

## **A Sociological Manifesto for a Nonviolent International Order**

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Sociologists and Political Scientists without borders (Socpolsf; Sociólogos y Politólogos sin fronteras) has posted The Manifesto of 22/09/02 on its website. It states:

Sociologists and Political Scientists without borders deplore the belligerence and arrogance of the political leaders of a country that was the first constitutional democracy, whose Constitution they are subverting.

Socpolsf join the NGOs and INGOs, pacifist movements, and popular initiatives that are today asking for a just, nonviolent international order maintained through democratic authorities.

Socpolsf make a call to Social Scientists to assume our responsibility in nourishing the conscience of citizens in that respect.

In one sense, this statement does not require elaboration. It simply affirms efforts to achieve cooperation to promote nonviolence and a peaceful international order, and protests that the United States is hindering these efforts. However, it is an important document for Sociologists in three other respects.

First, the 22/09/02 Manifesto was issued in Spain jointly with similar declarations made by other Spanish NGOs, which illustrates how Sociologists can play a distinct role in civil society.

Second, it shares with Doctors without borders and Journalists without borders the conviction that the needs of peoples are not defined by their memberships in particular groups or nations.

Third, in this particular context, it shows that it is possible to advocate peace and speak out against powerful nations from a position that is grounded in the tradition of Sociology. In order to clarify this third point, we briefly summarize the principles that were adopted at Socpolsf's founding in Madrid on 29 June 2001, and then draw on the discussions at the 2002 ISA Brisbane conference and subsequently posted on its website.

The founding document of 29/6/01 invites Sociologists and Political Scientists “to employ their professional capabilities in the service of countries and groups that lack resources to measure and evaluate their circumstances.” Socpolsf objectives are: “helping to clarify situations of dependence and/or oppression,” and making a “contribution to the globalization of human rights... to identify targets of study and action and to invest some time and energy to organize projects where it can apply professional skills.”

Socpolsf, in other words, shares with other organizations, such as Doctors without borders, a commitment to document and speak out against causes of oppression, but it does so by drawing from sociology’s own traditions. We observe the following:

First, the origins of sociology can be traced to critical curiosity, and throughout its history people from many backgrounds, and with different interests and levels of education, have contributed to sociological knowledge and understanding.

Second, an objective of Sociologists has always been to question the status quo and to challenge the interpretations of powerful elites.

Third, Sociologists have never been particularistic. That is, there is no Spanish, French, or Anglo-Saxon sociology, and Sociologists everywhere share the same conceptions about the sui generis nature of power and oppression. .

As corollaries to the above and in the context of globalization processes; Socpolsf adopts the following principles:

First, the critical tradition of sociology now needs to focus on the growing inequalities in resources, rights, and well-being between developed, western peoples and formerly colonized, Third World peoples.

Second, Sociologists do not have visions, doctrines, or reform plans for others. This is particularly important as sociologists relate to peoples in the Third World, whose autonomy and freedom have been denied by colonists, missionaries, undemocratic political leaders, reformers, and capitalists.

Third, Sociologists have the responsibility of taking initiatives in working with and serving peoples in the Third World as they too wish to exercise their rights as citizens rather than subjects, to turn dictatorships into democracies, and to have the same protections from multinationals that people from rich nations have.

The Manifesto of 22/09/02, though penned within a distinctly European tradition of dissent, may be generally useful. In our view, advocating peace and denouncing aggression is not political or partisan, but rather, sociological. That is, recognizing that the highest priority for global order is to reduce global inequalities, the position of Socpolsf is that war and its ensuring instabilities would impede working towards that goal.