

THE GLOBAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

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Regressive Globalism and the Structure of Globality

The beginning of the twenty-first century has seen a decisive change in world politics compared with the first post-Cold War decade in which 'global' ideas first became enormously influential. The military reassertion of American nationalism by the George W. Bush administration, following the terrorist massacre of 11 September 2001, has widely been seen as marking an end to the liberal globalism of the previous decade. And if 'globalisation' was the buzzword of the 1990s, it now seems distinctly less fashionable. Some critics have gone so far as to argue that it was little more than a passing intellectual fancy that masked underlying realities of class and military power. Certainly globalisation-speak is no longer so prominent among world elites: in Gramsci's terms, there has been a shift within the hegemonic international bloc symbolised by the departure of former US President Bill Clinton and the marginalising of the 'third way'.¹ Correspondingly, some radical activists have shifted from seeing globalisation as the problem ('anti-globalisation' is no longer a label of choice) and have re-branded their movement under a 'global justice' logo.

These shifts in the political discourse surrounding 'global' change represent important challenges to the emergent global civil society. They also offer an opportunity to separate the *conjunctural* features of the first global decade from the *structural* features of globality. The decline in the fashion for naive globalisation-thought enables us to see what is more fundamental and durable in global development. At the same time it helps us to see globality, not as a single set of ideas, but as a complex field of competing forces in which even self-proclaimed 'anti-

globalists', whether of the right or of the left, must also recognise some crucial elements of global reality.

In an attempt to understand the development of 'new' intellectual paradigms in the last quarter-century, I have argued that the historical sequence in which they emerged (first 'postmodernity', then 'post-Cold War', and finally 'globalisation') reflects the development of the crisis of the Cold War system (Shaw 2000: ch. 1). When ideas of postmodernity emerged in the 1980s, predominantly in the cultural sciences, they reflected a general sense of emergent crisis that had not reached the stage of decisive political change. Ideas of 'post-Cold War' emerged at the beginning of the 1990s, during the period of political crisis itself, and were centred on political and international thought. Ideas of 'globalisation' became dominant in the mid-1990s, as the crisis was resolved and new world power relations, centred it seemed in economics and communications, became apparent. Whereas 'post-' narratives reflected the sense of transformation of old relations, the idea of the 'global' suggested the positive content of the new.

But in the spread of 'global' ideas, exactly what this term meant was often far from clear. The main idea was that identified by Anthony Giddens (1990), namely, the intensified interconnectedness and the worldwide stretching of social relations. Behind this, of course, lay the core meaning of 'globe' as a planetary sphere, and considerable impetus to globality flowed from the greater recognition of our common physical environment. However, commonality in a deeper and broader sense was also entailed by globality. By 'global' we meant not just transformed conceptions of time and space but the new social meaning that worldwide relations involved. This could be understood as the development of a common *consciousness* of human society on a world scale, with an increasing awareness of the totality of human social relations as the largest constitutive *framework* of all relations. Global civil society represented attempts to give this consciousness the form of purposive action and

¹ Antonio Gramsci (1972) argued that the dominance of (national) ruling groups was maintained through 'historic blocs' of shifting combinations of social forces, centred on sets of beliefs that were constantly developed and renewed. Applying this idea at the global level is complicated, but the approach has gained ground in the discipline of international relations.

organisation with an explicit normative agenda; but this kind of awareness was present in all the kinds of social action that globalisation theory embraced, including—as I have suggested—in 'anti-global' thought.

The late 1990s had already seen important shifts in globalisation debates. More sophisticated work was outgrowing the antinomies of the 'undermining' of nation-states by the market (Ohmae 1990) and the reassertion of the centrality of the state (Hirst and Thompson 1996; Weiss 1998). As David Held *et al.* (1999) rather neatly summed it up, an intellectual third way was open that stressed the changing character of the state and broadened the conception of *global transformation* (rather than globalisation) to give equal weight to political and military processes. Corresponding to these intellectual changes, the political third way, briefly supreme as the Clinton-Blair axis of 1997–2000 coincided with wider social-democratic predominance in Europe, headlined a normative global agenda even if its practice didn't live up to its finer ambitions. Increasingly embedded in the institutional agendas of many global international organisations, this partially incorporated the impetus of the still relatively weak global civil society. Given this apparent embrace of globalisation on the centre-left, it is no wonder then that far-left 'anti-capitalists' initially configured themselves as 'anti-globalisers' too.

Post-9/11 developments represent significantly new crystallisations of global relations. The uneasy coalescence of global civil society and global state leadership was already falling apart as the new Bush administration abandoned the Kyoto climate change accord, the International Criminal Court, and other globalist projects. Bin Laden's contribution was to turn the US from disengagement towards its own new but regressive global project. The 'war on terrorism' forged a new American global alliance, downgrading the old West at its core and centred on an axis of repressive authoritarian power linking Washington with Moscow, Beijing, Islamabad, and New Delhi. Never before had all the major non-Western powers been so strongly caught up in an American military campaign, nor (since 1989 at least) had the US given so much legitimacy to authoritarian

and semi-authoritarian rulers worldwide. In early 2003, the determination of the US to impose its own global order through war against Iraq threatened the stability of the transatlantic Western bloc and the viability of the UN as well as this larger global alliance with major non-Western states.

In these circumstances of *regressive globalism*, the democratic and human rights-oriented globalism of civil society is necessarily more fundamentally critical of established power. The political conjunction fits the opposition of 'humane' and 'inhumane' global governance outlined some years ago by Richard Falk (1995). In line with these new circumstances, a revamped 'global justice' campaign recognises the underlying reality of globality and advocates a progressive version of it. Nevertheless, the contradictions of global power remain very evident, with the progressive agendas of UN control of weapons and global democratisation paradoxically entwined in Bush's narrower project of an 'anti-terrorist' global alliance.

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The Political Core of Globality

It is clear from these fast-changing contexts of global politics that the 'global' is more than any one trend. Globality represents a fundamental integrative tendency in world politics, culture, economy, and society. Moreover, while modernity and capitalism in general have promoted these kinds of development over a longer period, they have reached a decisively new maturity in post-Cold War conditions. Contemporary globality cannot be reduced to the underlying structures of capitalist relations, which after all have not been fundamentally changed. Pre-existing trends towards the commodification of social life have been enhanced, but it is political changes that have made this possible. Thus, the specific quality of a global world does not lie in market trends but in the fundamental singularity of social space, however stratified and fragmented, that *political* and even *military* changes have brought about.

There are two main sides to this political infrastructure of globality. On the one hand, the results of the Second World War, the Cold War, and

now the 'war on terrorism' have aligned states into more and more integrated *global networks of state power*, regulating the complex political-military as well as political-economic relations of a global world. The worldwide intelligence-sharing in the hunt for Al-Qaeda epitomises this interconnectedness. On the other hand, the emergence of *global civil society* reflects the new awareness in society at large of a common global framework and the interest of social actors in common world agendas and networks to guide, organise, and legitimise their actions. Civil society responds not just to economic, cultural, and technical sides of globalisation, but also to state-level integration.

Thus, it is in politics, and around the tensions of these two sides, that globality crystallises. If globality is the development of a common consciousness of human society on a world scale, with an increasing awareness of the totality of human social relations as the largest constitutive framework, then global political organisation—both state and civil society—is crucial to the *recognition* of globality. I shall argue, therefore, that politics is the main axis around which the changing responses of the social sciences to global change have revolved. Thus the challenges of global social science parallel, and often clearly intersect with, those of global civil society, and civil society needs the theoretical clarification to underpin its own development. In this chapter I shall explore the manifold ways in which the social sciences have articulated and responded to global change and how these developments have affected disciplinary and interdisciplinary structures of knowledge.

Social Science's Ancien Régime

Intimations of globality have fundamentally challenged old ways of doing things in the social sciences (Shaw 2000: ch. 3). It is not far-fetched to liken the world view on which a great deal of mainstream social science was formerly based to that of the stamp collector. As a youthful philatelist in the mid-twentieth century, I sorted my stamps by political jurisdiction. I directed my attention to the national

forms—technical and symbolic—through which both intra-national and international communication took place. I was not so concerned with the manifold social relations—personal, commercial, professional, and so on—which these forms concealed, although these were much more important, almost certainly more interesting, and less constituted by the apparatus of statehood.

Much social science of the period sorted social relations in the same way, simply assuming the coincidence of social boundaries with state boundaries and that social action occurred primarily within, and secondarily across, these divisions. Social relations were represented by the national societies that were assumed to frame them. Just as I collected the various ephemera of national postal systems, social scientists collected distinctive national social forms. Japanese industrial relations, German national character, the American constitution, the British class

system—not to mention the more exotic institutions of tribal societies—were the currency of social research.

Of course the social sciences had long contained, but in a double sense, the challenge of the global. On the one hand, the master ideas of social thought, developed from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries, centred on concepts of universal, implicitly global significance: civil society, capitalism, industrialism, modernity. On the other hand, the twentieth-century institutionalisation of the social sciences in academic disciplines, research, and teaching practice have largely nationalised—

and internationalised—these concepts. Theory and analysis have come to refer, implicitly if not always explicitly, to the national and international frameworks of state and society that dominated social relations in the mid-twentieth century heyday of the imperial nation-state.

The core disciplines of the social sciences, whose intellectual traditions are reference points for each other and for other fields, were therefore largely *domesticated*, in the sense of being preoccupied not with Western and world civilisation as wholes but with the 'domestic' forms of particular national societies. Many writers (including Ulrich Beck in this Yearbook) have called this tendency 'methodological

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nationalism'. What it involved, above all, was a slippage from the general to the particular without bringing into the open the problematic abstraction involved in isolating the national case.

The particular was often assumed to be representative of the general. In sociology and political science, for example, American or British society, state, and capitalism with all their idiosyncrasies were often held to typify society, state, or capitalism as such. This tendency was not confined to conservative theorists like Talcott Parsons (1952). C. Wright Mills's (1956) radical critique of the 'power elite' was often presented as an alternative model of power in modern society without acknowledging the American specificity that he put at the heart of his account. Marxists could write about class in Britain as though it was a typical rather than a very peculiar case of a capitalist society.

In the domesticated core social sciences, when the general pattern of social relations on a world scale came to be represented by more than a single case, it was not usually by global, transnational, or even international relations but by the *comparative* method. Comparing different particular social forms came to substitute for understanding the relations between them and the general structures within which these comparisons might be explained. National and comparative sociology and politics increasingly dominated the core disciplines in practice.

The discipline of international relations conformed to this pattern as the exception that proved the rule. In the early post-war decades, when international realism was codified, world order could be conceived only in terms of the international. In a world of nation-states, *internationality* represented the relations between units and actors under this single, simple rubric. Inter-national, of course, meant inter-state, since states were mostly assumed, by definition, to represent 'their' nations. The relationship between state and nation was unproblematic.

The division of labour between the domesticated disciplines and international relations reflected a central paradox of the Cold War West. Although Western nation-states were casting off the military rivalries of centuries to create a common network of power, with an increasing number of bloc-wide and world institutions, national forms remained dominant.

Western integration was first of all cooperation between the nation-states and, reflecting them, national societies that had emerged from the era of total war. Commonality presented itself first as the *alliance* and *similarity* of what continued to be seen as distinct units.

No wonder, then, that the comparative method became so influential in Western social science and that, instead of global knowledge, international research generated comparative studies. The genre gained new life, indeed, at the end of the twentieth century with the increasing dependence of European social research on European Union funding with its inbuilt balancing of national interests. The post-

Cold War incorporation of many central and east European nation-states within the Western social science orbit has only accentuated this trend. Increasingly, however, the comparative method seems anachronistic, as simultaneously not just the Western world and its European sub-unit but world society as a whole begin to see themselves as integrated wholes. Within these

larger frameworks, relations between individuals, firms, social groups, and cultures are not necessarily, simply, or even primarily mediated by nationality-internationality.

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Crises and Transformation in Social Science Disciplines

It is difficult for any one scholar to know, and therefore to understand, fully what is happening in any one field or even sub-field, let alone in the social sciences as a whole. This section constitutes, therefore, a set of hypotheses about how and why the various social sciences have changed in response to the crisis of old national-and-international ways of social science. It is driven by my argument that global change is profoundly political in character. I contend, therefore, that the diversity of experience of transformation in the social sciences is explained, in part at least, by relationships to political transformation, and reflects the nature of the underlying connections of the disciplines to political forms.

My first hypothesis is that the disciplines of social anthropology and geography have shown greater

openness to global understanding than economics, politics, and sociology, the historically defining fields of social science. Interestingly, the former are fields in which, historically, the national-international nexus was formerly not just a methodological bias but more or less *explicitly* constitutive, through nineteenth and early twentieth-century colonialist and nationalist constructions of the subjects. The openness of both social anthropology and geography to globalisation debates follows their abandonment of these historic legacies. These subjects underwent profound theoretical and ideological transformations earlier in the post-war period, which have prepared the way for the recognition of globalisation.

Thus the old colonial-inspired traditions of social anthropology disintegrated with the independence movements of the 1960s (Asad 1971), which required new ways of conceiving spatially differentiated relations. The discipline's bias towards the study of less formal social relations facilitated an interest in relations defined in non-territorial and non-national ways—within and across rather than limited by state borders. The subject was thus transnationally oriented and implicitly globalist before global debates seriously developed. In particular, anthropologists have explored the transformation of culture in plural and hybrid forms (Hannerz 1996; Kahn 1995).

In geography, similarly, the old geo-political foundations of the subject have long since eroded, rendered anachronistic by the collapse of empire. In geography's case, however, space remains a master concept and, even before global debates became widespread, geographers mapped economic and social relations in transnational terms. Not only have geographers been in the forefront of analysing the economics of globalisation, but the concept of space has also been peculiarly problematised, and geographers have absorbed debates on time, space, and modernity from social theory. The result, however, appears to have been the decline of a distinctive disciplinary sense as the boundaries between geography, political economy, international relations, and sociological thought have become more and more fluid.

Critical geographers have embraced this new fluidity and redefined the role of geography within

it. Thus, Peter Taylor sees geography as 'marginalised' in the old 'state-centric orthodoxy' of the social sciences. 'The mainstream social science trilogy of sociology, economics, and political science', he argues, 'neglected questions of space and place because they failed to problematise the embedded statism in which they developed.' 'New spaces' are opened up in theory, however, by the 'new heterodoxy consequent upon globalisation' in which 'the new subtleties of social space are integral' (Taylor 1996: 1921). Taylor sees geography as particularly equipped for a social science that is discarding 'embedded statism' (by which he means something similar to 'methodological nationalism').

How true is it that Taylor's 'mainstream social science trilogy' of constitutive disciplines has failed to globalise, remaining within domesticated concepts? I know least about economics. However, despite the growth of international economics, there seems to be a real paradox in that economic relations are universally acknowledged to be important in globalisation but professional economists are hardly in the forefront of theorising that phenomenon. The degree of abstraction of much academic economic thought from concrete political-economic contexts has meant that, while much economics shows relatively little trace of methodological nationalism, it is equally oblivious of globalising tendencies. It is symptomatic that the economic relations of globalisation are picked up more in geography, sociology, and (especially) the burgeoning field of international political economy (IPE) which has emerged from international relations.

There is conflicting evidence on how sociology as a disciplinary subject has reconstituted itself in global terms. Social theorists like Michael Mann have made us aware of the historic global-national tension in their subject. Writing of the nineteenth century he points out, 'Throughout this period the nation-state and a broader transnational Western civilisation competed as basic membership units. Sociology's master-concept, "society", kept metamorphosing between the two' (Mann 1993: 9). Later, sociology was organised around the twin concepts of industrial and capitalist society. Both of these clearly held a potential for global understanding, but in the mid-twentieth century they were overwhelmingly

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operationalised as national categories. Even the new Marxism of the 1970s—with exceptions such as 'world-systems' theory that had their own characteristic weaknesses—largely adapted itself to the national contexts of existing social science. Since the Marxist revival petered out, there was if anything a further domestication of sociology, pragmatically integrating it in national and sub-national contexts.

Of course, some strands of social theory have been central to the global revolution in thought; but the work of thinkers like Giddens and Beck has impinged only slowly on the institutionalised intellectual context of the discipline. Sociologists like Martin Albrow (1996) have produced some of the most radical outlines of globality, but global ideas have also met considerable resistance. Barry Smart, for example, explicitly opposes the idea of a 'global sociology', 'with its connotations of a universalising, indivisible discipline', preferring the notion of 'a sociology of globalisation, or better still, sociological analyses of processes of globalisation'. For him, the idea of a 'global sociology', implying that 'there already exists a worldwide culture', is mistaken. Elevating the notion of 'society' to a global level suggests that 'the peoples of the world are incorporated 'into a single world society, global society', and this will not do (Smart 1993: 135). Moreover, where 'global' sociology has developed the global has been largely conceived in socio-cultural terms, and the relationship to political change is weakly represented (see the review of global sociology texts in Shaw 2002).

If sociology still has its difficulties with the global, political science has been even more disabled by its inherited methodological nationalism. Certainly, normative work in political theory has recognised that globalisation has led to a new problematisation of the division of international and domestic politics. What is at stake, as David Held (1995) argued, is nothing less than a fundamental recasting of political theory as it has developed *within* the liberal-democratic nation-state. Democracy and other political values have to be reconstituted in global—or as Held, Kaldor, and others prefer, 'cosmopolitan'—terms. However, in empirical political science the

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standard demarcation of national and international remains restrictive. Comparative politics suffers from much the same weaknesses as comparative sociology, but politics has the vices as well as the virtues of the more explicitly national focus involved in studying states and party systems. Political studies adapt by analysing politics as process at the expense of grasping the transformation of content. Thus the European Union or the United Nations can be seen as offering new contexts in which to explore the mechanics of political life and institution-building rather than challenges of historical change. What is true of politics may be even truer of law. Despite the growth of international law, which

parallels the expansion of international relations, legal studies remain closely attached to bodies of legal practice that are still largely embedded in national legislation, courts, and legal traditions.

The Special Role and Contradictions of International Relations

International relations plays a particular role in the development of global social science. It is the field that superficially most resembles an arena for new global understanding. It has the unique advantage for the purposes of global debate that, while it assumes the national, it was at least constituted *above* the national level. However, the historical forms of the field have reflected pre-global forms in which worldwide relations were conceived. In the Cold War era of institutionalised internationalism, the international encapsulated the dominant form of the emergent global order. It was possible for international relations to theorise world-level problems, but only as matters of international cooperation. In doing so, however, international relationists gave little more attention than any other social scientists to the specificity of the global. Instead they often encouraged a seamless elision of global with international politics.

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superpowers and blocs rather than the burgeoning global relations that underlay them. Nevertheless, the erosion of the historic statist core of the field can be traced at least to the period of détente in the 1970s. Rather as geography and social anthropology were transformed in the aftermath of empire, so the ending of the Cold War has led to an accelerated renewal of international relations, making disciplinary definitions of the subject increasingly problematic.

If only at the level of theoretical debate, and outside the United States, the dominant realism has imploded since 1989. The field of international relations is currently one of the most highly theorised of the social sciences, its intellectual ferment testifying to serious issues at stake. A wide range of critical approaches jostles for dominance with new versions of realism and neo-realism. This has opened up the subject (in some eyes at least) as an interdisciplinary field for specialised global studies: global political economy, global environmental politics, global gender studies, and so forth.

The transformation of international relations is, however, very problematic. The international and the global are not two ways of expressing more or less the same idea. Certainly, global relations depend in practice on international, including inter-state relations. This aspect is a source of much confusion. But the two concepts are of fundamentally different kinds. There is a core contradiction between them. Globality involves the unification of the social world and the relativisation of difference within it. The international represents the division of social relations by national (historically state, now increasingly cultural) boundaries and the definition of particular kinds of difference as constitutive. The global incorporates manifold spatial relations: the international defines certain relations as central.

Global understanding can help explain the international (including its defining contradiction and confusion between *international* and *interstate*). International theory cannot understand the global, except in the limited sense of one spatial level of inter- or trans-state relations, or as their negation: the undermining of states, interstate relations, and the international.

These ways of comprehending the global are profoundly limited: first, because the global is much more than a spatial level and, second, because global transformations involve the reconstitution rather than the simple undermining or overcoming of state forms and interstate relations.

International studies offer both empirical space for many fields of global enquiry and tantalising prospects of theoretical reformation. Ultimately, however, the disciplinary definition of the international is as limiting as the nation-centred operationalisation of universal categories in the core disciplines. Most of the attempts to resolve this problem in international theory have remained ad hoc: greater emphases on non-state actors, supplementing strategy with political economy, cultural theory, feminism, and so on. However, even the most tightly focused global theory that has emerged from international relations has had considerable difficulty in encapsulating globality, as I explored in my book (Shaw 2000: ch 3).

Interdisciplinary Fields, Interdisciplinisation of the Disciplines

In such transformations of disciplinary relations, an increasingly important role is played by interdisciplinary fields—such as environmental, communications, and cultural studies as well as IPE—which have often seen the most radical posing of global transformation. An early example, of course, was development studies: in the post-colonial era, this

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was a principal arena for issues of world political economy and world sociology. But development studies also embody some of the contradictions of a social science that is emerging from the national-international framework. Paradigms dominated by national-international conceptions have dominated the field, from the simple Western-sponsored stages-of-development model to the more radical promise of autonomous *national* development that issued from the critique of imperialism. Some development studies have, as a result, a curiously old-fashioned flavour at the

beginning of the twenty-first century. When it makes the nation-state its premise, development studies, too, is challenged by contemporary global change.

Other interdisciplinary fields have been more obviously congruent with emergent globalism but have also exemplified its difficulties. Communications and media studies have had an empirical importance because of the centrality of communications developments to globality. And yet the communications literature, in stressing the technological mechanisms of worldwide linkages, still leaves us with the question of how to understand their content. Critical political economy approaches, which emphasise the dominance of Western media corporations, are in danger of missing the novelty of contemporary global communications. Media roles crystallise in contrasting ways, in critical tension with as well as supportive of globally dominant interests.

In cultural studies, issues of global content have been more explicitly addressed. The field housed the first extensive debates (for example, Featherstone 1990; King 1990) that were influential in introducing globalisation issues into sociology and, more recently, international relations. Nevertheless, it is difficult to encapsulate globality primarily in terms of culture, as there is the danger of missing the political ruptures that have been the largest markers of change. Alongside economic process and cultural transformation we need to put the conscious practices of political revolution that have defined the beginnings of the global epoch.

If it is difficult to represent the global transformation of social relations in terms of changes within historic disciplines, it is also only partially adequate to see interdisciplinary *fields* as the answer to the global challenge. *Interdisciplinarity* is a phenomenon of the social sciences as a whole, and involves a radical relativisation not only of historic disciplines but also of established interdisciplinary fields. Interdisciplinarity is not a new phenomenon: the tendency for disciplines to cross-fertilise is as old as disciplines themselves. It is rather like internationalisation, which has always accompanied apparently entrenched nationality. Both reflect underlying unities of knowledge and human

society that are denied by more rigid definitions of disciplines; in the case of knowledge, of course, these were embodied in the very idea of the 'university'. Historically, the tendency towards disciplinary formation, like that towards national autonomy, deepened from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. However, this tendency was always balanced by forms of interdisciplinarity. These were often informed by intellectual trends, like Marxism, that spread across the various fields and, directly or indirectly, challenged narrow disciplinary conceptions of knowledge.

In the late twentieth century, as internationalisation increased so did interdisciplinarity. Successive waves of ideas fanned out across the social sciences: the new Marxism of the late 1960s, the feminism of the 1970s, and the postmodernism and environmentalism of the 1980s all preceded the globalism of the 1990s. Because these trends were first instantiated in one or more disciplines or interdisciplinary fields—particularly in sociology—interdisciplinarity often took the form of 'influence' of one field on another and the importation or borrowing of authors and ideas from one field

into another. The most important authors, like Giddens or Jacques Derrida, were widely cited across almost all fields; others' work was taken up across a more modest range.

Thus the practice of interdisciplinarity, at the end of the twentieth century, represented more than the ad hoc collaboration of scholars across boundaries that had always taken place in the disciplinary world. Interdisciplinarity had become a more thoroughgoing, self-reproducing set of processes in which borrowing, cross-reference, and constant interplay of ideas had become normal. The association of interdisciplinarity with internationalisation was not accidental: the tendencies towards integration of society and knowledge naturally accompanied each other. Just as internationalisation was a political reflection of the integration of the world, so interdisciplinarity reflected this integration in the structure of academic knowledge.

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Re-imagining the Conceptual Framework of the Social Sciences

The question that arises is whether global thought is just another universal intellectual trend, alongside feminism, postmodernism, and so on. It seems to me that globalisation theory itself can be plausibly represented in this light; it is a particular instantiation of ideas, powerful in its appeal, but very definitely of a particular time. However, globality, as Albrow (1996) suggests, offers scope for a broad historic reconfiguration of social knowledge. Its emergence is the point at which the historic potential of universal, secular, scientific knowledge ceases to be radically opposed to a social, political, and spatial world that can be grasped concretely only in terms of division.

In the global epoch, the world begins to be conceived practically as a single community. Globality is a political-spatial representation of the moral cosmopolitanism that was first conceived by Immanuel Kant at the beginning of the modern era, but was inevitably opposed to the empirical forms of an imperially divided world society. Global social science thus offers a new possibility of reunifying social science, just as global politics, and especially global civil society, offer the practical possibility of unifying the social world.

Of course, disciplines and interdisciplinary fields will continue to exist, rather like nations and international organisations, and will be a large part of the infrastructure through which global social science is developed. Social knowledge, like the social world of which it is a part, is so vast and complex that it cannot be adequately developed within a single unitary framework without many structural differentiations. But global social science, like global civil society, can recognise its internal differences as representations of specificity within unity and convenient building blocks of the larger picture. It should not see them as more absolute divisions of the kind that have sometimes been assumed in representations of discipline as well as national community.

The new transparency of global relations, with the end of the Cold War, has therefore brought with it a conceptual crisis in the social sciences. Since the very meanings of core concepts change in a period of transition, we need to redefine them for a global age. Globality challenges the disciplines to move beyond the ways of thinking which have predominated in their historic development. The possibility of global knowledge released by the end of the Cold War involves the simultaneous transformation both of concepts of nationality and of the ways in which integratory, internationalist tendencies have been understood. The links between people can no longer be squeezed into a national-international strait-jacket, even if this is still very much one of the dimensions which define them. This is as true of social relations 'within' states as it is of those 'across' their borders.

Instead, social relations are increasingly grasped in their genuine complexity, as interpersonal, familial, industrial, commercial, professional, local, regional, transnational, world-regional, global—as well as national and international. In this variety of terms in which social relations are now understood, some are intrinsically spatial (local, regional, national, transnational, international, world-regional) while others (interpersonal, familial, commercial, professional, lifestyle, movement) do not assume a particular spatial content. 'Global' has an obvious spatial reference but, as I argued above, its significance goes far beyond this. The global is the largest and most inclusive spatial framework of social relations and—interplanetary exploration apart—the maximum possible framework. Its development represents the partial overcoming of the major divisions of the world, cultural as well as territorial. Precisely for these reasons, globality includes both the spatially and the non-spatially defined differentiations of the world.

It is not accidental, therefore, that global categories have emerged as main forms of the new theoretical discourse of the social sciences and that the global has a different significance from the other terms. Those who oppose regional or transnational to global change therefore underestimate the significance of current transformations and mis-

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understand the debate on the global. To talk of global transformations does not mean that all relations are of a spatially worldwide or trans-regional kind. Rather, global transformation, involving fundamental changes in both the spatial and the non-spatial dimensions of social relations, includes the regional, transnational, and so forth—whereas none of these terms can include the global. Global social science represents, therefore, an important new stage in the development of the social sciences in which disciplines and interdisciplinary fields face common challenges of fundamental theoretical development.

Conclusion: Global Social Science and Global Civil Society

Global social science can make an important contribution to clarifying the potential of global civil society. Civil society itself is a pre-global concept that is now being transposed into global terms. Historically it epitomised the tension of universal values and national social forms, so the general problems of globally reconstructing social knowledge are particularly evident with the idea of civil society. Globalising civil society involves more than moving to a different level; it means understanding civil society as an active project, a contribution towards consolidating global society, and the critical 'other' of global state networks.

Global civil society has already benefited from the ideas about its possibilities that social scientists, in many fields, have developed. One of the differences from earlier national forms of civil society is precisely the contribution that academic understanding, for example in this yearbook, can make to practical activity. Global social science offers possibilities not only of theoretical clarification but also of worldwide networks of knowledge practitioners who in themselves constitute an important element of global civil society.

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