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‘Only connect’: the challenge of globalisation for the social sciences

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This paper examines the challenge posed by globalisation to social scientific research and the curriculum. It does so primarily in the context of sociology and in reflection upon C. Wright Mills’s argument for the ‘sociological imagination’. The latter has recently been taken up again in calls for a new public sociology and the present paper considers the new challenges that exist for the social scientific imagination in our current age. Arguing for a social science of connections, the paper suggests that a global social science is properly thought of as a series of local social sciences in dialogue with each other and open to transformation in the light of other perspectives and locations of knowledge. It concludes with a brief discussion of the implications for the curriculum.

‘Only connect ...’ is the motto of the novel, *Howards End*, written in 1910 by E. M. Forster. It is a novel that examined the ‘misunderstandings’ inherent in any divided society. In this particular work, Forster was concerned with the class society of Edwardian England, but in another novel, *Passage to India*, he offered an examination of colonialism and its impact on India and England. Equally important, however, he also addressed a division in modern culture between a utilitarian single-mindedness and a sympathetic apprehension of suffering and misfortune.

I shall begin on a personal note. I read the novel as a pupil at a provincial state school in England before going to university and it was instrumental in my choice to study sociology. I mention these brief aspects of biography, because I shall be arguing throughout this paper for the need to break with certain universalising tendencies within social inquiry and to accept its ‘provincial’ character; the global nature of social problems increasingly requires us to accept, I shall suggest, the local character of social thought. This is not to argue that we cannot learn from others in different traditions, but that there is no position from which to learn other than our own tradition(s) and its (their) limitations, as these are revealed by

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engagement with others (Rorty, 1992). This paper will then draw many of its examples from the British context of higher education and, while I do not claim that these examples are definitive, I do suggest that they are illustrative of processes that impinge in other places and contexts.

While I appreciated Forster's purpose and his sensibility, I disagreed with his account of social divisions.¹ Studying sociology offered an opportunity to make those connections in a systematic way and to temper Forster's 'imagined' connections through research. However, what Forster also identified, which is missing in much of the current discussion of education, is that it should not simply be about training for a job or developing competence in a subject, but it should also be about the education of judgment and the development of character.

I shall then address some old issues in this paper. However, they have been made pertinent once again in the light of Michael Burawoy's (2005) recent Presidential Address to the American Sociological Association in which he called for a return to 'public sociology'. This is something that Burawoy believed characterised sociology (among other social sciences) in the early period of the 20th century, but which was displaced by the professionalisation of the social sciences following World War II. However, for him and for many other commentators, the professional model has failed to deliver and, with its fragmentation, earlier conceptions of the purposes of social inquiry come to the fore as models for a social inquiry addressed to global issues.² Indeed, '9/11' has also contributed to a current sensibility that social inquiry needs to be able to address 'events', as well as 'social structures' (Ray, 2001; Canaan, 2002), although, of course, why that particular event and not others should have that impact is itself of sociological interest.

I

In many ways, what Forster captured in his novel was also expressed in C. Wright Mills' *The Sociological Imagination*, just as Burawoy's address owes much to the lasting inspiration of Mills. Published in 1959, the book was a powerful critique of American sociology and its turning inward, *either* to develop complex systems of theory abstracted from pressing public issues, *or* toward detailed empirical topics identified by their amenability to sophisticated techniques of data manipulation, rather than as topics significant in their own right. Mills's doctoral thesis had been a critical examination of the American pragmatic tradition and its concern with social problems and democratic education, a tradition that has once again been invoked as a way of connecting social inquiry and public concerns (see, Rorty, 1992; Baert, 2005).

These developments in sociology that Mills criticised had all occurred in circumstances of growing state bureaucracy and corporate organisation of the economy and wider society in which there was an increasing demand for knowledge as a means of administration and control. In the process, he argued there was a change in the character both of social science and the university: 'their positions change—from the academic to the bureaucratic; their publics change—from movements of

reformers to circles of decision-makers; and their problems change—from those of their own choice to those of their new clients' (1959, p. 96). Presciently, Mills also saw the media and advertising among the new clients of social science. With these developments, the university, for him, had become a narrowed space, increasingly organised around a utilitarian conception of knowledge and its purposes.

Similar arguments were made a little later by Alvin Gouldner (1973) who believed in the university as a 'cleared space' for public debate, but regarded the university's central problem to be:

its failure as a community in which rational discourse about social worlds is possible. This is partly because rational discourse as such ceased to be its dominant value and was superseded by a quest for knowledge *products* and *information* products that could be sold for funding, prestige and power—rewards bestowed by the state and larger society that is most bent on subverting rational discourse about itself. (p. 79)

Mills lamented this professional specialization, which he believed to be occurring across the social sciences and not just in sociology. In the end, for him, the problem was not simply an issue of sociology as a discipline, but how to secure *imaginative social inquiry*; disciplinary specialisation was part of what he deplored. Professional specialisation was occurring at a time when there were great issues of freedom and reason at stake and when people lived life with a deep sense of unease about the future. This unease, or sense of 'private troubles', Mills argued, was also frequently accompanied by indifference to the consequences of social processes when they did not directly impinge upon their own lives.

For Mills, the task of the social sciences was precisely to make connections; to connect 'private troubles' to 'public issues' and to understand public issues in terms of social structures. In turn, he argued, social structures must be understood historically. We can understand the direction of events in the rise and fall of social structures and the forces at work in them. When we reconnect these forces back to private troubles, we can understand how events seemingly out of control are generated by our own actions (including our inactions). From understanding this we can redirect our actions towards solving these problems, or at least ameliorating their effects. However, in making these connections, we also need to understand how our actions have consequences in the lives of other people who may be remote from us in most respects, for example, spatially, or culturally, except in the consequences of our actions for them and, increasingly, our fear that their actions may have consequences for us.³

II

Mills's book was very influential in British sociology. Indeed, it was probably much more influential in the UK than in the USA, where it was vehemently criticised on publication (Brewer, 2004). The expansion of the discipline, and, thus, its professionalisation, occurred much later in the UK. It took place from the mid-1960s and the writing of undergraduate curricula at this time was very much influenced by Mills. For example, in contrast to the USA, almost all sociology departments in the UK have

core courses in the classical tradition of sociology, whose heritage Mills was trying to resurrect. Over the last few years, there have been a number of ‘millennial’ reviews of the current state of sociology and its future, and, following Burawoy’s recent intervention in the debate, in the UK many have again endorsed Mills’s vision of the sociological imagination and the idea of a publicly relevant sociology (Stanley, 2005).

Yet I do not think all is well. The pressures that displaced the promise of the social scientific imagination are perhaps greater than when Mills wrote and the effects of mass media even more pervasive as the main lens through which ‘public’ issues are apprehended. Globalisation has become a key theme of government policy and higher education is seen as one of the ways in which national economies can compete in the global economy.⁴ This leads to an accentuation of social divisions. Across the period since Mills wrote there has been a widening of income inequalities globally and within the UK and USA (Gottschalk & Smeeding, 1997). Unskilled workers experience their incomes under pressure from de-regulated labour markets, while new entrants to higher education are encouraged to ‘invest’ in their ‘human capital’ to gain the returns to education and contribute to a high skills economy that risks leaving many behind. Financial investment creates a private interest and a view that returns to education are just, thereby insulating the relatively advantaged from the wider social consequences of inequality.

The expansion of mass higher education was much earlier in the US than in the UK, but since 1960 there has been an increase in the proportion of the age cohort undertaking higher education in the UK from 6% to 43%. Problems of financing this expansion have led to pressures on public funding and the introduction of student fees. In addition, universities have sought external income from (unregulated) overseas student fees, research grant income and ‘third stream’ income from business and other sources. There are two consequences of this development. As students invest more in their own education, they become more concerned and anxious about the returns to this investment, thereby reinforcing a utilitarian conception of education. As government invests more in higher education, it becomes more concerned about ‘value for money’ and ‘accountability’, introducing various kinds of audits to measure performance and quality, for example, the Research Assessment Exercise, and the Quality Assurance of teaching.⁵

Universities, in turn, are encouraged to adopt modern management practices and to understand higher education, research and scholarship as a competitive, rather than as a collegial undertaking.⁶ These practices include ‘devolved budgeting’ to Schools or Departments and, thus, not merely competition across universities, but within them. The consequence, I suggest, is that disciplines become ‘reified’ and inward-looking as they both create and respond to ‘benchmarks’ for research and teaching, and seek to maximise their own resources. The ‘proxy’ measures of audit, designed to capture and measure the achievement of the values intrinsic to education, become the real goals of education in a classic case of what Merton (1968) called the *displacement of goals* where, ‘an instrumental value becomes a terminal value’ (p. 253).

There is a certain pathos in these developments in so far as globalisation seems to reinforce tendencies toward ‘national’ agendas for social science just as a number of

recent contributions have identified a new 'transdisciplinary' (or interdisciplinary) moment in social theory and social science which they argue derives from globalisation (Wallerstein *et al.*, 1996; Taylor, 2000; Beck, 2005). According to Taylor, disciplinary social science, especially the core trio of economics, politics and sociology,⁷ is strongly 'state-centric'. This perspective, he argues, was probably always problematic, but we can now see that globalisation has accelerated and transformed the object-field of the social sciences and taken it beyond that of 'national societies'. The increasingly global character of transactions and flows requires social inquiry to go beyond the boundaries both of states and of 'state-embedded' disciplines.

It is certainly the case that alongside the pressures identified above which reinforce disciplinary formation, there is also an increasing emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches to research. Yet this also seems to be much more a consequence of the privatisation of knowledge than straightforwardly to be a response to the challenge of global social inquiry. For example, Gibbons and Novotny and their colleagues (Gibbons *et al.*, 1994; Novotny *et al.*, 2001; see also, Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004) have argued that there has been a general shift discernible over the last decades away from the university as the privileged space for research. This follows from the increased marketability of scientific knowledge with concomitant commercial investment in its production, and government concerns about maintaining effective investment in research and development. They refer to developments across the sciences (including the social sciences) as a shift from what they call 'mode one knowledge production' to a new 'mode two knowledge production'. The former corresponds to the conventional view of scientific research, based within universities and organised around the disciplines. In the latter, knowledge production is increasingly trans-disciplinary and is part of a 'larger process in which discovery, application and use are closely integrated' (1994, p. 46). On these arguments, even if research increasingly involves connections across disciplines, this occurs in a context where there is a narrowing of the purposes it seeks to inform.

III

'Only connect', then, may be the promise of social science, but it is by no means easy to achieve. Moreover, there are obstacles other than the institutional ones described in the previous section. In identifying the issue of potential indifference to the plight of others, Mills raised the problem not just of the distorted vision of a social science turned inward-looking, but also the problem of selective vision within the publics to which social inquiry is directed.

The problem of selective vision must also include the possibility that imaginative social science itself can be selective. Certainly, on re-reading Mills' book, it can seem very fresh, but what most jars about it, is not simply the language in which it is expressed—it is all about 'men'—and the absence of any appreciation of gender, but also the absence of any discussion of race. After all, when he wrote America still confronted the 'American dilemma' (Myrdal, 1944), namely, the lasting inheritance of slavery in institutionalised racism and segregated institutions. This was not just as

a problem of the South, but something that was generalised into federal institutions precisely as a consequence of failed reconstruction after the civil war. It was reinforced by the Woodrow Wilson administration of 1913–21 and the inequalities enshrined in the constitution were not finally revoked until the mid-1960s (King, 1995).

It is not simply that the civil rights movement was about to burst onto the scene, but that what was outside American social science was a long dialogue that had existed among black intellectuals, and between them and nationalist and de-colonisation movements in Africa (Ellison, 1953 [1944]; Singh, 2004).⁸ In this dialogue, a ‘cosmopolitan’ moment and the possibility of a ‘global civil society’ was recognised well in advance of mainstream, ‘universalistic’ social science. At this time, much of American social science sought to explain radically unequal treatment in terms of racialised theories of difference. The ‘private troubles’ of black Americans were not connected to the ‘public issues’ of American social structure by Mills, or by most mainstream social scientists.⁹ Nor were their wider connections in a world potentially divided along ‘racial’ lines recognised, except in terms of the embarrassment of such inequalities in the cold war competition among superpowers.

I do not mean this to be only a critique of Mills, but also to identify the issue of how problems come to be selected for scrutiny.¹⁰ Since Mills wrote we have become much more aware of the impact of social location on knowledge production, as a consequence, for example, of feminism and postcolonial theory (see, for example, Harding, 1986; Said, 1978). Nor is it simply a matter of recognising the lasting impact of slavery on *American* social structure. Slavery was a product of the modern world, with English cities like Bristol or Liverpool deriving a significant part of their wealth in the 18th century from the slave trade (Gilroy, 1993). Obviously, this points to connections that are not made within standard frameworks of social science (and, of course, it is these frameworks that are reinforced by subject benchmarks). However, the more fundamental point is that when sociologists think about social structure historically and, in particular, about the shift from pre-modern to modern social structures (a shift which is frequently argued to be a foundational moment for sociology itself; Heilbron, 1995; Wagner, 2001), slavery does not feature as part of the narrative. Modernity was formed in colonial encounters, yet those encounters are not represented in the core social scientific accounts of modernity, which are very much organised around the ‘twin revolutions’ of industrial capitalism and the democratic nation state.

Even when the focus of concern is British society, little is said about the role of imperialism in the formation of British institutions and social structures and the impact of de-colonisation movements on the nature of these institutions and their future viability.¹¹ Of course, there is discussion of Imperial pasts when identifying contemporary issues of migration and ethnicity, for example, as in the powerful analysis by the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies of how the ‘Empire strikes back’ (1982). However, few have engaged with the wider challenge that Hall (1992) posed about the relation between the ‘west and the rest’. The core categories of social scientific argument associate modernity with market exchange, bureaucratic rationality, democratic sovereignty and civil and political rights, and these are

presented as general categories that can organise thinking despite the significant failure to connect them with the problem of colonialism.¹²

Despite the emphasis on explanation in terms of historical social structures, it seems that the representation of social structures within 'ideal types' of modernity all too frequently abstracts from significant experiences of the processes of modernity; unsurprisingly what is abstracted from is the experiences of those outside the dominant 'publics' of mainstream social science. The current moment seems to be one where the (implicit) conception of a universal history, whether of 'modernity' or of 'civilisations', needs to be replaced by a conception of 'connected histories' (Subrahmanyam, 1997). This implies re-interpreting histories and trajectories (including their categories of interpretation) in an engagement with those with different perspectives and locations and in the creation of dialogues across perspectives and locations. This is not to argue for a recognition of the 'local' in the context of the 'global', but more strongly for a recognition that the 'global' is no more than the aggregation of the 'local'. The identification of the global as something distinct from the local and as exhibiting its own 'logic' independent of local manifestations is necessarily the privileging of some (local) perspectives over others.

In contrast, the dominant tendency in mainstream social science is to perceive globalisation as a process of extension of structures initiated in the west to other regions of the world, albeit with attendant problems of adjustment as traditional ways of life succumb to processes of rationalisation (Eisenstadt, 2002). In this way, there is a double derogation for those represented as 'other' by the categories of western modernity. First, they are argued to be 'outside' the universalistic categories of reason, rights and autonomous subjects, then they are argued to be 'saved' by them (if only they would recognise and accept the self-disciplines that are necessary for the proper exercise of such freedoms). Of course, there are many different inflections of this view, from neo-liberal views of the benefits of capitalist globalisation to more critical views that see an opportunity for the creation of a cosmopolitan global civil society (Beck, 2005). However, even in the latter case, the universal categories of 'cosmopolitan' thinking remain those first articulated in the West.¹³

Therefore, one of the significant challenges posed by globalisation is to the social sciences themselves and the universalism attributed to categories developed in the west. It seems obvious to say that one of the consequences of globalisation is that it both occurs in terms of interconnections *and* in terms of different locations within interconnected networks. Not only will 'private troubles' be different in different locations, but these different locations will provide alternative perspectives on the nature of social structures, their mechanisms and their trends of development.

In recommending a curriculum of 'connections' as a means of engaging with students and encouraging their engagement with public issues, the implication is that this will be a process of learning where they will come to see the world differently. There is no proper connection without the revision of previous knowledge and belief, but that must also include a process of learning within social science itself. As connections previously elided are engaged with, that will require re-thinking social science and our standard assumptions about social structures and their mechanisms.

In this context, where much social science has been ‘Eurocentric’, calls to ‘provincialise Europe’ (Chakrabarty, 2000) and to address globalisation without a ‘privileged centre’ is also a call to ‘provincialise social science’; that is, to think beyond boundaries, whether they are of disciplines or national communities. In doing so, we cannot escape our location as academics, students and citizens, but I do not believe that making connections is a matter of getting outside ourselves. As Forster suggested, it is a matter of sympathetic and engaged connection with others in different locations.

IV

Of course, sociologists from Marx onward have written about the impact of capitalism in terms of its dislocation of ways of living. However, where Marx (1973 [1853]) wrote of the impact of British manufacture on Indian handicrafts and the impoverishment that this was causing, current discussions of globalisation stress the transfer of jobs from the UK, Europe and the US to India or to China. Probably, it is this shift in perspective—that ‘others’ might now be the cause of ‘our’ private troubles—which explains why globalisation is seen as a new phenomenon.

Since Mills wrote, the mass media have become more pervasive in the identification of public issues and their connection to private troubles and as the ‘filter’ through which the social world is apprehended. Arguments about the public relevance of social scientific knowledge necessarily invoke the idea of a public sphere where social inquiry might contribute to ‘will-formation’ (Habermas, 1989 [1962]). As I have suggested, within a utilitarian conception of knowledge, there is an emphasis on contractual relations with users, whether these be private or public agencies, thereby ‘short-circuiting’ public debate. Where the emphasis is upon the possibility of social inquiry informing public debates, there is the further problem that these debates are frequently ‘pre-formed’ through mass media representations. If processes of ‘democratisation’ have had an impact upon the social sciences in terms of an increased recognition of the politics of knowledge production and calls for a ‘dialogic’ conception of social inquiry, the mass media do not have a ‘dialogic’ relation with their publics (Thompson, 1995). Indeed, the impact of democratisation on the media is found less in a conception of a dialogic relation and more in a tendency toward populism and centralisation of the focus of news on government (Gans, 2004).

In a seminal article on foreign news reporting, Galtung & Ruge (1965) identified a number of criteria by which something was deemed worthy of report. Although the criteria they identified have been modified and adapted to cover wider issues than that of foreign news reporting, and their underlying theoretical model criticised, their criteria remain the basis of later studies (see Harcup & O’Neill, 2001). I do not want to go into detail into all their criteria, but simply to identify a few that are particularly salient: What is newsworthy is eventful, rather than routine and cumulative in its effects, however significant those effects. Negative events are more newsworthy than positive ones. Preference is given to news-stories that can fit existing interpretive frameworks or which are familiar in terms of available interpretive themes. In addition, there is a framing of news in terms of national political

communities and a hierarchy of nations governing the newsworthiness of foreign stories, with elite nations predominating unless balanced by the scale of the event (with a corresponding hierarchy applied within societies in terms of metropolitan bias, concern with dominant groups or elite individuals). Even with the rise of global news media, such as CNN, these news values remain powerful in the organisation of reporting.¹⁴

To some extent these criteria also apply to the social sciences, which, as I have been arguing, also have their structures of relevance. For example, one area of overlap suggested by Mills is that each is engaged with 'private troubles' and mechanisms of 'public' recognition. However, social science is very much concerned with the location of 'private troubles' in social structures and their explanation in terms of forces whose effects are long term rather than immediate. Like news reporting, it does so in terms of interpretive frameworks (theories) and while these are subject to more extensive testing through research, the comparison is not always to the advantage of social science. Within the social sciences there can also be a preference for the familiar interpretation and, as I have argued in the previous section, that interpretation frequently reflects an implicit hierarchy of elite nations in terms of the data and experiences used in its construction.

I will now give a few brief examples. They serve to confirm the force of Galtung & Ruge's initial analysis of how events get selected for reporting. Three 'natural disasters' received major coverage recently—the Tsunami in the Indian Ocean on 26 December 2004, the Kashmir Earthquake in Northern Pakistan on 8 October 2005 and Hurricane Katrina on the Southern coast of the USA on 29 August 2005.¹⁵ Each met the conditions for news reporting in terms of 'impact' and 'negativity' and each was a highly visual event with images quickly beamed around the world and dominating news schedules for a significant period of time. It is readily evident that the nature of reporting was affected by the involvement of western (middle-class) holidaymakers in the Tsunami and the status of the USA as an elite-nation.

This paper does not allow me the space to say very much in detail about the reporting, but global mass media can have the paradoxical effect of rendering others as both immediate and remote. Thus, the presence of western holidaymakers brought the tragedy of the Tsunami 'home'. In contrast, the reporting of the Pakistan earthquake emphasised the region's remoteness and in so doing rendered the people remote.¹⁶ Yet a significant proportion of the British population, perhaps especially so in Birmingham, had relatives and other connections in northern Pakistan. The consequence of presenting the earthquake as 'remote' is implicitly to reinforce their remoteness within the British 'societal community'. Similarly, in the USA, the reporting of Hurricane Katrina revealed its largely black victims as a remote 'other' within the American 'societal community'.

The one constant in most disasters is that they initially elicit an immediate sympathy and support. Among the most disturbing images of Hurricane Katrina is that of the National Guard entering New Orleans with guns in readiness as if they were entering a defeated city, not providing relief. Those rendered homeless in New Orleans were routinely described as 'refugees', but what 'boundary' had these American

citizens crossed? It seems clear that part of what happened is how an interpretive framework—that of a black ‘underclass’ with values at odds with those of the ‘mainstream’ population—served to organise expectations about what would be found and how to frame reporting.¹⁷ Yet that interpretive framework is not itself a straightforward ‘ideology’, to be neatly separated from an (adequate) sociological account, it is also an interpretive framework within sociology itself. Gans (1995), for example, provides a detailed examination of the ‘invention’ of the label of ‘underclass’, its application to the American poor, and its racialisation; social scientists and funders of social research are central to his account of how the label came to be ‘legitimated’ as part of public discourse in America.

The connection between explanation and understanding in the social sciences is not simply an issue of formal methodology, it is an urgent issue of the ethics of sociological reporting, as well as media reporting.

V

I will end this paper by borrowing a phrase from Wallerstein and his team in their report for the Gulbenkian Commission on the need to ‘open the social sciences’ (Wallerstein *et al.*, 2000). We need to ‘open the curriculum’ in order to make connections. Yet, as I have observed above, it seems that current pressures on universities are the reverse, for them to compete, and to become more concentrated on specialisms (often called, hubristically, ‘investing in excellence’). Degree programmes in the UK frequently restrict students to choices within curricula defined by subject experts whose interests have become specialised around topics valued within a research assessment exercise. Only within very narrow limits do we allow students to choose their own curriculum.

‘Civics’, the education of judgement, personal development—these do not enter as values expressed within subject benchmarks, or the course objectives and learning outcomes with which we now preface our course outlines. If there is a problem of democratic and global politics in the way in which ‘publicness’ is increasingly (mass) mediated, at least part of the answer must lie with (mass) higher education itself and reform of the curriculum. It seems to me that we urgently need to place democratic purposes—education as an end, rather than a means—at the centre of social scientific curricula. However, the ‘civics’ that we need to address must be open to wider global influences in terms of understanding and engaging with different perspectives on modernity and with different locations.

As I argued at the beginning of this paper, one interesting feature of current debates is the return to pragmatism as a way of thinking about current problems confronting disciplinary social science (Rorty, 1992; Baert, 2005). American pragmatism (the tradition in which C. Wright Mills was himself located) showed an exemplary commitment to think about the nature of social inquiry and democratic pedagogy as necessarily connected undertakings. Moreover, the provisional nature of all inquiries, according to pragmatists, committed them to what I have called a provincialised understanding.¹⁸ If social inquiry is about making connections, the purpose of

those connections, for pragmatists, is to give rise to action to make a difference in the world. As William James put it:

the soul and meaning of thought . . . can never be made to direct itself towards anything but the production of belief . . . Thought in movement has thus for its only possible motive the attainment of thought at rest. But when our thought about an object has found its rest in belief, then our action on the subject can firmly and safely begin. (1904, p. 673)

However, because there are unintended consequences of action, action will give rise to further problems and, therefore, new settlements. So, too, any new partners entering dialogue will alter the terms of a settlement as new criteria and meanings are enunciated (and previous exclusions understood), which will be different from those previously held by the parties informing their actions prior to their mutual engagement. Therefore, provincialised understandings are not provincial in the pejorative sense where that is used to indicate 'closed' minds and 'ungenerous' sensibilities.

Pragmatism was also part of the milieu forming E. M. Forster's sensibility. The motto 'only connect' is a reference to a key chapter in *Howards End* where one of the main characters, Margaret, rehearses a dialogue with her husband, Henry. His motto, in contrast to hers, is the utilitarian one, 'Concentrate . . . I've no intention of frittering away my strength on that sort of thing'. Margaret responds to this, saying: 'It isn't frittering away the strength . . . It's enlarging the space in which you may be strong'.

That seems to me to be as good a definition of the purpose both of an undergraduate degree in social science and of a university; to be 'an enlarged space in which people can become strong'. The business of life can come later, but as E. M. Forster might have observed, whatever the importance of business in contemporary social life, neither life nor university can be run as a business.

Only connect! That was the whole of her sermon. Only connect the prose and the passion and both will be exalted, and human love will be seen at its height. Live in fragments no longer. (E. M. Forster, *Howards End*, chapter 22)

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Notes

1. Not least, as those familiar with the book will appreciate, because my own social position was closest to that of Leonard Bast, a tragic-comic figure in the book!
2. See Holmwood (2007) for a detailed discussion of Burawoy's argument.
3. As this paper was being written, the failures of the Home Office in Britain to follow proper procedure over the release of foreign prisoners at the end of their sentence without consideration for deportation had given rise to much media agitation and the sacking of the Minister responsible. What deeper concern about a 'foreign' threat lies behind such failures? The 'failures' consisted simply in foreign prisoners being treated the same as

British prisoners and their deportation, which the media tended to assume as appropriate, was in law and past policy no more than something to be considered.

4. See the Department of Trade and Industry White Paper, *Ensuring the UK Benefits from Globalisation*, available at <http://www.dti.gov.uk/ewt/part2.pdf>. nd.
5. This has given rise to the argument by Power (1999) that we live in what may be termed an 'audit society'. The particulars of 'audit' may vary, but many of their features are the same and policies within UK higher education are increasingly taken up in the EU and in Anglophone countries.
6. In this context, all universities are pressed to become the same, despite their different traditions (Collini, 2003). For example, my own university, the University of Birmingham, was set up with a strong 'civic' identity and pride in Birmingham's status as England's second city. With its current diverse local population, where ethnic minorities are poised to make up the majority of its population, it might, once again, be the case that a 'local civics' could be connected to the most profound issues of globalisation. However, funding constraints direct all universities to address an 'international market' abstracted from any concrete particularity, and this is so not just for the UK, but for other higher education systems with which it is in 'competition'.
7. It is significant that formal representations of disciplines frequently represent economics, political science, sociology and psychology as the core disciplines, with geography and history outside this core and anthropology usually allied with sociology. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Taylor is a geographer. The idea that disciplinary social science is 'methodologically nationalist' has been challenged by Chernillo (2006), who argues instead that it is 'universalistic' in form. Later in the paper, I will suggest that methodological nationalism and methodological universalism is a false polarity.
8. Indeed, it was symbolic that *American Dilemma* appeared under Myrdal's authorship. His senior collaborator was Ralph Bunche, head of department at Howard University and one of the leading black intellectuals of the period. Myrdal and Bunche disagreed over the designation of the 'negro dilemma' as a problem of 'caste' (see Spark, 2001)
9. For example, there is no essay on race in his collected essays (Mills, 1963) and no reference to racial segregation in his book length study of white-collar work (Mills, 1951).
10. Parsons, Mills' adversary, and a prolific writer on many topics, published his first essay on the topic of race, 'Full citizenship for the American negro? A sociological problem', in 1964 despite having written many essays on the sociological significance of the idea of the 'societal community' in which black American were denied rights of membership. It seems reasonable to infer that the true explanation of the publication of the volume of essays in which Parsons' essay was printed was that it was not so much an occasion to review the situation two decades after Myrdal, as it was a response to the burgeoning civil rights movement.
11. As Mehta (1999) has observed, despite individual rights and self-determination being central to liberalism, all major British liberals in the 19th century endorsed imperial domination. Yet as the (few) critics of Empire observed, not only was it an illegitimate subjugation, it transformed Britain at home, 'distorting' its institutions and traditions (as argued by Burke, 1999 [1783]) and its economy (as argued by Hobson, 1965 [1902]).
12. Just to take one example, Runciman's three-volume treatise on social theory ends with an application of its theory of three interconnected structures (or modes) of production, coercion and persuasion to the social and political history of Britain in the 20th century, yet there is barely a mention of Empire and its demise as a having any significance to that history (other than the emergence of a perceived 'race relations problem' in the 1960s associated with immigration and reference to the problem of absorbing colonial civil servants and finding alternative sources of employment to satisfy middle class aspirations). His conclusion is that: 'no doubt the withdrawal from empire was, for those

- whose lives were directly affected by it, as momentous an event as was the Second World War itself. But, as with the war, it does not follow that any significant change in either the structure or the culture of English society must have either accompanied or followed it ... no qualitative change in England's mode of production, persuasion or coercion was involved in the process' (1997, p. 122).
13. Beck is vehement in his disavowal of those who would bring different experiences to bear upon the question of a 'logic' of globalisation writing that such arguments are a form of 'empiricism' that would deprive, 'the analyses of political science and political theory of a critical outlook' (2005, p. 22). It should be clear that the status of the 'critical outlook' that Beck would promote cannot be separated from the question of which experiences it includes and organises. In arguing for the 'local' over the 'universal', I am not arguing for 'national' social inquiry; 'provincialised' social inquiry is as concerned as 'cosmopolitan' social inquiry with connections beyond the boundaries of disciplines and national communities.
 14. Galtung & Ruge's study was based on print-media. Clearly the need for a continuous play of film footage on cable channels and 24-hour news services introduces new requirements, but the availability of footage tends to reflect the criteria they initially identified.
 15. Estimates are that the death toll from the Tsunami was 187,000, from the earthquake in Pakistan between 100–200,000 dead and from Hurricane Katrina 1604 dead; 1 million were left homeless from the Tsunami, 4 million from the earthquake in Pakistan and 1 million from Hurricane Katrina.
 16. This play of 'remoteness' has very real (and seemingly, paradoxical) consequences in terms of material support. Given the different logistical problems in re-establishing communications after each disaster, it is striking that foreign governments supplied 4000 helicopters for Tsunami relief and just 70 helicopters for earthquake relief. Similarly, 79 per cent of aid pledged by governments to Tsunami relief has been realised, in contrast to 12 per cent of that pledged to relief in North Pakistan.
 17. Unemployment in New Orleans stood at 4.9 per cent just prior to the hurricane, but 28 per cent of the population was estimated to live below the poverty line.
 18. Dewey, for example, identifies the significance of a category of 'experience' precisely to express an agnosticism toward traditional philosophical concerns with the 'universal' and the 'true', writing that: 'when the varied constituents of the wide universe, the unfavorable, the precarious, uncertain, irrational, hateful, receive the same attention that is accorded the noble, honorable and true, then philosophy may conceivably dispense with the conception of experience. But till that day arrives, we need a cautionary and directive word, like experience, to remind us that the world which is lived, suffered and enjoyed as well as logically thought of, has the last word in all human inquiries and surmises' (1981) [1925], p. 372. This is a fuller answer to Beck's concern about the loss of a critical outlook to empiricism expressed in footnote 13 above.

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