Area Studies in the Age of Globalization

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Introduction

The body of knowledge that we call "area studies" is supported by little theory except that provided by the academic disciplines that compose it. Its history goes back to the beginnings of European imperial expansion, but area studies only came on the scene with the cutting of the world into national states that covered the map after 1945. Intellectual assumptions and academic practices in area studies depend on the power of national states to define territories of culture and history. National states provide the primary institutional base for area studies. National interests have justified funding for area studies in the universities, where additional interest arose from the need to understand national identities and cultural pluralism. Area studies could thus be expected to reflect change in the status of the national state, and so it has. Area studies has been deeply disrupted both institutionally and intellectually by challenges to the permanence and authority of national states in the last twenty years. Social movements inside national territories have challenged the legitimacy of existing states, political movements have changed state boundaries, and globalization has undermined the power of states to organize economies and knowledge systems.

In the U.S., area studies came into being to serve national interests that became more global after 1945. In the 1950s, federal programs and private foundations provided funds to increase American knowledge of world areas to inform the global conduct of U.S. foreign policy, but national interests also included businesses, foundations, and universities

that all sought to globalize their role in America's world. Before 1945, America's world centered on Europe, though it included East Asia and Latin America, and to a much lesser extent British and French imperial territories in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. After 1945, a new global U.S. view of the world emerged, and with it, area studies. Specifically, American national interests propelled an American style of area studies and American globalization at the same time.

The Cold War defined America's global context until 1989.[1] When the Cold War ended and the U.S. government declared itself the victor, university administrators, legislators, and funding agencies questioned the old rationale for area studies. Institutional support for area studies knowledge came to depend on its relevance to a new phase of globalization, as the university, like business and government, sought to expand operations globally in a world where America seemed to have no serious competitors. American scholars in area studies programs, well-endowed with talent and resources, have been forced to create a new foundation for area studies in relation to globalization. The reinvention of area studies is still far from over. Many area studies programs in the U.S. are in the midst of or on the verge of institutional and intellectual crises. This essay provides some history for the intellectual work of rebuilding area studies.[2]

The American Paradigm: Institutions and Funding

In the 1950s, area studies, study abroad programs, and international studies disciplines came into being at the same time. Fulbright programs, the Social Science Research Council's area studies programs, university programs to teach languages and area-specific courses, and American overseas research institutes and centers arose on the basis of funding generated by national priorities in Washington. The Title VI program in the Department of Education became the centerpiece of university funding for area studies. Struggles for academic funding henceforth centered on federal allocations and always involved discussions of global politics and the usefulness of area studies for U.S. interests. Since 1970, the central question in Washington has been whether to maintain funding for established area studies programs. Direct federal funding for area studies (which is only a part of the funding for international educa-

tion, training, and exchange) totals roughly $60 million annually, which is enhanced by federal funds for library materials.

Federal dollars have been concentrated in 115 or so National Resource Centers around the country, supported by U.S. Title VI grants. These grants allow institutions to attract other funding. For instance, the South Asia program at the University of Pennsylvania (Penn) has amassed an endowment whose annual income now approximates 70% of the value of a Title VI center grant. Penn graduate students supported for their first two years by FLAS (Foreign Language and Area Studies) funding receive support from other university sources for the rest of their studies. Books from South Asia constituted 12% of the total holdings of the main University library. Faculty appointments based on various department budgets now support a South Asia program at Penn that was originally established in the 1950s in a setting where the only major South Asian subject taught at the university was Sanskrit. Other old Title VI area studies centers for Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, South Asia, and East and Southeast Asia have had similar success raising funds and accumulating assets over the past fifty years, based on federal commitments from the 1950s that have remained substantially in place since then.

Federal allocations came under new critical scrutiny as the end of the Cold War undermined the most effective lobbyist argument on Capitol Hill. Military needs had been the Title VI lobbyists' secret weapon. When Ronald Reagan tried to kill the Department of Education, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger saved it by underlining the strategic importance of international and area studies. Unlike the government, private foundations never stressed a Cold War rationale of area studies, but they displayed it nonetheless when they responded to events in 1989 by raising new questions about the need to maintain area studies. The Social Science Research Council (SSRC) used the end of the Cold War as a rationale for transforming its area studies programs, and openly stated that changes in the world political environment influenced knowledge production in the U.S. academy. The Mellon, MacArthur, and Ford Foundations funded a series of discussions about the future of area studies.[3] Budget cutting by Congress triggered efforts to protect government funding for international programs, specifically Title VI.

The various institutions involved in area studies faced the challenges of the 1990s each in their own way. Universities analyzed area studies in

their own local perspectives. At the University of Pennsylvania, for example, discussions about area studies began with the fear that the Title VI program as a whole would die with the Cold War. In 1994, one dean said publicly that if Title VI funding died, so would area studies at Penn, but since then one new Title VI center has come into being with the deans' support and three old centers which lost Title VI funding received emergency attention from deans to re-establish the old area studies programs on new footing. Local finance now seems paramount, rather than national priorities. Universities are responding to market signals from funding agencies, donors, and constituencies composed of alumni, students, and legislatures. At Penn, the old emphasis of area studies programs on producing Ph.D.s has been replaced with a central focus on undergraduate education, with a keen eye to student demand and donor support from ethnic groups. At many universities, local constituency demands are nudging area studies programs into transnational ethnic studies.

At the SSRC, which has served as a sort of national think-tank for area studies, debates have been strictly academic. They focus on the globalization of social science; and they address not only the problem of getting funds but also the task of influencing funding agency priorities, particularly at foundations. Meanwhile, on Capitol Hill, Congress hears arguments about the interests of that mythical voter on Main Street, where federal funding for Hindi, Arabic, Korean, Swahili and the like has to make sense to middle-class America. But in this new political environment, Title VI has not died: in fact, it has grown. Fulbright funding has expanded. Whether this trend will continue under a Bush administration is uncertain, but so far, the cry that America needs to expand its global enterprise has met with sympathy on the Hill. The political importance of area studies institutions around the country, and of the ethnic group lobbies and constituencies, should also get some credit for maintaining area studies funding.

Responding to the Cold War's End

The fragmentation of the Soviet Union and the quickening pace of economic globalization in the 1990s are now accepted as epoch markers in a contemporary world context set apart from post-World War II decades. The SSRC's Vice President during the early 1990s, Stanley

Higgenbotham, wrote several essays and gave many speeches on the implications of the end of the Cold War, but discussions about the future of area studies have tended to focus rather on globalization, which has become prominent in American discourse generally. A lurking assumption appears to be that (U.S.-led) globalization has no opposition and dominates the world in which the U.S. academy is now working.

The present historical moment is widely seen to be the start of a new era. Thomas Haskell recently captured a newly-cliched view of recent history by saying: "The bloody contest between capitalism and socialism unexpectedly came to an end in 1989 after a struggle that gripped the world for a century and half."[4] Eric Hobsbawm called 1989 the end of "the age of extremes," saying that "citizens of the *fin de siecle* tapped their way through the global fog that surrounded them, into the third millennium [...] certain [...] that an era of history had ended." Then he added: "They knew very little else."[5]

Like many legislators and intellectuals, the leaders at the SSRC and the Ford Foundation understood the end of the Cold War to mean that new modes of knowledge production were needed. By 1989, the SSRC and American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) had sustained a dozen or so area studies joint committees for thirty years. These multi-disciplinary area studies committees, composed of faculty representing U.S. area studies programs, distributed about half of the SSRC operating budget to generate short-term grants for conferences and research publications. Annual reports of the SSRC indicate that these committees had an impressive record of productivity and influence. The new post-1989 critique of area studies initially came from the SSRC president, David Featherman, in the form of disciplinary objections to area studies in general. He argued that disciplinary social sciences were more universally applicable, globally useful, and more worthy of support than area studies. His argument against area studies favored "hard" social sciences like economics, political science, and sociology, which use statistical data, formal models (often mathematical), and positivist, explanatory theory. Featherman proposed reducing the power of the SSRC-ACLS joint committees to allow the central administration to reallocate funds more favorably to social science-oriented research and training.

In 1996, the SSRC, under a new president, Ken Prewitt, eliminated joint committees altogether and began to tap its way through the fog

toward a new and looser structure of "regional advisory panels." Prewitt clearly favored more global forms of social science knowledge over established area studies, and he opened up the Councils' options by pulling the plug on the old joint committees. In 1997, using Ford funding, the SSRC and ACLS held a joint meeting, including more than a hundred advisory panel members from all the areas and disciplines represented by the two Councils, for the sole purpose of discussing the current condition and future direction of area studies. The meeting began with a panel that described the present as a turning point in history, and then emphasis fell upon globalization and the transformation of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. At the end of the meeting, area studies survived critical scrutiny. It did so not because existing programs were taken to be satisfactory, but rather because participants repeatedly substantiated the need for area-specific forms of knowledge in social science and humanities disciplines.

At the SSRC and elsewhere, the intellectual and institutional trajectories of area studies are now diverse and uncertain. Federal and foundation funding have survived under sharpened financial pressure and political scrutiny. The SSRC maintains a loose experimental structure of regional advisory panels and has now centralized the financial decision-making that was previously dispersed among joint committees. Its goal at present is to internationalize social science research collaborations in order to break area studies out of old patterns defined by national territories and U.S. national interests, in recognition of the increasing trend of internationalization within the scholarly community.[6] The Ford Foundation made similar moves. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* reported in 1997 that Ford Foundation president Susan V. Berresford "believes that the foundation should devote more of its resources to supporting area studies programs and funding research into global issues."[7] Then Ford initiated a "Crossing Borders" program with funding totaling $25 million over a six-year period to support new initiatives to revitalize area studies. The program announcement says that Ford has two aims in this program: "first, to support intensive study of particular languages, cultures, and histories, building on the first half-century of work in area studies; and second, to foster innovative thinking and practices related to the field of area studies itself, through a variety of partnerships, as well as disciplinary and other 'border-crossings.' "[8]

Globalizing Social Science

Among social sciences, political science logically paid the most attention to problems posed by the Cold War's end, which had affected this discipline most immediately. Debates in *PS: Political Science & Politics* focused particularly on the Middle East[9] and on the role of theory in comparative politics.[10] Christopher Shea catches their tone with his headline: "Political scientists clash over value of area studies: theorists say that a focus on individual regions leads to work that is mushy."[11]

These debates reproduced an old opposition, between social scientists who support and those who oppose area studies, which had long simmered at the boundaries of disciplines over questions of interdisciplinary collaboration.[12] But old critiques of area studies[13] produced a novel outcome in the context of the nineties. Strict disciplinarians like Robert Bates argued that area studies did produce descriptive data that needed to be incorporated into universal theories and disciplinary methodologies; toward this end, he promoted rational choice theory. Interdisciplinary cultural specialists like Arjun Appadurai argued that new transnational processes affected every world region, forcing social science to study globalization itself in area-sensitive terms; toward this end, he promoted an amalgam of anthropology, history, and cultural studies such as that which is prominent at the University of Chicago.[14]

As area studies entered the new age of globalization, three academic arguments about what was needed came to the fore, most explicitly at the SSRC. "Hard" social science disciplinarians sharpened their old opposition to area studies with new confidence in the universal utility of their theories and methods, but area specialists among them made theoretical arguments for incorporating world areas into social science knowledge. "Soft" social sciences, especially history and anthropology, had been as deeply involved in area studies as political science, but less disrupted by the Cold War's end and, in collaboration with the humanities and cultural studies, more receptive to forms of knowledge from various world regions. As a result of the academic influence of four decades of area studies in U.S. universities, opposition between the hard and soft social sciences produced new intellectual space for the formation of global knowledge that combines universal theory with local substance. This new mode of knowledge production was awkwardly dubbed "context-sensitive social

science" at the SSRC. Context-sensitivity gave various social sciences and humanities disciplines a theoretical place to meet for discussions about area studies.

Social scientists can now collaborate with (or, at least tolerate) scholars who pursue "mushy" area studies forms of interdisciplinary knowledge by simply agreeing that there is an emerging formation of global social science that incorporates a cultural studies agenda. This seems to be the framework in which Ford and the SSRC propose to reconfigure area studies. This new form of social science has the potential of achieving global reach without being imperialistic, or even domineering. It is international in its embrace and participation; and it includes all the multicultural voices of race, class, gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, and such. It combines the collective powers of empirical, deductive sciences with the critical powers and descriptive, interpretive subtleties of cultural studies. Global in vision, arguments, and relevance, it is local in its data, application, and humanity. It keeps the humanities—language and literature disciplines—at one remove, however, because after all, it is a kind of social science. This global knowledge is not the same as area studies because it is not defined by an *a priori* separation of world territories. Its attitude to area studies is essentially utilitarian. It defines a domain outside area studies, encompassing area studies knowledge, giving it new meaning and utility, so that area studies can participate in a new global agenda.

However "context-sensitive" social science may become, a disjuncture remains between area studies and global studies. Area-focused disciplinarians in history and anthropology (including folklore), for instance, can remain committed to area studies as an end in itself. Their attention to global forms of knowledge—to world history, global issues, or transnational processes—brings them into a conversation with a context-sensitized social science, but they remain committed to the particularity of a specific world region, whether it be defined by national state boundaries, cultural boundaries, or transnational flows. At the same time, disciplinarians who are actually hostile to area studies as an end in itself can now accept area studies as a means to higher scientific ends.

The U.S. Global University

Collectively, colleges and universities need to reproduce all the various kinds of skills and knowledge that constitute area studies. Though each institution does not need to provide the entire package on its own, there is currently no national mechanism for coordinating area studies programs. Institutions confront their new challenges individually amidst a diverse set of local financial considerations, which include market demand for the knowledge they offer. In hard money terms, professions, sciences, and undergraduates most preoccupy the institutions of higher education that must sustain area studies.

For professional schools and the sciences, area studies programs are at best places for the application of universal knowledge. Some regions of the world do have a place in the conduct of some sciences—for instance, geology—and there are many international scientific collaborations in the Fulbright program. Environmental scientists spend time in many world areas, but they are not concerned with area studies knowledge that pertains to education and training in language and culture. Scientists enter the Fulbright Senior Scholars program because work overseas is useful to them; and indeed, humanizing science was part of Senator Fulbright's dream. There are some people from business schools on Fulbrights, and some business schools do receive support in their international efforts from the Department of Education. The University of Pennsylvania's erstwhile international studies Title VI program was located in the Wharton school, and the Lauder Program at Wharton specializes in using area studies to train international business executives.

Professional schools and sciences command vast financial resources in a way that is actually hostile to area studies, except as an adjunct. Professional schools do not need area studies knowledge in the same way that social science and humanities disciplines do, and they will not pay for its production. While business schools might be willing to train students in language and area knowledge for their specific professional purposes, they usually do not go beyond that. Even social scientists who are context-sensitive usually work in departments which are not. Social science departments typically use area studies knowledge, but do not want to pay for its production. In budget competitions, they join the sciences and professions in their support of universal knowledge with global reach.

One new financial base for area studies knowledge is coming from undergraduates who want ethnic studies, heritage studies, comparative literature, women's studies, cultural studies and new forms of international knowledge. All area studies programs benefit to some extent from this new demand. Area studies programs seek financial support from the appropriate "community" groups for institutional initiatives like language instruction. Asian studies programs look for funding for new faculty from Asian-American and Asian communities in America. African studies programs look for support from schools of medicine, nursing, and public health that are involved in research and training programs in Africa. African-American and African studies programs are tending to merge. Many undergraduates who seek heritage courses in Latin American or Indian studies are also pre-professionals who will work in a foreign country during their career. These are natural constituents for the institution of area studies within globalization.

Perhaps the most important shift represented by the globalization of area studies is the reduced role of the national state in its organization, finance, and ideology. The global agenda provides many new opportunities for area studies to serve the social sciences, business schools, public policy institutes, medical schools, NGOs, United Nations organizations, private enterprise, and governments. Universities are thus developing new support systems for area studies that cross the boundaries among schools and allow practitioners of all the disciplines to expand their powers to operate anywhere in the world. This has been happening for ten years, and many major area studies programs operate today inside multi-school institutes like those at Berkeley, Michigan, and Wisconsin. The university centralization of the administration of area studies has been moving ahead more rapidly even than centralization at the SSRC and Ford Foundation.

The New Globalism

Current trends indicate that area studies will develop by making a case for itself in the constellation of interests and forms of knowledge that converge on globalization. Global interests will not support area studies on their own because they are at best opportunistic in their appreciation of area studies and they will look to buy its knowledge without bearing the cost of its reproduction. For agents and scholars of globalization,

moreover, the territoriality that is built into area studies is odious, and knowledge that is attached in and for itself to a specific territory is archaic, limited, low-tech and lowbrow. Constraints on the flow of ideas and information such as those built into myriad foreign languages constitute obstacles for globalism, and old-fashioned area studies, like old-fashioned states, obstruct the movement of knowledge across their borders. A monolingual internet world is more their style.

The new globalism is trans-national and post-national; it associates state boundaries with restraint, confinement, and limitation. In the World Bank's 1997 *World Development Report*, for instance, we can read instructions for state managers, but beyond its function for the world economy, the state seems unnecessary. In globalization circles, the idea that a national state is a moral guardian of national interests, identities, and well-being seems to be a thing of the past. A new hyper-capitalist critique of the nation state has joined a leftist critique of national state power.[15] Stripping away the state would seem to "liberate" peoples and localities for participation in globalization.

Yet globalism as a form of knowledge conceals the territorial dimensions of globalization itself and thus the historical position of area studies within it. A new home for area studies in a world of globalization will begin to emerge as we better understand the long historic interaction of area studies knowledge and the process of globalization. Area studies knowledge did not begin with the Cold War but rather emerged with modernity, and constituted not only nationality, but also imperialism. Since the Enlightenment, imperial territorialism has elevated scientific, universal knowledge that encompasses and surpasses all the narrow, traditional, partisan, and idiosyncratic forms of medieval and early modern knowledge that preceded it and which have challenged modernity. Modern nationalism combined scientific, imperial knowledge as it emerged in the form of various academic disciplines and used a populist hyper-enchantment of tradition to substantiate national claims to territory.

After World War II, the earth was blanketed with nation states for the first time in human history. Divided among regions of culture, history, and political economy, this new world of nation states provided a grounded reality for the conceptualization and organization of area studies knowledge. Knowing all the regions of the world became the key to twentieth-century globalization, which embraced national territories of

culture and power that were subjects of area studies. A big shift in the nation-state system would necessarily destabilize area studies, so closely had the two been linked; and after 1989, such a destabilization did occur. However, this shift continued a process of globalization that actually began long before and whose pace has actually been faster at various times in the past than it is today—for instance, between 1880 and 1914.[16] What is new today is not the fact of globalization, but rather its recognition as a central historical process and its utilization as a theoretical basis for efforts to reorganize knowledge and power in the world.

As an ideological phenomenon, globalism expresses ambitions that use area studies knowledge but reject any aspect of area studies that prevents a comprehensive comprehension of the world. However much area studies may need to pitch itself into globalization, globalism does not provide a stable intellectual or institutional home for modern area studies scholarship.

Real Life in Global Territory

Though the U.S. is the home of the new globalism, U.S. intellectual life and culture is at one and the same time isolationist and expansive, parochial and imperial. U.S. public support for the U.S. worldwide war machine coexists with a small-town fetishism for intensely local, face-to-face, peaceful, patriarchal family-style, "we don't even lock the doors" social order that U.S. media call "the American way." Much the same can be said for hometown cultures of British and French imperialism in the nineteenth century. Nationalist territoriality and globalization always use one another, and imperial territorialism includes and even fosters its own opposition at home and abroad. Questions about perspective, intention, experience, and participation in globalization emerged after World War II, as Americans entered the world of old empires, and area studies inherited all the complexities of U.S. global territory. Area studies scholarship includes both globalizing and isolationist national tendencies.

The term "globalization" defies precise definition but conveys a sense that international forces—technological, economic, and cultural—drive history around the world, producing the possibility that humans may create a global society and also provoking fear that social life will be dominated by forces beyond the control of national governments within

which people see the possibility of democracy and self-determination. Globalization is an impersonal, objective process, unfolding out there in the world; but it is also a personal project for people who seek to create an integrated world economy and culture. Some people see these makers of globalization as history's visionary leadership; others see them as dreadful imperialists.

Today's proponents of globalization are also its leading experts and leading advocates of globalism in social science. Opportunities and anxieties in centers of global power preoccupy its experts. The world of wide open opportunities for U.S. enterprise also begets anxiety about chaos and barbarism, which in turn justifies national investments in global military and political power, as in Robert Kaplan's now-famous 1994 article in *The Atlantic Monthly*.[17] More pervasive chaotic global movement—described politically by J. Rosenau and culturally by Arjun Appadurai[18]— give the simultaneous double impression that globalization has no direction, center, or guiding logic, and that globalization is moving out from centers of international financial and media power according to the universal logic of business competition. The desire to find or make order in the chaos of the new world economy remains a pervasive theme among scholars of globalization.

Effective economic governance in the postmodern integrated world economy will require a marked strengthening of international institutions that may eventually acquire powers to tax and enforce the law if territorial jurisdictions collapse. Where is the center of the world system today? It appears to be somewhere in the international processes that lie behind the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, or GATT, where the World Trade Organization, or WTO was born, in 1995. David Korten argues that the WTO is "the world's highest judicial and legislative body." When fully operational, it will provide a means for any member country to challenge any law of another member country that it believes deprives it of benefits expected from the new trade rules. This includes virtually any law that requires imported goods to meet local or national health, safety, labor or environmental standards that exceed WTO-accepted international standards.[19]

The connection between the WTO and Main Street, U.S.A, indicates local ambivalence about global activity. There is a serious disjuncture between the process and the project of globalization, on the one hand,

and the territories and communities at the national, regional, and local level, on the other. This gap needs to be sutured by area studies scholarship. One of the central regions of globalization in the contemporary world is the United States, which is occupied predominantly by forms of knowledge and consciousness that are distinctly hostile to and ignorant of the global environment. U.S. political discourse is territorial both in the expansive and in the enclosed sense of that term. Knowledge in the university reflects that disjuncture and alienation, as pointed out brilliantly by Jane C. Desmond and Virginia R. Dominguez, who describe the alienation of American studies from area studies as being in opposition to the study of the "Self" as opposed to the study of the "Other."[20]

This contradiction is found within every national educational system, and at lower levels of spatial order within the nested territories that comprise everyday life in a globalized world. Schools accentuate and institutionalize the feeling of being a Texan, a New Yorker, or North Dakotan in America, or a Tamil, a Gujarati, or Bengali in India. Shahid Amin has shown that in India, the village occupies a place in the world of knowledge outside the national past.[21] But Amin does not tell us that this separation is sanctioned by official knowledge and sustained by the Indian government and by ruling elites, who in India, as well as in America, help to produce the localism and regionalism of political identity. Thus neither territory nor community are natural phenomena. They are socially stratified, with some people participating both on the local and the global levels, and occupying positions of leadership in regions of power, while other people live entirely at the local level and are thus essentially trapped in places they identify as their native space. All the world's territorial powers generate knowledge that both separate and connect people in the globalization process, but globalism as a form of knowledge only captures that small strand of activity and knowledge that pertains to expansive, free movements across the real boundaries within which most people live.

Institutions Fail

American area studies programs are little islands of academic activity in a sea of American studies of the American Self. Area studies programs are comparatively weak, scattered enclaves of intellectual activity

oriented toward a world outside America. Their occupants have reacted quickly, if not wisely, to challenges posed by the rising tide of globalization. They have had very little time or opportunity to reflect collectively on their condition. To sustain themselves, they have run for the money. Area studies programs came into being with national funding initiatives, and once established depended heavily on this funding, which allowed them to remain isolated from American studies of the Self. Their intellectual life became connected more to external aspects of America than to its internal politics. As their importance to U.S. globalization diminished, they worked hard to sustain funding locally inside universities. Some raised and strengthened dikes around their little enclaves of expertise. Others began to shift to American studies of the Self by joining ethnic studies programs. Still others learned to swim the heady currents of globalism. The scattered inhabitants of all these little islands that constitute the archipelago of area studies abandoned their old territory because they did not see that their islands together constituted intellectually coherent, political space. Their institutions failed to sustain the promise of area studies.

In the late 1950s, when a new set of funds known as the National Defense Education Act, or NDEA, was directed at the universities to give them a new interest in foreign languages and in foreign area studies, social scientists who were already most involved in foreign area studies—historians, political scientists, sociologists, geographers, and anthropologists—took this funding to link themselves with language and humanities programs. This produced an alliance between modernization theory and classical orientalism. The social sciences of modernization theory, developmental studies, state building, and the Cold War scholars formed alliances with scholars of classical languages and literatures. With NDEA funding, the universities assisted the classical Chinese, Sanskrit, Hebrew, Persian, and Arabic specialists to develop updated language programs with new teaching and learning techniques and technologies, strategically adding Japanese, Hindi, Tamil, Turkish, Vietnamese, Swahili and the like, according to institutional needs.

In Asian and Middle East studies, classical languages retained their supremacy, and the University of Pennsylvania has, for instance, had a coterie of full professors who specialize in Sanskrit while all of its modern South Asian language teaching is supported by untenurable faculty. By

contrast, centers in Latin American studies grew up around the interests inherited from a very old U.S. engagement with its colonial territory to the south and from European language studies in Spanish and Portuguese. African studies and Southeast Asian studies were built virtually from scratch. African studies was a most radical innovation, closely followed by Southeast Asian studies, because these new area studies fields had so little to build on within existing faculties when they were founded. They were least encumbered by alliances among old faculty interests in classical and European languages, philology, orientalism, and literary studies.

Troubles over the relationship between area studies and the disciplines arose only in part from a national funding crisis. While federal funding will continue to benefit area studies, all external funding agencies will insist on more and more local institutional support. Universities, however, do not conceptualize their own priorities within a collective of universities that must together produce a certain totality of knowledge. This collective conceptualization of a national university system lay behind federal funding, but it never took root. Now it would be up to the universities to reformulate some kind of collective image of themselves, so that each would contribute rationally to a national or even global process of knowledge production. Knowing their own place in the world of knowledge is essential for this purpose.

Faced with shaky outside funding and seeking support locally in competition with professions, sciences, and social sciences, area studies programs have demonstrated intellectual inadequacy and an incapacity to generate political support. The old institutions of area studies emerged from a set of opportunistic alliances cobbled together across disciplines. These have been very productive—and they still are—but their intellectual output has not been reinvested in the reproduction of intellectual capital for area studies. Arguments in favor of area studies have remained opportunistic, tied to an outmoded rationale for the flow of funding from government and foundations. Thus, when area studies were challenged by the social sciences at the end of the Cold War, the social sciences won, hands down, because area studies had no theory of itself for its self-protection, no intellectual mastery of its own fate.

Global forms of knowledge and their advocates will not generate the funding for area studies unless the necessity for area-specific knowledge is clearly and widely understood. The intellectual benefits of area studies,

including language learning, have gone to the disciplines rather than being used to enhance the stature of area studies in the universities. Meanwhile, as area studies specialists have worked for local funding, for tenure, and for promotions in their disciplinary departments, they have joined interdisciplinary programs in ethno-history, comparative literature, women's studies, Afro-American studies, ethnic studies, and transnational cultural studies which do not define themselves by area, but rather by the intersection of disciplines. One of the critical arguments for area studies programs—that they provide a productive space for interdisciplinary collaboration—has now been usurped by other interdisciplinary programs. The institutions of area studies—and the process and logic of area studies knowledge production—have not been intellectually reinvented or theoretically reinvested with the creative energies of scholars who were trained in area studies programs. Some scholars have reinvented their institutional and personal interest in area studies territory. African studies in particular has paid attention to its own legacy of productivity, but the volume on *Africa and the Disciplines*, published in 1993, has no analogue for other world areas; it expresses a specifically African studies intelligence and interest. It does not seek to provide a theory or intellectual rationale for area-specific knowledge or for area studies in general.

There is no theory of area studies or of area-specific knowledge; there is only a set of institutional, personal, and fragmented disciplinary, market, and professional interests that converge primarily on funding. The organizations that should have taken the lead in forming a broad theoretical basis for area studies are the area studies associations—the African Studies Association, Association of Asian Studies, Latin American Studies Association, and Middle East Studies Association—which have done little except tout the importance of their own world area. In the case of African studies, this effort has included exceptional efforts to theorize connections across world areas—most particularly with Latin America, but also, to a lesser extent, Asia.[22] However, this kind of cross-area work has for the most part been a project within the disciplines of history and anthropology or an effort to increase the vitality of one area studies project by drawing upon its relations with others.

Area studies scholars working within their own disciplines and across disciplines, and to some extent, across areas, have transformed the substance of area studies knowledge significantly in the last twenty years.

But being divided by discipline and by their separately institutionalized area studies interests, they have not bothered even to describe, let alone to theorize, area-specific knowledge as such. When their funding is threatened, they compete. A broadly-based theory for area studies that would make sense of the historical development of area studies forms of knowledge in a world of globalization would require a kind of collaboration across disciplines and areas that does not yet exist.

A Site for Area Studies

Potentially, area studies presents an academic counterpoint to globalization and a critical perspective on the new globalism. The kind of area studies knowledge that is a specifically American combination of rustic parochial isolationism and elite imperial expansionism is not merely a feature of globalization, it is also a breeding ground for new global theories and anxieties. Globalization is site specific, and each part of the world constitutes the center of its own global experience. Area studies scholarship is in a position to articulate the territoriality of globalization.

The SSRC solution to the problem of reorganizing area studies is a logical one: to internationalize area-specific scholarship and to extract area studies from its American moorings. Putting globalization in the perspective of all the various regions of the world, rather than seeing it as a singular process emanating from imperialist capitals, reveals a vast patchwork of world territories which have been both increasingly integrated and differentiated during the long history of globalization. Europe, Africa, and China assumed their modern identity as world regions in the context of globalization.

Old conventional wisdom holds that globalization has been driven by European expansion. Between 1917 and 1989, bipolar images of a capitalist-communist opposition in a "world of extremes" kept that conventional wisdom in place by generating an image of the world torn between two opposing camps based in Europe. A more complex landscape of cultural difference and historical differentiation is now coming into view, because bipolarity is dead and people from all world regions now participate in dispersed global discourses running the gamut from eco-feminism and human rights law to arms control and structural adjustment. Non-European contributions to modernity and the world economy are

becoming more apparent. In this new landscape of world history, some regions and groups are clearly more powerful than others. Some people and regions have more to gain from globalization than others. In much of the world, globalization is feared and hated. In general, it is seen as being distinctly American, and much of its guiding ideology and imagery today is made in the U.S.[23]

Area studies represents an academic articulation of globalization and territoriality outside the United States. Area studies institutions began with imperial intentions, but have moved well beyond them by operating in worldwide academic networks, and benefiting from the arrival of scholars from other world areas who became the cutting edge of area studies in the U.S. As a result, area studies in the U.S. are driven by global networks of scholarship that take cultural differences very seriously. Many American scholars have become partially expatriated by constant travels and studies in countries where they are foreigners at home abroad.

Thus, in the real world, boundaries and differences are widely understood as being permanent and necessary, even when they are shifting and constantly under danger of erasure. The world's non-European languages and literatures are not dying out. Despite Hollywood, many more films are produced in Indian languages than in English. National states continue not only to produce the world's currencies, protect private property, sustain capital accumulation, regulate financial markets, and sponsor national languages and cultures, so that, as the World Bank's 1997 *World Development Report* says, national states remain essential for the world economy; nationality is a permanent feature of world culture, especially when challenged. Many forces that drive and attack national states operate primarily inside their borders. A well-stamped passport is still the best sign of a global citizen who at every airport feels the scrutiny of the state.

Global intellectuals move among world regions of cultures and states. Globalizing disciplines represent their common language. Area studies embrace the fact that most global citizens live in territories where the local language is not global and never will be. Globalization has always sustained regional difference and particularism, as it does on Main Street, U.S.A. An appreciation of the multiplicity of sites from which world-changing circulatory processes historically emanate needs to anchor the reconceptualization of area studies. In this context, the West is not a single site but rather a set of localities lumped together variously amidst

a circulation of elements that emanate from various other places. Where does the reification of "the West" or "Europe and the U.S." as a single force in world history come from? What is the location of this theory? Certainly it is enshrined in American social sciences and area studies. It needs some serious reconsideration within area studies.

Globalization is perhaps best defined as a multiplication of sites in which circulatory movements intersect and from which circulatory movements emanate. More sites produce expanding circles of rippling waves that intersect at more sites over time. Globalization is not only a process but also a project, an ideology, and its operations need to be understood in the context of other processes and projects. There is already a critical literature on the globalization project, which indicates that it should not be assumed to provide the intellectual basis for academic studies of the world at the beginning of this century. Herman Daly put the matter simply in his farewell address to the World Bank, in 1994: "Cosmopolitan globalism weakens national boundaries and the power of national and subnational communities, while strengthening the relative power of transnational corporations."[24] If students in each part of the world are going to understand their real "place" in the world, they need to understand that national borders are zones of tension amidst global circulatory processes that change all kinds of boundaries. By transcending the U.S. national mentality, we can explore the various formations of territory, space, locality, region, and identity that define the world and we can begin to expand the scope of area studies and forge creative collaborations among area studies programs in the context of globalization.

Notes

1 See Noam Chomsky *et. al.*, *The Cold War and the University: Toward an Intellectual History of the Postwar Years*, New York: New Press: Distributed by W.W. Norton & Co., 1997.

2 This essay is an effort to pull together information on area studies that might be useful for students, faculty, and administrators in the context of current discussions. It does not reflect academic research on the history of area studies. For a history of Indian studies in the U.S., see *India's Worlds and U.S. Scholars: 1947-1997*, edited by Joe Elder, Ainslee Embree, and Ed Dimock, published for the American Institute of Indian Studies by Manohar Publishers, Delhi, pp.265-82.

3 See *Fulbright at Fifty*, the report of the National Humanities Center Steering Committee on the Future of the Fulbright Educational Exchange Program, July, 1997.

4 Thomas L. Haskell, "The New Aristocracy," *New York Review of Books*, December 4, 1997, p.47, reviewing Elliott A. Krause, *Death of the Guilds: Professions, States, and the Advance of Capitalism, 1930 to the Present*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1997.

5 Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914-1991*, Vintage, New York, 1996 (first edition, 1994).

6 "Internationalization of the Social Sciences and Humanities: Report on an ACLS/SSRC meeting, April 4-6, 1997," by Itty Abraham and Ronald Kassimir, June-September, 1997.

7 Joye Mercer, "The Ford Foundation shifts its focus and structure," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, August 15, 1997, A29-30.

8 http://www.fordfound.org/publications/recent_articles/crossing-borders.cfm

9 James A. Bill, "Comparative Middle East politics: still in search of theory," *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 27:3, 518-19, September 1994. Jerrold D. Green, "The politics of Middle East politics," *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 27:3, September 1994, 517-519,

10 Robert H. Bates, "Area studies and the discipline: a useful controversy?" *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 30:2, June 1997, 166-170. Chalmers Johnson, "Preconception vs. observation, or the contributions of Rational Choice Theory and area studies to contemporary political science," *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 30:2, June 1997, 170-4. Ian S. Lustick, "The disciplines of political science: studying the culture of rational choice as a case in point," *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 30:2, June 1997, 175-9.

11 *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 10, 1997, 13-14.

12 Richard D. Lambert, "Blurring the disciplinary boundaries: area studies in the United States." *American Behavioral Scientist (Special Issue: Social Knowledge: Balancing Specialization and Integration)*, 33:6, July-August 1990, 712-33.

13 See for instance the series of articles on each world area of area studies in *Society*, 22, May-June 1985; and James A. Bill, "Area Studies and Theory-building in Comparative Politics: A Stocktaking." *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 18, Fall, 1985, 810-12.

14 See Liz McMillen, "A New Cadre at Chicago," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, A10-11: "The University of Chicago has appointed scholars specializing in cultural and regional studies, mainly concerning Asia, to create a new cadre. In an age of changing national boundaries and cultures, it has initiated a new process of constituting the disciplines. This initiative will bring together 40 scholars to form a gender-studies center. The texts are being broadened to include the history of films and medical culture. The University's globalization project inspires rethinking of area studies by focusing on the relationship between regional and national cultures."

15 See *Reading Subaltern Studies: Critical Histories, Contested Meanings, and the Globalisation of South Asia*, Edited by David Ludden, Permanent Black Publishers, New Delhi, 2001.

16 For a popular account, see Louis Uchitelle, "World Economy Is as Interconnected Today as in 1913," *New York Times*, April 30, 1998.

17 "The Coming Anarchy: How scarcity, crime, overpopulation, tribalism, and disease are rapidly destroying the social fabric of our planet," *Atlantic Monthly*, February 1994, 44-76.

18 J. Rosenau, *Turbulence in World Politics: A Theory of Change and Continuity,* Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1990; and Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN, 1996.

19 David C. Korten, *When Corporations Rule the World*, London: Earthscan Publishers, 1995, p.174.

20 "Resituating American studies in a critical internationalism," *American Quarterly*, 48, 3, September 1996, 475-91.

21 Shahid Amin, *Event, Metaphor, Memory: Chauri Chaura, 1992-1996*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996.

22 See Frederick Cooper, "Conflict and Connections: Rethinking Colonial African History," *American Historical Review*, December 1994, 99, 5, 1516-1545.

23 See Anthony King, ed., *Culture, Globalization, and the World-System: Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN, 1997.

24 Quoted in Korten, *When Corporations Rule*, p.173.

Overseas Education: Dispelling Official Myths in Latin America

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One of the most important contributions that the study abroad program makes is to allow students and professors to contrast official (government and mass media) versions of reality with their own observations and experiences. In many cases, there is a significant gap between what students were told before they left the U.S. and what they have learned upon their return. Not all students are able or willing to go beyond their preconceived notions, in part because of the limited access to different classes, ethnic and gender groups, or because the nature of the program limits the range of experiences to which students are exposed. Nevertheless, in my nearly forty years of travel to Latin America I have found that most students do develop significantly different and critical views of the "official" versions of Latin America and U.S. foreign policy. The initial reactions to the contrast between preconceptions and reality vary from surprise to indignation, with many pursuing alternative and more critical paradigms. To illustrate this issue, I would like to cite several cases that I have witnessed in the field.

In the mid to late 1960s I traveled to Chile to conduct field research on politics and social structure. Chile attracted many overseas programs and researchers because of the relative openness of the political system and the well-developed academic programs. The official version of Chilean politics was that it was a country with a strong democratic tradition, with a durable democratic regime, very different from the rest of Latin America. Yet, upon arrival, many of us were struck by the enormous social inequalities in Chile, and the way in which the political system was skewed toward defending class privilege. Those of us who pursued our research in the local archives as well as in the field, found that Chilean history was punctuated by military coups in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and had an electoral system that constrained or excluded lower-class

Indian and women voters until well into the twentieth century. While voting was much freer from overt coercion by the mid-century, and a pluralistic party system invigorated public life, some of us questioned the viability of Chilean democracy if the lower classes ever gained an electoral plurality. Being U.S. citizens, many of the privileged classes welcomed us to their affluent homes and landed estates. Their gracious hospitality and pro-U.S. sentiment at first was disarming, if not welcomed. However, when questioned about their feelings regarding a potential electoral victory for a labor-based left coalition, many reacted with distinctly authoritarian responses. One very prominent Senator and landowner, when confronted with the question, answered: "If you think I'm going to give up all this because some ignorant peasants vote for the Marxists, you're crazy." The Senator's response revealed a deep-seated animosity to the idea that electoral politics could work in the interests of the lower-class. For many of us brought up and educated in the official version of Chilean democracy, this, the dark authoritarian side to the political system, was an important learning experience that provided us with a much more nuanced understanding of Chilean politics.

Beginning in the 1980s, many students and researchers visited the Andean countries to study "micro-enterprises," small-scale, mostly owner-operated businesses. Most of the 'official' literature and spokespeople from USAID, the Inter-American Foundation, and a substantial sector of Academia described the "micro-entrepreneurs" as a solution for, not a contributor to, unemployment. Researchers and students met formally and informally with many of the ambulatory street vendors, artisans and household producers. What they found was indeed a few micro-enterprises that were successful: they transformed their homes to brick and built upper floors to their previous shanty-style abodes; some hired a worker or two to meet demand. However, students also discovered that there were high bankruptcy rates, children of micro-entrepreneurs were out on the street or abandoned school, working at an early age. When questioned, most preferred stable wage employment with pensions, vacation and health benefits, all of which were absent from their employment in the "informal economy." Many researchers and students recognized that the official view was biased toward a select few of the successful micro-entrepreneurs; that this road was not freely chosen by the poor, but forced upon them by the lack of opportunities and employment in the formal sector.

Most of the students developed a critical view of their social science textbooks and of the celebration of "penny capitalism." Others, while recognizing the limitations of micro-enterprises, sought to study the successful cases in search of ways to emulate it for the rest.

The contrast between official versions of reality and practiced reality was forcefully brought home to students and professors in overseas programs visiting Brazil. The official version described Brazil as experiencing an "economic miracle in the 1970s" and becoming the seventh most-industrialized country in the world. Yet many students visiting Brazil were shocked by miles and miles of *favelas*, shanty-towns that surrounded the major industrial cities of the southeast. Those who traveled out of the city to the rural hinterland were shocked to find huge uncultivated private estates and millions of landless rural workers. In a seminar, one of the leading defenders of official "free market" policy raised more than a few eyebrows from several passionate interlocutors from his foreign student audience when he said, without irony, "The economy is doing fine, only the people are doing badly." One overseas student raised his hand and asked, with a strong dose of sarcasm: "Aren't the people part of the economy?" While the official economist passed on the standard free market formula—"a little pain is necessary for future prosperity"—more than a few students began to question the virtue and rigor of neo-liberal economic doctrine. In this regard, when I questioned the students about their previous thinking about economic orthodoxy and their prior exposure to it in the classroom, many stated that they were taught about it back in the Economics 101 classes. Moreover, many said it seemed to fit in with their own middle-class suburban life style. In Brazil, however, they saw the application of orthodox, neo-liberal doctrines as favoring the rich over the poor. Some even questioned its scientific utility since its free market assumptions didn't correspond to the vast socio-economic disparities that they observed.

Overseas studies program participants, particularly minorities, had been led to expect a racial democracy. Nourished on the richness of Afro-Brazilian music and dance, and the presence of superstar soccer players, many were shocked by the profound racial inequalities in employment, housing and land ownership. While racial inequality was something most U.S. students were informed about from their own home country studies and experiences, they were surprised at the extent to which most

European Brazilians denied its existence, some going so far as to state that the students were "projecting their problems onto Brazil." Students made informal cross-national comparisons that were useful in understanding their own society, and the ways in which people of influence rationalized and/or obfuscated injustices in the U.S.

The more perceptive students noted the ubiquitous role of the U.S. in the economy, cultural life and lifestyle of the Latin societies they visited. Most commonly, they commented on the dominant position of Euro-American banks and multinationals and the presence of U.S. real estate corporations (Twentieth Century), fast food restaurants (McDonalds, Pizza Hut, etc.), as well as pop singers, Internet, etc. While the images of familiar banking and food outlets was reassuring to many, others were disappointed that many of the indigenous enterprises and gastronomic delights were being forced out or adapting to the U.S. way of life. Frequently, students discussed whether the economic and cultural expansion and takeover of local markets was a new form of imperialism or whether it was the "modernization" of "traditional societies."

While most students made an effort to understand Latin societies on their own terms, and tried to avoid ethnocentric and disparaging comparative comments on their host countries, subtle comparison frequently crept in, particularly when hitches developed in everyday life: transport strikes, bureaucratic delays, bribe-taking police, etc. However, some of the students were also impressed by the social solidarity of low-income groups (plantation workers, dockers, and miners) who sacrificed monetary gain to resist unjust firings. This solidarity contrasted with the individualistic-competitive ethos many students had been taught as the formula for success. In some instances students were occasionally drawn into public demonstrations; for example, some students joined a march in defense of higher salaries for rural school teachers in La Paz, Bolivia in the early 1990s. While most student comparisons highlighted the obvious higher living standards in the U.S., in some cases—mostly prior to the advent of "free-market" capitalist policies slashing the social budget—students were impressed by the welfare state in Argentina and Uruguay. Students were genuinely surprised to discover (in the 1960s and early 1970s) universal health coverage, one-month paid vacations, paid maternity leave, and tuition-free higher education. These advanced social programs sometimes raised critical questions about why the U.S., with a much higher

GNP, could not also provide these programs for its population. Thus, the exposure to organized and socially conscious labor and peasant movements and activist student assemblies raised important questions about the constraints and limitations of our own version of democracy.

Probably the most dramatic change in student attitudes concerning U.S. involvement in Latin America took place in Chile during the early 1970s. The democratic election of a Socialist President, Salvador Allende, stimulated a great deal of intellectual curiosity in the U.S. academic world. Many students signed up to study at the University of Chile, the Catholic University in Santiago or the University of Concepcion. While in Chile they observed the positive outcomes of the re-distributive reforms (land, income, social allocations) on people's living standards. What struck and angered many students was the distorted reporting by the U.S. media, especially the respected *New York Times* and *Washington Post* as well as the nightly news reports on the major networks. Frequently, parents of students called to warn them of a Soviet takeover, and of "creeping totalitarianism," while the students were experiencing probably the greatest spread of political viewpoints in the local media. Many students were shocked by the willful distortions in the U.S. media and the hostile interventionist attitude of the U.S. Embassy in Santiago. Some of the overseas graduate students suspected covert CIA operations, in funding local business group lock-outs and violent strikes by truck owners, most of which was subsequently confirmed by U.S. Congressional hearings. While U. S. students, like their Chilean counterparts, took sides for and against the nationalization of U.S. mining and banking corporations, almost all were opposed to the U.S. government's effort to destabilize Chilean democracy. Students found it difficult to believe that the U.S. government, which they had been taught always stood for democracy and fair play, would systematically act to overthrow a democracy, to defend U.S. corporate interests.

I remember one seminar in which an American student stood up and challenged the idea that the U.S. was engaged in covert operations. The following week, Jack Anderson, the syndicated columnist published confidential reports of CIA and International Telephone and Telegraph covert operations designed to overthrow the Socialist government. The shock of recognition, of living in a country where the U.S. was engaged in undemocratic politics, raised troubling questions for many of the overseas students.

Overseas study groups also visited Cuba, some attracted by the "forbidden fruit" syndrome, others—encouraged by their professors to look at alternatives to capitalism—because of intellectual curiosity. The students, through organized seminars and classes, were able to question their host institutions about the one-party state and the restrictions on the press, were exposed to the high-quality national health system, the hemisphere's lowest infant mortality rate, and universal literacy.

Most students returned to the U.S. with a much more nuanced and informed view of Cuba, one that differed substantially from the official Washington "demonological" labeling of the island. The positive side of student visits to Cuba was the near-universal opposition to the U.S. travel and educational exchange restrictions as well as the economic embargo. On the other side, few students were converted to Communism as a political ideology. The everyday experience of students discussing informally with their Cuban counterparts frequently led to discussions of different models of democracy, as well as common likes—i.e., Cuban salsa, U.S. rock-and-roll, baseball, etc. What U.S. students discovered is that Cubans were not afraid to spell out their wants and dislikes about society and regime policy even as they express strong support for their country's defense of its national sovereignty. The Cubans, in the eyes of the students, were not ideological robots nor were they all eager to jump on the next raft to Miami, even if many had relatives overseas. While some U.S. students were critical of "consumerism" in their own society, they were surprised by the high degree of consumer interests in Cuba, particularly with the economic scarcities of the 1990s. So while they discovered Cuban opposition to Washington's policies to Cuba, they also noted the desire of many young Cubans to partake of "mall culture."

When overseas students are not in direct contact with a diverse population and alternative viewpoints, they may receive a distorted vision of the society they are studying. I spoke with a number of students who studied at the conservative Catholic University during the Pinochet dictatorship. Many of the democratically-inclined professors and students had been previously purged from the university. The students and professors were technically competent, very pro-U.S. and enthusiastic partisans of the law and order rule of the Pinochet dictatorship. While almost all of the U.S. students considered themselves in favor of democracy, many of them, in part or whole, accepted the view that democracy had led to chaos,

and a Russian takeover and/or the destruction of Chile necessitated a military takeover. Most of these students were wined and dined in the affluent households of their Chilean counterparts. Some were invited to the beachfront second homes and country clubs as guests of the family. There were few or no field trips to the massive shanty-towns, only photos in the controlled press of smiling slum-dwellers receiving housing titles from the benign, grandfatherly dictator Augusto Pinochet. The repeated theme of visible and experiential middle-class prosperity against the previous chaotic democratic nightmare, as transmitted by the student partisans of the dictatorship, had the effect of relativizing the idea of democracy. Many students developed the idea that democracy is good for advanced countries like us, and not appropriate for countries not ready for it. The micro-experience in this case, extrapolated from any historical data, led U.S. students to a distorted perspective on the past: they accepted the class bias of their affluent middle-class hosts, which may have also resonated with the suburban fears of their own affluent family backgrounds.

In this case, overseas education failed to open students to diverse social situations. Intellectually speaking, it might have given a well-informed and historically-minded researcher an insight into how class privilege shapes social perceptions.

Two important points arise from these experiences: the importance of the broadest possible exposure to different social classes, ethnic and gender groups as well as political debates; and a critical rereading of previous historical interpretations, avoiding exclusively "kings and queens" views of history, and incorporating history from below—the voices and testimonials of groups who are not normally discussed by orthodox economists and conventional historians who focus on great men and political scientists, and who view politics from a Washington perspective.

Conclusion

Study abroad programs and other genuine cultural exchange programs have in many instances played an important role in the education of U.S. students and their academic mentors. Notwithstanding the occasional use of these cultural exchanges by U.S. intelligence agencies for information-gathering purposes, the programs have provided an opportunity for many students to develop a more nuanced and critical under-

standing of our relations with other societies and possible alternative ways of living and producing.

On the basis of the "case studies" cited above there are several pedagogical approaches which could enhance the overseas experience:

- A more nuanced approach to conceptual analysis. The simple dichotomy of military dictatorships versus civilian democracies overlooks the degree to which latent and overt authoritarian institutions and behaviors exist within electoral systems. It is important to point out the distinction between formal democracies and substantive democracies to aid students in understanding the co-habitation of electoral regimes with abysmal class inequalities.

- With regard to the economy, the use of the term "market economies" or "free market economies" obscures the vast differences in commodity exchanges in local markets between petty producers and the operation of multi-national corporations operating in the international market. Along similar lines, the free market usually refers to the easy access of local markets by large scale foreign owned enterprises at the expense of small scale local producers, who not infrequently are unable to compete and are bankrupt.

Apart from conceptual refinements, overseas students would benefit from a more nuanced understanding of the plurality of views and interests and perspectives both in the U.S. and Latin America (or other overseas host regions). The pedagogical technique of describing the U.S. versus Latin American (or Arab) perspectives is deeply flawed. It overlooks the profound internal differences in class, race, and gender within each country, particularly the elite versus non-elite views. This is particularly a problem when teachers refer to "our" interests, when in fact they refer to the interests of specific policy elites and their business partners. There are within the U.S. a variety of groups with divergent conceptions of "our" interests, particularly once one departs form the Washington Beltway. More important, there are people-to-people programs, diplomatic and cultural exchanges that cut across state policies, and interests that enhance international understanding and cooperation.

Overseas studies programs have succeeded in furthering cultural understanding and diminished ethnocentrism. The best programs have

also enabled students and faculty, through their direct experiences, to cut through the propaganda fog that emanates from a mass media and government which paints overly rosy pictures of allies and blackens the image of real or imagined adversaries.