Intellectuals and their publics: perspectives from the social sciences (introduction)

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Introduction

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Reflecting and commenting on their professional calling are two activities intellectuals do regularly – and often they do so with passion. Ever since the term 'intellectual' became defined in more specific terms at the turn of the last century during the Dreyfus Affair,[1] intellectuals have been engaged in debates in which they have tried to position themselves sociologically, politically and culturally. A newly defined modern public has become the space where intellectuals try out their ideas or where they battle out their differences against real and imaginary rivals – sometimes even to the extent of trying to exclude competitors from the *agora*.

Over the years, new groups of intellectuals have entered the public arena while older ones have disappeared. New social differentiations have developed and with the help of new conceptual tools intellectuals have tried to make sense of the changes. Just a look reveals that the twenty-first-century intellectual is very different in his or her aspirations and functioning role when compared to the type that more than a hundred years ago was emerging. Today there exist considerably more agendas and competing views in terms of what defines intellectual life and what intellectuals should or should not do. The latest but certainly not the last invention in a series of such self-creations is that of the so-called 'public intellectual'. (For a working definition and role description of the public intellectual and the role public sociology should play, see Burawoy, 2005).

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1 The Dreyfus Affair (1898–1904) was named after the French officer Dreyfus, who had wrongly been accused by the authorities of spying for the Germans. The novelist Emile Zola was so outraged by the deeply flawed investigation and the miscarriage of justice that he decided to publish an open letter, 'J'accuse', subsequently signed by 1200 supporters, most of them writers, scholars and teachers. Ever since Georges Clemenceau called this manifestation 'a protest of intellectuals', the term stuck (Collini, 2006, 20f.). However, it would be wrong to suggest that intellectuals did not exist before the term 'intellectuals' was coined. The cases of Alexis de Tocqueville and Gustave de Beaumont, also discussed in this volume, clearly reveal that intellectuals existed a long time before the concept and modern notion and usage of the term became more widespread at the beginning of the last century (for a discussion of this aspect, see Collini, 2006, 17ff., and, more detailed, Charle, 1996). In *La marche des idées* (2003) François Dosse has reminded all participants in this debate that one has to distinguish between the history of intellectuals and intellectual history; the two can overlap, but they are hardly the same.

The aim of this volume on intellectual engagement in the public sphere is threefold. First, we try to identify some of the major issues intellectuals have tried to address and come to terms with, such as the changing public sphere, women intellectuals and just causes. Second, we look at particular complex social and political configurations in which intellectuals situated themselves, taking on positions or defending values, with all the contradictions, dilemmas and risks that engagement entails. Finally, we will study some particular cases, names and academic programmes in order to deepen our understanding of what intellectual engagement meant in the past and what it means today. The editors take this Introduction as an opportunity to establish a few parameters and to introduce some ideas that will help the reader to gain a better overall sense of the arguments presented in this volume. We would also like to draw the reader's attention to Howard Davis's reflections in the Conclusion to this volume, which together with the Introduction provides a frame for the investigations collected here.

Looking back at how intellectuals came into existence as a particular social group, the classic intellectual who entered centre stage towards the end of the nineteenth century is the first type that comes to mind. Being almost always male, he made his mark by usually addressing a single, undivided and usually well-educated audience – in other words, a relatively small portion of the population. The early type of intellectual came in two forms: as a university professor and as a professional writer. The prestige of a university professor was usually high enough to suppress any objections with regards to the authority of their public utterances. Bertolt Brecht once called this *das große Einverständnis*. This 'great consensus' between university-based intellectuals and the powers that be was a very solid one, in the sense that the public engagement of intellectuals was firmly located within the boundaries of the dominant discourse. Pronouncements of a radical, oppositional nature remained the exception. Many of the debates were, so to speak, about the pace of social improvement, not about the general direction society should take or about suggesting radical societal alternatives. Before the labour movement won access to decision-making institutions – in the first instance by democratically increasing their vote and by enlarging their representation in parliament – those few intellectuals who showed solidarity with the early labour movement and the emerging organized left could easily be neglected, marginalized or simply ignored by the majority of the educated public. The prime example of such reaction – or better, non-reaction – has to be Karl Marx, who during his own lifetime never experienced any wider recognition (if we disregard for a second that nucleus of followers and comrades who took his words as gospel). It would take a long time, actually the 'massification' and institutionalization of the labour movement, best expressed and symbolized in the rise of workers' parties, either of the socialist or the social democratic type, before Marx's intellectual contribution could be fully acknowledged.

The second classic group of intellectuals, already briefly mentioned above, consisted of writers. Quite a few of these men of letters could actually make a living from their art or were subsidized in one way or another and were thus in

a position to ignore expectations of the public at large. However, while this type of the writer-intellectual deviated more from the overall societal consensus than the first type of the university-based intellectual, most of their transgressing was confined to artistic questions and did not deal specifically with social problems. The great realistic novels of Balzac, Zola and Dickens and the naturalistic plays of Hauptmann and Ibsen portrayed social misery; seldom did their authors speak out in favour of a completely different societal model. Both types have been contemplators, whereas a third type was more active as spokesmen of nations, nations to be, social movements and causes.

Until the period leading up to the First World War, most of the intellectual debates were closely related to particular social forces and their causes, such as the various nationalisms and political projects of self-determination, imperialist and Western ideas of civilization, the battle between religious beliefs and the emerging secularized state, and addressed such important democratic questions as the inclusion of women and workers. Fundamental opposing contributions from intellectuals gaining wider public recognition emerged only after the communist movement had gained power in Russia and with the newly established Soviet regime now trying to connect with and influence the worldwide network of devotees – not a few of them 'intellectual workers' defending obediently the party line.

Between 1917 and 1989, many of the debates among intellectuals were indeed debates about the pros and cons of communism. This unintentionally brought the social democratic left into accord with Western democracy, in some countries arguably quicker than in others. Halfway through this era, in the 1950s, just as Daniel Bell announced the *End of Ideology*, a new ideology-driven movement entered the stage: neo-Marxism and the students and youth movements with their new idols, Che Guevara, Ho Chi Minh and Mao Zedong. Interestingly, these leaders were very much seen as practical intellectuals by their admirers[2] – even if their own martyr death (as in the case of Che Guevara, Patrice Lumumba or Amilcar Cabral) and the sacrifice of entire parts of the population (as in the case of China's Mao or Kampuchea's Pol Pot) were the net results. The tragic irony was that some of the radicalized intellectuals actually tried to copy their idols, re-enacting or re-creating in their own Western society what their idols had practised under Third World conditions. Fortunately, the majority populations of Western countries resisted following the example of such self-proclaimed revolutionary *avant-gardes* or simply decided to ignore their occasionally bizarre-sounding battle cries.[3]

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2   Those people were admired not only by student activists but by well-established social scientists, too. For example, Karl W. Deutsch, John R. Platt and Dieter Senghaas (1986) celebrated Lenin's theory of revolution and his conceptualization of the one-party state together with Mao Ze Dong's peasant and guerrilla organization as examples of major social science breakthroughs.

3   In this respect, the founding of guerrilla groups in Western countries was maybe not so different or so far away when compared to the present day's suicide bombers –

The audience of classical intellectuals consisted of educated people, and at the turn of the last century this still meant a relatively small portion of the population. However, due to modernization this audience grew steadily. Mass education and an increasing professionalization of occupations produced more and better-educated receivers for intellectual messages; they also contributed to a process that can best be described as a further differentiation in terms of available expectations. This has also created a wider range of critical voices for public intellectuals to engage with. Besides the enlargement of the audience and the developing of a wider spectrum of expectations, the expansion of the education system also offered would-be intellectuals without private means security and a stable income. Until then the normative term 'intellectual' stood mainly for alternative interpretations; now it became a descriptive term and signifier for all those professions that developed, manipulated and disseminated knowledge. Echoing older classifications, but partly also in an attempt to re-conceptualize and re-brand some old-fashioned and outdated Marxism, the new kind of intellectual now became known as the 'knowledge worker', encompassing both normative-emancipatory and descriptive dimensions.

In what may be described as a cunning moment or a twist of reason, the New Left may have unwillingly contributed to the new development in which the old world of bourgeois reasoning became increasingly democratized, shaping intellectuals and their products and perceptions profoundly in the process. Those intellectuals or would-be intellectuals who entered the formal system of higher education as professors or instructors were exposed to new, often competing role expectations. However, it was only after the Second World War and as a result of decolonization that developing countries began to follow the Western trend in higher education by introducing educational policies, often by means of special incentives such as scholarships, bursaries and writers-in-residence schemes, which made entry into higher education possible for future intellectuals. Until then the elites of the decolonized world (including most intellectuals) had mainly received their education at universities in the developed world.

Due to the changes described above, the majority of modern intellectuals across the Western world and in most (but not all) of the developing countries have for some time now encountered and experienced some kind of counter-pressure. It is probably fair to say that expectations of the public at large are no longer fully congruent, neither with the life and logic of academia nor with the rules that determine the success of the professional writer. To paraphrase Niklas Luhmann, while the medium of scholarship is looking for the truth or a scientific explanation, or in the case of the writer, aiming at a 'true' (but somehow unachievable) description of reality, the medium and means of appreciation of the public is applause – the dilemma, of course, being that one rarely gets applause for understanding, telling or revealing 'the truth'. Obviously, seeking truth(s) demands

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the only difference being perhaps their different ideological backgrounds. Again, a small minority group wants to 'liberate' the majority population from its 'moral downfall' and its 'complicity' with the powers that be.

a completely different set of attitudes and practices, and aiming for widespread public acknowledgment is not one of them (although fame can occasionally be a by-product of good research or scholarship). One way of evading such apparent contradictions is, of course, to concentrate one's energy and motivation and apply them to one field only. In other words, seeking refuge in specialization becomes a realistic option. The price, however, is the retreat of the scholar and researcher from engaging with the larger public sphere.

The engagement of the old-type intellectual rested on three pillars: ideology, an orientation towards the public at large, and the need for subsidies. Each of these pillars began to deteriorate and to crumble during the course of the twentieth century. Ideologies lost their appeal, mass culture diversified the public and created a larger spectrum of voices; finally, the economic base for independent middle-class existences disappeared during recurrent economic crises. However, the new haven for intellectuals, the world of higher education into which even the majority of professional writers now escapes from time to time (or sometimes even permanently) experienced fundamental changes too. Differentiations took place inside all levels of universities, research and scholarship – no stone remained unturned, no department unchanged.[4] As a result, scholars and researchers are now confronted with an increased level of complexity in terms of both defining and finding their role *vis-à-vis* the public and in terms of what is expected of them as full-time university employees. In the first quarter of the twentieth century, university professors could still remain in their proverbial ivory tower, ignoring demands from the outside world or speaking out only if they felt that it was the right moment to do so. If a professor actually spoke to the larger audience beyond the classroom, he could be sure that his authority was never challenged. At a later stage, however, changes in the organization of the scholarly environment forced professors to transgress the boundaries of their professional world when making public announcements; now, they would often find themselves in the position of having to legitimize their status and their views. As a result, particularly the more scientific-oriented disciplines developed specific patterns of dealing with non-academic audiences[5].

The most common relationship with the outside world was and still remains the surveillance and major funding authority, in Europe usually located in ministries or other parts of the state apparatus. In countries with a larger share of private universities, the surveillance authority is usually exhibited by boards of overseers, trustees and so on. Originally, the state provided all the means university professors needed, but step by step, other actors entered the field. Funding bodies such as philanthropic foundations offered additional means for research. Since modern research consists mainly of team efforts – the idea of the lone scholar is not dead yet, but is an outgoing model at least in terms of big funding schemes – the new spenders become even more influential because team effort also means requesting

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4   Only the German *Lehrkanzel* survived.
5   Stephen Hawking would be a representative figure in this respect.

and receiving more money. Funding team projects means that contracts have to be carefully negotiated and rules and regulations have to be followed. This in turn means interacting and liaising regularly with people outside the traditional realm of scholarly work. Whereas state or supra-national funding bodies define the wider research agendas while leaving space for individual or group researchers in that they do not set or define all aspects of the research, most of the new funding bodies give money only to well-defined endeavours that are usually to be completed within clearly specified periods. The drift is clear: team effort, outside funding, big science – goals which all reinforce each other and lead not only to a different kind of research but also to a different kind of engagement. A discipline or a particular department can indeed look very different if their leading members are successful in securing such funds. A further effect of this increase in funding opportunities is not only that scholars of one discipline are in competition with each other, but also that there is now also increased competition between neighbouring disciplines, with all the various consequences this entails, such as new role expectations but also new disciplinary hierarchies, envy or misunderstood pride.

New relations between academia and the business world emerged when scientific disciplines either teamed up with or even established themselves as enterprises mainly for the purpose of soliciting patents and/or exploiting intellectual copyrights. Some of these new enterprises were more successful than others, but the important thing to bear in mind in this context is that these new kinds of relationships also impacted on and shaped the functioning of the intellectual process and the disciplines involved. New campus enterprises expect that contractually bound research results or products remain their sole property. Rarely is the public at large aware of those products, although the former helps to fund the latter indirectly through taxpayers' money. The outcome is obvious. We are dealing here with the private appropriation of (partly) publicly funded knowledge. As if that was not problematic enough, very often researchers who are subcontracted as partners are also prohibited from disseminating or sharing their knowledge and their findings with colleagues and the wider scientific community. What stands out here are the influence and power that one sphere (the privately funded enterprise) exercises and holds over and against another (the publicly funded higher education sector and its intellectual workforce). The state or the government that often functions as a mediator or facilitator complicates matters, but does not take away from the fact that this is basically a deeply uneven relationship in which the private enterprise sets the agenda, controls the process and determines what to do with the final product, while the intellectual workforce, albeit at times without enthusiasm, follows and executes the enterprise's will. In terms of seeing those researchers ever engaging critically in the public sphere, the chances seem minimal. Almost by definition, they have become more interested in the sales of their intellectual products than in a genuine public discussion or the distribution of knowledge. Some may be highly visible in the media, but they appear to approach the larger audience in a purely instrumental way, to raise their own prestige and to attract more research funds from public authorities.

The social sciences and those scholars and researchers who still see themselves as intellectuals are in a particularly complicated position *vis-à-vis* potential 'customers' or 'clients' because their ability to feed the wider public's curiosity has, as a result of the changes outlined above, become somehow limited. In the eyes of the public, the social sciences are further undermined by the very fact that they lack an overall consensus. Social sciences and sociology in particular are fragmented enterprises, divided into rivalling schools and approaches. Furthermore, simplifying things is certainly not an attitude that one can encounter when sociologists meet in public. Even worse, those sociologists who regularly contribute to public debates often suffer a decline in terms of their scholarly reputation.[6]

Be all this as it may, and even with all restrictions, ifs and buts, there are still intellectuals who engage in the public sphere. A brief analysis of the various shades and engagements of the public intellectual might help us to understand the complexities involved.[7] The role of the modern intellectual usually encompasses a set of different roles. Each role segment offers, so to speak, some 'rewards', but it also involves some difficulties. The most uncontroversial role is that of the expert. The expert interacts primarily with a set of well-defined players, either from the private or the public sector, or with the media as a commentator on a specific range of issues related to the expertise in question. Major entrepreneurs as well as the media have a strong interest in securing the reputation of the expert because expert knowledge means first and foremost generating or securing authority through credibility. Counsellors and consultants are special cases of this category of experts. Their activity and advice are usually hidden from the wider audience. They are in a way more privatized versions of experts, because they counsel clients exclusively. As a rule, both types of experts provide recommendations towards public policies and avoid what intellectuals regularly do, namely criticizing a given social, political or even cultural condition. As long as experts are giving advice in one policy field only, they can secure their public and scholarly reputation much better than those generalists who critically comment on broader societal conditions.

Experts who leave their narrowly defined fields of competence and offer comprehensive or holistic solutions encounter much stronger responses from other experts, from politicians connected with opposition parties, and the media. The broader an expert's portfolio, the more visible he or she becomes. Professor X is then not only the expert for the reform of the higher education system, but a panellist at the Annual Meeting of an Academy of Fine Arts, regularly writes op-ed commentaries in a widely circulated newspaper, shows up on talk shows, can be persuaded by a publisher to exchange letters with another intellectual or artistic celebrity, earns honorary degrees, and so on. This trajectory of becoming

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6   The examples of Daniel Bell, Ralf Dahrendorf, Ulrich Beck or Anthony Giddens come to mind here.

7   Still readable descriptions of the newly emerging role of the expert can be found in C. Wright Mills's essay collection *Power, Politics, and People* (1963), see particularly 292–304, 405–22 and 599–613.

a public figure resembles a one-person Matthew effect, almost like an elevator that only knows one direction – upwards.[8] Today the 'public intellectual' role has its dark side too, because of the time limit public figures experience. The expiry dates of public intellectuals comes much faster than those of the scholars, the shelf life of the ideas and publications of the latter definitely last longer. The power of the media in its various guises to make or break public intellectuals has greatly increased, and is likely to continue and expand.

Experts with a broad portfolio cannot be easily distinguished from public intellectuals, and as a matter of fact, for the audience they often resemble one another, sometimes even to the point of becoming identical. This identical perception reminds us that any public intellectual actually needs to be an expert in something. Strong convictions and fine prose are not enough, and it seems that this distinguishes classical intellectuals from the new type of public intellectuals. Whereas the former needed nothing more than conviction and style, the latter need to speak with some scientific or expert authority.

Evaluation of contributions of expert-intellectuals follows two conflicting patterns. Expert proposals become criticized either according to the terms of scholarship or those of politics. The more a suggested remedy contradicts the political convictions of other experts or interested parties, the more the scholarly standing of the experts will be challenged. The best antidote against annoying policies is to question the scientific fundament on which suggestions have been built. On the other hand, in the case of challenging the scholarly reputation of someone who is not only a social scientist but also a public intellectual, it is sometimes appropriate to say that the person in question no longer takes part in real research, has lost track with developments in the field in which he purports to be knowledgeable, holds outdated views, and so on. However, one also has to concede that the demands experienced by public intellectuals can sometimes be so intense that remaining an active researcher is almost impossible (for more details, see Zuckerman, 1979).

Two crucial incentives to perform the role of public intellectual are that the financial reward can be very high and that status gratification follows almost instantly. While in the past it was not unheard of for a scholar or researcher to

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8   There is, however, nothing more embarrassing than having made it to the top and then have nothing more to say, either because one has spent all his intellectual energy and capital and only repeats what everybody knows already, or because one has been found out – that is, the intellectual in question has turned out to be a non-reasoning propagandist or simply a hypocrite who does not act upon his or her own teachings. Noam Chomsky would be a prime example for the first case (nothing new to say); Peter Handke taking sides in the case of the Serbian perpetrators is an illustration of the latter scenario of the propagandist, while Günter Grass and Zygmunt Bauman could serve as prime examples of being hypocrites because of their negative, if not to say embarrassing response concerning the revelations about and discussions of their respective pasts (Grass having been a member of the SS and Bauman a Stalinist informer and agent).

be acknowledged and celebrated only once he or she had passed away (Walter Benjamin is such a case), nowadays the celebrity status of a mass media guru can be reached in a relatively short period. Of course, only a few intellectuals reach this level of appreciation, but the incentives for trying are strong, and the rewards (money and fame) can be reaped immediately.[9]

The last point brings us finally to the topic of the modern mass media and the changing public sphere, and the influence both have on intellectuals. Let us take, for example, the cases of Max Weber and Emile Durkheim. Both acted in the public sphere, but at the time this sphere consisted only of some newspapers and magazines, public appearances in front of a few people, to whom one could speak using one's voice in a shared language of scholarship, and conversations with a handful of public figures who sought advice. There was no telephone, no radio, no TV, no easy-to-use public transport, not to mention Websites, online discussion groups devoted to particular thinkers, and the chance to travel to any place worldwide within 24 hours. Besides the multiplicity of media options, the world of mass media radically transformed the role of public intellectuals. The public to whom one speaks today consists of several audiences, only with a few of whom a speaker might be familiar with regard to their expectations, knowledge and familiarity with one's own thinking. Therefore, voicing ideas can have its communication and transmission problems, probably more so today than in the past. Below the surface of cosmopolitanism, local or subjective knowledge still continues to play a crucial role and mistakes, either on the side of the sender or the recipients, are almost inevitable. The multiplicity of media and places where public intellectuals are visible can sometimes cause severe dissonances. It also puts a premium on the ability to communicate in a popular and accessible style, not always easy when it comes to complex social problems and questions.

The critical attitude exhibited by what has traditionally been referred to as intellectuals lies at the core of their self-understanding. This deserves some closer examination. Over the last hundred years, the majority of intellectuals were on the political left. Their criticism was rooted in the tradition of the Enlightenment; however, some intellectuals developed and used a rather exotic rhetoric and somehow lost the sensibility or capacity to reach out beyond a narrow circle of followers. A feeling of isolation and alienation on the side of those who claimed to offer sound interpretations of the present occurred, which in turn led to further radicalization, sometimes to such an extent that the space ship of critical attitudes lost contact with the Mother Earth of knowledge and scholarship. Antonio Gramsci's organic intellectual, embedded in a social movement, can be found less in those politically challenging constellations Gramsci actually had in mind when he conceived his idea of the organic intellectual than in societies with a relatively high degree of normative integration. In other words, successful intellectuals

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9   While in the past intellectuals mainly addressed a national audience, some public intellectuals have now attained such fame that they can reach out to a continental and on occasion – such as the World Social Forum – even a global audience.

were always embedded in their society's cultural and political life. The story of the Myrdals as public intellectuals is so convincing because it shows that getting the message through to both the people and the politicians needs some kind of embeddedness in one's own society. (Michael Walzer has made the same point; Walzer, 1987 and 1988.)

This short overview about some aspects of the old and new role of the public intellectual cannot explain comprehensively all aspects of that complicated relationship between intellectuals and the public. However, we hope that we have provided the reader with some basic ideas. Perhaps the frame itself must be reformulated and refined in response to a changing role and faced with new and pressing social and political circumstances. We hope the reader will share with the editors the excitement of gaining new insights from the contributions to this volume.

The contributions which follow are organized according to a three-step logic ('provocations' – 'complications' – 'case studies'). Seen collectively, the contributors are social scientists broadly speaking; individually speaking, they might see themselves as sociologists, historians, anthropologists, political scientists or they come from some other related discipline and sub-discipline. Whichever label applies and whatever the epistemological vantage point, the contributions reflect the need for an ongoing cross-disciplinary social science debate about the changing and contested role of social knowledge in the civic and public sphere.

Reflecting on the tasks and role of public intellectuals from a social science perspective, the opening discussion in Part One starts with some provocative statements and questions. Our first three contributors, Jeffrey C. Alexander, Mary Evans and Joseba Zulaika, raise crucial questions that go to the very heart of the notion, role and functioning of public intellectuals. In his historical-theoretical reflection 'Public Intellectuals and Civil Society', Jeffrey C. Alexander notes that the public intellectual's role has become fundamental to the civil repair of modern societies. It is rooted in the first public sphere that emerged in Athens, and in the iconic figure of Socrates. These secular origins became folded into the Judeo-Christian trope of prophetic judgement. Public intellectuals criticize society on behalf of the putative, and necessarily unrealized, solidarity that underlies the civil-public sphere, and they do so by pronouncements that refer to the power of truth. Being a public intellectual must be understood performatively. It is an expressive figure organized in sub-genres formed by such political traditions as the revolutionary, reformist, conservative and counter-revolutionary, but it has also expressed itself in the figure of the public psychotherapist initiated by Freud. In real historical time, however, the performance of public intellectual is not as transcendental as it seems. As much denunciation and demonization as idealistic and inspiring, public intellectual discourse engages the binary, bifurcating discourse of civil society. Even while promoting civil repair, public intellectual performance becomes a vehicle for carrying out the excluding and stigmatizing boundary enforcement that also characterizes every civil society.

In the second contribution, Mary Evans asks a question that has been around ever since the term 'intellectual' was first coined: 'Can Women Be Intellectuals?' Referring to Virginia Woolf, Evans questions the degree to which women can maintain for themselves independence from those institutions which have been instrumental in maintaining male dominance. Woolf was writing at a time when women were fighting to obtain access to higher education and the professions, but she realized that the cost of achieving this access was collusion with the values of those institutions. However, Evans's contribution is not primarily concerned with the dominance of one gender in institutional contexts, rather it addresses the gendered dynamic of intellectual life. The 'discovery' of sex differences in the eighteenth century in one sense enlarged the world for women since it allowed them to claim a particular space, yet at the same time it arguably established a pattern in which women have been confined either to the articulation or the defence of women's particularity. When we consider the past two hundred years of intellectual life, we can now perhaps look back and see not the emancipation of women – and certainly not the intellectual emancipation of women – but a much more complex process in which the qualities of masculinity and femininity have become reified into intellectual standards and expectations, leaving little space for that openness of thought and imagination which Woolf wished to defend.

Our third provocative piece comes from Joseba Zulaika. In his contribution, entitled 'Terrorism and the Betrayal of the Intellectuals', Zulaika looks at the current terrorism discourse, and particularly the complex and often problematic role that intellectuals play in that discourse. Zulaika asks what one can do, as an intellectual, when the primary community to which one belongs (family, friends, village, country, occupation) produces terrorists? What exactly is the intellectual task? Should it be to define them, to diagnose them, to condemn them, to persuade them, to understand them, to exorcize them? Should one look at the situation as tragedy, irony, farce, romance or sheer crime? Whether in the Basque Country, Ireland or the United States, intellectual approaches to terrorism are of necessity enmeshed in the writer's self-definitions and ideological investments. Zulaika further questions whether there is a sense in which expertise on the terrorist Other presupposes acceptance of the logic of taboo and wilful ignorance of the actual life conditions of the subjects of research. Zulaika concludes that different readings and approaches to the phenomenon of terrorism are likely to produce antagonistic intellectuals.

The second part of this volume addresses some of the complex issues about which public intellectuals often get passionately exercised. First, William Outhwaite looks at how public intellectuals have shaped and responded to civil society debates. In his contribution, 'European Civil Society and the European Intellectual', he asks: 'What is, and how does one become, a European intellectual?' Outhwaite attempts to relate the idea of the intellectual in contemporary Europe to discussions of the eventual (in either sense of the term) existence of a European civil society or public sphere. He takes a limited informal sample of sociologists and other intellectuals and explores the dimensions of their pan-European resonance and the extent to which this is facilitated or hindered by media, academic and cultural structures.

In her contribution, 'What Influence? Public Intellectuals, the State and Civil Society', E. Stina Lyon addresses the issue of the relationship that exists between public intellectuals, the state and civil society and the production and interpretations of 'social knowledge'. Sociologists, Lyon argues, have since the inception of the discipline been influential agents in the public domain beyond academe in a variety of ways: as politicians, government advisers, social researchers on government-funded projects, critical writers and paradigm shifters, public orators, propagandists for social movements and voluntary organizations, teachers and activists. Lyon's argument starts with the assumption that what constitutes 'social knowledge' in the public domain has over time, and place, been a contested issue with power over its collection, interpretation and dissemination shifting between the state, civil society and the public, each variably receptive to and supportive of exposure, criticism or advocacy by public intellectuals. Lyon then outlines some of the different types of public 'connectivity' that create public platforms, and their implications for sociological influence in these different domains. She argues that the often lamented demise of the public intellectual, the 'man of knowledge' as understood in the past, can from within such a framework be seen as a less interesting question for sociologists when compared with and juxtaposed to attempts to articulate what kinds of sociological intellectuals are needed in the public sphere at present, and how and why they should be supported.

In his chapter 'Public Intellectuals, East and West: Jan Patočka and Václav Havel in Contention with Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Slavoj Žižek', Stefan Auer takes the complex relationship between the state, knowledge and intellectuals a step further. One would think that intellectuals are ideally suited to make a valuable contribution to the political life of their societies. However, more often than not, observes Auer, even the wisest among them have failed dismally. Intellectual sophistication offered no reliable protection against political idiocy. The contention of Auer's contribution is that dissident intellectuals in Central and Eastern Europe proved to be more prudent in their political judgements about important issues of their time than their Western counterparts. To give substance to this argument, Auer restricts himself to a sample of representative figures (Czesław Miłosz, Jan Patočka, Václav Havel *contra* Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jean-Paul Sartre, Slavoj Žižek) and some key issues, such as their views on power and violence. Auer uses Hannah Arendt as a moderator in this fictional debate.

Auer's discussion clearly points towards those debates that are associated with the fall of the Berlin Wall. Anson Rabinbach takes this event as his starting point too, but gives it a different historical twist and treatment. In 'Public Intellectuals and Totalitarianism: A Century's Debate', he looks at how, since the fall of communism, both the word and to a somewhat lesser extent the concept of totalitarianism has made a significant, and some would argue permanent, comeback. During the 1990s, historians, as Ian Kershaw noted, have been compelled 'to examine with fresh eyes the comparison between Stalinism and Nazism'. More recently, in the atmosphere of heated controversy during the debate prior to the war in Iraq, a number of distinguished commentators once again embraced the word 'totalitarian',

extending its scope beyond the historical dictatorships of the 1930s and 1940s to include regimes and movements in the Middle East. Rabinbach asks, 'Why does the comparison between Stalinist communism and Nazism still continue to produce offence or provoke fervour? Can "totalitarianism" serve both as exoneration and as a way of amplifying guilt, as apologia and indictment, depending on how closely the speaker's position might be identified with the victims or perpetrators?' As Rabinbach points out, totalitarianism has always been a protean term, capable of combining and re-combining meanings in different contexts and in new and ever-changing political constellations. A powerful reason for the persistence of 'totalitarianism' can be found in the historicity of the term itself, the importance of 'moments' of totalitarianism, rather than in its conceptual validity, its intellectual 'origins' or its 'heuristic' value. The 'moment' of totalitarian performs a well-established rhetorical political function, defining a horizon of cognitive and intellectual orientations that sharpen oppositions, at the expense of obscuring moral and political ambiguities. As Walter Laqueur shrewdly observed more than two decades ago, the debate over totalitarianism has never been a purely academic enterprise. It has, as Rabinbach concludes, also been about an intensely political concept, defining the nature of enmity for the Western democracies for more than half a century.

Whereas the function of Part One was to raise crucial questions about the tasks and roles of public intellectuals and Part Two dealt with complex and complicated issues linked to those tasks and roles, Part Three consists of case studies in which some of the most prominent public intellectuals and their role and function are being investigated in detail. Some of the greatest public intellectuals actually fulfilled that function before the term 'intellectual' had been coined, as the first two intellectual case studies about Alexis de Tocqueville and his companion Gustave de Beaumont show.

In 'Tocqueville as a Public Intellectual', John Torpey demonstrates that Tocqueville's *oeuvre* admits of a considerable variety of interpretations, is politically polyvocal, and has been enormously influential in the United States and around the world. Despite this massive resonance, Tocqueville's writings are simply not regarded today as crucial to the training of professional sociologists – as opposed to well-read undergraduates or scholars of other kindred disciplines. Torpey argues that Tocqueville's stature as a public intellectual, his apparent concern with countries rather than concepts, and his presumed failure to live up to twentieth-century standards of scientific rigour has left him out of the sociological canon. At the same time, his views on intellectuals have been in line with relatively conservative thinking about the politics of that group that is unappealing to sociologists with world-transforming ambitions. Yet his understanding of the politics of intellectuals is rather more sociological in character than those of Marx. Ultimately, argues Torpey, Tocqueville should be seen as a kind of modern-day Stoic in the mould of Max Weber – someone who regarded certain changes as unstoppably afoot in modern society, whether he liked them or not, and who saw it as his task to make sense of those changes and to do what he could to moderate their more extreme effects.

While *Democracy in America* and its author Alexis de Tocqueville achieved prominent intellectual status, very little is known about his colleague and companion Gustave de Beaumont. In their contribution, 'Tocqueville's Dark Shadow: Gustave de Beaumont as Public Sociologist and Intellectual *Avant la Lettre*', Tom Garvin and Andreas Hess briefly sketch out Beaumont's achievements as a public intellectual in the liberal French tradition who was also an internationalist-minded political sociologist preoccupied with the darker side of societal and political conditions in the United States, France and the United Kingdom and Ireland. While Garvin and Hess's historical reconstruction acknowledges Beaumont's special relationship with Tocqueville, they also argue that there were important differences between the two. This becomes particularly obvious with Beaumont's *Ireland* book. The authors conclude that it is not only important to acknowledge Beaumont as a public sociologist and intellectual *avant la lettre*, they also argue that it is a liberal conception of public sociology – like that of Tocqueville and Beaumont – which is needed at present but which seems to be missing from current debates.

The remainder of Part Three consists mainly of case studies that differ from the more historical Tocqueville and Beaumont studies in that they discuss more contemporary figures and their reputation and public role. The first attempt is that of Laurent Jeanpierre and Sébastien Mosbah Natanson. In their contribution, 'French Sociologists and the Public Space of the Press: Thoughts Based on a Case Study (*Le Monde*, 1995–2002)', Jeanpierre and Natanson provide a contemporary sociological description and analysis of open editorial pages of France's main national daily newspaper, *Le Monde*. They reason that in France the social sciences have become increasingly the base from which to launch a career as a public intellectual. However, they also argue that the career of the public intellectual and the career of the scientist are clearly differentiated. The majority of the columns written by French intellectuals in the daily press are general viewpoints. They often deal with foreign policy and international problems with no relation whatsoever with the specific professional skills of the writer. The authors conclude by offering a typology of public intellectuals in the press consisting of the universal specialist, the spokesperson, and the specialist who can sometimes be an expert.

In our next case study, 'You Only See What You Reckon You Know: Max and Marianne Weber in the United States of America at the Turn of the Twentieth Century', Dirk Kaesler discusses whether the American experience of Max Weber impacted on his work. Kaesler maintains that the sociologist already had everything worked out about the United States before actually visiting the country, and that the trip functioned more as *post festum* affirmation of the theory than as a completely new experience that would then be conceptualized. Kaesler also maintains that this finding does not take away from Weber's genuine intellectual insight into the functioning of American society. In contrast, it just affirms how intellectually well prepared Weber was before making the Atlantic journey. Kaesler concludes that Weber did not only get America 'right', but that he actually turned out to be a sociological prophet in regard to the future course of American society and politics.

In his case study 'Towards a Sociology of Intellectual Styles of Thought: Differences and Similarities in the Thought of Theodor W. Adorno and Jürgen Habermas', Stefan Müller-Doohm takes a closer look at the function of intellectual style of thought for the public sphere, where we uncover a somewhat surprising feature that is common to Theodor W. Adorno and Jürgen Habermas. While it is true that for Adorno the notion that the process of negation that has dissent as its goal is crucial, Habermas's form of critique is inspired by the idea of communication which – in the best case – can culminate in agreement. But in both men, the appellative function of intellectual critique, whether it addresses morally sensitive subjects, as in Adorno's case, or a politically functioning public sphere, as with Habermas, points to the agonal positionality of the intellectual style of thought. Agonality, in which the battle for meaning is the defining feature of the intellectual style of thought, finds its expression whenever commonly accepted views, convictions, institutional preconceptions and tendencies become the objects of contestation. As an agonal form, Müller-Doohm argues, intellectual critique is an 'incompetent but legitimate form of criticism' (Lepsius), and it follows from this that agonality is an interpersonal characteristic of the intellectual style of thought. It may make its appearance in finely graded and highly divergent versions: in Adorno's case as agonality with the goal of dissent, in that of Habermas as agonality with the goal of deliberation.

Earlier, in Part One of this volume, Mary Evans asks whether there can be women intellectuals. In his detailed study 'Women as Public Intellectuals: Kerstin Hesselgren and Alva Myrdal', Per Wisselgren looks at two of the foremost Swedish intellectuals, both of them women. Wisselgren shows in detailed fashion how Alva Myrdal and Kerstin Hesselgren have influenced public debate and public policies. The aim of Wisselgren's contribution is to argue for the need for a more gender-sensitive understanding of public intellectuals. The first section of the chapter problematizes the concept of the public intellectual in itself; the author points at its inherent ambiguity, historical situatedness and gendered bias. In the second section, this discussion is empirically substantiated by analysing and contextually comparing two of Sweden's most prominent intellectual women in the first half of the twentieth century. Wisselgren pays particular attention to the historically changing spheres of social research, social reform and the public. He concludes that a substantial part of the answer to the question concerning the lack of women among public intellectuals is to be found in exactly those very academic spheres in which traditionally gendered institutional barriers prevailed.

In our final case study, 'How Hayek Managed to Beat Lazarsfeld: The Different Perception of Two Sub-fields of Social Science', Werner Reichmann and Markus Schweiger compare and contrast the work and impact of two different public intellectuals. In their study, Reichmann and Schweiger argue that as academic disciplines, sociology and economics took off almost at the same time. More specifically, in the 1920s business cycle research institutes were founded that enriched economics with very empirical and quantitative works. Around the same time, applied and empirical social research emerged. Comparing the

development of the two disciplinary sub-fields, one can observe the existence of many similarities and differences, continuities and discontinuities that finally led to completely different receptions and positions. However, the applied economists were in many respects more successful than the empirical social researchers. The direct comparison and juxtaposition shows that F.A. Hayek, the first scientific leader of the Viennese business cycle research institute, had a much greater impact than Paul F. Lazarsfeld, who is regarded as the founder of empirical applied social research. It is ironic that the intellectual heritage of the less politically engaged researcher Hayek now has much more political influence than the very ideologically driven sociological work of Lazarsfeld. Judging by such perceptions and results, the authors legitimately ask, 'Which factors contribute to making one particular field of scientific work successful and public more respected than another?'

The volume concludes with some reflections by Howard Davis. In 'Revisiting the Concept of the Public Intellectual', the author reconsiders and discusses the strengths and limitations of the various conceptualizations and notions of the public intellectual presented in this volume.

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