

Chapter 1

Social sciences
facing the world



Flooding in UK, 2007
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Social sciences facing the world

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Chapter presentation

Ernest Rutherford, the Nobel Prize winner for chemistry, famously said that the only possible conclusion in social sciences is that ‘some do, some don’t’. This may be true of some research, but not of all. Rutherford’s belief in hard, natural sciences was so strong that he downgraded ‘the rest’ as ‘stamp collecting’. But were he still alive, he might amend his position. Maybe he would even admit today’s need for collaboration between different types of knowledge. Overcoming global challenges and understanding major trends in human societies have become multiplayer games. And they are games in which the social sciences can make a difference. The social sciences are concerned with providing the main classificatory, descriptive and analytical tools and narratives that allow us to see, name and explain the developments that confront human societies. They allow us to decode underlying conceptions, assumptions and mental maps in the debates surrounding these developments. They may assist decision-making processes by attempting to surmount them. And they provide the instruments to gauge policies and initiatives, ‘and to determine what works and what does not’.

This chapter has two focuses. In the first section, distinguished scholars in different disciplines engage with global challenges and major trends in societies: environmental change, poverty, financial crises, inequality, marginalization, ageing and the future of cities. It is obvious that some social sciences are particularly suited to illuminate specific challenges or trends. Here, for instance, a demographer (Chamie) discusses population

trends, an economist (Milanovic) the validity of indicators of global income inequality, and a sociologist (Sassen) the development of global cities. But other pairings appear more counterintuitive: a geographer (O’Brien) writes on global environmental change, an anthropologist (Gupta) on poverty, a geographer (Harvey) on the financial crisis, and a political scientist (Apter) on marginalization and violence. So this portrait of the world is also a mirror of the richness of the social sciences, and the fertility of their tools and perspectives when it comes to understanding today’s developments in human societies.

But even this picture of global developments in specific social sciences does not tell us much about the different trends affecting the social sciences across the world, especially outside Europe and North America. This is the focus of the second section of the chapter. In it, councils for social science research that are members of the International Social Science Council portray the main challenges and trends affecting disciplines and institutions in their regions. They are the Arab Council for the Social Sciences (ACSS), the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO), the Association of Asian Social Science Research Councils (AASSREC) and the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA). They bring to light how social, political, economic and environmental challenges frame and shape diverse research policies, agendas, and funding programmes. The contributions to the second section also underscore the areas of research and action on which the social sciences should focus, and where their contributions would be most urgently welcome. ☺

1.1 Social sciences and global challenges

Introduction

To say that the social sciences face the world has a double meaning. It refers to the necessity for social scientists to confront and deal with the challenges and trends affecting human societies. And it also suggests their role in observing these phenomena. In the first meaning, the observers are mainly concerned with responding adequately to challenges and trends. In the second, the focus is rather on examining these challenges and their analytical

outcomes. The contributors to this section target the two connotations: they try to grasp the quality of the challenges and trends, and they assess their implications for academic and research purposes.

The world depicted here is one of profound and menacing developments occurring at the global and local scales. Challenges such as environmental change, poverty, financial

crisis and inequality, as well as trends affecting human societies such as ageing, marginalization and the rise of cities as strategic economic spaces in the global economy are occurring everywhere but take on different forms according to local contexts. The authors discuss a wide array of challenges and trends, but other challenges such as gender issues, public health concerns, security, food crisis, migrations, diversity and integration, and burning issues and trends could also have found a place in this section. The present selection reflects the priorities identified in the foremost international conferences of recent years, such as the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000 and the Copenhagen Conference on Sustainable Development in 2009.

The authors do not make any secret of the fact that today's challenges and trends in human societies are also challenges for their disciplines, and are forcing them to adjust. Developing the right instruments and categories of observation is a condition for the assessment of current developments and where they are leading us (Chamie). Results can be surprising, even daunting at times. Different characterizations of inequality, for instance, produce very different pictures of the extent and evolution of global inequality (Milanovic), but social science provides methods that are particularly appropriate for developing and debating the tools with which societies can observe and assess their development. The contributors to this section share the conviction that today's global challenges require revisiting former methodologies and approaches (Apter, Harvey), and even the development of new ones altogether (Sassen, O'Brien, Gupta). This is the most striking feature of the following contributions.

Innovation thus becomes a key word in this section, and the different contributors largely regard innovation in terms of interdisciplinarity. Each of them is a proud representative of core social science disciplines: O'Brien and Harvey are geographers, Gupta is an anthropologist, Sassen a sociologist, Apter a political scientist, Chamie a demographer and Milanovic an economist. Even if the traditional disciplinary boundaries remain in their contributions and the topics, vocabulary and literature are discipline-bound, the channels for innovation that they propose nonetheless confirm how blurred the frontiers

between the respective social sciences have become. They agree on the necessity of collaboration between the social sciences, or interdisciplinarity. Some authors make concrete proposals for interdisciplinary collaborations (for example, O'Brien in this section, and see more on this in Chapter 6), and most of their analyses agree that burning issues require some degree of interdisciplinary analysis.

There is a growing conviction among social scientists today that more attention needs to be paid to the plurality of contexts. This red line runs through many of the chapters that follow, but is explicitly expanded in two directions in this section. One is the realization that cultural dimensions form these contexts. Worldviews, beliefs, institutions, culture and history shape the way different people perceive and react to a phenomenon. This may sound like a truism, but the implications of cultural differences appear with more clarity than ever in the face of the current global challenges. In the case of poverty, for instance, unitary definitions ('those who live on less than US\$1/day') and solutions that were supposed to be valid everywhere have been revealed as ineffective when actions by the poor, and therefore the meaning of poverty for those who experience it, have not supported the proposed solutions (Gupta).

We also realize increasingly that no matter how central beliefs and worldviews are, culture itself does not furnish the last word on contexts. Rather, a local context is the sum of a realm of economic, social, gender, ethnic, institutional, political, technological, environmental and cultural dynamics. Understanding these dynamics, and developing methodologies to make them visible, are conditions for the development of adequate, locally embedded responses to major trends and developments (O'Brien, Milanovic). Even authors who plead for the production of new global theories insist that they pay close attention to the ways in which people interpret their realities (Apter). There are no context-free responses to global challenges that are applicable everywhere.

Where do these considerations bring us with respect to social sciences' contributions in the face of recent global developments in human societies? Do they imply that only context-specific theories and models are valid and pertinent? This requires careful thinking and debate. ☺

Responding to the global environmental change: social sciences of the world unite!

Karen O'Brien

Global environmental change is a challenge to traditional disciplinary research practices. The scale, rate, magnitude and significance of changes to the global environment have made it clear that 'research as usual' will not suffice to help individuals and groups understand and respond to the multiple, interacting changes that are now occurring. The social sciences have an important role to play in providing the knowledge base and inspiration for new policies that promote resilience, sustainability and social change.

Global environmental change is a challenge to traditional disciplinary research practices. The scale, rate, magnitude and significance of changes to the global environment have made it clear that 'research as usual' will not suffice to help individuals and groups understand and respond to the multiple, interacting changes that are now occurring. 'Research as usual' is unlikely to mobilize societies to press for the changes that are necessary for a more sustainable future. The social sciences have an important role to play in providing the knowledge base and inspiration for new policies that promote resilience, sustainability and social change.

Global change research has shown that changes to the global climate system, the water system, biodiversity, land cover, marine ecosystems and ecosystem services in general are closely linked to human activities, and that these changes cannot be understood and addressed without closer attention to the interactions between human and physical systems. In recent years there has been an expansion of research on coupled social-ecological systems, as well as a growing emphasis on the human dimensions of global environmental change. But the full potential of social science contributions has yet to be realized. The integration of different types of knowledge, different perspectives on human–environment relationships, and different approaches to science can help global change research to foster the transformations that are needed to address such pressing challenges as climate change. For instance, the ways in which individual and collective beliefs, values and worldviews influence behaviours and systems have not been adequately integrated into global environmental change research. Nor has the relationship between cultural factors, human development, institutional changes and governance been adequately linked to the

dynamic biophysical changes that are presently taking place. Anthropology, psychology, sociology, political science, economics, science and technology studies and of course geography are among the fields that can contribute to an integrated understanding of global environmental change. Yet the need for a greater contribution by the social sciences and humanities also calls for a change in research practices. In the following paragraphs, I identify three emerging directions for research, each of which can potentially assist society to deal with the challenges posed by global environmental change.

Greater attention to relationships and interactions across disciplinary boundaries

While disciplinary research in the social sciences has provided valuable insights into human culture, political systems, social organization and so on, global environmental change research requires that these insights be combined with 'outsights' from other disciplines to show how different factors interact and affect one another. The development of Earth Systems science within the natural and physical sciences shows the potential benefits and gains from interdisciplinary research. An interdisciplinary approach across the social sciences and humanities can similarly foster interactions and feedback that can be used to identify barriers and catalysts for change. Interdisciplinary social science research does not, however, have to replicate the systems approach of Earth Systems science. Instead it can be grounded in a framework that recognizes individuals' and groups' subjective dimensions, which influence human agency and hence behaviours and systems. An interdisciplinary approach to the social sciences can provide stronger input into existing understandings of coupled social-ecological systems.

Growing recognition that different worldviews and different types of knowledge can create different truths, as well as different ways of responding to environmental change

The social sciences integrate ontological and epistemological differences that lead to alternative understandings of physical and social processes. Understanding the relationship between rationalism, empiricism, constructivism and other approaches can provide insights into a range of possible actions and responses to global environmental change. Likewise, understanding the role of local knowledge, traditional ecological knowledge, religious and spiritual beliefs, and attitudes to technology can provide valuable insights into sustainable forms of social innovation and governance. A recognition that not all actors and cultures see the world in the same way also raises important ethical questions about global environmental change, including the question of whose views and whose values count, and about the rights and responsibilities of present generations when it comes to non-humans and future generations.

Acknowledgement that context plays a key role in understanding the drivers of and responses to global change

People- and place-based research can contribute to a greater understanding of the wide range of alternatives to current economic development models, models of governance, and social and environmental responses to global change. Social science research shows that it is seldom environmental change alone that challenges societies. Changes in the environment are closely linked to dynamic economic, social, cultural, ecological, institutional,

technological and political contexts. These contexts often call for responses that address multiple stressors and respond to interlinked challenges. Consequently, there is a need to facilitate access to knowledge and technology that is relevant to the contexts in which people are living and experiencing environmental change. Separating issues of development, poverty reduction or gender rights from global environmental change and considering it as a separate 'box' that can be addressed through research and policies independent of other social processes will most probably lead to a dead end.

These three research directions are producing methodological innovations, including a greater role for action research, qualitative research and the co-production of knowledge. The decisions and actions taken by humans in the coming decades will have a critical effect on ecosystem health, biodiversity and human security. Most obviously, decisions about energy will profoundly affect the future trajectory of climate change. The biogeophysical sciences have greatly contributed to our understanding of global environmental change, including to the idea that we are now living in the Anthropocene Era, in which human influence on the environment is a decisive factor. It is now clear that human responses to global environmental changes will define the world's future. Human society must meet its responsibilities, and social science research must serve as a cornerstone both for our understanding and for the promotion of a new model of global change; a model in which concerns for ecosystem health and human well-being form a basis for much broader interpretations of human development and a far deeper commitment to sustainability. ☺

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The construction of the global poor: an anthropological critique

Akhil Gupta

The growing attention being paid to global poverty raises a number of analytical questions. What are the origins of this sudden interest in global poverty? How is it to be explained? Why did it arise at this particular historical juncture? And what are its effects on international institutions, nation states in the North and South, and most importantly, on the world's poor?

Since the late 1990s, poverty has once more become an important issue on the international agenda. However, what has emerged is not just poverty per se, but a certain discourse on 'global poverty'. If we chart, somewhat unscientifically, the number of publications in which the term 'global poverty' has been used, we notice a 500 per cent increase from 1999 to 2005. The new consensus on global poverty culminated in the UN Millennium Declaration (September 2000).

The growing attention being paid to global poverty is unquestionably a positive development. However, it does raise a number of analytical questions. What are the origins of this sudden interest in global poverty? How is it to be explained? Why did it arise at this particular historical juncture? And what are its effects on international institutions, nation states in the North and South, and most importantly, on the world's poor?

The poor on the policy agenda

In order to understand global poverty's centrality on the policy agenda, we must first rule out the convenient explanation that growing interest in the topic is due to a sharp increase in the number or proportion of people living in absolute poverty. The available data actually points to a steady decrease. The number of people living with less than US\$1 a day fell from 1.47 billion in 1981 to 969 million in 2004. As a percentage of the world's population, the drop is even more significant, from 40 per cent in 1981 to only 18 per cent in 2004 (Chen and Ravallion, 2007, p. 21, Table 1).¹

1. We might see a reversal of this trend with the current global recession, and the food crisis that preceded it. The 2008 Millennium Development Goals report cautions that possibly 100 million more people will be in extreme poverty as a result of the food crisis.

A series of other convergences may help to explain the growing interest in global poverty.² One set of explanations can be found in political and economic events (Noël, 2006, pp. 313, 318–19; Kanbur, 2001, p. 1083). These include:

- protests organized by 'global civil society'
- the rise of social democratic governments in the major European countries in the 1990s
- the East Asian crisis of 1997 which provoked a rethinking of the wisdom of implementing structural adjustment programmes in countries with large populations of poor people
- internal disagreements and differences between and within multilateral institutions.

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), allied to executive power in the United States of America, have been in support of the 'Washington consensus', while the United Nations agencies that deal with social issues, such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), and the UN Research Institute for Social Development have not.

Another possible explanation for the newfound visibility of the poor may have to do with neoliberal globalization's effects in terms of wealth distribution. Neoliberalism has contributed to a massive upward redistribution of wealth (Harvey, 2005, pp. 9–19). We must also mention the tremendous influence of thinkers who have emerged as advocates for the poor: Jeffrey Sachs, Amartya Sen, Peter Singer and Paul Collier, to name just a few. However, no

2. The overall trend of a sharp downward spiral in the number of people in absolute poverty should not hide the fact that in some parts of Africa, sharp increases in the number of poor people have been recorded.

matter how insightful such thinkers have been, favourable conditions for the reception of their ideas have enabled them to have a substantial impact. I shall now argue that the timing and visibility of the discourse on global poverty is also related to recent transformations affecting neoliberalism.

Neoliberalism and global poverty

The chief institutional mechanism by which this renewed emphasis on poverty has been implemented is a 'new Washington consensus' forged in late 1999 by the World Bank and the IMF: the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs).³ The PRSPs are country-driven, result-oriented strategies that bring national development plans in line with neoliberal globalization by emphasizing growth, free markets and an open economy (Weber, 2004, p. 197; Craig and Porter, 2003, p. 53). However, they differ from structural adjustment programmes through their emphasis on the need for broad-based growth strategies, good governance, decentralization, empowerment, investments in health care, education and human capital, and social protection for those who are adversely affected by adjustment processes.

These papers can be interpreted as a 'Third Way' solution to harmonize economies in the global South to neoliberal globalization without completely disregarding the human costs that are associated with such 'adjustments'. In this view, the renewed interest in poverty expressed through the coordinated actions of the World Bank and the IMF on PRSPs is really about inventing a new form of governance to control developing countries and to prevent the rise of alternative social and political models (Weber, 2004). Craig and Porter (2003, p. 53) make a similar point: PRSPs, they argue, 'obscure power relations and restrict practical and political options, while exacting heavy establishment and compliance costs'. Taking a broader perspective, Sindzingre (2004, p. 176) argues that the extensive focus on poverty is politically regressive since it displaces concerns with global inequality and postpones a real discussion on development.

For Noël (2006, p. 322), the rhetoric of global poverty has been adopted cynically as a means of legitimizing neoliberal globalization. In this view, the importance that is given to global poverty in the written statements of multilateral

organizations, G8 countries and other global economic elites serves to conceal the real agenda of structural change, giving it a more politically acceptable facade. Craig and Porter (2003, p. 54) argue, for instance, that the logic behind PRSPs is clear: 'global economic integration first, good governance second, poverty reduction following as a result, underpinned by limited safety nets and human capital development'. In this view, poverty reduction lies at the margins of a global agenda that is grounded in a particularly unequal vision of economic integration (Noël, 2006, p. 323).

Another sceptical view of the promotion of global poverty as the poster child for the current era is that poverty, vulnerability and risk help create a 'reserve army of the unemployed' for global capital. The argument is that nomadic capital can exploit relatively immobile labour through the implicit threat of downward mobility. It suggests that people tend to be more vulnerable and exposed to market risks from the moment that their livelihoods depend on aid and transfer payments. Paradoxically, the global poverty discourse draws attention to the disastrous circumstances that can befall any worker, thereby serving as a tool to discipline labour in the global economy.

I would like to add a few more critiques that bring into question the concept of global poverty. What does it mean to speak of global poverty? In what sense is poverty global and what implications does formulating poverty in these terms have for the kinds of solutions that are proposed to eradicate it?

Contextualized thinking about poverty

We could talk about poverty as being global in two ways. First, the term is used to designate a particular social group or category of individuals (for instance, those who live on less than US\$1/day). Second, it serves to highlight the structural and institutional mechanisms that operate on a global scale and that produce poverty. According to this interpretation, global poverty points to the facet of poverty that can be traced to the actions of global institutions and global structures.

The first definition is the traditional way of defining global poverty. But it suggests, if only implicitly, that there is some reason to include all poor people in one category. Counting the poor is certainly an important reason for defining poverty in this way. This concept of global poverty favours a context-free, or at least contextually thin, understanding of poverty. It looks for unitary explanations and for uni-

3. I am contrasting this 'new Washington consensus' to the Reagan era when the previous 'Washington consensus' was forged. At that time, the World Bank and the IMF pushed relentlessly and dogmatically for structural adjustment and free markets.

versal solutions (more complete markets, empowerment, participation, transparency, decentralization and so on).⁴ The goal is to find what works in a particular local setting, and then 'scale up' to other settings. This is a fundamental premise of major development institutions including the World Bank, national governments and transnational non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

From an anthropological viewpoint, we should press for a way of thinking about poverty that first considers the meaning of poverty for those who actually experience it before attempting to find solutions. Indeed the actions of the poor as social agents depend on their own understanding of poverty. We know from the study of famines that even when people are dying of starvation, they make culturally and socially significant distinctions in order to decide what kinds of food are edible, who gets to eat whatever little food is available, and in what order (Greenough, 1982; Sen, 1983). Even under extreme conditions, the assumption that certain goods are vital is faulty. Vigdis Broch-Due (1995, p. 4) argues that 'Poverty, like all images and concepts, is an unstable construction, changing with context, culture and social conflicts situated in history.'

We can broach the broader point about context dependency by highlighting three important points. First, we cannot have meaningful solutions to poverty unless we understand how the poor comprehend their own situations. Indices used to measure poverty, such as the US\$1/day income measure, fail to question what those income measures might mean to the people who are so classified. Although people whose income is below US\$1/day might be categorized as 'the poor', they may find that they have little in common with each other.

Second, in calling for a contextually specific understanding of poverty, I am not making a classical anthropological case for 'the local' and hence for smaller scale. I am arguing for a specific theory of the articulation of global, national and local structures. Even if global and national structures are identical, we may need different solutions for different regional and social contexts. I contend that 'solutions'

to poverty will need to vary depending on geographical location, but also because of gender, caste, ethnicity, religion and other factors. My argument for complexity and non-reducibility is no doubt a frustrating conclusion to social engineers who wish to find 'ready-to-use' and 'broadly applicable' solutions. Nevertheless, it is the only logical outcome if we decide to consider seriously the mantras of decentralization, participation and empowerment.

Such contextually dependent understandings of poverty acknowledge the role of historically enmeshed inequalities in creating poverty for certain social groups in a particular region. A 'one size fits all' approach, scaled up from another setting, might actually increase inequality, or push more people into poverty, than an approach tailored for a specific place (Gupta, 1998).

The ideological shifts that made neoliberalism and market triumphalism possible also meant that the critique of global and national inequality could no longer be articulated with any conviction in the public sphere. Once the relation between poverty and inequality had been sundered, the only way to deal with the problem of poverty was through an ethical discourse grounded in human rights. In this sense, global poverty (as the term has been used here) could only emerge as a problem once the critique of capitalism as a generator of global inequality and extreme poverty was no longer tenable.

Poverty as a flow

In a forthcoming book, Anirudh Krishna formulates a critique of certain aspects of anti-poverty policies that are built on the premise that poverty is a stock rather than a flow. Policy 'solutions' are aimed at lifting those below the poverty line out of poverty, yet the success of these solutions would be far greater if they prevented people who are not poor from becoming poor. It is ironic that the search for invariant methods of poverty alleviation leads to a distancing from the very features that are most responsible for global poverty, namely historically grounded inequalities, asymmetries of power, and the inability of the poor to access global labour and commodity markets.

In focusing resolutely on national poverty eradication plans, the PRSPs do not address the fact that the elimination of global institutional and economic inequalities may be more effective than any action taken at a national or local level. The removal of agricultural subsidies for farmers in the USA and Europe (including the subsidies for irrigation), the internalization of pollution costs (caused by vehicle emissions and other factors that contribute

4. Discourses of empowerment, participation, transparency and decentralization have been used constructively by many different organizations in civil society. My critique of universal solutions is that they restrict and predetermine the range of possibilities. They force social agents and social groups that have a more complex understanding of local realities to fit their plans of action within these cookie-cutter formulas, but they do not always prevent them from using these categories to their own ends.



Teenager working, Pakistan
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to global warming), and the elimination of some of the restrictive aspects contained in the TRIPS Agreement⁵ (which keep the price of medication prohibitively high) would contribute to changing the structural factors that lie at the root of poverty far more than the 'scaling up' of micro-credit.⁶ Yet the focus of development institutions and expert knowledge continues to be on the latter type of solutions. If there are invariant conditions that contribute to global poverty, they are likely to be found in the structures of global institutional arrangements, such as agricultural subsidies, externalization of pollution costs, and restrictive trade regimes such as TRIPS. However, it is precisely these structures of inequality that go largely unaddressed in the current discourse on global poverty.

The paradox of global poverty is that it has drawn worldwide attention to a phenomenon that is in need of urgent action from a range of global players, yet by decontextualizing poverty, it invites 'solutions' that are largely ineffective. Raising the alarm about the extent of poverty is not sufficient to combat it effectively. Lack of attention to meaning, historical inequalities and structural conditions will inevitably slow down the process of poverty alleviation. The wrong strategy may actually reinforce ideas about the intractability of poverty whose ultimate effect is the normalization of human suffering. ☺

5. Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights: intellectual property rights in the WTO.
6. My point here is not to downplay the importance and utility of micro-credit. I fully realize that it has played a very important role, particularly in the lives of poor women. However even this innovation, once scaled up, has made credit costlier and more difficult to obtain for the poor. My larger point is that other important structural changes have been ignored because they would compel changes in global power arrangements, and that development institutions could do more good by providing the intellectual arguments and institutional support for such changes than by interfering in micro-credit programmes and trying to scale them up.

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Measuring global income inequality

Branko Milanovic

Measurements of global inequality depend on the way income or consumption is defined, on the assumptions made regarding income-sharing within households, and on the conversion of local currency incomes into international dollars. Including data on the real income of individuals from household surveys, instead of using countries' mean income, is a definite improvement when measuring inequalities worldwide. However, much remains to be done to improve the quality and comparability of data.

Measuring inequalities and identifying whether they have increased or decreased, particularly through the effects of globalization, is an issue that has come to the forefront of debates between economists. For several years the international agenda focused on poverty and how to improve the material conditions of the poorest. Yet psychological studies have invariably shown that people care not only about their absolute income, but also about where they stand in the social pyramid, and whether they think their position is fair (Frank, 2005). Globalization has facilitated increased awareness of other people's incomes. Therefore, the perception of inequalities among both the poor and the rich can potentially lead to serious tensions within and between countries.

Measuring income inequality raises a number of complex methodological problems. While comparing mean income between countries is not new, the measurement of global inequality is a relatively recent topic. In the past, several economists have measured inter-country inequalities, comparing the per capita gross domestic income (GDI) between countries (Kuznets, 1965), but it was not until the mid-1990s that the first calculations of inequality between world citizens were made.

Different concepts of income inequality

It is important to keep in mind three main concepts of global income inequality. Concept 1 measures inequality between countries' mean incomes (inter-country inequality). Concept 2 measures inequality among countries' mean incomes, weighted by the countries' populations. Concept 3 (global inequality) deals with income inequality between world individuals.

The study of inter-country inequality, Concept 1, is concerned with the convergence or divergence of mean incomes among

countries. This research has generated a huge literature but it tells us little about income inequality among world individuals.

Concept 2 inequality is a step forward because it takes into account countries' different population sizes. Weighting mean countries' incomes by population size is fairly accessible and low cost: data is needed on only two variables: GDI per capita and population. However, this method does not take into account inequality within countries, and implicitly assumes that each individual within a country has the same per capita income, which is obviously false. This last assumption has to be abandoned if we want to calculate 'true' global inequality. In order to do so, we must have access to national income distributions, which are only available from household surveys. Moreover, household surveys must be available from most countries around the world for the results to be globally representative. Such data only became available for China, the Soviet Union and its constituent republics, and large parts of Africa, from the early to mid-1980s. This is Concept 3.

Methodological issues in measuring global inequality

A series of methodological issues arise when calculating global income inequality.

First, what 'income' should be used in the comparisons? Normally, it should be the mean income from household surveys. However, the mean disposable income from these surveys is often lower than the GDI per capita, and in some cases substantially so. This is not a mistake, but a matter of definition. GDI includes components such as retained profits, build-up of stocks, and government spending on administration, education, health and defence, which are not part of household disposable income as estimated from household surveys. The gap between the two is particularly large in countries where the state spends a

significant amount on 'free' public education and public health. These are funded by direct taxes, which are not included in disposable household income.

Could we then combine the GDI per capita with distributional statistics derived from household surveys? This cure is worse than the disease. Scaling up survey income data by a given parameter (the ratio between the GDI per capita and mean income from household surveys) allocates the difference across the board, to both the poor and the rich. We know this to be inaccurate because retained profits and capital gains are received disproportionately by the rich, who also tend to benefit more on a per capita basis than the poor from publicly financed health and education. This 'solution' actually makes things worse, and is also internally inconsistent. It accepts the income distribution obtained from a survey, but does not trust the mean income calculated from it.

There was a quantum leap when more household surveys were made available. Increasingly standardized household surveys are also coming into use across countries. 'Income' could therefore be used to measure inequality in global studies, as it does in national studies. However, this does not solve the problem entirely. National definitions of survey income are not identical in every country. In poor countries, the valuation of home consumption and the income of the self-employed is a problem. In richer countries, the issue is how publicly funded health provision should be taken into account. In middle-income countries, the underestimation of very rich people's capital incomes is the greatest concern.

Second, there is disagreement over whether global inequality should be measured in income terms at all. Alternatives include consumption and expenditure measurements. It is often argued that these are better indicators of welfare and that they are capable of being measured more accurately, because households do not hide them as much as they do income. But there are advantages to using income too: it shows real economic potential. A millionaire who lives austere is still an economically very powerful person.

Third, which exchange rates – market exchange rate or purchasing power parity (PPP) exchange rates – should be used to convert local into internationally comparable incomes? The use of market exchange rates clearly underestimates the welfare of people in poor countries, who face lower price levels than people in rich countries. If we want to compare individual welfare worldwide, the use of PPP exchange rates is a must. But our knowledge and understanding of PPP rates is still defective. The most recent, and largest ever, International Comparison Project came up with results that

showed price levels in most of Asia to be much higher than had been estimated before on the basis of previous exercises. In particular, price levels in China and India were found to be more than 50 per cent higher, which led to dramatic reductions in their real (PPP-based) incomes and welfare, and hence to significant increases in calculated global poverty and global inequality.

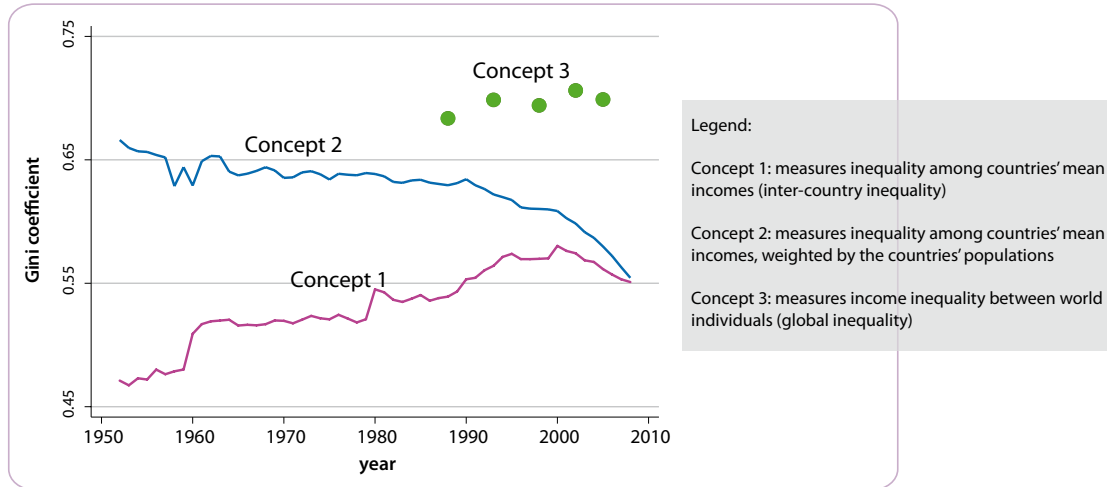
Fourth, should household incomes, which we normally obtain from surveys, be spread equally across all household members? Or should we allow for economies of scale? To reach the same level of welfare, two people living together need less than each of them would have spent separately, while children's consumption requirements are less costly than those of adults. This is important because household size differs systematically between countries. Since richer countries tend to have lower household sizes, the use of per capita measures underestimates welfare in poor countries and thus overestimates global inequality. The consensus so far has been that inter-country and global comparisons should be done on a per capita basis, partly to conserve comparability with national accounts that use GDI per capita.

How big is global inequality and how did it evolve?

The three approaches to measuring income inequality produce a wide variation of results, as shown in Figure 1.1. According to Concept 1, inter-country inequality increased steadily from 1980 until around 2000. This means that countries' mean incomes diverged. (Inequality is measured by the Gini coefficient on the vertical axis. Gini ranges from 0, perfect equality, to 1, maximum inequality.) According to Concept 2, inequality in the world has decreased during the past twenty-five years. This was largely because of high growth rates in China, and more recently in India. If China's and India's current growth rates continue for another decade or more, they will be a powerful twin duo for the reduction of global inequality.

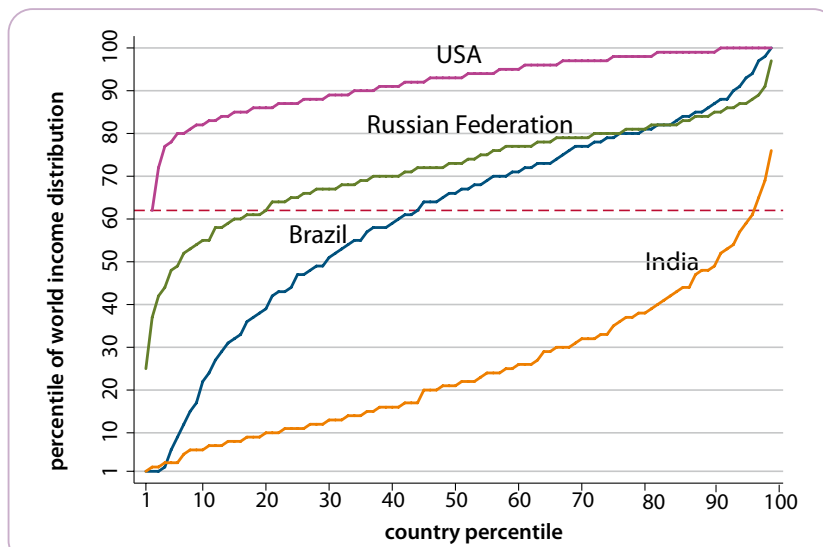
Using incomes from household surveys to compute Concept 3 global inequality (Milanovic, 2005) shows that the Gini coefficient fluctuated, increasing after the economic collapse of Eastern Europe and widening within-nation inequalities in most OECD countries, China and the Russian Federation, but decreasing with China's economic growth. While global inequality seems not to show a clear trend, it is clear that it is extremely high – Gini is around 0.7. This means that global inequality is significantly higher than the inequality found in any single country, including South Africa and Brazil, the most unequal countries in the world, whose Ginis are around 0.6.

Figure 1.1 — The mother of all inequality disputes: three ways of looking at global inequality, 1952–2007



Source: Own update of Milanovic (2005), using the most recent 2005 purchasing power parity.

Figure 1.2 — Position of different countries and their income classes in global income distribution



Source: Own update of Milanovic (2005), using the most recent 2005 purchasing power parity.

An important question is how much of global inequality is due to differences in mean incomes between countries and how much is due to income differences between individuals living in the same country. Unlike the situation that prevailed at the end of the nineteenth century, when most global inequality was due to within-nation income differences (we could call this 'class' differences), today more than 80 per cent of global inequality is explained by differences in countries' mean incomes. We can call this 'locational' income differences or the citizenship premium (see Milanovic, 2009).

Although they are less important, inequalities within countries are not negligible. The interaction of 'between' and 'within' inequalities is illustrated in Figure 1.2, which plots the position of each percentile (running from the lowest, 1st, to the richest, 100th) of different countries' income distributions in the global distribution. For example, the poorest percentile of Americans are better off than 62 per cent of the world population, but the poorest percentile of Russians are only better off than 25 per cent of the world population. Income distribution in the USA hardly intersects at all with Indian

income distribution. Only 3 per cent of the richest Indians are better off than the poorest Americans. Such examples can be multiplied. However, countries are not homogeneous entities composed only of either rich or poor people. Consider Brazil. Its population spans the entire spectrum – the poor being among the poorest in the world, and the richest belonging to the highest global income percentile.

Conclusion

Measurements of global inequality depend on the way income or consumption is defined, on the assumptions made regarding income sharing within households, and on the conversion of local currency incomes into international dollars. Including data on the real income of individuals from household surveys instead of using countries' mean income is a definite improvement when measuring inequalities world-wide. But much remains to be done to improve the quality and comparability of data, and it is to be hoped that in some not too distant future a fully-fledged global household survey, perhaps led by the United Nations, will be organized.

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It is often implicitly assumed that the data on changes in global inequality can be interpreted as telling us whether globalization is globally equalizing or not. While in the most abstract way this is so, the causal link between globalization and global inequality is in fact very difficult to make. This is because globalization might affect the growth rates of poor and rich countries differently, might lead to either the widening or shrinking of national income distributions (which differ between poor and rich countries), and might tend to benefit either populous or small countries more. Depending on how these various channels of influence interact, and how strong each of them is, globalization's overall effect on global inequality could vary. Hence statements about the relationship between globalization and global inequality are highly time-specific and contingent on past income history, rather than general.☺

A financial Katrina? Geographical aspects of the financial crisis

David Harvey

For a geographer, talking of a subprime crisis necessarily involves talking about the urban crisis that generally accompanies it, in which the most vulnerable are usually the first to suffer. Similar patterns of geographical concentration of foreclosures, and an overlap with social and racial origins, emerged in practically every major city in the USA. Regardless of the urban structure, patterns always signal neighbourhoods in which speculative housing development was seeking new markets.¹

My interpretation of the present world financial crisis is very much shaped by my geographical background and my reading of Karl Marx's *Capital*. We have all heard about the financial aspects of this crisis, and the succession of financial events that it comprised. But considering that capitalism annihilates space to ensure its own reproduction, I wish to focus here on what happened on the ground, in the US cities that were the primary victims of the collapse in real estate that led to the financial crisis.

If we observe the geographical distribution of foreclosures in Cleveland, for instance, we notice that they are concentrated in certain specific areas of the city. Their distribution mirrors the geographical distribution of the subprime lending as well as that of the African-American population in the city (hence the title of my paper – a 'financial Katrina'). Every foreclosure represents a particular personal history and tragedy. For a geographer, talking of a subprime crisis necessarily involves talking about the urban crisis that generally accompanies it, in which the most vulnerable are usually the first to suffer. Similar patterns of the geographical concentration of foreclosures, and an overlap with social and racial origins, emerged in practically every major US city. Regardless of the urban structure, patterns always signal neighbourhoods in which speculative housing development was seeking new markets.

Let us now reflect on the particular case of Cleveland, the implications of the crisis in terms of urban change, and its consequences for the people who live and work in these urban settings. In such a context, municipal governments

are getting to the point where they can no longer provide basic services to their constituents. They have to cut back for two reasons. First, their main source of income – the property tax – is in decline. Second, they are shut out of the credit markets and cannot borrow at any reasonable rate. So at the same time as this crisis is unfolding in various neighbourhoods and urban areas, it becomes increasingly difficult for municipal governments to respond in a creative and constructive way, since their assets are decreasing.

This raises another important question. If we look back in history, we find that there has been a series of financial crises over the past twenty to thirty years, most of which were triggered by the property market. In 1992, for example, the Swedish banking system essentially went 'belly up' as a result of excessive involvement in property speculation. The USA had its savings and loan crisis as well, costing approximately \$200 billion to get out of. The crisis that unfolded in South-East Asia began in Thailand, and there again the property market was involved. The end of the Japanese boom in the late 1980s had a lot to do with excessive engagement in land and property markets as well as with excessive engagement on the stock exchange. In 1973 there was a huge property market crash – about six months before the oil price hike – which brought down numerous financial institutions.

If we go back in time, we notice earlier links between the expansion of property markets and the expansion of mortgages. The 1853–68 property boom in Second Empire Paris ended with the collapse of the financial institutions. In other words, there has been a long history of this sequence of events within capitalism. With the current crisis, history appears to be repeating itself, only this time on a different scale.

1. This paper is the abbreviated version of a presentation given at City University of New York Graduate Center, 29 October 2008; for more information see <http://davidharvey.org/2008/12/a-financial-katrina-remarks-on-the-crisis>

Why is there such a relationship? Part of the answer lies in the fact that throughout capitalism's history there has been a capital surplus disposal problem. Capitalism is always about producing a surplus in the form of a profit. This implies that there is always more at the end of the day than there was at the beginning. Part of that 'more' gets put into producing more 'more' the next day. As a consequence there is a perpetual process of compound growth. Historically the target, when capitalism is healthy, has generally been a compound growth rate of around 3 per cent. Even when there is a 'mad cow disease economy' (as we have right now) the target remains a rate that is above 0 per cent. There are therefore various historical periods in which there is an 'excess of liquidity': a tremendous amount of money in circulation that nobody knows exactly what to do with.

How will the 3 per cent growth rate be absorbed? One solution has been to expand geographically, for example from Europe to the USA or Argentina in the nineteenth century. In more recent times, people have been sending their surplus capital to China, thereby securing their compound rate of growth. The second possibility is to invest this excess liquidity in property. The interesting thing about property is that, particularly when people are building and financing it, a number of years go by before they actually realize they have over-produced, enabling them to absorb their surplus liquidity. Eventually, however, there is a crash of some sort. It sounds astonishing that only five years ago the head of the IMF stated that the world was awash with surplus liquidity. What the evidence is now showing is that political pressure was used to push this liquidity into new areas, particularly mortgage finance. In the USA, political pressure was placed on US federal mortgage and finance companies (Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac) in order to get them into the subprime business. This idea had been circulating ever since the Community Reinvestment Act of the late 1970s. For a certain segment of the working population, subprime mortgages had worked, at least until the recent push that was due to surplus liquidity. Surplus liquidity is the real heart of the current problem.

Every time property markets and financial institutions have picked up after a crisis, financial innovation has been required in order to do it. This was true in 1853 in Paris. It was also true in 1945. A large proportion of the surplus liquidity and productive capacity available after 1945 was indirectly absorbed through the process of suburbanization in the USA. However, that suburbanization required new financial configurations, new state policies (particularly the GI Bill of Rights) and new tax incentives, for instance tax breaks on mortgages. The entire structure of mortgage finance

was revised to facilitate the suburbanization process. That process came to an end in the 1960s and 1970s. A different kind of dynamic then began to settle in. Financial innovation became crucial. The urbanization process needed to absorb the surplus had to go global (it went to China, it went to India ...). A global reform of the financial structure was necessary. Mortgages were bundled up in specific ways, getting them into institutions that started to spin off other institutions. Financial innovation became a way of accommodating these new configurations. For example, the financial system came up with derivatives. The derivatives market is an astonishing affair. It now involves betting on the value of unusual underlying assets such as weather futures (whose market worth is US\$4 billion) and pollution rights. Just a few years ago, while the global economy was worth US\$40 trillion, an estimated US\$286 trillion was circulating in the derivatives market, and in 2008 US\$600 trillion circulated in this market. We like to think that there is a big crash going on in Wall Street. While admittedly some of the hedge funds have gone bankrupt, four hedge fund managers drew down personal incomes of over US\$3 billion each out of these markets last year.

How is this possible? Why do states allow banks to innovate and behave as they please? Why do governments no longer concern themselves with the people? This reminds me of what took place in New York City (NYC) during the 1975 fiscal crisis. That fiscal crisis was part of a more general crisis in municipal finance across the USA. But it was deeper in NYC for some very particular reasons. This crisis of municipal finance followed on from the crisis of 1973, which started in property markets and spread over into financial institutions. During this crisis, investment bankers organized a financial coup against the elected government of NYC, essentially taking over its financial functions and mandating its policies. This period has taught me two basic principles for how to interpret the practices of neoliberalism, as opposed to its ideological mask. The first is to protect financial institutions at all costs. In other words, in the event of a conflict between the well-being of financial institutions and the well-being of the people, priority must be given to the former. The second principle is that governments are no longer to look after the well-being of a population, but rather to create a good business climate and therefore to encourage investments, whatever the cost. The theory behind that was of course that if investment is attracted, a rising tide will eventually 'trickle down' from the ceiling.

These two principles were for me what guided neoliberal politics from 1975 onwards. They became central to IMF practices and policies. When the IMF dealt with Mexico in 1982, it basically bailed the country out so that Mexico could

pay back investment bankers in NYC. It then proceeded to 'discipline' the country in order to ensure a 'good business climate'. This is where the neoliberal mask came in. It all has to be left to the market, it all has to be about individual responsibility – people cannot expect the nanny state to take care of them. In other words, the ideological mask was one thing and actual practices were another.

One visible outcome has been the biggest ever loss of assets for African-Americans (as the map of Cleveland indicates). My suggestion is that their losses represent the upper class's profit. Marxist geography invites us to analyse the connection between the map of Cleveland and what is going on in Wall Street.

Governments have of course taken equity stakes in order to avoid a new cycle. But this is not enough. We have to think about how to organize the banking system so that it can go into a place like Cleveland and stabilize the situation by rebuilding neighbourhoods and rebuilding lives. The banks on Wall Street will not do this by themselves. If this does not work, we need to create a new bank, a national reconstruction bank, and give it sufficient resources to go into places like Cleveland and work with the municipal government to reconstruct neighbourhoods. More generally, this new bank should contribute to the reconfiguration of the US urban system so that it becomes more energy-efficient and contributes to the creation of real employment opportunities. In other words, a national reconstruction programme is in order. One way of achieving this could be through the nationalization of one of the banks in order to make sure that its decisions are in line with the general interest.

What about the 3 per cent compound growth rate? In 1850, the global economy (counting both goods and services) was estimated at approximately US\$135 billion. In 1950, it was valued at US\$4 trillion at constant value and in 2000 at US\$40 trillion. Today it is valued at around US\$46–48 trillion. Imagine a 3 per cent compound rate of growth based on that starting point! Another way of imagining it would be this: a 3 per cent compound rate of growth on activities that are confined to a 50 mile radius around the city of Manchester and a few other hotspots is one thing. However, a 3 per cent compound growth rate on everything that is going on in China, Japan and South-East Asia, in Europe, in North America, in Latin America, and in the Gulf States is something altogether different. A rate of 3 per cent entails a doubling of economic activity every 15 years. And the ultimate result is the formation of fictitious bubbles where assets are pushed up very hard and then suddenly crash.

What we really have to do is to take hold of the surplus so that the people who produce it (that is, workers in the real economy) control the surplus and are able to dispose of it. They are the ones who should start thinking of the construction of a totally different world. Yet the folk on Wall Street are still making massive amounts of money. What we are seeing right now is that assets are not being consolidated for the benefit of the people, but are being reconstituted and reconstructed around a particular class configuration. In other words, we are witnessing a consolidation and centralization of class power into the hands of a few institutions that escape public control. Unless we fight this tendency, by the time we come out of this crisis we shall end up running straight into the next one.☺

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Foreseeing future population challenges

Joseph Chamie

The major population challenges that we will be faced with in the twenty-first century are becoming evident: population growth, urbanization, population ageing and international migration. These trends, and the accompanying critical demographic differentials, have significant social, economic, environmental and political consequences at the global, regional, national and subnational levels. Effectively dealing with the world of tomorrow requires us to understand, anticipate and address these global population trends.

The evolution and rapid growth of the world's population raises new and important challenges. Demography is vital to understanding and anticipating future changes in population that will shape the world through the twenty-first century.

Historical developments

For most of history, the world's population has grown at a very slow rate. In the very earliest period, small human populations were concentrated in eastern and southern areas of Africa. Some 60,000 years ago, these populations expanded not only along the coastal and inland areas of the tropics of Africa but also to the coasts of South Asia and Oceania. This migration continued so that 30,000 years ago, most of Eurasia as well as significant portions of the western hemisphere were settled.

Thousands of centuries were needed for the global human population to reach 300 million by the year AD 1 (Table 1.1). Towards the close of the fifteenth century, the world's population was approaching the half-billion mark, representing an increase of some 200 million over a period of 1,500 years. When Thomas Malthus wrote his famous essay on population at the end of the eighteenth century, the world's population had not yet reached 1 billion.

Despite the fact that human populations had already started to move to distant lands, some of the most important migration flows between continents began during the sixteenth century at a time of rapid European population growth, and spread westward. By the middle of the eighteenth century, less than 3 per cent of world's population (then approximately 800 million people) lived in the Americas. By the middle of the twentieth century, the proportion of the world's population living in the Americas had increased nearly sixfold to 14 per cent.

Before modern times, practically all of the world's population lived off the countryside. A thousand years ago, only a minute fraction of the world's population – less than 1 per cent – lived in towns or cities. By 1700 this proportion had hardly changed, and only five cities had more than 500,000 inhabitants: Istanbul, Tokyo, Peking, Paris and London. By 1800, approximately 3 per cent of the world's population lived in cities or urban centres. By 1900, this proportion had grown to around 15 per cent.

In striking contrast to earlier periods, the twentieth century was one of revolutionary demographic developments, unparalleled during all preceding centuries. The unprecedented growth in the world's population in the twentieth century dramatically impacted the course of life on this planet. The world's population practically quadrupled during the twentieth century, growing from 1.6 to 6.1 billion people. The twentieth century also ushered in radical changes in human survival and reproduction. Numerous vaccines for diseases such as smallpox or polio

TABLE 1.1 > World population milestones

Population	Year (AD)
0.3 billion	1
0.5 billion	1500
1 billion	1804
2 billion	1927
3 billion	1960
4 billion	1974
5 billion	1987
6 billion	1999
7 billion	2011
8 billion	2025
9 billion	2045

Source: United Nations Population Division.



Two generations, Pakistan
© UNESCO/Sayyed Nayyer Reza

were developed; average life expectancy at birth extended beyond 60 years, and at the global level, the average number of children per woman dropped by half. In addition, the world's population was increasingly concentrated in urban areas, with close to half of humanity living in towns and cities by the end of the twentieth century.

High levels of international migration were another significant demographic feature of the twentieth century. After slowing down in the wake of the First World War and during the Great Depression, there was a significant increase in migration during and after the Second World War. Decolonization also contributed to the growth in migration flows. By 1960, there were an estimated 77 million migrants in the world; fifty years later the number had almost tripled to 214 million.

Five upcoming trends

In the coming decades, major population challenges can be expected.

First, the planet will have to sustain a much larger population than today. With annual increases of 78 million, today's global population of 6.8 billion will almost certainly reach 7 billion by 2011 and most probably 8 billion by 2025. After that, things are far more uncertain. If fertility rates continue to decline and reach the projected replacement levels, the world's population could stabilize between 9 and 10 billion in the second half of the twenty-first century.

Second, practically all of the world's future population growth will occur in the world's less-developed regions. Africa's population is projected to double by 2050, reaching the 2 billion mark, and the populations of Asia and Latin America are also projected to increase markedly over the next 40 years (from 4.2 to 5.2 billion and from 589 to 729 million respectively). In contrast, a number of European countries, as well as Japan and the Republic of Korea, are entering a period of population decline. However, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the USA are expected to continue growing, largely as a result of international migration.

Third, while population ageing was an important demographic development during the twentieth century, demographic ageing will become even more critical during the twenty-first century. The proportion of the world's population aged 65 or older is likely to double by the middle of the century. In a number of countries such as Italy, Japan and Spain, one in three people is expected to be 65 or older in 2050.

Population ageing raises serious issues such as increased immigration, the financial viability of pension systems, and the adequacy of existing health-care systems for the elderly. Today's social security, pensions and health-care budgets are in the black largely because of the favourable demographics of the past. A declining active population and a growing number of pensioners are expected to lead to what many label a 'red ink' society.

The ageing of the population presents even greater challenges for many less-developed countries, which are ill prepared to deal with the growing needs of their elderly populations. These countries already have low levels of economic development, and the ageing process there is occurring at a far quicker pace than occurred historically among developed nations. Consequently, most developing countries lack the necessary institutional mechanisms, such as pension or health-care systems, for the provision of even the most basic assistance and care for their ageing population.

Fourth, the majority of the world's projected population growth over the coming decades will take place in urban areas, where the majority of humanity now resides. Over the next three decades, urban areas in less-developed regions are expected to double in size, growing from about 2 billion people today to close to 4 billion by 2030. There will be a significant increase in the number of very

large cities, or megacities, with populations of 10 million or more.

Fifth, international migration is expected to remain high throughout the twenty-first century. The more developed regions are expected to continue to be net receivers of international migrants, with an average gain of more than 2.5 million per year over the next 40 years. Today, many European countries already rely on international migration for their modest population growth, to replenish their shrinking labour forces and to support and care for their ageing populations. At the same time, the populations of most sending countries continue to grow relatively quickly, with many working-aged individuals having difficulties in finding steady employment and increasingly resorting to illegal immigration.

Conclusion

While the future remains uncertain, the major population challenges that we will be faced with in the twenty-first century are becoming evident: population growth, urbanization, population ageing and international migration. These trends, and the accompanying critical demographic differentials, have significant social, economic, environmental and political consequences at the global, regional, national and subnational levels. Effectively dealing with the world of tomorrow requires us to understand, anticipate and address these global population trends. Enhancing demographic research is an essential ingredient to meet these challenges. Demography provides both a powerful microscope with which to view the underlying dynamics of humanity's changes and a far-reaching telescope foreseeing the coming population challenges and their likely consequences for other vital issues such as climate change, energy consumption and natural resource depletion. ☺

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Cities in today's global age

Saskia Sassen

Much is known about the wealth and power of global firms and financial exchanges. What is less clear is why cities should matter more in a globalized world than in the preceding Keynesian decades. Nor is it clear in what ways the financialization of a growing range of economic sectors affects cities. Major current structural trends are generating new types of social and spatial inequality that ultimately alter the meaning of the urban and the civic. This is especially evident in global cities.

As recently as the 1970s, many of our great cities were in physical decay and were losing people, firms, key roles in the national economy, and their share of national wealth. The leading cities of the three major economic powers – New York, Tokyo and London – were bankrupt. But as we moved into the 1990s and 2000s, a rapidly growing number of cities re-emerged as strategic places for a wide range of activities and dynamics. This has, at least in part, been due to the new economic role of cities in national economies and in an increasingly globalized world.

Much is known about the wealth and power of global firms and financial exchanges. Their ascendancy in a globalizing world is no longer surprising. New information and communication technologies are also generally recognized as the servants of economic globalization and as providing its tools and infrastructure. After 20 years of corporate economic globalization, we know that these firms and exchanges are highly susceptible to crisis. Since the 1980s, there have been five major global financial crises, in addition to adjustment crises in over 70 countries. Finally, the latest crisis has made the extreme levels of financialization visible across almost all economic sectors throughout most of the world.

What is less clear is why cities should matter more in a globalized world than in the preceding Keynesian decades. Nor is it clear in what ways the financialization of a growing range of economic sectors affects cities, especially global cities. Finally, while inequality has long been a feature of cities, major current structural trends are generating new types of social and spatial inequality that ultimately alter the meaning of the urban and the civic. This is especially evident in global cities, which become the sites of new kinds of political actors and practices.

From the Keynesian city to the global city

In their early histories, cities, were above all centres for administration, small-scale manufacturing and commerce. They were mostly the space for rather routinized endeavours. The strategic spaces in which major innovations were happening were government (the making of social contracts, such as the welfare state) and mass manufacturing, including the mass construction of suburban regions and national transport infrastructures.

The most common and easiest explanation of why cities became strategic in a global corporate economy is the continuing need for face-to-face communications and for creative classes and inputs. However, in my reading, these are surface conditions which cannot fully explain the new phase.

The rise of cities as strategic economic spaces is the consequence of a deeper structural transformation evident in all developed economies. This affects cities at multiple levels, from the provincial to the global. At the heart of this deep structural trend is the fact that firms in all economic sectors (from finance and insurance to mining, factories, transport systems and hospitals as well as governments at all levels) are today buying more services, such as insurance, accounting, legal, financial, consulting and software programming. Until recently, most firms, governments and households produced these services themselves. Now they are bought from a rapidly expanding specialized intermediate service sector. An increasing number of households are also buying these services, but this is part of final consumption rather than of the intermediate economy.

These kinds of intermediate services tend to be produced in cities, no matter how rural the location of the mine or steel plant that they service. So even an economy based

on manufacturing or mining will feed the urban corporate services economy. Firms operating in more routinized and subnational markets increasingly buy these service inputs from more local or regional cities. This explains why we see the growth of a professional class and its associated environment even in cities that are not global. Global cities differ because they are able to handle the more complex needs of firms and exchanges operating globally. It is only in its most extreme forms that this transformation feeds into the growth of global cities, cutting across the binary divide between the national and the global.

The outcomes of this structural condition become wired into urban space. The growth of a high-income professional class and high-profit corporate service firms becomes visible in urban space through the growing demand for state-of-the-art office buildings, and for luxury consumption and residential space. The growing demand for such buildings and spaces has led to massive and visible displacement of more modest-income households and modest profit-making firms, no matter how healthy these may be from the perspective of the economy and market demand. In this process, urban space itself is one of the actors producing the outcome.¹

This partly explains why architecture, urban design and urban planning have played such critical roles. From the 1980s onwards we have seen the partial rebuilding of cities as platforms for a rapidly growing range of globalized activities and flows, from the economic to the cultural and political. This explains why global cities became also objects of, as well as for, investment when this global phase took off in the 1980s. It also explains why global cities expanded so rapidly as globalization proceeded. In turn, each of these new global cities became an object of investment – cities as diverse as Dublin and Buenos Aires in the 1990s, and Istanbul in the 2000s. Dozens of cities entered this pattern at one point or another in these two decades.

1. My most pessimistic scenario in my new project, *The New Wars and Cities: After Mumbai*, is that conflict is now wired into urban space itself. This is partly due to gentrification and displacement, and the resulting politics of competition for space. In some cities (for example, New York and Los Angeles) this has taken the form of massive direct and indirect eviction of lower-income people and enterprises from the gentrifying areas as well as the rise of gangs claiming and controlling neighbourhood space. In other cities (in Europe and Shanghai) it takes the form of new racisms that can lead to physical violence. In some cities (São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro), at its most extreme, it takes the form of partial sporadic urban warfare, including warfare in prisons. See <http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/the-new-wars-and-cities-after-mumbai> (Accessed 28 November 2008.). See also http://cgt.columbia.edu/events/cities_and_new_wars/

When I first developed the global city model in the 1980s, my starting points were the global networks of firm affiliates, global financial exchanges, global trade routes and global commodity chains. The emergent scholarship on globalization examining these global operations emphasized geographical dispersal, decentralization and deterritorialization, and rightly so. But I was interested in the territorial moment of these increasingly electronic and globally dispersed operations. At that time, I proposed to focus on New York and Los Angeles, which seemed to be major territorial nodes. However, my methodology – starting with firms' and exchanges' global operations, and tracking the sites where they went – forced me to recognize that during the 1980s, it was New York, London and Tokyo that stood out, with Los Angeles lower on the list.

Applying this methodology today leads us to a vastly expanded global geography of sites. There is more of everything – global cities, export processing zones, offshore banking centres, and massive warehouses that are just one stop on global trade routes.

The multiple circuits of the global economy

There is no such entity as 'the' global economy. There are global formations, such as electronic financial markets and firms that operate globally. But the current era's key feature is a vast number of highly particular global circuits – some specialized, others not – that criss-cross the world, connecting specific groups of cities. While many of these global circuits have long existed, what began to change in the 1980s were their proliferation and their increasingly complex organizational and financial frames. These emergent inter-city geographies have begun to function as an infrastructure for globalization. They also increasingly urbanize global networks.

Different circuits contain different groups of countries and cities. For instance, Mumbai is today part of a global circuit for real-estate development that includes investors from cities as diverse as London and Bogotá. While coffee is mostly produced in Brazil, Kenya and Indonesia, the main trading place for coffee futures is Wall Street – even though New York does not grow a single bean. Each of the specialized circuits in gold, coffee, oil and other commodities involves particular places, which will vary depending on whether it is a production, trading or financial circuit. And then there are the types of circuits that a firm such as Wal-Mart needs in order to outsource the production of vast amounts of goods, including manufacturing, trading, and financial/insurance service circuits. If we were to track the global circuits of gold

as a financial instrument, London, New York, Chicago and Zurich would dominate. However, the wholesale gold trade places São Paulo, Johannesburg and Sydney on this map, with Mumbai and Dubai added through the trade in gold for and in jewellery – much of it aimed at the retail trade. While New York and London are the world's biggest financial centres, they do not dominate all markets. Chicago is the leading financial centre for futures trading. In the 1990s, Frankfurt became the leading trader for British treasury bonds, of all things. These cities are all financial leaders in the global economy, but they lead in different sectors and they are different types of financial centres.

Global economic forces are not the only ones to feed the formation and development of this proliferation of circuits. These are also fed by migration, cultural work, and civil society struggles to preserve human rights, the environment and social justice. NGOs fighting for the protection of the rainforest function in circuits that include Brazil and Indonesia as homes of the major rainforests, the global media centres of New York and London, and the places where the key forestry companies that buy and sell wood are headquartered – Oslo, London and Tokyo. There are particular music circuits that connect specific areas of India with London, New York, Chicago and Johannesburg.

Adopting the perspective of one of these cities reveals the diversity and specificity of its location on some or many of these circuits. These emergent inter-city geographies begin to function as an infrastructure for multiple forms of globalization. The critical nodes in these inter-city geographies are the highly specialized capabilities present in each city, more so than the cities as a whole. These are strategic inter-city geographies, consisting of multiple and diverse circuits.

Another critical part of being a global firm or market is that it ultimately means entering the particularities of national economies. This explains why these global actors need more and more global cities as they expand their operations across the world. Handling these national factors is a far more complex process than simply imposing global standards.

This process is easier to understand if we consider consumer sectors other than the organizational and managerial ones addressed in this article. For example, a routinized operation such as McDonald's adjusts its products to the national cultures in which it operates, which might be in France, Japan or South Africa. The global city contains the

resources and talents that are needed to bridge global actors and national specifics. This explains why cities' specialized differences are so critical now, more so than is usually recognized. In turn, this explains why the world's many and very diverse global cities do not just compete with each other. Collectively, they also form a globally networked platform for the operations of firms and markets as well as a variety of other actors, from NGOs to cultural organizations.

The network of global cities has expanded as more and more firms have gone global and entered a growing range of national economies. The management and servicing of much of the global economic system takes place in this growing network of global cities and city-regions. While this role only involves certain components of urban economies, it has contributed to the national and global repositioning of cities.

This repositioning, and the fact that cities do not simply compete with each other, takes on added importance at a time when cities are at the forefront of a range of governance challenges that are usually understood as being purely global. Many cities have had to develop the capabilities needed to handle these so-called global challenges long before national states signed international treaties or passed national laws. The air-quality crises in cities such as Tokyo and Los Angeles in the 1980s had to be dealt with (and were) as a matter of urgency, without waiting for national governments to pass car emissions laws.

Cities are forming new kinds of alliances to confront global firms and to address the new environmental challenges. These are only two of many possible types of engagement that cities might embark upon.

There is not one model global city

While there is competition between cities, there is far less of it than is usually assumed. A global firm does not want one global city but many. Given the level of specialization of globalized firms, the preferred cities vary from firm to firm.

The many different specializations of cities and urban regions in today's global economy arise from their specific deep economic history, which is of fundamental importance for the type of knowledge economy that a city or a city-region ends up developing. This goes against the common view that globalization homogenizes economies. The extent to which this deep economic history matters varies, and partly depends on the economic particulars of a city or region.

Globalization homogenizes standards – for managing, accounting, building state-of-the-art office districts, and so on. It does, however, need diverse and specialized economic capabilities. The capabilities to globally trade, finance, service and invest need to be developed; they are not simply a by-product of the power of multinational firms and telecommunications advances. Different cities have different resources and talents for producing particular types of capabilities. The global city is a platform for producing such global capabilities, even when this requires large numbers of foreign firms, as is the case in cities as diverse as Beijing and Santiago. The world has more than 70 major and minor global cities. Each contributes to the production of these capabilities in its home country, and thereby functions as a bridge between its national economy and the global economy.

A large 2008 study of seventy-five cities rated the top cities for worldwide commerce. Not one of them ranks at the top in all of the 60-plus variables, and not one gets the perfect score of 100.² The scores for the top two cities are 79 for London and 72 for New York; further down, the city ranked 10th, Amsterdam, scores 60, and Madrid 59. London and New York – the two leading global cities – rank low in several important aspects. Neither is in the top ten when it comes to starting or closing a business.

Perhaps most surprising is that London ranks 37th on contract enforcement and 21st on investor protection. Singapore ranks number 1 on both variables. Less surprising is that New York ranks 34th on liveability, defined in terms of health and safety. In the global South, cities such as Mumbai and São Paulo are in the top group for financial and economic services, but their overall score is decreased by their low rankings on ease of doing business and liveability, given their low levels of well-being for vast sectors of the population. Perhaps most surprising is the rise of small European cities such as Copenhagen and the fall of large US cities such as Los Angeles.

In the growing number of global cities and their differences, we witness the larger story of a shift to a multipolar world. The US cities' loss of position, compared with the 2006 survey, is part of this shift. It is not that the USA is suddenly

2. The 2008 *Mastercard Worldwide Centres of Commerce Index* (Mastercard Worldwide, 2008), for which the author was a panel member, ranks 75 cities according to more than 60 variables that cover a wide range of conditions – from macro-level factors such as political and legal frameworks, to the particulars of how easy it is to execute an import or export operation, how many days it takes to open and to close a firm, liveability factors and a city's global recognition.

less important. Instead other regions of the world are rising, and there are multiple forces feeding their multi-sited economic, political and cultural strengths.

New types of informal economies and urban innovation

The new spatial and economic inequalities take specific concrete forms. One of these is the recent growth of informal economies in major global cities in North America, Western Europe and to a lesser extent Japan. Much of today's informalization is actually linked to key features of advanced urban capitalism. This explains the particularly strong growth and dynamism of these informal economies in global cities, including a mostly overlooked development: the proliferation of an informal economy of creative professional workers including artists, architects, designers and software developers.

The decline of the manufacturing-dominated industrial complex that characterized most of the twentieth century, and the rise of a new, service-dominated economic complex, provides the general context for informalization. Demand for informally produced and distributed products and services is encouraged by the growth of a high-income, high-profit urban sector. This generates a demand for craftwork, design and low-income, labour-intensive products and services, such as prepared food and a range of household services.

The new creative, professional informal economy is partly a function of an expanded supply of university graduates who find themselves in a shrinking labour market. More significant is the active demand for design inputs into a vastly expanded range of products, services and built environments. The migration of young, middle-class university graduates to cities, especially global cities, has stimulated a proliferation of informal studio work that may eventually become formalized. Starting informally is a means of exploring opportunities and options. Once such an informal creative economy exists, it greatly expands opportunities and networking potential for artists and professionals. Operating at least partly informally allows these professionals to function in the interstices of urban and organizational spaces which are often dominated by large corporate actors, and to escape the corporatization of creative work. In this process, they contribute two very specific features of the new urban economy: its innovativeness and its new frontier spirit. We can see this as a reinvention of Jane Jacobs' urban economic creativity.

These new types of work informalization match the formal deregulation of finance, telecommunications and most other advanced economic sectors pursued in the name of flexibility and innovation. But while formal deregulation was costly, and was paid for by tax revenues as well as private capital, informalization is low-cost and is largely the responsibility of workers and informal firms themselves. Conditions akin to those in the global cities of the North may produce a new type of low-income informal economy in cities of the global South, alongside the older, survival informal economies and the professional, creative informal economy.

Conclusion

This type of analysis has theoretical and political implications. The fact that global firms need cities – and indeed groups of cities – unsettles common notions of the mobility of capital and the capacity of electronic networks to escape territorial limitations, and hence the regulatory frameworks of territorial governments. Politically, this means that it should enable these cities' political, corporate and civic leaders to negotiate more benefits for their cities from global firms. This could lead to positive outcomes if the governing classes can see that these global economic functions will grow better in the context of a strong and

prosperous middle class, rather than in the polar inequality that exists among a growing share of households. European global cities have done better than global cities in the USA precisely for this reason.

The trends in the new rising cities of the global South track the now-familiar trends of the global North: the growing numbers of the very rich and the very poor, along with increasingly impoverished traditional middle classes. In these cities, there will be fewer modest middle-class households and fewer modestly profitable economic sectors. These were once the major economic presence in these cities, and they are critical to the urban economy because their incomes are most likely to be fully spent there. Their presence provides built-in resistance to the spatial and social reshaping of cities along extreme, polar class lines.

We urgently need to innovate on the front of urban governance. The old bureaucratic ways will not do. Ours is a whole new urban era, with its share of positive potential as well as miseries. In cities, our governance challenges become concrete and urgent. National states can keep talking; urban leadership needs to act. 😊

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Marginalization, violence, and why we need new modernization theories

David E. Apter

The hypothesis is that insofar as development-cum-marginalization results in the individualization of risk, the more frequent will be efforts to collectivize it. Collectivization of risk takes many forms, including so-called fundamentalisms, ‘tribalism’ and extreme sectarianism. Each becomes useful in terms of transforming the risk-taker into the risk-maker, whether through confrontation, social movements, extra-institutional protest, terrorism or, more occasionally, revolution.

A better name for this paper would have been ‘outline of a theory of practice’, Pierre Bourdieu’s title for his magisterial study uniting a structuralism of sorts with a phenomenology of sorts. Here, I want to present my own version of such an ‘outline’: one that includes a structural argument about some of the social and political consequences of scientific innovation in a context of modern global development, as well as a logic of contradictions produced by the way the latter makes use of science and innovative knowledge. I want to connect this logic of contradiction to the political condition of negative pluralism, a condition that undermines the basic premises of democratic institutions embedded in positive pluralism. I will also attempt what might be called a palimpsest – an outline of a new kind of modernization theory. Like its earlier version, this theory will emphasize the structural, but in its newer version, emphasize more phenomenological themes.

In the more particular context of this Report, I shall also be concerned with some of the pitfalls arising from science itself, especially as applied instrumentally. As I see it, one of the presumed virtues of the social sciences is that by applying theories to facts, we can uncover what has hitherto been hidden from view, and by so doing redefine relevance, identify new problems and turn attention to what otherwise might have remained obscure. To put it differently, I see the task of the social sciences as the reasoned interpretation of experience through the discovery of valid generalizations and their application to particular events. We seek theoretical and useful knowledge to which both the unique and the familiar contribute. Within that frame, science, and particularly social science – despite profound differences with respect to the appropriate forms and fashions of the scientific enterprise – provide opportunities to enrich understanding, not only about how

to ‘do’ social science, but also how to think about it, and how best to evaluate where it stands in the order of things, and in the process change the order itself. But what if that ‘order’ is conventionalized by the social sciences themselves, so that they become part of the problem rather than the solution? Hence, the political and theoretical argument I propose requires us to look at the wider effects of social science knowledge on the institutions and conditions in which it operates.

With this perspective in mind, I want to try my hand at ‘revealing’ what I think is a range of problems hidden beneath the kind of theory that purports to deal with the ‘big’ contemporary problems: war and peace, recession and prosperity, justice and violence. These consume our daily lives and impinge on us as citizens and scholars. My starting point is something we can designate as global developmental, whose social consequences are visible in the multiple crises we confront today and obscure others waiting down the road – some of them stemming from the very efforts to use science and information, knowledge and education to resolve them. In short, I intend to discuss some of the ways in which the spread of rational inquiry itself, not to speak of the institutions devoted to that end, can – in a context of modern global development – lead to serious perversities in social and political life. A bifurcation in public space and private roles, whose consequences will be touched on below, is not the least of these consequences.

Among those consequences are social differences that break down what in large measure constitutes common understanding. Indeed, even common-sense causes and effects become different from the prevailing norms for people most penalized by the process of development. These differences include what will be recognized as

applicable, valid rules of the game. It is not only in so-called 'failed states' that people marginalized by the development process live under conditions of great personal risk, and confronting a rogue environment, see threatening and random perversities around them. In short, I want to address some of the structural conditions that in effect privatize public institutions and, at worst, make democracy a form of paralysis, a kind of bad joke. Hence, in this essay, the concern is with the negative social and political effects of knowledge itself, and its consequences in the opportunity and meaning structures that affect people in their daily lives, including some of the social pathologies that knowledge exacerbates rather than ameliorates.

The structural argument

Among the consequences of global development are quantum leaps in scientific and technological knowledge. Applied as productive outputs, these have a continuous and creative impact on social life. The impacts are highly differentiated, depending on where we stand in the social system. If, for some, the effects include opening up opportunities and expanding choice, for others, these same factors prejudice rather than add to their prosperity. This results from a bifurcation between those whose roles are marginalized in the productive process and those whose roles (by becoming more and more functional) are elevated to the status of elites. This suggests a structural model with two opposite poles, a condition of extreme marginalization leading to a virtual condition of functional superfluosity, and a knowledge-producing class of ever greater functional significance. We might consider the 'pulls' between these tendencies as a kind of dialectic, not in terms of a proletariat as Marx would have it, but in ways of looking at the world as well as at life opportunities, conditions and circumstances. The marginalized are departrimonialized, displaced and dispersed – and in both 'metropolises' and 'peripheries'. Social vulnerability goes with such displacement from normalcy (Wacquant, 2009).

I do not want to overstate the case. That there have been vast benefits from globalization cannot be denied. At its best, capitalism remains innovative, creative, entrepreneurial, stimulating and imaginative. But the point is that these very virtues have become part of the problem, a problem that is built into the industrial process itself, as the following explains:

1. Growth depends on increasing productivity.
2. Increased productivity depends on innovations in design and their application to product outputs.
3. Such output applications increasingly take the form of capital-intensive industry at the expense of labour-intensive industry.
4. This results in redundancies in the labour-intensive sector, especially among the unskilled and poorly educated.
5. Prolonged unemployment, especially among the least skilled and most poorly educated, turns an economic condition of unemployment into a social condition of marginality.
6. Marginality represents a sector of functionally superfluous people for whom no prospects for improvement are easily available.
7. Marginality individualizes risk.
8. Risk reduces the efficacy of programmes designed to help those displaced by institutional means, including schools and training programmes and the like, which validate failure more than realize success.
9. The more such social pathologies spread, the more difficult it is to eliminate the negative consequences of risk without vast state expenditure on compensatory and welfare programmes (which are almost invariably inefficient).
10. Increased state expenditure brings rising social overhead costs.
11. Such costs reduce the state's ability to mediate and balance appropriate principles of equity and growth.

At least two points should be noted about this line of argument. It is as much a sociological argument as an economic one, and a psychological argument as much as a sociological one. The first and second are structural, the third is psychological, and all three are ingredients of a political argument about negative rather than positive pluralism and growing political violence (despite vast expenditures on arms and military adventures). In short, the emphasis here is on social and political pathologies produced by global capitalism.¹

1. No one-to-one correspondence between, say, workforce marginalization, social polarization and political violence is implied in these comments. Nor is marginality all of a piece. There is the marginalization of the downwardly mobile and the newly unemployed. There is the marginality of the urban ghetto and the rural township, the Paris banlieues and the slums of Nairobi and so on. And with them go vast differences in the terms of the social and cultural life in each. To some degree, these are dependent on where race, religion, ethnicity, clanship or combinations of these are predominant influences.

In this argument, risk plays a central role. The greater the degree of marginalization, the greater the likelihood that those functionally displaced in these terms will use alternative forms of identity. These alternative identities serve to mobilize, to establish mutual confidences, and above all, serve as ways to collectivize risk. My hypothesis is that insofar as development-cum-marginalization results in the individualization of risk, the more frequent will be efforts to collectivize it. Collectivization of risk takes many forms, including (especially in the absence of reasonable socialist alternatives) so-called fundamentalisms, 'tribalism' and extreme sectarianism. Each becomes useful in terms of transforming the risk-taker into the risk-maker, through confrontation, social movements, extra-institutional protest, terrorism or more occasionally revolution: in short, violence. These latter themes are of course as old as social science itself, and each has its own literature, which it would be pointless to recount or deal with here. However, many of these themes were perhaps intrinsic to the kind of 'systems theory' that characterized early modernization theories. It might make sense to say something about that original perspective before trying to turn it on its head in terms of truths and consequences.

Modernization theory as a theoretical point of departure

Among the many things that the 'old' modernization theorists ignored were the ever higher social overhead costs which, developmentally induced, forced themselves on us politically, while remaining unrecognized by still dominant political, economic and sociological models. Today, we see the fallout of such defaults. If my assumptions are correct, models are now needed that are better able to connect the structural conditions prevailing today – economic as well as social – to more interpretative modes of analysis. Indeed, a good many of the facts we are after lie in what people say about their circumstances, how they interpret their condition, and the narratives they form, from and out of which they construct a logic of action. When it comes to matters of protest, we particularly need to be able to read words and acts like a text (a social text, as Geertz would have it), and to see what such readings reveal politically in terms of compensatory principles.

In fact, as regards a more phenomenological turn, the old modernization theory was on the verge of exploring some of these issues when it came to an abrupt end. The categories – functionalities, development, structures, role differentiation, innovation and others which are equally emblematic – used in what was called systems theory were about to take a more phenomenological turn, especially

in the last work of Talcott Parsons. Before that could really happen, however, modernization theory effectively disappeared. Ironically the phenomenological emphasis survived, but deriving as it did from such diverse sources as linguistic theory, analytical structuralism, interpretive sociology and even literary theory, it never attained more than dubious status as belonging to the corpus of social science *tout court*. Despite such status, I would argue that it is essential to a revised and more relevant form of modernization theory that is relevant for current purposes.

Let me be clear. On the whole, the old modernization theory disappeared for good reasons. Moreover, even at its peak, it was influential but never dominant in the social sciences, and it was always the object of suspicion (which applies even more so to interpretive theory today). Among the many weaknesses of early modernization theory was that its categories ignored the important ways that people interpreted 'systemically defined' reality on the ground. There was much talk about norms and values, but in the abstract rather than concretely. On the whole, it ignored the events and actual circumstances of roles and the lives as lived within them. Missing was much sense of how interpretation acted to change that reality itself. As a result, a good number of the theory's more confident predications turned out to be, if not wrong, then not right enough – such as the rise of secularism at the expense of the sacred (Andrain, 2008), and the self-evident rationalities of choice and self-regulating markets. Missing from modernization theory was what later also came to be called cultural sociology – not only more phenomenological concerns, but politics as interpretation, as acting out, as performance, as symbolic behaviour. Even if we accept that the driving force of development was industrialization, and development was the driving force of modernization, over time it has become clear that universal functionality does not so easily ride roughshod over prevailing and more parochial particularisms such as race, ethnicity, religion, and differences of language and kinship.²

In this sense, modernization theory failed to see how industrialization, notwithstanding extraordinary increases in productivity, generates implacable social problems and

2. Anyone who today reads Kerr et al., *Industrialism and Industrial Man* (1960), or case studies of innovation, such as those by Burns and Stalker, *The Management of Innovation* (1961), can see how persuasive such ideas of modernization appeared to be and how beguiling as policy and practice.

political instability, and increases public and private risk.³ In this regard, the radical and Marxist critiques that preceded and succeeded modernization theory were more prescient. Modernization theorists, for all their broad perspectives, never dreamed they would live to see the old metropolises peripheralized, with China, India, Brazil and other countries becoming the new engines of industrial growth at the expense of the old. Little attention was paid to some of the less benign and enduring legacies that served as the context for much of the world in which modernization was occurring, namely imperialism, whose aftermath included serious distortions in local social life, and what might be called pathologies of alien power and control. There was even less concern with the impact that imperialism had on the 'imperialists' themselves and with metropolises being treated as insular, self-sustaining sources of modernization, and not heir to its backlashes.

There were other early modernization theory failures too. Attacked by a barrage of critical theories – dependency, neo-Marxism, and their variants – a good many critiques were also a response to the ferment occurring on the ground in much of the developing world (not to mention its occurrence within the metropolises themselves). Beginning in the late 1950s there was a virtual explosion of local and international protests, solidarity movements, pan-Africanism, and developing-world expressions of socialism and nationalism, with radical socialist metropolises emerging in Accra, Conakry, Algiers, Cuba and Pyongyang, not to speak of such hot spots of visible imperialism as the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya, Vietnam and the Algerian War – events to which most modernization theorists remained largely oblivious. It was not Parsons who addressed these issues but Fanon.

Structurally, then, modernization theory failed precisely in those aspects in which it should have succeeded. It argued that development and modernization would lead to benign effects, diversity, complexity, differentiation and pluralization. But all these turn ugly in the face of profound cleavages between citizens. Is there any point at all in going back to earlier forms of modernization theory? I think the answer is yes. I believe modernization theory had greater depth and theoretical power than its critics have given it credit for. Above all, it was about systemic change. Societies were its primary units of analysis. Its central problem was how to examine the possibilities of functional integration

3. Aside from my own work on nationalist movements and protest, very few modernization studies emphasized social movements. Among the exceptions were Neil Smelser (1963) and, much later and in a very different tradition, Alain Touraine (1984) and Anthony Giddens (1985).

by societal systems and subsystems under conditions of rapid transformational innovative change. However, if it has any relevance today, it would be for examining the breakdown of functioning institutions and the ensuing disorder and violence.

New modernization theory and negative pluralism

I have suggested that if we start with the structural predicaments and the logic behind them, as described above, a new modernization theory can become useful for the recognition and the analysis of negative pluralism. It has been suggested that market-driven growth favours capital-intensive industry over labour-intensive industry at the expense of employment. This produces the need for people with high educational, training and technical attainments. Required too is an educational process that creates a divide between the technologically literate and the technologically disadvantaged. The resulting polarization goes well beyond theories of class division to cognitive differences, each with its own deployment of intelligence. This exacerbates differences in which cleavage politics takes the form of negative pluralism, i.e. one in which interests are raised to the level of principles. This highlights differences of religion, caste, race, language and other categorical affiliations, and turns them into often-profound convictions, exaggerating differences rather than minimizing them, and favouring the potential for conflict over mediation. In turn, this reinforces and perpetuates differences that threaten prevailing institutional frameworks, renders party politics a war by other means, and undermines the ideals of a democratic political system. By adding a more phenomenological understanding of how people read the logic of their situation and act on that, we can begin to understand how and why even the best-laid and most predictive structural understanding is so frequently up-ended in events. In fact, in these respects, none of the successors to modernization theory fared any better than the systems of which it was so critical. As a result, the social sciences are perpetually chasing after unanticipated events, especially those that not only redefine facts on the ground, but also the analytical space within which knowledge and understanding occur.

What can democracy mean under such circumstances? Virtually all liberal doctrines contain an assumption – explicit or implicit – that for the most part citizen choices are rational. Choosing is itself a function of the marketplace, whether economic (goods and services) or political (votes and candidates, facts and values). Ends are open in both, but with rationality, the magic of the market is

to produce collective outcomes. Each is independently equilibrating, and in tandem, the two constitute a moving equilibrium. Democracy as a moving equilibrium works when the private economic market dilutes concentrations of power in the political market, while the latter reallocates wealth in the economic market according to preferred principles and preferences manifested in both markets. In effect, democracy is a model of mutually compensatory and distributive consequences. The better it works, the more integrative and stable the society and state become.

It is when democracy works in this fashion that we can speak of positive pluralism – the kind that concerned modernization theorists. Differences of principle are accommodated as interests, which, appropriately mediated according to appropriately weighted and allocated priorities based on fair rules of representation, allow for faith in the future. We can believe that if interests are not serviced politically or economically at one point, they will as a whole or in part be serviced at another point in time. Diversity, then, is a choice. The proliferation of difference enriches society rather than dividing it. But if the two markets reinforce each other by concentrating both wealth and power in the same hands, the opposite happens. With polarization reinforced by both the economic and the political markets, and when risk and uncertainty become the common condition of those marginalized or becoming marginalized, the likelihood grows that groups will form that favour their own ends at the expense of others.

In short, where positive pluralism begins with the assumption that where it counts, people are more alike than different, negative pluralism begins and ends with the assumption that the differences between human beings are more significant than the similarities. When group interest replaces individual choice as the basis of representation and accountability, and the compensatory propensities of the double market become sticky or fail, with insensitive leaders and parties failing to address perceived inequalities – especially in the economic sphere – the conditions for negative pluralism grow. Interests are elevated to the level of principles, which are difficult to negotiate. Under such circumstances, the mobilization of political groups, which is normally integral to the democratic process, produces instead the mobilization of difference. If the latter breaks out in confrontation and violence, the first casualty is a common understanding of the public sphere (Habermas to the contrary). Under such conditions, ‘last shall be first’ doctrines become acceptable and protest drives the equilibrating process, using extra-institutional forms of opposition. Negative pluralism is a function of prolonged

insensitivity and non-responsive reciprocity between economic and political markets.

With negative pluralism, opportunities for political entrepreneurship multiply. Opportunities are opened for new forms of organization and power, and the formation of new criteria of membership, jurisdiction, obligation and even trust in a world without trust, often using ‘tradition’ as a mode of legitimization. Defined as the ability to sustain loyalty and punish betrayal, power is one of the important preconditions for anti-state movements that claim to act on behalf of victims. They encourage people to act in concert, provide the opportunity to transcend their individual limitations, and, even in the context of violent acts, create both symbolic and moral capital in the absence of other kinds. In these respects, ‘negative pluralism’ drives out tendencies towards the kind of tolerance and flexibility we associate with positive pluralism.

Where positive pluralism defines the terms and conditions of freedom and choice, negative pluralism defines the terms and conditions of identity and affiliation. Under marginalizing conditions, ‘identity’ is more important for the degree to which it allows less tolerance of others. The more ‘choice’ is limited to the functionally significant and ‘identity’ defines the functionally superfluous, the less likely will the first be to do their work properly, and the more state and society will be in conflict.

To summarize, a refigured modernization theory provides us with some of the analytical tools to confront how negative pluralism downgrades the similarities between human beings and elevates the differences, transforms interests into principles and claims into rights, and maximizes cleavage politics. It reinforces parochial communitarianism and collectivizes individualism. Difference becomes the priority basis of representation and accountability. Universal sectarianism thus poses the unanswerable question of how tolerant of the intolerant a democratic political system can be, especially when political parties and movements become locked into stalemates that thwart the institutional bases of accommodation, accountability and consent.

A new analytical framework for social sciences

It will be noted that this discussion has used functional theory of a kind embedded in early modernization theories, but transformed into opposite conclusions. For all that, however, a new modernization theory needs to recognize that modern global economies will continue to be market- and technology- driven, and that high capitalisms will

produce major economic, political and social crises. Nor is there much doubt that government and the state will favour enterprise over community and the functionally significant over the functionally superfluous, conditions that lead to chaos on the ground. So much so, that to force changes in policy outside the conventional institutional frameworks will always be difficult, regardless of swings in public mood and fortune. What is clear today is that in so many different circumstances, conditions and political settings, a growing proportion of citizens feel socially and politically abandoned.

These are conditions under which no democratic institutions can work well. They are conditions that effectively disenfranchise significant numbers of citizens whose governments refuse to listen. Hence, it is not so surprising that as those at the top, the functionally significant, gamble with money in the spirit of enterprise combined with organizational discipline, those at the bottom gamble with their lives and those of other people, with each activity producing its own social order and rules of order. Today's modernization theory needs to take into account the significance of risk and gambling, both of which are critical components of global capitalism. And this in turn will require redefining the rules of power and obligation, accountability and consent in terms of the functions, roles, institutions and structures of contemporary political systems.

To study modernization today, we need to bring institutions back in, as well as the role of networks and

performance. This requires theoretical frameworks capable of comparing cases and situations in light of the hypotheses developed here, and in structural, normative and behavioural terms – what earlier modernization theorists meant by systems. The old modernization theory emphasized adaptation, mutual adjustment, and the boundary limitations of order. The radical critique emphasized the opposite – modernization as perpetually disequilibrating, disordering, making even the most secure institutions and polities precarious. Taking these together as a reconstituted modernization theory, we might hope to establish criteria for a new moral ontology, a normative standard for determining appropriate and compensatory strategies – those most likely to render technology and functionality more hospitable to social and political reform.

While there is little prospect of a capitalist dénouement in favour of realizable socialist alternatives, this does not mean that we must accept that the way today's world works is the way it has to work. Start with the principle of global capitalism as the moving finger of modernization, assume that it incurs increasingly high and unacceptable human costs, and the arguments made above become a fresh theoretical starting point. It allows us to anticipate some of the more critical and ongoing predicaments with which – whatever their form – governments, states, regimes and societies will have to contend, and to suggest strategies and politics, many of which are objects of suspicion, within more orthodox forms of contemporary political and social analysis.☺

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1.2 The view from the regions

Introduction

In the second section of this chapter, various social science research councils, member organizations of the International Social Science Council, introduce the trends affecting the developments of their disciplines in their region. The Arab Council for the Social Sciences (ACSS) does this for the Arab countries, the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO) for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Association of Asian Social Science Research Councils (AASSREC) for Asia Pacific, and the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) for Africa. The stress is on developments in regions that remain to various degrees at the periphery of the North American and European cores of social science production. Their goal is to describe these trends and to identify the challenges to social sciences in years to come.

This regional survey points to the strong focus of international social science research on precisely the global challenges and major trends in societies tackled in the first part of this chapter. It confirms the new and more global nature of these developments around the world.

However, there are also regional emphases in social science research, identifiable trends mirroring specific contexts. Discussions on issues arising from the region's political conflicts and from development agendas are central in the Arab region. Demographic and migration challenges form the core of numerous studies in Asia Pacific. Poverty and inequalities remain crucial in Latin American and Caribbean countries. And the processes of reconciliation and transitional justice are focal points for social scientists in African countries.

The various councils for social sciences research thus portray moving research landscapes in which new themes emerge, but which also remain intimately connected to their regions' recent history. They point to important ways in which socio-political processes have interacted with developments in social sciences in the different regions in recent decades.

The social sciences seem especially suited to tracking regional transformations in the context of global change. In the years of African decolonization, the numbers of departments and of social scientists in Africa grew noticeably, even if they remained relatively small for such a vast continent. A similar growth in the number of departments and an overall improvement in social science research capacity took place in Latin America and the Caribbean in the 1950s and 1960s, in keeping with the socio-political dynamics that transformed the region at the time. Social science research in the Arab countries took off in the 1970s, driven by attempts to develop new theories, models and topics suited to the analysis of changing Arab societies. Similar developments occurred in Asian countries, such as China, where economic and social transformation in the late 1970s led to an urgent need for social science analyses.

These regional surveys also depict what the regional councils see as the main challenges for the further development of social science research in their region, and here again, the context appears crucial. CLACSO underscores the risks of isolation, ACSS the incapacity of social scientists to participate in public debates in the Arab countries due to political conditions. AASSREC stresses the sharp contrasts in the research landscape across the region, and mentions the potentially dramatic effect of global warming in the major deltaic area and islands of the Asia Pacific region. CLACSO worries that poverty and inequality hamper the development of social sciences in Latin America and the Caribbean. And CODESRIA points to the lack of research infrastructures in many African countries. As different as these regional challenges are, the four councils agree on the need for social science research to focus on improving research networks and infrastructures for collaboration, and on supporting weaker countries. ∩

Arab Council for the Social Sciences (ACSS)

www.arab-council.org

Seteney Shami and Moushira Elgeziri

In the Arab region, the social sciences are shaped by a context characterized by severe socio-political, economic and environmental challenges, instability, and by diverse and divergent research policies, agendas and funding programmes at national and regional levels. Three main fields of social inquiry can be identified: the challenges of the post-independence Arab state, issues arising from 'global' and developmental agendas, and fields emerging from interaction and opposition to Western scholarly agendas.

In the Arab region, the social sciences are shaped by a context characterized by severe socio-political, economic and environmental challenges, instability, and by diverse and divergent research policies, agendas and funding programmes at national and regional levels. At the risk of reductionism, we can identify three main fields of social inquiry. The first and most established is the literature on the challenges of the post-independence Arab state, including the quest for democracy, the elaboration of Arab identity and nationalism in the context of changing regional dynamics, and the Arab–Israeli conflict. The second are the issues arising from 'global' and development agendas, whose local contexts are addressed by NGO-based research. These issues are perhaps best summarized by the UNDP's *Arab Human Development Reports*, which pose the challenges of the region as a knowledge deficit, a freedom deficit, and a deficit in women's empowerment. To these challenges we should add research on economic development concerns such as trade, labour markets and poverty. Finally there are the themes and fields of research arising from interaction with, and sometimes opposition to, Western scholarly agendas. Among these, questions of gender, Islam, social history and comparative politics are predominant.

Within these regional agendas, we can also discern specifically national concerns, especially where there is a fairly robust research community, as in Lebanon, Egypt and Morocco. These concerns are shaped by particular questions regarding the relationship between the state and society, and issues related to social segmentation, urban life and the politics of culture.

In the 1960s important contributions arose such as Samir Amin's centre/periphery development theory, and critiques of Orientalism by Anouar Abdel-Malek and

Abdullah Laroui. The 1970s and 1980s saw a proliferation of scholarly production and regional circulation, often fuelled by a drive towards the 'indigenization' of the social sciences. The present landscape is characterized by partial agendas, local concerns and the general alienation of Arab intellectuals who are reluctant to take, and discouraged from taking, part in public discourse. Both the state and religious authorities curtail academic freedom to a significant degree. So satellite television and blogging are more powerful as media of critical debate than scholarly production. To avoid confrontation with the Arab states and at the same time engage in high-quality products that ensure recognition on the international academic scene, many Arab scholars write in foreign languages for a mostly non-Arab readership. However, in recent years, some Arabic journals and books have drawn attention and triggered discussions, due to their theoretical rigour or the importance of the topics addressed.



Jemaa el-Fna Square, Marrakesh, Morocco
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These books and journals include:

- Al-Sourty, Y. I. 2009. *Authoritarianism in Arab Education*, Kuwait, Alam Al Ma'refa.
- *Idafat, the Arab Journal of Sociology*, issued in print and online by the Arab Association for Sociology with the Center for Arab Unity Studies.
- Lahsan, W. and Ashraf A. K. (eds). 2009. *Secularism: Confused Concepts*. Beirut, Ru'ya.
- Najjar, B. (2008). *The Refractory Democracy in the Arab Gulf*. Beirut, Dar-al-Saqi.
- Bahithat (in press). *Women and Money*. Beirut publisher. √

Seteney Shami and Moushira Elgeziri

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Association of Asian Social Science Research Councils (AASSREC)

www.aassrec.org

John Beaton

The broad themes that unite social science research in the Asia Pacific region are employment, social mobility and equity, security and safety, education, population, health, globalization, adaptation to climate change and the governance required to manage these matters. There is a divide in research capacity due to funding differences and other factors, particularly the isolation of scholars in developing countries.

Within the overarching themes, social scientists in the region often focus their research on practical issues that are pertinent to measuring individual and community well-being. This is particularly true of social scientists employed by government-supported agencies. It is increasingly recognized that although social scientists should be concerned with local issues, there are some universal themes (for example, poverty, equity, population and health). These themes transcend national boundaries and promote collaboration and a regional view.

In most Asia Pacific nations, intergenerational and geographical issues are of current importance. The young increasingly abandon rural life for the opportunities cities appear to hold. Skilled and unskilled workers move from homelands to distant or foreign soils to exploit economic

opportunities. This topic links specialists in migration, labour, identity, citizenship, language, politics, law and perhaps even the full range of social science disciplines. Most Asia Pacific social scientists are deeply committed to understanding emerging patterns of multiculturalism and the conditions that can give rise to harmonious societies rather than dislocation, anomie, crime and wasted lives. Economic cycles can drive prosperity or poverty, and both outcomes have practical consequences in social upheaval and failures in social cohesion. In recent decades, the great economic success of Thailand, India, China, Viet Nam and elsewhere has produced over-populated cities, uncontrolled pollution and the loss of social infrastructure. Understanding how governance, institutions, trust and security can contribute to confident and hopeful lives is important for social scientists and their governments.

While some countries, notably the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Myanmar, remain poorly integrated in the region, they are not unique in this respect. Nations with small populations are particularly susceptible to isolation through poor communications and economic barriers.

Social scientists recognize that factors such as rising sea levels and marine transgression in low-lying areas will affect nations differently, but rich peri-coastal agricultural lands and the peoples who subsist on them will be under the greatest threat. This suggests the need for social science knowledge to assist with coordinated multinational regional agreements regarding adaptation and security. Flooding in major deltaic areas such as the Ganges, Indus, Irrawaddy and Mekong sometimes provides stark but informative models for future social, economic and political issues that will accompany global warming in many areas of the world. Across the region there are highly variable political architectures and processes to address such issues, and each will need social science knowledge to address the problems arising from them.

'Clean' government is clearly present in a number of countries, but pockets of corruption and episodes of institutionalized mismanagement of public agencies persist everywhere. Political scientists keenly observe the current trends toward democratization and representational government, and are increasingly positioned to provide knowledge-based policy recommendations to enhance public well-being.

Thanks to information technology, young scholars in the Asia Pacific region are better connected to the world social science literature than ever before, and the diversity, overlap, commonalities and dilemmas of current social science themes and topics are no longer privileged information available only to the elites. Of equal importance to the next generation of scholars are the increasing opportunities for research travel, collaboration and employment in developed countries. Here synergies and collaborations provide Asia Pacific social scientists with enhanced opportunities to identify and frame thematic issues, and to understand trends in the context of the world social science environment. ∩

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Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO)

www.clacso.org

Alberto D. Cimdamore

Substantial knowledge has been produced on crucial topics such as violence, social conflict, the role of the state, democracy, employment, education, indigenous peoples, religion, social justice, environment, integration, development, inequality and poverty, as a result of an evolving strategy of inter-institutional and international cooperation. In some of these topics (for example, economic and human development, democracy and education), Latin American scholars have made outstanding contributions to world social science.

Latin America and the Caribbean have been contributing in an original way to the social sciences since at least the mid-twentieth century, when their production acquired distinct traces within a more institutionalized academic environment (Sagrera López, 2000). The development of this creative tradition of social research has been conditioned by the countries' political and economic evolution in recent decades. Some of the effects can be observed in the relatively low levels of financing and coordination within (and among) the national scientific systems. These are institutional limitations that impact individual and collective scientific outputs, as much as they do international academic cooperation at the regional level.

Several challenges emerge from the complex reality that the social sciences in the region face. The most important of these challenges is the need to sustain the production of high-quality and socially relevant research connected to and disseminated within the education system and the decision-making process. The important social problems shared by the countries in the region demand knowledge-based policies to overcome them while simultaneously posing a challenge to academic cooperation and calling for institutional support for independent and critical social science research. This is particularly relevant in times when the ideological premises of neoliberalism have been transformed into economic and social policies that weaken the state's capabilities to fulfil its basic functions, thus affecting the public education and research systems.

However, the lack of incentives for the development of critical social sciences has not been the only effect of the region's prevailing political economy during the past three decades. The negative impacts on most relevant social indicators are found in official reports, which show

unacceptable levels of poverty, exclusion and inequality everywhere in the region in spite of renewed economic and human development.

In this context, where Latin America has the sad title of the most unequal region in the world, social science has a crucial role and mission. Such an enormous challenge calls for strong support for research environments that can produce superior scientific outputs, which are needed to inform policy for meaningful social change. In Latin America, the financing tools are mostly in the hands of international cooperation agencies and governments, and these tend to be reticent in supporting critical social knowledge. Who would like to be openly criticized by those they are supporting, for their performance on core social issues for which they are largely responsible? The answer to this question explains the fate of financial and structural support for critical social sciences in societies that desperately need meaningful social change.

Despite these restrictions, it is possible to identify niches where the region's social sciences community could make a difference with the tools at hand under current circumstances. These actions might not be ideal – a full solution would include stronger structural and institutional support for social sciences – but some would be achievable while members worked on obtaining more comprehensive support.

Substantial knowledge has been produced on crucial topics such as violence, social conflict, the role of the state, democracy, employment, education, indigenous peoples, religion, social justice, environment, integration, development, inequality and poverty, as a result of an evolving strategy of inter-institutional and international cooperation. In some of these topics (for example, economic

and human development, democracy and education), Latin American scholars have made outstanding contributions to world social science.

As well as being a resource-sharing strategy that can maximize the use of scarce funds, horizontal cooperation directed towards the creation and dissemination of critical social science research outputs is a practical and effective way of boosting research. Networking is an effective strategy to foster creativity and productivity in social science, especially in times of relatively low resources. It can also be a realistic and efficient strategy to improve the quality and impact of social science production and sharing.

The Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO), the most relevant social sciences network in the region, has selected networking as the option for improving the production and sharing of social science-relevant knowledge within the region.

Despite its financial limitations,¹ CLACSO has been able to systematically promote and support a critical social science agenda within its growing network of more than 250 research institutions. Since its inception at the end of the 1960s, CLACSO has been driven by an effort to maximize its impacts in the world of social science, and in the formulation of policies to overcome the most urgent social problems.

For historical reasons, the Council's objectives and strategy have mostly been centred on the region. The cooperation

1. CLACSO resources come mostly from international cooperation. Members of the network are university research centres (65.3 per cent), independent research centres (30.9 per cent), and governmental and regional organizations (3.8 per cent), in 25 countries.

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strategy now faces the challenge of creating and sustaining the production of meaningful knowledge with institutions outside the region, to deal with the growing list of global problems that affect all us.

An example is the joint endeavour between CLACSO and the Comparative Research Programme on Poverty (CROP) of the International Social Science Council. From the beginning of this decade, it has consistently supported a focus on social research on the causes and effects of, and solutions to, poverty from a relational perspective. This perspective's close connection with social inequality contributes to an explanatory and normative body of research. Other research that CLACSO supports covers a wide range of topics, via activities sponsored by other core academic initiatives such as the Working Group Program and the South–South Program.

These and other research and education initiatives link thousands of social scientists all over the region, and elsewhere, through platforms specially designed for collaborative academic work. These include the Electronic Academic Network (RAEC), the Social Sciences Virtual Library Network, the Virtual Campus and the Social Science Graduate Network.

Beyond these, there are still several important scientific challenges that need to be dealt with in the present and near future. These are the need to develop more and better theories, capable of guiding research that addresses the most prominent regional and social calamities; encouraging the use of comparative methodologies to assess and improve such theories in complex and heterogeneous historical contexts; and advancing the dissemination of research outputs in order to facilitate their use by both academic and decision-making bodies. ☺

Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA)

www.codesria.org

Ebrima Sall

Which idea of Africa does today's social science offer? The present paper provides an answer on the basis of the social science research made in Africa, and elsewhere. The author shows that the conversations between the social sciences and the humanities, and between social sciences in Africa and in other parts of the global South, are becoming livelier and cover a growing number of themes.

In *The Idea of Africa*, Mudimbe (1994, p. 12) asks the following question: 'Which idea of Africa does today's social science offer?' In this paper, I try to answer that question by looking primarily at social science research within Africa that has for long been, and still is, faced with the question of autonomy. In the first section of this paper, I look at the reasons why autonomy became an issue, and how the African social science community has been trying to address it. In the second section, I examine some of the major issues and themes in social science research in Africa from the late 1990s to date.

The challenge of autonomy

Africa had some of the first institutions of higher learning in the world,¹ and many great intellectuals, such as Ibn Khaldoun and Ahmed Baba, some of whose works are considered great social science texts to this day. However, social sciences as we know them today came to Africa through encounters with the West, particularly during the colonial era.

Autonomy became an issue for the social sciences for at least two reasons. One is that in the immediate aftermath of the wave of decolonization that swept through the African continent in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the formation of epistemic communities was regarded as a condition for and a logical consequence of the struggle for political independence. Autonomy was perhaps as important for the social sciences in Africa as political independence was for the continent generally. The dominant epistemological order in Africa, as in the rest

of the world, was that of the West, and the first and second generations of African scholars were trained in the West (Mkandawire, 1995, 1999). Many of the new universities established in Africa in the late 1950s and early 1960s were for a time affiliated with French and British universities. The heavy dependence on resources from the West, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s, made the autonomy of the social sciences in Africa a major issue of concern. Beyond the question of resources, the question posed was: who sets the research agenda?

In the five decades or so that have elapsed since the wave of decolonization swept through the continent, and fifteen years after the official abolition of apartheid, the institutional and demographic bases for social science research, teaching and related activities have undergone deep transformation. From a very small number at the end of the colonial era, African universities are now close to a thousand, and still growing at breakneck speed. Both governments and private providers are setting up new higher education institutions. Research centres, institutes, networks and NGOs are also mushrooming.

However: '... the Euro-American epistemological order remains central in the African Academy. Since the colonial encounter, the construction of scholarly knowledge about Africa has been internationalised both in the sense of being an activity involving scholars in various parts of the world and the inordinate influence of externally generated models on African scholarship' (Zeleza, 2007, p. 2).

The challenge of autonomy, and of developing interpretative frameworks that are both scientific and universal, and relevant – that is, 'suitable' for the study of Africa and of

1. Al-Azhar University in Cairo, founded in AD 970–72, is a good example. In the fifteenth century, the University of Sankoré in the town of Timbuktu, in present-day Mali, was a great institution. So were other institutions in present-day Morocco, Tunisia and other countries.

the world from the standpoint of Africans themselves – is still very real.

From the late 1950s to the early 1990s, the African social science community grew in size, but still remained relatively small. In most countries, the institutions of higher education and research were few in number, and often new and weak. The research environment was less than ideal, given the poor socio-economic and political conditions that prevailed. This led to poor funding for higher education and research, and to violations of academic freedom. The key concepts and theoretical frameworks with which most African scholars worked were ‘made in the West’. Western interpreters, as well as African analysts, have been using categories and conceptual systems that depend on a Western epistemological order. Even the most explicitly ‘Afrocentric’ descriptions and models of analysis, explicitly or implicitly, knowingly or unknowingly, refer to the same order (Mudimbe, 1994).

The efforts of regional social science councils such as CODESRIA and OSSREA, and professional associations of sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists and the like, to address the problems of autonomy have therefore been geared towards building a networked, self-aware community of scholars. Some explicitly sought to participate in the building of what has been called an ‘African library’ to replace what Mudimbe called the ‘colonial library’. The modern African library would of necessity be made up not only of written texts, but also of oral and visual ‘texts’.

One of the major difficulties that the social sciences had, and still have, to face is fragmentation, as well as the fragmentation of the African community of scholars as a whole. This fragmentation was largely, but not exclusively, due to the colonial partitioning of Africa into more than 50 states, most of which are small and economically dependent. Outside North Africa, where Arabization has been a major development in recent years, social science research is mostly conducted in European languages, particularly English, French and Portuguese. The building of a ‘networked community of scholars’ therefore required efforts to transcend disciplinary, linguistic, gender, generational, regional and ideological divisions. Some regional councils (CODESRIA, for instance) have also tried to develop alternative mechanisms for the setting of standards in scholarship. These include the creation of forums such as the Africa Review of Books, and an Africa-based social science indexation system.

Another major challenge has been to bridge the gulf that separates ‘modern’ scholars from the extremely rich and vibrant intellectual traditions that Africa had in the past and from the non-Europhone intellectual traditions of today (Jeppie and Diagne, 2008; Kane, 2003). The rediscovery of old texts is one manifestation of a strong determination to reconnect with the works of great intellectuals such as Ibn Khaldoun (Alatas, 2006) and Ahmed Baba, and there have been moves to tap into the rich contemporary non-Europhone literature. The rediscovery of the Timbuktu archive (Jeppie and Diagne, 2008; Kane, 2003) has led some to argue that Africa, like Europe, had its own Age of Enlightenment (Kane, 2003; Amselle, 2008). This Enlightenment most certainly had its own downside, as did the European Enlightenment. It is, however, significant enough to cause us to view the history of the social sciences and humanities in Africa in a new light. What Mudimbe calls the ‘colonial library’ (Mudimbe, 1994) was not the only library that ever existed in Africa. There was a Muslim library, as well as a larger non-Europhone library (Kane, 2003; Amselle, 2008).

For much of the time, however, efforts geared towards building an African library have used borrowed concepts, theories and paradigms. The social dynamics of African societies was read by analogy, as was the interpretation of African experience. The challenge of autonomy, as Adesina (2006) has argued, still remains a major one for the social sciences in Africa.

Breaking away from, or going beyond, the ‘statist’ logic that has tended to dominate most interpretative frameworks in the social sciences has also not been easy. The statist approach has led to what has been called a kind of ‘command science’ (*La science du commandement*, Ouédraogo and Sall, in press), science in the service of the dominant powers and the dominant order. Their approach is to read society from an externalist point of view. Their main aim is to decipher, categorize, name, label or map social groups, phenomena or dynamics. The process is more or less part of a state project consisting of what James Scott calls ‘making societies legible’ (1997), in order to make them ‘governable’. The alternative project is a fundamentally emancipatory one (Neocosmos, 2006). Colonial ethnography and ethnology have been closely associated with the colonial project that they are regarded as serving. Much of the recent literature on governance, whose main preoccupation has been how to make whole societies and certain social classes and groups ‘governable’, is informed by a statist philosophy that, these days, comes in many guises.

The major debates

The first issue to become the subject of very lively debates over a long period of time was the historicity of African societies. Colonialism meant the denial of a 'civilized' African past. The struggle of the African elite for a 'civilized' identity, as against being characterized as backward or inferior, made history the battleground for reclaiming a new, singular historical trajectory of glory for itself. 'African historians demonstrated that African societies had a glorious past' (Ouédraogo and Sall, in press).

For a time, state- and nation-building were perhaps the most important issues debated in the social sciences in Africa. This was understandable, given the newness of the many socio-political formations that emerged from decolonization processes. A number of studies focused on boundaries and cross-border networks and movements, on national integration processes, ethnicity and so forth. Studies on rural and agricultural development, and on strategies and prospects for industrialization, also proliferated.

The emphasis in these debates then gradually shifted towards issues related to the economic crisis and structural adjustment, poverty, the informal sector, social movements and democratization, human rights, land and agrarian issues, gender issues and urbanization. In the early 1990s the effects of economic and political liberalization – rising poverty levels, the spread of armed conflicts and associated phenomena such as refugees, displaced populations and child soldiers – were twin processes that were extensively researched and discussed in journals and other academic publications. The HIV/AIDS pandemic, climate change, transformative social policy, the pervasive marketization of higher education and of the social sciences themselves, and the political and economic integration of the continent, are among the issues that currently occupy many scholars. So are issues of corruption and political succession.

The mid-1990s were profoundly marked by the Rwandan genocide on the one hand, and on the other hand, the end of apartheid in South Africa. These contradictory developments gave rise to a number of studies on violent conflict, the processes of reconciliation and transition justice.

Mahmood Mamdani, following Samir Amin, Issa Shivji and Jimi Adesina and several other scholars, has argued that:

We are at the cusp of a third phase [in the recent intellectual history of the social sciences in Africa] which needs to be driven by multiple ideas. I suggest the following: (a) development in the



post-neo-liberal era; (b) citizenship and rights in an era of state and civil crisis; and (c) re-thinking African history, philosophy and social thought in light of the Timbuktu archive, following the joint contributions of Ousmane Kane [2003], and Suleymane Bachir Diagne and Shamil Jeppie [2008]. The issue of re-thinking Pan-Africanism in light of contemporary challenges is important, but should form a sub-theme of the second big idea above (Citizenship and Rights ...).

(Mamdani, 2009)

The search for ways of responding to and rolling back neoliberalism seems indeed to be one of the single most important issues and challenges for African social science research in the twenty-first century. The recent global financial crisis has led to a partial rehabilitation of neo-Keynesianism and new interest in developmental states and in social democracy (for instance, Mkandawire and Adesina's works on transformative social policy). However, in the social sciences themselves, neoliberalism has led to a high degree of marketization, which has resulted in



Internally displaced person awaits food ration, Sudan. How does he see the world?
© UN Photo/T. McKulka

increased fragmentation, as Burawoy (2007) has argued, rather than in the 'opening' and greater unification that the Gulbenkian Commission report (1996) authored by Wallerstein and his team seemed to have observed. In the context of the African academy, the forms, manifestations

and consequences of the marketization of the social sciences themselves are yet to be fully understood. We have spent much more time and effort studying the marketization of higher education (Mamdani's 2007 study on Makerere University is a recent example) than on the study of the marketization of the social sciences per se. Understanding the pervasive logic of neoliberalism in a whole range of domains, from trade to the environment, is also crucial.

In conclusion

The social sciences in Africa are still faced with challenges at the epistemological and the institutional levels. Overall, however, they have reached a fairly high level of development, with a growing number of seminal works, such as Mafeje's (1971) critique of the ideology of tribalism, Ifi Amadiume's (1987) work on gender relations, Mama, Imam and Sow's (1997) work on the engendering of social science itself, and also Mamdani's (1996) work on citizenship, Mkandawire's (1999) work on democratic developmental states, and transformative social policy, Moyo's (2006) work on land, and Amin's (2008) work on alternatives to neoliberal globalization (including his recent papers on the global financial crisis). The list is long.

The conversations between the social sciences and the humanities, and between those in Africa and the social sciences in other parts of the global South, are becoming livelier and cover a growing number of themes. The 'African library' is therefore taking shape, and the range of 'texts' in it is becoming broader.☺

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Is the Executive Secretary of CODESRIA. His most recent publications include *Frontières de la citoyenneté et violence politique en Côte d'Ivoire* [Citizenship and Political Violence in Côte d'Ivoire] (co-edited with Jean-Bernard Ouedraogo, 2008) and *Human Rights, Regionalism and the Dilemmas of Democracy in Africa* (co-edited with Lennart Wohlgenuth, 2006).

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