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Chapter 18

Building in Sociology in a Pluralistic Society: 40 Years of Sociological Practice in Spain

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Introduction

The emergence of sociology in Spain as a distinctive discipline of the social sciences has been closely related to the social dynamics present in Spanish society over the last four decades, a period of a swift and significant accumulation of all kinds of changes. In this chapter we explain how Spanish sociology is closely linked to the construction of Spain as a pluralistic social, political and economic regime¹ common to western democracies. The institutionalization of sociology was largely driven by the transition to democracy and framed by the announcement of the Constitution of 1978. We defend the argument that the institutions inherent to the discipline (universities, scientific societies, research centers and others), along with various currents of thought and sociological practice, are incardinated in the democratic dynamics that took place within the historical context of these 40 years.

Moreover, sociology also contributes to the structure of certain features of the social and political organization of Spain as we know it today. The production of social knowledge and the use of this knowledge in a wide range of settings have helped shape important public policies. Freedom of research and thought has led to better self-knowledge of Spanish society. The diversity of theoretical traditions, the contrast of empirical observations of important social problems, and the conflicts and consensus common to sociological

interpretation have been part of debates and diagnoses and have left their mark on the nature of key policies and institutions.

In this chapter, we provide a succinct interpretation of the role of sociology in the construction of democratic Spain, as well as a brief history of the discipline.² The strategy to develop our argument lies in the different uses of sociology in a variety of important domains for Spain's development as a pluralistic society. The sections in this chapter cover sociology in government, civil society, universities and the research system, and in the state of public opinion. In each section we address the link between sociology and these settings, by examining aspects of the recent history of the discipline that provide insights into its role in modern Spain. The chapter ends with a critical diagnosis of current features and some thoughts on future perspectives.

The Analytical and Chronological Viewpoint

In order to analyze the discipline's trajectory, we take a viewpoint that combines analytical and historical perspectives. From an analytical perspective, we are obliged to think as sociologists and to apply our own canon. We use certain elements that define the specific canon of sociology which are widely accepted today over and above the diversity of approaches. Sociology has created a view of human action as rooted and socially situated. It interprets social action as rational behavior in accordance with value introjection and expectations of the behavior of others. It takes into account the various levels of power, influence and cooperation in the relations between actors, and pays attention to how these actions crystalize into stable structural and cultural social entities, transcending aggregates of individuals and conditioning the environment in which we live. These features are considered as some of the cognitive lens through which the discipline views the world. They define which areas of reality are more deserving of research and shape the methodological orientation to address them. This perspective is no better or worse than others; it is an

assumption considered adequate for observing certain aspects of social reality. It also distinguishes us from the models of behavior used by other social sciences.³

This point of view has important implications when the situation of sociology is observed as a discipline of the social sciences. First of all, sociology is an institution within the scope of modern R&D systems, comprising a set of organizations, regulations, and material and human resources. This includes centers of learning, degrees, a structured scientific community, coded knowledge production, professional and scientific societies, specialist publications and a cluster of professions, among others. A discipline should be seen as a group of organizations, formal roles and informal rules that persist in time but that also follow certain models of social relations, which may be consensual, competitive or conflict-based and which, in any case, are distinguished by unequal relations of power and influence. Such relations should be observed within the institution itself and in relation to other institutions in the public or private spheres. Therefore, an analysis of sociology must necessarily make mention of its relations with public policies, of the way it is cast in the business sector and civil society, of its role in the university and of its place in the R&D system.

From a chronological perspective, though 1978 is the reference year for this chapter, the immediate and longer-term background that condition the discipline should be borne in mind. An important contrast between Spanish sociology and sociology in most of western countries is mainly due to the political history of Spain. Between the end of the nineteenth century and the 1930s, social thought in Spain integrated many of the advances of the incipient sociology that was emerging in Europe and the United States of America. This gave rise to important figures in early sociological thought on the social problems in Spain. The main issues under study were related to the main social problems of the time such as the oligarchies, development of rural and urban areas, poverty, the peasantry, criminality and others. This development was arrested by the Spanish Civil War, when freedom of thought

was restricted and many social thinkers were forced into exile. Exile gave rise to what some called 'sociologists without a society' (Gómez Arboleya, 1958)..

At the same time, during General Franco's dictatorship, a sociology of peculiar characteristics evolved in Spain. In the early years, sociology was banished and practically banned at university. There were no degrees or diplomas, and sociology subjects were minimal, at times forming part of political and economics studies, law and philosophy. However, a way of closely linking sociology with the State and the Catholic Church emerged, particularly related to development and social policies. A few years later, the modernization of the Franco regime gradually facilitated the introduction of sociological theories and observation methods already established in the West. The virtual non-existence of sociology at university level had led many young people to travel abroad to receive training that did not exist in Spain. This was mainly the case of graduates in law, economy, philosophy and several branches of engineering wishing to study sociology, who specialized in sociology in the United States, France, the United Kingdom and Germany, and who helped introduce empirical observation methods and more contemporary currents of thought in Spain.

During the Spanish transition to democracy, these new currents linked up with the work being undertaken at Spanish institutions. The return to Spain of exiles and professionals who had gone abroad to study coincided with the emergence of young generations of sociologists in a university system that had gradually embraced the discipline. It was with the transition to democracy that the full development of Spanish sociology took place, particularly at universities. For that reason, we can affirm that the distinguishing features of Spanish sociology were forged in the intellectual and professional melting pot that led to the Constitution of 1978.

Because of Spain's highly idiosyncratic history, in the second half of the twentieth century Spanish sociology did not start out as a university product. In modern Spain, sociology was initially a tool used by the government and by certain sectors of civil society. It

then became a tool at the service of business. In the 1970s, it gradually consolidated and expanded as a university discipline, swiftly overtaking the importance and the role it had had in other sectors. It is therefore important to point out that sociology has not always been a profession identified with the academic sector, in contrast to more recent views that may be biased by the shift experienced in recent years. This development justifies the time sequence of the following sections on the field of action of sociology, though in some of them the immediate history, and the social and political environment prior to 1978 is taken into account.

Sociology in the Public Sector

One of the vital roles of Spanish sociology lies in the modernization trends of government and of numerous public policies. In the 1960s and 70s, Spain was becoming increasingly more complex and diverse. In a few years it had undergone rapid economic and social change as a result of migration from the country to the city, emigration, incipient industrialization, tourism, greater contact with new technologies and western lifestyles, and a rising standard of living.

Certain sectors of government took an interest in sociological studies as a planning tool, particularly empirical studies based on statistical data, as had already occurred in western democracies (Del Campo, 2015). Some policy makers of the Franco regime, including the so-called 'technocrats', discovered in sociological research exhaustive and systematic information to guide public policy, as well as a tool to legitimize the inclusion of measures aimed at modernizing the government and at promoting socioeconomic development by placing Spanish society in contact with the consumer trends and social habits of more advanced countries.

Early experiments in using sociology as a tool for social knowledge and to guide decision-making were closely linked to the religious charity Cáritas, where sociology had

access to a more favorable space for development than in the academic sector, in tune with the social doctrine of the Catholic Church. As early as 1963, Cáritas began a macro-social survey throughout Spain to obtain information on which to base its social welfare plan. This was the seed for the establishment in 1965 of the FOESSA Foundation (Promotion of Social Studies and Applied Sociology), which produced extensive and periodic reports on the social situation of Spain. These studies standardized modern techniques of sampling and data processing, gave detailed information on the social situation and served as a guide for public policy, undertaken from then on with a substantial knowledge base along the lines of what already existed in neighboring countries.

The research tradition undertaken according to this empirical vocation increased during the 1970's with the transition to democracy and the creation of the regional governments (called Autonomous Communities), which gave rise to numerous research and sociological research offices that were particularly active in the 1980s. This was the period of the so-called studies on the 'social reality' of myriad issues (youth, women, the third age, unemployment, rural population, emigration, and many more besides). Soon there was a rise in sociological studies in Spain. This type of largely descriptive scientific production was part of the process of social change and socioeconomic development of Spain. The contributions of sociology were used to achieve minimally rational evidence-based action, which facilitated the introduction of debate and counterbalance to public policy on fundamental aspects of social organization associated with living standards and access to the services of the fledgling welfare state.

An essential tool for the modernization of public policy was the creation in 1963 of the current Spanish Centre for Sociological Research (CIS) (previously called Institute of Public Opinion – IPO), which became one of the entities that has shadowed the development of Spanish democracy. It was conceived as a governmental center for assessing the opinions and the behavior of the population through representative polls and surveys, including

possible responses to government policy. When the IPO became the CIS in 1978, it was during this democratic stage that it became a touchstone for gauging Spanish society, not only as a survey center, but as an institution that began functioning as a tool linking sociological research to the agenda of important public policy on the road to democratic consolidation.

Moreover, the CIS has carried out representative surveys of the general population on a wide range of issues, the results of which have played a vital role in certain decisions that have accompanied policy-making and legislative development, involving deep-seated social change in Spanish society in the early years of democracy, including the laws on divorce, abortion, security or entry into the then European Economic Community. In addition, the CIS assumed the more decisive role of promoting research and sociological thought by providing funds for studies and by acting as an academic press for sociology (Torres Albero, 2003). It is, then, an especially singular institution through which Spain has secured a competitive advantage in the field of sociology. An important reason is that for 55 years a stable structure has been held in place, thereby facilitating the continuity needed for implementing homogeneous methodologies, accumulation of data and the construction of time series. In recent years, the CIS has increased its public repercussion as a result of more recent regulations that have formalized the way results and data are communicated to the government, the political parties and the media, respectively. We will discuss these issues below when we examine the role of sociology in public opinion.

Sociology in Civil Society Organizations and Firms

One of the contributions of sociology that must be mentioned is its role in the development of key organizations in civil society outside the government. Moreover, its participation in the third sector is particularly significant. With the guarantee of liberties and separation of powers permitted by the democratic regime, sociological studies were embraced by

numerous foundations and NGOs. Sociological analysis was set up as yet another tool for entities whose origin and range of action was the social or the political spheres. At times, it also functioned as a tool for guiding decision making, and at other times, it was a form of influence depending on the agenda being defended by the various institutions. The dissemination of studies and interpretations of social reality based on data, legitimated by the practice of social science and accompanied by interpretations sometimes alternative to the official ones, became yet another item in the defense of interests in a pluralistic state. In Spain, the 'search for the latent' was soon established. Inherent to sociological tradition, it entailed revealing aspects of reality which are not easily pinned down through knowledge or common sense and which it attempts to influence by uncovering social situations that encourage collective action or the intervention of public powers.

Moreover, sociology was also institutionalized in the market through leading research offices and businesses in the sector. In the years before the transition, some agencies paved the way for demoscopic and market studies, and for the diffusion of sociological techniques for research in these domains. Access of the Spanish economy to global markets, particularly after entry into the European market, resulted in day-to-day business activity requiring greater knowledge about the desires, perceptions, behavior patterns and lifestyles of clients or workers. Consumer and market studies, mainly involving sociologists with no positions in academia (Ortí, 2007), became the customary sphere of professional development for sociology (Gómez Yáñez, 2012). Business associations for market and opinion studies set up in the 1990s reflect the considerable involvement of sociologists. Indeed, for years most job openings for sociologists have been in the private sector, though it must be said that the nature of this sector results in them having far less visibility compared with academic and government sectors (Díaz Catalán et al., 2016).

This panorama shows us that sociological practice, the professional identity of which is a combination of research, consultancy, management and planning based on knowledge

accumulated by the discipline, gradually became a routine part of organized life in democratic Spain, particularly when it is transferred to other key agencies of civil society, such as the strategic planning offices of political parties. In short, the link with several areas of activity has enabled sociological concepts and ways of thinking to spread to the daily practice of many sectors, thus contributing to the social incorporation of sociology consisting of the cultural assimilation of categories of sociological thought in the ways of thinking and acting that characterize knowledge societies.

Sociology in Science Institutions and the University

Around 1978, greater growth and a more effective institutionalization of sociology took place in academia. Implementation at university level and in the research system was the driving force behind the production of diverse social knowledge. This section looks at several features that distinguish the future of academic sociology and its institutionalization in the world of science.

An initial aspect was the creation of organizations and forms of collective action associated with the university and research system. In the mid 1970s, there were very few departments and sociology degrees and diplomas were only available at two universities (Complutense University of Madrid and University of Deusto, Bilbao). In the following decades, growth was continuous and sustained. In a short time, sociology was fully institutionalized with separate departments at practically all universities. After the transition to the European Higher Education Area, official undergraduate degrees in sociology were available at 14 public universities, and there was a sociological component in numerous multidisciplinary masters' degrees. Currently, there are 46 sociology departments at public universities and others are being established in the private university sector (see Fernández Esquinas et al., 2016b).

At the same time, sociology was effectively incorporated in the R&D system through the creation of specialist research centers in the public and private sector. However, a significant difference between Spanish sociology and that of other countries is its concentration at university level. Aside from the cases mentioned, in Spain, compared with their important presence in other countries, few specialist sociological research centers are linked to government institutions, in particular the semi-public or private agencies located at the interface between science and fields of practice. An important reason is that during the 1990s the professional identity and the visibility of sociology as an organized endeavour shifted towards the academy. Later we shall see how this scenario has fashioned certain features of current Spanish sociology.

The second aspect in the institutionalization of sociology refers to the formation of a 'scientific community' of sociologists, which has also occurred through the university development model (Torres Alberó, 1994). The years when academic sociology emerged in Spain coincided with a period of change in how sociology was understood and undertaken internationally. In contrast to the customary division of functionalist versus conflict-orientated approaches which characterized sociology in the previous decades (and was also experienced by generations of Spanish sociologists during the transition in the 1980s and 90s), we witnessed the so-called 'constructivist turn'. The focus began to shift toward the meaning that people attributed to their actions and interactions on a micro-social scale, away from macro explanations and the preference for empirical studies of social structures that had been the norm in previous decades. This was accompanied by an explosion of currents, themes, research styles and approaches to reality, resulting in myriad sociologies. The new approaches helped academic sociologists focus their attention on the multiple aspects of spheres of interaction and diversity of identities, which differed considerably from the predominance of 'grand theories' versus the 'social cartographies' that were characteristic of previous years. In a short time, a huge diversity of epistemological and

methodological approaches emerged in Spain and were introduced simultaneously with a rising demand for university lecturers in sociology.

It is worth noting that Spanish academic sociology has always been closely associated with consultancy and applied research for business and public agencies. Despite the fact that many Spanish sociologists began their professional lives by either working for the government or for business, their professional careers continued at universities, thanks to the demand created by university expansion well into the 1990s. Many university lecturers were doubly connected with the university and the world of consultancy and business research, a situation that began to change radically for the new generations of academic sociologists with the assessment procedures introduced by science policy and university agencies.

The third aspect was the development that coincided with the institutionalization process and that helped define the differential elements of the discipline, especially the professional associations⁴ and scientific societies, which were bolstered by the power acquired by sociology at university level. Initially, the association movement was initiated in the fledgling autonomous communities. The first scientific societies were created in some regions around 1977 (Andalusia, Basque Country, Castile and Catalonia, among others). In 1978, the Spanish Federation of Sociology (FES, previously known as the FASEE, Federation of Sociology Associations of the Spanish State) was set up and immediately came to represent the entire country. It encompasses 13 associations, as well as university departments, faculties, research centres, private sociology associations, and hundreds of individual members. 'Research committees', representing sociological specialties and serving as a platform for the promotion of specialized research and the exchange of ideas, were regularized. Today, 30 FES research committees comprise the main organizational unit, which reflects how sociology works and acts in fields of professional and research competence, and links individuals in territorial associations or the FES itself with peer

groups. The FES went on to formally represent Spanish sociology at the International Sociological Association (ISA), with the agreement of the territorial associations and other federated bodies. The international presence of Spanish sociology received a significant boost when in 1990 the ISA World Congress of Sociology was held in Madrid, bringing thousands of sociologists to Spain, and the active participation of the FES in the creation of the European Sociological Association, where it has represented Spain from the outset.

Sociology and the State of Public Opinion

Thanks to the continuous production of data and interpretations on the social reality of Spain, sociological diagnoses are currently a crucial factor that helps a growing sector of the population to understand the world and take a stance. To illustrate the role of sociology in the shaping of public opinion, we will revisit the strategic role of the CIS.

For a long time, CIS surveys have not only been a source of information for specialist professionals, but also for the media and the general public. The current arrangement aims to guarantee transparency through the publication of all study results and to provide ease of access to the original micro-data. The CIS is the body that has most transparently institutionalized the production and use of social data on the public agenda. By implementing a survey methodology based on interviews with representative samples undertaken in the homes of private individuals, particularly at a time of restrictions and difficulty in obtaining resources for rigorous fieldwork, the investment efforts of the CIS provide a benchmark of quality if one considers the multiple contextual incidents that might affect surveys that are carried on without the existence of a reference series of data.

Today there is a complex organizational field of data production institutes in which validity and reliability are constructed by contrasting various data sources. In recent years, research institutes have emerged in some autonomous communities to fulfill similar functions, some of them in collaboration with universities. In addition, a range of agencies

and businesses of varying trends have freely undertaken studies, along with the media which act as clients or main users in the sector.

Survey-based sociological studies of opinion and social behavior have a multiplying effect when they become a source of knowledge for political parties, governments, the media and numerous businesses, and are followed by a growing sector of the population. We are therefore witnessing the routine use of sociology in shaping the 'climate of opinion' to the extent that it is currently impossible to understand social and political interactions without the constant flow of sociological knowledge. In short, sociology is already a part of the citizen culture on public issues. It functions as a tool for political debate when definitions of a situation must be established. It is a counterweight to the spread of visions of reality created by other sources outside the world of social science and contributes to preventing erroneous, or simply false, diagnoses and paves the way for debate.

Current features of Spanish Sociology

The evolution of sociology in the domains examined so far has contributed to defining the features of the discipline to date. One feature is the great diversity of theoretical and methodological orientations. We can emphatically state that there is no prevailing current in sociology in Spain, in contrast with past times in Spain or in other countries, when sociology has been identified mainly with specific schools or theoretical traditions. In Spain currently there are multiple sociologies, from conflict-oriented to consensualist, structural or interactionist currents, countless eclectic postures, as well as multiple orientations arising from postmodernity. There are critical sociologists, social activists, sociologists with purely professional or research objectives and ideological sensitivities around practically all positions on the political scene. It is also important to note that this diversity is associated with a significant fragmentation of approaches and study themes, as well as the atomization of existing research, in tune with the dynamics of university institutions.

A second feature is that Spanish sociology, despite its early development in other sectors, has depended significantly on the universities, both in terms professional image and the influence of research currents and styles that have prevailed in academic life. However, most jobs for sociology graduates are found in firms, governmental bodies and civic society organizations, and not in the academy, although in close competition with other social science disciplines. This contrasts with the way that other disciplines have attempted to professionally transmit their body of knowledge through a professional demarcation (Abbott, 1988) associated with certain jobs and the management of resources in activity sectors identified with their disciplines, whether in the government or the private sector. In the case of sociology, the discipline and the profession are highly dependent on the university context in key questions such as the orientation to employment, professional identity, working styles, research funding and social visibility.

A third feature of Spanish sociology is the plural nature of its territorial organization, which has led to a multi-level scientific society. Despite this fragmentation and atomization, the Spanish associational model is a unique case of integration in the world of scientific societies. It has great potential for collective action, such as the Spanish Sociology Congress organized in collaboration with territorial associations and universities, the most recent of which offered over 1500 presentations and gathered more than 2000 sociologists.

The fourth feature is the specialization and the mix with techno-scientific professions when exercising the sociological profession. Although the sociological tradition shares a distinctive understanding of social phenomena, common theories and methodologies as a fundamental basis for practice, the complexity of the world we live in and the demand for applied social knowledge call for specialization in the various spheres of organized life. Like most professions based on a body of complex knowledge, sociological practices tend to focus on specific aspects of social life that lead to middle-range conceptual developments and practical applications. This requires sociologists to continually interact with other

professionals from the social and the natural sciences, and to seek the specific nature of sociological knowledge in order to work with them.

Pending tasks and future prospects for Spanish sociology

We cannot end this chapter without offering a critical perspective on pending tasks that limit the potential of sociology and constitute future challenges. A significant challenge is the combination of so-called scientific 'excellence' imposed by the current academic policies with the utility that is expected of the social sciences. The social sciences have undergone a transformation in how findings are funded, assessed and communicated. The dynamics of R&D systems are conveying the social sciences toward internationalization, standardization of scientific production and competition with global scientific communities. At the same time, the uses of the social sciences continue to depend on the characteristics of local socioeconomic environments, which require adjusting research to specific conditions of application. This trend has had particularly visible effects in non-English-speaking countries which have their own research tradition and publish in their own languages. This has caused a separation between publication strategies, criteria for scientific legitimacy and the segmentation of audiences: publications orientated to the global scientific community versus those intended for users in the close environment. This challenge will most likely force us to avoid extremes in the near future; that is, to prevent a drastic division between articles produced in English only, which may have an impact on citations but a non-existent socioeconomic impact, and local science decontextualized from global advances and with difficulties to maintain its status in the R&D system. This parting of the ways has yet to be managed. The future lies in a combination of strategies to ensure a dual-use sociology, which obtains legitimacy in science entities, while producing useful knowledge for solving the real problems of Spanish society. In summary, we must publish more and better in

better international domains, and we must do so selectively. We must seriously improve the way we compete for funding from competitive R&D. But we must also continue to anchor our *raison d'être* in the problems we solve, in order to achieve a better world, both in our immediate surroundings and globally.

A second challenge, related to the former, lies in what we now call knowledge transfer and the socioeconomic impact of science. We are facing the dilemma of better defining the channels through which sociology can transfer its accumulated skills to the real world and increase its impact. In particular, Spanish sociology has been biased toward certain forms of transfer over others, which has favored some types of impact and relegated others. As for the application of practical issues, much applied sociology has been aimed at decision-making in specific situations. What is missing, however, are institutionalized ways of using sociological knowledge in public policy and organized fields of social life. There is a certain feeling that basic sociological knowledge does not permeate decision-making. Especially lacking are 'interface structures', from advisory boards to think-tanks, designed to ensure that sociological knowledge is channeled to the right places and is suitably adapted to our realities and institutions, particularly centers specializing in sectorial policies.

We have also observed some bias in communication. The way sociology is broadcast has been closely associated with public intellectuals who participate in the media using their knowledge on behalf of or against certain questions on the public agenda. The 'public sociology' movement in Spain have led to intellectual production aimed at mobilizing academics rather than at communicating their knowledge. Moreover, it tends to align with specific interpretations of social research, whether a social cause or an ideological trend. This is a contrast in relation to customary scientific culture practices in R&D systems. Spanish sociology is practically devoid of routines and institutions for transferring findings to the general public through science communication channels. In the immediate future, it will be necessary to avoid serious problems in the communication and understanding of complex

knowledge generated by sociology through a wide range of options to promote scientific culture, from informative publications and audiovisual products to forums for connecting specialists with possible users and citizens in general.

Finally, a third challenge lies in accommodating professionals in the labor market. The concentration of sociology qualifications at bachelor or undergraduate degree level and the difficulties to align masters level with advanced training oriented to practice seriously hinder attempts to link sociology with sectors of professional practice. The absence of effective institutions contributes to the loss of professional identity. Very often other disciplines adopt sociological knowledge as their own, but define their own professional demarcation in accordance with their own degree structures. This trend enlarges the distance of academic sociology from the labor market and contributes to the increasing identification of the discipline with traditional academia. Prospects for the immediate future entail making an effort to define a professional perimeter based on real sectors of activity for which sociological knowledge has a strategic component, which involves coding sociological knowledge for areas particularly close to our model of social action. In particular, sectors that function systemically, from basic public services to key economic sectors, such as energy, transport infrastructure, R&D and innovation, industrial fashion, tourism, the agro-food industry, and several other sectors in which Spain has competitive potential. It is, then, about re-coding the labels of 'sociologists of ...' in fields of practice in the knowledge society. The immediate future may push us toward designing more and improved institutions to meet these objectives, such as postgraduate studies connected to activity sectors that offer employment, advanced training for sociologists, specific agencies for knowledge transfer, specialist publications in professional practice and training for multidisciplinary work.

Conclusions

For a long time, Spanish sociology has been a fully consolidated discipline, present at practically all universities and to a large extent in business and government. It has always been characterized by the diversity and richness of perspectives and research interests and has contributed to important social debates in recent Spanish history. However, at this moment of accelerated social change we are currently experiencing, the social sciences, and sociology among them, are facing significant challenges to demonstrate how they can help to build a more prosperous society, with greater equality and freedom. We would like to close this chapter by referring to a recurring question in the history of this discipline: 'What is sociology for?' Obviously, as with every other scientific discipline, it serves for guiding decision-making in fields where knowledge of social facts is important. Sociological knowledge helps incorporate higher degrees of rationality into the organization and strategy of governments, businesses and third sector entities. The appropriate utilization of sociological tools undoubtedly improves public policies, training, work and the effective use of resources, and contributes to correcting the unforeseen consequences of action.

But in sociology and in other social sciences there is an additional use other than the instrumental. Sociological thought usually acknowledges that it contains an expressive component founded in its value base that can be shared by people who learn or use the sociological legacy. Sociology is therefore hugely responsible for increasing citizen's culture because of the implications for understanding and acting rationally on collective facts. Consequently, efforts must be made to ensure that it is more present in public debate. It must provide rigorous diagnoses of our social reality, and it must do so attractively and affordably in order to reach a wide range of audiences. Bringing sociology closer to all sectors of the general public will enable citizens to reach informed opinions and consensus

on the social challenges that lie ahead, while helping us to consolidate a pluralistic democracy.

Notes

¹ By pluralism we refer to the legitimate participation in the social and political arena of a range of actors in addition to the State and members of the elite. The parties and social collectives that compete in pluralistic regimes are distinguished by their ideological and social heterogeneity, irrespective of their economic resources, and by a variety of articulation of interests and collective action around political and economic power (see Schmitter et al., 1992; Giner and Pérez Yruela, 1981).

² There are already several works which widely document the intellectual and institutional sides in the history of Spanish sociology (Del Campo, 2001; Díez Nicolás, 2007; Giner and Moreno, 1990; Giner and Pérez Yruela, 2006; Lamo de Espinosa, 2007; Torres Albero, 1994). There are also several detailed cartographies of sociological specialties (Pérez Yruela, 2007) and recent diagnoses of the sociological profession (Fernández Esquinas et al., 2016a). We depart from these previous works in order to provide a dynamic account of sociology as interrelated in the political and social development of the democratic regime.

³ A cognitive lens is understood as a metatheoretical presupposition prior to observation, which characterizes all disciplines, whether from the social or natural sciences. In our case it distinguishes us, for example, from the model of behavior of economic utilitarianism and from psychological approaches based on individual traits and emotions (see for instance, Portes, 2010).

⁴ In Spain, a distinction is made between professional orders and scientific societies. Professional orders are devoted to defending professional practice, mainly in business and in government. Scientific societies promote sociological knowledge and deal with the scholarly organization of the discipline.

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