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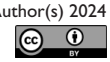
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Edward Webster, Sarah Mosoetsa, Karin Pampallis and Michelle Williams
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

Abstract

In this tribute, we take a different approach and explore the influence of Southern Africa on Burawoy's sociology. The influence of Southern Africa on Burawoy began early in his career when he himself was just learning what it meant to be a sociologist and continued to influence him in different ways throughout his life. In an interview with Eddie Webster in Johannesburg, 21 October 2023, Burawoy observed: 'My experiences in Southern Africa decisively shaped my sociology at a theoretical level, at a methodological level and at a substantive level. Throughout my career Southern Africa was one reference point for understanding other societies'.

Keywords

political sociology, public sociology, South Africa, state socialism, Marxism

In this volume, our colleagues rightfully pay tribute to Michael Burawoy's scholarly achievements and his impact on the generations of students and scholars he has influenced. In this tribute, we take a different approach and explore the influence of Southern Africa on Burawoy's sociology. The influence of Southern Africa on Burawoy began early in his career when he himself was just learning what it meant to be a sociologist and continued to influence him in different ways throughout his life. In an interview with Eddie Webster in Johannesburg, 21 October 2023, Burawoy observed: 'My experiences in Southern Africa decisively shaped my sociology at a theoretical level, at a methodological level and at a substantive level. Throughout my career Southern Africa was one reference point for understanding other societies'.

We divide this tribute into three parts. First, we show how Burawoy's sociological roots lie in the 5 years he spent in South Africa and post-colonial Zambia during his 20s. It was in Zambia that he began his formal study of sociology and anthropology, and where he first undertook research on

Corresponding author:
Michelle Williams, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1 Jorrison Street Braamfontein, Johannesburg 2050, South Africa.
Email: michelle.williams@wits.ac.za

the workplace. These experiences decisively shaped a number of things: his methodology, ethnography and the extended case study method; his theory, Marxism; and substantively, a comparative approach, in which he located his case studies in a global context through his notion of global ethnography.

In Part 2, we show how Burawoy drew on his Southern African research on the Zambian Copperbelt to locate the Chicago workplace in a global context. He contrasted the hegemonic 'production regime' of the Chicago factory with that of 'colonial despotism' in Zambia, 'market despotism' in 19th-century England and 'bureaucratic despotism' in socialist Hungary. During his years in Chicago, Burawoy continued to write from his material on Zambia, developing a comparative analysis that showed workers in Africa and the US face fundamentally similar conditions under capitalism. It was also during this time that he deepened his close friendships with South African intellectuals and political activists.

In Part 3, we examine the impact of Burawoy's return to South Africa after the unbanning of the liberation movements to discover a new sociology – a sociology that was engaged in the struggles against apartheid. He developed a matrix within which he tried to universalise the different moments of the discipline of sociology – professional sociology, policy sociology, critical sociology and public sociology. The notion of public sociology became the topic of a global debate but eventually Burawoy was persuaded by his colleagues in South Africa, especially in the Sociology of Work Programme (SWOP), that his matrix failed to capture the distinctiveness of South Africa's notion of critical engagement. We conclude this section by discussing how Burawoy returned to South Africa in 2023 to share his interpretation of the American 'public sociologist', WEB Du Bois. Through his interaction with his South African audiences, Burawoy began to rethink his interpretation of Du Bois. The reciprocal interaction between Burawoy and Southern Africa has enriched, and continues to enrich, sociology in exciting and innovative ways.

Part 1: Burawoy's Sociological Roots in Southern Africa

In 1966, while still a student at Cambridge reading Mathematics, Burawoy made his first trip to South Africa. This was part of a summer trip hitchhiking across the continent. While in South Africa, he worked briefly at an advertising agency in Johannesburg, and mixed with a wide variety of people. On this trip he learned about apartheid and its ramifications, and became interested in education as a means of social transformation. The vibrant political milieu was underpinned by the recognition that the anti-apartheid struggle was in a new phase with many leaders, including Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, and Ahmed Kathrada, in prison on Robben Island with life sentences and other key leaders like Oliver Tambo and Joe Slovo in exile. The African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Communist Party (SACP) were banned and operating out of Lusaka in Zambia and London in the United Kingdom, and the military wing (uMkhonto we Sizwe) had set up training camps on the African continent. The apartheid state met activism with violence; arrests, trials, harassment and assassinations were widespread. Burawoy had landed in this maelstrom of political activism in which the stakes were often life and death. Clearly, the political context was exciting and intense for the young Burawoy.

After graduating from Cambridge in 1968, Burawoy returned to South Africa. Having met Luli Callinicos during his visit in 1966, when he returned in 1968 he stayed with her and it was through Luli that he met Eddie Webster.[1] Luli and Eddie were history teachers at King David's School at the time, and later married, the three became lifelong friends. He spent 6 months in the country working as a journalist at *Newscheck*, a liberal Afrikaner magazine similar to *Newsweek*. Of course, during this time he had the opportunity to learn more about apartheid at its height. It was during

this trip that he and Eddie travelled through the Transkei in the Eastern Cape, giving Burawoy a firsthand glimpse of apartheid's grand plan of separate development.

From South Africa, Burawoy moved on to Zambia, where he first arrived at the end of 1968. Because of the anti-apartheid boycotts, he would not return to South Africa until 1990. The ANC and SACP had set up offices in Zambia, and consequently Lusaka (and London) was the epicentre for exiled activists and intellectuals. In Zambia, Burawoy met Jack Simons, an exiled South African academic and leading member of the banned SACP. Simons told him that it wasn't difficult to determine how workers were reacting to Zambian independence, which had been achieved in 1964, but that little was known about how mining companies were reacting to independence. Copper mining was a major activity in Zambia that had begun during colonial occupation and continued after independence. Burawoy took up the challenge and sought to understand how the mining companies were responding. Through his contacts with Anglo American's Dennis Etheredge, Burawoy took a job on the Copperbelt in the Personnel Research Unit where he conducted social surveys on 'social problems' on the mines, including absenteeism and turnover. On his own initiative, he developed the mathematics of the job evaluation exercise that would join Black and White wage structures while maintaining the colour bar. While Burawoy was officially working on the mine, he was also developing his ethnographic method, which would become a hallmark of his sociology.

Burawoy received a fellowship to study at the newly created University of Zambia and for the next 2 years (1970–1972) he studied sociology, politics and anthropology at the university, working under the mentorship of Jaap van Velsen. Van Velsen was the chair of the small department (other members included Jack Simons and Raja Jayaraman – a young Indian anthropologist and student of M.N. Srinivas) and was introducing an MA programme with two students, one of whom was Burawoy. Van Velsen, Simons and Jayaraman were Marxists of one sort or another, and revelled in the gruelling destruction of the two MA students' work. Burawoy stuck with it because he was so fascinated by sociology (the other student dropped out of the programme). While he was working on his MA thesis on student politics, the University of Zambia was in the vice grip of robust student politics, which were especially salient in the immediate post-independence period. At the same time, he continued to work on the Copperbelt, exploring work processes on the mines, the colour bar and how the 'Zambianisation' process worked.

During this period, Burawoy encountered several influences. He was strongly influenced by Jaap van Velsen's (1961) ethnographic studies and extended case method as well as by the South African social anthropologist, Max Gluckman. Jack Simons shaped his thinking in terms of the relationship between race and class, and also provided a Marxist critique of the pluralist approach to South Africa. Raja Jayaraman's (1981) work on caste and class introduced Burawoy to the importance of understanding the articulations of race, caste and class. His friendship with Eddie and Luli also continued and they met up again in England while Eddie was studying at Oxford. He also renewed his friendship with Morris Szeftel, who was writing his PhD at Manchester University on Zambia's one-party state. For Burawoy, this was a time of an intense induction into sociology with a strong ethnographic method. Burawoy's (1972a) first publication based on his work on the copper mines came out at this time: 'Another Look at the Mineworker' (http://burawoy.berkeley.edu/Southern%20Africa/Bates.pdf), a critique of Robert Bates' book on political development in Africa.

It was also at this time that he published *The Colour of Class* (Burawoy, 1972b), (http://burawoy.berkeley.edu/books.htm#Color) which examined the reproduction of the racial and class order on the mines. It was in this book that he developed the idea of a moving colour bar, which Eddie, after reading the book, called the 'floating colour bar'. Through his ethnographic work on the copper

mines, Burawoy used the extended case method to explain how the colour bar was reproduced as a result of a constellation of external forces – state, Black workers, White managers and mining capital. The centrality of mining capital to the Zambian economy meant that the state ignored the colour bar; they chose instead to protect the sacred copper cash-cow. The *Colour of Class* was heavily influenced by Frantz Fanon's (1963) *The Wretched of the Earth*, and became an important book in labour studies in the region.

The years spent in South Africa and Zambia introduced Burawoy to a particular style of engaged sociology that was emerging at that time because of the turbulent political and social milieu. This time also introduced him to the power of deeply embedded ethnographic methods, Marxism and the forces of capitalism. Burawoy left Southern Africa a committed sociologist with a clear agenda to study workers in their workplaces in an effort to better understand capitalism and its methods of control. In the years to come, this early influence of Southern Africa, especially on the copper mines, would shape his intellectual itinerary and that of many of his students.

Part 2: Years of Research and Study in the North: The Influence of Southern Africa Continues

Burawoy left Zambia in 1972 to pursue his PhD at the University of Chicago, studying under William J. Wilson. Burawoy would not return to South Africa for 20 years, and shifted his attention to workplaces in the Global North. While he was no longer directly working on Southern Africa, with the encouragement of Wilson he continued to write about Southern Africa. Perhaps because of the particularly heady intellectual and political milieu he had experienced in Zambia, he found the courses at the University of Chicago very boring and provincial. The exception was in his second year, when he took Adam Przeworski's seminar in the political science department. This was transformative for Burawoy. He was introduced to Marxist theories of the state, including Althusser, Balibar, Poulantzas and, most importantly, Gramsci. It was through Przeworski's seminar that Burawoy began to appreciate social theory in a way he had not before.

Bringing the role of the state into his thinking, he worked on a project on migrant labour in California and South Africa, showing how the state reproduces systems of migrant labour. This paper is significant not simply because it is his first attempt to bring the state into his analysis of capitalism but also because he employed a comparative method with South Africa and California, teasing out the similarities between the cases, two countries that were ostensibly totally different. Burawoy recognised that labour in Africa was essentially no different from labour in the United States; both were subject to the forces of capitalism, an argument developed in his 1976b article 'The Functions and Reproduction of Migrant Labor: Comparative Material from Southern Africa and the United States' (http://burawoy.berkeley.edu/Southern%20Africa/Migrant%20Labor.pdf). Here again, we can see the influence of his experience in and engagement with scholars working in and on Southern Africa, this time especially that of Jaap van Velsen who saw migrant labour in Africa as a system of cheap labour designed by the state and capital, and not as a function of African culture as was commonly argued. We can also see a strong link to the work of South African scholar and political activist Harold Wolpe.[2] Wolpe's (1972) seminal article, 'Capitalism and Cheap Labour-power in South Africa: From Segregation to Apartheid', analysed the reproduction of cheap labour through the articulation of modes of production.

It was in Chicago that Burawoy met Harold Wolpe – who was invited to visit by William J Wilson – with whom he would forge another lifelong friendship. After the initial meeting in Chicago, Burawoy would see Wolpe regularly over the next 20 years in London, and the Wolpe

family became a second family to Burawoy. He arranged for Harold and AnnMarie Wolpe to come to Berkeley in 1981, and he continued to see them when the Wolpes returned to South Africa after 1990. In fact, these regular visits and extended conversations with Wolpe had a major influence on Burawoy's understanding of South Africa. Reflecting his close relationship to Wolpe, Burawoy wrote two important overviews of Wolpe's work: 'Harold Wolpe: Doyen of South African Marxists' (http://burawoy.berkeley.edu/Marxism/Wolpe.SARB.pdf) (Burawoy, 1989) and 'From Liberation to Reconstruction: Theory and Practice in the Life of Harold Wolpe' (http://burawoy.berkeley.edu/PS/Wolpe.ROAPE.pdf) (Burawoy, 2004a).

His work during graduate school, including his dissertation, further developed a comparative lens of different production regimes within capitalism, which was in constant conversation with Africa. His dissertation – which eventually became the published book 'Manufacturing Consent: Changes in the Labor Process under Monopoly Capitalism' (http://burawoy.berkeley.edu/books.htm#MC) (Burawoy, 1979) – was based on an ethnographic study of a machine shop. It pointed out the contrast between colonial despotism in Southern Africa and the hegemonic order in south Chicago. In Chicago, workers were constituted as industrial citizens through the internal labour market and grievance machinery as well as collective bargaining that coordinated the interests of capital and labour. The book's Appendix (http://burawoy.berkeley.edu/Books/MC/Appendix.pdf) underlines the difference between politics of colonial despotism and hegemonic production. After completing his PhD in 1976, he moved to the University of California, Berkeley to take up a full-time academic position in the sociology department.

During this period, Burawoy (1976a) also published a summary version of his University of Zambia master's dissertation, based on 2 years of field research, entitled 'Consciousness and Contradiction: A Study of Student Protest in Zambia' (http://burawoy.berkeley.edu/Southern%20Africa/Zambian%20Students.pdf). Interestingly, his recent work on the contradictions of the university in the United States brings him full circle as he returns to the university as a contested site in research he did with graduate students during COVID, 'Laboring in the Extractive University' (http://burawoy.berkeley.edu/Universities/Labouring%20in%20the%20Extractive%20Industry.pdf) (2023).

From the mid-1970s until his retirement in 2023, Burawoy remained at the University of California, Berkeley. He pursued studies of South Africa, post-Soviet Russia and Eastern Europe, brought together in the comparative historical analysis *The Politics of Production: Factory Regimes under Capitalism and Socialism* (http://burawoy.berkeley.edu/books.htm#Politics) (Burawoy, 1985). This was intended as an innovation within Marxism based on the idea that politics can be found in production as well as at the level of the state, thereby posing the question of the relationship between the two. A major inspiration for the comparative methodology was Miklós Haraszti's (1978) *Worker in a Worker's State*, an ethnography of a socialist tractor factory in Hungary. Interested in the Polish Solidarity movement but unable to get into Poland, Burawoy pursued ethnographies of workplaces in Hungary, especially a machine shop similar to the one in South Chicago and a steel mill. *The Politics of Production* compared production politics under advanced capitalism, early capitalism, state socialism and colonialism. It was followed by *The Radiant Past: Ideology and Reality in Hungary's Road to Capitalism* (http://burawoy.berkeley.edu/books.htm#Radiant%20Past) (University of Chicago Press, 1992, co-author János Lukács) – a collection of the ethnographies of work conducted in Hungary during the 1980s. The one major piece on South Africa during this period was 'The Capitalist State in South Africa: Marxist and Sociological Perspectives on Race and Class' (http://burawoy.berkeley.edu/Southern%20Africa/State.pdf) (Burawoy, 1981), a critique of Edna Bonacich's split labour market as applied to South Africa. The article elaborated on the significance of the state, and was deeply influenced by the research programme set in motion by Harold Wolpe.

Throughout this period, he continued to have close friendships with Eddie Webster, Luli Callinicos and the Wolpes, among many others from South Africa. The encounters over the four decades were truly global, from Chicago, Berkeley and London in the 1970s and 1980s to Johannesburg and Cape Town after 1990 when the boycotts were lifted. This unusual combination of two decades of absence from South Africa accompanied by continued intense intellectual and personal connections with South Africa is a monument to the power of South Africa's influence.

Part 3: South Africa Re-visit and Its Public Sociology

Burawoy returned to South Africa in June 1990, for the first time since 1968. During that visit, he observed a new and vibrant sociology that was engaged in, working-class politics, social movements and the struggles against apartheid. He was introduced to this sociology by the papers given at the Association for Sociologists in Southern Africa (ASSA).[3] During this visit he was also struck by the celebration of the surfacing of the South African Communist Party after 30 years in exile and underground. Eddie Webster had recently established the SWOP[4] at Wits University that focused on critical engagement and research with and for the labour movement. The critical role of the Black working class in the anti-apartheid struggle and the emerging democracy was central to SWOP's formation and *raison d'étre.* The labour movement worked closely with SWOP, as it understood the importance of critical engagement and the research SWOP provided. This was an exciting time full of opportunity and possibility, and Burawoy recognised the extraordinary developments in South African sociology as it engaged the world around it. After this trip, Burawoy came to South Africa regularly.

In 1996, Burawoy became chair of his department at Berkeley. Inspired by what he had seen in South Africa, he advanced the notion of public sociology, which was also practised by his colleagues at Berkeley (e.g. Todd Gitlin, Arlie Hochschild, Bob Bellah, Rob Blauner and others), but in a different way. Their approach was more traditional than the organic public sociology he had witnessed in South Africa, especially in sociology and in SWOP.

But it was only after a visit in 2000 that Burawoy really developed his understanding of public sociology. At that time, Eddie invited Burawoy to come to South Africa in connection with the Deep Mine Project. This marked the beginning of regular visits to South Africa over the next two decades during which he worked with a number of Wits University PhD students and scholars (including Sakhela Buhlungu, Sarah Mosoetsa, Karl von Holdt, Sepetla Molapo, Asanda Benya, Maria van Driel and Jackie Cock) and learned the ins and outs of SWOP. In these years, he became convinced that South African sociology showed the possibilities of public sociology.

In 2003, Burawoy was elected president of the American Sociological Association (ASA), and projected the departmental project of public sociology onto a national plane in his Presidential Address: 'For Public Sociology' (Address to the American Sociological Association, 15 August 2004b) (http://burawoy.berkeley.edu/PS/ASA%20Presidential%20Address.pdf). Of course, he was not the first American to talk about public sociology. C. Wright Mills had proposed a similar idea, and following him Herbert Gans promoted public sociology when he was ASA president. What was novel was the four-fold matrix within which Burawoy tried to capture the different moments of the discipline of sociology: professional, policy, critical and public. Emanating from two fundamental questions – Knowledge for whom? and Knowledge for what? – he regarded the categories themselves as universal, combining in different ways at different times in different places and in different disciplines.

When he was invited by Tina Uys to address the South African Sociological Association (SASA) in 2003 (http://burawoy.berkeley.edu/PS/Society%20in%20Transition.pdf), he presented a history

of South African sociology through this matrix. And in the United States, he spoke about the South Africanisation of US sociology (http://burawoy.berkeley.edu/PS/Marxist%20Newsletter.pdf), trying to push it away from its hyper-professionalisation. In South Africa, many, including Eddie, were intrigued by this idea while others were uneasy with the idea that the South African practice was wrapped in a critique of the professionalisation of US sociology. However, Burawoy claimed that his matrix was universal and could be applied anywhere with particular specificities.

Ironically, the critique of the matrix came from scholars within SWOP who argued that the scheme was too Northern in its obsession with the interrelations among different types of sociology within the US discipline. The critique was developed in a book edited by Andries Bezuidenhout et al., (2022)[5] *Critical Engagement with Public Sociology: A Perspective from the Global South*, which offered an alternative to public sociology – the idea of critical engagement, first advanced by Eddie Webster. Burawoy (2010, 2021) responded that he had always thought of this as organic public sociology, and that he had presented it in this way in his biographical account of Webster's sociology: 'Southern Windmill: The Life and Work of Edward Webster' (http://burawoy.berkeley.edu/PS/Webster.Windmill.pdf). Eventually, he realised the truth of South African critiques of public sociology. As he would put it, US sociology was *introverted*, oriented towards its professionalism, while South African sociology was *extraverted*, oriented first and foremost to the world beyond the academy. While in South Africa in 2023, Burawoy drove home the distinction between introverted and extroverted sociologies in relation to the biography of WEB Du Bois.

He stated in the 2023 interview with Eddie that he saw 'extroversion' as the way Du Bois developed his own version of critical engagement in the United States, independent of professional sociology, from which he had been excluded. In the end, Burawoy believed that South African sociology lay somewhere between US public sociology and Du Boisian extroverted sociology since it still emanated from within the university. In his 2023 visit to South Africa, Burawoy gave a series of lectures on DuBois and one public lecture on DDT Jabavu, putting him into dialogue with DuBois. Reflecting on his trip, Burawoy mused that the comparison with Jabavu highlighted DuBois' positionality as middle class and Black in an imperial country to which he both belonged but from which was also deeply alienated. Whether this will begin another engagement with DuBois for Burawoy is yet to be seen, but the DuBoisian lectures clearly represent another influence of South African sociology.

In this period, the influence of South Africa on Burawoy was very pronounced as his engagements with South African sociology helped shape his ideas around public sociology and its possibilities in the US academy.

Conclusion

Southern Africa shaped the sociological practice and perspectives of Michael Burawoy throughout the 60 years of his sociological career. Engagement with Southern Africa and the struggle against apartheid took a discontented 20-year-old mathematics student from England and drew him irretrievably into trying to understand the world through a sociological lens. His early experience with Southern Africa gave Burawoy the ethnographic methods that would become his primary research tools for the rest of his life. It immersed him in key puzzles connecting class, the labour process, race, migration and the state that would be interwoven in his research and theorising during the decades to come. As he explored new theoretical repertoires and did intensive ethnographic research in Chicago and Hungary over the subsequent two decades, the influence of Southern Africa continued. Returning to South Africa sparked one of Burawoy's most influential contributions to the discipline, his distinctive formulation of the idea of public sociology and its subsequent transformation into 'critical engagement', again in response to South African debates.

Southern Africa was never just a 'case', a source of information used to support theories or arguments developed elsewhere. Southern Africa and especially South Africa was an intellectual, personal and political milieu fundamental to shaping the way Burawoy saw (and sees) the world and sociology's place in understanding the world. It gave him a grounding to struggle against what he saw as the debilitating parochialism of a social science unable to escape the Global North.

Burawoy's personal, professional and political evolution is unique, but it exemplifies a broader lesson that is increasingly recognised as critical to the productive development of sociology and its sister disciplines. A sociology that is trapped in debates, evidence and perspectives dominated by Northern intellectual milieus and traditions will be impoverished relative to the possibilities created by genuine engagement with the intellectual and political networks grounded in the Global South. Michael Burawoy had the good fortune of early immersion in Southern Africa and the good sense to recognise the value of his connection. He and his Southern African colleagues and comrades have blazed a trail towards building a robust global sociology.

Authors' note

Eddie was starting to work on this article, but did not finish before he passed away suddenly on 5 March 2024. We have used his original notes and rough draft based on an interview he did with Burawoy to finish the article, and have tried to develop the line of argument he was making based on his notes. We all had conversations with Eddie about the article as he was quite excited about the idea of Southern Africa's influence on Michael.

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ORCID iD

Michelle Williams https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9623-0916

Notes

1. Luli became a leading social historian, writing an iconic trilogy on working-class life in early Johannesburg (1981, 1987, 1995, 2000) and the monumental study of ANC President, Oliver Tambo (2012). Eddie Webster became one of the South Africa's leading labour scholars and sociologists, and published the highly influential book, *Cast in a Racial Mould (1986)*.
2. Harold Wolpe was a leading member of the South African Communist Party and lived in London in exile. He famously escaped from Prison in Johannesburg and through clandestine networks was smuggled out of the country.
3. In 1993, ASSA joined together with the Suid-Afrikaanse Sosiologie Vereniging (SASOV) to establish the South African Sociological Association (SASA), which continues to be the main association in Southern Africa.
4. SWOP was originally a project within the department of sociology, but later became an independent research institute within the University of the Witwatersrand.
5. All three scholars were in SWOP for many years and had worked closely with Burawoy.

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