CHAPTER 4
THE SOCIAL SCIENCES IN MOZAMBIQUE. SOME THEORETICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS

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The problematic of the social sciences in Mozambique leads to an initial - and brief - comment on the relationship between the social aims and the theoretical aims of science.

In this case - taking sociology as an example - we have considered the very structure of the science with its theoretical, methodological and conceptual models, integrated in processes of normative conflict, that epistemological discourses, in their historicity, accept or criticise. We have also taken into consideration the fact that science is a source of power, and therefore political power mediates through its proclamations.

The epoch - which marks our analysis - is post-colonial. And, any attempt in this period to build "models of society" is enmeshed in the doctrinaire demands of two ideological reference points: first "scientific socialism", and later "liberalism". They constituted powerful influences in building the social sciences in Mozambique.

These are some questions that punctuate the reflection proposed for your consideration. Clearly only multiple and systematic approaches, with a pertinent empirical basis, can prove what follows correct and make sense of it.

The Social Aims and Theoretical Aims of Science - The Example of Sociology. A List of Questions.

For operational reasons we have chosen sociology, in approaching the relationship between the theoretical aims and the social aims of science. As the science of the new industrial society, sociology initially displayed a character that was at the same time ideological and scientific, shown in the fact that its theories were deeply marked by radical and/or conservative ideas. Moral and political debates demanded investigations that legitimised conflicting and conflictive social positions and political rhetoric.

The underlying question in the emergence of sociology was knowing whether individuals were "badly" socialised, or whether it was the type of social organisation that generated their "bad" socialisation and the social problems it created - such as unemployment, delinquency, crime, prostitution, poverty,

alcoholism etc. For the radical trends of the 19th century, social problems arose from the unequal appropriation and distribution of material goods among different groups and classes. For more conservative political thinkers, social problems and crises needed capitalist states to intervene and develop new normative practices, to sustain the status quo. Through such considerations forms of social knowledge were utilised for social reform, social medicine, social work and social legislation.

In this debate, conservatism played an important role. Polemical conservatives, opposing the enlightenment and its defence of natural law, opposing the French Revolution's ideas of liberty and equality, introduced ideas about the necessity for institutional order and its preservation. In defending this order, they managed to "identify" various traditional institutions, which became the object of study, the empirical characteristics of which laid the corner stones of modern social science (Myrdal 1982).

It is in this light that one can understand the work of Le Play (1), *The European Workers*, published in 1855, about the differences between rural and urban families and their contexts.(2) The use of empirical observation allowed the collection of quantitative data, oriented to budgetary issues, and above all introduced the social survey as a research method. This method was linked to an important goal - the study of poverty as a social problem caused by ignorance and exploitation.

Later, in his work *La Méthode Sociale: Abregé des Ouvriers Européens* (1878) (Cruz 1989, p.237), Le Play basically proposed a social method of researching and proposing the appropriate normative orientations of working class families. For him, the family was the central institution of society and its preservation for the survival of the status quo, a necessity.

"Sociological" (3) practice was thus characterised by its descent from the philosophy of history, and the value granted to a method regarded as a series of procedures for the quantitative collection of data. In constructing the sociological object, the method became everything, whilst at the same time it accepted the given world as it was.

Because sociology was in an initial stage of its formation, and was therefore only minimally structured, with no internal mechanisms to regulate scientific practice (4). The process of constructing its object had to await for the theoretical contributions of Marx, Weber and Durkheim.

But if sociology emerged in Europe in the dialogue between radicals and conservatives, it became a professional vocation in America. Here, sociologists "at the service of a doctrine that was threadbare, but thoroughly internalised, set out to win secular triumphs, and, thanks to the diversification of the labour market, managed to implant themselves solidly in several professions. Quite the opposite was the behaviour of European sociologists who remained in the cloisters for a long time; they contented themselves with struggling with other ideologues for the few university ivory towers that the

bourgeoisie always granted them, the better to neuter them. Of the Europeans, it can be said that they are regular sociologists; the Americans were the first secular sociologists" (Herpin 1982, p.7 and following).

The secularisation of American sociology had its other side - businesses and the state remained aloof from the political commitment and free appreciation of the professionals. The crisis in the organisation and application of science also affected American sociology in the 1960s. This crisis began to call into doubt the usefulness of sociological knowledge, the regulation of social problems, and above all the resulting political implications and undertakings. (5)

In 1968, at the Congress of the American Sociological association (in Boston), the debates were marked by a new rhetoric, that of the radical sociologist, which culminated in a proposal for the creation of a sociology of sociology. Gouldner (1970: 57) characterised it as "a sociology in need of an empirical dimension which could be at the root of a great variety of research into sociology, the sociologists and their professional role, their career obsessions, their establishment, their power system, their sub-cultures and their position in society as a whole".(6)

In the final analysis, the crisis of sociology posed the question again of the relationship between this science and the social. Sociology (and other social sciences), which has not gone short of investments to contribute to its research, in order to regulate certain social problems, has shown its ineptitude.

To sum up, the social sciences found themselves in a situation of permanent danger - that of defending the dominant interests. But contesting science also posed another problem, that of the conditions of its scientificity. The social crisis of sociology unfolded into an epistemological and hermeneutic crisis within the framework of the broader crisis of the paradigm of modern rationality. One of its most relevant aspects was the loss of the hegemony of positivist philosophy, which was shown in the emergence of two opposing camps and their variants concerning the scientific status of the social sciences.

The first camp, Santos reminds us (1989, p. 60 and following), preserved from the positivist paradigm that which represented the integrity of scientific practice: the search for objectivity (invariance, control and coherence), and for achieving its objectives - effectiveness and universality. But taken as a whole, this camp defended and agreed with the specificity of the social sciences, and simultaneously attempted a possible convergence between natural sciences and social sciences.

The second camp defended the claim for a specific status for sociology and for the social sciences. Phenomenology became important, and inspired currents such as ethnomethodology, and symbolic interaction. Some authors took extreme positions, and went so far as to deny that conditions existed to grant the status of scientificity to the social sciences.(7)

In conclusion, this deep crisis which has shaken sociology (and the other social sciences) was a crisis that, beyond question, was at once political and epistemological as the Gulbenkian Commission report stipulates. Political in so far as there is "a whole range of groups 'forgotten' by the social sciences: women, the non-western world as a whole, minority groups inside the western countries, and other groups historically defined as politically and socially marginal" (Gulbenkian Commission 1996, p.82).

It is also epistemological in so far as "the new voices heard among the social scientists have raised theoretical problems which went beyond the question of the topics or matters for legitimate study, and even beyond the argument that assessments differ according to the perspectives from which they are made....they came also in the sense that the theoretical structure of the social sciences (and also of the rest of the natural sciences and the humanities) have suffered from the incrustation of certain presuppositions, and frequently of preconceptions or of a priori reasoning, lacking any theoretical or empirical justification, which ought to have been clarified, analysed and replaced by more justifiable premises" (Gulbenkian Commission, 1996, p.83).

In this context of complexities, what can one say and think about the social sciences in Mozambique?

The State of the Social Sciences in Mozambique - Some Questions

After the proclamation of independence (1975), the Frelimo Party led the state and attempted to reorganise Mozambican society.(8) It thus appeared as a privileged instrument for achieving a model of society resting on the following radical aspects: I) economic development - marking the entry into modernity - in the framework of a socialist economy; ii) national unity as an ideological construct, privileging unity rather than diversity; iii) creating the Nation-State and its nationalist ideology; iv) a developmental ideology which attempted the betterment of life's conditions for all; v) strategies of solidarity for the liberation of southern Africa.

This, in essence, socialist model posed serious and fundamental questions which deserve lengthy and deeper reflection. For the purposes of this paper they will only be listed:

i) The creation of a state inspired by Marxist-Leninism and the affirmation of a socialist development strategy - in the perspective of modernisation that Samir Amin described as the - taking of agriculture as the base, industry as the dynamising factor, and heavy industry as the decisive factor (9);

ii) The definition of the exercise of power as one between the Party and the state; and through that the recognition of the Party's leading role (10). The exercise of power involved the ability to make use of the apparatuses of the state to define the lives of social agents and even coerce individuals for the social good.

iii) Critique of the rule of law and of the neutrality of the state (11);

iv) The definition of property and of property/power relationships - with the politico-legal definition of property based on a system of (re)classification of classes, in accordance with the practical demands of the exercise of power (12);

v) The question of knowledge of the social world, taking into consideration the role played by Marxism. (13)

From this final question -the knowledge of the social world, or, sociology was seen as a fundamental part of our reflection and led to some further orientations:

a) How to make operational the Marxist analysis of Mozambican society, given its specific historical characteristics? For example, how to consider the working class as the vanguard of social transformation in a society where it was only just emerging, and which was dominated by a semi-proletarianised peasantry, reproducing itself through migrant labour? (14)

b) How to struggle for the transformation of a colonial state into a workers' state, when this transformation involved the participation of a significant petty bourgeoisie?

c) How to transform an economy of services and of the export of labour to other countries of the region (a transport corridor) into an economy based on industrial development?

These dilemmas led Ganhao (15) amongst others (1983, p.7 and following) to draw up perspectives for the intervention of the sciences, and particularly the social sciences, for the achievement of emancipation. To quote: "We Mozambicans believe that our task as scientists and researchers is to understand the forms that will allow us to change social conditions. This need for change, however, does not do away with the need to study these conditions, to analyse them, debate them, call them into question, and afterwards redefine our analyses and interpretations. It is obvious that the need for social action strengthens the need for scientific study. Our task consists of proceeding with a systematic assessment of the social conditions in our region, of its social forces, of the contradictions at play, of the results of particular political actions and even of alternative policies".

At the same time the fragility (16) of the Mozambican scientific community was recognised, and the virtual non-existence of any serious status for the social sciences. (17)

The analysis of this state of affairs was conducted from a politico-ideological viewpoint, involving a critique of the colonial legacy: "In colonial Mozambique, the social sciences, formally organised, were of little significance: analysis of Mozambican society was forbidden because our country was forcibly regarded as an integral part of the Portuguese colonial state. The little research that was undertaken into Mozambican society was to a large extent of an ethnographic nature, and its purpose was to demonstrate

the inferiority of African social structures. Historical work was largely designed to demonstrate the idea of a static and "uncivilised" past. And the political sciences limited themselves to describing the apparatus and personalities of the colonial state" (Ganhao, 1983, p.8).

The proposal for a new kind of social scientist involved redefining the social sciences. "Any attempted distinction between what is defined as social sciences on the one hand, and Marxism on the other, should be eliminated".

In training intellectuals "the unity of theory and practice, the organic link with the popular masses and their struggle" (Ganhao, 1983, p.9) was defended, and conditions were created to produce a consensus. A consensus in which Marxism and development ideology were to become one and the same thing. (18)

The failure of the ruling party to create the desired socialised outcomes; the vicious civil war engineered by South Africa's destabilisation campaigns, the lack of support for some of the reforms opened up the way for a liberal ideological alternative, put an end to the hegemony of this dominant model. But instead of a critical reappraisal, a new model emerged which was thrust on our society by the structural adjustment programmes of our society and the need to move to a new form of multi-party democracy.

Here are some of the new orthodoxy's characteristics:

I) It operated within a geo-strategic context, marked by the end of the cold war, leading the logic of capital expansion on a world scale and to a "marginalisation" of Africa. According to Amin (1995, p.16), it is the epoch "of the recompradorisation of the periphery as a whole...", in which the structural adjustment that such a situation inspires "is the unilateral adjustment of the peripheries to the demands of globalised expansion to the benefit of central capital"; (19)

ii) It argued for an Economic Recovery Programme under the control of the World Bank;

iii) In a new constitutional order, it institutionalised the Rule of Law with its prerogatives in terms of civil liberties - a plurality of political parties, freedom of association, freedom of the press and the re-introduction of the primacy of private property.

v) It provided the emergence in the academic field of strategies that argued the neutrality of science and "scientific knowledge".

The struggle to legitimise the differentiation between the scientific field and the political field pushed sociologist to define the scientificity of their object of inquiry; this attitude involved conforming with scientific norms, which were different, indeed a far cry from the aims and means of Frelimo's marxian paradigms.

In the case of the social sciences, this strategy had two components and emphases: I)the training of social scientists and ii)the nurturing of specific research programmes.

As regards to the training of social scientists, a Social Science Training Unit (UFICS) was set up. (20) In a document on the "Formation of the Social Sciences in Mozambique" (AAVV, 1993, p.7 and following) a critical assessment was made of the training provided up until then in the Arts Faculty, in the following terms: "The training does not seem to follow any model of organisation coherent with the interdisciplinary nature that is the characteristic par excellence of the great family of social sciences the sociological, anthropological, psycho-sociological and political basis of training is still very tenuous. Given the characteristics of Mozambican society as a whole, marked by diversity, heterogeneity, dichotomy, tension, conflict and a deep crisis of identity at several levels, one would have expected that the curricula in the social science area might reflect this situation in a more transparent and unequivocal way, and might equip the future graduates in a better fashion to face effectively the challenges that await them".

The ideological shifts were profoundly clear.

As for research, the situation was seen to be very critical, and was easy to fathom from inter alia I) the material and social conditions of the researchers, ii) the institutional conditions for research, and iii) the conditions of theoretical production.

I) Precarious material and social conditions meant that, instead of discussing the conditions of producing knowledge, the institutions were content just to identify immediate and visible shortcomings. Such as, for instance, the lack of working conditions (low wages and lack of housing); money for operational expenses; professional and financial incentives for a career in research.

ii) From the institutional point of view, one noted the autarky of groups of researchers, demonstrated by the difficulties of access to scientific magazines; the marginalisation of local publishing activity; the feeble inter-institutional cooperation in research at national level; the fragmentation of the organs that coordinated and developed science and technology; the subjection to the arbitrary nature of certain systems of research assessment; arbitrary granting of remuneration; the adroit transformation of Research Centres into outposts of social engineering, commonly known as consultancies; selective access to data banks and sources of information, generally available when a Mozambican scientist visited Europe and/or America, as part of his/her training, or as part of the scientific tragedy of the brain drain; submission to "scientific domination" by accepting problematics and project "design" that have little to do with Mozambican social reality.

The struggle for Mozambican voices in this new world and local context has barely began: the achievements of social scientists under the ideological hegemony of Frelimo and Marxism-Leninism, although decried now, must not be denied. In essence their radicalism, sided with the poor, the dispossessed and colonised. On the other, their doctrinaire limitation of alternatives was

short-sighted. Although the liberal model makes alternatives and plurality a norm, its impulse is elitist and conservative. Mozambican social scientists will have to find a voice and a space to respond to this crisis.

Notes

(1) Le Play was conservative, and his work is deeply influenced by the ideas of Bonald. We find him referring to Bonald throughout his work. Late Le Play published his conservative ideas in the work *Social Reform in France* (1864).

(2) For Nisbet (1980, p.152), this work is "little more than a detailed realisation, empirically broadened, of ideas contained in Bonald's essay on the social contrasts between rural and urban families and their contexts....exactly the same emphasis on a strong and autonomous Church, on a stable and deeply rooted family, the abolition of divorce, a combination of localism and federalism, with a sharp decentralisation of administration, a withdrawal by centralised political power from all areas of social organisation, and a substantial reduction of individualism in the economic, social and cultural spheres..."

(3) In Le Play's legacy we find interesting and controversial aspects of a positivist nature. Here are some of them: i) the idea that knowledge derives automatically from observation; ii) the idea of similarity between the method for observing natural phenomena and that used to observe social phenomena; iii) the separation he establishes between his theoretical social formulations and research proper.

(4) The followers of Le Play were to constitute an important school thanks to the monographs and surveys they perfected (through greater concern for relations with data received from the authorities, and systematic and classificatory bibliographies, the family-trunk of Le Play was to be of great usefulness). The studies carried out by the Le Play school were thus innovatory, and contained many of the basic prescriptions necessary for sociological surveys.

This school was also to influence American empirical research. The first American surveys were to have a realistic, journalistic and political character.

(5) At the root of this crisis we find several factors: the accelerated integration of science into the military-industrial complex, justified initially by the United States' involvement in World War I, and later by its participation in other wars (Korea, Vietnam); the transformation of science into a productive force leads to an exponential increase in the number of scientists - and to a strengthened role for governments and industry in research to the detriment of universities. The organisation of scientific work undergoes profound alterations. Scientists are proletarianised, stripped of their means of production. A process of social stratification is established, and at the top of the pyramid is a an elite of prestigious scientists. The production and reproduction of capital (prestige and financial) comes to obey the logic of stratification. The search for the industrial profitability of science does away with the idyllic vision of scientific communism: secrecy and wars over patents are the order of the day. The ambition to transform scientific institutions into vast networks of formal communication is under

siege, and one witnesses the formation of small groups of scientists communicating informally and functioning as "invisible colleges".

From the point of view of the applicability of science, the crisis is equally plain. Ethical concerns accompany major technological advances. Opposition arises to the deterioration of the environment and to the transfer of technology to countries of the periphery in ways that strengthen their structural dependence.

(6) The movement of dissident sociologists went in a variety of ways. Many became sociological militants dedicated to setting up autonomous mutual aid communities, while others abandoned sociology altogether. Sociological knowledge began to be developed around the problematic of black Americans - Harold Cruse (1967) - or around that of women - Germaine Greer (1970).

(7) Feyerabend (1993, p.28), for instance, favours a methodological anarchism.

(8) There are not many studies on the post-colonial state in Mozambique. After independence, the social sciences were present in the shape of history and geography. The former was particularly concerned with the history of national liberation, and of the resistance that occurred in the more distant past. Above all, this was a matter of documenting and legitimising, to the former colonising power and to the world, the protagonism of African actors. A further argument on the shortage of studies mentioned above concerns the preponderance of studies centred on questions of social engineering (directed towards solving social problems) on research oriented towards sociological problems. The place of Mozambique in the world division of scientific labour to a large extent explains such a conditionalism. Despite so many limitations, our problematic regards Frelimo as a political organisation with a political field, and to this extent characterised by relations and struggles for the monopoly of a legitimate vision of the world. Struggles in which groups and classes (even if embryonic or in the process of formation) were involved.

(9) The model for transition to socialism was defined at the Third Frelimo Congress in 1977:
- promote the growing socialisation of agriculture and lay the foundations for its industrialisation;
- speed up the industrialisation process and promote the building of heavy industries;
- develop and consolidate the leading role of the state in the economy;
- guide the development process through overall economic planning;
- form a powerful working class which, organised and led by its vanguard party, will assume the leadership of society (*Documentos do 3 congresso da Frelimo - Directivas Economicas e Sociais*, Frelimo, ed. Frelimo Ideology Department, undated, pp 19-20).

(10) Samora Machel (1977, p.112/113): "The Party and the state are two distinct entities. The Party is the highest form of organisation of the labouring classes. The People's State that we are building is the main instrument for implementing the Party's policy. The Party directs and guides all state activities. The Party does not replace the state".

(11) According to bourgeois theorists, the state is neutral: the bourgeois Rule of Law would be above classes and class conflicts: a state which could be used independently by exploiter s and exploited alike. In this way, the question of the seizure of power by

the workers, and of the defeat of the exploiting classes and their state apparatus, would never be posed. As a result, one would also not pose the question of establishing the dictatorship of the exploited, the dictatorship of the working class, the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is an attempt to demobilise the working class, an attempt to convince the working class that its struggle to overthrow the power of the bourgeois state is useless (Samora Machel, 1977a, pp 9-10).

(12) Samora Machel recalled how property, classes and socialism are intertwined: "The Constitution of the People's Republic of Mozambique, in proclaiming that power is held by the worker-peasant alliance led by Frelimo, is expressing the new balance of forces created by the victory of the People's Liberation War.

"The final goals fixed in the Constitution of the People's Republic of Mozambique are, essentially, the building of the political, ideological, scientific and material foundations for a socialist society.

"The Constitution establishes that the land and the natural resources of our country are state property. It places value on collective forms of production, it defends the interests of the working masses, and defines the leading role of the state in the national economy" (Samora Machel 1977a, p.57-58).

(13) In his opening speech at the inauguration of the Nampula military academy in October 1978, Samora Machel stated: "an effort is needed, particularly from the teachers, so that the study of certain material, such as dialectical materialism, historical materialism, political economy and scientific communism is not undertaken in a abstract way, independent of Mozambican reality, or using Mozambican reality as a mere reference point" (Ganhao 1983, p.10).

(14) On this question, see O Mineiro Mocambicano (1977), a study carried out at the Centre of African Studies by an interdisciplinary team.

(15) The historian Fernando Ganhao was the first Vice-Chancellor of Maputo's Eduardo Mondlane University.

(16) A position that can be generalised to all of sub-Saharan Africa: see, for example, Gaillard and Aast (1988) and Gaillard (1990).

(17) Boubacar Ly (1989, p.4 and following) gives four reasons to explain the insignificant status of the social sciences in Africa: lack of public understanding; indifference, distrust or hostility from those holding power; lack of sufficient domestic funding for social science research; bureaucratic management and sparse human and material resources.

(18) Thus one can better understand the statement by Mkandawire (1993, p.523): "In those days, when the nationalist coalition had a certain impulse, development ideology was at its apogee, and development planning was in fashion, it seemed natural that the state, the Party, or simply the political authorities would fix and structure the national priorities guiding research in our institutions. Researchers oriented their own research priorities taking national priorities into account. Several development institutes, at least in theory, were to orient their work on the basis of national priorities. Even when they expressed critical opinions, researchers in general limited these to the failure to implement national plans, to the extreme dependence on foreign consultants etc".

(19) The Fifth Frelimo Congress - the first held after the death of Samora Machel - drew up the balance-sheet of Frelimo's trajectory in search of "national consensus" and "the normalisation of life". It precisely posed the question of structural adjustment/the Economic Recovery Programme in the following terms:

"The introduction of the Economic Recovery Programme has demanded major efforts from the Party in the sense of explaining to the workers the situation of the country, the economic strategy to be adopted, and the efforts required from everyone to bring the country out of the situation in which it finds itself" (Frelimo, 1989, p.54).

(20) This was established at the Eduardo Mondlane University in August 1995. It has a three year common core (for a bachelors degree), and a two year specialisation in sociology, anthropology and state administration.