



Michael Kuhn, Doris Weidemann. *Internationalization of the Social Sciences: Asia – Latin America – Middle East – Africa – Eurasia.* Bielefeld: Transcript - Verlag für Kommunikation, Kultur und soziale Praxis, 2010. 414 S. ISBN 978-3-8376-1307-0.



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M. Kuhn: Internationalization of the Social Sciences

This edited volume is recommended to all those with an academic interest in the internationalization of science and higher education, in particular of the social sciences, and the various forms and effects of processes of globalization on science in different parts of the world. It provides a valuable contribution insofar as it brings together rich evidence from a potpourri of non-Western national science systems that are usually little discussed and less visible, for different kinds of reasons.

The compilation goes back to two EU funded projects and a number of workshops on the internationalization of the social sciences. They are the GLOBAL SSH project (www.globalsocialscience.org), administered by the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study (SCAS), and the ESSHRA project (<http://esshra.tubitak.gov.tr>), coordinated by the national science council of Turkey (TUBITAK). The two editors, Doris Weidemann, a trained Psychologist and Professor for Intercultural Training at the University of Applied Sciences Zwickau and Michael Kuhn, Director of the KnowWhy Global Research Project, state in their introduction that it is the aim of this book to capture per-

spectives from different (semi-) peripheral science communities that illustrate current positions and concerns and that hint at the multiple interrelations and dynamics that accompany the repositioning of actors in an era of globalization (p. 17).

The contributions in the book address the internationalization of the social sciences in 14 different countries from Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, Southern Africa and Eurasia. In their introduction the editors refer to Syed Farid Alatas (2003) much-quoted model of global academic power structures, which classifies countries either as social science powers, semi-peripheral or peripheral science communities. Alatas, Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Singapore, has defined the latter ones as systems, which are academically dependent on the social science centres (from where the social sciences had been imported) regarding methodological approaches, theories, concepts and categories and not least research agendas. Syed Farid Alatas, *Academic Dependency and Global Division of Labour in the Social Sciences*. *Current Sociology*, 51 (2003) 6, pp. 599-613. The volume thus creates a platform for social scientists

largely representing science systems that oftentimes feel neglected, underrepresented and marginalized in the international science system.

The majority of authors approach their discussion of the internationalization of social sciences historically by outlining the developments of the different national science systems from their emergence to the current situation. The institutionalization of the (social) sciences is most of all presented as transplant of institutions and import from Western science traditions during the 19th and 20th century, which constitutes their first international dimension. The role of the 'Anglo-American model' is underlined, for example, in He Huang's paper on China in the first half of the 20th century, before the country had turned to the 'Soviet model' and its scientific socialism, characterized by the 'subordination of science' under bureaucracy and 'out-of-date scientific principles or doctrines' (p. 22-24); since the 1980s the 'American model' has been considered worthy of imitation by Chinese reformers (p. 35). The establishment of social sciences in Japan, as described by Kazumi Okamoto, were initially highly influenced by European, in particular German developments; after the Second World War a shift in orientation towards the United States of America took place. I Ketut Ardhana and Yekti Maunati portray England, France, Germany and the U.S. as major points of orientation for the social science development in Indonesia. The same goes for Lebanon and Jordan (the contributions of Jacques E. Kabbanji as well as by Abdel Hakim K. Al Husban and Mahmoud Na'amneh). For Argentina, Tomás Várnagy observes a current wave of 'Americanization' concerning science developments and a shift from a meaningful past to current disorientation and marginalization resulting from the marketization and commercialization of the university and higher education (p. 161). And Hebe Vessuri, also speaking from a Latin American vantage point, bemoans 'the lack of alternative solid models to the Euro-American one capable of better responding to the problems of national contexts' (p. 138). A number of science systems experienced strong influence of Soviet paradigms during the Cold War period, e.g. China, which according to Huang led to 'all scientific communication with the West (...) entirely cut off' (p. 26) as the Soviet Union was a closed science system not integrated into world science and rejecting Western dominance until after 1990 letting itself be guided by Western models (Sosunova, Titarenko and Mamonova on Russia, p. 285). Similar isolationist patterns were to be found in Ukraine and Belarus until they reached their independence from the Soviet Union at the

beginning of the 1990s when efforts to integrate into the international science system gained momentum (see articles by Larissa Titarenko and Igor Yegorov). Overall, the West is displayed as having 'set the standards for what is now considered 'mainstream science' and has been serving as the role model for scientific communities all over the world' (Pradeep Chakkarath on India, p. 89). Yet, what 'Western science' means in detail and how it is translated into social science practice is spelled out very differently in the contributions, if at all.

Under the banner of the recent period of the internationalization of the social sciences the authors brought different phenomena to the table, e.g. the internationalization of students and teaching staff, the extent of their being involved in mobility programmes and the establishment of Graduate Schools or international degree opportunities (e.g. the articles on Indonesia, Japan, Turkey and Jordan). Some authors discussed the international reception of social science research from particular countries through citation indices, co-authorships and international visibility (e.g. Johann Mouton on South Africa, Sencer Ayate and Aykan Erdemir on Turkey or the Lebanese case), furthermore the number of successful applications for international research funding, the involvement in transnational and comparative research projects and other forms of border crossing collaborations. (International) research in the social sciences in the post-Cold War era, however, has been largely depicted as challenging. Financial insecurity, a lack in infrastructure and facilities as well as the dependence on foreign sources for social science research constitute major concerns. Especially, the 'hijacking' of the social sciences' research agenda through external donors, such as the World Bank, the UN, but also the European Union's Framework Program or USAID, has been repeatedly criticized (e.g. in the articles on Latin America, Lebanon, Ukraine and Belarus).

What crystallized from the different contributions is that the perceived Western dominance and unidirectional influence on 'peripheral science systems' has provoked different reactions and opened up alternative pathways of pursuing questions in the field of social sciences and humanities. They range from indigenization efforts in India as counter strategy towards the unconditional adoption of mainstream concepts from the West to a reinforced focus on nationalism and national identities as exemplified with China and Japan and Japan's claim to also export knowledge and interpretations of the globalized world from their view point. For Latin America, the strategy seems to have been a radical reinterpretation

of Western scholarship grounded in local knowledge. In that context, the importance of research and publication in local languages and the necessities of translations were echoed several times (e.g. in the contribution on Brazil by Renato Janine Ribeiro, but also in the Japanese case). Another approach has been followed, for example, by Russia, which escaped from its pre-1990 isolated social science heritage of historical materialism in an astonishing short period of time to become part of the Western dominated discourses. Further responses include different kinds of regionalization processes. They are, for example, observed in Latin America through the creation of an Iberoamerican Knowledge Space in 2006 and the Arab region (e.g. the through the Islamization of the social sciences). Besides there are slowly emerging forms collaboration among social scientists from East Asia and not least processes of Europeanization, e.g. through the involvement of Russia, Belarus and the Ukraine in the EU's Framework Programs. Interestingly enough, the present developments in internationalizing the social sciences in Korea (Kwang-Yeong Shin and Sang-Jin Han), South Africa and Turkey have been portrayed as less problematic, even as success stories. Michael Kuhn's interpretation of these experiences is that the cases do not consider international collaborations as the competition of parochial world interpretations but as an opportunity to absorb different perspectives toward a discourse about the multiplicity of worldviews (p. 405).

Responding to the iterated call for establishing equal partnerships between non-Western and Western social science communities the closing contributions from the editors develop their ideas for new forms of international collaboration to overcome a Western model of interna-

tionality and hegemonic discourses and attitudes (Doris Weidemann). Grounded in a conflation and first assessment of the presented national experiences they suggest encouraging and building upon variations of knowledge cultures and the creation of what Michael Kuhn in the concluding chapter has labelled scientific multiversalism in a multipolar science world.

With its historical approximation to the development of the particular science systems and local prerequisites for the internationalization of the social sciences the collection is an exciting and overdue compilation. The presentations of cases that are usually not among the oft-cited references provide a fresh impetus for further comparative thinking on how socio-historical developments influence the opportunity of participating in the internationalization of research and higher education and under what circumstances global interaction is less likely. The insight, for example, that the isolation of South Africa's science sector by the international community during the apartheid era on the one hand and the planned and voluntary isolation of scientists in the Soviet Union and its republics on the other largely produced similar outcomes and situations after the end of the Cold War invites further studies on their interrelation and attempts to learn from one another. The diversity of case studies and the way they are presented by the different authors has made a systematic comparison in this book impossible. Yet, the volume opens the floor for a more thorough and nuanced debate on truly universal science through new forms of international collaboration aimed at addressing the most pressing problems of global concern and is as such highly welcomed.

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