Famous and Forgotten: 
Soviet Sociology and the Nature of Intellectual Achievement under Totalitarianism

Mikhail Sokolov
msokolov@eu.spb.ru

Abstract

For decades Soviet and later post-Soviet sociology was dominated by a cohort of scholars born between 1927–1930 (Grushin, Kon, Levada, Ossipov, Yadov, Zaslavskaya). The origins of their prominence and the character of their recognition offers a puzzle, as intellectual achievements of this cohort defy conventional ideas about where academic renown comes from. Academic prominence is usually associated with either intellectual leadership or skillful manipulation of the academic power structures. Neither of these stories describes the peculiar pattern of recognition of the giants of Soviet sociology whose fame persisted after they retired from administrative responsibilities and in spite of their ideas from the Soviet era being almost forgotten. The hypothesis developed in this paper holds that this peculiar form of fame emerged from the unique position sociology held in Soviet society. The paper introduces a distinction between natural and intentional secrecy and argues that while most of Western sociology specialized in natural secrecy, Soviet sociology had to deal with intentional secrecy resulting from conscious attempts to conceal the dismal realities of state socialism. The pervasiveness of secrecy during the Soviet era resulted from the central legitimization allowing Soviet sociology to emerge and develop with an unparalleled speed, but, at the same time, it explains why sociology was so effective at hiding considerable subversive potential and facing periodic repression. This political environment accounts for Soviet sociology's unique intellectual style as well as for the fact that its central figures remained in the disciplinary memory as heroic role models, rather than as authors of exemplary texts.

Keywords

Soviet sociology, history of sociology, sociology of social sciences, sociology of secrecy, legitimacy

The history of Soviet sociology stands as several puzzles that cannot be solved easily with reference to commonsense views on how the sciences, including the social sciences, work. Among others, this history challenges one views on the origins of science and fame to the academic world. Like many of its conceptions, the history of Soviet sociology is shrouded in secrecy. This secrecy resulted from the central legitimization allowing Soviet sociology to emerge and develop with an unparalleled speed, but, at the same time, it explains why sociology was so effective at hiding considerable subversive potential and facing periodic repression. This political environment accounts for Soviet sociology's unique intellectual style as well as for the fact that its central figures remained in the disciplinary memory as heroic role models, rather than as authors of exemplary texts.
Latour are incredibly idealistic in their belief that it is only by putting forward groundbreaking ideas that a group of scholars (or in the specific case of Latour’s theorizing, a network uniting academic actors with non-human actants) can come to dominate the intellectual scene. This prominence will hold as long as these ideas continue to be accepted. Other sociologists in the academic world, particularly those studying social sciences (Bourdieu 1988; Clark 1977; Wiley 1979), tried to allow for sources of academic power other than the ability to mobilize intellectual support. Thus, in Pierre Bourdieu’s pessimistic vision of the field of social sciences in France, academic power residing in the control over others’ professional trajectories dominates over purely intellectual influence.

The careers of the more prominent figures of Soviet sociology do not, however, fit easily into either of these two stereotypes—intellectual leader or institutional manipulator. While many of them served in important administrative posts, they remained revered (or even worshipped) figures even after they ceased to have any control over others’ academic careers. At the same time, their works from the Soviet era—during which they were their being marginalized—are scarcely remembered. This article will proceed in the following way. First, I will provide evidence substantiating the claim that the recognition won by the Soviet sociologists is of a very intriguing nature to those studying academia. Then I will formulate the major research hypothesis matching types of sociological work to the types of secrecy a researcher has to deal with. Then follows a very short historical overview of the development of sociology in the USSR. Then I will show how the Soviet sociologists’ having to deal with Soviet secrecy explains the nature of the major problems they had to solve, the achievements they valued, the dominant styles of their work, and the peculiar character of their fame. I will conclude by discussing some implications of these arguments for our understanding of “recognition” in the social sciences.

THE PUZZLE: A STRANGE WAY OF BEING FAMOUS

In the 1960s, a group of scholars established themselves as the leaders of Soviet sociology and retained their centrality within the discipline until the first decade of the new millennium. This most prominent members of that group were Boris Grushin (1929–2007), Igor Kon (1928–2011), Yuri Levada (1930–2006), Gennady Ossipov (b.1929), Ovsej Shkaratan (b.1931), Vladimir Yadov (1929–2015), Tatiana Zaslavskaya (1927–2013), and Andrei Zdravomyslov (1928–2009). In the new millennium, their lifelong achievements were celebrated by accolades of various honors, including medals of disciplinary associations, invitations to give plenary talks, and memorial editions. A few leaders of Soviet sociology wrote autobiographies (Kon 2008; Zaslavskaya 2007), complemented by various biographical and historical materials (interviews, collections of historical documents) prepared by their former pupils, relatives, and colleagues.¹

There still exists something short of resembling a “personality cult” around them. To give only one illustration, to commemorate Yadov’s eightieth birthday, the Moscow-based Institute of Sociology published a book of memoirs by his colleagues named “Yadov: great, unique and inimitable” (Gorshkov 2009). Its chapters had revealing titles such as “Yadov: starts with the letter “Y” (B. Doktorov), “Yadov: The family jewel of Russian sociology” (V. Bakirov), “Yadov: the leader” (M. Lisina), “Yadov: great, unique and inimitable” (V. Bolotina), “Yadov: The family jewel of Russian sociology” (R. Komarova).¹

¹ One can find more detailed histories in Zemtsov (1985); Shlapentokh (1987); Weinberg (2004); Firsov (2012); Zdravomyslova and Titarenko (2017).
While there was probably a degree of self-irony in naming the pieces in such a fashion, this was obviously not intended to be read as sarcasm. To complement the picture of this apotheosis, they remain among the most cited authors in Russian sociology.

This apparently points in the direction of “intellectual leaders,” an interpretation that suggests that Yadov, as well as other Soviet sociologists, were men and women who established influential schools of thought early in their careers. The existence of these schools could explain the later they continue to enjoy. This text will argue, however, that this explanation is not completely satisfactory. We will see that, surprisingly, the intellectual achievements of Soviet sociology were nearly forgotten during the very period in which its founding fathers received their highest honors. No abstract intellectual constructs associated with their names that could be considered “a theory” currently enjoys any wide currency in Russia. The works of these Soviet scholars that they defined as their most important intellectual contributions, and which were published at the period they rose to prominence, are scarcely cited, and a few of such texts were never reprinted, despite the fact that many of them are completely readable. At the period when the leaders of Soviet sociology were at the heights of acclaim and power, their intellectual legacies from the Soviet past fell into oblivion. Few people remembered and cited their work published before 1991. As an illustration of this, Table 1 gives an indication of the amount of citations for the published work of the six key figures of Soviet sociology in the Russian Scientific Citation Index (RSCI). The RSCI covers Russian periodicals from 2004. The figures give some idea of which work of the giants of Soviet sociology is most visible now.

As of September, 2017, Yadov with 11,495 citations is the most cited of 5,490 authors that the Russian Index for Scientific Citing (RISC)—see below—classifies as sociologists. Zaslavskaya is No.8 with 8,763 citations, Zdravomyslov No.10 (6,501). Igor Kon, who is counted as a psychologist, rather than a sociologist, got 21,213 citations and became the most cited of above 7,000 authors in this category.

The six who received above 3,000 citations in the RSCI were chosen for analysis. The data were taken from the RISC webpages on 1 September, 2017. RISC does not produce compact disc editions, and as the database is being constantly updated, the figures are not exactly reproducible. Nevertheless, the results proved stable after several recalculations.
<table>
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<th>Name</th>
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<td>Social Identification in a Crisis Society.</td>
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<td>Strategies of Sociological Research: Description, Explanation, Understanding of Social Reality</td>
<td>2007 (316)</td>
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<td>Zaslavskaya</td>
<td>7254</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Contemporary Russian Society: A Mechanism of Social Transformation.</td>
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<td>Social Structure of Contemporary Russian Society.</td>
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<td>How All-Russian Center for Public Opinion Study was Born.</td>
<td>1998 (191)</td>
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<td>Kon</td>
<td>23144</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Sociology of Personality.</td>
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<td>Discovery of the Self</td>
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<td>Child and Society</td>
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<td>Zdravomyslov</td>
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<td>Needs, Interests, Values.</td>
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<td>The Sociology of Conflict</td>
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<td>The Sociology of Inequality. Theory and Reality.</td>
<td>2012 (133)</td>
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<td>Social Stratification in Russia and Eastern Europe</td>
<td>2006 (100)</td>
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<td>The Problem of Elite in Contemporary Russia</td>
<td>2007 (131)</td>
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<td>Gurevich</td>
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<td>Categories of Medieval Culture</td>
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<td>Medieval World: The Culture of the Silent Majority (2ed)</td>
<td>1990 (507)</td>
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<td>Historical Synthesis and the Annales School</td>
<td>1993 (466)</td>
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<td>Indo-European Languages and Indo-Europeans</td>
<td>1984 (496)</td>
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<td>Slavic Language's Semiotic Systems</td>
<td>1965 (493)</td>
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1. Titles provided are English translations of Russian-language originals.
2. Net citations for two identical editions.
3. Net citation for two editions.
5. Brooklyn Public Library Collection of Russian Language materials.

Table 1. Bibliometric characters of citation of work by leading Soviet sociologists in the Russian Index for Scientific Citing, in comparison with scholars from other disciplines.
The first impression is one of the high immediacy of their work: the texts of the Soviet sociologists receiving most citations are relatively recent ones published after the start of Perestroika in the mid-1980s. The major exception is Igor Kon who was a key figure in importing whole fields of Western social sciences, such as (sociological) social psychology and sexology. His earlier texts introducing these fields to the Soviet reader remain widely read and cited, while the popularity of his later books was probably undermined by his interest in gay and lesbian studies, which had a lesser appeal to the majority of morally conservative Russian academics. With the exception of Kon, we find only two Soviet books on the list, both listing Zdravomyslov among their authors: his 1986 treatise on Needs, Interests, and Values from the Perestroika years and the second edition of his and Yadov's Man and His Work, which appeared in 2003. The newer edition, however, had a totally new section offering a reinterpretation of the older results, contained a previously unpublished account of a comparative study of labor values of Soviet and US workers and a replication of the original study after Perestroika, as well as sections with the author's recollections of the emergence of their masterpiece. With this exception, the texts of the stars of Soviet sociology that are currently most acclaimed appeared after the USSR was gone. As a measure of the immediacy of their reception, a calculation was made for each of the six representative figures the year in which their text receiving the median citation was published (e.g., roughly half of the citations go to earlier and half to later texts). Yadov's and Zdravomyslov's median citations fall at their publications of 1995, Shkaratan's falls in 1998, Zaslavskaya's 1999, and Levada's in 2000 (Levada died in 2006, so half of the papers cite works produced in the last six years of his life, only Kon's falls when the USSR was still alive, 1988).

This is a highly unusual citation pattern for leaders of an intellectual movement in twentynth-century sociology. While recent research has partly disproved the earlier conclusion that science is "a young man's game," it nonetheless seems that the majority of disciplines, including economics, the most influential papers are still produced by relatively young people in their late thirties or forties (Diamond 1980; Wray 2003; Jones et al. 2014). It seems that this pattern also holds for sociology. A reader could test this proposition by composing a list of books that have most influenced him or her and then find out the authors' age when the book was written. For this purpose, I used the list of the "Books of the Century" named by members of International Sociological Association as those "which were most influential in their work as sociologists" in 1994. I took seventy-eight books named by five or more people from the 455 surveyed and calculated the age of the author at publication (for those published posthumously, the age of death was taken, although in most cases it obviously led to an overestimation of age parameters). The mean age of an influential book author was forty-six years; median was forty-five, and the modal value was only thirty-nine. Only three books qualified as published when their author was over sixty: two of them were published posthumously (Mead's Mind, Self, and Society and Marx's Capital). In contrast, Today's median publication citation falls when he was sixty-eight years old, thirty-eight years after his publishing success; for Levada, the median citation was to a paper published when he was seventy years old, forty-two years after the first piece published by him was published. Zaslavskaya was seventy-two years old. Sixty-one years had passed since her first piece was published. This discrepancy can be partly explained by the fact that, in sociology, citation measures are not perfectly correlated with subjectively estimated influence (Najmann and...
Following the "institutional manipulator" interpretation, one might suppose that the pattern of the Soviet sociologists' recognition is a reflection of their exceptional political skill in manipulating power structures rather than intellectual leadership. Perhaps those dependent on them cited their work to avoid the wrath of the academic bigshots. This hypothesis turns out to be even more wanting, however. The majority of them did occupy important administrative posts at various points in their lives, such as heads of the Academy of Sciences institutes, in fact, many of them were renowned organizational builders who actively participated in creation of these institutes (Ossipov, Firsov, Zaslavskaya). However, some occupied administrative positions for only very short times early in their lives (Igor Kon), and most suffered from long periods of political disfavor during which they lacked the keys to institutional power. What is more, their academic lives long after their enforcement from influential administrative posts, and after most of them, sadly, passed away, their influence obviously cannot be fully explained with reference to their control over others' careers.

Four familiar explanations can be offered to explain the oblivion of the works of leaders of Soviet sociology without resorting to the institutional manipulator hypothesis. First, the tendency to cite recent literature could be attributed to the citing of later editions rather than the originals. However, qualitative analysis demonstrates that when earlier editions were identical to the original one, the latter received the lion's share of citations. Further more, most of the books routinely cited in interviews as the highest quality work of Soviet social sciences were not reprinted for many years after 1991, with some of them available only as rare, mimeographed editions (such as Levada's 1969 Lectures on Sociology until 2011, or not published at all, such as the second volume of Grushin's Taganrog studies). It was only recently that some of Levada's, Grushin's, and Zaslavskaya's texts were reprinted as parts of commemorative editions that also included their autobiographies and recollections related to them (Grushin 2001; Zaslavskaja 2007; Levada Ju.A. 2011); none of them were printed by a major commercial publisher and most editions were made available electronically immediately after their release, thus demonstrating that the publishers did not hope for any market success. The only example of a later edition gathering considerable citations was the increasingly extended editions of Yadov's textbook on methods, giving peaks at 1987, 1995, 1998, 2001, and 2003.

The second explanation of the unusual tendency to credit leading Soviet sociologists for relatively recent findings is that they, in all likelihood, had to keep their most important thoughts to themselves until Soviet censorship vanished. Their best books could be published only after the fall of Communism, which explains the unusual citation pattern. This claim is hard to disprove bibliometrically, but if it is subjected to a more qualitative analysis, this explanation appears diachronically stable. The only example of a later edition gathering considerable citations was the increasingly extended editions of Yadov's textbook on methods, giving peaks at 1987, 1995, 1998, 2001, and 2003.

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As the RISC stores information on citations to books and edited volumes, not only on journal articles, this pattern could be explained by the fact that sociologists, rather than memorandum journal editors (Hewitt 2004). Even taking this into account, however, Soviet sociologists look like as a rather odd group of classics.
Perestroika years. His later, and currently better-cited books such as From Opposition to Understanding. Ideological Images of 1970s Soviet Names and Looking for Area. Sociological Essays from Across the Iron Curtain (1984), mostly consisted of interpretations of ongoing survey studies.

Comparison with other Soviet social-scientific disciplines may be revealing here. I relied on the table two figures who shared much with the first-generation Soviet sociologists: historians Anatolii Gurevich (1924–2002) and linguist and semiotician Vyacheslav Ivanov (1929). Gurevich and Ivanov were of approximately the same age as our heroes; they joined and concluded their publication career well into the twentieth century, and they also developed a kind of scholarship that was highly non-revolutionary and ideologically neutral: Gurevich was a prominent student of Lev Trofimov, one of the best-known Soviet sociologists of the pre-revolution period, while Ivanov was no less associated with a traditionalist, non-Marxist intellectual tradition. 

As one might expect, both were quite active after the fall of the USSR, with Ivanov publishing in the West. Zinoviev was a member of the same intellectual circle as Levada, although he was bluntly non-Marxist and ideologically suspicious (Gurevich was a prominent student of Lev Trofimov, one of the best-known Soviet sociologists of the pre-revolution period). Both Gurevich and Ivanov, who obviously did employ Marxist and ideologically suspicious methods, were associated with political dissident circles; in spite of this, they managed to publish their most cited books in the Soviet era. Gurevich, as one might expect, published with publication careers, however, began after the fall of the USSR, and Kordonskii, the most widely renowned of them, is marginal to sociology.

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sociology was (mostly) empirical. It was also (mostly) applied, or at least it naturally used the
historical forms of applied research, and the topic of this research are arguably obsolete (e.g.,
neurology research at a Soviet plant—subject of numerous studies during the Soviet era—hardly
a species of "applied sociology.

Moreover, the claim that leaders of Soviet sociology never invented a "theory," understood as a
set of relatively free-floating propositions, would be untrue, although they were obviously less
attracted to theorizing than their US or European counterparts. The "disposition conception," of
Yule and his group—a social-psychological model of attitude formation mixing one of Henri
Murphy, Gordon Allport, and Hilgard Blumke's ideas (Yule et al. 1970), and Grundtvig's theory of
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by Tang and Yeo Chi 1978) or its present reputation.

Finally, evidence of repressions contradicts the belief held by the savant notion of Soviet
sociology that Soviet sociology associated itself with regime causes and voluntarily limited itself
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the Academy of Sciences in the early 1970s following the ‘Levada affair.’ During that episode, the majority of Academician scientists—who were officially responsible for guiding their branches of research in the Soviet academy—firmly stood on the threshold of exit. The new place of work was preparation of publication of the archive of Prince Tenishev. Yadov and Firsov were fired from the Institute for Social Sciences and Technology, which was a stronghold of sociology, and Firsov’s obligation at his new place was work was preparation of publication of the archive of Prince Tenishev. Both were demoted from their positions as department heads to senior researchers. Yadov had to avoid the spread of certain information (Bundestädt 2013; Simmel 1906; Goffman 1969; Gibson 2002). Natural secrets are not protected through human conscious efforts. They can be divided into secrets of distance and secrets of perspective. The former arise from difficulty in observing an object, while the latter emerge from difficulty in criticizing observations and putting forward a hypothesis placing the available observations into a meaningful pattern. In turn, as well as many non-Western societies, empirical sociological research mostly praises itself for disclosing secrets of distance. Then, in quantitative research, statistics allow a researcher to grasp regularities in social life invisible for those who are immediately involved in it, while qualitative research allows him or her to get in contact with social groups that these middle-class politburo members mostly ennui.

SOCIAL SCIENCES AND THE TYPES OF SECRECY: A RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

All scholarship deals with secrets. The secrets disclosed by research can be divided, however, into two broad classes: natural and intentional. Intentional secrets emerge from conscious attempts to avoid the spread of certain information (Bundestädt 2013; Simmel 1906; Goffman 2002). Natural secrets are not protected through human conscious efforts. They can be divided into secrets of distance and secrets of perspective. The former arise from difficulty in observing an object, while the latter emerge from difficulty in criticizing observations and putting forward a hypothesis placing the available observations into a meaningful pattern. In turn, as well as many non-Western societies, empirical sociological research mostly praises itself for disclosing secrets of distance. Then, in quantitative research, statistics allow a researcher to grasp regularities in social life invisible for those who are immediately involved in it, while qualitative research allows him or her to get in contact with social groups that these middle-class politburo members mostly ennui.

Neither one of these types of natural secrets were the principal aim of Soviet sociologists. This paper puts that Soviet sociology specialized in disclosing intentional, not natural, secrets about society because the latter were much easier to manipulate and sabotage in the Soviet Union, than they were in the US. Western competitive. Both Soviet sociology’s research styles and peculiar organization of disciplinarians’ memory could be accounted for by this fact: Probably all human societies can be divided into two broad classes: those who pursue the goal of solving an immediate problem (providing itself as disclosing secrets of perspective) and those who pursue the goal of solving an immediate problem (providing itself as disclosing secrets of distance).

Sokolov, Soviet Sociology 
marked “for restricted use” (after which it was no longer permissible to use it) the Soviet people were not meant to know in too much detail what the public catering system had to offer (for restricted use).

An explanation one could offer for this fact is that secrecy was the other side of the Soviet central legitimation myth, according to which socialist societies developed along a scientifically devised, all-embracing plan of movement toward communism. In the official Soviet vision, societies unaware of the laws of history discovered by Marx and Engels, or not ready to embrace them, existed in the kingdom of historical necessity. They were governed by forces outside the scope of their control and, consequently, suffered from regular crises. Soviet society, in contrast, existed in the realm of historical freedom because it was based on a recognition of these laws, allowing Lenin and his comrades to work out a blueprint according to which the first socialist state developed.

This legitimation myth had several empirical implications, a falsification of any of which would put the whole myth in doubt. It followed from the myth that:

1. The development of Soviet society follows a pre-scheduled path;
2. The implementation of this plan assures the superiority of socialist society over its capitalist rivals;
3. The Soviet people more or less unanimously support the movement into the direction chosen by the Party;
4. A few rather specific predictions would come true, such as the gradual disappearance of the divide between manual and intellectual labor and, thus, working class and intelligentsia, in both living standards and lifestyle.

The legitimacy of the Communist Party’s rule depended on how well Soviet society approximated these predictions. Multiple grand discrepancies would instantly raise doubts in either theory, practice, or both, and would ultimately undermine the Party’s right to rule. Undoubtedly for the Soviet elites, many of these predictions were quite precise and could thus be quickly (and easily) disproved, as occurred with the ill-fated 1937 census resulting in the infamous “Statisticians’ Affair.”

To make things even more complicated for the Party, the fact that one of the central predictions was that Soviet society would be governed according to an all-embracing plan inevitably produced a sort of a vicious circle: the necessity to legitimize any new action through reference to a plan lead to proliferation of progressively more precise and, thus, more collapsible predictions covering every aspect of the USSR’s development.

Overall, due to its definition as a fully rationalized state, the Soviet Union was unique as a state in the sheer scope of responsibility for its rulers. The rulers of a totalitarian regime are by definition responsible for everything happening with its citizens. This “everything” ranged from the presence of religious beliefs to lack of shoes of a particular size in a particular village store. The same legitimation myth of all-encompassing responsibility that gave the regime license to intrude into every corner of citizens’ lives made it extremely vulnerable to criticism when it failed to fulfill its promises.

Moving to the subject of our study, this meant that an
analysis of any aspect of social life had repercussions as an evaluation of the legitimacy of the Soviet regime as a whole. A variety of explanations or excuses were available for the ruling elites. Some problems could be attributed to natural or historical causes, such as the cultural legacy of the Tsarist period, and such legacies were regularly referred to, even late in the Soviet period. Other problems were the result of shortcomings at the level of the directorate and, if the organization was large enough, the Party and/or Komsomol (Communist youth organization) cell. Problems at the regional level were the responsibility of the municipality and ruling (local Party committee), whereas party committees, local Party committees—i.e., regional committees—were accountable for the affected territory. Finally, nationwide problems were the responsibility of the Council of Ministers and the Politburo. Unless the problem was experienced nationwide, the legitimacy of the regime as a whole could be safeguarded by making some personnel changes. The fourth and final defense mechanism was suppressing the evidence of a social problem. Such evidence could not be allowed to become public, or even to appear. This explains the all-encompassing secrecy that was one of the most pronounced traits of the Soviet regime. Together, the last two defenses give us the tendency to limit the scope of any activities that social scientists deemed dazzling information and to prevent such information from becoming publicly available. And here come the sociologists who, by the very nature of their trade, were divulgers of secrets.

**A VERY BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF SOVIET SOCIOLOGY**

Statistical, positivist, and Marxian movements reached Russia soon after they emerged in Western Europe (Golosenko and Kozlovsky 1995). The further development of sociology in what later became the USSR was also largely synchronous with that of other countries. After WWI, the initial blooming of sociology was followed by a widespread decline (Shils 1970; Turner and Turner 1990). In Russia, however, this downturn ran far deeper than in most other countries as the even the word "sociology" disappeared from the official lexicon. Lenin used it inconsistently, both as a specific name for Comtian positivism (an anathema for a Marxist), and as a generic name of any social theorizing (he occasionally referred to Marx as the father of scientific sociology—a citation widely used by Soviet sociologists later). Unluckily for the term, Bukharin employed it as a generic name publishing “A textbook in Marxist sociology,” after his downfall, the word also fell into disuse and was reserved as derogatory term to describe “bourgeois teachings” (burzhuaznyje uchenija). Eventually, a group of professional critics of such teachings emerged at the Institute of Philosophy of the Soviet Academy of Sciences in the late 1940s, but its personnel never referred to themselves as sociologists (Batygin 1991). Historical-materialist philosophy was officially the only theory applicable to historical process.
Social surveys continued in the 20s and, to a lesser degree, the early 30s (Batygin 1998), but following the consolidation of Stalin's rule they virtually ceased. The turning point was, arguably, the “Statistician’s Affair” of 1937-1938. Although some of those involved in the surveys of the 1920s survived the repressions, all traces of their activities disappeared, and a new generation of empirical researchers started their work without any knowledge of their early Soviet predecessors. A revival of sociology began after Stalin's death and, in many senses, was a prototypical example of the homogenizing pressure of the “world-society” (Scott and Meyer 1994; Meyer and Schofer 2005). Its history began when the Academy of Sciences—a network of institutes in which most basic research was located (see Appendix for details on how the Soviet Union was organized)—received invitations from organizers of the World sociological congresses. The invitation for the Liège congress of 1953 was ignored, but the next one, for the Amsterdam congress of 1956, found a warmer welcome. In correspondence with their Party curators, academics argued that absence of a Soviet delegation at such an event could be regarded as a sign of Soviet intellectual weakness; they made a special point of insisting that having participants from Third-world countries exposed to advocates of capitalism from the US and Western Europe was dangerous (Moskvichev 1997). The academics had found the right arguments needed to persuade the Party officials. A delegation consisting of twelve philosophers attended the 1956 Congress, and Soviet representatives were present at them from that point on. Moreover, the USSR expended a great amount of effort to send the largest delegation as this was perceived to be a matter of national prestige. For many Soviet sociologists, this offered the only real chance to see the outside world.

However, Soviet participation in such events led to revealing consequences. Thus, according to the provisions of the International Sociological Association that gave a country the option of sending a delegation, a national sociological association had to be set up. This was the principal reason for organizing the Soviet sociological association in 1958 under the leadership of Yuri Frantsev, one of the central members of academic establishment of his time. He was the editor-in-chief of the main Party newspaper “Pravda,” the rector of the Academy of the Social Sciences attached to the Party’s Central committee, and one of the founding father of the MGIMO (the Moscow Institute for International Relations)—the elite Moscow diplomatic academy. It is safe to say that from that moment on, sociology officially existed in the USSR.

The creation of the Association was not enough by itself, however. Soviet philosophers appeared somewhat amateurish at sociological meetings and their ability to resist alleged assaults of the advocates of capitalism was feeble. More suitable candidates were needed for such a challenge and Frantsev soon transferred the Association to one of his students from MGIMO, General Joiner (1959), who, from then on, became one of the central figures of the Russian sociological establishment for more than two years. Others, and other students of Frantsev from the diplomatic school (Ishereya, Tzashchek, formed one of the first groups in the USSR that read Western sociologists extensively) and with a more positive attitude than their predecessors, who functioned as professional defenders of capitalist societies. Other groups emerged at approximately the same time at faculties of philosophy at Leningrad University (Yadov, Zdravomyslov, later Firsov), and Sverdlovsk University (Rutkevich, Kogan).

These early comers and the future leaders of the sociological movement formed a remarkably homogeneous group. They belonged to the generation of 1926-1930 and were thus peers of Bourdieu, Habermas, Foucault, Luhmann, Tilly, and Howard Becker. Most of them were children
of intelligentsia—professors of humanities, teachers, doctors, or prominent Party officials. Many were active in Komsomol, the Communist Youth Union, which was not surprising given that the philosophy faculties were widely regarded as a source of cadres for the Party apparatus. In their later reflections, they would define themselves as Communist true believers at the outset, incorporating the vision of socialist society as a rational project (see interviews in Batygin 1999).

After Stalin's death, however, there was a general feeling that the Soviet project had suffered a great distortion under the rule of a tyrant, and was in need of a radical renovation. These renovation attempts shaped the last period of enormous social creativity in the Soviet history, known as “the Thaw” (1955–1968). For many, including the young philosophers, that meant reviving the technocratic imagery of social engineering with the latest achievements of science. In this they were supported by powerful Party philosophers, like Frantsev, who were also looking for a new creed. The first Soviet sociologists can be regarded as the younger generation in their academic patronage networks and worked under the following arrangement: the bosses would provide them with political and administrative cover, while their dependents would produce innovative work for which the bosses could take credit. Such bosses included Lovchuk (patron of the Sverdlovsk group), Rozhin (patron of the Leningrad group), Rumyantsev, Fedoseev and Konstantinov in Moscow, and later the political economist Prudensky in Novosibirsk. The motives of the bosses who fostered sociology still remained subject to conflicting interpretations; the subsequent narratives on them fall typically into two groups according to the connections of the narrator to a particular figure. For example, the former clients of Frantsev describe him as a dedicated reformer and a secret critic of Communism, while others believed that he was an unprincipled opportunist interested in distancing himself from excesses of Stalinism.

Whatever the motives, sociology promised to bring new life to the legitimizing myths of Soviet society as a totally rational organization. That made it attractive and not only for the academic bosses. Making a career in the Party required demonstrating initiative that would be noticed by one’s superiors. For a provincial Party official that meant starting a campaign creatively invoking one of the grand themes of the Soviet ideology, ideally making its way into federal press or television. Risks were involved, however; the initiative could be considered un-scientific or something could go wrong in the process. Nevertheless, there was always the chance to get ahead, and for many there was no other way.

Given that American empirical sociology promised to make social engineering “truly scientific,” a phrase that was central to Soviet legitimizing myth, it was inevitable that sociology should spread and expand in the USSR. Sociology became a source of several Union-wide campaigns such as “scientific organization of labor” or “social planning.” Social planning was probably the single most important political achievement of Soviet sociologists. From its early days, almost all legal-economic activities in the USSR were engineered according to an all-encompassing plan developed by Gosplan. A group of sociologists based in Moscow worked on a paper of two Soviet émigrés who worked at Yadov’s group for a considerable time (Beliaev and Butorin 1982).
Leningrad advocated the inclusion of a set of social parameters into these blueprints, so that they regulated not only production and consumption, but also the rise of educational levels or stability of marriages. Each plan controlled at national levels as well as at the level of particular enterprises, which were responsible for social development for their personnel. A request to develop “plans of social development” was included in the new Constitution adopted in 1977.

When, in the 1970s, the Soviet Sociological Association published a directory of its members (Ossipov 1970), it listed 1426 individuals and 231 organizations, which made it the second largest national association at the time (after the American Sociological Association). This list of organizations gives an idea of the nature of Soviet sociologists occupied. 91, or 39%, of them were university departments (kafedra) and the laboratories attached to institutions of higher learning. It is worth noting that none of these departments had the word “sociology” in their name. 40 (17%) of the organizations were laboratories of the scientific organization of labor or social planning at industrial enterprises, 38 (16%) were institutes or divisions of institutes of the Academies of Sciences (Soviet and republican academies), 31 (13%) were centers of applied research attached to the profile ministries, 5 (2%) were centers attached to the Party and Komsomol divisions and the remaining 7 (3%) were attached to various organizations such as mass media, trade unions and artistic societies (see Appendix 1 for a very brief introduction to the Soviet governance).

Soon after rebirth of their discipline in the late 1950s and early 60s, Soviet sociologists reached the heights of public acclaim. Newspapers with the widest circulation sought to publish the latest results of their surveys, and their lectures translating the wisdom of their Western colleagues gathered crowds. Igor Kon recalled that his course on “the sociology of personality” (largely consisting of American interactionist social psychology) in Leningrad University was attended by over 1000 people. The big university hall proved to be unable to accommodate this amount safely, and Kon had to sign a paper embracing full responsibility for any possible consequences (Kon 1999). One wonders if Talcott Parsons, or any other American sociologist, ever gathered such an audience.

This development did not come problem free. First, as one might expect, it encountered opposition from some Marxist-Leninist philosophers, who regarded the rise of sociology as an encroachment on their territory. During the 1950s and 60s the spread of sociology met sporadic resistance from those criticizing, for example, any statistical analysis of survey data as an expression of “bourgeois positivism.” This kind of opposition was silenced, however, by the 1970s. A symbolic turning point was seen in 1971 with the publication of an article in the official flagship journal of Party ideology The Communist, which was authored by leading Soviet philosopher Grigorii Glezerman, the Party curator of academic philosophy Nikolai Pilipenko, and philosopher and sociologist of science Vladislav Kelle (Glezerman et al. 1971). This article, characteristically titled “Historical materialism – theory and method for scientific research and for revolutionary action” formulated the division of spheres of influence between the disciplines. Historical materialism was proclaimed the only true theory of historical development. Sociology was responsible for “concrete” empirical research instrumental in order to help solve the social problems of the Soviet society but ultimately demonstrating the correctness of the grand theory. Sociology thus became a sub-discipline of historical materialism, to use Abbott’s (1986) phrase. After that, no objections were raised against sociologists being denied the right to call their journal “Sociological issues” (Voprosy sotsiologii), which was customary for a fully-fledged discipline, and had to call it “Sociological research” (Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniya).
the empirical research, but macro-sociological theorizing, especially as far as comparison of socialist and capitalist societies was involved, fell mostly beyond the purview of Soviet sociologists.19

Thus, Glezerman participated in the campaign against Yuri Levada who carried out bold comparisons between socialist and capitalist societies in his lectures at the Moscow University. Levada was dismissed from the university, and subsequently the Academy's Institute for Applied Sociological Research, where Levada headed a department, became a victim of a political pogrom. An anonymous letter accused the institute of a loss of political vigilance, as was demonstrated by Levada’s lectures, a fall in publication productivity, and a “one-sided ethnic composition” (which can be translated from the idiom of the day as an employment of a significant number of Jews). This latter letter caused the dismissal of Yuri Theognost Shekter (Bergga 1999: 445-475). In a word, party investigations, the Bolshevik Anarchists replaced the former philosophers-patterns of sociologists-Bourgeoises, and a few leading figures, including Levada, had to leave the institute. This was the first-known, but as not the only, case of a “purge.” Similar campaigns followed what was called “prokoly” (political blunders), which occurred in Tartu, Leningrad and Novosibirsk in late 70's and early 80's (Firsov 2012; Zdravomyslova and Titarenko 2017).

Apart from individual repression, sociologists experienced certain restrictions of a less direct nature. Graduate schools (aspirantura) and PhD-level degrees (candidate of sciences) in “applied sociology” existed, but were extremely rare. Undergraduate education in sociology was unavailable until the beginning of Perestroika. What probably depressed Soviet sociologists most was a ban on launching a research center that could carry out nationwide surveys. Their studies were confined to singular enterprises, or to the audience of a newspaper, or, less frequently, to communities like a village or middle-range town (for example Grushin’s study of reception of mass communication in Taganrog) but were never at the level of a larger territorial or administrative unit. Finally, only during Tchernenko’s brief administration in 1984 were principal decisions made to launch undergraduate education at Moscow and Leningrad universities and to create an All-Russian research center for public opinion studies (WCIOM), neither appeared until the beginning of Perestroika.

Perestroika totally altered the landscape for Soviet sociology. This general political liberalization allowed those who had been repressed and dismissed from their posts to return in triumph to their previous positions and to head institutes and the governing bodies of the Association. Their former nemeses took their place as outcasts. Sociology faculties flourished in universities, especially after 1991 as a result of the conversion of former historical materialism chairs. Yadov headed the Moscow Institute for Sociology, the descendant of the Institute for Applied Sociological Research and a national survey center was created with Zaskavskaya as the first director, soon replaced by

19 There were some exceptions to this rule. One of them was comparative studies of science, which were carried out in a relatively free fashion even when the comparisons turned out to be unfavorable to the Soviet side. Interestingly, however, such studies were typically related to the area of sociology or a specific discipline named “Naukovedenie” (or “Science studies”). In a few remaining universities, science departments of sociology, or “Naukovednye” departments, published such studies. In October 1990, the Russian Academy of Sciences and a Soviet Ministry of Science finally acknowledged the need for such research by setting up a Commission for the Creation of a Science Institute. This commission was never created, however. The last Soviet Anti-Semitism fueled by the Six-days war was on the rise at this moment.

20 Arguably, Russia pioneered the use of various research performance metrics the usage of which in Russian universities could be traced to early 19th century. The Soviet Academy of Sciences paid tribute to this obsession.

21 Late-Soviet Anti-Semitism fueled by the Six-days war was on the rise at this moment.
Levada. Zaslavskaya also headed the Soviet Sociological Association. Their authority won in the previous period secured them leadership in the new times.

THE ACHIEVEMENTS AND THE TROUBLES OF SOVIET SOCIOLOGY

As one can easily see from even from this brief reconstruction, the entire development of Soviet sociology occurred in the shadow of the major legitimizing narrative of Soviet society. This narrative and the necessity to maintain the belief in it explains its emergence, the repressions it suffered from, and the recognition its leaders received.

We have already seen how the legitimacy themes surfaced in the story of the Soviet sociological revival. Soviet sociology as a whole emerged from the necessity to demonstrate that the Soviet Union was eager to implement the newest techniques of governance rationalization as well as that it was a leading player in the global intellectual scene. It also emerged from the demand necessity to expand the scope of spheres in which the planning procedures applied.

Following the path shown by Lenin required ongoing planning activity, such as the development of subsequent five-year economic plans. In Soviet Marxist, the economic base determined the development of the social and cultural superstructure, which meant that economic plans were considered the most important type of blueprint in the engineering of Communist society. Nevertheless, the ideology of a fully rationalized state also required expanding planning into new spheres. To explain some of its failures, the Soviet leadership had to recognize that cultural and social rudiments of capitalist society, if not dealt with in a rational manner, may impede the development of socialist economics and defer the coming of communism to the indefinite future. That meant that cultural and social spheres had to be rationally managed as well. Ideally, the plan should have covered everything, from the output of potassium to the transformation of family values. Soviet sociology's mission was to assist in what, to use Coleman's phrase (1983), was the rational reconstruction of Soviet society.

In the first stages of development at least, support of the sociological movement in the upper echelons of political elites were met with initiatives from below. At a lower level of the administrative hierarchy, a broad spread of applied sociological research was facilitated by the necessity to demonstrate that each individual organization was scientifically managed. As such demonstrations also contributed to confirming the legitimacy of the whole Soviet project, they were highly valued; providing them was the road to a career in the Party (Beliakin and Butorin, 1982).

The need to demonstrate the intellectual superiority of Soviet society over the outside world, as well as attempts to resolve its internal tensions, explain why the institutionalization of Soviet sociology was so rapid and successful.

The legitimacy needs of the Soviet regime explain, however, not only sociology's successes, but also its hardships. Any advances in the institutionalization of sociology fed sociologists into potential problems. Most obviously, sociological studies could raise doubts about the presuppositions Soviet politics relied on. For understandable reasons, research that directly tested propositions of official ideology were under particular intensive control. Nevertheless, some studies followed in this vein. Yadov’s and Zdravomyslov’s masterpiece, Man and His Work (1970), was directly aimed at testing the proposition that, as Soviet society moves toward communism, post-material incentives (such as having an interesting job) replace material ones (meaning salary). Yadov surveyed employees at a large plant in Leningrad and discovered that engineers were much less likely to be materialistic than manual workers. That could be interpreted as a proof of the maxims of official ideology. It was believed that highly qualified labor will replace unqualified labor in the course of the new scientific...
revolution, and, if the character of labor is responsible for degree of materialism, new generations of workers are likely to become more post-materialist than earlier ones. Yadov and his colleagues, however, walked on thin ice as they showed that, first, important cultural divisions existed between classes, and, second, working class members were further from the Communist ideals.

The episode ended well for Yadov and his colleagues, although not everybody was so lucky. An instructive example was the "Golofast affair" of 1983–85 in Leningrad (Bozhkov and Protasenko 2005). Valerij Golofast, a Leningrad sociologist and a younger colleague of Yadov, had prepared a book on the sociology of family that made relatively free comparisons between Soviet and US studies. The book was to be published by Nauka, the Academy of Sciences publisher who was responsible for ideological quality control. The reviewers at Nauka duly pointed out Golofast's mistakes. The criticisms were relatively mild, merely requiring the revision of several paragraphs, but Golofast ignored them,oversaw the whole episode from colleagues at his institute, and attempted to get the manuscript printed without alterations. When the truth surfaced, he was subjected to a detailed investigation and his expulsion from the Party was discussed. Ultimately, the punishment turned out to be not so severe—Golofast received an official reprimand, which meant that he was unlikely to be promoted or allowed to go to conferences abroad. His book was excluded from the publisher's schedule.

Independently of how well sociologists' findings or theorizing fitted in with the Party line, an important element was what intellectual sources sociologists relied upon in developing their reasoning. An overly intensive and uncritical reliance on "capitalist" sources in social sciences (except psychology, which by the 1970s attained the status of a natural science) was suspicious and possibly signaled that an individual did not recognize the superiority of Soviet science with its Marxist-Leninist foundations. Citing Parsons without ritually condemning the capitalist bias in his reasoning was a risky thing, and Levada suffered partly because he was not cautious enough.

The risk of coming into conflict with the guardians of Soviet ideology was the greatest in the case of researchers working at the Academy of Sciences who were responsible for basic research and for translating Western literature into Russian (knowledge of foreign languages and access to foreign books were severely limited). The next source of political troubles for Soviet sociology was equally important for all belonging to it, not only to those working at the elite research institutions. As an inevitable consequence of sociology's legitimization through its usefulness in bringing about the Communist society, sociologists were primarily experts on problems. As such, they were interested in the proliferation of problems to specialize on, were keen to ensure that these problems would remain active in the public consciousness, and were inclined to find potential threats in whatever subject they studied. The success of sociology was intertwined with shedding light on the dismal realities of Soviet socialism and this made sociologists an inevitable danger to the legitimacy of those who were responsible for the realities they studied.

For those at the bottom of the Soviet administrative hierarchy, sociology's potential as an opportunity was to be balanced with its dangers. Initiating a campaign that promised scientifically based improvement could led to one being noticed at the top. However, the research could also reveal problems that would then be attributed to its initiator. Active heads of local Komsomol at a
planted could launch a series of surveys of young workers to find out how political propaganda among them could be improved. In itself, such an initiative was highly regarded. But, if the surveys revealed that workers were completely indifferent to propaganda, and no improvement occurred after new measures were implemented, that would put the activists in significant danger (Rusalinova 2008); the lack of political consciousness could be attributed to their own failings as political agitators. This was generally the sober way for their superiors to interpret the findings. Sociological research was thus a threat for those responsible for the setting studied. The latter, knowing that they had no chance to relieve their superiors of the information on their performance after it appeared, often chose to prevent this information from emerging at all. The infamous Soviet secrecy often consisted not of classifying information which was publicly available in other countries, but of gathering none. Thus, after the damaging 1937 census, a new census was carried out in 1939 that demonstrated results closer to what the Politburo wanted to announce. Following this, however, no further censuses were carried out for 20 years, until 1959.

Carrying out sociological research in a given setting required collaboration at different levels: collaboration between the subjects researched, between those in authority in the research setting and those above them in the authority chain as well as those above the researchers. Research could be blocked by a refusal to cooperate at any of these levels. The higher levels of a bureaucracy could overrule the decisions of lower levels when they suspected them of trying to avoid their control. In practice, however, they were often convinced to do otherwise by the lower levels, disguising their own secrets as being secrets of the regime in general. If such arguments failed, the research could still be blocked, through either a tacit lack of cooperation or a counterattack.

An episode that occurred in Leningrad at approximately the same time as the Golofast affair is instructive. Boris Firsov, a friend and colleague of Yadov, was charged with the task of developing an "information system" at Leningrad obkom. Among other things, the system applied content-analysis procedures to accumulate information on complaints. The task gave Firsov an office at obkom and a direct telephone connection to the higher Party officials (vertushka), a symbol of highest Party trust in an individual. At some point, however, a secretary of Yuri Andropov, the head of Politburo, requested data from Firsov on complaints from Leningrad inhabitants about the state of the public health system. Having provided the data, Firsov's group was removed from the "information system" project the following day and the project closed. The fact that Georgii Romanov, the powerful head of the Leningrad obkom, had punished sociologists for making potentially damaging information on the state of healthcare system in his territory available to the Secretary General was, however, never mentioned. Instead, Firsov's carelessness in dealing with sensitive information in a totally different case was given as a pretext of his fall from grace (Firsov 2012). The institute's director, unhappy about Firsov's direct contacts at obkom, used the blunder to force Firsov to leave for another institute. The craft of sociological research in such a setting is indistinguishable from the art of political intrigue. One had to build coalitions consisting of agents belonging to different hierarchical levels who needed to be convinced that the benefits of a given piece of research (in value to belonging to real improvements or increasing international prestige, the chances to get recognition from one's superiors) outweighed its risks. The list of specific settings described by Soviet sociologists reflects the opportunities that existed to build such coalitions. The chances were best at the bottom of political hierarchy; the higher the level, the less political support they found.

Overall, the policy adopted by the Communist Party toward sociological research could be formulated in the following way. Sociologists were allowed to do their research at particular local
cases, as anything happening at a level of a particular plant could be dismissed as a “singular shortcoming” (edinichnyj nedostatok), probably together with the plant's director or head of local Party organization, so not discrediting the Soviet project in general. But the wider the scope of the research, the more general were its implications, as it meant that a higher level of the political hierarchy would be deemed responsible. The higher the level, the less incentives there were to initiate a research campaign. While a local obkom secretary for propaganda could see it as a chance for promotion, a Politburo member had no upward promotion aims. This explains why the institutionalization of sociology stalled at the local level, and why establishing a national survey center proved to be such a challenging task.

The stagnation of sociology in the 1970s and early 1980s, which a few observers noticed (Shlapentokh 1987), was probably the result of its reaching the limits of expansion. On one hand, the list of problems the Soviet regime was ready to recognize as existing had been exhausted and new groups within the discipline found no subjects to study. On the other hand, sociology was unable to institutionalize at the level that would allow it to be regarded as a fully-fledged discipline by the powers that be, the public, or sociologists themselves. As the mission of Soviet sociology was to assist the Soviet state in developing plans and evaluating performance, its structure was correlated with the structure of the state. Each research center was attached to a decision-making unit of a certain level in the administrative hierarchy, with the research center's status and profile corresponding to that of the respective unit. The scope of settings the center analyzed also coincided with the scope of authority of the unit to which it was attached. Thus, the institutes within the Academy of Sciences, connected to the Union ministries and to regional Party branches (obkomy), stood at the top of this hierarchy. They could study at the level of whole regions or entire industries. Even they, however, could not research such subjects as the class structure of Soviet society or public opinion of the Soviet people at national level. Without such divisions, the institutionalization of sociology was deemed incomplete. Sociologists striving to boost the importance of their discipline inevitably endeavor to enlarge the territorial scope of their research to the national level. That meant, however, conducting research for which the results could not be interpreted as characterizing “singular shortcomings.” Unable to expand upward, Soviet sociology also faced increasing resistance at the lower levels. As sociological work became more familiar, the attitudes held toward it by Soviet administrators became increasingly less enthusiastic. For latecomers, who did not initiate campaigns to introduce innovative methods of scientific governance but merely joined them following orders from above, there were no possible gains, only risks. Sociological studies were not stopped, but at most enterprises they were reduced to a certain number of safe, and often purely decorative, forms.

While the obstacles and risks in developing sociology in the USSR were enormous, so were the perceived importance of research. Probably the same vulnerability that made the regime receptive to sociological studies would also make it more vulnerable as a part of its administrative system to similar actions of social importance. In the USSR there could be no study of the Soviet state's intellectual foundations without studying the intellectual foundations of the Soviet regime's credibility, something sociological researchers were always eager to remind sociologists of. But while this status was a source of much trouble for Soviet sociologists, it also gave them the feeling of possessing enormous influence that was unheard of in other contexts.
This understanding of the significance of their research created a unique intellectual style, not fully intelligible for scholars living in another system of relevances (an example of such gross misunderstanding is Greenfeld, 1988). As elements of Western sociology travelled East, they were put to rhetorical usages not intended by their originators. One example will suffice here.

A trait of Soviet sociology that may surprise an international observer is the central role public opinion studies played within it. Rather than an industry at the periphery of the profession, public opinion polls were (and, to a certain degree, still are) widely regarded as perhaps the most important sociological practice. The stars of Soviet sociology strove more vigorously to become the heads of national public opinion research centers (Grushin, Levada, Zaslavskaya) than to receive professorships at Russia's most prestigious universities or to be elected a member of the Academy of Sciences. "The sociology of public opinion" is still a necessary course in sociologists' undergraduate curriculum and George Gallup may be mentioned in the same breath as idols of sociology such as Robert Merton and Paul Lazarsfeld. There are still no established terms in the Russian language to distinguish Gallup's polls from academic sociology.

The relevance of public opinion studies to the Russian sociological context was, in all probability, due to the fact that they disclosed one of the most sacred secrets of Soviet society. An essential part of the Soviet regime's self-description was its self-declared democratic nature, which was buttressed by the claim it enjoyed the unanimous support of all Soviet people (with the exception of a pitiful band of renegades, dissidents, and class enemies). Together with scientific authority, this democratic support was one of the regime's two major sources of legitimization. Public opinion polls, however, revealed that the regime was incorrect in many instances. At times they even showed that the majority disagreed with the course chosen by the Party. In a society deprived of any real elections that, nonetheless, witnessed constant references to the "popular will" as the ultimate source of authority, public opinion polls emerged to play the role as a substitute for plebiscites. As such, they have gained the most politically important role of science. For those who saw this as the major aim of sociological enterprise, pollsters naturally gained the stature of sociological giants.

This understanding of the role of sociologists was shared by international observers familiar with Soviet society. An essential part of the Soviet regime's self-description was its self-declared democratic nature, which was buttressed by the claim it enjoyed the unanimous support of all Soviet people (with the exception of a pitiful band of renegades, dissidents, and class enemies). Together with scientific authority, this democratic support was one of the regime's two major sources of legitimization. Public opinion polls, however, revealed that the regime was incorrect in many instances. At times they even showed that the majority disagreed with the course chosen by the Party. In a society deprived of any real elections that, nonetheless, witnessed constant references to the "popular will" as the ultimate source of authority, public opinion polls emerged to play the role as a substitute for plebiscites. As such, they have gained the most politically important role of science. For those who saw this as the major aim of sociological enterprise, pollsters naturally gained the stature of sociological giants.

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Ironically, this was their original intention in the eyes of people like George Gallup who saw polls more as a political instrument than a research technique. One of the preeminent historians of Soviet sociology, Boris Doktorov also wrote voluminous biographies of the founding fathers of the US pollster industry [Doktorov, 2005]. In a private communication with the author, Doktorov expressed the belief that the US pollsters stand much closer to Soviet sociologists than their academic counterparts. This arguably explains the pattern of progress in research techniques in Russian sociology that was much stronger in gathering quantitative data (e.g., in constructing scales), than in statistical analysis. Most articles in the Soviet era never offered more than frequency distributions. If the argument here is correct, they all had reasons to do so as it was the distributions that had the greatest unveiling value. A small band of those who cultivated advanced methods of analysis were highly appreciated and widely admired—as they provided evidence of the discipline's scientific status—but were rarely emulated.
Soviet academic establishment who was officially entitled to define realities of Soviet societies. For outside observers, as well as from the perspective of social sociologists themselves, the very fact of its emergence and relatively free circulation along administrative channels signaled important political changes.

The importance of sociology was also recognized among the Soviet educated public, which we have so far omitted from this discussion. Soviet people were surrounded by information screens but they were constantly anxious to know what lay behind them. One of the central slogans of "Solidarność," the Polish trade union that became a central force in overthrowing Communist rule, was "To tell the truth about the real situation in the country." This also expressed the feelings of many Soviet citizens. The initial burst of enthusiasm over Soviet sociologists, which made their leaders little short of media stars, was followed by a period of indifference during which sociologists were left studying local problems. This was, in turn, followed by a new wave of acclaim during the Perestroika years when national research became possible and the list of forbidden topics rapidly shrunk. After decades of struggle, Soviet sociologists ultimately prevailed. Soviet sociology ended in a burst of enthusiasm, not in a whimper of subservience.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This returns us to the original question of this paper: Why has the fame of Soviet sociologists persisted, while the specific fruit of their intellectual labors has almost been forgotten? The answer to this question consists of two parts, the first part pointing to the ambiguity of intellectual achievement, the second to the traits of Soviet society that favored certain forms of achievement over others.

First, there is a growing literature that questions the accuracy of the conventional opposition between "moral" and "purely intellectual" qualities of a researcher and the belief that great discoveries are predominantly a product of the latter (Shapin 1995; Lamont 2009). All involved in research know that any groundbreaking study is no less a demonstration of stamina and courage, as it is of imagination and breadth of vision. Some settings, however, tax character qualities particularly harshly, and they are particularly likely to produce figures whose standing as heroes fully eclipses their contribution as providers of facts or ideas. An example here are polar explorers: few people remember what (if any) were Scott's unfortunate expedition discoveries, but this does not detract much from Scott's fame.

The settings in which investigators have to deal with strong intentional secrecy are similar to polar expeditions in the sense that they are another area in which moral qualities become a dominant element of academic achievement. The discoveries of social scientists struggling with intentional secrecy are able to the revelation of investigation journalists, as with journalism, the major obstacles to disclosing intentional secrets are usually organizational or political, rather than intellectual. Facts are difficult to construct because of the need to overcome the active resistance of those who would like to suppress their construction. To deal with such secrets one needs courage, patience, diplomatic skills, and other qualities usually qualified as moral.

The success of the founding fathers of the Soviet sociology lay in their possession of these qualities and this, more than anything else, was what they were and are still admired for.

The second part of the explanation points to the specific characters of Soviet society, which was unique in the extremeness of secrecy present in it, and which thus particularly favored moral components of academic achievement over the cognitive. I argued above that this persuasion

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Serendipities

with epistemology open to all as it was in other countries was a by-product of its self-definition as a single rational project. The production of meaning tended to cancel the self-definition created variations define Soviet sociologists had to overcome. It also gave their work
characteristic of its historical context. The Soviet legacy is an object. Soviet society scientifically planned (as certified scientists) remains without weight or it could not be ignored
without jeopardizing the whole of this myth. Instead, they were regularly celebrated of this fact
probably by those few who imitated their studies. The reason they were so repressed was precisely
because what they said was considered so important. This into the 1980s apart from
many other relatively and twenty-first-century authoritarian regimes. While all non-democratic
governments are likely to produce some limits of expression, for most, the scope of such
expression is limited to highly specific issues, such as the levels of a party’s popularity. Moreover,
most do not sell that through advice by academic dignitaries. The teleological, part-
uristic, regime-related to the state, even for corruption and monetary deviations, and
getfully opened sociologists who tried to draw attention to Russia’s mounting problems. There is
little political incentive to attack the regime in broad terms. Sociologists often regard
their immediate audiences, but this came at the cost of rendering their work less important in their own eyes
or could otherwise be. Inflating expression would allow the former challenge of avoiding really
for-reach truths able to influence the legitimacy of the Soviet regime and possibly change the
country’s course overnight. The research taking moral qualities must only be also the un-
provoked by sociologists and their publics so far more important, than safer topics.

The problem with studies concerning international secrecy is that they, as well work by investigative
journalists, are more likely to produce simultaneous surveillance reports, attracting the valued
attention in a short time span, than having intellectual impact. Settings in which international secrecy
produce role models with greater than unusual causal tests, and moral examples for young
beginners with greater than theoretical generalization. For those who associate true
scientific and deserved shares in the social sciences with authorizing texts and ideas outlining their authors, it
would seem that Soviet sociologists were victims of the “law of nature” that has placed a
persistent role in Russian history in general. They were reduced by the ones with which they could
share an audience and a sense of self-importance, andDegraded to untautological such that would
learn more solid landmarks behind. Their efforts at fanning the veil of secrecy were unlikely to
muffle the political regime creating this veil. After an enormous change in the dominant form of
political regimes, the very nature of the Soviet sociologists’ advancement became
unintelligible.

This paper emerged from a talk given at a panel of the World Sociological Congress in Yokohama in
2014 called “Failed Sociologists and Dead Ends: in the History of Sociology.” Soviet sociology
quite obviously be considered a dead end. Its brevity outlined the narrowness of their research and
there are few people today who would claim to develop their theoretical legacies or who make use
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researchers themselves and their immediate audiences share, then Soviet sociology probably
represents one of the peaks of sociological history.

References

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2. My gratitude is to Christian Fleck, to whom the exciting idea of this session belongs.
3. For further to the recession of ideas, see his two highly skilled epigones colleagues who claimed developing the ideas
on the Soviet sociologists’ theory (Belotev, etc.) and its version (about, etc.) India.

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APPENDIX 1: HOW THE SOVIET UNION WAS ORGANIZED

Organizationsally, the USSR can be regarded as an extremely complex matrix structure consisting of a multiplicity of independent functional hierarchies. These hierarchies, however, were largely arranged according to the same set of principles, and intertwined at each successive level. The following is, of necessity, a very simplified picture that mentions only the agents appearing in our story.

The basic duality in this structure was between those belonging to the state apparatus on the one hand, and to the Party and Komsomol, the Communist youth league – on the other hand. Nearly all organizations providing employment, including industrial enterprises, universities, and research institutes were integrated into the state apparatus. The leading role here was played by the Ministry of the Economy. Party and Komsomol primary cells were created as organizations-employers. As such, party members among university professors had to attend meetings of the Party primary cell and to pay dues at the universities where they worked. The higher levels of the Party organization, however, were organized following territorial, rather than institutional, principles. All primary cells were subordinated to the district (raion) Party committee (rajkom), and the latter to the regional (oblast) committee (obkom) (sometimes as intermediate level of city committee (gantkom) (gantskom)). A strict hierarchy among the territorial units of the same class was present such that, for example, the basic educational institutions of any region were at the subordination of the oblast committee.

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three types of higher education institutions. The first of these was institutes immediately connected to the ministries, such as the MGIMO that was connected to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The second type was institutes connected to the Party central organs, such as the Academy for Social Sciences. Finally, there were major universities that represented the capital cities and received students from them, including children of the elites in Moscow, Leningrad, Sverdlovsk, or Novosibirsk. In addition to these two branches of the academic system, there was the applied research system that was affiliated with the ministries (upper strata) or particular enterprises (lower strata).