Public Sociology in Canada: Debates, Research, and Historical Context

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Introduction

In "For public sociology" and other essays, Michael Burawoy acknowledges that the national sociologies of countries other than the US (e.g., Brazil, Norway, South Africa) differ substantially from the US case. The balance and dynamics among the four types of sociology, the timing and phases of the historical development, and the challenges that face the discipline are some of the many ways sociology differs from country to country (2005a:20–22; 2005c:382–4, 2005d:423–4). Canada is a particularly interesting case because of its geographic proximity and strong economic and cultural ties to the United States. Canadian sociology has been deeply influenced by American sociology, but has always stood in an uneasy intellectual and political relationship to the US version of the discipline (Hiller 1982; Brym with Fox 1989; Cormier 2004; McLaughlin 2005). A serious discussion of the possibilities and challenges for a public sociology in Canada requires an analysis of the historical and sociological specificity of the Canadian version of the discipline, something we offer in this introduction as well as in the following papers.

We begin this introduction by summarizing the argument in Michael Burawoy's "For Public Sociology" essay to give Canadian readers who have not followed the controversy a basic sense of the issues at stake. We then briefly examine selected aspects of the history of Canadian sociology — English- and French-language — to highlight some ways in which Canadian sociology differs from its US counterpart. Next we review the historical context within which earlier traditions of "engaged" sociology in Canada developed. This provides a background for the papers in this special issue of the *CJS*. Since it is difficult to talk about the possibilities for a public sociology in the United States or Canada without an appreciation for the larger national institutional, cultural, and historical environment within which intellectuals work, we provide a brief overview of the Canadian public intellectual debate. Finally, we

give a brief introduction to the papers we have assembled here. They are diverse in method and style. Some are conceptual, others polemical, and a good number are built on empirical and historical research. Whatever their differences, however, they share a purpose — to remind us that sociology matters outside the walls of the academy and that we need to think carefully about its place in the public sphere. Certainly we think the papers gathered here give Michael Burawoy provocative and scholarly material to respond to in his essay that closes out this special issue.

Burawoy's Public Sociology Agenda

In his controversial 2004 ASA Presidential Address, "For Public Sociology," and a series of essays, commentaries, rejoinders, etc. written before and since, Michael Burawoy claims that sociology, particularly American sociology, is going through "dark times" (2005a:5). The world is likewise in dire straits. Over the past quarter-century, he argues, neoliberal economic political philosophies and practices ("market fundamentalism"), in particular the privatization of much that once lay in the public sphere under broad societal control, have exacerbated racial, class, and gender inequalities, reduced economic security, eroded civil rights, contributed to environmental degradation, and abetted the establishment of oppressive states in some parts of the world (2005a:7; see also Burawoy et al. 2004:125). The academy has not escaped the gloom; pressures brought to bear by government cutbacks and market forces have threatened "the very idea of the university as a 'public' good" (2005a:7).

To solve these problems, Burawoy says, we need to "resuscitate" the public sphere, to put "the social" back at the centre of the polis. In his view, this can be done only through a combination of open dialogue among and progressive action on the part of a range of "publics," many of which have been heretofore oppressed, unrecognized, and/or without voice. Sociology — in the form of *public sociology* — can and must play a pivotal role in this process. Sociology is a "science" and a "special moral and political force" (2005a:6) with the capacity to rouse, inform, even create public debate and action. Indeed, via a process of respectful mutual edification, it can help publics to create a more humane and collectively satisfying social world. As Burawoy puts it,

> We have spent a century building professional knowledge, translating common sense into science.… [W]e are more than ready to … tak[e] knowledge back to those from whom it came, making public issues out of private troubles,… thus regenerating sociology's moral fibre (Burawoy 2005:5).

At the heart of his argument is a set of distinctions among four interrelated and somewhat antagonistic types/faces (2005a:18, 24) of sociology: *professional, policy, critical,* and *public*. Briefly characterized, professional sociology is mainstream, value-free, scientific sociology; policy sociology is applied professional sociology practised at the behest of clients; critical sociology is radical, oppositional, academic sociology (Marxist, feminist, etc.); and public sociology is reflexively engaged in dialogue with publics outside the university. In the US, Burawoy suggests, these types of sociology are ranked in a "more or less stable hierarchy" with professional sociology clearly dominant (2005a:18; see also 2004:1611). Burawoy claims that the four types of sociology could/should develop a "shared ethos" and become "reciprocally interdependent" (2005a:15). Were they to do so, he says, they would derive "energy, meaning and imagination" (2005a:15) from one another — "develop a variety of synergies and fruitful engagements" (2005a:18) — while holding each other "mutually accountable" (2005a:17). Further, each would be able to avoid assuming its particular "pathological" form and contribute to the "flourishing" of the disciplinary enterprise. Alas, he laments, the promise of US sociology, his "normative vision" of the "best of all worlds" for the discipline, remains unrealized (2005a:17).

But Burawoy is no pessimist. There is hope for sociology and for human liberation — and it begins with the strength of *professional* sociology (2005a:6). Professional sociologists regard themselves as scientists and scholars who use sophisticated scientific techniques of data gathering and analysis to discover the nature of social reality, often seen as objective and external. Ultimately, they claim, the correspondence between social reality and what they know about it (empirical data, theoretical laws) can approach unity (2005a:16). The "instrumental knowledge" (2005a:11) they produce shows citizens and policymakers how to achieve the particular social, political, or economic ends they choose (2004:1605–6). Burawoy generally agrees with their claims. Drawing on Imre Lakatos (1978) and others, he describes professional sociology as an endeavour built on the pursuit of "multiple intersecting research programs" (2005a:10) which collectively produce the "true and tested methods [and] accumulated bodies of knowledge" upon which the discipline rests (2005a:10, 15; see also 2004b:105). Without it, he says, the other forms of sociology would lack the "expertise," "ammunition," "insight" and "legitimacy" they need (Burawoy et al. 2004:105; Burawoy 2005a:10, 2005b:318–9) to be convincing when they "present themselves to publics or powers" (Burawoy 2005c, 2005d:424).

Counterpoised to professional sociology is *critical* sociology, the "guardian" (Burawoy et al. 2004:105) and "collective conscience" of

professional sociology (2005b:321; 2005a:10). While it is not entirely clear what is and is not included under the label "critical sociology,"[1] there is no mistaking its purpose: to produce "reflexive knowledge" derived from a consideration of the "foundations" and value premises of mainstream sociology to address questions concerning the morality of human action (2005a:11). Indeed, unlike professional sociology, which claims to be value-free, critical sociology presumes to judge the relative merits of various moral definitions of the best of all possible worlds — in short, to be able to point the way to progress. In "For Public Sociology," Burawoy acknowledges that critical sociologists generally understand themselves to stand in "*opposition* to professional … sociology" (2005a:11; emphasis added; see also 2004:1611), but claims nonetheless that if critical sociology worked as it should, it could act in the collective interest by preventing professional sociology from assuming its pathological form: "self-referential" (2005d:424), socially "irrelevant," "mindless," and "obsess[ed] with technique" (Burawoy et al. 2004:105; Burawoy 2005b:323).

Professional sociology assumes this pathological form, he says, because its devotées become overly focussed on carving out a niche for sociology as a high-status science. When they take this path, they "insulate themselves from politics" and engage in what he calls "anti-politics" that tend to "conserve" the status quo rather than reform it in a positive direction (2004:1605; 2005a:5, respectively). Critical sociology becomes pathological when it becomes "dogmatic" and "sectarian," tied up in abstruse textual analysis, too academically focussed and too little concerned with providing an accessible public critique of the foibles of professional sociology (2005a:17; Burawoy et al. 2004:105).

1. In "For Public Sociology" he lists three examples of critical sociology: feminism, queer theory, and critical race theory (2005a:10). Elsewhere, he adds poststructuralism to the list (2004:1609). But feminism in its liberal variant offers no great threat to capitalism (neoliberal or otherwise), so it is not clear whether it could constitute "critical" sociology in the sense the other listed approaches do. This is especially the case since, in another essay, Burawoy places Marxism — the quintessential form of "radical sociology" — at the heart of critical sociology (2005b; see also the discussion below). Also unclear is the place that interpretive and postmodern sociologies hold in his scheme. One might reasonably claim that the "foundational" critique that interpretive sociology offers of the ontological and epistemological assumptions and methodological practices of sociology as a "science" make it a part of "critical" sociology (2005a:10, 16). But in "For Public Sociology" Burawoy refers to Dorothy Smith's use of Schutz's phenomenology as a use of "canonical" or "conventional" sociological theory. So it would seem it is not a part of critical sociology. This makes sense for at least some practitioners of interpretive sociology who remain resolutely convinced that they can and should remain value neutral in their attempt to understand human behaviour. Such sociologists would not fit into Burawoy's conception of an activist, progressive, social democratic public sociology. The same logic applies to postmodern theory. Postmodernism is critical of the ontology and epistemology of social science, but it is politically relativistic (if not nihilistic) and offers no support to Burawoy's social democratic political project.

The third type of sociology, policy sociology, is, for all intents and purposes, an applied professional sociology that is "beholden to the limited concerns of a client" (Burawoy et al. 2004:104; 2005a:9) or "the broader concerns of a patron" (Burawoy et al. 2004:104; Burawoy 2004:1608), making policy sociology the "servant of power" (Burawoy et al. 2004:104–5). Policy sociologists are directed to examine problems and find solutions according to the political preferences of those — typically governments and corporations — that can afford to pay for their services. This sets up a pathological dynamic; policy sociology and the mainstream sociology on which it is based are put at the service of the powerful, "distorting" the practice of the discipline (2005a:17).

Burawoy's description of *public* sociology, very closely tied to critical sociology, is more complex than the other three. It is also inconsistent. His initial formulation is straightforward. He describes it as akin to policy sociology — indeed, each can turn into the other (2005a:9–10) — in that it is practical, oriented to the solution of social problems. However, unlike policy sociologists, who have clients or patrons, public sociologists are involved with "publics" or specific interest groups. Public sociologists enter into "dialogic relations" (2005a:9) with these publics and the two groups then try to come to some kind of political accommodation so that solutions to the problems that one or the other has identified can arise out of respectful, open dialogue and mutual education (2005a:9). There are two "complementary" subtypes of public sociology: "traditional/elite" and "organic/grassroots" (2005a:8, 2004:1606). Ideally, he says, the former would "frame" the latter while the latter would "discipline, ground and direct" the former (2005a:8). Traditional public sociologists write widely read books, pen opinion pieces in elite newspapers and so forth. They "stimulate reflexive debate" about public issues, but have little real, long-term impact because they address (i.e., "talk at" rather than engage) anonymous publics of individuals, all of whom are well-educated but most of whom are "mainstream" thinkers (2005a:7). By comparison, organic public sociologists work closely with visible, active organizations, many (but not all) of which champion the interests of "counter-hegemonic groups" — disadvantaged or oppressed sectors of the population such as immigrants' rights groups (7–8; see also 2004:1607–8).

The inconsistency in his description of public sociology arises in his discussion of its political orientation. Near the beginning of "For Public Sociology," Burawoy states that it is *inherently* neither right nor left wing; in his words, it has "*no intrinsic normative valence*, other than the commitment to dialogue around issues raised in and by sociology. It can as well support Christian Fundamentalism as … Liberation Sociology"

(8–9, emphasis added; see also 2004:1608). It is two *other* features that make public sociology "public," according to Burawoy. First, it is committed to the use of collective, dialogic, democratic means for defining and solving social problems. Second, it requires an action orientation that involves sociologists quite directly in the nitty-gritty of political praxis. Later in the article, however, he changes his criteria for public sociology: only a "*critically* disposed" public sociology can "represent the interests of humanity" (2005a:25, emphasis added). It can perform this task by fighting the effects of "state despotism and market tyranny" (2005a:24) which earlier in the paper he tied directly to "neo-liberalism" (2005a:7). In fact, in all his papers, Burawoy claims that sociology has a special bond with civil society and can and must represent the interests of civil society against economics (which is oriented to the expansion of markets) and political science (which is oriented to the protection of political order). In particular, he says, "[c]ritical sociology … has the urgent task of clarifying the possibilities" of civil society and defending it against "encroachments" (2004:1610).

But it can do much more than that. In "The critical turn to public sociology," Burawoy reviews the development of the "radical sociology" of the 1970s, based first and foremost in Marxism, and argues that it aimed to create a "socialist sociology" which would displace the mainstream/professional sociology of the period. He notes that it failed in this goal but claims that, nonetheless, radical sociology was effective in challenging and changing the discipline at the time. And critical sociology remains crucially relevant today. Why? Because if public sociology is to serve humanity, it must "develop" and then act on "normative and institutional criteria for *progressive* intervention" (2005b:324, emphasis added). That is, through a respectful dialogic relationship with oppressed publics (2005b:323), it must, first, develop a set of objective criteria for measuring progress, and then help publics in their efforts to develop institutional structures and practices that would realize those criteria.[2] Only in this way can sociology realize its potential as the bearer of what he refers to as humanity's "universal interest." "Sociology's fate today," Burawoy writes, "depends on its connection to a vibrant civil society." More specifically, he says, "the interest of sociology coincides with the universal interest — humanity's interest — in containing if not repelling the terrorist state and the commodification of everything, that ruinous combination we call neo-liberalism" (2005b:319). In his estimation, only radical sociology possesses the capacity to undergird such a development. Why? Because radical sociology lies at the heart of *critical sociology* which in

2. Burawoy (2005b:325) mentions Archon Fung and Eric Wright's (2003) analysis of "empowered participatory governance" as a useful model.

turn constitutes the foundation for what Burawoy sees as a properly progressive *"social democratic" public sociology* (324–5, emphasis added).

A (Brief) History of Sociology in Canada

In order to engage seriously with the implications of the debate on public sociology in Canada, it is necessary to step back from our contemporary practices and look historically at the discipline north of the border. The history of Canadian sociology offers both close parallels and stark contrasts to the American case. The two most important parallels are obvious; Canadian and American sociology went through roughly similar stages of scholarly and professional development and arrived at similar destinations. Since the 1970s, American sociology and Canadian (especially English-language Canadian) sociology have looked much alike.

There are strong contrasts as well. First, Canada has two national sociologies — one French-language, the other English-language. Both are somewhat parochial or inward-looking, each largely ignores the other, and neither has much international profile. In addition, sociology in English-language and French-language Canada both developed on a much-delayed timeline compared to the American discipline (Forcese 1990:36–7).

English-language Sociology to 1960

Sociology first appeared in English-Canadian universities around the turn of the 20th century. Harry Hiller (1982) has pointed out that during this early period (into the 1920s) most of those who taught sociology in Canada, typically at small, church-affiliated colleges, employed imported British and American approaches which were generally religious and/or philosophical in style. Though no detailed studies of their careers exist, most of these "sociologists" appear to have been either Catholics influenced by the 1891 papal encyclical on social justice, Christian socialists, or — most numerous — advocates of the Protestant Social Gospel (Helmes-Hayes 2003b:18–25; Campbell 1983). All, in their different ways, were committed to the solution of social problems and the creation of "God's Kingdom" here on earth (Hiller 1982:8–12; see also Allen 1971; Campbell 1983; Cook 1985; Christie and Gauvreau 1996).

During the next phase of historical development, the two most important sociology departments in Canada were based at McGill University in Montreal and the University of Toronto. The first secular English-language department of sociology was founded by University of Chicago graduate Carl Dawson at McGill University in 1925 (Shore 1987). The famous American ethnographer Everett Hughes taught there for over a decade, which raised the profile of the department and began a rich

qualitative research tradition. The McGill department, while relatively small, continues to play an important role in Canadian intellectual life.

At Toronto, English Canada's flagship university, sociology got an earlier start, but with initially more modest results. From 1915–1927 Robert MacIver, a Scottish political scientist and head of the Department of Political Economy, professed the merits of a philosophically oriented form of New Liberal sociology (Clark 2003:29–30; McKillop 1994:498–513), but it never caught on. Not until 1938, the year his successor and fellow "New Liberal," E.J. Urwick[3] left, did Toronto make its first full-time appointment in the discipline: social historian S.D. Clark. Clark was a protégé of Harold Innis, the Head of the Department of Political Economy and Canada's most powerful social scientist. Neither Innis nor Clark had much use for the upstart American science of sociology (Hiller 1982:15–6, 45). The result was that until 1960, the most high-profile sociology that emerged from Canada's most powerful department of social science took the form of social history and remained out of step with developments elsewhere in North America.

Away from Montreal and Toronto, English-language sociology grew slowly, fitfully, and discontinuously until the late 1950s. Some universities did not offer their first course and/or make their first full-time appointment in sociology until late in the period (e.g., Alberta, 1956–7; Carleton, 1950–1; Manitoba; 1948–9; McMaster, 1956–7; Mt. Allison, 1955–6; Saskatchewan, 1958–9; Western, 1959–60). Others took these initial steps earlier, but waited until the 1950s to offer multiple courses (e.g., Alberta, 1955–6; Carleton, 1950–1; St. Mary's, 1957–8) or appoint more than one full-time person to faculty (e.g., Acadia, 1951–2; Alberta, 1958–9; UBC, 1953–4; Carleton, 1956–7; McMaster, 1958–9; Saskatchewan, 1959–60).[4] In fact, as of the end of the 1950s, only three universities — Alberta, McGill and Toronto[5] — had more than two full-time appointments and, as late as 1956–7, Canadian universities had made only 32 full-time sociology appointments (Hiller 1982:23, Table 3). As a consequence, most sociologists were "lone wolves" housed in multi-

3. Urwick was likewise influenced by the New Liberalism, but he remained an idealist philosopher, highly critical of the empirical, scientific nature of sociology (McKillop 1994:514–5; Moffatt 2001:30–45).

4. For a list of the English-language university calendars we reviewed (at Robarts Library, University of Toronto) see the Bibliography. Not all calendars were available for all years for all universities, but the coverage was well in excess of 80%.

5. Conventional wisdom has it that the second English-language department was established at Toronto in 1963 (Hiller 1982; Clark 2003; Hall 2003). However, according to university calendars and other documents, it seems that the University of Alberta established an independent department in 1961–2 under the direction of R.L. James (University of Alberta *Calendar* 1961–2; see also "University of Alberta Department of Sociology Self-Study Report: History of the Department," n.d.). Either way, it took four decades for a second independent department to come into being.

disciplinary departments (e.g., R.E.L. Watson at Acadia, C.W. Topping at UBC, and John Porter at Carleton).

The slow growth of English-language sociology makes it hard to characterize in general terms. Hiller claims that between 1920 and 1960, English-language sociology slowly distanced itself from the British model of the discipline, becoming more professional and scientific in orientation (1982:6–19). To the end of the 1950s, he writes, sociology remained "interdisciplinary" and "historical," committed to the study of social change and national "self-understanding" (1982:18–9). We would generally agree, but argue that before definitive claims can be made about the character of English-language sociology during the period it would be necessary to conduct detailed research on the generation of lone scholars that built the discipline between the late 30s and the early 60s, a topic we will leave for another time.

French-language Sociology to 1960

Numerous scholars have noted that both the *focus* and *nature* of Québec sociology have been different from the discipline in the rest of Canada (ROC) (e.g., Garigue 1964; Falardeau 1967; Nock 1974; Rocher 1992; Fournier 2001, 2002; Warren 2003; Gagné and Warren 2003). Most importantly, the focus of Québécois sociologists has never shifted from "the national question," though the interpretive categories framing their analyses of the issue have shifted over time — from "race" to "ethnic group" to "society" to "nation" (Fournier 2002:42). However, the nature of the discipline certainly has changed. Early on, Québécois sociology was Church-controlled. It focussed on two issues: the national question and social problems related to social welfare and social work. For decades, it remained largely moralistic, philosophical, and religious, gaining a foothold in the Québec academy in the 1920s and 1930s under the sponsorship of the Catholic Church. Not until 1951 did Jean-Charles Falardeau establish a more modern and secular French-language department at Univérsité Laval (Bedard, n.d.). In most respects the secularization, professionalization, and increased theoretical and methodological complexity and sophistication of Québec sociology matched developments in English-language sociology. Nonetheless, Québécois sociologists continued to use a different sociological point of reference, to employ a different style, and pursue a different agenda than their English-language fellows (Warren 2003:353–374; Gagné and Warren 2003:7–44). Although Québec sociology grew in the 1940s and 1950s, moving away from social problems and moralistic philosophy, thus becoming more like the discipline in the ROC, it continued its focus on the national question. Furthermore, unlike its English-language counterpart, it con-

tinued to take most of its cues from European (especially French) social thought rather than from American sociology. The only "counterfactual" here was the use made of Chicago sociology by followers of Everett Hughes at Laval (Fournier 2002:46–7).

After 1960

During the 1960s, both sociological communities grew and became professionalized very rapidly, as part of a massive expansion of Canadian postsecondary education (Axelrod 1982; Owram 1996; Hiller 1982:19–29). In English- and French-language Canada alike, sociologists formed new departments, hired faculty on a unprecedented scale, expanded undergraduate programs, founded graduate programs, established their own professional associations and journals, and gained access to meaningful government funding for research. Between 1956–7 and 1971–2, Canada's sociology community grew from 32 to 829 (Hiller 1982:23–6).

There was a price for this rapid expansion. To find qualified faculty, English-language departments had to recruit from outside the country. They hired large numbers of foreign nationals, mostly Americans, and Canadian sociology soon became US-oriented: American texts, issues, data, academic stars, and theories came to dominate. A nationalistic "Canadianization" movement — itself an example of public sociology — developed in protest (Hiller 1979; Cormier 2002, 2004). The highly contentious debate over Canadianization was just one of many similar developments which turned the discipline into a political minefield in the late 1960s and 1970s — often over the very questions Burawoy raises in "For public sociology." The premise of our special issue, however, is that the questions Burawoy raises about the necessity for a public sociology require a historical understanding of the specificity of the sociology profession and general intellectual and political context in any particular nation that engages in the global public sociology debate, something Burawoy suggested in his discussion of the need for the "provincializing of American Sociology." With this general historical periodization of Canadian sociology in mind, then, we offer the following overview of engaged/public sociology in Canada, mindful of the fact that the work and sociologists we survey do not always fit easily into the categories Burawoy specifies.

There have been five periods of public/engaged sociology in Canada: 1) 1880–1930, the Social Gospel (and similar forms of Christian meliorism); 2) the 1930s and 1940s, Fabian socialism; 3) the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, New Liberal sociology; 4) the 1970s and 1980s, feminism and the new political economy; and 5) most recently, a period of intense professionalism in the context of disciplinary identity crisis. We outline some of the most salient features of each period below.

ON POLITICALLY ENGAGED/PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY IN CANADA

1880–1930: Social Gospel and Christian Meliorism

As in the US, one of the driving forces behind early Canadian sociology — English- and French-language alike — was social betterment. This was true both outside and inside the academy. One of the most important of Canada's nonacademic protopublic sociologists was seafarer Colin McKay. A self-taught socialist and activist sociologist, between 1897 and 1939 he wrote voluminously and advocated tirelessly in various public forums on a wide range of issues important to Canada's working class (Lewis and McKay 1996; McKay 1996).

Also active during this period were proponents of the Protestant Social Gospel. The Social Gospel, to be sure, came in three versions — conservative, moderate, and radical (Allen 1971) — but all shared a desire to humanize and Christianize the social order. The proponents of the Social Gospel regarded the science of sociology as a political tool; while we don't know whether those within the academy had any political influence beyond their classrooms — there are no detailed studies of their careers — those outside the university seem to have had some clout. The Social Gospel participants used social survey data and very *public means,* including sermons, speeches, involvement in welfare agencies and government policy bodies, to push all levels of government to improve employment practices, housing, sanitation, and access to educational resources and facilities (Hiller 1982:8–12; see also Allen 1971; Campbell 1983; Christie and Gauvreau 1996; Cook 1985). Two particularly famous Social Gospellers — J. S. Woodsworth (the leader of the social democratic Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) and Mackenzie King (Liberal prime minister) — ended up in Parliament.

1930s and 1940s: Fabian Socialism

As the era of the social gospel passed, a different dynamic came into play. English-language sociology slowly adopted the American scientific model and its value-neutral political stance. More importantly, however, through the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, the tradition of "ivory towerism" combined with the efforts of meddlesome politicians, businessmen, and senior administrators to create a chilly climate for left-of-centre activist scholars (Horn 1999; 2006). At McGill, for example, American-style sociology received a warm reception early on and, in 1925, Carl Dawson established an independent department there. Dawson, a Baptist minister, held Social Gospel reformist beliefs and during the early years of his tenure at McGill engaged in some amelioristic activities in the Montreal community. As well, he oversaw McGill's Department of Social Service,

which the university closed in 1931. Despite this early dabbling in a form of protopublic sociology, Dawson held to the view that social work should be "scientific," based on sound research (Moffatt 2001:69–85), and remained more interested in developing science than applying it himself. This view was reflected in the highly professional, mainstream sociology program, rooted largely in Chicago sociology, he developed at McGill (Wilcox-Magill 1983; Shore 1987). With one notable exception, none of his colleagues became involved in public causes, though some (and some graduate students) engaged in reformist policy-relevant research as part of the Frontiers of Settlement Project or the McGill Social Science Research Project in the 1920s and 1930s (Shore 1987:162–94, 195–261, respectively; re the MSSRP, see also Irving 1986).

The exception was Leonard Marsh, an economist hired in 1930 to be Research Director of the MSSRP. Like Porter, Marsh received his training in economics and sociology at the London School of Economics (LSE). While at the LSE he became a vocal exponent of Fabian socialist (and to some extent, New Liberal) ideas (Helmes-Hayes and Wilcox-Magill 1993:85, n. 8 and 9). After coming to Canada, he joined the social democratic League for Social Reconstruction (on the LSR, see Horn 1980) and, as the 1930s and 1940s unfolded, developed a high profile as an activist — researching, writing, working on government policy bodies, and giving public talks. His mission, not realized until years later, was to convince the federal government to enact legislation which would establish a comprehensive welfare state (Horn 1976; see also *Journal of Canadian Studies* 1986).

Marsh, however, engaged in public sociology at a high personal cost. To senior university administrators and financial supporters from the business community, his "collectivist" beliefs and political activities were both wrong-headed and detrimental to McGill's image. The principal terminated his position as soon as he could (Shore 1987:265–6; Helmes-Hayes and Wilcox-Magill 1993:97; Helmes-Hayes 1994:463, n. 6). In the sociology department at Toronto, Innis had profound misgivings about scholars taking part in public political debates and activities (see Watson 2006:169–198 and *passim*). Such was his influence, combined with pressure from government and business interests, that only a handful of professors — and no sociologists — took up radical, reform-oriented causes (Irving 1980; Ferguson 1993; McKillop 1994; Watson 2006).

On the national scene it is difficult to make any definitive claims about the degree and kind of political engagement of Canadian sociologists during this period. Indeed, a review of English-language university calendars indicates that this should be seen as an open question. It is true that at some universities (e.g., Toronto, McGill, UBC, Manitoba) sociol-

ogy largely separated itself from social work, social welfare, and related efforts at reformism early in the period. But about half of these universities offered courses covering these and related topics for some or all of the period (e.g., McMaster, Queen's, Western). This was especially the case at the smaller, religion-based universities and colleges, Protestant and Catholic alike (St. Francis Xavier, Mount St. Vincent, St. Mary's, Mount Allison, St. Thomas, Acadia). Preliminary archival research also suggests that more individual faculty members than have made it into the discipline's collective memory may have been engaged in public, reform-oriented policy sociology and community activism during the period.

A good example is Coral W. Topping, the first (and only full-time) sociologist at UBC between 1929 and 1954. Topping, a Protestant clergyman, was a holdover from the Social Gospel era and a practitioner of some aspects of Chicago sociology (despite having received his PhD from Columbia). Throughout his career, he did practical, reform-oriented research on social issues such as transient workers, alcoholism, and delinquency and worked with a range of community groups — e.g., the John Howard Society, the Student Christian Movement, and the Social Service Council of Canada. His favourite cause was the progressive New Penology, an enlightened set of theories and practices then gaining popularity in the correctional systems of other advanced Western nations. Topping did research, engaged in policy work, took part in government commissions, and acted as a public advocate on behalf of the new penology for a quarter-century (UBC Archives, C.W. Topping Fonds). We suspect that further archival research would reveal that many members of this generation of "lone wolf" sociologists engaged in similar public sociology-type activities at the community level.

1950s, 1960s, and 1970s: New Liberal Sociology

Elsewhere in this volume Helmes-Hayes argues that in the latter part of the "reconstruction" era after World War II, a new kind of public/policy sociology, New Liberal sociology, became prominent in Canada. Its roots lay in the political economy and sociology of Leonard Hobhouse, John Hobson, and kindred spirits in England in the last decades of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th (Clarke 1978; Freeden 1978; Collini 1979; Allett 1981; Dennis and Halsey 1988) and was intimately tied to the development and application of Keynesian economics and the theory and practice of the managerialist welfare state. The most important practitioner of New Liberal sociology, according to Helmes-Hayes, was John Porter (1921–1979), author of *The Vertical Mosaic* (1965) and the most high-profile sociologist in Canada during the 1960s and 1970s (Brym with Fox 1989; *Canadian Review of Sociol-*

ogy and Anthropology 1981, entire issue). It was during this period that Canadian sociology finally took its place beside other fully institutionalized social science disciplines in the university system. We will say no more about new liberal sociology in this introduction, because the point is developed at length in Rick Helmes-Hayes' piece on John Porter. We remain convinced that New Liberalism is an important element of Canadian sociology's historical tradition of public sociology, with an important contribution to make to the contemporary public sociology debate.

1960s and 1970s: Marxism, Feminism, and the New Political Economy

Coincident with the expansion, rapid hiring, professionalization, and maturation of the discipline during the period of the 1960s and 1970s came problems and conflict. During this period, the Canadianization struggle came to a head and, in a set of related struggles, Marxism, feminism, interpretive sociology, and the new political economy carved out spaces for themselves in the university despite resistance from mainstream sociology and various political and intellectual elites (Drache and Clement 1985; Marchak 1985; Fox 1989; Armstrong and Armstrong 1992; Eichler 1992; Clement 1998). For years thereafter, the discipline remained a contested terrain with camps of scholars carrying various theoretical, methodological, and political flags into multiple battles.

Some of these struggles were inward-looking, concerned largely with the politics of the academy. The attempt to Canadianize the discipline involved efforts to hire Canadian scholars, and posed a challenge the hegemony of American professional sociology by incorporating Marxism, feminism, and the new political economy into the scholarly canon. Similar debates (saving, of course, the Canadianization theme) occurred simultaneously in US sociology (Burawoy 2005b). Equally inward-looking were related struggles at various Canadian universities over the democratization of departmental governance (re the sociology department at Simon Fraser University see Johnston 2005; re the situation at Toronto, see the essays in Helmes-Hayes 2003c).

Not all struggles/debates, however, remained within or concerned only the academy. Some were linked to societal public debates or problems and to larger social movements. For example, in English-language sociology, the effort to Canadianize sociology took place in the context of widely held fears of American economic and cultural domination of Canada and was part of a nationalist political movement that brought together numerous social, economic, and political groups (Cormier 2004). As we noted above, Québécois sociologists were even more public- and policy-oriented. Indeed, many were involved as public intellectuals in Québec's Quiet Revolution — efforts to secularize the univer-

sity, modernize the civil service, improve the condition of the province's working class, develop the modern welfare state, end English dominance of the province, and preserve the French language (Brooks and Gagnon 1988; Fournier 2002; Warren 2003).

Perhaps the best example of outward looking movements of the period, however, were the feminists, French- and English-language alike. In English-language sociology, their activities as researchers and advocates in and for the women's movement probably constitute the most successful instance of large-scale, long-term, grassroots public sociology in the history of the discipline (see Fox 1989; Armstrong and Armstrong 1992; Neis 1992; Reiter 1992; Eichler 2002; Creese, McLaren, and Pulkingham pick up this issue in their paper in this issue). Despite the fact that critical and public sociology enjoyed a period of substantial visibility and success in the 1960s and 1970s, it was unable to dislodge Canadian professional sociology from the centre of the discipline. As in the US, professional sociology dominates to this day particularly since around 1980, although the precise balance between the various types of sociologies in Canada is a topic of some controversy and research (see e.g. Brym and Nakhaie, this issue; Davies, this issue).

1980–2009: Professionalism and Disciplinary Identity

Since 1980, sociology in Canada has been a reasonably well institutionalized academic discipline, where the engaged and policy-relevant elements of our work are often subordinated to the professional demands placed on professors and graduate students by modern research-oriented universities and academic disciplines. Some politically engaged traditions discussed above remain alive and well in contemporary Canadian sociology (particularly the political economy and feminist traditions), both in Quebec and the ROC, yet professionalism and a new managerialism popular among university administrators rules the day in the modern academy. As a result, today's Canadian sociology professors and graduate students face far more "publish or perish" pressure than in the past. As well, in a new development, they must deal with enormous grant-getting, student accountability, and labour market pressures. These factors tend to lead to an ultra-professional culture — a sharp contrast to the movement culture that was widespread in the heady days of the 1960s and 1970s.

In fact, the contemporary debate about "disciplining" Canadian sociology reflects not only the new economic and institutional pressures that professors face today but also the particular tensions that a relatively weakly institutionalized discipline like sociology faces in the modern university. According to some scholars, Canadian sociology faces a

profound potential institutional crisis that requires a new emphasis on discipline-based scholarship and identity and an improved and more professional Canadian Sociological Association (McLaughlin 2005, Brym 2003). For others, the last thing that Canadian sociology needs is movement in the direction of American-style academic professionalism and an orthodox sociological identity (Curtis and Weir 2005). The international discussion fostered by Burawoy's efforts has particular salience in Canada, then, where questions about the survival and growth of the discipline have been hotly debated.

Public Intellectuals in Canada

Before introducing the papers in this special issue on public sociology in Canada we want to suggest some of the ways public sociology should be contextualized. In particular, we want to highlight the extended discussion in the US and elsewhere regarding the public intellectual. This debate provided much of the intellectual energy that Burawoy has capitalized on as he has promoted his exciting but controversial goal of raising the status and profile of public sociology. Controversy over the "decline" and "death" of the public intellectual came to Canada in the years after it entered the discourse of the American elite public sphere in the reviews of Russell Jacoby's *The Last Intellectuals* (1987) and, later, Richard Posner's *Public Intellectuals* (2001).[6] According to Jacoby, intellectual life in the contemporary United States was distorted by rising academic professionalism and specialization. From the perspective of this story of decline, the old-fashioned but admirably civic-minded generalist intellectuals of the past had been replaced, beginning in the 1960s, by specialized scholars who wrote about technical matters in tortured prose to a narrow, largely professional, scholarly audience.

From the late 1980s onward, the narrative of the decline of the public intellectual was adopted widely in the United States and around the world. As Eleanor Townsley argued, the debate about the alleged death of the "public intellectual" became influential among journalists, academics, and some other elements of the political class in the United States precisely because Jacoby's questions touched on core issues such as the role of the university in modern society and the political struggle between "left" and "right" in electoral politics and cultural life (Townsley 2006). Since the turn of the 21st century, this language about the "public intellectual" has spread internationally, significantly shaping

6. Here we will be borrowing some phrases and sentences from a draft article on the "Public intellectual debate in Canada" by Eleanor Townsley and Neil McLaughlin.

elite debates about the role of ideas and scholarship in Australia, Great Britain, the European Union, and beyond. The public sociology debate can be read from one angle, then, as an attempt to raise some of the same intellectual and political issues that Jacoby addressed, but inside the discipline of sociology.

It is useful to think about both the public intellectual and the public sociology debates using Bourdieu's analysis of the logic of fields, a strategy that gives us a way to identify the interests of the major players involved in such debates (Bourdieu 1975; Swartz 2003). From Bourdieu's perspective, debates about both public intellectuals and public sociologists are always in part "classificatory struggles" as well as disputes about important and contested political, professional, and cultural stakes. In this case, they are struggles to define the appropriate institutional and political relationships between knowledge and power in the United States and Canada. Thus, instead of debating who is or is not a public intellectual, as journalists or pundits might, field analysis poses the more sociological question: what is at stake in debates over public intellectuals in Canada? It is important to address the question of what constitutes public intellectualism in public sociology but we do not want to focus exclusively on such definitional battles.

This is why we do not anywhere in our introduction try to define "who is a public intellectual," or "public sociologist" or "test" empirically the thesis that these social types have died in Canada. We are even less interested, it must be said, in engaging in the long-standing Canadian tradition of trying to discern why English Canada has so few intellectuals (Brym and Myles 1988). Public intellectuals have existed in English Canada in the past (see, e.g., Horn 1986; Massolin 2001), and we believe they exist today. Ironically, modern cultural institutions create new candidates for this social role even as tensions among journalists, academics, politicians, and political activists give rise to the debate that the public intellectual is in decline. As Stefan Collini, English historian and literary scholar, has argued, attempting to measure whether or not public intellectuals are dying as a social type is not very useful (Collini 2006).

Perhaps a more productive approach is to examine the contours of the debate about the decline of the intellectual. Thus, for Collini, the central puzzle is why there is perennial debate about the decline or absence of intellectuals. In the English case, there exists a paradox (Collini 2006). Despite the existence of a rich tradition of public intellectualism and social criticism, there also exists a deeply held and long-standing cultural belief that only the French have "real intellectuals." Collini calls this "Dreyfus envy." But Collini claims that this belief is mistaken; "the

decline of the public intellectual" is a myth that most national traditions outside France buy into, despite the absence of evidence for it. Indeed, according to Collini, debates about the social roles of intellectuals recur in advanced capitalist societies not because intellectuals grow fewer in number or because their powers wane but because of structural contradictions in modern cultural and intellectual life. Specifically, modern capitalist societies combine increasing specialization in institutions of knowledge with an obsession with celebrity in broader intellectual and cultural life. The result is contradictory expectations and irresolvable debates about the social role of the intellectual. The public intellectual debate is only the most recent example of a debate created by cultural and institutional tensions and contradictions inherent in modern societies. For Collini as for Townsley, then, the public intellectual is only a new gloss on long-standing tensions about the role of intellectuals in society. In our view, it is useful to think about the debate on public sociology in a similar way.

That said, we realize it is inevitable that at least some effort can and must be expended on thinking about who might count as a public intellectual or sociologist. In their thoughtful contribution to a symposium on "The professionalization of intellectuals" which dealt extensively with the problem of defining intellectuals and public intellectuals, Robert Brym and John Myles defined public intellectuals as those who contribute to public debates "in their capacity as *scholars*" by presenting their work "to a broad educated public [in a manner that] serves … to define the issues of the day" and challenges conventional, and/or "official" versions of these issues (1989:445). According to such a view, once a scholar leaves the academy for politics, for example, s/he ceases to count as a public intellectual because s/he no longer presents her/himself as a scholar.

But did Canada's great public intellectual, former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, bracket or leave behind his training as a legal scholar when he became a politician? We think not. Trudeau's cerebral style as a politician helped him carve out a special — lamentably, all too rare — category of public intellectual, i.e., an intellectual who plied his trade while simultaneously serving as a politician.

Academics who enter the civil service create a similar puzzle. Did O.D. Skelton cease to be an intellectual when he left Queen's University for the federal civil service in 1920s? Or did he become another category of public intellectual, one more powerful in the public sphere than any university professor ever could be, precisely because he had direct access to the levers of power? Barry Ferguson's account of the reasons Skelton gave for leaving the academy to join the Ottawa bureaucracy

stress Skelton's desire to have an impact in debates on public policy and government practices — precisely in his capacity as an academically trained expert in economics. At the time, it was a role that the academic culture of Queen's University — and the rest of the Canadian university system — denied him (Ferguson 1993). We might think of the cases of Trudeau and Skelton in another way. Rather than striking them off the rolls of public intellectuals or public academics because they left the academy to enter the hurly burly of politics — to effect change in the corridors of power — might we not count such academic "expats" as especially significant public intellectuals?

The question of the size or breadth of the audience a public intellectual is supposed to reach also raises another question. How wide an audience is necessary before a scholar is referred to as a "public intellectual" or public sociologist? Does the audience need to be national? Regional? We think not. A community-based organic intellectual working with and on behalf of homeless people, listening to their problems and concerns, raising consciousness among citizens, social agencies, police, and local politicians would seem to fit the criteria of public sociologist perfectly well. Their efforts at the community level to develop best practices suggested by social scientific research and then give research-based talks to various audiences would qualify either as public intellectual or public sociological work. Certainly they do for Burawoy.

This is important in the history of engaged/public sociology in Canada because only some of the scholars to whom we refer below as public sociologists had the entire nation for an audience. One who did was the Fabian Leonard Marsh, an advocate for the modern welfare state we discussed earlier in this introduction. But other scholars worked with regional or community-level publics to effect positive social change. C.W. Topping, a sociologist at UBC 1929–1954 worked with a variety of local groups on a range of local social problems in Vancouver, suggesting that we need to think about public sociologists in as wide and broad a way as possible, something we think is consistent with Burawoy's general argument.

Yet another problem in defining a "public intellectual" or "public sociologist" concerns the issue of involvement in policy formation and application, and here we part somewhat with some of Burawoy's stated emphasis. Burawoy's conception of the public sociologist acknowledges the synergy that can occur between public and policy sociologies. We would want to put more analytic focus on a range of comparative questions. In Canada, the policy/public divide raises an especially difficult point, for at one important juncture in our nation's history Burawoy's categories do not work well.

Scholars have shown that in the "reconstruction" era after World War II, Canada shifted to a "positive" form of state involvement in the economy and civil society (Keynesianism and the welfare state). In Canada, these changes were driven not by academics or politicians but by senior civil servants. Though popular opinion was favourable to the postwar extension of a managed economy and the welfare state (Owram 1986:261; Finkel 1997:6), politicians remained reticent or hostile. It was New Liberal economists working in the federal civil service — Ottawa "mandarins" such as O.D. Skelton, W.A. Mackintosh, W.C. Clark and R.B. Bryce — who, along with public intellectuals such as Leonard Marsh, proposed and pushed the interventionist, managerialist policies eventually adopted by government. But by Burawoy's reckoning, these men were not public intellectuals for obviously they did not work publicly. They did not argue the merits of their progressive liberal vision of society in scholarly journals, popular magazines, newspaper articles, or political speeches, and thus did not belong to or champion the interests of any specific interest group-type "public." They were civil servants who worked in government offices in Ottawa separate from such activities and were effective precisely because their efforts were *not* public and because they often had direct access to politicians.

Nor, it is important to emphasize, were they "policy types," working solely at the *behest* of clients — in this case understood as the Government of Canada. In fact, in considerable measure, they reversed that dynamic, adopting or developing progressive ideas and policies (Keynesianism, the welfare state) which they then sold to politicians in the course of cabinet discussions, Liberal Party roundtables, and private meetings (Ferguson 1993; Granatstein 1982; Owram 1986). For this reason, we believe Burawoy's categories need rethinking in the Canadian and, possibly, other contexts. Bearing these complications in mind, we take this to be an illustration of the particularity of Canadian sociology — and Canadian public sociology more specifically. Perhaps in Canada where there is a strong left liberal/socialist third party presence, and where there is a more collectivist political culture — a clear, long-term preference for the interventionist state — it is possible *at times* (e.g., the reconstruction period) for progressive intellectuals in the federal civil service to do what in the US requires public intellectuals operating in civil society. We will leave these questions for another time and a larger discussion, and now introduce the papers and thank those who made this special issue on public sociology possible.

The special issue begins with two polemical pieces. Gillian Creese, Arlene Tigar McLaren, and Jane Pulkingham, while applauding Burawoy's efforts to raise the profile of public sociology, want to make fem-

inist concerns and feminist sociology more central to the debate. They outline a number of ways in which, in their view, feminist sociology does not fit into Burawoy's four-fold typology and review some concrete examples of collaborative, interdisciplinary, feminist public sociology that they have carried out. Their purpose in doing so is to make feminist sociology more central to public sociology and to give more "clarity and substantive meaning" to Burawoy's notion of public sociology, in particular in the Canadian national context. Scott Davies also wants to ground the debate in the Canadian disciplinary context, but he comes to conclusions very much at odds with Creese, McLaren, and Pulkingham. For Davies, the strength of the critical tradition in Canada relative to professional sociology is one of our major problems since there exists, in his view, a very real danger of two incommensurable traditions existing in one set of disciplinary and professional institutions and organizations. From this perspective, Burawoy's call for a critical and reflexive public sociology risks undermining the project of "going professional" that Davies sees as central to the long-term intellectual growth and institutional stability of Canadian sociology within contemporary research universities.

With these two contrasting normative pieces introducing the issues at stake in the public sociology debate in Canada, we move to five different pieces that lay out conclusions for us to consider based on scholarly, empirical, and contextual work. Robert Brym and Reza Nakhaie have written what is, to the best of our knowledge, the first empirically based study of public sociology based on a random survey sample, allowing us to move towards testing Burawoy's theories with a detailed case study of public academic work among Canadian professors. In addition to providing detailed information about the attitudes of Canadian professors in relation to the issues involved in Burawoy's account of public academic work, Brym and Nakhaie highlight both the role of teaching and the importance of book writing in the public sociology project. Anne Mesny takes up a very different issue, asking the fundamental question: "What is it that sociologists think they know that lay people/publics do not know?" Her overview of that question is especially interesting because she writes from a very unusual institutional location. She teaches sociology and management courses in a business school. She argues that there are four different conceptions of the differences between sociologists' and nonsociologists' knowledge and assesses the implications of these differences for the practice of public sociology. Returning to some of the empirical issues raised by Brym and Nakhaie, Lisa Kowalchuk and Neil McLaughlin offer an empirical study of "op-eds" in Canadian newspapers, while Zygmunt Mochnacki, Aaron Segaert, and Neil McLaughlin compare book writing among sociologists, economists, and

political scientists in Canada. These two empirical contributions suggest sociologists write fewer books and opinion pieces than other comparable disciplines. They also suggest a need for more empirical research to better understand some of the sociological issues involved in public sociological activity. Avi Goldberg and Axel van den Berg contribute to just this empirical agenda by examining the subfield of social movements scholarship in Canadian sociology. There is no easy way to draw a clear boundary between empirical analysis and opinion, of course, and in their essay Goldberg and van den Berg highlight some of the concerns about public sociology raised by Davies in this volume, and Jonathon Turner (2005) and Steven Brint (2005) in the United States. Will public sociology, particularly a left-wing activist version of the project, undermine the scientific standards and credibility of the discipline? And how does this perennial debate play out in the Canadian context? A serious discussion of these issues surely requires a historical analysis of sociology in both Québec and in the ROC.

It is thus appropriate that the last two contributions to the special issue are historical. One deals with the history of French-language sociology, the other with English-language sociology. Jean-Philippe Warren reviews the history of French-language sociology in Québec from the late 19th century on. Warren begins by putting a different theoretical "spin" on Burawoy's conception of public sociology. He then uses this framework to demonstrate that the problem of public sociology, i.e., balancing what he sees as the three fundamental dimensions of sociology — professional, descriptive, and political — have been "solved" in very different ways by various schools of sociology in Québec over the past 100-plus years. The final paper in the special issue, written by Rick Helmes-Hayes, examines the writings of John Porter, English Canada's most famous sociologist. Helmes-Hayes argues that Porter developed and employed a brand of "engaged, practical intellectualism" rooted in the British New Liberal sociology and political philosophy of the late 19th and early 20th centuries that not only anticipates many aspects of Burawoy's public sociology but remains relevant today.

The editors would like to extend a special thanks to the reviewers who helped us put together this special issue. Without their generous and expert help, often extended on short notice, we would have been unable to do our job. We also owe a special thanks to Michael Burawoy himself, who has generously agreed to write a response to the contributions to this special issue. Burawoy's commitment to sociology is inspiring, and we can only commend his initiative in stimulating and engaging in a truly global dialogue about the future of public sociology that serves

to provincialize the American version of our craft as only one possible form of the discipline.

Last, but not least, we owe a debt of gratitude to Jeffery Cormier, the original editor of this special issue. Canadian sociology lost Jeff Cormier's original voice and scholarship in September 2007, but not before he pulled together the vision for this special issue based on his own deep commitment to an indigenous, engaged, and professional Canadian version of the discipline. Cormier's study, *The Canadianization Movement* (2004), is an often-cited contribution to the study of social movements as well as an addition to the literature in the history of Canadian sociology. That is appropriate given the book's scholarly strengths, and Cormier's disciplined and scholarly commitment to a Canadian sociology rooted in its own unique national context and contributing to national development and well-being. Jeff wanted to see a volume that discussed and debated public sociology in Canada without *a priori* commitment to either the professional, critical, policy, or public versions of the discipline. We have tried to respect Jeff's commitment to diversity, intellectual openness, high professional standards, and principled positions in the way we put together the volume. We look forward to seeing a larger debate about public sociology ensue in Canada in ways that will both honour Jeff's memory and contribute to the strengthening of the discipline he loved.

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University Calendars

Acadia, Alberta, UBC, Carleton, King's College (Dalhousie), Manitoba, McGill, McMaster, Mount Allison, Mount St. Vincent, Queen's, St. Francis Xavier, St. Mary's, St. Thomas, Saskatchewan, Sir George Williams, Toronto, United (Winnipeg), Western.

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