

**A Public Sociology for the Mainstream: Jean Martin's
Sociology for Nation-building**

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A Public Sociology for the Mainstream: Jean Martin's Sociology for Nation-building¹

The pursuits of the social sciences need not be undertaken with the public good in mind, but in practice they often are. Public purpose is obvious in policy research, and equally in critique that informs democratic debate of the issues of the day. Even as knowledge for knowledge's sake, social science may serve a public interest with ideas and argument that enlarge a society's capacity to reflect on itself.

Recent calls for a revitalised 'public sociology', led most notably by Michael Burawoy (2007), aim to inspire sociology to orient itself to the public good and democratic process. Burawoy (2007: 28) describes public sociology as sociology that 'brings sociology into a conversation with publics, understood as people who are themselves involved in conversation'. Frances Fox Piven (2007: 158) defines it still more broadly, as 'the uses of sociological knowledge to address public and, therefore, political problems'. Supporters of public sociology see it as a return to the discipline's roots in the critique of industrial society and movements for social reform. Like earlier discussions of the decline of the public intellectual (Jacoby 1987; Posner 2001), much of the advocacy of public sociology sees contemporary social science as betraying that earlier tradition. The career structure of contemporary academe, it is argued, has drawn social sciences away from engagement with the public and into debates within narrow academic specialties. The result, it is claimed, is a professionalised social science pursuing questions of disciplinary rather than public interest and responding in terms dominated by arcane theory and technical matters of method and measurement.

Arguments for such a public sociology have become unhelpfully caught up in where it sits among the existing forms of the discipline. The critique of professional sociology implies an opposition between sociology as institutionalised in elite university departments and as engaged in the social and political world outside. Burawoy (2007: 31-34) himself aspires to a complementarity among public sociology, policy sociology, professional sociology, and critical sociology. In this schema, policy sociology refers to research framed by existing policy agendas, professional sociology to the empirical pursuits of the academic discipline, and critical sociology to abstracted theoretical dispute. This categorisation appears to have offended almost everybody, and perhaps rightly so. More importantly, it obscures more interesting questions about the conditions under which the pursuits of social science and public purpose may be joined.

This paper examines a conception of sociology that refused distinction between intellectual and public purpose, as developed in the work of Jean

¹ This paper is part of a larger project, *Jean Martin and the Social Sciences in Australia*, being conducted by Peter Beilharz, Trevor Hogan, Sheila Shaver and Amanda Watson. The investigators wish to acknowledge the Australian Research Council for grant DP 0450974 making the research possible.

Isobel Martin. This conception was a product of its time and place: post-war Australia, where sociology was belatedly established as a university discipline (Germov and McGee 2005) only in the 1950s. Its circumstances were propitious: the policy needs of a late-modernising nation called for expertise of a new kind, while programs for population growth through mass immigration presented the budding social sciences with a kind of natural experiment. It offered a public sociology that was also a sociology of the mainstream, in which an orientation to issues on the public agenda did not seem to require compromise in the sophistication of its perspectives or a blunting of its argument. The lessons that may be learned from this Australian experience for a vital public sociology lie in the conditions of its possibility, but also in the limits that came to be applied to it.

The paper points to four aspects of these conditions. The first concerns the character of the social science itself. Wallerstein points to the stance taken towards value neutrality as its most fundamental dimension, with inherent tensions between value-neutrality and organic engagement that are not easily reconciled. As he observes (2007: 171), '...it is almost impossible to be honest in the position of an organic intellectual and it is equally almost impossible to be honest in the claim of being value-neutral'... His own solution requires the social scientist to work through issues of intellectual analysis, moral evaluation and political synthesis.

A more material aspect is concerned with the institutional foundations of social science in giving opportunities and setting constraints on social investigation and expert comment. This concerns not only access to resources for costly projects but also auspices conferring legitimacy to social inquiries, including the terms on which social scientists work with government. Thus Fox Piven (2007: 163) enjoins sociologists to reconsider 'the too-comfortable pattern of treating government as our patron' that she believes sociologists have fallen into. For Patterson (2007) the issue is not whether or not a sociologist works for a client, but the intellectual terms and public stakes that are attached. A further aspect, intellectual independence or autonomy, follows directly from the second. For Fox Piven this requires social scientists to eschew a policy science in which the patron dictates the story line, and to value but also criticise the academic environments that encourage intellectual criticism and dissidence.

There are finally a set of matters concerned with the communication of ideas and evidence, most self-evidently the freedom to speak, debate and publish. There is also concern with the form and accessibility of this communication, with advocates of a public sociology stressing unmediated communication to and with a lay public (Jacoby 1987, Burawoy 2007). Some conceptions of public sociology stress a dialogic communication between the public sociologist and the concerned public, while others contest this (Burawoy 2007; Smith-Lovin 2007).

Who was Jean Martin?

Jean Martin was one of the founders – the ‘founding mother’ – of Australian sociology. She was a committed researcher, conducting studies in both ‘basic’ and ‘applied’ modes, and a professor who established one of the country’s first departments in the discipline. A respected member of the small national social science leadership, her advice and opinions helped to shape departments and research cultures of the Australian discipline as it spread through the expanding university system of the 1960s and 1970s. Martin’s legacy is particularly interesting for the sociology of social policy. C. Wright Mills (1959) famously located sociology at the intersection of biography and history. The significance of Martin’s sociology stems from the time and historical context in which she worked, and from the moral aims and theoretical purposes that she brought to projects and methods. Martin’s working life as a sociologist closely coincides with the period of Australian postwar nation-building. Reflected in it are the sober concerns of the 1930s – employment and unemployment, economic hardship, the rise of fascism and communism – and the optimistic promise of the post-war decades, where social ills such as poverty were seen as amenable to policy solution.

Martin was born Jean Isobel Craig in 1923. The daughter of an engineer and civil servant, she was brought up in the middle class suburbs of Sydney’s north shore. At Sydney University she studied anthropology under some of the leading figures in the discipline at that time. It was there that she became interested in sociology, a discipline not then established in Australia. Her mentor A. P. Elkin had a longstanding interest in sociology, and in the wartime context had drawn a circle of people sharing this interest around him, some of them assisting him with public opinion research on the war effort and public morale (Wise 1985: 149). As soon as she completed her undergraduate degree Martin began conducting sociological research. By 1945 studies of rural housing in country districts of New South Wales had earned her an MA with first class honours and the university medal. No Australian university then offered formal study in sociology. Making connections through W. Lloyd Warner, who had been at Sydney University earlier, she spent the year 1947/1948 studying sociology at the University of Chicago and more briefly at the London School of Economics. She was completed a PhD at the newly established Australian National University in 1955 for a study of wartime Displaced Persons who had been settled in the rural town of Goulburn and the manner and degree of their assimilation into Australian society.

In 1955 she married historian Allan William Martin. Moving to Melbourne and then Adelaide as her husband’s career led them, Martin continued to teach and conduct research, much of it on casual and part-time bases. In 1964 she worked on the design of Australia’s first survey of poverty. In 1965 she held a research fellowship in the Department of Economics at the University of Adelaide, where among other projects she did a follow-up study of the subjects of her PhD research a decade earlier, published as *Refugee Settlers* (Martin 1965). In 1965 she was appointed Foundation Professor of Sociology at the newly established La Trobe University in Melbourne. Allan Martin was

appointed Foundation Professor of History at the same time. While building a new department in a new discipline, she continued a program of active research and publication. She was elected a Fellow of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia in 1971. In 1974, after experiencing ill health, she left La Trobe to take up a senior research fellowship in the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University, where she remained until her death from cancer in 1979 at the age of 55. Besides *Refugee Settlers*, her work in book form included *Community and Identity* (1972), and *The Migrant Presence* (1978). *The Ethnic Dimension*, a collection of her papers on ethnicity and pluralism edited by Sol Encel, was published in 1981.

In addition to research in conventional academic mode, Martin conducted an extensive body of research under public auspices. These included the study of poverty among immigrants for the Commission of Inquiry into Poverty (1975), studies of immigrant settlement and integration for the National Population Inquiry and the Australian Population and Immigration Council (Martin 1976, 1978) and extensive studies of immigrant education (Martin and Meade 1979; Meade 1981, 1983). She began but was unable to complete a government-commissioned study of Vietnamese refugees, discussed below. This paper focuses on these studies as practices in public sociology.

Jean Martin's sociology

Martin created herself as a sociologist in a country that then had no such discipline, and her sociology was conditioned by the opportunities and source materials available to her. Its local roots were in anthropology, and she had an enduring interest in human institutions of family and kinship, the local ecology of everyday life, social networks and structure, and culture and migration. Her early studies of country districts in New South Wales took the holistic form of the community study, describing the local economy, the livelihoods dependent on it, and the institutions and social life linking the local population. From early on Martin also drew from wider sources. At the University of Chicago her teachers included Warner, Robert Redfield, Louis Wirth, Ernest Burgess, Herbert Blumer, and William H Whyte. She read voraciously during that year, including extensive reading in psychology and race relations, and conducted a field study among ethnic residents of a Chicago suburb. Warner, who had also made a transition from anthropology to sociology and who was by then fifteen years into his study of Yankee City (1941), was a strong influence. She took from him both a model for the analysis of social class and a methodological style blending qualitative and quantitative analysis. Her doctoral study of refugee settlement drew on psychology as well as sociology and anthropology.

Martin developed these influences into a distinctive sociology of her own. As a public sociology it owed a good deal to its historical moment. Extending from the 1940s through the 1970s, Martin's working life coincided with the period of Australian post-war economic development, population growth and nation-building. This was the period of full (male) employment and the 'long boom'.

Domestic manufacturing expanded, with Australians now making and buying goods previously accessible only to the relative few. The cities grew new and increasingly far-flung suburbs as a consumption-led economy filled them with families of mainly male breadwinners and dependent wives. A home-centered suburban culture brought high fertility, a baby boom and aspirations for these children to enjoy new standards of education and the possibility of upward mobility.

This was the 'golden age' of the Keynesian welfare state, when the Australian post-war frameworks of trade protection, full employment and social security were elaborated (Macintyre 1985; Castles 1985). The war and constitutional changes had reshaped the roles of commonwealth and state governments, with a newly powerful commonwealth government now controlling taxing and spending. Housing policies fostered home ownership and urban sprawl. The school system grew with the children of the baby boom, and by the end of the Menzies era the commonwealth government had begun to use its control of revenues to direct state as well as national policies. It also oversaw the expansion of university education, with new institutions created and their scope extended to include doctoral degrees. Above all, government directed large-scale population growth through refugee settlement and assisted immigration. Over the period immigration large-scale immigration brought increased racial and cultural diversity, with programs aimed at predominantly 'British stock' extending to eastern and southern European countries and as the decades passed also to countries of the Middle East and Asia. These areas of expanded government responsibility defined the policy themes of Martin's work: family, inequality, poverty, settlement and cultural integration.

The ethos of nation-building is most characteristic of settler societies, with their narratives of peopling a continent, taming the landscape and building foundations for economic development. Its most familiar symbols are iconic infrastructure such as the roads, rails, bridges and ports that bind the nation together, Australia's favourite example being the Snowy Mountain Hydroelectric Scheme of the 1950s (Wanna 2008). There are social equivalents in key aspects of Australian policy architecture, perhaps most notably automotive manufacturing (the Holden car) and the development of a social security system (Watts 1987). Above all, the ethos of nation-building was expressed in its programs for population growth through assisted immigration. The experiences of these new settlers, the place they would occupy in the nation's industries and suburbs, and the kind of society Australia would become with their reception, were the overarching themes of Martin's work.

A sociology for nation-building

Martin set out how she saw the contribution of social scientists to the purposes of the nation in an address she presented to the Anthropology

Society of New South Wales in September 1949.² Her theme was the role of the anthropologist in research intended to 'guide social action', i.e. to inform the decisions of government administrators or policymakers. She titled her address 'The Anthropologist as Social Engineer' explaining that the more conventional term of 'applied anthropology' had become closely identified with the administration of native peoples. Recently returned from the USA, she canvassed key examples of such research, primarily as part of the war effort.

The conduct of research intended to 'guide social action' had been controversial, and Martin reported three distinct viewpoints. One held that the anthropologist, as a scientist, should simply present the facts and leave these to speak for themselves. A second view, which had come to the fore in discussion of the role anthropology should play in the development of an international declaration of human rights, questioned the ethical propriety of scientists making universalist statements about human values since these were matters for societies themselves to determine. A third view held that whatever the discomfort for its practitioners, participation in social action was inherent in the anthropological endeavour. For the researcher to stand apart from plans of action and statements of value would be to abandon the findings of research to those who wish to use them, whatever their motives. The discussion of social problems must inevitably risk entanglement in power struggles over policy choices.

Martin herself held this third view, for this and the further reason that, uniquely in the social sciences, knowledge derives from human social interaction. In the course of the research process, social scientist and research subject influence and are influenced by one another, and participation in social action is therefore intrinsic to the research process. Martin saw it as nevertheless possible for the social scientist to maintain the objectivity necessary for science, citing Gunnar Myrdal's *The American Dilemma* (1944) as an example.

What Myrdal has done is to analyse the American value system, and then show how the activities of Americans fail to live up to this value system, and what course of action would need to be followed if this value system were to be realised. This is surely a legitimate scientific procedure, and the important point is it does not necessarily involve the anthropologist in any statement about the rightness or wrongness of the value system itself.

She went further to argue that social scientists might take advantage of 'natural experiments' affording them opportunities to test their theories in the context of actual social life.

As social science, the research Martin went on to do spoke at a number of levels. It sought to establish well founded empirical facts on matters of public concern and policy importance. This is best exemplified in Martin's (1975) analysis of a national survey of incomes and housing costs for the 1970s

² Australian National University, Butlin Archives, Ref. N132, Location 458, 'The anthropologist as social engineer', Address to the Anthropological Society of New South Wales, Sept. 1949.

Commission of Inquiry into Poverty. Her report gave the definitive account of economic hardship among recently arrived immigrants and the circumstances in which this constituted poverty. Another level of her work delved into processes of social interaction and the genesis of social structures and institutions. Her study of the ethnic organisations formed by Eastern European refugees (Martin 1972a: x) used the the settlement of displaced persons as a natural experiment to study group organisation in minority populations. A study of family and community (Martin 1970), not focused on an immigrant population, showed the genesis of urban structure in the cultural construct of community, vested in the images of class and family, by which residents oriented themselves to the city and its neighbourhoods. Martin spearheaded the development of social network research in Australia.

A third level of her work concerned ethnic identity and ethnic relations in a society rapidly absorbing large numbers of immigrants from increasingly diverse countries of origin. From its beginnings as a settler society, Australia had seen itself as British and adopted legal and cultural frameworks ensuring white British dominance. It subjected Indigenous peoples to regimes of so-called protection that, while variable across time and place, included relocation from traditional lands to reserves and missions, removal of part-Aboriginal children from their parents, and training for domestic and semi-skilled employment. The policy goal of their assimilation into the mainstream culture of white Australia was taken for granted until the late 1960s. The mass immigration program was predicated on parallel assumptions, with preferential terms for immigrants from Britain and other countries ranked according to racial and cultural similarities with Britain. It was assumed that, with minimal assistance, economic opportunity and the welcoming kindness of their new neighbours, immigrant settlers would quickly adopt an Australian way of living and of seeing the world. Assimilation was a key policy plank of post-war nation-building (Rowse 2005).

From her first study, Martin's research on immigrants began to probe the complacent assumptions of assimilation. She saw Eastern European refugees from middle class backgrounds, dislodged by war to rural Australia, finding Australians ignorant and self-satisfied. A decade later, many refugees felt themselves still not fully accepted. Ethnic identity and ethnic community remained meaningful for them, and in certain circumstances ethnic community associations might assist their engagement with wider Australian society. In this and later research Martin regularly observed cultural misrecognition of immigrants, including by well-meaning health, education and welfare professionals seeking to assist them. Seeing such failures as damaging for immigrants, including through the high psychic costs they imposed, she became highly critical of assimilationist policies.

Martin (1971, 1972b) argued instead for incorporating immigrants in Australian society on the basis of ethnic structural pluralism. She distinguished structural from cultural pluralism. Cultural pluralism referred to the parallel existence of distinctive life-styles and institutional arrangements within the framework of a single society. Structural pluralism, in turn, referred to the situation where

such distinctions have an ongoing, all-embracing character and confer a group identity on the people who manifest them (1971: 98). Martin saw Australian society as having developed only an emasculated ethnic pluralism, its fuller expression limited by policies and practices incorporating immigrants as individuals rather than groups and a tacit refusal to recognise cultural difference. Martin located failures of commitment to equality of opportunity for migrants in what she called the ideology of settlement, the set of values and beliefs defining the terms of migrant incorporation into Australian society (1972b: 14). The ideology of settlement denied any role to national groups in the settlement process, and was opposed to any assistance that entailed special privileges or considerations for migrants as migrants. Martin saw some forms of positive discrimination as essential to prevent the consolidation of ethnic inequality and the possibility of a culturally stratified society. She argued that that pluralism had to go beyond mere cultural pluralism to be rooted in the actual structure of ethnic community groups and networks. Only then could it genuinely engage the interests of the people involved. At the same time such pluralism must not assume or seek to create unity within ethnic groups, who are as diverse and fragmented as other sections of Australian society. Finally, a mature pluralism must accept the political expression of ethnic interests as normal and legitimate, in the same terms as those interests expressed in existing parties and social movements.

Martin became a strong public advocate of Australian multiculturalism, then beginning to take institutional form in the policies of the Australian Labor Party government of Gough Whitlam elected in 1972. Of a variety of proposed forms multiculturalism might take, e.g. cultural pluralism, structural pluralism, welfare pluralism, Martin's was the most theoretically consistent and the most politically demanding (Lopez 2000). In the event, it was the more limited cultural pluralism that defined Australian multiculturalism (Australia, APIC 1977).

In 1971 Martin was elected as President of the Sociology Association of Australia and New Zealand (now The Australian Sociological Association). In her Presidential Address (Martin, 1972c) she returned to the theme of sociology in social action. In 1949 she had been 26, and although well qualified for the time, was still an academic junior. In 1971 she was nearing fifty and a professor heading one of the country's largest sociology departments. Australian sociology had grown rapidly since its late start, and the new ideas it offered were imbued with the critical and politicised ethos of the era. Martin was now the conservative, defending her vision of the discipline against more flamboyant alternatives.

Martin was critical of the introspective focus of the discipline at the time, in which it was worrying about its relationship with government and research sponsors while failing to notice a widening gap between high theory and the empirical actualities of daily life.³ Titling her address 'Quests for Camelot',

³ For example, Alvin Gouldner's (1970) *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology* was being widely read at the time.

Martin likened the pursuit of sociological knowledge to the legend of King Arthur. The resemblances were layered, from the sweeping interpretations of grand theory, the actual social world they referred to, and the betrayal of social ethics in the CIA-sponsored counter-insurgency research project in Latin America that called itself 'Project Camelot'.⁴ Running through all was an unaddressed question about the limits and obligations of the social scientist as a political being on one hand and as a creative agent in social change on the other.

Martin found the nub of this issue in tensions between the intractability of the material world on which social science depends and the inherent pressure on the social scientist to adopt a stance towards it. This tension was greatest in those circumstances where the social scientist had to depend on information generated by organisations whose purposes differed from his or her own. 'The paradox is that, as critic, the sociologist must be in some genuine sense an outsider. But as an outsider his ability to gain access to the knowledge he needs ... is severely limited' (p. 8). Martin suggested that this tension extended beyond research sponsored by government agencies, and indeed was inherent in all research related to political and industrial structures.

Sociology should respond to these issues, in Martin's view, with active, creative and above all sociological engagement with the construction of social data. This should include work to encourage more and better collections of public data, especially in open frames of reference allowing the possibility of alternative conclusions and giving the basis for radical forms of social accountability.⁵ She pointed, too, to the possibility of examining the routine generation of social data as a problem in the sociology of knowledge. She also pointed to creative opportunities in the active involvement of the researcher, as participant observer or as part of a social experiment, in creating new data through the documentation of context, experience and consequence.

While this paper was in large part a reprise of the themes of her earlier 'The anthropologist as social engineer', it gave considerably greater depth to the social relation between researcher and the social world being investigated as a presence in research knowledge. Martin's theoretical approach to her own work drew strongly on symbolic interactionism, and through the 1970s gave increasing centrality to the social constructionist perspectives of the sociology of knowledge developed by Berger and Luckmann (1971) and Burkart Holzner (1968). She saw the taken-for-granted knowledge of everyday life as a social construction forged in the context of group relations, with those with greatest power able to shape social institutions and define the dominant reality.

In *The Migrant Presence* (Martin 1978) she used these ideas to examine the Australian society on the receiving end of mass immigration and the effects

⁴ See Horowitz (1968).

⁵ At that time Australia had no regular national survey of household income and expenditure no longitudinal data on income, employment, family structure or health, and no survey of time use.

that increasing social diversity were having on it. This project had been commissioned as part of a national inquiry into population issues (Borrie 1975). Focusing on the key institutions of education, health and trade unions, Martin identified an 'ideology of settlement' predicated on the assumption that immigrants would quickly accustom themselves to Australia as it was, with government required only to ensure employment and help them to learn English. Over the thirty years of the program, this ideology had come under increasing challenge. Research showed different realities, including high numbers of migrants returning to their countries of origin and significant levels of economic hardship and poverty. Professionals working in the schools, health services and welfare organisations came to see their immigrant clients as poor, disadvantaged by both their inability to speak English, and lacking respect for cultural differences. A new ethnic leadership began to speak out about migrant needs and rights, and to argue for policies of multiculturalism. Martin was herself a strong advocate of such policies through both her research and her membership of various advisory and policy committees.

A public sociology for the mainstream

Martin made no distinction between an academic social science producing knowledge for knowledge's sake and a public one providing evidence for policy and public debate. She saw the role of sociology as to give a society and its key institutions the kind of self-knowledge that will make it accountable to either supporters or critics.

One reason that she could take this view was that her model of sociology was deeply social, but also scientific. It had a strong debt to Max Weber, most evidently in its separation of fact and value. Its methodological hallmarks were systematic empirical research, usually incorporating both quantitative and qualitative elements, conducted and analysed with a critical objectivity aware of the limits and distortions of the research process. This is social science in the mode of critical realism (Sayer 2000: 10-22). It treats the real as having an existence outside the knowledge of the observer, and the objects of the real as having structures and powers of their own. The real, or its expression in action, can be known through empirical inquiry, but have existence whether or not they are known. Critical realism is only partly naturalistic, for there are also hermeneutic dimensions in the investigator's interpretation of the world under study. Phenomenology and the sociology of knowledge enabled Martin to see the real as constructed in social process, and reflexivity gave a way to situate the investigation itself in the analysis. Martin (1978: 11) saw social scientific knowledge as cumulative, though not simply so: 'It is basic to my understanding of what cumulative enquiry means in sociology that one scholar's abode can serve as another's framework for building a very different kind of habitat.'

Martin held a respected place among policy makers, welfare state professionals and ethnic leaders as an expert on immigrant wellbeing and an advocate of policies for recognition and acceptance of cultural diversity. Not

all forms of social science are equally accessible to policy makers and democratic publics. Martin's model supported empirical findings and sociological explanations that such audiences could recognise as socially scientific and relevant to their purposes. The Weberian separation of fact and value gave a degree of objectivity, while its grounding in social interactions and institutional structures cast explanations in terms of recognisably human actors. It remained, nevertheless, a sophisticated version of sociology as 'social planning', presenting an account of society in which political interest and bureaucratic power were little evident. It assumed a rationality and good will in the take-up of findings that cannot necessarily be taken for granted.

Martin's time offered exceptional opportunities to undertake significant research studies with nation-building mandates. Some of the most important, such as those of immigrant poverty and the effects of immigration on the receiving society, were commissioned as part of formal public commissions of inquiry headed by independent academic experts. Other studies formed part of a broad research program on migration established under the auspices of the national social science academy and bundling resources from universities, government departments and private sources. The auspices and arrangements for these projects gave Martin access to the resources required for sophisticated large-scale investigations and enabled her to work with bureaucratic departments in the role of independent expert.

These opportunities undoubtedly had their limits. Even relatively open commissions of inquiry, such as these were, have terms of reference and timetables that must be adhered to, and working relations with bureaucratic colleagues depend on negotiation of means and ends. Martin took a pragmatic view of these matters, making the best of chances that might not come again. In Australia at least, there are now many fewer opportunities to conduct basic research with policy significance in this way. A generation later Australia and its academic social sciences are better developed, and the institutional machinery of research more regularised. The Australian Research Council, the main national granting agency for academic research outside the health field, has far larger programs to allocate peer-reviewed grant funding than was the case in Martin's day. These are highly competitive, with low success rates and little room to respond to unforeseen research opportunities.⁶ There is very little philanthropic research funding in the social sciences. Otherwise, academic social science research depends substantially on funding contributions by organisations, including government departments, with interests in the outcomes.

Whatever the auspices and opportunities of her research, Martin was always in a position to define the research questions to be asked and to determine the methods of empirical investigation and data analysis that would shape the results. This capacity, above all, is what a public sociology requires. This is

⁶ The legal foundations of these grants do not fully shield the outcomes of ARC selection by peer review from political interference. A recent Minister of Education declined to approve the funding of an unknown number of recommended grants in the social sciences. The reasons for his decision have never been made public.

not at issue in investigator-driven research, but more problematic where government is a funder. In Martin's time Australia's educated elite was much smaller and they were generally allowed considerable intellectual independence. Australian government departments now routinely commission research for policy purposes, much of it from academic investigators. Increasingly, however, this process operates through tender processes and managerial contracts that ensure tight bureaucratic control of research design and the publication of research results.

Public sociology must, of course, communicate with its relevant public. The public inquiries and special research programs in which Martin participated also ensured her a public platform for the publication of her research findings. Her work on poverty was published as part of the official report of the inquiry. *The Migrant Presence* was at once a book and a report of the national inquiry on population. Some of her relevant publics were more closely targeted: she worked as a member of committees and advisory bodies for ethnic organisations and policy-makers. Martin gave some public lectures, but was not a media figure in the manner of today's public intellectuals. Since her time the media, both traditional and new, have become far more significant in mediating communications between sociology and its interested publics. While this development offers new and diverse opportunities for engagement, it also adds greatly to the challenges facing the would-be practitioner of public sociology. Those who would direct their findings into public arenas now need knowledge of diverse media channels and developed skills to get their message across undistorted by the play of media interests.

The door closes on Martin's public sociology

In 1975, the end of the Viet Nam War and the fall of Saigon prompted a flow of Vietnamese refugees out of that country. Australia's troops had been withdrawn three years earlier, but it had obligations to assist in the settlement of refugees. On relatively short notice, Martin was commissioned to undertake a five-year longitudinal study of some of the first cohort of these refugees to be settled in Australia. Her commission came directly from the Prime Minister's Office and was to provide funding with few strings attached. At Martin's request, the study was to be conducted under the auspices of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, Australia's honorary society in the social sciences. This body had established the research program in immigration through which Martin had conducted much of her previous work. The respect it carried should have insulated the research from political intervention or the appearance of political control.

Coming in an irregular fashion at an exceptional moment, this was a special opportunity to conduct research that would be valuable in the terms of knowledge for knowledge's sake and at the same time inform policy for the support of a new and culturally different immigrant group. Martin was uniquely qualified to conduct it. She quickly recruited a team of Vietnamese

researchers, and a first wave of data collection was undertaken within the year.

By the end of the year, when Martin's next tranche of funding was due, the project was overtaken by the historic political crisis in Australian government known as 'The Dismissal' (Macintyre 1999; Sexton, 2005). The Labor government had had a number of scandals and incurred large deficits. Against all parliamentary traditions, the Liberal Country Party opposition had blocked the budget bill in the upper house. With the two houses of Parliament in stalemate, the Governor General famously dismissed the government and appointed opposition leader Malcolm Fraser as caretaker Prime Minister. Martin's funding was deferred, and after the election of the opposition to government the funding of her study was suddenly terminated. The reasons given cited the deficit inherited by the new government and the need to curtail all possible expenditure in the context of financial emergency.

Archival sources do not contradict this, but they add a further layer to the explanation. The documents are annotated with conversation between the senior officials managing the grant showing bureaucratic ill will and distrust of academics. These remarks refer repeatedly to an unnamed other academic who had failed to complete a project. There is clear objection to the autonomy of publication provided for in the conditions of Martin's grant, and the fact that she was not required to produce a report tailored to the needs of government.⁷ From the timing of actions it is clear that these officials took advantage of the moment to reassert control.

Martin wrote a passionate letter of objection to the incoming Minister of Immigration. In this letter she set out what this meant for the form of public sociology that she had practiced:

There is one further and more general reason for my concern about the fate of this particular project. In the last decade, and particularly during the 70s, there have emerged what have seemed to me very promising developments in government-academic cooperation in social science research.... In these various enterprises, I have seen the possibilities of academic-government cooperation realised, without the independence of the enquiries concerned being compromised in any way. One condition of this independence – a necessary condition as far as I have been concerned – is that there was always understood to be an unequivocal commitment on both sides: the government of the day made its commitment in inviting my participation, I made mine in accepting.... Clearly an academic social scientist like myself can no longer assume that a request to undertake research or take part, in his or her professional capacity, in an enquiry represents a commitment on the part of the Australian government.

7 National Archives of Australia, Document Series No. A463, Control symbol 1975/2900, Title Settlement of Vietnamese refugees in Australia – Longitudinal study.

.....In the present climate of world events, new waves of refugees are emerging every few months, Australia has made its own contribution to the resettlement of some of these helpless peoples in the past in accepting, for example, Displaced Persons, and, later, victims of the Hungarian and Czech coups. We will doubtless have occasion to respond to international disturbances in this way again, but we can do so humanely and effectively only to the extent that we understand how refugees differ from other migrants and what in fact has been the outcome of our manner of dealing with and responding to those who are already here...(Martin 1976).

It is perhaps ironic that the incoming Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser has since earned national and international respect for his advocacy of racial equality and ethnic multiculturalism. After Martin's death her former student Frank Lewins and others completed a necessarily reduced study of the first group Vietnamese refugees to settle in Australia (Lewis and Ly 1985).

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