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e-bulletin



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Editorial

E-Bulletin (International Sociological Association)

It gives me great pleasure to bring to you the third issue of the ISA E-Bulletin, which has received tremendous support from sociologists everywhere. The featured essays section of this issue brings together the voices of four scholars, M S Gore, E J Ejiogu, Lynne Philips and Suzan Ilcan, who deal with a range of substantive issues that impact all our lives and demand sociological engagement. The 'In conversation' section continues to be popular, this time carrying the condensed text of a conversation between sociologist John Clammer and a prominent Japanese woman scholar, Ueno Chizuko, dealing with gender, sexuality, nationalism and feminism. The final section - 'Reflections' highlights the challenges faced by sociologists in practicing their craft in the present, through the theme of 'globalization and sociological practice.' As editor, I am committed to accessing and securing diverse voices from the global sociological community and their representation in this document, and further to ensuring the international tone and flavour of the E-Bulletin. As always, I welcome all feedback and suggestions and look forward to your continued support of the ISA e-Bulletin.

Vineeta Sinha
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The Social Scene in India at the End of the Century

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Madhav Sadashiv Gore was born in Hubli, on 15 August 1921 and had his school education in Hubli. In 1942 he graduated in English Honours from colleges affiliated to the Bombay University in Dharwar, Pune, and Sangli. Thereafter he studied at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences and obtained his post-graduate diploma in Social Service Administration in 1945, completed one year as the Sir Dorabji Tata Research Fellow, and later obtained his Master's Degree in Sociology from the Bombay University in 1948. From 1951-53 he studied sociology in the Columbia University (USA) and obtained his Doctoral Degree from that university in 1961. He worked as a Senior Lecturer at the Delhi School of Social Work from 1948-1951, as an Officiating Principal during 1953-54, and as Principal from 1954-62, when he joined the Tata Institute of Social Sciences as Director and served the Institute in that capacity until his retirement in 1982. From 1983 to 1986 he was Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bombay. He was a Visiting Lecturer at the Beloit College and at the Department of Sociology of the Wisconsin University in the United States in 1960-61. He is currently Chancellor of the Jawaharlal Nebru University. He worked as a Senior Lecturer at the Delhi School of Social Work from 1948-1951, as an Officiating Principal during 1953-54, and as Principal from 1954-62, when he joined the Tata Institute of Social Sciences as Director, and served the Institute in that capacity until his retirement in 1982. From 1983 to 1986 he was Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bombay. He was a Visiting Lecturer at the Beloit College and at the Department of Sociology of the Wisconsin University in the United States in 1960-61.

*As a social scientist his major areas of interest have been social work and sociology. He has researched and written in the fields of social work, community development, educational sociology, family sociology, urbanization, social movements and the sociology of aging. His recent book on Ambedkar's social and political thought won for him the Ghurye Award as the best book published in sociology in 1993. He has worked on several voluntary and governmental bodies and committees, was Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Aftercare Programmes of the Central Social Welfare Board(1955), Chairman of the Indian Council of Social Science Research(1971-77), Chairman of the Police Training Committee appointed by the Government of India (1973-75) and a member of the National Police Commission(1977-79). He is the author of several foundational papers and authored and co-authored several books among which **Social Work and Social Work Education, Urbanization and Family Change, Field Studies in the Sociology of Education, Social Aspects of Development, and the Social Context of an Ideology** are better known.*

He was given a special award by the Indian Council of Social Welfare for outstanding contribution by a social scientist to social work. He has also been a recipient of the Padma Bhushan award at the hands of the President of India(1975). He was given the Senior Award of the Homi Bhabha Fellowships Council in 1982 and the National Fellowship of the Indian Council of Social Science Research during 1990-92.

Text of a speech delivered at Ramnarain Ruia College, Mumbai, February 1998

I would like to speak today, somewhat impressionistically, about the social changes that have taken place and those that have not taken place though we intended them to happen over the past half of a century. The term 'social' is broad and it can cover everything relating to society and that could be economic and political changes as well. But the previous two speakers in this series have covered the economic and political happenings of the last half century. That helps to delimit the term 'social'.

Even so it can refer either to changes that have taken place in relation to the basic institutional framework of society like marriage, family, education, religion, social stratification - i.e. caste and class, rural-urban patterns of habitation, and art and entertainment or it may refer to changes in social services in the various fields of health, education, rehabilitation, housing, the environment and social welfare. This is obviously too long a list of areas and they can't all be discussed in the course of one talk. So I will perforce have to be selective about what I discuss and my reason for choosing these rather than certain other areas would be that I am somewhat more familiar with them than with others. In the time that I have I will limit myself to some broad social changes and not undertake a review of attainments or failures in the broad area social and welfare services. Our constitution placed before us the goal of a society which would be equitable, secular and democratic. I will focus primarily on the promise of equity.

Marriage and the Social Status of Woman

I will begin with the institutions of marriage and family. In this area social reformers had planned and desired certain changes from the days before Independence. The focus of these changes was equity toward women and, later, toward the other underprivileged groups in our society. Legislation regarding abolition of the sati system, abolition of child marriages and raising of the age of marriage were already on the statute book and the aim here was to mitigate the injustice and hardships that early marriage, widowhood and the sati system imposed on Indian women. There were other broad social objectives as well but improving the status of women was the primary objective. The promotion of remarriage of young widows, the promotion of education among girls, the acceptance, if not promotion, of various types of intermarriages, the enforcement of monogamy, the prohibition of unequal marriage between old widowers and young child brides, were some of the immediate targets that social reformers were pursuing at the stage of independence. Monogamy is now enforceable in the case of Hindus if the first wife makes a complaint against her husband's bigamous marriage and there are now no legal barriers to widow remarriage.

Most of these changes were part of a programme of improving the status of the Indian woman in the household that the middle class social reformers had been pursuing for almost half a century before Independence came. Some others were part of the Hindu Code Bill presented to the Legislature but which could not be passed in its original form and was later passed in a modified form through several individual pieces of legislation. The women whose status the social reformers had been preoccupied with prior to independence were those of the middle class, or using sociological term, women of the classes and castes that had been 'sanskritised'. Of course many of the disabilities of women except the one regarding widow remarriage held true for women of the other classes as well. Girls of the lower castes married early and would already be mothers at least a couple of times before they had gained

adulthood, women of these classes had even less opportunity for formal education, and they were more likely to suffer the consequences of their husbands entering upon bigamous marriages than middle class women. But with the exception of Jotiba Phule the efforts of the other social reformers were orientated primarily toward the middle class women.

The Present Position

Today, among the middle classes and particularly in the urban areas the age of marriage has steadily risen and child marriage is not any longer common, girls in this class get the benefit of education and have even the opportunity of pursuing a career, more remarriages and inter-marriages take place among this class than in others and more in the urban areas than in the villages. The reason for underlining this class/caste and regional basis of change is to point out that the success of a social reform depends not only on the facility made available by law or by the reformer but on the degree to which the objective situation supports it and the pressure that it exercises on the individual to change.

Two factors seem to have been responsible for middle class women taking to education and later to employment. The spread of education among middle class girls was first a consequence of the increase in the age of marriage in this class where the young man got his first job only after he had completed at least his school and in some cases college education. Delaying marriage until after the boy had secured a job was itself a change rooted in the changing occupational structure of the middle class in which the occupation and economic status of the eligible young man was no longer dependent upon his father's occupation and status and required that he gain an his social position based on his own appropriate qualification and subsequent employment promising him security and economic advancement. The link between the family and its occupation had been broken for the urban middle class by the factors of urbanization and industrialization. This meant that young men of each generation had to find their own opportunities and achieve a social status based on their own equipment and skills. In this context sending the girl school until she could be married to an appropriately qualified young man seemed a better alternative than keeping her idle at home. Also an educated young man, often living away from his parental home, preferred to marry a girl who had some education. Besides, with changing aspirations the young family now needs two earners rather than one.

Effects of the Second World War and the Independence Movement

The other factor that accelerated the education of young girls in the urban areas was the demand for an educated female labor force created by the Second World War. The war generally facilitated the employment of educated young women – especially those of the lower middle class – in government offices, beginning with the newly established ration offices, and gradually extended to other government departments. Middle class men were being recruited on a large scale as short term commission officers in the armed forces and, in a civil capacity, in military accounts.

There was also an expansion in the opportunity for employment for both men and women in the expanding industrial and commercial firms. These opportunities which arouse with the war expanded after independence. But until recently middle class women favoured employment in government offices rather than in private firms. Such employment was considered secure both in the sense of personal security as well as from the point of the probability of continued employment. Until recently government jobs were preferred to jobs in private firms even by men.

The spread of education and the spread of employment for middle class women mutually assisted each other during and after the war. Earlier when education was considered only as an additional accomplishment desirable for a housewife it remained restricted to a small number of upper middle class, urban families. The rising cost of living and the changing ideas of the kind of life style the new lower middle class wanted to maintain was another factor leading to the spread of education and employment of women. The changing ideas of the preferred life style were themselves a consequence of greater exposure through the firms, through popular magazine, popular literature and the media to the life styles of the upper middle class within the country and to ideas that had percolated from the West.

At the same time the army opened up opportunities of employment for women as nurses and as cadets in the Women's Auxiliary Corps. It was primarily young women from the middle class Christian families who opted for nursing as a career. Why Christian girls took to nursing more than girls from other communities needs examination. May be the Christian faith made the acceptance of individual care and service acceptable as a career for girls. May be there were more educated girls among the Christian poor than among the Hindu or Muslim poor. May be the high dowry requirements of marriage among the educated Keral Christian families compelled the girls to look for employment. The alternative for such middle class educated girls unless they were already married was to join school teaching as a career. This probably constitute the largest single social group in the profession in India.

Employment among the lower middle class girls in other communities seemed to have remained largely confined to teaching until after the opportunities for employment in government offices opened during the war. Employment of women in commercial offices on any substantial scale was also a post Second War phenomenon and here again the lead was taken by Anglo-Indian, Parsee and Christian women at least in western India. The reason was probably to be found in the English language base of the education of these women but I suspect that their employment was also a consequence of the less restrictive attitudes in these communities to the idea of women mixing with men in social and formal work situations. Middle class Christian and Parsee homes have in some ways been less resistant to westernization or Anglicization of their social life and increased social communication between men and women is a part of this new orientation.

The considerable increase in the total number of educated, employed women has been one of the major social change in post-War, and post-Independence, India. The participation of women in the nationalist movement, particularly in its Gandhian form, has been another major factor which helped the Indian woman to move out of the limits of the household into social and public life. Even the Hindu woman seemed to have experienced less opposition to her entering the freedom movement than to her entering the occupational world. Participation of women in extra-familial activities – social, economic, political – has been one of the major changes on the social scene in India and it has strengthened particularly since Independence. Girls from middle class homes are now among the high achievers in school and college examinations as well as in competitive examinations. Women are to be found now in every field of economic and professional activity. One expects that this will have important consequences for social life generally and for family life in particular.

Changes in Family Life

The traditional form of marriage in most Indian communities required that marriages be arranged by the elders in the family, that they be within the caste, sub-caste, or community

and that they take place early in age. These considerations were important for the functioning and stability of the joint family. Marriages in the middle class are no longer 'early' in the way they used to be. They are no longer marriages that take place before or soon after attainment of puberty. The girl who marries into her husband's family is now at least 16-18 years of age, has usually completed her high-school if not college education and is not socially and psychologically as malleable a person as she might have been at the age of 10-15. The boy who marries is also not young and impressionable. He is educated, employed and is not a part of a joint family corporation whether in agriculture or in business. He has to function as a unit earner outside the household.

Marriage are still largely arranged if not through family contacts and the grapevine of communication within the caste and community then by use of the impersonal newspaper advertisement of through formal agencies which specialize in match-making and match fixing. The opportunities for social communication between the young boys and girls are still limited in our society. Boys and girls do meet in colleges but not yet socially outside college. Also the girls are expected to marry someone older, someone who is already settled in an occupation and whose economic standing and future can be assessed. Such a person will not normally be from among a young girl's cohorts at college unless she is prepared to wait. This happens often in the case of girls who are studying at the post-graduate level where there is a possibility of the boy and girl settling down occupationally about the same time. In most other case marriages are arranged.

But arranged marriages had earlier the functional implication of strengthening the joint family in a variety of ways. It tended to delay the point at which the conjugal tie between the young couple would gain priority over the filial tie between the boy and his parents or the fraternal tie between the boy and his brothers. The later age of marriage nullifies to some degree the effect of an arranged marriage in which the younger girl remained away from her husband and functioned as a young girl under the tutelage of her mother-in-law. In a relatively short period of marriage the young son of the family and his wife become an identifiable, separate unit within the household with growing mutual bonds. This raises problems for the joint family and threatens the traditional authority structure of the family.

There are other factors as well which seem to affect the internal relations of the family. Probably the most important of these is the occupational differentiation within the family. In the rural context where occupations were determined by caste the 'middle class' was typically the landowning class. Land was unusually inherited and held in common by the males. Common occupation and common coparcenary rights in the land tended to reinforced joint living and an avoidance of family division and a division of the family land into smaller less economic units. This happened even in the case of families where there was a common business inherited from an earlier generation. The coparcenary rights applied here as well. So common ownership of property and a common occupation became important reinforcing factors for the traditional joint family. The notion of inherited rights often extended even to the relationship of landlord and his dependent service giving families though here it might not exercise the same compelling influence that it did in the case of landed property or property in a common business.

The urban environment has completely changed this picture for most occupations other than hereditary individual family owned businesses. The other white collar occupations are not hereditary in the urban areas. This opens up the scope for occupational diversification within the family between father and son or brother and brother and, as mentioned earlier,

the gains of learning act has protected and individual's earnings from his non-hereditary occupation from being claimed by units of joint family.

Occupational differentiation also means the possibility of considerable differences in individual incomes of the earners in the family and this adds to the difficulty of joint family living where the expectation is that one shares one's assets generally within all the other members of the family. In the short run this is offset by the sense of familial obligations that bind parent child and brother-brother ties. But over time this becomes difficult and it is difficult to accommodate different standards and patterns of living within a common residential unit. Newer ideas of privacy, and the growing pattern of individualized styles of living and non-availability of large houses wherein individual units could manage to find separate spaces for day to day living brings closer the break down of the joint family into its sub-units.

This is facilitated by the fact that often the brothers in a family or even a father and a son who are now in different occupations are required to live in different towns or cities depending on the circumstances of their employment. This reduces the sense of guilt or awkwardness involved in family divisions. Separate residences for married brothers even in the same town or city have now come to be accepted as normal in the urban middle class though occasionally the point of separation may be postponed due to family exigencies or due to non-availability of housing accommodation in large metropolitan cities. There is also a trend whereby decisions regarding getting married get postponed and become contingent on the availability and affordability of separate housing.

What Happens to Familial Obligations?

Does this mean that the joint family has become extinct in the middle and higher income groups. Far from it. The idea of separate residential units for married brothers and their families had generally come to be accepted in the urban areas but the idea of familial obligations is yet alive. This manifests itself in different ways.

Its influence is seen first in the acceptance of obligations for one's younger unmarried siblings who may not yet have completed their educations. Educating one's younger male siblings and helping them settle in life is still accepted as a responsibility by elder males in the middle class. How far such help may extend depends on several factors including the degree of fraternal affection that particular families have developed. But culturally this is expected. In the case of younger sisters the earning brothers are minimally expected to help them get settled in matrimony. In the middle classes the education of younger sisters until they are married is also expected to be accepted as a responsibility by the brothers if the parents are not living or are not in a position to take this responsibility.

The system of joint family obligations is seen to continue in the relatively willing support that sons give to their aged parents. The culturally preferred pattern is for the parents to live in the household of one of the sons-usually the eldest son. If this is not possible then the sons minimally are expected to help support them financially to continue to live in their own home. If there is more than one son the responsibility may be shared between them.

The family sentiment is still strong and in the absence of elder brothers sometimes elder sisters have taken on the responsibility of supporting the family. This often involves a special hardship because once married a woman is expected to give priority to the demands of her husband's family. If therefore she takes responsibility for her own siblings or parents it has to be by giving up or postponing the idea of her own marriage. But this whole question of

how far a woman who is educated and earning should accept responsibility for her parental family is still new and there are no defined and culturally accepted norms and practices.

In the case of aged parents it is not yet common in India for married daughters to take the financial responsibility of supporting their parents through many such cases are now in evidence. Earlier accepting material support from a married daughter would have meant transgression of traditional norms for parents. This sentiment still continues but there are instances of widowed parents living singly with their daughter. As unitary households become common and married women increasingly have their own incomes the possibility of a woman accepting responsibility for dependents from her parental family may increase.

In another aspect the family life of the middle class is undergoing an important change. The size of the family is decreasing fast. The educated professional family does not want to have many children and if the wife is earning then they decide to stop after the first child. There is still value attached to having a male child and sometimes to having a child of each sex. This may occasionally lead couples of this class to have more than two children. But the attitude to having children has undergone a change. Children are not looked upon as assets for the future. Having children is now considered a value in itself – a type of fulfillment. At the same time there is an increasing feeling that having children is a responsibility – financial as well as social and psychological. Parents of this class are beginning to be aware that children involve sacrifices in their own lives and aspirations.

What is more this awareness and this attitude is spreading to the lower middle classes as well at least in the large urban areas. Education of the woman is considered a key variable influencing the size of the family. To this must be added the factor of employment. If the woman is educated and is also employed she is less likely to have or want more than one or two children.

Urbanization, industrialization and education have all contributed to these changes in the life pattern of the middle class. So have the efforts of social reformers and social legislators. Our middle class men and women is not yet as self-preoccupied or individualized as in some of the western countries but that is probably the direction in which they will move. If that happens, as is likely if we adopt a high consumer orientation, the life within the family will be affected not only in terms of the size of the family but also in terms of the interrelationships between its members.

Caste and Class in the years since Independence

I have been using the term ‘middle classes’ in the foregoing pages where I have discussed changes in the institutions of marriage and family over the recent past. I have done so to refer to that section of our society which is characterized by relatively higher achievements in education – at least high school and above- and generally by white collar occupation-clerical, managerial and professional. In recent years there has been a change. A section of the traditionally blue collar employees have also joined this ‘class’. I refer to those who may be employed as skilled workers, operators, packers, time-keepers etc. who are permanent employes in organized industry and even those who are employed as peons in municipal and government offices and in government aided institutions. Their wage levels have risen and they enjoy a measure of employment security which distinguishes them from casual workers in industry or workers in unorganized industry and, again from agricultural workers in rural areas. Further, this is a group which has adopted middle class life-styles in so far as their incomes will permit and middle-class aspirations of education for their children and goals of upward mobility. One may, if one chooses, label them as lower middle class but

they are no longer the old workers in the textile mills of Bombay either in terms of their educational level, or their earnings or their aspirations and life style.

The middle class is more heterogeneous in its caste composition than the middle class probably was at the point of independence – at least in the urban areas. At the point of independence or more generally prior to the second world war the urban middle class consisted primarily of the clerical, teaching, administrative and managerial employees, those who were members of the ‘learned professions’ of law, medicine and engineering, and those who were traders, merchants and money lenders. To begin with this class was recruited in Maharashtra largely from among Brahmins, CKPs, Pathare Prabhus, and, later, a section of the Maratha, Jain, Lingayat communities who had been influenced and had benefited by the *brambhanetar* movement and the initiatives in education taken by Chhatrapati Shahu, and the merchants and traders who came very often from outside Maharashtra. This group depended upon education as a necessary equipment for entering on their occupations. The working class, including workers in the mills and peons in government offices and private establishments, was clearly separated from this middle class.

Since the second world war the position has changed and a section of the urban working class has changed its self image and its economic status – partly through labour organization, partly through the requirements of education and training required by their work and consequently by the higher wages they command. The industrial working class is drawn from a wider caste, community and regional base than the traditional middle class and has thus widened the social base of the new middle class. This working class now also attracts some from the lower strata of the traditional middle castes in Maharashtra and the new beneficiaries of the constitutional provisions for reservations for the Scheduled Castes and Tribes.

Caste Still Relevant

This does not mean that the economic opportunities have opened up altogether to all equally and that caste is no longer a relevant factor in upward mobility. Certainly, legally that is the case but not in practice. Individual and family life is still lived very much within and through the caste. In small towns and in remote urban areas caste is an important determinant of one’s life chances in Indian society because social life is still largely governed by caste affiliation and that in turn determines your chances of taking advantage of the opportunities that many exist for upward mobility whether through education and employment or through mobilization of social contact and influence. Caste may not be an important influence in interpersonal communication in formal settings, particularly in the urban areas. But caste is generally important in the familial sphere and influences subtly the choice of intimates and friends even at work. This in turn vitiates the openness of channels of communications.

In the rural areas caste still governs economic life to an even larger degree and access to and utilization of educational and occupational opportunities is determined by caste status. The higher the caste status the greater the chances of one entering a school or college and remaining in it to complete one’s studies. Caste is also the basis of the struggle for political power and upward mobility through political mobilization in rural areas. In the case of Marathas in Maharashtra, and other comparable land owning groups in other states, politics combined with land ownership has been an important channel of upward mobility – more important than the channel of education and white collar employment.

In the last couple of decades this power elite has also taken advantage of the increasing opportunities for education. After the first few years of independence the plurality and the

land base of these middle castes in various parts of the country helped their gaining control of the political machine at least at the State level. This dominance of the traditional landed castes in State level politics continued well into the seventies. Recently the dissatisfaction among the further lower strata has begun to manifest itself in an organized way. The Mandal commission has led to political mobilization among tribes. Such mobilization is now proceeding apace. There are some efforts to use the somewhat undefined phrases like the dalits, the downtrodden and the deprived to build a common political platform for the O.B.C.s and the scheduled castes. How far it will succeed and whether such a combination will finally be led by the O.B.C.s or by the Scheduled Castes is not yet known..

But the open democratic structure and the mechanism of reservations in jobs, if not in legislatures, has certainly proved an important channel to provide limited upward mobility to successively lower strata of the Indian society. First the *savarna* intermediate castes – the non-Brahmins, then the scheduled castes and tribes as a result of the reservations provided in the Constitution and, more recently, under the Mandal dispensation, the backward castes have benefited by reservations in employment in government offices and offices of aided institutions.

To begin with this upward mobility for the ‘deprived’ groups will very likely be political. The new politically upward mobile groups have yet to develop tools and mechanisms of converting their political base of access to power into more lasting social, occupational and economic strength. This cannot be achieved easily in the short run and not without a greater spread of education in these groups and without some access to capital resources. Even the intermediate and large land owning castes have only recently begun to consolidate their elitist position by entering in substantial numbers into education, the professions and the world of art, literature, science and philosophy. In Maharashtra they have been helped substantially by the Cooperative Movement and even in other states the landowning castes have benefited by the liberal subsidies offered by government for agriculture and agriculture related industries.

The Strife around Class and Caste

The fact that the democratic polity makes it possible for different strata to stake their claims to political and economic opportunities does not however mean that the process of transfer is smooth and without conflict. The transfer of power from the Brahmins to the non-Brahmin middle castes in the South of the country was comparatively smooth because the Brahmins in Maharashtra and in the southern States were generally a small minority and in electoral politics they could not present a serious challenge. This is not the case when we consider the challenge from the non-landowning O.B.C.s to the land-owning and currently powerful upper castes. This tussle is currently going on in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. And this tussle is not merely being fought the ballot box. It is manifesting itself through armed attacks and counter-attacks between the organized ‘armies’ of the upper caste not been able to give adequate protection to the untouchables. The O.B.C.s are being politically wooed both by the landed castes and by the untouchables. In the meanwhile, the government in power is unable to control or turns a blind eye to the regime of repression and threats let loose by the big landlords.

Again, in the border districts between Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra, the struggle between the landed and the landless has taken on the form of a militant conflict between the Government and the Naxalite led landless communities including some nomadic tribal groups. The democratically elected government has to contain the militancy of the oppressed and yet not seem unresponsive to the woes of the landless. It would prefer

to separate the problem of tackling militancy from the problem of the landless and disinherited poor. Such neat choices may not always be available to a ruling party. The failure of successive governments to get moving on the question of land reform and their inability or unwillingness to hurt the interests of the large peasant has lost them the confidence of the landless and poor. The prospect of illicit arms flowing into these pockets of unrest is what is making them sit up but it is unlikely that they will find in themselves the will to take prompt actions to redress the grievances of the affected groups.

The problem of the landless is at once a problem of class and of caste because in most cases the two modes of social stratification converge and the lower castes are invariably also the poorer ones. In some ways this problem of the disaffection of the landless poor – whether in Andhra or Bihar or Uttar Pradesh is likely to pose a more difficult challenge than the ethnic based problems of insurgency on the frontiers. These problems cannot be blamed on foreign elements seeking to weaken the Indian nation nor can they be treated merely as problems of accommodating the identities of groups lying at the physical periphery of the country. They are a problem of and within our society, problems testing our economic and political professions of working for a free and at least relatively equal society.

These problems have meant repeated arson, looting and burning down of entire untouchable villages and the loss of lives of countless poor. They have also meant a gradual strengthening of forces which challenge the rule of law and order. In Andhra this situation has expressed itself in many instances of kidnapping of senior government officers and the murders of allegedly repressive landlords. The government may not be able to play for long the role of a tolerant bystander interested in but unable to address directly the grievances of the poor. They may have to actively enforce law and order and also act to remove the causes of the unrest among the poor.

Caste in the Urban Areas

One expects that caste has a very limited role to play in urban areas and that relationships are governed by class affiliations in individual social life and by objective criteria and contractual considerations in the formal sphere of economic and political activity. One needs to consider the extent to which these assumptions are valid.

In a small town one finds that neighborhoods often crystallize with a broad category as its base – thus we may have a Brahmin alley or a Maratha alley, or lanes based on the occupation specific caste groups such as baniyas, weavers, chamars, cane-workers, etc. Even in the large metropolitan cities the older portions of the city – for example the middle class chawls in Dadar or Girgaum in Bombay – would tend to be caste based. This is now more difficult in the larger cities because finding a house is no longer a matter of choice. One accepts whatever is available. But where there is a choice, as for instance, in the formation of a cooperative housing society one finds that the membership gets designedly limited to particular broad caste groups unless they are societies based on the members' affiliation to a place of employment – as in the case former government employees, or former port trust employees etc. To the extent that a neighbourhood decides the choice of friends the social interaction tends to be within the caste group if the basis of the formation of the neighbourhood is caste.

But, even if a neighbourhood is 'cosmopolitan', we find that intimate familial relationships tend to be limited first to the extended family and then to members of one's caste. There are of course exceptions and there is no doubt that the urban dweller is likely to be more exposed to inter-caste interactions at the social level than a village dweller. But one

may notice a tendency to limit invitations for family meals to persons of the same caste. While social occasions like celebrations of weddings and larger social functions will normally be attended by guests drawn from many castes close family contacts which would include communication with women in the family tend to be limited to one's caste.

When it comes to marriage all arrange marriages – and most marriages are still arranged – tend to be within the caste. The only change is that instead of being limited to particular sub-castes as they used to be they may now be a little broad based and may include socially close other castes. Even this is likely to happen only if the young boy or girl concerned has taken some part in the choice of the partner. To the extent that marriages of choice have become more acceptable in some of the social groups-like upper class professionals there may be a greater possibility of marriages across castes or across linguistic groups or even across religious groups taking place.

Class in Urban Areas

Social relationships at the work place in urban areas are based on departmental proximity and rank in the hierarchy of an organization and do not depend on caste affiliation. But the likelihood of such relationship converting into family friendship are limited and where they occur they are more likely to be among members of the same or equal status caste groups.

In urban areas caste does not play any part in access to public places like restaurants, cinema halls, or social clubs. Here social and economic class plays a more decisive role. Affordability of access to a particular hotel, restaurant, or club becomes a critical factor. Such class differentiation is also noticed in choice of residential area and more recent residential colonies are homogenous in terms of class rather than caste.

Of course attainment of a particular economic class status may itself depend upon the caste or the regional group in which one is born. To the extent this is the case class differentiation also becomes an indirect way of caste or region based differentiation. Even class based differentiation, in its negative implication, serves to keep out the lowest caste categories.

In the large cities there is also often a regional or linguistic basis of differentiation in housing and choice of club membership. At times this may extend to educational institutions. Thus some colonies and clubs or schools are sponsored and predominantly patronized by particular linguistic groups than by others. There are usually no formal rules limiting memberships to particular language or caste groups in admission to these institutions but a process of self-selection based on life-styles takes place and particular communities tend to predominate in particular institutions. Further in the recruitment of staff the minority status of particular communities may enable their institutions to ensure that senior staff positions are reserved for members of particular groups.

Thus caste class and regional background all play a part in differentiating social relationships in urban areas. Caste and regional background often go together because castes are most often region specific and in that sense class and caste become the major differentiators in urban social interaction.

Social Movements

I have said nothing so far about social movements of the period since Independence. They constitute a subject by themselves and I will deal with them briefly in this presentation. In some ways social reform and social movements share a common ground in that both are

aimed at bringing about a change in the prevalent values and practices within a society with respect to a particular group. But while social reform was often undertaken for a deprived group by one who did not belong to it, a social movement is usually initiated by and for the group by one who is a member of the deprived group. In any case even if a movement is initiated by an outsider the deprived group has to be an active participant in the efforts to seek a change. Typically, in the nineteenth century those who sought to bring about reform in the condition of women in our society were often men and women did not figure prominently as leaders. Those reformers who sought the abolition of untouchability—including Gandhiji—were caste Hindus. Increasingly now those who are seeking to bring about a change are from among the group that suffers inequity. To that extent one finds an edge of militancy and impatience with the present leaders associated with social movements. They are led not by reformers but by ‘activists’. They are protest movement and not reform movements.

One could say that against the ‘Harijan’ movement initiated by Gandhiji which was largely reformist, the Ambedkar movement in the same cause was militant or activist. In the same sense, while Gandhiji’s Harijan movement was reformist his movement for freedom from the British was activist. There is an element of political mobilization in most movements today and it has become easier to undertake such mobilization in the post-Independence periods because the political institutions of post-Independence India are more open. This is a major difference and a gain for those interested in promoting change.

There are as many movements as there are ‘causes’ – the women’s cause, the environmental cause, the dalit cause, the cause of the agrarian labourer, the cause of displaced populations and so on. Often there is more than one movement ostensibly for the same cause. This happens because ‘causes’ with a political potential tend to be utilized by more than one political party.

Activist social movements arise because there is inequity in the many of our social institutional arrangements. Agitation through an organized movement is a part of the strategy for advancing a

cause or advancing the interests of a particular group against whom an injustice is said to have been done by the prevalent dispensation.

The most deprived groups in our society are the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes. Of the two the scheduled castes had a longer history of organized representation and agitation on their behalf since before independence. The scheduled castes were also the worse sufferers of the two in the sense that apart from servitude and deprivation they also suffer the indignity of their very person being regarded as unclean and untouchable though they lived in a continuing interaction with the rest of society.

The movement for betterment of the untouchables has now taken primarily the political route where the representatives of the Scheduled Castes are expected to use their vote and influence to ensure betterment of the lot of their people. Free India has not yet been able to fulfil its promise to the Scheduled Castes of providing the climate for their fullest development. The Scheduled Castes are caught in a network of unequal exchange and exploitation between the upper castes and the erstwhile untouchables. The worse case is probably that of Bihar where, as mentioned earlier, the economy of the landed gentry seems to depend on the subjugation and continued ‘enslavement’ of the untouchables and they have no qualms about using arms to suppress moves toward liberation. The political elite of the State has either sided with the landed gentry or has failed to bring them within

framework of law. Even in the other states the problem of ensuring equal opportunity to the scheduled castes is still very much with us.

The Scheduled Tribes have faced different kinds of problems depending on how close or far they lived from the main body of the Indian people. Those who lived away in distant hills in the North-East suffered isolation but they enjoyed relative freedom and maintained their cultural identity and dignity as a people. Free India in its effort to ensure political integration posed a threat to their sense of independence. They protested against being included in the Indian State and there was a long period of 'insurgency' in the North-Eastern frontier region. The problem has only recently been tackled by dividing the area into separate culturally homogeneous 'states' and ensuring they have each their own governments and also laws which protect them from being exploited by the plains people. The problem is not yet completely solved but has become more amenable to being handled within the political framework.

Those tribes which lived in the plains but occupied large contiguous geographical areas were also generally cut off from the main body of Indians and enjoyed relative freedom. But they began to suffer exploitation as Indian enterprise spread to these formerly tribal areas in search of metal ore and coal or found other reasons for encroaching on tribal land. The Santals in Bihar and the Warlis and Takurs in Maharashtra are examples of tribal groups that had earlier lived in relative isolation though surrounded by settled agricultural villages. The Santals suffered loss of their relative freedom as the land where they lived turned out to be a major mining resource and collieries and iron ore mining spread to their villages. Their protest continues and the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha is its political manifestation. The Warlis and the Thakurs were a relatively small group. The cause of the Warlis received public notice because of Godavari Parulekar's efforts to organize their protest against virtual enslavement and economic exploitation.

Those who lived as nomads probably suffered the most privations in terms of finding the wherewithal for their daily life. They were partially dependent on the villages with whom they interacted as roaming petty traders in forest produce or products of their own special handicraft. The bird catchers who are currently in the news either because their occupation is seen cruel or as threatening the continuation of the diversity of species are an example of such nomadic group which has lived in a continuing economic exchange with the main society but is now facing a problem. These tribes which were divided into small groups have not been able to present any major organized protest.

Gradually some individuals from among the scheduled tribes who have benefited from the education opportunities first opened by Christian missionaries are now finding their way into the governmental administrative hierarchy through competitive examinations and the mechanism of reservations and a few tribals have also moved up the political channel and are important functionaries in the political arena either at the State or the national level. The tribals from the North-East have an advantage in that they have a higher percentage of literacy and education. The fact that in many cases their education is in English also helps them in their upward mobility and integration into the Indian elite. The problem of social and cultural adjustment however are still not resolved for the tribal communities as a whole. There is much mutual ignorance and suspicion between the 'tribals and the main body of the Indian society. The Indian government while assuring the tribals autonomy also hopes that as they become involved in economic and political activities their isolationism will break down and there will be greater communication and exchange between these peoples living in the sensitive border area and the rest of the country at the social and cultural level as well.

It is neither possible nor necessary to cover all the social movements that are active in our midst today. I have touched only two of the most deprived sections in our society. It happens that movements relating to both these groups are today primarily political though the problems they face are social and cultural as well. While protest movements against inequity are necessary there is an urgent need for strong movements for the promotion of education and internal reform among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as well. They are problems that would need to be addressed over a period of long years involving conscious social reorientation within the affected groups themselves.

Concluding Remarks

I began by saying that my presentation is in the nature of an impressionistic survey of the some of the important social changes that have taken place in India. I have restricted myself to the areas of marriage, family, caste, class and the situation regarding the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The promises that we made ourselves at the point of independence are still not fulfilled whether in terms of the main community or the minorities or the specially deprived groups. We have not been able to create so far an equitable social order. What we have is a generally secular and broadly open democratic polity. A democratic system is a means to attaining a just society. It needs to be used for attaining our social goals. These will not be attained without conscious effort on the part of those who are born to privilege as well as those who are deprived. It is such efforts that will give birth to a civil society.

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Biotechnology and Global Governance: Narratives of Risk, Uncertainty, and Responsible Expertise¹

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Introduction

The increasing ambivalence about biotechnology today places it in good company with other contested terms which hint at managing social transformations, such as development, the market, and globalization. Biotechnology is made all the more powerful by its apparent ambiguities: it is said to cause harm to farmers and the environment at the same time that it apparently manages risks for them both; it circulates as a monster image devouring everything in its path and yet is also a saviour for failing models of agricultural development.² Rather than adding to an increasingly polarized debate, we hope to make a different kind of contribution here by unravelling biotechnology as a discursive subject bound up with processes of global governance. The general question we ask is how an analysis of biotechnology as a narrative of risk and uncertainty might aid our understanding of biotechnology as a project of governance. Specifically, we are interested in understanding the extent to which one version of biotechnology, one animated by the rhetoric of science and economics, is embraced by notions of risk which govern populations on global scales. We undertake this analysis with reference to our research on the United Nations (UN), specifically, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).³

Considering biotechnology as a narrative of risk and uncertainty draws on two kinds of literature. The literature on narrative has focussed on how narratives (or stories) are strategically constructed through the employment of particular kinds of tropes and rhetoric (Clifford & Marcus 1986). These literary strategies lend a particular authority to texts and speech, and are thus effective in rendering distinct realities (Mattingly & Garro 2000; McNee

2003; Ryan 2004). Given the relative silence in this literature on the political (as opposed to the poetic) power of narratives (Behar & Gordon 1995), we thread this understanding of narratives into a second set of literature, the governmentality literature, which focuses precisely on questions of political power through an examination of government (Barry, Osborne & Rose 1996; Dean 1999; Foucault 1991; Rose 1999). The governmentality literature is particularly important for our case because of its recent interest in the relationship between government, governance, and risk. We draw on the work of Pat O'Malley (1996, 2000), who critically engages with Beck's (1992) influential work on the risk society. O'Malley argues that it is useful to distinguish between uncertainty and risk because it highlights how there is something more to governing than "the deployment of expert-driven ideologies that appear to tame [risks] by quantifying their probability, thereby rendering them predictable and thus manageable" (2000: 461). Often eclipsed by the focus on a 'risk society', the notion of *uncertainty* involves a different modality of governance which mobilises people with capacities for "reasonable foresight and everyday prudence" (O'Malley, *ibid.*). Uncertainty, in other words, is an enduring aspect of governing the self and others. This insight helps us to understand how the narratives associated with biotechnology may be tied to different kinds of governing for different kinds of purposes. We employ the term *responsible expertise* to refer to the different ways in which expert knowledge about biotechnology may be generated, and the extent to which people may be drawn into responsibilities associated with its use in their everyday engagement with the present through anxieties about the future.

Governing through Risk and Uncertainty

All narratives, including scientific ones, involve "strategies for the encompassing of situations" (Burke 1969:3, cited in Clifford & Marcus 1986); that is, they exclude and include voices, silence and express ideas, and employ and mask languages and logic to render reality in particular ways. As a social object, biotechnology is made meaningful through a range of strategic narratives that focus on risk and the possibilities (or not) of its management. For example, narratives that engage the rhetoric of economics or science do not deny that the application of new biotechnologies holds risk factors but stress the economic necessity of biotechnology for feeding ever-expanding populations, or emphasize the potential for managing its risk factors through the development and deployment of scientific expertise. From a narrative perspective, then, the analytical objective is to unpack how different tropes inhabit what we hear and read about biotechnology and how these tropes burden us with particular understandings of their value to social and economic life.

When we turn to the governmentality literature, with its particular interest in exploring the techniques that govern populations beyond the state, a different kind of question arises. Rather than focusing on the literary devices of narrative, this literature draws on the work of Michel Foucault to interrogate the relationships between a range of discourses (how narratives are presented, practised, and bound up with the social) and what is referred to as the "technologies" of government. The analytical concern becomes, for our present purposes, the extent to which discourses of biotechnology may be embedded in the practices and devices of rule. Is there a relationship between the discourse of biotechnology, as a necessary and manageable risk, and governing populations? Distinguishing risk (and the requirement of expertise) from uncertainty (and the commonsense reasoning of rational subjects) illuminates this question, and our interest in narrative, in a unique way. It offers the opportunity to investigate not only how the rhetoric of risk and expertise may play a role in

managing responses to biotechnology, but how people may be made responsible in new ways *through* biotechnology. In our examination of UN narratives of biotechnology, we keep this distinction in mind to illustrate the extent to which biotechnology offers opportunities for governing populations through expertise at the same time that it mobilizes ‘everyday prudence’ on global scales.

The UN and Biotechnology

International organizations, and particularly the UN, have been central to the development and coordination of biotechnology in many regions around the world. Both UNESCO, as the UN agency responsible for disseminating scientific knowledge and promoting education, and the FAO, the specialized agency of the UN responsible for food and agriculture, have widespread initiatives to inform populations about biotechnology. Asia, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean – viewed as facing bleak futures due to the problems associated with hunger, overpopulation and underdevelopment – are particularly important regions for these initiatives. Given space constraints, our discussion here draws on examples from Latin America and the Caribbean, and South Africa.

UNESCO established the Latin American Network of Biotechnology Centres (Sasson 2001: 55) in 1983, which soon became what is today the Regional Biotechnology Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean. Financial support for this programme was provided by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the participating governments, and participation was open to universities and the public and private sectors. Within this context, UNESCO and UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization) implemented a long-term biotechnology plan, with nine projects initiated between 1987 and 1989 alone. Activities included holding training workshops, developing diagnostics for identifying plant diseases, identifying new labels for DNA probes for diagnosing human viruses and diseases, and genetically transforming sugar cane, maize, beans, and potatoes to become pest and virus resistant. External experts in biotechnology, designated as such by UNDP, reviewed this programme very positively and recommended its extension. The programme moved into a second stage (1993-1996), including the development of an electronic network for information exchange between governments, research and development institutions, and industry (See Sasson, 2001).

In addition to UNESCO’s Latin American Network of Biotechnology Centres, the organization also launched in 1990 the Biotechnology Action Council (BAC). The BAC aimed to strengthen national and regional capabilities in biotechnology in developing countries by providing opportunities for education and training and the exchange of information. It embarked on a number of activities targeted at young scientists with the goal of enhancing a scientific and technological base that would contribute to developing countries becoming ‘independent and self-sufficient in biotechnology.’ In an effort to accomplish this task, BAC established in 1995 five regional Biotechnology Education and Training Centres throughout the world (UNESCO, 2005d). The activities of the regional Centre in South Africa, for example, focuses on expert research and training in a range of fields, including: tissue culture laboratory; *in vitro* mass propagation of crops (maize, bulbs, strawberries, roses, soybeans and cucumbers); long term *in vitro* storage of plants; embryo rescue; and regeneration and gene transfer. Researchers from thirteen developing and least developed countries have been involved in this particular initiative (UNESCO, 2004: 17). As a way to further biotechnology research on a global scale, UNESCO’s 2002-2003 budget allocated \$3.5 billion towards ‘capacity-building in the biological sciences and

biotechnologies' through its proposed International Basic Sciences Programme. These monies were used to assist Member States in training and research through cooperation with networks, IGOs, NGOs, and centres of excellence, with special attention paid to developing countries and 'countries in transition' (UNESCO, 2002: 3). As a UNESCO policy administrator put it: "[N]etworking... amongst the producers of knowledge, and networking between producers and users of knowledge is useful... in general terms [and] I think other organizations have been trying to build knowledge networks...in a given field" [UNESCO interview, Paris, 2005]. In this context, the politics of biotechnologies is being shaped by such global organizations that aim to control the human, technical, and financial resources necessary to support expert research training and the development of networks.

REDBIO, the FAO's network in Latin America for disseminating information about biotechnology, began in 1989. The FAO found at that time that the main weakness in the region was "the dearth of training in advanced plant biotechnologies" (Sasson *ibid*: 104). In 1990, experts in biotechnology met in the FAO regional office (Santiago) and formed the Network of Technical Cooperation in Plant Biotechnology, or REDBIO. Sponsored by the FAO and based in its regional office, REDBIO's mandate was to promote the network and its activities, raise funds, and set policy in genetic engineering, germplasm, micropropagation, cell and tissue culture, and the diagnosis of plant pathogens. By 2000 REDBIO had over 549 affiliated laboratories in 32 countries. Its website, monitored through the FAO regional office, had received over 5,000 visits in 1999 alone. A Code of Conduct in Plant Biotechnology was created by FAO and REDBIO to "serve as a reference for individual countries setting up their own regulatory codes" (Sasson *ibid*: 109). REDBIO has produced texts for use in agricultural schools, published manuals for growers, and organized countless seminars and workshops. Today it has 643 laboratories in Latin America and the Caribbean, and has 2349 research and academic graduates and 1542 postgraduates (Rota and Izquierdo, 2003:np).

FAO and UNESCO documents are consistent in their depiction of why the world needs to discuss biotechnology and why these organizations should play a role in promoting such discussion. Indicating the need for more comprehensive and scientific research on biotechnology in developing countries, international panels of experts influenced UNESCO's biotechnology initiatives, such as the BAC programme, by advancing ideas that the applications of biotechnology could have "far-reaching consequences" and favourable impact in the developing countries, "many of which suffer from large and rapidly increasing populations, chronic food shortages and malnutrition, poor health, and profound environmental problems" (UNESCO, 2005e). Pointing to its 1945 mandate to improve standards of living and agricultural productivity, the FAO has consistently framed biotechnology within the problematic of population growth and limited resources for producing more food. A telling document is *Agricultural Biotechnology for Developing Countries* (2001a) which is a compilation of the results of one of a number of electronic fora launched by the FAO between 2000 and 2001. The organization opened this electronic discussion of biotechnology with 6 distinct conferences on the subject, including in total over 1200 participants from 47 different countries around the world (FAO 2001a: vii). Recognizing that efforts in biotechnological advances and implementation were being hindered by controversy, the FAO saw the need for the organization to provide "quality, balanced, neutral and factual information" about biotechnology "to assist Member Nations in obtaining the full benefits of new developments while minimizing risks" (p.1-2). This document narrates biotechnology as a controversy in need of debate, and positions the FAO

as an “honest broker of quality science-based information” on the subject (p.2). By providing background papers to suggest how discussions might proceed and summarizing debates to establish agreement as well as polarized views, the FAO promotes itself as a good manager and at the same time is able to provide a clear rationale for why expert knowledge about biotechnology in agriculture is required. The potential risks of biotechnology warrant “responsible” consideration through the establishment of expert committees which can provide “science-based” evaluation systems that “objectively” determine the benefits and risks of biotechnology (Sasson 2001: 118; see also FAO 2005a,b; UNESCO 2005a,b,c). A reliance on experts – poised in these narratives as neutral scientists in search of the truth – not only helps to sideline political narratives (which are understood to fuel, not resolve, controversy) but locates farmers, with often intimate knowledge about their land, as subordinate subjects requiring (re)education. The power of experts to define and settle the controversies around biotechnology is made all the more compelling by science-based narratives which are, more often than not, highly abstract, impenetrable, and immune to debate except by other experts.

This impenetrability, however, may also constitute a limitation of scientific narratives as a strategic mode of rendering particular realities. Increasingly, populations may fail to listen or, worse, succumb to the myths of “soundbite science” (FAO 2005b) and reject scientific expertise. The UN response to the skepticism of the public regarding biotechnology as a necessary risk has been, not to cast a critical eye on the concept of expert knowledge, but to attempt to bridge the gap by popularizing expertise about biotechnology and expanding it across populations. This strategy alerts us to the fluidity of responsible expertise as a governing technique and aids our understanding of the UN as a mechanism for mobilizing ‘prudent’ consumers and producers.

The UN initiates a range of activities in many regions of the world to disperse responsible expertise regarding biotechnology. It is telling, for example, that the FAO has published an accessible 300-page glossary defining terminology for biotechnologies in food and agriculture, with the recognition that at times “simple differences of interpretation of terminology have threatened to de-rail negotiations of international importance” (FAO 2001b: v). The UN also plays a pivotal role in massaging biotechnology as a concept. One important example is the idea of “appropriate biotechnology” (Izquierdo et al 1995; Wendt & Izquierdo 2003). Appropriate biotechnology is the *appropriate* integration of biotechnology with other technologies for producing food and other agricultural products (Sasson 2001), taking into account the existing conditions and geographies of particular countries. It permits the channelling of biotechnology in “a viable and responsible manner” toward the concrete necessities of both producers and consumers (Wendt & Izquierdo 2003: 4).

The narrative of appropriate biotechnology works to ensure that biotechnology is not viewed by the public as a foreign or isolated technology but a normal part of necessary change. Biotechnology moves from a product of profit-hungry corporations to a product of responsible management. Within this narrative, responsible management does require expertise, but expertise is not simply the knowledge of outsiders. For biotechnology to be ‘appropriate,’ a range of new responsible subjects are necessary – decision-making politicians from various levels of government, Ministry representatives to develop national biosafety systems, and technicians working in regional agricultural research centres. In this sense, the term enables an expansion of the boundaries of who can and who should have expertise at the same time that it orients populations to new ways of thinking about the present and the future. Appropriate biotechnology creates an opportunity for transforming historically

marginalized populations (once constructed as ‘risky’ and in need of outside aid by experts; see Nugent 2000) into knowledge experts who can responsibly manage the potential of biotechnology. Responsible expertise, as a governing technique, draws in ‘Northern’ experts as well as ‘Southern’ scientists, government policy-makers, academics, and the general public to become what Rose (1999) would refer to as ‘experts of themselves.’ For example, during the period, 1993-2001, a total of 24 UNESCO/BAC professorships from the North and the South were awarded for provision of research instruction and skills to host institutes in Brazil, China, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, India, Jamaica, Jordan, Latin America, Malaysia, Mexico, Pakistan, South Africa, Sudan, Thailand, Turkey, UK, Vietnam, and Yemen, in a range of research expertise including: aquaculture farms, biomaterials, biopesticides, BNF technology, cyberbiotechnology, DNA fingerprinting, environmental biotechnology, food biotechnology, gene transfer, immunology, molecular neurobiology and pharmacology, plant biotechnology, and plant molecular biology (UNESCO, 2005e).

Governing through responsible expertise requires biotechnology to be a familiar social object for public consumption. Particular attention is paid by the UN to strengthening the public sector, in part because, as an FAO representative put it, a strong public sector attracts private money.

One of the things we are observing is that it’s the countries that have stronger public sector research infrastructures that are attracting private monies. Countries that don’t have any public sector capacity to understand, to regulate, are not attracting private sector investment, because the private sector needs a transparent and predictable regulatory system. (FAO interviews, Rome, 2003)

Educating the public about biotechnology is an important component of this public sector strategy. One interesting example is a large FAO/REDBIO project concerned with combatting the negative impression that Latin American children may have about biotechnology. The project’s solution to the problem is to introduce the concept into the school system, where science teachers in particular have the responsibility to educate students about biotechnology to “qualify them as the decision makers of the future to deal in a reasoned way with the chances and the risks of biotechnology” (Rota & Izquierdo 2003: np). The animated format of this module uses the metaphor of adventure to offer a playful vision for students so that they can imagine one day growing up in a world of biotechnology.⁴ Projects such as this help to construct biotechnology as ‘common sense’. Biotechnology becomes a sound strategy for managing, with ‘reasonable foresight and everyday prudence’, the uncertainties of everyday life.

Conclusion

We have focused on biotechnology as a project that emphasizes the governing of the present through risk and uncertainty about the future. As a salient feature of UN activities throughout the world, biotechnology as a risk narrative is globally dispersed as a reasonable option for managing an uncertain world dealing with the problems of hunger, overpopulation and underdevelopment. We have shown, in the case of Latin America, how the ideas of risk, uncertainty, and responsible expertise provide a platform for how populations come to know biotechnology, and how people may come to adopt it as one component of ‘everyday prudence’. The concept of responsible expertise guides our exploration of the relationship between expertise and responsabilization, or what Foucault

(1980, cited in Burchell 1996: 20) refers to as the interaction between the techniques of domination and the techniques of the self.

Dean (1999) notes that if the task of critique is to investigate the historical conditions of knowledge and knowledge production, then we need to investigate the ways in which risk is calculated and for what purposes. Here we have shown biotechnology to be a project that not only draws its inspiration from the social imaginaries of risk but disperses distinct narratives of expertise to influence the contours of responsibility for the risky world which is thereby produced. In a climate that increasingly fosters risk-thinking, we understand our critique to form part of a necessary examination of the ever-expanding practices that place risk at the forefront of our lives, and that encourage us to place the risks associated with technologies (of all kinds) in the present, as part and parcel of governing the future.

This analysis points to a number of ways in which sociologists and anthropologists might engage with biotechnology debates. First, it speaks to the importance of investigating the narrative linkages made between risk and technologies, and the ramifications of these linkages for larger projects of governance. What realities are excluded through the strategic narrative of biotechnology-as-science, and what possibilities exist for developing alternative narratives to challenge the current ways in which biotechnology, and its future in our lives, is discursively managed? Second, in unravelling the notion of expertise, our analysis raises the question of not only how the power of expert knowledge may be buoyed by biotechnology debates but how it may be popularized and expanded to new populations in ways which can undermine the ability of scientific expertise to readily settle controversies. The political implications of this point would certainly be worth pursuing. Finally, we note the importance of casting a critical eye on the expansion of networks between the north and the south in the name of ‘sharing knowledge’. How are the sciences and scientists in the South being mobilized in the name of responsible expertise through networks that at the same time govern the place and trajectories of biotechnology? This is a crucial *sociological* question, the answer to which will aid understanding of the fluidity of power in the current context of globalization and of the overall significance of biotechnology in determining ‘our global future’.

Notes

1 This article is a preliminary essay on biotechnology and the UN which forms part of two larger projects on globalization. Research, including interviews in the Head and Regional offices of the FAO and UNESCO, was funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Council of Canada (SSHRC). Lead authorship alternates with each publication produced through our collaboration on these two projects. Our thanks to SSHRC and to those who participated in interviews. Thanks are also due to our able research assistants, Kelly Greenfield, Nicole Noël, and Karina Schneider.

2 The 120th Nice Carnival (France), entertaining the theme ‘Cloning and Bioethics’ for the third year in a row, includes a massive float called “Frankenstein the Magician” (see *Anthropology News* 45 (8), November, 2004, for a front page visual). For contrasting views on biotechnology and its promise for the future, see Delgado (2002); Pardey (2001); Shiva (1997, 2000); World Bank (1991).

3 Guiding this discussion is the FAO and WHO definition of ‘modern’ biotechnology as: “the application of: i) in vitro nucleic acid techniques, including recombinant deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) and direct injection of nucleic acid into cells or organelles, or ii) fusion of cells beyond the taxonomic family, that overcome natural physiological

reproductive or recombinant barriers and that are not techniques used in traditional breeding and selection” (FAO/WHO 2001).

4 This was a pilot study of 3000 students in 30 schools in Brazil; the module was translated into Spanish for use in other Latin American countries (Rota & Izquierdo 2003).

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Projecting the Future: Some Implications of a Transformed US Military for the Third World

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Introduction

An expert on US national security matters once noted that “changing military manpower realities may be the single most critical and persistent issue impinging upon US defense policy in the 1990s. “The inability to recruit and retain a sufficient number of high-quality military personnel may seriously constraint the choices of national security policy makers” (Margiotta 1980 in Klerman and Karoly 1994: 41). In Workforce 2000, a Hudson Institute report authored by William B. Johnston and Arnold H. Packer in 1987, an alarm was raised that “Only 15% of the new entrants to the labor force over the next 13 years will be native white males, compared to 47% in that category today” (in Klerman and Karoly 1994: 45). Concerns have been expressed over the format and force structure of the US armed services long before and even after the establishment of the All Volunteer Force (AVF) in the 1970s. The issues raised in this essay may stem from and are indeed related to some of those concerns.

The US Army

The Army is the largest of all the five uniformed Services that constitute the US military establishment. Ironically in terms of enlistment, in the US, while the Army is the least popular amongst the elite, it tends to be the most socially representative in terms of class, race, religion, and geographic region: By virtue of its high numerical strength, there is hardly a section or component of America which is not represented in at least the Army’s rank and file. In 1997, 9,000 out of the 78,000 individuals in the Army officer corps were Blacks. However, the number of Blacks and women who are in the Army does not approximate their actual number in the over all population. In contrast to the 13% which Blacks claim in the general population of the US, the percentage of enlisted personnel in the US Army who

are Blacks remains quite high. It took a deliberate personnel measure to reduce the high percentage of Blacks in combat units immediately after the Vietnam war (Janowitz and Moskos 1974). In 1990 20% of the enlisted personnel in the US Army were Blacks. In 2002 they made up 28% (Segal and Segal 2004). In contrast to their high share in the general population of the US women constituted 15% of the US Army in 2004 (Segal and Segal).

Experience shows that on each of those times in the past when the US had been engaged in a declared war the largest numbers of people usually passed through the ranks of the Army. The reasons for that have always been accounted for by its size and the need to replace the casualties of sustained ground combat. Specifics must suffice here for elucidation purposes: By most accounts Vietnam was America's most notorious combat engagement. The Army contributed a little more than 1.4 million of the 2.1 million men and women that served in Vietnam. Its share of the 58,152 combat deaths was 66% (38,179).¹ When that number is compared with the share of the combat deaths suffered by the Marine Corps which fielded 294,014 personnel and lost 14,836, (25.5%), the Navy which fielded 126,006 and lost 2,556 (4.4%) and Air Force which fielded 273,013 and lost 2,580 (4.4%) respectively, the picture will be more graphic notwithstanding that the Marine Corps lost the highest percentage of its personnel.² In the on-going US-led war in Iraq the Army's share of the 1,952 deaths as at July 15, 2005 is more than 1,075.³ The Army is indeed a mass organization, and as a result a unique component of the US military establishment. Its "human and social dimensions are less obscured and defined by technology than are those of the other Services".

In Europe, the Left has age-old anti-military sentiments. In France for instance, during the National Revival period—1910-14—when the social democrats were pro-military, their positive attitude towards the French military establishment was only in terms of support for mass conscription for a primarily defensive army. During that same period many of the French people who identified with the ideological Left were still skeptical of the French military's officer corps. In the whole of Europe since 1945, few out of the millions of Europeans who sought careers in the military, it is only a statistically insignificant proportion that came from democratic households, the intelligentsia or households with strong labor background. The same assertions cannot necessarily be made about the US where political debates tend to take place in the context of "everyone a patriot, everyone a capitalist"⁴. Americans identify quite strongly with their national creed of freedom, liberty in the pursuit of happiness. It is not unusual to hear lower class Blacks who have never visited anywhere beyond the continental US say that in spite of all the imperfections of the American society they would rather not wish to live anywhere else.

In terms of their composition, ever since they were racially integrated, the US armed services—particularly the Army—have more than before, tended to reflect the larger American society. Military sociologists often argue that when military force format fails to reflect the racial and ethnic diversity in a given society or societies, it tends to produce a condition in which the military establishment poses real or potential threats to society—see Lasswell (1941 and 1951), Janowitz (1960), and Boene (1990). Proof of that argument was evident in the US but in reverse during the war in Vietnam because a draft was in place at the time. The larger American society that furnished manpower with which the war was being waged wielded a tremendous influence over its prosecution. When it became clear to many Americans that many more of the poor and minorities than other Americans were being drafted to fight and die in a war that they felt was misguided and out of control they felt obliged to weigh in and protest against its continuation. Perhaps the war could have

dragged on much longer than it did if it had been prosecuted with a different military. Africa, Asia, and parts of Latin America have paid their own high price for the non-representational military formats that colonialism bequeathed to them. Most of the military coups that render post-colonial states in Africa, Asia, and Latin America politically unstable can be attributed to the fact that the compositions of their militaries do not reflect the diversity of nationalities and groups that constitute their polities.

In recent years, political debates in the US have been increasingly strident. The Left in America charges that the society has become more economically stratified with less and less opportunities for particularly members of racial minorities. The Left blames such disparities and inequities on the social policies of the Right. On its part, the Right insists that the American society has become more polarized along racial, ethnic, social lines due to the social philosophies of activist governments of the Left. Many people were taken aback by the do-or die attitude shown by the Republican Right in the presidential election of 2000. It was like they couldn't afford to lose it. In spite of the strident manner in which the current Bush Administration equates patriotism in America with unquestioned support of its policies in their entirety, Black America has found cause to say otherwise. In the November/December 2001 issue of the NAACP's *The New Crisis magazine*, a story on the subject charged that "Black Patriotism is far more complex than flying Old Glory and singing "God Bless America"—or going to war for that matter".

What would happen if in the future the US military becomes strongly identified with any particular racial group, class, or ideological group? Anyone who is genuinely interested in the extensive reach of American policy at this time ought not take a back seat on the ramifications of that vis-à-vis the peoples of the non-European world and cultures.

Scenario Number One

Current demographic trends indicate that the population of minorities—Hispanics, and Blacks is on the increase⁵. Research findings show that the proportions of Hispanic and Blacks in the Army are tending towards outstripping their share of the total US population (Segal and Sinaiko 1986, Burk 1995, Moskos and Butler 1996). Studies have shown that Caucasians enlist less in the Army during times of economic boom (Segal 1989, Eitelberg and Mehan 1994, Moskos 1986). An extended period of economic boom will likely attract more minority youths into the military particularly the Army.⁶ Given the central position of race in America wouldn't the high preponderance of minorities in the Army impact US military missions abroad as was the case in Vietnam? There's the view that it was partly the charge leveled against the Nixon White House that Blacks and the lower classes were sacrificing disproportionately in Vietnam that caged it and helped to cost it public support.⁷ But even in the context of the bold ideological policies of the Bush White House, class politics in America has not been as sharply delineated as it is in continental Europe. That and the fact that the significant proportions of Hispanics and Blacks already in the Army have not yet impacted the situation in any obvious way is reason for one to argue that scenario number one renders itself mute.

Main Scenario

The 1990s in the US witnessed the emergence of "a military-reform movement"⁸ (Boyer 2003: 56) from the Right. Members of this movement believe strongly that the US was destined to wage all of its next wars "somewhere in the region stretching from the Horn of Africa, in the west, to Central Asia, in the east, and to the Red Sea in the north" (Boyer 2003:

56). The reform movement has been engrossed in the quest to transform the US military and prepare it for those wars of the future. Vietnam, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the end of the Cold War produced a crop of military officers, leaders, and thinkers who proceeded to shape the US military into “a force that seemed more comfortable with peacekeeping” (Boyer 2003: 55). That crop of officers who were already in charge of US national security policy making in the 1990s tried out their ideas on what the role of a post-Vietnam and post-Cold War military establishment ought to be with the expulsion of Iraq from Kuwait, Somalia, and Kosovo during the presidencies of George Bush the father, and Bill Clinton. Their presence and ideas helped to establish the decision after Saddam Hussein’s invasion and occupation of Kuwait that Operation Desert Storm would specifically expel the Iraqi army from Kuwait and prevent Saddam Hussein from posing a serious military danger to his neighbors and the Kurds in the north. They helped to ensure that US intervention in Somalia and Kosovo were both for nation building and peace keeping.

Members of the reform movement who were particularly irked by the failure of Operation Desert Storm to oust Saddam Hussein from power and the retreat from Somalia sequel to the televised dragging of the body of dead US soldiers in Mogadisu were averse to those whose career was shaped by Vietnam, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War and what they represented—restrained deployment of the military. For the reformers the lesson in Vietnam is that domestic politics could pose the obstacle of failure to US military intervention abroad. The reformers are strongly convinced that limiting combat deaths and rendering whatever combat casualties that occur in military engagements abroad would curb the threats posed by domestic politics to any such engagements. They reposed their “faith in the transformative power of microchip technology in warfare” (Boyer 2003: 56) in their conviction. The reformers’ contempt for generals and leaders who believed on restrained deployment of US military power is underscored by their pejorative reference to the latter as “Clinton generals”. The unknown factor in the equation so far is: The bold, stubborn, and almost pugnacious ideological bravado (Reich 2004) of the American Right evident in the reformers and the policies of the Bush White House. Can one draw from Tocqueville’s nineteenth century thesis on America to observe that it stems from the absence of barriers to “tyrannical abuses” (Tocqueville 1961: 307) in the American political system that Tocqueville mentioned in his book? The US Army’s format and reputation as a mass organization made it a target for the reformers who hardly hid their conviction that a mass Army is a liability. What started as a desire became a project when George Bush the son became president in 2000. The events of September 11, 2001 created the political atmosphere to launch it.⁹

Society in America is market-driven, but its complex past dictates the lines and degree of stratification that affects members of the American society. One’s race, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, etc. determines his or her station in society. Call it an innate yearning by Americans to subjugate someone else without recourse in the quest for hierarchy in their society even as they wax lyrical about equality. As Tocqueville puts it: An American is forever talking of the admirable equality which prevails in the United States...but in secret, he deplores it for himself; and aspires to show that, for his part, he is an exception to the general state of things which he vaunts. There is hardly an American to be met with who does not claim some remote kindred with the first founders of the colonies” (Tocqueville 1956: 225). Hence, race tends to underlay economic status, healthcare, education, and even moral aptitude in America. People who are in the high socio-economic status, who receive

the best education, who enjoy high medical care, and have the least or zero contact with the criminal justice system are more likely to be Caucasians than Blacks or Hispanics. America's AVF military Services are highly selective. They have no room for youths who are at the bottom of the ladder in society—i.e. those who do not have the educational, moral and medical qualifications. Current statistics indicate that those enlistment requirements that render people ineligible for enlistment into the military will become more strident in the years ahead as the size of the active duty military continues to decrease. When transformation alters the Army from a mass organization into a highly selective entity chances are quite high that it could accept more Caucasians than Blacks and Hispanics. We also know that in America, for historical reasons, Caucasians are more likely than racial minorities to become amenable to the ideological politics of the Right.

America's demography, which is in the center of issues in this essay, configures in interesting patterns in the fifty states. Every aspect of the configuration has continued to reflect considerably on US domestic politics. Robert Reich (2004) points out that America's rural areas, small towns and cities, southern parts, and outlying suburbs are inhabited predominantly by Caucasians who profess fundamental Christianity. In American political-speak they are the residents of the 'red states' that voted unquestioningly for George Bush in 2000 and 2004. The affinity of this category of Americans for the military is quite high. A writer in the *New Statesman* before the 2004 election argued that the Iraq war casualties failed to become an election liability for Bush because most of them came from the 'red states'.¹⁰ The inhabitants of "America's sprawling metropolitan regions in the north-east and on the west coast, the larger cities and the inner suburbs" (Reich 2004: 16) include a lot of Blacks and Hispanics. They are not that gun-loving and fundamentalist in their Christian adherence. The 'blue states' in which a significant proportion of Americans who belong to these later categories reside voted for both Al Gore and John Kerry in 2000 and 2004 respectively. Together, the 'red states' and 'blue states' symbolize the further hardening of the divide between township and county, the two components identified by Tocqueville (1961) as the sociological elements that the founders of the US wielded together to create a nation in 1776.

The reformers share a unity of purpose and even mindset with residents of the 'red states' that America is and must "remain the strongest nation on earth" (Reich 2004: 16) that it must use resolve and toughness to drive fear into the rest of the world in order to sustain its pre-eminent position amongst other countries. Their preference is to project America's military might with the Marine Corps, more and more of the Special Forces, Private Military Contractors (PMCs)¹¹, the Navy and the Air Force and less of the Army.¹² Transformation targets senior members of the officer corps¹³, the weapon systems and the force structures of the military. When it is completed, it would detach the military from popular mainstream American society and anchor it onto the fringes of America represented by the conservative Republican and Christian Right. It will scrub off a possible reintroduction of the draft for good. Whenever it is deployed in America's future wars, a transformed military will rely on unmanned drones, precision weapons, Special Forces, PMCs, all of which will answer "to a constituency of one" (Boyer 2004: 59) who could be a president who lost the popular vote. Although the Army may not have been rendered irrelevant yet, conservative military policy makers are going to transform it into a non-mass organization by taking advantage of the highly complicated high-tech weapon systems that will come on stream to push for "an enlisted force drawn from the higher status groups, e.g. Caucasians, higher SE families and better educated". A "potent, lithe, and quick" (Boyer 2004: 55) Army is less likely to experience extensive casualties when it is deployed in an endless war on terror far away from

continental US in the Mideast, Asia, or Africa. It will therefore not become a liability that will expose war makers to increased political scrutiny. African American leaders who have in the past been averse to extensive Black casualties will be taken care of once and for all.

If the Right in America retains control of the White House for 8-16 years in a row, and the ‘War on Terror’¹⁴ rages for a longer time, the chances that the American military establishment could tilt to identify more with the Right will increase. Such a development may not translate to a situation in which the military will pose a problem or threat to US domestic politics, but it could lead to more US military adventures in the Third World.

Some Sociological Implications of a Transformed US Military for the Third World

When World War II ended in 1945 the US was the only major participant whose economy was unscathed and even strengthened by the war-time build-up. With the brand new World Order which came into existence at the Yalta Agreement between the US, the USSR, and Great Britain; the three victorious allied powers, the US quickly availed itself of the advantages that accrued from its good fortunes to become the pre-eminent global power and the leader of the capitalist world-economy. In a World Order and world-economy that recognized nation-states as the sole legitimate actors in global affairs, America’s pre-eminence became the logical means to a desire by US foreign policy makers to quest for the preservation of that pre-eminence in perpetuity.

For 50 years the US—and the USSR—were able to manage and even handle some of the several political events that occurred in several parts of the non-European world that were left out of the terms of the Yalta Agreement. Those political events that included the activities of the Chinese Communists who ignored Stalin and charted their own independent path in world and their domestic affairs, the Korean war, the anti-decolonization struggles in Asia and Africa, the formation of OPEC and oil crisis, US defeat in Vietnam, the Iranian Revolution (which branded them the Great Satan I and II respectively), etc., all tended to symbolize threats to the World Order which the Yalta Agreement established on the one hand, and crisis in the capitalist world-economy, which the US began to dominate at the end of World War II.

Those events and several other factors canalized into forcing a set of unforeseen priorities on the US and the USSR during their Cold War. Notwithstanding that those events imposed a set of unforeseen priorities on them, both super powers were able to handle them and their aftermath quite well particularly because they either gave rise to states or involved states. Since states are the only actors recognized in the Yalta-established World Order which guided inter-state affairs, coupled with the fact that states functioned as stabilizers in the world-economy, the US was quite amenable to the logic of engaging with those states as either foes or friends. The USSR on its part was unable to manage the debt crisis to its advantage in its East European sphere of influence where the crisis engendered the events that led to the birth of the Solidarity labor movement in Poland, which escalated the processes that led to its demise. The same was true of its invasions of Afghanistan in 1979 (Wallerstein 2003). The collapse of the USSR in 1989-90 was indeed the collapse of Yalta.

The collapse of the USSR and the end of the Cold War removed the underlying justification by US policy makers for America’s hegemony in the world-economy. Globally, both events became the one single event which made the masses of people everywhere to openly express their skepticism about the ability of the nation-state to promote social,

economic, and political transformation of society in a manner that will benefit them by improving their lives. That phenomenon was evident in the loud clamor all over Western Europe by the masses for the dividends of peace. In Eastern Europe it was evident in the disintegration of the various satellite Soviet states. In the non-European Third World—Africa, Asia, and Mideast—it was evident in the collapse of and escalation of instability in some of the post-colonial supra-national states and the emergence of spokesmen and women for nationalities and non-state actors who insist that their interests and well-being were not guaranteed in a World Order that acknowledged nation-states—irrespective of their origin, the antecedents and legitimacy of those who presided over them as the only legitimate actors.

Those who advocate and quest for the transformation of the US military are ardently convinced that nation-states remain “the most powerful actors in world affairs” (Huntington 1993: 22). They insist that their pre-eminence must therefore be preserved in perpetuity. Allusion to that dogma that prosperity and progress in the world can be guaranteed solely on the auspices of the existing state system is made in the opening sentence of the National Security Strategy which President Bush presented to the US Congress in September 2002, which states that: “The great struggles of the twentieth century between liberty and totalitarianism ended with a decisive victory for the forces of freedom—and a single sustainable model for national success: freedom, democracy, and free enterprise” (Soros 2003).

That mindset tends to pervade the ranks of US conservative and neo-conservative circles. Samuel P. Huntington who is also a prominent member of the US conservative establishment has steadily warned on the need for the US to brace itself for the “clash of civilizations” (Huntington 1993: 22) which will characterize the post Cold War world. He cautioned that “Foreign policy is not about the relationship among individuals living under the rule of law but about the relationship among states and other groups operating in a largely lawless realm” (Kaplan 2001). This mindset which George Soros characterized as being derived from “a crude form of social Darwinism” (Soros 2003) is intended to guide “the pursuit of American supremacy” (Soros 2003) by its adherents in the US foreign policy establishment. It sustains the grand notion that non-European peoples are incapable of conceiving views on their destiny, that there’s one ultimate truth conceived and propagated by the US for them. Anyone who dares to resist US efforts in this regard is considered to be against the US. That alone puts the one in the category of those who must face pre-emptive military and police action (Mamdani 2005).

In an era when the antecedents of the state, the state system and most of those at their helm of affairs have given many cause for skepticism and even to reject what they symbolize, a transformed US military is most likely to be used by conservative and neo-conservative policy makers to bolster tottering states and their leaders in the Third World. A transformed “smaller, insular, and expeditionary” (Ricks 1997) US military will be deployed in the approximately 702 installations located in 132 countries around the globe (Pinter 2005) “to impose [US] views, interests, and values” (Soros 2003). Those deployments constitute bad omen for Third World peoples. The prelude to that bad omen seems to be what Walter Carrington, a former US ambassador to Nigeria decried recently as the militarization of US Africa policy in the name of War on Terror. Two typical cases in point in Africa: Even in the midst of deepening crisis of famine, the government of Niger Republic and impoverished former French colony in Africa’s Sahel region has been playing host to a crack contingent of US military trainers, experts and advisers for several years now. For reasons that derive from

the War on Terror, the security of the Nigerian state and its leaders is higher priority to US policy makers than food security for the ordinary Nigeriens.

The government of the Eritrean state¹⁵ is unbridled in its leaders' repressive practices against the opposition. Its leaders' favored status with the Bush White House and Pentagon has shielded them from serious criticism even as it continues to receive extensive military aid and assistance from them. In the post-September 11, 2001 era, its value as a strategic site for military deployments in the Horn of Africa and Mideast has increased several folds. Isaias Afworki, its president does not hide his country's strategic importance for US military activities in the War on Terror. He used World Bank aid to build an airport with ultra-modern runways and landing facilities that he proudly said will accept practically anything that the US military owns, which flies.

Conclusion

Given a transformed military, one cannot say with certainty what the response of the larger American society will be to its government's increased and sustained military adventures in the Third World might be, but one can safely project that it may not be adverse in the short run. So far, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have panned out in ways that underscore that point of view. The general public has found it somehow difficult to sustain its focus on them partly because those who are killed and wounded in them are almost faceless—the media a forbidden from showing their flag-draped coffins as they are brought home. A transformed US military is not likely to sustain extensive combat casualties. In which case, the general American public will hardly be aware that its government is at war. But the absence of popular oversight will shield the political leadership from political scrutiny by the larger society. In itself that possibility, is more likely than not to ensure that all such adventures will be out of control.¹⁶ Tocqueville argues that problems in American society stem from the self-interest of Americans as individuals and as a society.¹⁷ Would it be misplaced deduction to argue that the quest by the reformers to transform the US military and make it suitable for unrestrained adventures in parts of the Mideast, Asia, and Africa is underscored by their self-interest?

Notes

1 Ninety-six percent (6,955) of the total dead were Blacks who served in the Army and the Marine Corps. Blacks took 14.1% of the deaths at a time when the proportion of Blacks in the total US population was 11%.

2 See "Vietnam War Casualties by Branch of Service", The American War Library www.members.aol.com/warlibrary/vwc18.htm.

3 "Iraq Coalition Casualty Count", www.icasualties.org.

4 As a mantra this seems to be rooted in American's age-old love for money—see the first volume of Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*.

5 According to the US Census Bureau, in 2000 one out of every eight person in the US is Hispanic. Since 2000 Hispanics claim the highest growth rate in the US population. They constitute 14% (40.4) of the total US population in 2004. Also, see "Hispanic Trends: A People in Motion", Pew Hispanic Center. See www.pewresearch.org.

6 In America the military has often been the avenue through which most members of minority groups seek opportunity and advancement in all facets of endeavor in America. The Army is the epitome of that. Unlike the Air Force, and the Navy, the Army does not place a

high technical aptitude demand on most of its enlisted personnel before they can perform. Thus, in spite of the burden of race and Low Socio-economic constraints the Army beckons on and accepts more minority youths than the other three Services.

7 Peter Feaver who studies public opinion on US military engagements attributes the loss of public support in the Vietnam War by the Nixon White House to its wavering and show of weakness. He is currently a consultant to the White House—See *The Washington Post*, June 30, 2005.

8 Most members of this movement who include Dick Cheney before he became George W. Bush's running mate and Vice President, Donald Rumsfeld before he became Defense Secretary, his former deputy at the Pentagon and now World Bank chief Paul Wolfowitz, and others are associated with "the neo-conservative Project for New American Century" (Arrighi 2005: 83). See www.newamericancentury.org for details on the Project. Arthur Schlesinger documents the rise of individuals behind the Project in "The Making of a Mess", the September 22, 2004 issue of the *New York Review of Books*.

9 Newt Gingrich the former Speaker of the US House of Representative an ally of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and a member of his Defense Policy Board told the media in the days after the events of September 11, 2001 that those events handed George Bush the opportunity to remake the world however he desires.

10 So far, more than 75% of the more than 1,952 deaths and the more than twenty thousand wounded in Iraq are Caucasians.—See www.icasualties.org.

11 Statistics from Iraq alone show that the PMCs have lost more than 225 of their personnel. Those statistics have been absent in the media.—See www.icasualties.org.

12 The Marine Corps do not contain a significant proportion of minorities in its enlisted ranks and file, the Navy and Air Force have high proclivity for technology.

13 The current practice in the Pentagon is that every senior military officer who is in line for a three or four star must "pass through a screening process, including two or more interviews with Rumsfeld or one of his top assistants" (Boyer 2004: 59).

14 John Pilger in "Blair's Bombs", *New Statesman*, July 7, 2005 argues that the "goal", of the 'War on Terror' "is not security, but grater control" of people and world resources.

15 Since 1993 when Eritrea won its independence from Ethiopia after a 30-year war, the country has remained a one-party state under the control of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF)—the main movement in the independence struggle, which transformed itself into the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDL)—a political party. Elections that have been postponed twice in 1997 and 2001 haven't held yet. The Constitution which was ratified in 1997 is still in limbo, and the government insists that tensions with Ethiopia, and problems with dissidents and the press are to blame.

16 Some people including Arrighi (2005) and George Soros (2004) argue that such adventures abroad by the US amount to quests "for global supremacy [that] will go down in history as one of the several 'bubbles' that punctuated the terminal crisis of US hegemony" (Arrighi 2005: 83). As far back as 1987 Paul Kennedy had in *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* warned "that overextension and over-reach have again and again proven the Achilles heel of hegemonic states and empires" (Arrighi 2005: 30).

17 The prevalence of rugged individualism as a time-honored value in US society stokes "the paranoid style" of American politics—the tradition, that is, whereby fear of some 'other'

(communism, socialism, anarchism, 'outside agitators' or, for the capitalism or state conspiracies) is essential to the creation of political solidarities" (Arrighi 2005: 40-1) as derived from Hegel ([1821] 1967), Arendt (1966), and Harvey 2003).

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On Japanese Sociology: A Conversation with Ueno Chizuko

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*Ueno Chizuko is Professor of Sociology in the Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology, Tokyo University, specializing in gender studies and the sociology of sexuality. A lucid theorist with a sharp eye for social trends, she writes from a wide-ranging perspective on the role of gender differences in capitalistic society. She is the author or co-author of 26 books and innumerable essays. Her first book to appear in English was published in 2004 (**Nationalism and Gender**, Melbourne, Trans Pacific Press, translated by Beverley Yamamoto). Her other prominent works include **The Rise and Fall of the Modern Family** (1994) and **Nationalism and Gender** (1998).*

On January 30th 2006 John Clammer, Professor of Sociology at Sophia University, Tokyo conducted a conversation with Ueno Chizuko, Japan's leading feminist sociologist and advocate of human rights and gender equality in Japan. In our conversation, held in her book packed office at Tokyo University's Hongo Campus, we ranged over a wide range of issues concerning the nature of Japanese sociology and its place in the world of sociology as a whole.

In response to my first question as to whether there is or has been a distinctive Japanese sociology Professor Ueno replied passionately that in her view globalization has meant "Englishization" of the academic world and not a genuine equality between the different alternative sociologies that have arisen from different national traditions. In particular she asserted that "non-Western" sociology has been marginalized, and that this is as true of other Asian sociologies as well as of African and Latin American ones, and even the less well known traditions of Scandinavia and Eastern Europe. In the past certainly sociology in Japan was a "translated" discipline and in the postwar years Japanese sociologists could survive professionally as essentially cultural translators, both in the literal sense of translating mainly US sociology texts into Japanese, and in the sense of attempting to relate this English

language sociology and its own distinctive socio-cultural background to the very different society of Japan with its distinctive historical trajectory. But Ueno pointed out, this is no longer the case. In the post-Cold War era new realities have emerged and the special issues that have arisen in Japan - the rapidly falling birthrate and with it the total population, a rapidly ageing society and with it a range of questions about care, policy issues regarding insurance and health provision for this large elderly population - have forced Japanese sociologists to look anew at their own society in terms of its current social problems and to attempt to develop models that fit this indigenous reality and are not simply imported from abroad.

But the problem is, Ueno suggested, that Japanese empirical sociology is simply not read outside Japan, not simply because of language, but because it has not occurred to the majority of sociologists internationally that it is interesting and poses fascinating comparative questions. In response to a later question as to whether we should then start a journal or some other publication to publish Japanese sociology in translation, Ueno thought that this would not work because it would have too small an audience. She suggested that for the most part non-Japanese audiences have little interest in Japan-made social theories, even assuming in extreme cases that there is no such thing as social science in Japan. Although Japanese sociologists and anthropologists have long had a strong comparative interest, there has been a tendency to compare Japan itself (especially by non-Japanese sociologist working outside the country) with the USA, whereas in fact in her opinion it makes much more sense to compare Japan with other industrialized and urbanized societies such as Singapore, and the OECD countries when it comes to the sociology of social policies, care for the aged and the other emerging issues in both Japan and European societies that are now way past their fertility transitions.

The question of Japanese empirical sociology (of which, as Ueno pointed out, there is a great deal emerging from a large and lively profession in the country), led us quite naturally to the question of sociological theory - and as to whether there are distinctive Japanese contributions here. Her answer to this proved expectedly to be quite complex. She suggested that while it is not possible to identify a specific "Japanese" form of theory, substantial contributions have been made by Japanese social thinkers such as Karatani Kojin and Sakai Naoki to postcolonial theory and to postmodern theory. At the same time younger sociologists have been building theory out of distinctive characteristics of contemporary Japanese society which do not have precedents abroad, such as the large number of "Otaku" or extreme fans of animation games and comics, and "Hikikomori" or "withdrawers" - young adults who refuse to go out of their homes and become shut-ins communicating with the world if at all via the internet, the equally large numbers of children refusing to go to school and the development of an "virtual community" society in Japan which is having extensive sociological effects. What is sociologically interesting about Japan is that it is a mature and affluent consumer culture, really the only one in Asia, which brings with it a range of distinctive sociological issues. But in Ueno's view one of the richest veins of sociological activity has been in transnational cultural studies which is very advanced in Japan and with an increasing number of Japanese sociologists writing in English to reach international audiences. While Japanese cultural sociology originally drew on the innovations of the British Birmingham school of cultural studies, it has shaped it to fit the Japanese and East Asian contexts.

In response to my suggestion that it is in fact European social theory that has had in the recent past the most impact in Japan, she agreed, but suggested that this has a time frame to

it. During the years of the "Bubble" economy when there was tremendous interest in consumer culture, Baudrillard for example was popular (and visited Japan at least once to lecture), but with the decline of the economy after the bursting of the bubble, interest in the so-called postmodern French thinkers has declined. Foucault on the other hand has a big following and is still in her opinion considered a very significant figure, as is Pierre Bourdieu. A number of German scholars such as Niklaus Luhman and Ulrich Beck are also influential.

I next asked Ueno about the direction that her own work is taking. Her past writings have ranged over a large number of subjects - social theory, fashion history, the "comfort women" issue (Asian women, often Koreans, forced to be sexual slaves to serve the Japanese Imperial army during the war years), the controversies surrounding the revision of school textbooks and modern Japanese history in general. I suggested to her that the core of all her work however has always been her strong commitment to feminism. With this she passionately agreed! Her two most recent books have taken a fresh turn however, being concerned with the sociology of care, a subject which she wryly suggested, one gets more interested in as one gets older! Building to some extent upon German precedents, Japan has experimented with an insurance system to provide a care service for the elderly when in need. The system has been modified to fit Japan, and when taken together with the national health insurance scheme, this compulsory care insurance has made Japan into a sort of "socialist" society, or at least a much more communalistic one than most Anglo-Saxon societies. The issue of ageing in Japan - much discussed in the media on an almost daily basis now - she suggested need to be seen from two perspectives. The first is that it is to a great extent a constructed "problem" - seen as such by politicians and by those who want to keep up the scale of the national economy and cannot tolerate the idea of it shrinking (with the declining population) until Japan rather than being the number two economy in the world, will eventually rank below China, India, Germany and perhaps even Britain. In fact, she suggested it is not a "problem" at all and the aged are not only a huge resource, but with a generally healthy population and good medical care, she personally is looking forward to living to a ripe old age! The second is that ageing itself is a gendered issue. With Japanese women living very long lives a number of issues arise. While one of these is certainly that of the provision of care (many are and will be widows and possibly living alone in the depopulated countryside), an equally large question is that of the "empowerment" of the old. Here we paused to spend some time trying to translate into English both the titles of her recent books and the central concept that she is advancing, which is literally to be translated as "Self-Sovereignty of People in Need of Care" or the "autonomy" of the aged and the disabled, involving the right to make decisions including lifestyle choices and to be politically and socially active even when they are in need of care and assistance. Her interest and empirical work has as a result shifted from a concentration on care givers, to the recipients or subjects of care. This too she suggested is very much a feminist as well as a sociological issue.

My final question to her was about what she thought of the Western sociology of Japan. Her answer was that in many ways it is very deficient. Western sociologists and anthropologists she suggested have tended to pick up on the marginal, such as Geisha, hostess clubs and fish markets. The problem is, she proposed, that Western sociologists of Japan have focussed almost exclusively on the cultural and not on the social or economic problems of Japan. Even, she proposed, when they study about Japanese style, management and other economic issues, they tend to overly draw on cultural factors in their interpretations. The result has been a kind of "aestheticization" of Japan, a form of

Orientalism (to use Karatani's phrase). While Japanologists have access to the literature published in Japanese, the more general sociological community internationally is dependent on the very few translations of major Japanese sociological works into European languages (and very few are available in any other, for example Hindi). Even the works of the most important Japanese philosophers and anthropologists such as Yoshimoto Takaaki and Yanagita Kunio are unavailable in any language except Japanese. The answer Ueno proposed must lie in an intellectual globalization paralleling the economic globalization already so apparent, through genuinely comparative perspectives that run contrary to the existing English-centeredness of the academic universe.

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On Globalization, Combined and Uneven

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A few weeks after what has since come to be known as the “nine-eleven” attacks in the United States, the large and diverse sociology department of a research-oriented state university, located about an hour’s drive from one of the sites of destruction, held a joint faculty and graduate student meeting entitled “The Attack on the World Trade Center and the Sociology Classroom.” The sombre conversation covered all sorts of reflection and suggestions, from techniques of personal trauma management to the possibility of adopting a standard lecture from a course on substance abuse for a discussion of “the terrorist mind” that might be “similar to the mind of the alcoholic.” What was conspicuously missing was any suggestion that sociology as a discipline might have something to contribute to explaining the causes, main components and dynamics of the social, economic, political and cultural processes that have led to those acts. Nor was there any sense that the attacks, like any other social fact, could serve as elementary analytical tools in the service of advancing students’ understanding of the world as they are preparing for life in the twenty-first century.

More striking perhaps is the consistency with which the attacks are understood in an exclusively *national* frame in the political discourses of ‘terrorism’ in the United States. From the rescue workers who break out in spontaneous chants of “U-S-A, U-S-A” live on prime time television when the president first visits the disaster site of the *World Trade Center* (my emphasis), to the countless newspaper accounts, commentaries and statements by politicians that deal with the experience of the attacks, everyone and everything seems to suppress the brutally clear symbolism encoded in the choice of the targets: markers of global capitalism and global military hegemony. Meanwhile, among the movements, organisations and print magazines occupying what can be regarded as the left end of the political spectrum, criticisms of the ongoing war, the global resource grab, as well as reactions to the various ways in which U.S. society is experiencing the local effects of global transformations are, again, most often framed in strictly national terms. The key anti-war demand is almost always that politicians in power “bring *our* troops home”; calls for alternative energy development

insist that we put an end to “*America’s* energy dependency on foreign oil”; and the complex global transformations referred to in short as “the rise of Asia” are seen invariably through the rising share of Chinese products in the U.S. market.

The dynamic, global system of network connections we recognise today as the world economy is the result of an interplay between two sets of very large social structures that emerged in tandem, gradually, over several centuries. One provides channels for the circulation of commodities, violence, persons, information and cultural patterns; the other involves mechanisms to stem, control, oversee and regulate such flows. The resulting, global system of hierarchies, borders, internal social boundaries and movements across them is in great flux today: The frequency, reach and speed of the flows of all key socio-economic, -cultural and -political factors has recently begun to rise to unprecedented levels. Meanwhile, the increasingly intense and seamless articulation of the world—a dynamic inherent to globally organised capitalism—requires the (re)production, allocation and valorisation of not only all forms of capital, but also of labour, involving geographically dispersed locales and creating a variegated global map of structural tensions concerning borders and flows.

The term ‘globalization’ is a much more recent coinage than the phenomena it purports to address. It is also of distinctly un-scholarly origin.² At first, it served as something of an embellishment, referring to a rather specific phenomenon in economic history—an observed tendency of the share of cross-border transactions to increase among all economic transactions—with a term that radiates a world-historical and all-inclusive, pan-human sense of an epochal shift. Given the prominence of global economic and political relations in such, diverse paradigms in the social sciences as the work of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, John Hobson, V.I. Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg, Leon Trotsky, Fernand Braudel, Samir Amin, André Gunder Frank, Immanuel Wallerstein or Edward Said, from the perspective of the followers of such scholarly traditions—of which contemporary sociology is an heir—the recent “buzz” about globalisation appears to be too little and, clearly, too late. After all, much of the scholarly debates about the temporal frame of the capitalist world-system are between those suggesting the long sixteenth century as the beginning, opposed by those advocating a much longer, indeed, five-thousand-year look. In this framework, fascination with the last decades appears to be rather myopic. There is, hence, a tendency among some scholars of international dependency, world-systems analysts, as well as many historians of *longue-durée* global economic, political and cultural relations, to feel a distinct lack of excitement, or even outright annoyance, with the recent popularity of the term itself.

While I certainly understand the frustration arising from seeing the reinvention of a rather obvious basic tool of our craft, here I take a different approach: I find it enlightening to observe how the sudden, recent entry of the notion of ‘globalization’ into sociology as a discipline reveals something important about the transformations of our time, and about the ways in which the social sciences may have been, and continue to be, vested in those transformations. I see a number of ways in which this process may be relevant to sociologists worldwide.

First—and perhaps closest to the original meaning—we can take ‘globalization’ to refer to an overall increase in the frequency of cross-border flows of all sorts and the resulting, decreasing transaction costs of interactions and connections across borders. David Harvey gave this process the name “time-space compression” (1989) and argued that “the history of capitalism has been characterized by speed-up in the pace of life so overcoming spatial barriers in the process that the world sometimes seems to collapse inwards upon us” (Harvey, 1989: 240).

One important and useful way of demonstrating this is by observing the increasing weight of international trade in economic value produced worldwide. Figure 1 offers an illustration, based on computations using data from the *World Development Indicators* dataset compiled and published online by the World Bank. The over-time tendency is clear: There appears to be a recent secular trend increasing the global share of international trade.

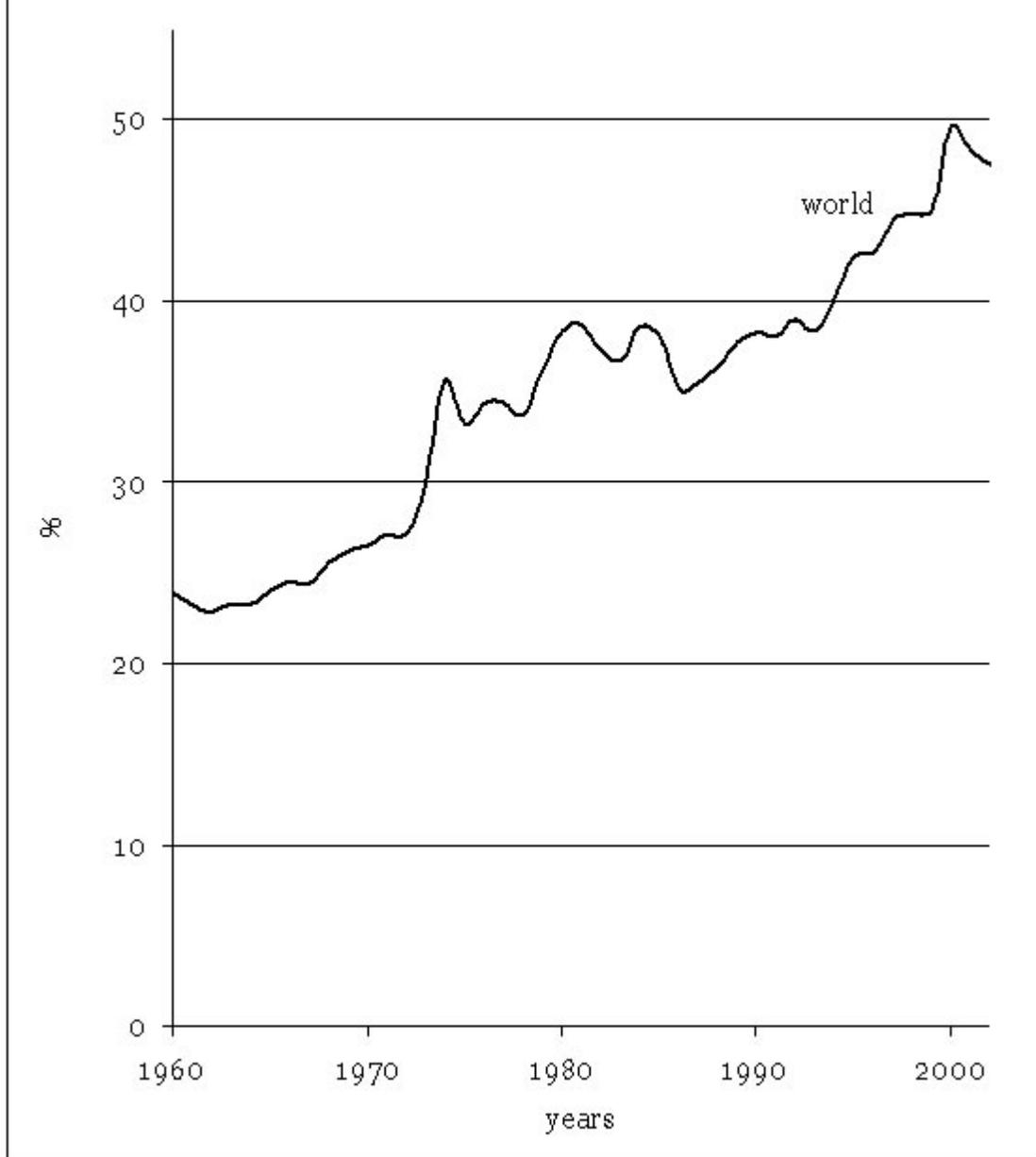
The problem is that if that is all we say about the post-world-war-II period—as many applications of the term ‘globalization’ do (especially in fields such as political science and the humanities)—much of the resulting celebration of the spectacle of global commodity flows misses two, rather crucial aspects of the process. First, those increasingly predominant, global linkages create not only opportunities but also exclusion, displacement and suffering, and continue to exacerbate global inequalities of all sorts. Second, the global spread of those interconnections is, itself, highly uneven. The first point has been documented by a very distinguished body of sociological scholarship, from the seminal “dependencia” work by scholars affiliated with the Economic Commission for Latin America in the early 1960s to recent studies on global inequality and its connections with global economic linkages. We shall take a brief look at the second point.

Figure 2 depicts the spread of the rate of trade ‘globalization’ for all countries and years included in the *World Development Indicators* dataset. The vertical lines indicate the range of trade ‘globalization’, and the line cross-cutting them is the same as the global curve shown in Figure 1. In other words, while the overall increasing tendency is still there, a more detailed picture of ‘globalization’ yields some additional and equally important observations.

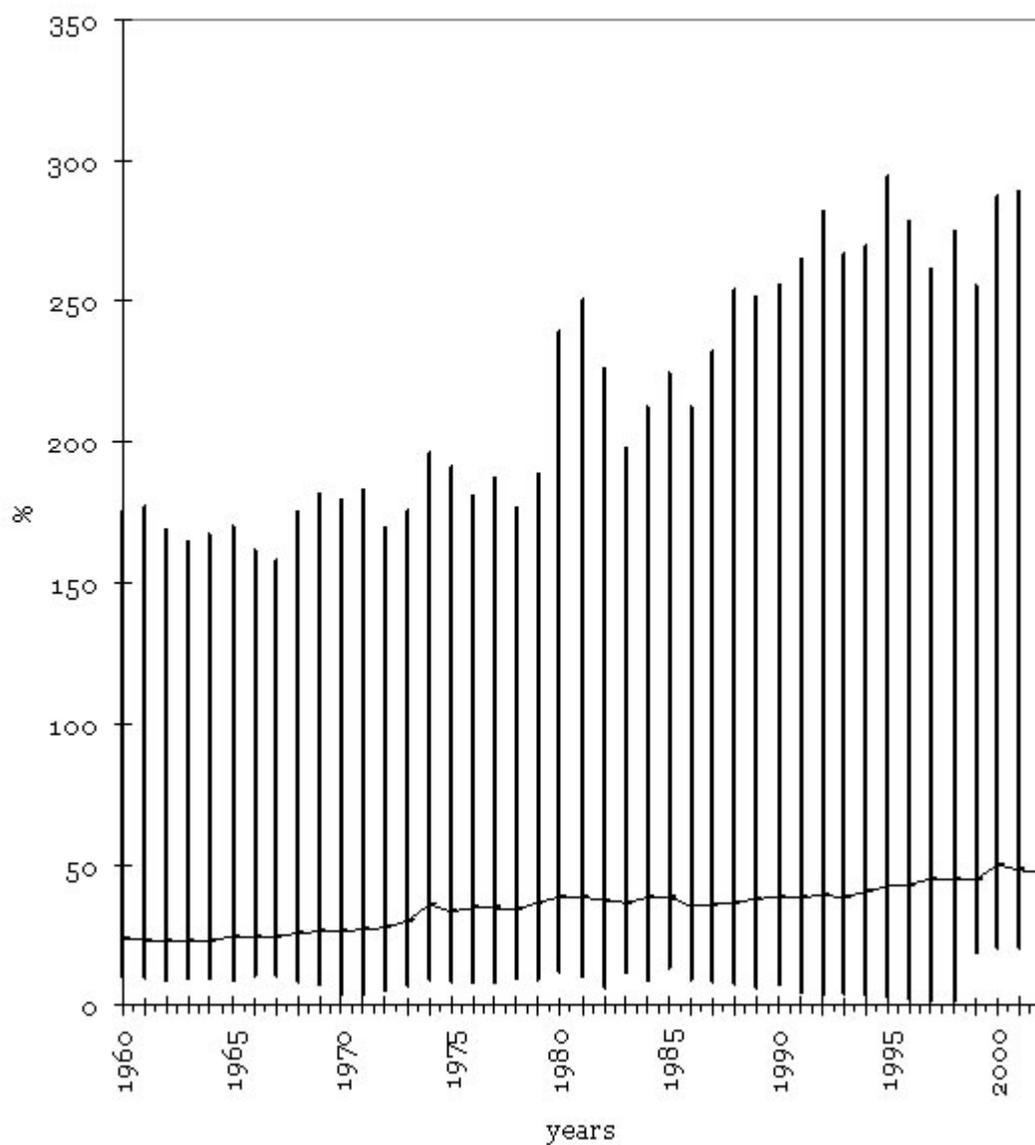
The most striking insight is that the world’s states have had a remarkably wide range of experiences with ‘globalization.’ Already in 1960, we had a set of states or dependencies—e.g., Hong Kong (176%), Luxembourg (170%), Malta (128%), Puerto Rico (124%) and Trinidad & Tobago (121%)—that had remarkably high rates of exposure to ‘globalization’, a striking contrast to the other end of the spectrum—the U.S.A. (9.6%), Afghanistan (11.2%), India (11.9%), Brazil (14.2) and Niger (14.5%), for instance—which registers strikingly little by way of ‘globalization’. It is also remarkable how heterogeneous the composition of both groups of economies is in terms of their members’ relative positions in the economic geography, political economy or political history of the globe. Other than the regularity that, in 1960, the most ‘globalized’ societies tended to be relatively small polities, specialising in (combinations of) off-shore business, international tourism and/or entrepôt trade, it is exceedingly difficult to find anything in common among the members of the groups on the two extremes.

Between 1960 and 1980, the global average rate of ‘globalization’ changed from 24% to 38%, but perhaps even more remarkable is the widening of the global range of the various states’ exposure to global economic forces. By 1980, the least ‘globalized’ economies—a group constituted, by then, by Argentina (11.5%), China (15.5%), India (15.7%), Turkey (17%), and Ghana (17.6%)—had moved “up” in terms of their rates of exposure, but the move was barely perceptible (a mere 1% to 4%). Meanwhile, the world’s five most globalized societies—Bahrain (240%), Luxembourg (189%), Malta (187%), Panamá (187%) and Hong Kong (179%)—each had 19% to 63% higher exposure to ‘globalization’ in 1980 than the most globalized polities did in 1960. In other words, the global variation in the range of experiences with ‘globalization’ widened considerably during this period.

Figure 1.
International Trade as % of the Gross World Product
Computed from IBRD. 2005.



Range and World Mean of Trade Globalization
(Exports + Imports)/GDP [%]
Computed from World Development Indicators online data



Since 1980—and this is the point at which the notion of ‘globalization’ entered sociological discourse—we see, again, a moderate increase in the overall share of international trade in gross world product, moving from 38% to 49.6%. This is, clearly, a noticeable increase but, again, it almost dwarfs when we place it in the context of the state-to-state variation in exposure to global economic forces. The entities in the most exposed group—Hong Kong (287%), Luxembourg (283%), Aruba (280%), Malaysia (229%) and Malta (216%)—added another 35% to 90% (!) to the rates of this end of the spectrum. Those least exposed—Japan (20.2%), Argentina (22.4%), Brazil (22.8%), the United States (28.3%) and India (28.5%)—have also moved “up,” but only by approximately 5% to 11%.

There is, of course, much more to the spread of global economic relations, and their impact on the world’s societies, that ought to be analysed, and it is obviously not something I could attempt in this essay. My point, instead, is rather simple: Once we realise how radically uneven exposure to ‘globalization’ has been, it is difficult not to question the overall usefulness of the term. If we have a process of large-scale social change that is so *unevenly* global, as we see in these simple figures, a mere emphasis on the secular, overall upward turn, especially if coupled with the vague hint of a teleological assumption encoded in the word ‘globalization,’ might be excessively “flattening” and, hence, misleading, even if there is a modicum of an empirical basis to it.

A corollary of this possible critique is largely in agreement with models of change developed by Giovanni Arrighi and his collaborators (e.g., Arrighi 1994, Arrighi and Silver 1999), who argue that the upsurge in one, key aspect of the global economic content of the post-world-war-two increases in global flows—in their analysis, the sharp upturn in the proportion of the value of cross-border *financial* transactions in all economic activity—is not a historically unique, secular trend. They show that shifts in the relative weight of financial capitalism have been recurrent phenomena, ones that tend to mark the end of a given period or, hegemonic cycle, *within* global capitalism: Around the turn of the 19th to 20th centuries a similar move accompanied the twilight of British hegemony;³ in the period since the second world war, it is a concomitant of the decline of the global hegemony of the United States⁴.

This brings us to some of the additional ways in which attention to ‘globalization’ might inform our understanding of global sociology. Accessing these meanings requires that we approach the term with a dose of the implicit, global-geopolitical-cognitive critique offered by that very rich and complex body of scholarship which is loosely labelled as post-colonial studies.

In focussing on the global transformations that have taken place during the last few decades—i.e., the period during which the term ‘globalization’ has acquired its unprecedented currency—we notice two interlinked processes of global change that do represent a true novelty. As it turns out, both of those disproportionately affect those societies of the world—Western Europe and some, formerly European-settler societies outside of Europe—which have been the wealthiest and most privileged areas of the world in the recent one and a half centuries of the history of global capitalism. These changes involve vast geopolitical, economic and cultural transformations that /1/ make the hitherto more or less practicable, *de facto* social, face-to-face isolation of some of the wealthiest societies from most inflows of people from the less privileged, poorer, non-European, and “racially” and/or culturally disparaged parts of the world less and less tenable, and /2/ show at least the credible possibility that the structure of global inequalities might change in such a way that some of the previously underprivileged, poorer and non-European societies of the world will acquire a noticeable measure of wealth, privilege and global power in the broadest

sense of the term. The latter poses, by implication, serious challenges to some key current, global interests of west European and north American power. Most significant in this latter regard of course is the possible re-emergence of Asia as a powerful region—with specifically, China and India, and possibly former-Soviet Northern Eurasia, as key actors—with globally significant weight in terms of economic, political, military and cultural influence and a resulting geopolitical significance of the continent unseen since the early 19th century.

Now, how are these changes relevant to the popularity of the concept of ‘globalization’ in the social sciences? In my reading, they are directly pertinent because what is revealed in the social sciences’ new-found fascination with the global is not a transparent reflection of the objective process of increasing global interconnectedness, but a set of transformations that bring the issue of the wealthiest, most powerful societies’ global involvement—and, by implication, their perceived, increasing vulnerability to global processes—to the fore of their self-understanding. In other words, the new fascination with ‘globalization’ may be yet another Euro- and North-America-centric feature of the social sciences that mis-recognise themselves, like Eurocentrism has invariably done, as universal.

Since both processes are easily and matter-of-factly described by, and from the geopolitical perspective of, the political mainstreams of west European and North American societies as “negative” in their implications, a preoccupation with the global is quite understandable. An explanation for the upsurge in the currency of ‘globalization’ in the social sciences, based on such an argument, would, hence, point to the astonishing hegemony of the West European and North American “moral” location in sociology, and suggest a sense of a collective fear of a new, reverse flow of influences and penetration, and an alarm of a loss of position, as key explanations for the preoccupation with ‘globalization’. In this reading, there does not have to be anything objectively or necessarily “global” about ‘globalization’: What it reflects, instead, is the appearance of a remarkably un-specific, vaguely politicised notion of the “global,” read as a collective risk from a western subject position (except in the celebrations of the new-found access to harmless, quality-of-life-enriching artefacts from other cultures). Pointing out that un-invited, internally transformative, harmful penetration by external powers has been the key element in the experience of capitalist modernity in much of the world outside of Western Europe would reveal the Eurocentric nature of the social sciences’ recent preoccupation with ‘globalization’.

In this logic, an important possible reason why “we,” i.e., sociologists around the world, suddenly talk so often and in such general terms about ‘globalization’ might be that much of sociology as a scholarly-intellectual enterprise is morally rooted in Western Europe and North America in ways that are both surreptitious and unshakeable. This interpretation would be supported, for instance, by the remarkable survival of modernizationist, single-line-teleological imageries of global social change⁵ in spite, and in the face, of the repeated, intellectually devastating, professionally circumspect, historically accurate and morally impeccable critiques and dismissals of that perspective, reinforced by the recent conversion of some of its most significant, earlier proponents to an imagery of multiple modernities.⁶

Finally, an additional way in which I find the term ‘globalization’ reasonably interesting for analysis in the social sciences has to do with a further implication of the last point. It is undeniable that sociology as a discipline, and the social sciences in general, have been marked by a glaring “elective affinity” with the concerns of the wealthiest western societies, placing serious doubts on their relevance in the rest of the world (e.g., Alatas 2001). Yet, it is also possible to argue, as I would like to believe, that the widely noted, multi-paradigmatic

character of sociology (e.g., Ritzer, 1975) allows the simultaneous co-presence of analytical perspectives, resulting in a certain polyphony of voices, including voices that seek to establish ways in which critiques, including critiques of global structural conditions, can be developed from a multiplicity of theoretical angles as well as geopolitical and socio-historical locations. This optimistic view regarding the promise of sociology leaves open the possibility that, perhaps sometime in the future, sociology, or some of its sister-disciplines, could actually become the culturally, economically, geopolitically un-biased “science of social forms,” to quote Simmel’s classical formulation.

That, however, would require /1/ explicit acknowledgement of the extreme variation in exposure to ‘globalization’ among the world’s societies, /2/ recognition that relatively high level of such exposure has been the *longue-durée* feature of many parts of the world, especially those outside of Europe, /3/ an open discussion of the differential effects of ‘globalization’ on societies occupying distinct hierarchical positions in the global economic, political and cultural structures that “push” globalization forward, and /4/ a healthy dose of epistemological self-doubt about the purported objectivity of our sociological analysis, including those in the global mode.

Notes

- 1 The author is grateful to Mahua Sarkar for her indispensable, critical suggestions and encouragement.
- 2 The online etymology site <http://www.wordorigins.com> sums up the story this way: “The term Globalized quota first appears in 1959 in *The Economist*; it is a reference to quotas on car imports to Italy. The word globalization itself appears in Merriam Webster's New International Dictionary in 1961. Several other sources use the term throughout the early 1960s. It was well established by 1965.” (<http://www.wordorigins.org/wordorg.htm> as of 12 February 2006.)
- 3 Thus Arrighi and his colleagues revise Lenin’s conclusions, based on information from the late-nineteenth-century shifts that read those changes as the last phase of capitalism as such.
- 4 This is something that Wallerstein interpreted as marking a possible end to capitalism, ushering in a period of extended global turbulence and a possible global shift to a post-capitalist global order.
- 5 For a recent discussion of the pervasive modernizationist assumptions that underlie even otherwise well intentioned, activist scholarship in the west, see Sarkar 2004.
- 6 E.g., Shmuel N. Eisenstadt has recently argued that “modernity and Westernization are not identical; western patterns of modernity are not the only ‘authentic’ modernities” (2000:2-3).

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e-bulletin

Challenges to Sociological Practices in India Today

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The discipline of Sociology and its practices are placed in an interesting historical moment today in India. On one hand the discipline together with other social sciences is enveloped by an institutional crisis, mainly emanating from the contradictions emerging out of the University structure as it interfaces with nation-state policies and politics and global processes. On the other hand, today, it is on a journey of reflection, to assess its identity, theoretically and methodologically, together with its relationship to its past, that of the project of colonial modernity and its future, that of internalising itself and its perspectives. In the short note below, I chart out the many dimensions of the conflicting and contradictory trends that construct the practices of the discipline as it confronts the challenges of globalisation. But before that, a caveat:

The practices relating to sociology in India are organized in terms three discourses and in three sites in India. The first is the formal site of the University system and relates to the way sociology is taught and learnt as a discipline within university departments-more than hundred Indian Universities (almost all being public and financed by the Central and State governments) out of the two hundred odd in the country teach sociology. Second, today sociology and sociological practices are being reconstructed in new ways; in Universities in its interdisciplinary schools as ways of doing social sciences, and outside these institutions, in various private, semi-private and government research institutes of social sciences, as interdisciplinary research studies in specific areas and themes such as development studies, cultural studies, environment studies, women's studies, and recently, dalit studies or studies of marginalized communities.

Thirdly, sociological practices may be conceptualised as reflexive epistemologies, as ways doing pedagogies or ways of learning through teaching, which can become a potential for engendering emancipatory knowledge. Again while this aspect of sociological practice is mainly organised within University structures, we do see the principles of reflexive pedagogies increasingly becoming structured and institutionalised in sites outside the University, as these construct new political actors. Today, it is not only political movements and non-governmental organizations that intervene to create reflexive and critical self-consciousness through new pedagogies but also institutions in the fields of art, theatre and

media which use reflexive epistemology to change embedded unequal socialities and to expand the limited nature of the public sphere and democratic practices in India. In this note I will restrict myself to the changing practices of sociology within the University system but yet wish to suggest that we do not forget the other spheres, for these interact with the discipline as it is being reframed today within Universities.

In the last ten to fifteen years, the system of higher education has been impacted by three sets of processes: changing state policies on University education together with the growth of rightist and fascist politics, the opening of the educational market to global processes, and the contradictions emanating out of the structure of the University system. On one hand Indian Universities have to incorporate into its folds increasing numbers of students (especially from the deprived groups) who use education as a means to enter the market and modern society and on the other hand its access to finances, intellectual and physical infrastructure is constantly being depleted. Additionally there is great unevenness within and between Universities, in the nature of syllabi and curriculum and quality of learning and teaching together with management, administrative and leadership structures. This unevenness is further amplified if the medium of instruction in Universities is an Indian language. On one hand the state has not encouraged the development of specialised knowledge literature in Indian languages and on the other, students (and even faculty) do not know and understand English, the language of power. No wonder, University structures are overwhelmed by demand politics related to language and group identities, given the nature of Indian politics wherein affiliations to religion, region, language caste, tribal and gender identities find support.

Like other parts of the world, in India also, the state has steadily withdrawn its commitment to finance higher educational system, leading to declining grants for infrastructure and faculty positions. Also there has been a redistribution of existing resources to a few Universities, renamed now Universities of excellence and promotion of applied areas of study and learning (ICT, Biotechnology and Bioinformatics) rather than the foundations together with a strict adherence to criteria of accreditation (based on quantitative features such as student-teacher ratio or cost-benefit analysis, rather than qualitative) for distribution of grants. Additionally, as a result of rightist and fascist political trends and their control of the state for a few years, new subjects have found funding such as astrology, Hindu physics and the old have been revived such as Sanskrit and Indology.

Today, the state is encouraging privatisation of education and is promoting close ties with industries and research institutions. Since the late sixties the Indian state had encouraged the growth of private educational institutions of teaching and learning in professional courses such as medicine, engineering, and management. Now these have moved into applied areas such as computer education. Also, with the opening of the market of higher education more and more foreign Universities have entered the country directly by opening campuses or franchising degrees. Distance learning/E-learning courses of foreign Universities have also been introduced as Internet technology expands and increasingly finds a place as an instrument of learning.

What impact has this complex conflicting and contradictory trends have on social sciences and especially practices related to sociology? No doubt most social sciences departments today are facing an institutional crisis with depleting finances, faculty, and infrastructure and library resources. Much more significant is the steady decline in demand for registration to social science courses and degrees and where the demand and registration has remained steady, it has been because of the need to obtain a degree rather than learning

the subject. Doctoral registrations in key quality University departments of social sciences are decreasing and becoming in select cases a rarity leading to an unease regarding the future of the discipline.

And yet this institutional crisis has also opened many new windows of opportunities within some select Universities and for the discipline of Sociology in these Universities. As the world shrinks, academics are building bridges to collaborate and initiate comparative research programmes. If state funding for teaching programmes is decreasing, new funding opportunities are being initiated through international collaborative teaching, exchange and research programmes. Such programmes are also helping to change the nature of University structures; initially Indian Universities were established as only teaching Universities. Now these are becoming increasingly research oriented. Additionally syllabi and curriculum are being transformed as Universities attempt to train and teach students to be competitive in the global market. In some of these Universities the classroom has become a site for practising reflexive thinking as the syllabi connects up academic learning with the processes of transformations taking place within and around the many worlds (local, regional, national and global) lived by the students.

These institutional processes are aided by the changes occurring within the discipline over the last two decades as it interfaced with trends and processes taking place outside the Universities, such as the growth of social movements and various kinds of collective action that structure the many kinds of the 'publics' in civil and political society, as also the growth of rightist and fascist forces together with state and communal violence. No wonder the discipline today in India (at least in select few Universities) has become open and interdisciplinary both theoretically and methodologically. Earlier the discourse of colonial modernity framed the terms that conceptualised the discipline. Then, Indian sociology framed its task as assessing tradition and researched on caste and village India. Rarely did it think it fit to interface with the problems of market and power as these were being framed in context to capitalism and democracy within nation-state politics. Rather, its focus was on the past, to cull out a set of principles to structure its domain: the discourse of indigeneity dominated its mentality. In this context its methodological biases were also one-dimensional. Ethnographical approach and participant observation framed its approach to assess socialities within the nation-state.

Today there is a reflexive repositioning of the discipline as it restructures its focus assessing the many contradictory dimensions of the structuring of contemporary socialities within and outside the nation state. Of significance is the recognition and a need to understand contemporary inequalities that interface and link pre-modern structures of exclusions with new ones in context to global market processes. Sociological practices in India has thus enlarged its vision to assess the new inequalities and the distribution of power in the context of democratic aspirations of the marginalized, whether women, tribes, religious and regional minorities and deprived castes. Simultaneously it is also studying conflicts, protests and new forms of collective violence being organised within the dynamics of nation-state politics, including assessing the many variations of cultural representations that form the content and form of these protests.

Of equal relevance has been the impact of its journey into the exploration between development and environment. An entire new language of analysis has grown as a result of this interrogation as displacement and migration has become a focus of study in the context of 'development' oriented capitalist development that tag along instrumentalist notions of science and technology. In this context there is recognition that the notion of territory no

longer defines the boundary of the discipline. Rather both the concepts of the nation and the nation-state need to be reframed in terms of the mobility of capital, labour and communication systems together with the way the diasporas deterritorialise and redefine nation as a global imagined community placed in unequal access to global power structures.

In the above I have outlined the two processes structuring the discipline institutionally and academically. The challenge faced by the discipline as a result of deepening sociological crisis is significant. On the other hand the possibilities are also enormous. Where the discipline will go is in the hands of the sociologists within and outside Universities and in their academic and professional interventions.

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GLOBALIZATION AND THE PRACTICE OF SOCIOLOGY

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[T]he scholar is a god, seated on a sublime eminence, observing dispassionately the life of society in all its varying forms; they think (and yet more loudly proclaim) that vile "practice" has no relation whatever with pure "theory". This conception is of course a false one; quite the contrary is true: all learning arises from practice. - Nikolai Bukharin

The above quote from *Historical Materialism: A System of Sociology* not only outlines in broad terms the relationship between theory and practice, it also provides a point of departure for thinking about the variance and similarity in the practice of sociology across the globe. Globalization as a process of social and cultural interpenetrations must be seen as a basis for explanation of such commonality and variations.

Global Diffusion of Sociology to Global Sociology:

Globalization as a phenomenon of societal and cultural interactivity and connectivity, now generally agreed, is an age-old process but as concept in social science has a short history. The word global kept cropping up in various social scientific literature as well as popular books since the 1960s. The clearest exposition was in the writings of Marshall McLuhan (1964) who popularized the phrase "global village". The term "globalization", however, was first used as a book title only in 1990 (as far as the US Library of Congress catalogue reveals). *Globalization, Knowledge and Society* (edited by Martin Albrow and Elizabeth King) was published in 1990 drawing on the essays published in various issues of *International Sociology* the journal of International Sociological Association (1986-1990). Some of the explicitly focused sociological writings on globalization as a process began with the writings of Roland

Robertson in the 1980s (1983a, 1983b, 1985); although the theme was clearly present in his earlier discussions of international systems (Nettle and Robertson 1968) as well as in the writings of Moore (1966), Meyer, (1980) among others. With hind sight, the first social science publication that dealt with the subject of globalization was *The Communist Manifesto* (1848); while Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) in his *Prolegomenon to the Universal History* foreshadowed the idea. Globalization as a social process is old and has a much longer history. The early globalizing processes began with the dissemination of religion and culture, interactions of people, groups, communities through trade and commerce from the ancient times. In fact, the moot question is: why globalization studies did not emerge much earlier? The answer may lie in the relationship between social sciences and the nation-states. Since social sciences were nurtured by and within the ambit of nation-states, the focus and scope of social sciences for the most part remained within the nation state. In some fields, however, a sub-field emerged with the title international, for example, international law, international economics, international or comparative politics, international relations, comparative sociology, cross-national or intercultural psychology and so on. In all these fields, nation-state remained central. Had there been no nation-states, sociology or social sciences would have been born with a global focus.

In the Cold War days, it was a widely shared view that the world was split on an ideological line: Capitalist versus Socialist. The two worlds were different not only as politico-economic systems but also in terms of the production and distribution of systems of knowledge. The Bourgeoisie west had sociology; the socialist world had historical materialism which allegedly provided a scientific account of society, its historical development and its future trajectory. For Bukharin and the other Marxist intellectuals, knowledge, especially about society was not disinterested and was linked to class interests. Such class-specific relativistic understanding of social knowledge production retreated in the post-cold war world but was replaced by a new form of relativism ushered in by post-modernism. This new genre of relativism offered multiple interpretations of social reality as well as the rise of sociology. The conventional wisdom, it was argued, needed to be dismantled. While postmodernism as an intellectual trend in sociology may be passé, the idea of plurality of interpretations with regard to the practice of sociology across societies has gained wider acceptance.

Should one look at the practice of sociology within the disciplinary matrix or consider sociology as a mode of examining society, as social cognition? In fact, for C.Wright Mills one need not be a sociologist to be equipped with sociological imagination as the reverse is equally possible. It is, thus, useful to recognize multiplicity of approaches and divinations in the ability for societal self-reflection. In India, for example, writers such as Sarat Chandra Chattapodhay (1876-1938), had an incisive sociological mind. His novels, mostly “thick descriptions” about the complexities of rural society, the tension between traditionalist and the modernist ideas and views that his characters represented – were sociological in the broad sense of the term. In one of his speeches, he even mentioned sociology. Calcutta University offered sociology as a subject in such departments as philosophy and later economics in early twentieth century. One of Sarat Chattapodhay’s novels is titled “Palli Samaj” (1916) or literally, Village Society. Such writers and men and women of letters with a sensitive understanding of the affairs of society, I believe, could be found in other societies as well. Sociological imagination was neither restricted to sociologists, as Mills indicated nor to any geo-cultural region. As an outgrowth of modernity, sociological imagination spread globally.

However, in discussing sociology as a profession we need to limit our attention to the institutional sociology as it was developed in the European and North American academia before spreading to the other parts of the world. Sociology as a subject was taught in Calcutta (Kolkata) at the turn of the 20th century but as a self-conscious intellectual field it flourished only after India's independence in 1947. The first Indian sociologist to get published in the western sociological journals was perhaps, Radhakamal Mukerjee of University of Lucknow who published three articles in the *American Journal of Sociology* in the 1930s. Indian sociology since the 1970s has been the site of debates over indigenizing sociology. Indian sociologists did not reject the key concepts such as class and social stratification but sought to ground them in local contexts.

Japanese sociology remained quite faithful to the mainstream European sociological traditions in the 19th century and to the American sociological paradigms and personalities in the twentieth century. Even American sociology where as a discipline it was developed most comprehensively since the establishment of first sociology department in 1892 at the University of Chicago, the impact of European sociology was pronounced, albeit selective and serendipitous. American sociologists at the early stage were not influenced so much by Marx, Durkheim, Pareto or Weber as by Spencer and Simmel. Spencerian legacy was most visible in the Social Darwinist movement in American sociology. A number of American sociologists and other social scientists studied in Berlin where they came under the spell of Simmel's influence. One of them was Robert Park. Albion Small who founded sociology at Chicago sent three students to Berlin to study under Simmel and he translated a number of Simmel's articles in the *American Journal of Sociology* which he edited (Levine, et al, 1976:816).

Sociology in Japan and China began its career since the late nineteenth century. Japan developed a theoretical tradition reflecting first the European and later the US sociological traditions. The word "society" *Shakai* appeared in Japan in 1876 and *Shakaigaka* (sociology) in 1878 (Odaka, 1950). The works of Spencer were translated in the early 1880s. Japan's sociology bore the influence of European, especially German and French influence. As such there was greater emphasis on social theory rather than social research (Steiner, 1936). Today there are serious Parsonians in Japan, disciples of Blumer in China and Foucauldians almost everywhere. Sociology reached China at the end of the nineteenth century. The first book with sociology in its title was published in 1903 with the translation of Spencer's *Principles of Sociology* by Yen Fuh (Sun 1949), Sociology in China became effervescent in the 1930s and 40s. In the wake of the Communist Revolution as sociology was banned in 1952, Chinese sociologists of the day had three options. Some fled the country; those who remained either reinvented themselves as historians or demographers or something less controversial. The third option was to be in the good book of the regime highlighting the role of sociology in the post-revolutionary society. The reputation of Fei Hsiao Tong became somewhat tainted for his lending support to the revolution. One of the émigré sociologists from China, C.K. Yang, a famed family sociologist took refuge in the University of Pittsburgh. Following the opening of china, especially with the Deng Xiao Peng initiative of reforms, sociology was revived in China in which University of Pittsburgh played a role. However, China wanted to develop a sociology with Chinese characteristics.

Sociologists in the periphery who were trained in the sociological centers in Europe or North America brought home respective traditions. India's development in social anthropological traditions marked a distinctive English anthropological influence as contemporary Chinese sociology bears an American sociological influence. In some countries European heritage gave way to the American influences which by the last quarter

of the twentieth century reached various corners of the world. US political hegemony had an ally in her academic preeminence. However, such an equation of military power with intellectual power is neither automatic nor everlasting. Contrary to Wilbert Moore's (1966) claim that sociology became remarkably international, Oromaner (1970) demonstrated by analyzing citations that internationalization of sociology was tantamount to Americanization of sociology. Before accepting the US hegemony thesis and issuing calls for "provincializing" American sociology, we need to deconstruct, that is, dismantle "American sociology". There is no American sociology; there are multiple tendencies – divergent sociologies - within American sociology. It would be a mistake to equate Immanuel Wallerstein with Charles Murray (co-author of *The Bell Curve*) just because in a spatial sense and by citizenship both of them are American sociologists. It would be an ecological fallacy. Besides, American mainstream sociology as practiced in the United States today remains largely provincial anyway. The critique of American sociology being not global enough may be seen as a sign of assertiveness in the periphery. This assertiveness is more nuanced and different from the earlier call for indigenization. Indigenization movement of the 1970s and 80s was an early expression of that intellectual nationalism which is now giving way to a call for (genuinely) globalizing sociology.

The ebbing of national sociology movement and methodological nationalism has ushered in a new possibility of comprehensive and meaningful globalization of sociology. Yet, the new dividing lines are not so much geo-cultural but are based on disciplinary specialisms. For example, a Singaporean medical sociologist will have more in common with an Australian medical sociologist than with a colleague working in a separate field of specialization next door. Internet and modern telecommunication and frequency of international meetings and conferences have made such interconnected global clusters a reality. Specialism and professionalism have gone hand in hand which has the potential of undermining the role of sociologists as public intellectuals. The paradox is: in order to claim intellectual legitimacy one cannot downplay the importance of professionalism and the global connectivity it entails, yet in the short-term it might lead to depoliticization of sociology. In the long-term, however, a call for global or transnational public sociology may usher in new and comprehensive reevaluation of the role of sociology and the sociologists.

In ISA there are two Research Committees with sociological practice or something close to it in its title. RC 26 Sociotechnics-Sociological Practice and RC 9 Social Practice and Social Transformation. And of course the very idea of Applied sociology has been around for a long time. What does sociological practice mean? And how has sociological practice been affected by the forces of globalization? Are sociological practice like sociological theories and concepts in a flux as a result of globalization?

Praxis, Practice and sociological Practice:

Praxis as a concept has strong Marxist flavor. Theory comes out of praxis which is not just practice but a reflexive action. Practice in the sense of Bourdieu has a similar connotation where subjective and objective remains intermingled. Such a nuanced understanding is not what we are aiming here. By sociological practice we will restrict its meaning to the practice of sociology as an intellectual discipline as well as the practice of sociology as a profession.

Sociological practice involves minimally teaching sociology and conducting research that sociologists would recognize as sociological. The broader meaning, however, refers to the public role of sociology as a discipline and the wider responsibility of sociologists as change agents in society. Sociologists can be social reformers or at least social critics. The

reformist ambition in sociology was pronounced in the writings of Auguste Comte, the putative founder of modern sociology. Comte's call for the religion of humanism and so on was titled in favor of sociology as a religion. Now with the theological ambition out of the way, sociology continues to bear the ambition of become a moral science and not just a science of morality as Durkheim would like it to be. It is, thus, not surprising that some sociologists tend to identify Adam Smith as one of the founders of sociology. Here Smith the author of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, not the *Causes of the Wealth of Nations* gets preeminence.

In order for sociology to be relevant to the needs of society, it is important to acknowledge the social role of sociology. At an abstract level sociology can be social commentary and sociologists as social commentators or social critics, or at a more mundane level, sociologist is someone who can be gainfully employed because of the value placed on the discipline. For example, in Bangladesh with the remarkable proliferation of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) – many with western links, sociology graduates became suddenly employable which added to the prestige of sociology as a discipline. The employers in NGOs preferred sociology graduates who with methodological skills were competent in carrying out social research.

In Singapore, sociology graduates found employment in various government departments ranging from housing to community development. Many sociology graduates had better research skills which could be tapped by the employers in carrying out special research. Thus sociology continues to be a popular subject for students in Singapore. Sociology is thriving in many developing countries when it seems to be in decline in many advanced countries.

Globalization and Sociological Practice:

Globalization, though it means many things to many people, is one of the master processes of our time. Globalization as a field in sociology is a legatee of the macro-sociological interests and development. Globalization study addresses itself to the connectivity of broad processes of technological, economic, political, cultural interrelationships. Whether one looks at the economic, cultural or media connectivity worldwide, one has to take a much broader understanding of society and social institutions. Sociology focuses its analytical lenses on the flows and processes in society whether at the local, national or global levels. In other words, sociology has a genuine claim over the field of globalization.

Some sociologists accuse sociology as a prisoner of nation-state. The definitions as well as the boundaries of society, which sociology seeks to study, often overlap with those of nation-state. The definitions as well as the boundaries of society, which sociology seeks to study, often overlap with those of nation-state. Anthony Giddens and Immanuel Wallerstein have both lamented that sociology has been the study of modern nation states. And they have since made bold efforts at rectifying that lacunae. Roland Robertson and other protagonists of globalization discourse since the late 1970s have redefined the scope of sociology as the social scientific study of the global processes. Ulrich Beck has explicitly called for the development of new concepts to capture the new realities of interconnectedness, plurality, multi-locality and multiplicity.

Sociology, it is often said, deals with the social life. In fact, all social sciences deal with social life or its various aspects. It is difficult to conceptualize *social* as a category. In sociology, there are two meanings of social. Social used in the sense of Wallerstein or for that matter Marx, encompasses technology, economy, politics and culture. Such terms as

political economy, social formation, or mode of production have been used as substitutes for social. Sociology is interested in the understanding of these broad processes, especially at their interrelatedness.

There is, however, a narrow meaning of social which is often equated with social system or what some people call societal. Here society is an abstract system of social relations, a web or network of social relations. Following Talcott Parsons, (and before him, Durkheim) some social scientists sought to view sociology as the *scientific* study of society. I put the stress on scientific because one of the goals of science is to define one's field narrowly so that specialized and predictable knowledge can be produced and accumulated. Sociologists with a positivistic bent of mind were quite happy with the narrow definition of sociology, hence the delimited conceptualization of society in the sense of social system. In this formulation, the field of study of economics is economic system; the field of political science is political system and so on. All social sciences could live happily in a world of segregated systems of knowledge! However, a large number of sociologists having dissatisfied with this narrow conceptualization of society, sought to view society and the scope of sociology broadly. They also found the earlier compartmentalization unnecessary, unproductive and overly abstract. All these so-called subsystems interact. Albert Hirschman called for the need of trespassing into each other's domains. The rise of macro-sociology is a clear response to the attempt to overcome a delimited view of sociology. Barrington Moore, Wallerstein, Tilly, Skocpol and others have looked at society in the broadest sense of the term, in that the inspiration came from Marx, Weber and later Braudel and other social historians. Recently, Turner (2006) has argued that sociology has been about social which did not quite equate with national society. Social could easily refer to global society or society not limited to national society.

The practice of sociology and the public role of sociology need to be situated in the broader conceptualization of social. Sociologists have not quite disappeared from the lime light of public office. Fernando Henrique Cardoso is not only one of the leading sociologists but was elected as the President of Brazil for two terms. However, the first sociologist as president of a country credit goes to Thomas G. Masaryk who was a professor of sociology at the University of Prague at the turn of the twentieth century. (Eubank, 1936). In the Netherlands Pim Fontuyn was a sociologist who met with assailant's dagger. Saad Ibrahim, the Egyptian sociologist was sent to for criticizing Egypt's sham democracy. He was released after the Egyptian authority yielded to the moral pressure of the international community.

Globalization impacts sociology and the practice of sociology by presenting new challenges. Globalization created sociology or made sociology globalized. Sociologists as professionals, creatures of globalization, a multifaceted process, stand in opposition to the downside of globalizations. Many sociologists stand up against the adverse effects of neoliberal globalization: the miseries, poverty and violence, but in their struggle affirm globalization by invoking rationality and common humanity.

Sociology as the most abstract of social sciences needs to be public philosophy (Bellah et al, 1986). The moral concerns have to be brought back to the centre stage of sociologists' concern. A social science concerned with the entire society has to be historical and philosophical. The focus on historical will ground social science locally (but not at the expense of the global); while the philosophical orientation will strengthen universality which is under attack from both religious and neoliberal fundamentalists.

The task ahead for sociologists is to focus more on the production of socially useful knowledge for the benefit of common humanity. Sociology was the child of enlightenment

as such it has a critical role in society as such sociology cannot free itself from the larger public role. It is only when sociology became institutionalized as an academic discipline and was nurtured in the American academia rather than in Europe the mainstream sociology lost that critical mandate and became involved in the search for localized social problems. It is time the problem solving role of sociology is broadened and integrated with a critical stance towards reconstructing global society based on “equality, liberty and fraternity”.

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