global contexts in the XXIst century. This mode has several important differences from the other alternatives discussed in the literature. First, it escapes the political emphasis and ideological claims but rather concentrates on the more fundamental ethical issues. Second, it tries to overcome the limitations of the contemporary professional mainstream (instead of idealizing it). Third, it presents itself to the publics in the understandable way, while remaining properly scientifically validated (however, avoiding the exaggerated accent on the statistical procedures and fitishization of the natural science’ principles (“numerology” and “quantofrenia”)).

Perhaps, this mode of interaction with society would be more effective in comparison with the “organic public sociology” proposed by Michael Burawoy (2005) not only in terms of improving the status of the discipline in its interrelations with society but also for stimulating the humanistic and democratic social transformations in

different parts of the globe. At least, the results of our study of the Russian experience in the last 150 years, suggest that it is possible.

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