

Chapter 5

Homogenizing
or pluralizing
social sciences?



Periods from Haitian history, National Office of Ethnology, Port-au-Prince, Haiti © UNESCO/F. Brugman

Homogenizing or pluralizing social sciences?

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Chapter presentation

The previous chapters have demonstrated the growing internationalization of the production of social science knowledge. What are the consequences of the ever-increasing circulation of people and ideas for knowledge production: not only for what is produced but also for how it is produced?

The first hypothesis is that internationalization leads to homogenization, through the progressive harmonization of knowledge production norms. However, this can only happen in the context of the dominance of Western research systems, as was shown in Chapter 4. The West, with the USA in the lead, is the main contributor to world social science production and publishing. This leading position gives the West a major role in defining which research outcomes deserve to be published. Which issues are of interest? Which research methodology produces robust knowledge? Which theoretical concepts should be referred to? The global North quantitative domination of social science production could cause the global South to respond by internalizing Western knowledge production norms in order to be visible on the international scientific scene. This is particularly true in the present competitive context, in which ranking enjoys so much attention. Ranking requires common evaluation criteria and comparison tools, which we know are mainly formulated in the West (Chapter 7).

But research internationalization also facilitates the advent of divergent voices on the international scientific scene, and stimulates a fruitful and productive meeting between heterogeneous ideas and methods. The emergence and affirmation of research from regions outside the European cradle of social sciences may challenge and question the Western standards for social science which have dominated the scene to date. This may contribute to a reconsideration and renewal of the research interests, methodologies and theoretical concepts of the global social sciences.

But, this is the second hypothesis, does research internationalization reinforce the historical Western hegemony inherited from social sciences' European origins (see Wagner in this volume), or does it open them to a renewed and higher plurality?

This chapter aims to refine these hypotheses and explore the interrelations between contradictory trends. It draws on both theoretical contributions and national case studies. The first section deals with theoretical contributions on the multiple faces of Western scientific hegemony, its effects, and counter-hegemonic currents. These contributions all challenge the central idea of the universality of science. The second section goes into greater detail in expressing this tension between universal and local knowledge by offering empirical studies of the research interests and approaches in three countries.☺

5.1 Hegemonies and counter-hegemonies

Introduction

In her contribution, Wiebke Keim uses sociology as an example that illuminates Western hegemony in social sciences. For her, the European origin of academic disciplines within specialized institutions, and their later extension into the rest of the world, has led to the marginalization of the global South's social experiences and social-scientific production. The global South's sociology, in particular, still suffers from its intellectual dependency on Western production and from an unequal division of labour. Researchers from the global South are often more devoted to empirical studies and data collection, whereas the theoretical implications of these works are discussed in studies by researchers in North-Western countries. But this exclusion process goes hand in hand with an inclusion process. Indeed, Western science has the ambition to be universal. General social theory is regarded as universally valid, and social realities from all over the world are analysed with its tools, which are essentially produced in the North. Consequently it is argued that Western social science produces a 'distorted form of universality'.

Several counter-hegemonic currents have emerged since the 1960s. They aim both to challenge North Atlantic domination and to offer social sciences that are socially relevant for realities which mainstream research has not fully taken into account. These currents seem to be enjoying a revival in the present context of internationalization. Keim notes that there is absolutely no paradox in this, as the increase in international communication networks is likely to intensify the tensions between local and general sociologies, and to stimulate specific claims for the recognition of local social realities and forms of knowledge.

For Syed Farid Alatas, mainstream social science research is often irrelevant for the South. Many research projects

following methodologies, theories or empirical approaches pervaded by the norms and discourses of mainstream research have proved either inadequate or inapplicable to the diversity of local contexts. The author lists a series of research projects in Asia which are presented as alternative in that they suggest a different methodological or topical approach (see other examples of the changes introduced by the integration of indigenous standpoints in New Zealand by Peace in Chapter 2). From these, he proposes a typology of alternatives in social sciences, and calls for the improvement of the relevance of research projects that go further in their degree of alternativeness in order to improve the relevance of global social sciences.

The universality and the value-neutral objectivity of science have also been deeply questioned within Western countries, particularly by feminist studies, which were the first to maintain that knowledge production was dominated by a male and white supremacy. This movement has led to the notion of 'standpoint research', which stresses that all knowledge is situated knowledge, and that the best way of increasing the robustness of knowledge is to multiply the diversity of the experiences of those producing scientific knowledge (Harding). This opens onto the diversification of the researchers' origins and to participatory methodologies.

These contributions as a whole suggest that different currents, originating in both the South and the North, converge on common concerns regarding the expression of cultural and social diversity in social science knowledge production. As with the relative feminization of the academic world, 'peripheral' researchers' gradual accession to 'central' fora may provoke improved consideration of the plurality of local social experiences and theoretical production.☺

The internationalization of social sciences: distortions, dominations and prospects

Wiebke Keim

The present double movement, in which the scholarly community becomes more internationalized while specific local claims also gain in status, is not as paradoxical as it might appear. On the contrary, it seems that this recent development has its foundations in the very history of the social sciences, in the realities of its worldwide spread, and in the forms of its international constitution. Tensions between local and general sociologies could be regarded as a direct consequence of growing international communication.

There is no doubt that scholars' scope for international communication, including the global interconnectedness of social scientists, has increased considerably in recent decades. This interconnectedness, combined with social-scientific interest in globalization, has led to the current debates on the internationalization of the social sciences. Optimistic voices, for example within the International Sociological Association, talk confidently about the internationalization of their discipline, currently a favourite topic at world congresses. However, these developments have also led to fierce contest and to resistance to the idea of a single, unified and 'truly global' sociology. Arguments against the vision of a globalized discipline have in turn provoked fears of the fragmentation of the discipline into localized, nationalized or indigenized sociologies.

This implies that the connection between the commonly accepted and shared idea of the discipline – in this case sociology – and its local realization is becoming increasingly problematic (Berthelot, 1998). I argue that it is not paradoxical that the call for more local sociologies, often emerging from the global South, appears at exactly the time of ever-increasing globalization. We need to take the dissident voices' backgrounds into account in order to understand that they come as no surprise. They are specific challenges to a North Atlantic domination that has to be resisted in order to develop an independent scholarly tradition, one that speaks from the context of origin.

Although social thinking has been present in all societies at all times, the social sciences as academic disciplines within specialized institutions are of European origin. In many cases, they expanded into other continents through colonialism and imperialism. This transfer of knowledge and its associated scholarly practices has led to problems of academic underdevelopment, intellectual

dependency, unequal international division of labour, and the international marginalization of the social experience and social scientific production of the global South (see other contributions to this volume for empirical evidence). It is this North Atlantic domination that is the target of the challenges to a globalized sociology.

Besides political challenges and resistance to North Atlantic domination, there is a fundamental epistemological problem. General social theory in itself pretends to produce universal statements, concepts and theories. But this does not happen unless these statements have been adequately tested against empirical realities outside Europe and North America. This has hardly ever been done. The North Atlantic domination therefore leads to a strongly distorted form of universality. It is distorted because to date, this claim of universality relies on both 'radical exclusion' and 'radical inclusion'. These supposedly general theories do not take into account the experience of the majority of humanity, those living in the global South. Nor do they recognize the social theories produced in the South. I call this 'radical exclusion'. In turn, 'radical inclusion' means that despite these radical exclusions, general social theory is regarded as universally valid. The social realities in the southern hemisphere are thus subsumed, without further thought, under the claims produced in the North. This tendency, which has largely not been reflected on, blurs the distinction between the universal and the particular, and the North Atlantic particular is thought to have universal validity. This is a fundamental epistemological problem for social science: that is, for disciplines aiming at the formulation of generally valid claims about society.

In recent years, several attacks have been launched against the North Atlantic domination of the social sciences. These have included critiques of Eurocentrism (Amin, 1988), the

deconstruction of Orientalism (Said, 1978), attacks on anthropology and area studies (Mafeje, 1997), and critiques of the coloniality of knowledge and epistemic hegemony (Lander, 2003). At the same time, the constructive approach of the indigenization project attempts to develop sociological concepts from knowledge contained in oral poetry (see the debate involving Akiwowo, Makinde and Lawuyi/Taiwo in Albrow and King, 1990; Adésinà, 2002).

There are also the detailed analyses of Alatas (2006), who has been working on Eurocentrism within Asian social science and proposes alternatives for research and teaching. In addition, Alatas has conceptualized how far imported approaches may be irrelevant to the analysis of local societies, and proposes a set of criteria to render Southern sociologies more relevant to their own contexts. Connell (2007) considers three current, general sociological theorists, and points out in greater detail how far their approaches show the tendencies of inclusion and exclusion outlined above. Lander (2003) takes a more historical and philosophical perspective on the coloniality of knowledge in Latin America. Keim (2008) analyses North Atlantic domination's empirical factors and effects as well as the emergence of counter-hegemonic currents in Africa and Latin America. (See also S.F. Alatas in the next section.)

I understand 'counter-hegemonic currents' more as implicit challenges to the North Atlantic domination. They include socially relevant social science research and teaching, which has the potential to develop into theoretically relevant fields of knowledge production over time in the countries of the global South. A historical example is the emancipation of an entire continental community, Latin America, from the international mainstream through dependency

theory, introducing a paradigm shift away from the then dominant, rather Eurocentric, modernization theory. Another example is the development of South African labour studies into an autonomous scholarly community, which has recently produced publications relevant to the field of labour studies, as well as to general sociological theory-building (Sitas, 2004).

It appears that the present double movement, in which the scholarly community becomes more internationalized while specific local claims also gain in status, is not as paradoxical as it might appear. On the contrary, it seems that this recent development has its foundations in the very history of the discipline, in the realities of its worldwide spread, and in the forms of its international constitution. Tensions between local and general sociologies could be regarded as a direct consequence of growing international communication. Increased international exchange and the gradual accession of 'peripheral' sociologists to 'central' fora confront scholars, who have to date regarded themselves as practising universally valid theory, with the problem of North Atlantic domination. However, the expected internationalization of the disciplines cannot be achieved on a more equal footing between North and South as long as this problem is not recognized and adequately discussed. Taking the social experience and theoretical production emerging from the global South seriously will enrich the disciplines and enable scholars to reflect upon the possibilities of generalizing their claims beyond the local context to a broader empirical basis. This remains the major task for the current and future generations of social scientists. And so, onwards towards a truly global sociology?~

Wiebke Keim

Completed a Ph.D. in sociology at the universities of Freiburg in Germany and Paris IV-Sorbonne in France. She currently coordinates an international, comparative research project on household strategies under conditions of precarious prosperity in four countries, at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland. Her focus areas are history and epistemology of the social sciences, African and Latin American sociological traditions, the sociology of science and knowledge and social inequalities.

The call for alternative discourses in Asian social sciences

Syed Farid Alatas

The call for alternative discourses in Asian social sciences suggests that the social sciences take place in a social and historical context, and must be relevant in this context. One way to achieve relevance is to develop original concepts and theories on the bases of the philosophical traditions and popular discourses of these societies. Any claim to universality must respect the extent of the differences between Asian and non-Asian societies, and admit that in some instances distinct theoretical backgrounds are required.

Groups of scholars and activists from various disciplines in the developing world have been influential in raising the issue of the state of the social sciences in their countries. However varied they are – we cannot speak of a unified intellectual movement – their calls for endogenous intellectual creativity (S.H. Alatas, 1981), an autonomous social science tradition (Alatas, 2003), decolonization, globalization, sacralization, nationalization, or for the indigenization of social sciences share similar concerns. These include Orientalism, Eurocentrism, the irrelevance of mainstream discourses, and the construction of alternative traditions. In today's social sciences, Orientalism and Eurocentrism no longer involve blatantly racist or prejudicial statements, based on simplistic dichotomies between Orient and Occident, progressive and backward, or civilized and barbaric. Instead they take the form of a marginalization of non-Western thinkers and concepts, and the desire for analytical constructions resulting from the imposition of European concepts and theories (Alatas, 2006: ch. 6).

Defining alternative discourses

'Alternative' discourses set themselves in contrast to, or even oppose, what they consider to be mainstream, Euro-American 'universal' discourses. The aims and objectives of alternative discourses are not merely negative. They do not simply break with metropolitan, neocolonialist influences and hegemony. The defenders of alternative discourses do not reject Western knowledge in toto. More positively, they are genuine non-Western systems of thoughts, theories and ideas, based on non-Western cultures and practices. They can be defined as discourses which are informed by indigenous historical experiences, philosophies and cultural practices which can be used as sources for alternative theories and concepts in social sciences. Alternative discourses are relevant to their surroundings, creative, non-imitative and original, non-

essentialist, counter-Eurocentric, and autonomous from the state and other national or transnational groupings.

While there may be general agreement on the need for alternative discourses among social scientists in Asian countries, actual proposals remain scarce. Let us for this reason consider some models of alternative theories and concepts in social sciences which have been developed in the Asian context.

Five forms of alternatives

Alternative discourses are attempts at correcting what is perceived as the irrelevance of mainstream, Euro-American theories and models for the analysis of non-Western societies. Irrelevance can be of different types, including unoriginality, redundancy, disaccord, inapplicability, mystification, mediocrity and alienation. These types of irrelevance impinge on all facets of social science knowledge, including its meta-analyses, methodologies, theories, and empirical and applied studies. Alternative discourses can be developed for each of them. The following examples of alternative discourses in Asian social sciences focus on the methodological and theoretical dimensions. The degree to which alternative discourses contest the validity of Euro-American social sciences for the study of non-Western societies varies. It ranges from cautious and creative use of Western theories – for instance Karl Wittfogel's work *Oriental Despotism* (1957) in which he creatively builds on Marx's Asiatic mode of production – to the shaping of local theories induced from local contexts.

Development of local theories adapted to the study of one region

To explain the prevalence of selfishness among peasants in pre-revolutionary China, Fe Hsiao-t'ung developed the notion of the 'gradated network' (Lee, 1992, p. 84). This

concept is a response to the irrelevance of the dichotomy between tradition and modernity which forms the basis of Western social theories for the study of China. Using this 'local' concept adapted to the study of a local reality, Fe Hsiao-t'ung argues that the individual enterprises found in millions of villages are China's industrial bases, and that industrial development in China should keep its rural anchorage instead of leading to concentration in urban centres (Gan, 1994).

Mixing of local and Western theories adapted to the study of one region

In a previous work on Ibn Khaldun (Alatas, 1993), I proposed to enlighten aspects of Iranian history by mixing a Western theory of production with Ibn Khaldun's theory of state formation. Safavid Iran's economic system was described with reference to the Marxist notion of the tributary mode of production, but the rise and the dynamics of evolution of the Safavid world empire were depicted in the framework of Ibn Khaldun's theory of state formation.

Mix of non-Western and Western theories adapted to the study of different regions

Local theories can also become the foundations of broader, non-Western theories. Ibn Khaldun offers again a good case in point. His theory of the dynamics of state formation and decline does not apply only to Arab, North African and West Asian societies, but can become a theory of historical timeframes which is useful for the study of these regions but which can also be applied to China and Central Asia (Turchin, 2003: ch. 7; Turchin and Hall, 2003). The core of Ibn Khaldun's cycles is a secular wave 'that tends to affect societies with elites drawn from adjacent nomadic groups' and which operates on a timescale of about four generations, or a century (Turchin and Hall, 2003, p. 53).

Development of non-Western theories adapted to the study of different regions

In some other cases, concepts developed for the study of one non-Western society are used for the study of another. In response to the stereotypical opposition between Indian and Chinese religions, Indian sociologist Benoy Kumar Sarkar had highlighted the commonalities between Asiatic religions. In his *Chinese Religion through Hindu Eyes*

(Sarkar, 1916/1988, p. 304), Sarkar looked at the history of Asiatic sociology and compared Sino-Japanese Buddhism and modern Hinduism. He argued that Buddhism in China and Japan had its origin in Tantric and Pauranic Hinduism. The Hindu or nationalist bias is hard to avoid in this example, but more important for our purpose is the attempt at developing non-Western theories to study local realities.

Development of a universal theory on the basis of the study of one region

This is the most radical form of alternative discourse. It concerns the universalization of theories developed for the study of a local reality. Such locally generated universal theories, intended for the study of local or broader realities, can be mixed with non-Western and Western theories. Here again Ibn Khaldun's theories are good cases in point, although from an East Asian perspective, they may be regarded as combinations of non-Western and Western theories. Another example of locally generated universalizable theory is the nineteenth-century Filipino thinker José Rizal's theory of indolence (Rizal, 1963; Alatas, 2009). Rizal's theorization of social and political developments is original and different from any comparable attempts in the West.

Conclusion

The call for alternative discourses in Asian social sciences does not imply any cultural homogeneity in Asia, or that there is anything like an Asian branch of social sciences. It does suggest, however, that the social sciences, like any form of knowledge, take place in a social and historical context, and must be relevant in this context. In Asia, social sciences must be relevant for the study of Asian societies (Lee, 1992). One way to achieve relevance is to develop original concepts and theories on the bases of the philosophical traditions and popular discourses of these societies. To achieve such relevance is but one aspect of broader efforts to free social sciences from cultural dependency and ethnocentrism, and to achieve genuine universalism. The goal is not to substitute Eurocentrism with another ethnocentrism. But any claim to universality must respect the extent of the differences between Asian and non-Asian societies, and admit that in some instances distinct theoretical backgrounds are required.☺

Syed Farid Alatas

Is Head of the Department of Malay Studies and Associate Professor of Sociology at the National University of Singapore. His latest book is *Alternative Discourses in Asian Social Science: Responses to Eurocentrism* (Sage, 2006). He is currently preparing a book on the historical sociology of Ibn Khaldun.

Standpoint methodologies and epistemologies: a logic of scientific inquiry for people

Sandra Harding

Standpoint epistemologies, methodologies and philosophies of science emerged in feminist social sciences, biology, and philosophy in the 1970s and 1980s, but remain controversial for many researchers since they challenge the adequacy of conventional Enlightenment ideals of science. This paper focuses on central standpoint themes and provides examples of such research, taking up criticisms en route.

Standpoint epistemologies, methodologies and philosophies of science emerged in feminist social sciences, biology and philosophy in the 1970s and 1980s. They were not the only such efforts. Others squeezed feminist needs into familiar empiricist and ethnographic methodologies and epistemologies. But these were more innovative; they require effort to resist the tendency to incorporate them into empiricist or ethnographic frameworks. They have since spread widely throughout the social sciences and into such natural science fields as health, medical, environmental and technological research. Moreover, their 'logic of research' has appeared independently in just about every liberatory social movement of at least the past half-century. In this sense they are 'for people' rather than for the interests of dominant institutions and groups.

This logic originated in Marxian claims about the epistemic value of the standpoint of the proletariat. However, feminisms and other social justice movements have radically transformed the Marxian account to make these research strategies and explanations relevant to contemporary political and intellectual contexts. Standpoint research remains controversial to many researchers since it challenges the adequacy of conventional Enlightenment ideals of science: value-neutral objectivity, instrumental rationality, and a narrowly conceived 'good method'. Yet at the same time it reshapes such ideals to serve the empirical, theoretical and political needs of social justice movements. It also redirects the gaze of ethnographic accounts back onto the dominant institutions and groups in society. In these innovations, standpoint projects have opened up space for productive new debates about the actual and desirable relations of experience to the production of knowledge (see Jameson, in Harding, 2004). This paper focuses on central standpoint themes and provides examples of such research, taking up criticisms en route.

All human knowledge is 'situated knowledge' (Haraway, in Harding, 2004). How we interact with people and the world around us both enables and limits our knowledge of nature and social relations. In hierarchically organized societies, the daily activities and experiences of oppressed groups, which are usually ignored and disregarded by dominant groups, enable insights about how both the natural order and society function. Such insights are not available – or at least are not easily available – from the perspective of dominant group activity. Thus people who do the 'domestic labour' of the world – in their homes, other people's houses, restaurants, offices and hospitals – have distinctive experiences. These experiences help them to understand the material world, human bodies and social relations in ways that are unavailable to most of the university professors (mainly men) who produce epistemology, social theory and the conceptual frameworks of research disciplines. What appears to them as strictly physical labour is perceived as a natural activity for the less talented. Thus, conventional epistemologies tend to naturalize social power. Women intellectuals and especially women of colour tend to have a 'bifurcated consciousness', acting as 'outsiders within', since their daily lives occur on both sides of the divides that separate the 'ruling' and the 'ruled'. (See essays by Collins, Smith and others, in Harding, 2004.)

Does this mean that only those who are exploited in such ways and have such experiences can understand what standpoint epistemologies and methodologies reveal? Of course not. The people who come from such exploited groups speak, protest, write and now serve on advisory panels, tenure committees and editorial boards. To be sure, they will tend to understand subtleties of discrimination which are not at first visible to people from dominant groups. But those from privileged groups can also learn

to see those features of society. To be sure, such a brief formulation fails to acknowledge both the plurality of forms of domination (gender, class, race) and the diverse forms of upward mobility. Yet the point here is that people with privileged lives, and who often make policies that direct everyone's lives, frequently misperceive the facts about their own and less privileged lives. But they can, with effort, learn to see the world more accurately.

The conceptual frameworks of research disciplines, like those of dominant social institutions more generally, have been organized in ways that satisfy the groups that support and fund them. They therefore tend to serve the interests and desires of those groups (Hartsock and Smith, in Harding, 2004). In order to get a critical perspective on such conceptual frameworks, research must begin from the 'outside'. (Of course we cannot entirely escape the dominant frameworks, but just a little 'outside' will help.) Standpoint projects do this by starting research from the daily lives of social groups that are not well served by dominant institutions. Cheryl Doss, for instance, looks at the problems for women caused by the introduction of 'improved' agricultural technologies in Africa. Stephanie Seguino analyses the problems with the way the World Bank conceptualizes the bargaining power of women in labour disputes (both in Kuiper and Barker, 2006). The very concept of 'Third World' development and how women were being harmed by it has been increasingly challenged by feminist critics over the past two decades (see Tinker, Young, Braidotti et al., all in Visvanathan et al., 1997). It is important to note that the aim of such studies is not to undertake an ethnography of women's lives but rather to examine critically the dominant institutions and their policies, cultures and practices that affect women's lives (for more examples of such work, see Kuiper and Barker, 2006; Visvanathan et al., 1997).

A standpoint is not an easily accessible 'perspective'. It is rather, as Nancy Hartsock has pointed out, an achievement that requires both science and politics (in Harding, 2004): science in order to see beneath the hegemonic ideologies within which everyone must live; and politics because to engage in such science requires material resources and access to dominant institutions to observe how they function. Moreover, a standpoint is a collective achievement, not an individual attribute. It requires critical discussion among the people whose positions it represents. Thus standpoints are politically engaged epistemic and methodological research strategies. They intend to produce the kinds of knowledge that oppressed people need and want in order to flourish, or even just to live another day. After all, our dominant knowledge

systems are now solidly positioned within the perceived needs of nationalists and state administrators, military leaders and corporate profiteers. Politics is already present in the research agendas induced by such a configuration. Feminists or other social justice researchers try to create intellectual and political spaces where knowledge can be produced for their constituents.

A good example of the transformation of a regulative ideal for research is the notion of 'strong objectivity'. Some social interests or values are shared by an entire research community. Both male and white supremacy and heteronormativity have been accepted for much of the history of Western social science. Traditional ways of 'operationalizing' the value-neutral objectivity of research have lacked the resources to detect how such commitments were implicitly embedded in disciplinary theories, methodologies and institutional cultures. It was with the emergence of social movements representing those who were disadvantaged by such disciplinary features that everyone else (not just the disadvantaged) became able to see the ways in which discriminatory social values had profoundly fashioned social research. The work of feminist, labour and postcolonial movements informs Lourdes Benaria's criticisms of how international agencies fail to perceive women's work accurately (Visvanathan et al., 1997). Feminist and other global activist groups' activities on reproductive issues contribute to shaping Betsy Hartmann's criticisms of the US Agency for International Development (USAID)'s sexist and racist assumptions, and their effects on the agency's population control policies (Visvanathan et al., 1997).

In addition to the misunderstandings and criticisms addressed above, feminist standpoint theory has been accused of essentializing the concept of 'women'. To be sure, some feminist writers have inappropriately generalized from their own situation. Yet the logic of standpoint theory should work against such tendencies, directing every inquiry to start off in the actual lives of a particular group of women or other people as they understand their lives (see examples cited above). Standpoint theory has been charged with Eurocentrism, in that it focuses on problems such as positivism that are not of major importance to women in other cultural settings. Moreover, the re-evaluation of women's experiences does not have the political edge in societies such as India that supposedly already value women's traditional experience, yet in practice still discriminate deeply against women (see Narayan, in Harding, 2004). Such criticisms draw attention to the constant need to articulate research projects on the basis of concrete local experience.

The standpoint logics of research should be controversial. They produce and attempt to rectify some of the most troubling challenges to today's widely noted

'epistemological crisis of the West', which also appears to be a global epistemological crisis of masculinity.☺

Sandra Harding

Is the author or editor of fifteen books and special issues of journals, most recently *Sciences From Below: Feminisms, Postcolonialities, and Modernities* (Duke University Press, 2008). She co-edited *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* (2000–2005), and has acted as consultant to the Pan American Health Organization, UNESCO, and the United Nations Development Fund for Women.

5.2 Tensions between global and local knowledge in practice

Introduction

The following contributions elaborate the tension between global and local knowledge through the study of research topics in a range of countries outside Europe and North America: the three Maghreb countries, Japan and China. The authors' approaches differ: Deng Zhenglai adopts a qualitative approach, whereas Brisson and Tachikawa as well as Waast and colleagues rely on statistics of keywords in bibliographical databases. But even then, the authors of these papers do not examine the international databases usually used in bibliometrics. Instead they study the Japanese national database and the catalogue of a research library in Morocco. Through their methodological choice, they point out that research internationalization and its measuring devices tend to make regional productions invisible if they are empirical research projects with a low level of generalization, or if they have been published in a language other than English or French.

All the papers in this section insist that research developed in response to global agendas can coexist with research encouraged by local contexts and needs. Japan, the most rapidly ageing society in the world, had to tackle the issue of ageing from the 1990s onwards, long before other countries (Brisson and Tachikawa). Conversely, the shift from women's studies to gender studies in Japan is probably more related to epistemological changes in US and European universities, and to contacts and collaborations with them, than to changes in Japanese society or particular trends in local research. The propensity to tackle either 'external' or 'internal' topics – that is, topics on the mainstream agenda or of local concern – varies according to the discipline in

question. The choice of topics also goes hand in hand with the publication language: external topics are more likely to be published in a language used broadly in academia (Waast et al.).

The pitfall of the first type of research is its irrelevance to local specificities, including the application of a non-relevant framework of analysis, a distorted understanding of the local situation and the omission of important local issues. The pitfalls of the second are a tendency to hyper-empiricism, a lack of comparative studies, and being thematically self-centred and with little scope for generalization. The challenge now is to construct interpretative frameworks and outcomes 'that are both scientific, therefore universal, and relevant, that is, suitable for the study of the [local] context and the world from the [local] standpoints' (see Sall in Chapter 1). This requires a balance between in-depth research drawn from local contexts and dialogue with global social sciences.

Deng Zhenglai, who analyses the various steps of social science development in China since 1978, calls for a progressive self-organization of the Chinese social sciences in the present period. He takes this to mean both an increased intellectual independence and a move towards the world; a duality that will allow for an 'authentic contribution to the intellectual debates and academic exchanges with social scientists from around the world'. His ambition meets up with regional associations' call for greater autonomy and influence for the research produced in their region (see Sall in this volume for Africa; Cimadamore in this volume for

Latin America and the Caribbean). This strengthening of national and regional social sciences is not only an aspiration but also a reality in a number of countries including China,

India and Brazil. It contributes to the development of the global social sciences, gradually reshaping them into a multipolar scientific world.☺

What do social sciences in North African countries focus on?

Roland Waast, Rigas Arvanitis, Claire Richard-Waast and Pier L. Rossi in collaboration with the King Abdulaziz Foundation Library

What are the main objects of social science research in the Maghreb? In the Maghreb there is prolific scientific activity, and the factors affecting the choice of research topics spur specific controversies. As a contribution to these debates we present the main results of a comprehensive study of publications in the human and social sciences in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia.

This article presents the main results of a comprehensive study of publications in the human and social sciences in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia.

A study based on a library's multidisciplinary catalogue

This study was based on the analysis of a large library catalogue. Following an important selection, coding and 'cleaning' effort, our research provides data covering approximately 100,000 academic publications over twenty-five years (1980–2004).

Unlike similar studies, we chose to examine a large library catalogue rather than international databases such as IBSS, SSCI or Francis. This choice was due to a series of considerations, some technical and some to do with social science publication practices. There is a tendency within the social sciences to publish more books than journal articles, unlike in the natural and exact sciences. In the Maghreb we also found a large number of academic publications that were unregistered in the international or even the national reference systems. Moreover, journals that are present in the large bibliographical databases have strong biases against non-English languages and particularly Arabic, which in our case represents two-thirds of the output.

Three criteria guided our choice of libraries:

- an exhaustive publications register, meaning a library that has an active document-seeking strategy and adequate management tools and know-how
- a relevant index with a bibliographical note established for all the collected documents
- a computerized file that could be used for data-mining purposes.

There was only one library in the Arab countries (including the Gulf countries) that met these criteria, the King Abdulaziz Foundation library in Casablanca, Morocco. Since 1980, this library has been committed to gathering all publications originating from the Maghreb or dealing with it in the human and social sciences, whether published within or outside the Maghreb, and whether written by regional or foreign authors. It brings together the different publications through international but also local markets and publishers, and has an active policy of seeking information instead of waiting for publishers to deposit books and articles. All publications (articles, books and book chapters) are indexed through a thesaurus. Authors are described in a note that includes their citizenship and standardized name in Arabic and Latin letters, probably a unique feature worldwide. This extensive computerized database comprises topics, keywords and authors' names, which are in one-to-one mapping with numbers so that the

Figure 5.1 — Growth in number of Maghrebi social science publications compared with that of faculty members, 1980–2004

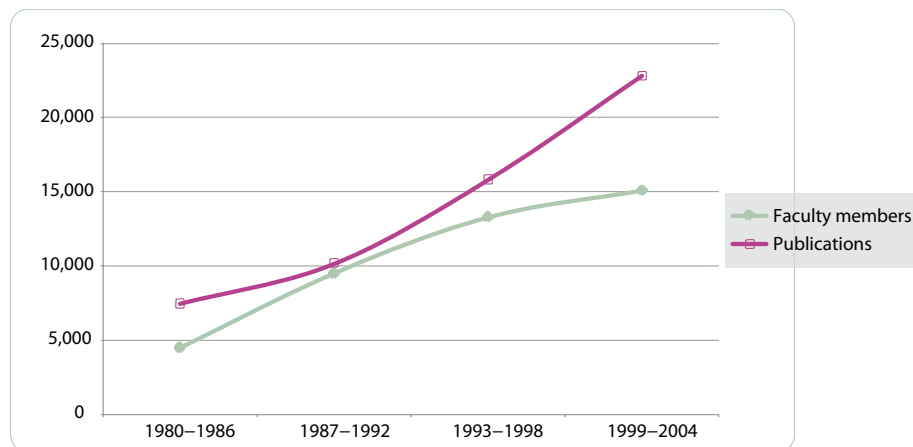


TABLE 5.1 > Evolution of the production in social sciences in Maghreb countries (percentage of total for the main disciplines)

Years	History	Literature and language studies	Law	Sociology	Economics	Political sciences	Islamic studies
1980	19	18	10	15	15	9	9
2004	12	25	17	14	8	14	7

information can immediately be translated into Arabic or a European language. The complete work of a given author (or on a specific subject) is therefore accessible regardless of its original language and without duplication.

We undertook the statistical analysis of this data file after having selected what we have labelled academic publications: that is, excluding mainly poetry and fiction, but including all other fields of interest such as recognized academic disciplinary work (economics, sociology, law, anthropology, psychology, literature studies, religious sciences and the like). We limited our study to the three most productive Maghreb countries (Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia).

Growing production, changes in disciplines

A breakdown of the texts according to their date of publication indicates a rapid increase over the twenty years from 1985 to 2005, from 2,000 in 1985 to over 6,000 new documents per year in 2005. Output has grown in close relation to the number of university faculty members but at an accelerated pace, so that there has been an overall growth in productivity (see Figure 5.1). The average yearly output by author is similar in the three countries and is approximately one article every three years, steadily growing in recent years.

This production is divided into three roughly equal categories: books, chapters in books, and articles. About one-third of the references (34,000) dealing with the Maghreb are written by authors who do not originate from the region, and the rest are by Maghrebi authors. There was only a slight rise in the proportion of Arabic-language publications, from 50 per cent in 1980 to 60 per cent in 2004. The second most important language in 2004 was French (33 per cent).

Table 5.1 shows the distribution of this material according to the main disciplines in the corpus and its evolution over time. Over the 25 years from 1980, law and literature have been gaining ground, while history and economics have declined. These changes do not mirror global trends, nor do they indicate a change in student or academic staff numbers. The underlying explanation seems to be linked to a shift in readership interests.

A changing set of publication themes

Disciplines as they are assigned by librarians are not the only way of classifying output. A more dynamic method would be to reflect the semantic proximity of various keywords that are assigned to the documents. We therefore created coherent packages of documents¹ and called these clusters of documents ‘scientific themes’ (Figure 5.2). As

1. Through a statistical procedure known as K-means non-hierarchical classification of associated keywords. Claire Richard-Waast carried out this analysis.

Figure 5.2 — Main themes in Maghrebi social sciences, 1985–2004

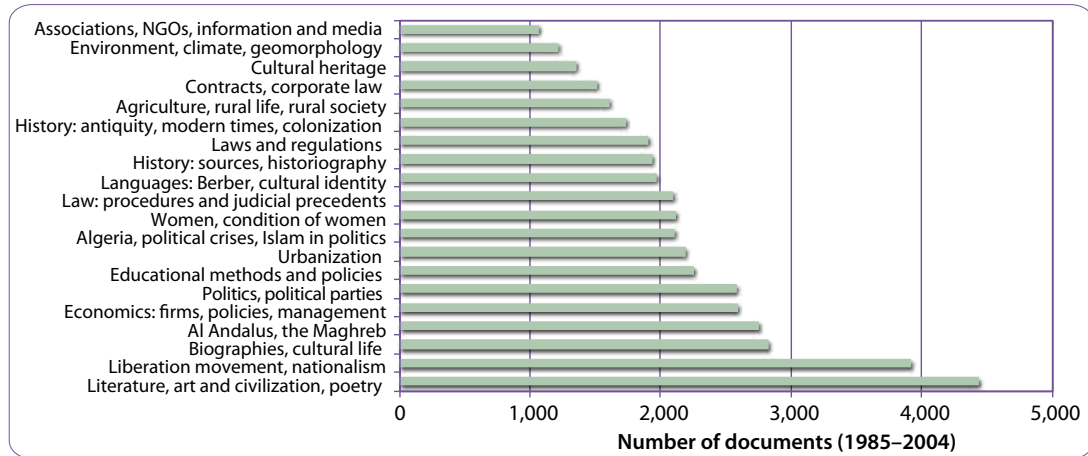
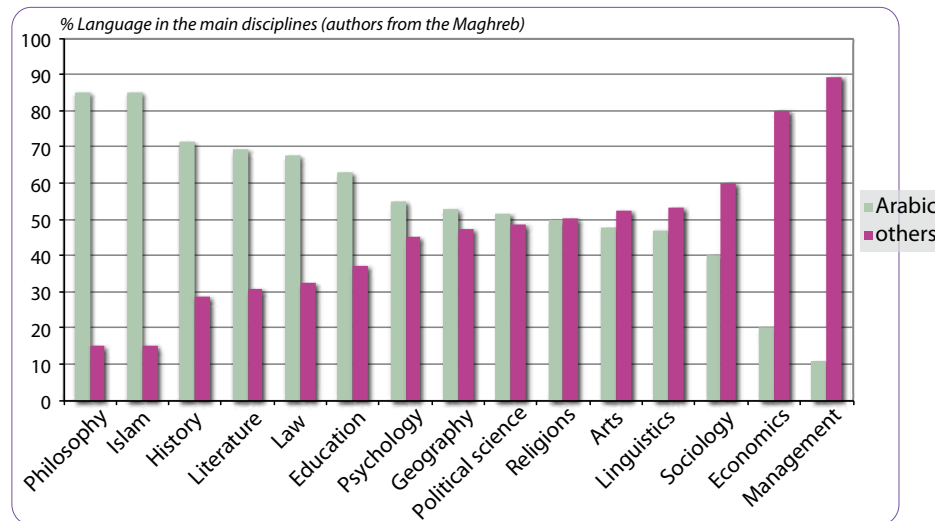


Figure 5.3 — Disciplines and language for authors originating from the Maghreb, 1985–2004



can be seen, civilization, historical and cultural themes are dominant. They are closely followed by themes relating to policy and politics.²

Over time, several empirical fields have appeared successively: agriculture and rural studies in the early 1980s; urban studies (at their peak by 1985–1990); and gender studies during the 1990–1995 period (Table A5.2 in Annex 3). Since 2000, new themes have been emerging, such as cultural heritage, identity, law, political life and civilization, including arts, literature and language studies.

Publication language and thematic interests go hand in hand

European languages (English and French mainly) tend to dominate the current global research agenda, for

2. For the purpose of the presentation, themes are grouped into larger ensembles. For details refer to our publication available at www.estimate.ird.fr

example publications on women, the environment, and globalization and its economic consequences, as well as the research areas that are of particular concern for decision-makers (such as urbanization, natural risks, economics, policy, enterprise and management). By contrast, material connected to law, cultural life, education and local history is generally written in Arabic (Figure 5.3, see also Figure A5.4 in Annex 3). The choice of language also tends to be linked to epistemological issues: disciplines that try to find scientific laws must compare their findings with others and thus use a global language, whereas locally guided disciplines tend to favour local languages (Figure 5.3).

A number of concerns are common to all three countries (for example, literary studies, democracy, law, economic themes, studies on women and environmental concerns). But the intensity of concern and the approach to the topic may differ between the three. Islam, cultural identity and liberation movements, for instance, have been strong areas

of interest in Morocco, less so in Tunisia; but rural studies or ancient and early modern history have attracted greater interest in Tunisia than in Morocco. Finally we should stress that North African authors (we have a database permitting us to identify them) do not always share the same themes as European authors. The former seem more interested in education, law, political studies of local life, agriculture and rural studies, ancient and modern history, women's studies, urbanization, language and cultural activities, whereas the latter are more interested in pre-independence history (Al Andalus and later periods), arts and political Islam. Some themes overlap for both Maghrebi and non-Maghrebi authors; for example, economic policy and enterprise, literary studies and the socio-political analysis of liberation movements.

A subtle dynamic of themes and words

While we cannot go into much detail here, we argue that even within a single thematic cluster, 'migrations' occur. These migrations can be analysed by the changing set of keywords that are associated in a cluster. Some of these changes take the abrupt form of ruptures rather than continuous evolution. More often, a theme and its keywords are stable over a long period of time, around thirty years. Migrations are usually more subtle and difficult to observe at the disciplinary level or even at a broad level of general interest than within a single theme. For example, in sociology we can track how women's studies emerged from studies on the family and then were separated from them; or how 'cultural identity' became a major theme, into which several other themes are now merging: Islam, emigration, education, Berber studies, linguistics, modernity and Arabization.

A local agenda and a definite empirical stance

On the whole, research in the social sciences tends to focus on issues of national interest; moreover, most research is mainly empirical investigation in the sense of involving the field gathering of data. Some of the themes we find on the global agenda are of course represented (for instance, women, migration and poverty). Additionally, there is a high level of cooperation with European countries, in particular France and to a lesser extent Spain. But as we have mentioned, interests are different on the North and South shores of the Mediterranean: rural sociology, for instance, has held a dominant position in Morocco, in sharp contrast to European research, and its own praxis in this field. Industrial and labour sociology in Algeria during the 1980s is another relevant example. In no way have we witnessed a tendency to adopt the global agenda en bloc. We also witness a clear tendency for hyper-empiricism, a lack of comparative studies, a number of self-centred themes and very little generalization or theorization.

We found a skewed distribution of authorship: a small number of authors, usually well known and rather older, are responsible for the vast majority of the research output, leaving little room for younger scholars. Finally, brain drain constitutes the greatest threat, sometimes at a dramatic level, as has been seen in Algeria for well-known political reasons. The main threat has been not so much a massive brain drain as the departure of a small number of well-known academics. All these tendencies probably reflect the lack of government policies in favour of the social sciences and some lack of interest of broad sectors of society in the social sciences and their virtues.☺

Roland Waast, Rigas Arvanitis, Claire Richard-Waast and Pier Luigi Rossi in collaboration with the King Abdulaziz Foundation Library

Roland Waast is a senior researcher at the Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD). He was a co-founder of the *Science, Technology and Society* journal and has written a number of books and articles on scientific communities and science indicators. He has just carried out a 'Mapping of Science' with J. Mouton in 55 developing countries.

Rigas Arvanitis is a senior researcher at the Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD, France). He has spent numerous years working on innovation, technological apprenticeship and science policies in Latin America (Venezuela, Mexico) and in China. Most recently he led the European project ESTIME (Estimation of scientific and innovation capabilities in eight South Mediterranean countries, from Morocco to Lebanon).

Pier Luigi Rossi is an engineer at the Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD).

Claire Richard-Waast is a statistician. She has held managerial responsibilities in R&D at IBM and now works at Electricité de France.

This study was completed thanks to the support and collaboration of the King Abdulaziz Foundation Library in Casablanca, Morocco. The Foundation Library holds more than 600,000 documents, all of them catalogued in a computerized index system. One of its missions is to gather all human and social science publications originating from and dealing with the Maghreb.



Current topics of social science research in Japan

Thomas Brisson and Koichi Tachikawa

Japanese social science production reflects both Japan's long social science tradition and current social, economic and political change. The high number of Japanese social science publications shows the vitality of Japanese social sciences, but may also hide deep changes and theoretical shifts in disciplines such as economics, political science, history and sociology.

Recent trends in Japanese social science production need to be understood in terms of Japan's long and continuous history of study of the social sciences and of current social, economic and political change. The number of Japanese social science publications has remained high, with 16,652 books and articles published in 2006. This is far more than in other disciplines such as technology, the natural sciences, literature and philosophy.¹ These figures clearly indicate the vitality of Japanese social sciences, but may also hide deep changes and theoretical shifts in disciplines such as economics, political science, history and sociology. These changes and shifts are the focus of this paper.

The field of economics may be the most representative example of these recent changes. The debate on Japanese capitalism was launched after the introduction of European theories at the beginning of the twentieth century, giving it a long and important tradition of critical analysis. Nevertheless, Japanese economics has tended to be increasingly and exclusively concerned with modelling data at the expense of a focus on more critical, classical economic history. This shift is reflected in the shrinking number of academic positions with a focus on these latter issues. Despite the absence of specific data, we can obtain an idea of the importance of this shift by recalling Marxism's huge impact in Japan, and the impact of other more or less critical trends up to the 1970s. The privatization of universities, which reinforced their dependency on the economic powers, US universities' growing role in the formation of Japanese economics, and the pressure to publish in English, may account for these changes, albeit only partially.

1. In view of space restrictions, references, figures and methodological discussion are given in the online version of this paper.

Generational changes have also played a crucial role in the evolution of research topics. The case of Japanese political sciences illustrates this tendency. Even though political sciences have a long tradition spanning the whole of the twentieth century, they have recently witnessed the effects of what Masaki Taniguchi describes as a 'generation gap'. The divide, he argues, is between scholars who experienced the country's defeat in 1945 or the political movements of the 1960s on the one hand, and the younger generations who grew up in the post-economic growth era on the other. The former generation tends to focus on specific subjects such as the history of European political thought, the history of Japanese politics, political philosophy and ethics, and the history of Japanese political thought; the latter generation focuses on topics such as political process, local government and administration, and electoral studies and voting behaviour. There is a clear shift from theoretically oriented political sciences to more empirical ones. Various factors may explain these generational differences. The first is the theoretical changes that occurred at the end of the 1980s, intended to promote a vision of political sciences freed from the imposing heritage of European – especially German – theories. This trend was reinforced by the growth in academic positions in political sciences at the time, which allowed young scholars to develop new approaches. Further, this empirical focus is due to the growing internationalization of the discipline. Since Japanese political scientists are now involved in regional and international comparative programmes, more attention has to be paid to factual data and empirical research topics. Similar conclusions on the need to find alternatives to the European scientific legacy can be drawn from the analysis of a field which is partially autonomous from the social sciences but which is nevertheless closely linked to them, namely history.



Entrance to a Shinto shrine, Japan
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The introduction of European epistemologies at the turn of the twentieth century left an indelible mark on Japanese historiography, which had previously developed autonomously. This influence is manifest in terms of research topics (with many Japanese scholars specializing in European history) as well as methodical devices (for example, the *Ecole des Annales*, the most influential). However, the European frame has been largely reworked, sometimes in paradoxical ways. One striking example is in the development of the so-called *Nihonjinron*, a literature with strong historical (as well as ethnological) ties to the question of Japanese cultural and national identities. The latter issue is extremely sensitive in Japan, prompting debates between historians and leading to scientific (and partially political) divisions. The internationalization of the discipline and international exchanges have received much attention here too. With a growing number of Japanese historians trained at US universities, the traditional European–Japanese connections have weakened, prompting a change in research topics and methodologies. Nevertheless, European connections have remained significant enough to maintain strong scientific exchanges with Japanese historians. The result of these various processes leads us to describe the Japanese historical field as being structured by a set of oppositions between Japan-centred and internationally oriented scholars. But each

of these groups is heterogeneous in terms of its methods and influences.

Japanese sociology, to which a longer analysis is devoted in the online version of this paper, exemplifies another pattern of change regarding research topics and current trends in social science. The most recent changes can be summarized roughly as the consequences of two distinct processes. The first is that in the past few years, several subjects have gained sociological recognition because they have tackled issues considered to be important for Japan as a whole. Ageing, a highly sensitive issue in Japan, is a striking example. Almost absent from the sociological surveys of the 1980s, it is currently one of the most discussed problems. Other topics such as ‘youth’ and ‘gender’ have followed a similar pattern in that they have lately received a great deal of political and social attention. A second process is more specifically linked to sociology’s international dimension, because Japan is a global country and because its sociology is historically related to European theories. New research topics have therefore been tackled (see the online version of this paper), but the European founding fathers of the discipline have remained important. The international dimension of Japanese sociology thus appears to be a product of specific transformations and of its own historical development. 😊

Thomas Brisson and Koichi Tachikawa

Thomas Brisson is Assistant Professor of Sociology at Tsukuba University (Japan) and has specialized in the study of scientific migrations and international academic exchanges.

Koichi Tachikawa is Professor of History at Tsukuba University (Japan) and has specialized in modern and European history.

Westernization of the Chinese social sciences: the case of legal science (1978–2008)

Deng Zhenglai

This paper examines the Westernization of Chinese social sciences on the basis of an overview of its historical development over the thirty years to 2010, with particular reference to legal science in China. It argues that Chinese social sciences must establish academic standards based on China's local knowledge to achieve a knowledge transition towards the world, contrary to the tendency of unreflective Westernization.

This paper aims to explain the tendency towards the Westernization of Chinese social sciences on the basis of an overview of its historical development over the thirty years to 2010, with particular reference to legal science in China. The reform policy of the late 1970s opened China up again to the outside world, which transformed not only the economy and politics of China, but also its intellectual terrain. With an unstoppable zeal to catch up with the West, China embarked upon a journey to absorb from the developed nations not only technology and capital, but also ideas and theories. It will be argued that Chinese social sciences must establish academic standards 'based on China's local knowledge' and thus achieve a knowledge transition 'toward the world', contrary to this tendency of unreflective Westernization.

China's reform and opening in 1978 ushered in a new era for Chinese social sciences, whose development over the thirty years since 1978 can be divided into three stages. The first is the introduction to China of the latest Western social science theories, research methods and disciplinary and academic systems, which has continued and will continue in the future. The second is the assimilation of the theoretical framework of Western social science from the 1990s onwards, using Western social science knowledge and methods to explain Chinese issues, particularly in the areas of economics. Finally comes the stage of 'integration into the world', with the adoption of international academic norms, methodologies, and disciplinary and academic systems, particularly through the academic standardization movement from the mid- to late 1990s.

The consequence of these three stages of development was the establishment of comprehensive disciplinary systems based on Western theoretical frameworks and academic standards for social science (Deng, 2008; Liu

Dachun, 2008). But we have come to realize that Chinese social sciences, even after this thirty-year development, are still inadequate to the tasks of our times. The Westernization of the social sciences has resulted in some serious consequences. Chinese scholars have accepted Western concepts and theoretical frameworks without critical scrutiny and creative thinking, and have adopted them as academic standards in the assessment of Chinese social sciences and Chinese development. They have largely modelled their study of Chinese issues upon Western concepts and theoretical frameworks while neglecting in-depth research and theoretical innovation (Deng, 2007; Wang Hui, 2008).

Let us use China's legal science as a case to illustrate this problem. As is well known, the mainstream Chinese conception of human rights puts emphasis on the 'right of existence', or the right to maintain and develop human existence. What supports this conception is what could be called 'the justice of a generation': that is to say, the legitimacy of our generation's life is based on whether or not we can exist and develop in the world. But in the area of environmental protection, Chinese scholars have adopted the Western concept of environmental rights, behind which is what could be called 'the justice of generations'. According to this concept of rights, the legitimacy of one generation's life should be judged by the common quality of human life for the present and further generations.

Chinese scholars have, however, neglected the fact that the Western approach bases its legitimacy on the natural, chronological sequence of life events, while the Chinese process and its legitimacy are synchronic. That is, the Chinese people face the problems of existence, development and environment simultaneously. There therefore exists a tension or conflict between these two

conceptions of rights. This means that we have to make a choice in political philosophy or legal philosophy between these two contradictory conceptions of right or justice. If we do not address this conflict, an overwhelming majority of the Chinese population, the poor peasants in China, would not be able to tackle the dilemma of existence and environment simultaneously and reasonably (Deng Zhenglai, 2006).

Another example is the Consumer Rights Protection Act. Through an examination of essays on consumer protection published in legal science core journals (CSSCI) from 1994 to 2004, we find that only thirty-five essays were about consumer rights protection. These essays uncritically applied Western concepts and theories to the analysis of Chinese problems. They portrayed a Chinese society which is as homogeneous as the industrialized West, and overlooked the dual urban and rural structure of China as well as its disparity between rich and poor. This meant disregarding the differences between developed urban areas and underdeveloped rural areas in China with regard to the protection of consumer rights. In this dual structure, it can reasonably be expected that a highly urbanized Consumer Rights Protection Act that mainly targets the relatively well-off and developed part of China may be ineffective when applied to the underdeveloped rural areas. This means that the Consumer Rights Protection Act, which was modelled on its US and German counterparts, is faced with a fundamental dilemma of the duality of Chinese social structure (Deng, 2008, ch. 3).

I therefore suggest that Westernization has not only subjugated Chinese social sciences to Western cultural hegemony, but has also served to reduce the academic autonomy of Chinese social sciences. As is shown in my work, *Where is China's Legal Science Headed* (Deng, 2006), China's legal science development, despite great achievements over the past thirty years, is subjugated to the Western modernization paradigm which not only provides Chinese writers with an ideal picture of a social order and system based on Western experience, but also prevents them from recognizing the distortions in the

picture they present of China itself. In this Westernized ideal picture, China is presented as an 'Oriental' special case of the universal experience of Western modernization.

To establish the academic autonomy of Chinese social sciences, we must move towards the world and achieve a 'knowledge transition'. This means that we must move to a new stage beyond the previous stages of introduction, assimilation and integration into the world. Moving towards the world involves more than integration into the world. It suggests authentic participation in intellectual discourse, and academic exchange with social scientists from elsewhere (Deng, 2007; Yu Jianxing and Jiang Hua, 2006).

In my view, this new historical stage is not simply a natural continuation of the previous three stages, but instead demands a higher level of engagement from Chinese social scientists. They must establish academic standards which make it possible to conduct in-depth research on general theoretical questions and Chinese issues in particular, and so engage actively in substantive discourse with Western social scientists on our own terms. This will lead to an enrichment of Chinese social sciences, but will also impact on the intellectual development of the world's social sciences in the light of Chinese knowledge and experience (Deng, 2008; Huang, 2005; Yu Wujin, 2007). The example above about different concepts of right or justice illustrates this point. Incorporating the multilayered social structure of developing countries, including China, into social sciences research is another promising means for us to understand modernity, modernization and development better (Cao Jingqing, 2000). To take another example, the Chinese traditional philosophy of peaceful coexistence, not only between humankind and nature, but also between ethnicities, ideologies and ways of life, can offer resources for us to rethink some of the global issues facing humanity nowadays. It is in this way that traditional resources from other countries, places and nations will lead us to a better vision of the future world and its order, in which social sciences based on local knowledge with an international outlook will play an indispensable part. 😊

Deng Zhenglai

Is Distinguished Professor at Fudan University and dean of the Fudan Institute for Advanced Study in Social Sciences (IAS-Fudan), Shanghai, China. He holds honorary professorships at a number of Chinese universities. Deng Zhenglai's research interests include legal philosophy, political philosophy and interdisciplinary studies in humanities and social sciences. He has published several books, a number of which have been translated.

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