

## Editorial Essay

# Introducing Global Perspectives: An Editorial Essay

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## Global Perspectives

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### AIMS AND SCOPE

*Global Perspectives* is a new journal for the social sciences: online only, peer reviewed, inter- and transdisciplinary, and taking advantage of the multimedia publishing opportunities presented for academic journals today. *Global Perspectives* seeks to advance contemporary social science research and debates, specifically in terms of concepts, theories, methodologies, and evidence bases. *Global Perspectives* is devoted to the study of patterns and developments in fields such as trade and markets; security and conflicts; communication and media; justice systems and the law; governance and regulation; cultural spheres, values, and identities; environmental issues and sustainability; technology-society interfaces; and societal changes and social structures, among others.

More generally, *Global Perspectives* is open to the whole thematic range of the social sciences, and in particular those phenomena that are no longer located neatly within established geographical or national boundaries, if they ever were. After several decades of globalization, many facts, trends, or relations that were seemingly more or less contained within nation-states, societies, or regions now increasingly cross borders and show significant degrees of "in-betweenness." Units of analysis are both overlapping and embedded in each other. The concepts and empirical bases needed for a profound understanding of financial flows, climate change, intellectual property rights, technological advances, or migration flows are just some examples that illustrate the complexity of the research task ahead.

*Global Perspectives* is also interested in conceptual

and empirical approaches that go beyond established disciplinary boundaries. From their common origins in the moral political economies of the eighteenth century, the modern social sciences are now in their second century. They have become a global enterprise with millions of researchers and many more students. As a product of the Enlightenment and modernity, they have been significantly shaped by national interests, changing higher education policies, and numerous attempts at professional and political control. When the various disciplines emerged in earnest from the late nineteenth century onward, they were closer to each other than they are now, and the borderlines between what is today regarded as science, social science, and the humanities were more fluid. The often unsettled positions of psychology, history, anthropology, geography, and legal studies are cases in point.

Arguably, economics, political science, and sociology have become the three "pillar" disciplines, with others straddling the science-social science (anthropology, geography, psychology) or the social science-humanities border (history). The rather fluid division of labor proved highly beneficial, especially during their founding periods, and ushered in what could broadly be called the age of the classics. Towering figures—from Karl Marx and Émile Durkheim to Vilfredo Pareto, and from Max and Alfred Weber, John Maynard Keynes, W. E. B. Du Bois, Theodor Adorno, and Hannah Arendt to Karl Popper—combined and indeed represented multiple disciplines. Others, such as Rabindranath Tagore, Frantz Fanon, Paulo Freire, and Ali Mazrui, added valuable and challenging perspectives, even though they were not social scientists as such.

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In essence, the age of the classics, ranging from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, was a highly productive period that laid the foundation of contemporary social science. Even today, with the various disciplines having grown rapidly—as well as further apart—some of the most innovative works come from scholars that cross or combine disciplinary perspectives: Elinor Ostrom (political science), Harrison White (sociology), Michael Spence (economics), Mary Douglas (anthropology), Allen Scott (geography), and Edward Said (cultural studies) are cases in point.

We do not argue that the disciplinary setup of the social sciences needs some fundamental rethinking or revision. Nor do we seek to take away from disciplinary discourses. Rather, we wish to provide spaces for works that do not fit easily into established disciplinary frameworks and that, precisely because of this, may harbor important new insights and innovative potential. Opening up and nurturing such opportunities is a core concern of *Global Perspectives*. It will be no easy task, as it runs up against the deeply entrenched, historically contingent constructs that are increasingly recognized limitations of the social sciences, among them the emergence of strong disciplinary boundaries, methodological nationalism, and unsolved normative issues.

Disciplinary silos have been extensively criticized—for example, by Wallerstein (2003) when he puts forth the forceful argument that the social construction of the disciplines as intellectual arenas has outlived its usefulness. Yet calls for more interdisciplinarity, transdisciplinarity, and multidisciplinarity probably date back to the very time when the intellectual arenas were carved up, signaling persistent tensions that were mostly in favor of the disciplines as they assumed professional control.

Nonetheless, we suggest that more and more of what Stirling (2015) identifies as "nexus-related" challenges are emerging. By these he means compounded issues such as climate change, inequality, resource scarcity, digital transformations, or migration, which demand scholarly analysis of an interdisciplinary and even transdisciplinary nature. Inattention to these nexus-related issues can lead to failures, especially when singular disciplines fail to see the more multifaceted nature of the issues at hand. The global financial crisis is a case in point. Following the crisis, many observers demanded to know why few had predicted it. In 2009 Queen Elizabeth II asked an audience of economists at the London School of Economics and Political Science, if the crisis was so large and obvious in retrospect, "why did nobody notice it?" In the wake of the crisis, dozens of articles were published, mostly by economists to attempt to excuse themselves for their predictive errors (Rivas and Perez-Quiros 2015, 534–36).

Nonetheless, the meaning and extent of how the various social science disciplines are to cooperate remains unclear, even contested. Despite his critique above, Wallerstein (2008) later discouraged multidisciplinary approaches and spoke in favor of boundaries of the traditional disciplinary boundaries as they make distinct contribution to an overall social science enterprise. Wallerstein seems to miss that this pattern is well established already, and specialties like gender, ethnicity, developmental, peace, and, indeed, global studies have contributed significantly to our understanding of society. What is missing, though, is a strong feedback loop from the specialties to the main social science disciplines. As a result, they remain somewhat isolated from the social science mainstream.

This relative isolation of interdisciplinary specialties also means that the social sciences are surrounded by weakly integrated fields in a hierarchical arrangement. This configuration has to be seen in the context of Burawoy's (2013, 7) point, arguing that interdisciplinarity can be "dangerous to weaker, critical disciplines since it can become the Trojan horse for the dissolution of particular disciplines by bringing them into a hierarchical relation with more powerful disciplines." In other words, the social sciences today are less of an open and level playing field than they were in the past.

In addition to disciplinary divisions, the issue of methodological nationalism remains a key feature of debates around the state of the social sciences. Wimmer and Schiller (2002, 301) describe this as "the assumption that the nation/state/society is the natural social and political form of the modern world." They lay out the fundamental implication of this assumption when they point to the state of the debate: "Where there were fixed boundaries, everything is now equally and immediately interconnected. Structures are replaced with fluidity. Being sedentary is replaced with movement.... The territorial boundedness of analysis has been overcome by a spiralling rhetoric of deterritorialization and delocalization" (326). Clearly, complex dualities are at work, and to Sassen (2010) the global—as institution, process, practice, or imagery—emerges and operates in the framing of national states while at the same time transcending it. Put differently, globalization both defies, and is shaped by, the nation-state.

Reviewing the history of the social sciences, Chernilo (2011, 99) suggests that "methodological nationalism is seen as a result of the historical formation of both modernity and the social sciences that cohered around processes of nation-state formation." This process was fortified by the emerging disciplines and professional-academic control structures that soon developed, but particularly after the 1960s and the expansion of

university systems worldwide. In other words, disciplinary structures and methodological nationalism pose closely related challenges.

Understanding the history of the social sciences is critical, not only in relation to methodological nationalism but also in terms of Eurocentrism and Western biases. One approach to counteract Western dominance comes from postcolonial studies, particularly the notion of the subaltern. It is an approach that draws on Gramsci's work on cultural hegemony, with an emphasis on narratives and sense making. It is also in the tradition of Said's (1978) notion of orientalism; he argues that the West reduces Eastern societies to a static, nonmodern image while portraying itself as dynamic and "rational." This creates a false view of "Oriental culture," which can then be studied and portrayed in a way that serves imperial power.

Postcolonial thinking has gained some influence in recent decades, especially in anthropology and global studies. Can twenty-first-century social science be "de-Westernized," and for what purpose? If it is true that the current social science mainstream reproduces Western hegemony, what follows, and who or what would or should be served under alternative scenarios? And if the "Western" approach to the study of social phenomena no longer can claim some universalist status, and indeed has become "provincialized" (Chakrabarty 2008), what will follow?

These are difficult questions that soon enter normative, even political, terrain. They also point to a different challenge: the still-dominant Popperian and inferential approaches to social science. Critical rationalism as the attempt to conduct research in as normatively neutral a way as possible, and to do so with a systematic engagement of theories, hypotheses, and facts, faces contestation by political-cultural forces growing in strength and acceptance.

To some extent, there have been such challenges before, if we recall the Frankfurt School and Adorno's critique of Popper's critical rationalism. Outside the West, for example, in the Soviet Union, the study of politics was embedded within other disciplines and sought to "critique bourgeois theories." These studies were considered closely linked to the regime, and political science as a discipline was not established until 1989 (Ilyin and Malinova 2008, 4). Sociology in the former German Democratic Republic was highly professionalized as an empirical discipline—at least in terms of observing society. However, it was conceptually barren regarding the interpretation of data, caught in the ideological straitjacket of Marxism-Leninism. Across socialist regimes, economics became subservient to state planning. At the same time, however, we should recall that economists such as Oskar Lange, Wassily Leontief, and

Michal Kalecki had a significant influence on the study of market pricing, production systems, and economic cycles in capitalist contexts.

More fundamentally, we need to revisit the normative nature of the social sciences. Karl Popper himself, conscious of his own ideological roots, was a member of the libertarian Mont Pelerin Society along with Friedrich Hayek, his lifelong friend. Together with other leading thinkers of their generation, they regarded the social sciences as an instrument of constructing a social order on the supposition of common core values. A normative social science can flourish in liberal orders, and can also be challenged, as the Frankfurt School did in the 1960s and postcolonial studies do today.

A core issue is whether the social sciences can flourish in non-democracies or illiberal orders. Here, Gupta (2019) makes a strong argument when suggesting that "before democracy, the context for the pursuit of social sciences did not exist." This statement is historically rather questionable as the classical period of modern social science took place in political systems that would not qualify by today's understanding of what constitutes a democratic order. The flourishing of sociology in early twentieth-century Germany is a clear case in point. Yet in a fundamental sense, the future of the social sciences globally no longer depends on the West alone; it increasingly also depends on the trajectory of the social sciences in China in particular—not only politically but also in terms of its epistemological impact (Reny 2016; Ahram and Goode 2016).

As important as the relation between the social sciences and democracy is the issue of Western and non-Western notions of the "social" and the concept of society, economy, and polity. However, these ultimately Western notions, initially carried by colonialism, and then by academia and the institutions of the Bretton Woods world, did not diffuse globally without variations of semantics and understandings. How were concepts of society and economy shaped in non-Western societies—and, crucially, in their languages? What conceptualizations and epistemologies exist outside the Western canons? The various meanings of *al-ijtima'* (Arabic), *shehui* (Chinese), *samāj* (modern Hindi), *masyarakat* (Malay and Indonesian), and *sangkoms* (Thai)—all terms that equate to the English *society*—surely had an impact on the way social sciences are practiced in these countries and academic systems. These terms did not always carry the same meaning as their Western counterparts. In some cases, existing words were chosen to translate "society" (e.g., the Hindi *samāj* existed for centuries before the connotation "society" was introduced). In others, the decisive tensions between citizen and state disappeared in translation (as in the Korean *sahoe* or in Thai).

There are other issues we could raise: the rise of the cyber world, artificial intelligence, robotics, and the future of "analog" society; the big-data phenomenon, with massive amounts of information becoming available for analysis, and the issue of data protection; or the interface between the natural sciences, on the one hand, and the humanities, on the other. For these and the issues raised above, the social sciences seem ill-equipped. They appear caught somehow between the national, international, and transnational, and the disciplinary, interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and transdisciplinary. The combination of disciplinary work in a national context still dominates and receives more academic recognition. What is more, the social sciences have collectively failed to put themselves under critical review to become fitter to face the forceful cultural and political currents that are increasingly questioning their legitimacy and impact.

*Global Perspectives* sets out to help overcome such national-disciplinary fragmentation and isolation and wants to be a platform for uncomfortable debates where nagging questions can be addressed. *Global Perspectives* starts from the premise that the world that gave rise to the modern social sciences in their present form is no more. The national and disciplinary approaches that developed in the last century are increasingly insufficient to capture the complexities of the global realities of a world that has changed significantly. New concepts, approaches, and forms of academic discourse are called for.

## CONTENT STRUCTURE

*Global Perspectives* will be organized in subject sections informed by major conceptual or empirical issues, sometimes grounded in traditional disciplines, while inviting significant interdisciplinary crossovers and transdisciplinary approaches. All of the sections imply the respective adjectives ranging from the global, transnational, and international to the national, regional, and local, and they include the relevant institutions and organizations.

Initially, *Global Perspectives* has eight subject sections (listed below in alphabetical order), which carry equal weight:

1. Communication, media, and networks
2. Cultures, values, and identities
3. Epistemologies, concepts, methodologies, and data systems
4. Political economy, markets, and institutions
5. Politics, governance, and the law
6. Security and cooperation, international institutions and relations
7. Social institutions, organizations, and relations

## 8. Sustainability transformations and technology-society interfaces

The subject sections include disciplines like economics, sociology, political science, geography, psychology, and anthropology, and they encompass fields or specializations like global history, gender studies, developmental studies, policy studies, education, cultural studies, health studies, and data analytics, among others. What unites them is a push to reach across established boundaries to enhance the capacity of the social sciences to improve our understanding of a complex, globalizing world. This also implies reaching out to the natural sciences and the humanities.

*Section on Communication, Media, and Networks*

*Editor: Payal Arora, Erasmus University, Rotterdam*

The "global turn" in media and communication demands new ways of conceptualizing relations and boundaries between the local, the national, and the transnational. In recent years, ubiquitous computing, mobile technologies, and social media have amplified the urgency to unpack the globalizing of media platforms and communication patterns and processes as well as their underlying politics and policies.

While the media continues to be implicated in the disjunctions between economy, culture, and politics, as Appadurai (1990) astutely observed a quarter century ago, their digital cultures have created new opportunities and discontinuities at a global scale that require a prolonged and thoughtful investigation.

Speculations about the fate of traditional mass media like print, radio, and television continue to be of rising concern in academic and industrial research. The rise of user-generated content has challenged conventional framings of media producers and audiences bound by the nation-state. For example, bloggers, podcasters, online celebrities, digital activists, and citizen-journalists can shape global public opinion and the media landscape at large.

As a few digital platforms control the vast amount of data generated through everyday communicative practices worldwide, scholars across disciplines are rightfully concerned about who gets to collect, curate, store, and moderate such media content. What is driving the expansions in media infrastructures and policies, and is there a unified and shared logic to their organization? What are the implications of new media technologies for politics and governance at national and international levels?

We have witnessed a significant shift in discourses surrounding globalization and media, from a celebratory to a more critical stance. Only a decade

ago, studies were tethered to the notion of the "networked society" of collective intelligence, participatory knowledge making, community building, and activism. Today, we appear less optimistic, as scholars sound the alarm on new forms of discrimination, alienation, and victimization through the uninterrupted datafication, predictive analytics, and automation of the "surveillance society."

While big data did not reify into an "end of theory" as prematurely envisioned, we hesitate to ask the big questions that can best encapsulate the interconnectedness of information flows and the intersectionality of their data sets. It remains a challenge to "decenter" and "decolonize" the global to stay clear of a singular and universal logic to explain the social order of global media. This endeavor requires a reexamination of past formulations of information/media systems, as well as a critical assessment of the velocity, variety, volume, and other such rubrics posited to define new media architectures and practices.

How do we transcend the binaries of the online and the offline, the public and private media spheres, "data rich" and "data poor," producer and consumer, homogenization and heterogenization, media convergence and divergence, and disembodiments and the situated materiality of media imaginaries to the contextual integrity of the media event? What alternative frameworks, systems, etymologies, and ontologies are on offer to reconfigure our understandings of how global media are organizing the power relations in society?

In this context, we invite papers that propose methodological innovations and conceptual alternatives to how we approach the dialogue between media and the global. Should we continue to use the nation-state as a central unit of analysis or push for a provincializing or translocating of the global in media studies? Are we giving too much primacy to data in untangling global digital cultures and overestimating their influence? How do we conceptualize the global transformations of the traditional media without being too medium- or usercentric? These are some of the many issues contributors to *Global Perspectives* are welcome to address.

#### *Section on Cultures, Values, and Identities*

*Editor: Helmut K. Anheier, Hertie School and Luskin School of Public Affairs, University of California, Los Angeles*

Culture is one of the most complex terms in the social sciences today, being deeply implicated in diverse and contested disciplinary discourses. Culture, in a broad sense, is a system of meaning, its social construction, articulation, and reception, including religion, ideologies, value systems, and collective identity. In a

narrow sense, it refers to the arts—that is, what artists create and what is regarded, preserved, exchanged, and consumed as cultural artifacts.

Various disciplines regard culture as their terrain: anthropology, economics, political science, sociology, and, of course, history and the humanities, including cultural studies and the arts themselves. Frequently divided by methodology and a split between quantitative and qualitative approaches, they function too much as closely guarded silos, discouraging the inter- and transdisciplinary dialogue *Global Perspectives* advocates.

*Global Perspectives* will challenge and contrast the presuppositions within the social sciences toward culture: too often, culture is either a residual once the "hard" economic and political factors are considered, or it becomes the all-encompassing construction supposedly explaining everything. Similarly, culture is seen as something that either prohibits or accelerates progress, or it becomes a politically innocent reference category to paint over increasingly absent shared values and common narratives.

That globalization affects culture and vice versa may seem a truism. Yet the interaction involves some of the most vexing questions of our times, and it remains inadequately documented, analyzed, and understood. It challenges previously more stable cultural systems, forms of everyday life, and identities, and it does so in very uneven and diverse ways. The triangle of collective heritage, identity, and memory, long assumed a foundation of societies, has become uncertain and is being transformed.

There are deeply rooted clashes of national cultural interest that have been set in motion as globalization has advanced. Is the world moving, as some would claim, toward cultural uniformity or toward tensions and conflicts? Or are there signs of an alternative set of outcomes rooted in a more polycentric system of cultures in terms of meaning and identity, production or consumption? What is the meaning and validity of a Western or Asian "cultural imperialism" thesis or a "clash of civilizations" between East and West?

In contemporary society, there is a deepening intersection between the economic and the cultural. The media presents one dramatic illustration of this intersection—that is, commercially produced cultural artifacts. At the same time, culture has come to be seen as an instrument of economic development and urban revitalization—a view that is encapsulated in terms like *creative class*, *creative cities*, and the *creative economy*.

Yet culture is also about the arts. Notions of *l'art pour l'art* (art for art's sake) in the sense that culture is about the arts and creative expression first and foremost are challenged by the deepening intersection with the economy and politics. Interpretative frames

for what counts as art, what can be regarded as cultural innovations, and who "owns" or represents them imply many changes for how works of art, for example, are appreciated, collected, presented, bought and sold, and preserved.

*Section on Epistemologies, Concepts, Methodologies, and Data Systems*

*Editor: Miguel A. Centeno, Princeton University*

Social science has not kept up with globalization. While the scale and the scope of global interactions has increased exponentially, the unit of analysis for much of social science remains at the national level at the highest. That is, with the world assuming a different shape, social scientists continue to study it using arguably outdated scholarly foci. To develop a global perspective, we have to reorient ourselves to a new level of aggregation.

Essentially all social science is interested in the process through which individuals combine to form more complex, organized wholes. Today, we have created an unprecedented level of organized, complex aggregation. The number and types of nodes and the different links between them now form what could be envisioned as a three-dimensional spiderweb across the globe. How to study it?

We propose that a basic epistemology might be the analysis of the complex systems that form the backbone of increasingly interconnected and interdependent societies. What were once local and regional economies and socio-ecological systems with somewhat bounded cultures are now becoming rapidly globalized, depending ever more on coordination across spatial and temporal scales. Each component in such systems connects with countless other components, creating a web of interactions that is to some degree self-organizing, not centrally controlled, and susceptible to nonlinear responses to change.

To unify the study of systems across academic disciplines and operational domains, we might use and develop concepts such as those offered by network analysis as both tool and metaphor, and also invite the introduction of new concepts that help the social sciences solve the conundrum of methodological nationalism. Such concepts could have more universal currency across disciplines and provide an insightful level of abstraction for understanding the underlying mechanisms of systems without losing the important characteristics of the whole system.

We are open to all forms of methodology, qualitative and quantitative. For the former, we would welcome historical analysis of the development of global links, institutional analyses of relevant organizations, and ethnographies of (and tracing approaches to) the process and consequences of globalization. Quantitative approaches would include networks

analyses, multilevel analysis, event history, flow and diffusion models, and, thematically, studies of possible stress and tipping points in complex systems (e.g., global finance, communication, logistics, environment, etc.).

We would also welcome studies of existing data sources on complex global systems. We are particularly interested in strategies for data collection, visualization, and dissemination of data reporting on units of analysis other than the nation-state. These include global or transnational flows and transactions in real as well as cyberspace among organizational and institutional complexes as well as noncontiguous geographical units such as cities, regions, or geopolitical alliances.

*Section on Political Economy, Markets, and Institutions*

*Editor: J. P. Singh, George Mason University*

Scholars continue to grapple with how markets work in tandem with—or in divergence from—political economy institutions from local to global levels. Markets include formal and informal forms of exchange including barter systems and new forms of cryptocurrencies. These exchanges—facilitating resource allocation and adaptations—are constrained by (and also shape) formal and informal institutions such as regulatory rules, governance systems, forms of collective action and societal organization, cultural and national boundaries, and ideological possibilities. The political economy of markets and institutions is also continually transformed with transverse factors such as fast-changing technologies, flows of ideas and peoples, and changes in the environment.

The political economy of markets and institutions requires multiple perspectives and methods to address a growing list of issues that confront humanity. These include concerns about global and societal inequalities, incompatibilities among regulatory and governance systems, effects of climate change, breakdown in global governance including international trade, transformations in global value chains, new forms of labor and work, and issues of artificial intelligence ranging from new forms of work and computation to financial sociometrics. Underlying notions from reciprocity and trust to coercion and discipline must be revisited to understand markets and institutions. The methods needed to address these issues include detailed ethnographies, comparative and historical cases, and quantitative models encompassing traditional data sets and new forms of big data.

From a common origin in questions of moral political economy in the eighteenth century, the social sciences diverged in disciplinary direction during the last two centuries. Current problems and anomalies are increasingly bringing the social sciences into

meaningful conversations about common problems and issues. These have included interdisciplinary insights on preference formation at a micro level and addressing issues of collective action at the macro or global levels for issues such migration, climate change, and intellectual property. Silos are breaking down: issues of cultural identity and anxiety are discussed simultaneously with international trade and employment in understanding preferences and collective action; climate change severely impacts health, migration, and resources.

*Global Perspectives* is an important intervention toward fostering interdisciplinary and mixed-methods conversations on current theoretical, ethical, empirical, and policy questions surrounding the political economy of markets and institutions. Such scholarly work is often difficult to publish in journals that are monodisciplinary, privilege an empirical method, or are bound to one worldview. We welcome articles that analyze the political economy of markets and institutions from multiple perspectives and that utilize individual or mixed methods. The disciplinary domains include anthropology, cultural studies, demography, economics, geography, international relations, political science, psychology, and sociology. These and related disciplines are relevant to analyzing the political economy of human endeavor in the creation, sustenance, and regulation of markets and institutions.

#### *Section on Politics, Governance, and Law*

*Editor:* Hagen Schulz-Forberg, Aarhus University

At first sight, politics, governance, and law—both as concepts and as empirical realities—seem distinct and easily allocated to separate disciplines. Yet when considering them from global perspectives, they are ultimately contested, as are the relations among them. Generically, *politics* might be seen as the continuous self-design of a polity through ways of gaining and arranging power; *governance* as the way in which government might function effectively and simultaneously, when conceived of globally, as transnational and global regimes beyond national realms of sovereignty; and *law* can be grasped as a social technique by which societies and the international community choose and live by the norms they have reason to value.

The trinity of politics, governance, and law has shaped the "long twentieth century." From the unraveling of European empires to the emergence of international law based on a liberal teleology in the interwar period, the interplay of the three concepts was crucial for shaping the global order. With the establishment of international organizations and institutions as the trinity's resting place and the affirmation of the nation-state as the main locus of the social, seemingly inextricable tensions emerged between the local social

organization and the larger transnational settings, regimes, and trade flows. When zooming in on concrete political practice in different parts of the world, what exactly politics is, beyond the general description, varies significantly. The same is true for governance and law. Clearly, different conceptualizations and traditions of law exist when taking a global perspective rather than a localized or a transcendental one.

What is at stake increasingly in the twenty-first century is an amplification of twentieth-century struggles over legitimate national and global order—and over how to make sure their relations remain supportive of peaceful coexistence. What was framed as tensions between "the political" as the ultimate source of normative power and "the law" as a value-based construction on which normative power is built and toward which all politics need to refer had reached a compromise formula in the postwar decades. Yet this was mostly about the West. The construction of international law and national constitutionalism presupposed basic norms, such as the "human person," "human inviolability," and "human rights." When former colonies moved toward their own normative orders, and when non-Western religious influences refrained from copying the liberal script into their nations' constitutions, their constructions of legitimacy became in tension with Western notions and practices.

Against the backdrop of the inescapable tensions between transnational economic and legal spheres and national political and social spheres, the old twentieth-century tension between legality and legitimacy is back on the agenda with full force. Alas, this tension arises in a much more complex global setting than seventy or fifty or even twenty-five years ago. The relations between politics, governance, and the law will play a decisive role in shaping a peaceful unfolding of the twenty-first century as the need for a new global sustainability becomes increasingly urgent, particularly in the face of increasing tendencies to autocratic rule and lasting "states of emergency." When are nation-states shaped in a way conducive to global peace? And when are global relations shaped in a way conducive to national peace? What is the future of democracy in the twenty-first century? Will regional federations finally democratize, or will democracy continue to reside in nation-states? How resilient are national democracies in the face of authoritarian challenges, and how shall national, regional, and global politics, governance, and law interact to work together peacefully?

#### *Section on Security and Cooperation, International Institutions and Relations*

*Editor:* Thomas J. Biersteker, Graduate Institute, Geneva

Global security and cooperation take many forms and appear differently from different vantage points on the globe. This is why global perspectives on security, cooperation, and institutions are needed. Both what needs to be secured and the threats from which it must be secured vary across time and place. Security includes classic issues associated with the security of states, derived from Weberian justifications for state formation (to provide security within and protection from without). At the same time, security also extends to the domains of human security, system or network security, and the security/survival of the planet itself. The state can be the provider of security and/or the source of insecurity for different populations. Sources of insecurity for different populations can come from inter-state conflict (nuclear conflict), from the collapse of functioning state institutions (anarchy at the local level), from the commitment of acts of terrorism, from lack of access to basic resources (like water), from cyberthreats to existing global networks, from debris from outer space, or from neglect of the ecological health of the planet.

International cooperation is also multidimensional and increasingly emerges at multiple levels. International institutions extend far beyond the realm of formal intergovernmental organizations and increasingly include informal arrangements that engage state actors along with actors from business and civil society. These informal arrangements can take many institutional forms, ranging from public-private partnerships to multistakeholder initiatives, transgovernmental initiatives, and transnational policy networks or communities. Governance deficits at the intergovernmental or inter-state level can be overcome or addressed at the regional or the local (and increasingly the urban) levels.

International relations as a subject remains a contested domain, with successive generations of scholars pushing the boundaries of the subject with conceptual, normative, and methodological innovations. *Global Perspectives* is open to those challenging the limits and contesting the variety of different parochialisms that emerge in various national, disciplinary, and institutional settings, as well as challenging those who engage in efforts to "discipline" the field. While it is essential to remain empathetically open to the existence of multiple vantage points and sensitive to the possibility of the coexistence of multiple truths to describe international relations, it is imperative to maintain a commitment to science, in the broadest sense of the term, with attention to value-informed and systematic analysis.

*Global Perspectives* encourages submissions that take a global view of security, cooperation, international institutions, and international relations. That is, deliberate attempts to look at a common problem from multiple vantage points or from

underrepresented vantage points are particularly encouraged. Multidisciplinary approaches are encouraged but not required, as are contributions that go beyond addressing debates in social science alone to thinking through and spelling out some of the policy and practical implications of their analysis.

### *Section on Social Institutions, Organizations, and Relations*

*Editor: Sara R. Curran, University of Washington*

If one consequence of globalization is that national sovereignty and international order are unraveling or, at least, deeply challenged and reconfiguring, then it becomes necessary to ask fundamental, even nagging, questions such as the following: What knits people together? What ensures the continuity and sustenance of communities? And what are the deeper social forces that either accelerate or slow the forces of global change and shape cascading effects within localities (and vice versa)?

Social scientists seeking to better understand global complexity suggest looking for basic elements that bring some people together, exclude others, disrupt social orders, and invent new social relations. This means turning back to fundamental concepts such as social institutions, organizations, and relations in order to move knowledge forward and better understand meaningful social changes, compositions, and mechanisms, both conceptually and empirically. The global challenges of today hark back to other moments in social history when intellectual figures emerged to offer compelling interpretations and explanations for the nature of the human condition, the character of social change, and the emergence of social institutions, organizations, and relations.

*Global Perspectives* invites "big ideas" essays that take up the deeply humane inquiries that characterize our shared social scientific, intellectual antecedents and those who shifted our paradigmatic views of the meaningfulness of social institutions, organizations, and relations. These essays might ask questions formulated in earlier historic moments, such as the following: How do we explain social change? How is society possible? What is society in these times, and what are social organizations?

Why is it so important to ask these questions at this time? The paradoxes of today cry out for better explanations and plausible answers. Qualitative shifts in social relations are frequently invoked as explanation and outcome in these times of both extreme connectivity and insularity resulting from our global technosocial landscapes. For example, technology has spread access to the means that might connect us all, while at the same time concentrating powerfully destructive tools in the hands of just a few. With globalizing technologies, other paradoxes emerge. How do we make sense of the real possibilities

for human-to-human compassionate contact across the globe with the proliferation of expressions of profound fears of the "other" and the concomitant insecurities and violent acts against the "other" from almost every corner of the globe?

We welcome contributions that help us see the taken-for-granted and reinvigorate the social science imagination to reveal the rules, norms, and strategies that structure the multiplicity of everyday interactions globally *and* locally. Because temporal and spatial distances governing transactions have, throughout much of history, created uncertainties around the future of social life, social institutional analyses offer ways, for example, to understand how uncertainties are framed, managed, and possibly limited through the infusion and reification of values and feelings into specific guidelines for expected actions and outcomes (Williamson 1998). A global perspective on institutions might reexamine how the results of globalization's temporal intensification and spatial shrinkage create new or more uncertainties and can disrupt or strengthen institutions, creating room for entirely new and coincident or competing institutional forms through new ideologies, imaginaries, and ontologies (Steger and James 2019).

While social institutions are the norms, rules, and shared strategies constraining human life, social organizations are the formal and informal social spaces for controlled human interaction and provide indications of social cohesion (Moody and White 2003). Social organizations enable social connections, accumulate and distribute, discipline and order, create and produce, and disrupt and repair, to name but a few of the meaningful actions that have been theorized and observed. As such, social organizations interact, shape, and react with both social institutions and social relations in an interdependent and dynamic way. A global perspective on social organizations attends to these fundamental actions, structurations, and cohesions (Foucault 2012; Giddens 2003). Global social organizations research might "follow the money" through iconic studies of the flows and landing points around the world of any object or thing—for example, T-shirts or flip-flops (Knowles 2015; Rivoli 2014). Such studies have the epistemic power to reveal previously hidden interlocutors of globalization at both the core and the periphery, possibly unveiling the fundamental mechanisms animating global assemblages (Sassen 2007). There is much work to be done in this area to help explain crucial and immediate socio-ecological global problematics and dilemmas.

Social relations are fundamental foci of social analyses, defining interactions and statuses between two or more individuals or between an individual and any other higher order social collectivities. Crucial social theorists for understanding the agentic nature of social relations point to affinities, identities, and

imaginaries as the cognitive mechanisms that are embodied and enacted in the everyday interactions of social life and that reveal the power, positionality, and intersectionality instantiated in social relations. And, as Hirschman's (1970) work reminds us, it is not just the instantiation but the ruptures or dissolutions that must also be observed to fully understand social organizations and institutions. Global social relations research in this realm can be particularly productive via ethnographic studies of breaching and disruption with an ethnomethodological sensibility of the deeply embodied nature of social relations. A fascinating example of that kind of approach might be the studies found in a recent collection edited by Alexander, Stack, and Khosrokhavar (2019).

The essays in this section would contribute toward these new insights by centrally attending to the dynamic, interdependent, and mutable nature of societies and global forces. These essays should reinvigorate investigations of social institutions, organizations, and relations as they inform global complexities and should contribute toward generating new conceptual domains and new knowledge through multiperspectival lenses of space and time; analyses of processes, disruptions, and disruptors; recursive reflection; mutability; and dialectics.

#### *Section on Sustainability Transformations and Technology-Society Interfaces*

*Editor: Dirk Messner, Federal Environment Agency, Berlin*

This section addresses a triangle of three closely related themes: global change, sustainability, and technology. Understanding the dynamics of each as well as their interrelationships requires perspectives from across the social sciences but also from the natural and life sciences, including fields such as computer science, robotics, and environmental studies.

The UN 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement on climate change, among others, offer a plan for accommodating a global population of ten billion people by 2050. They acknowledge and accept planetary limitations, seeking to avoid tipping points in the earth's carrying capacity. Understanding the implications of the many transformations toward sustainability requires profound inter- and transdisciplinary approaches: robust knowledge of interactions and feedback loops between globally interconnected social systems (societies, economies, polities, cultures), technical infrastructures, the environment, and cyberspace. *Global Perspectives* provides space for the social sciences and the humanities as well as the natural and life sciences, engineering, and informatics to contribute to the analysis of global sustainability transformations.

Digitization, big data, artificial intelligence,

autonomous technical systems, biotechnologies, and nanotechnology will transform societies and economies profoundly. There is a need to understand the various and varied impacts these technological drivers of change are likely to have on fundamental aspects of society: new power patterns and different inequality mechanisms can emerge, and democracy and privacy might be challenged. Transferring the authority to make decisions to technical systems (e.g., in stock markets, the administration of justice, autonomous mobility, health diagnostics, or power grids) offers opportunities for problem-solving based on machine learning but also involves the risk of losing control over societal processes. How will sustainability transformations and these technological revolutions interact? Shaping these socio-technological dynamics requires new research alliances of sustainability sciences, social sciences, humanities, and digital and other engineering sciences.

A cornerstone of global sustainability transformations is the reconfiguration of the global order: the world is economically, technologically, and ecologically highly integrated and interconnected but socially, culturally, and politically fragmented. How does global governance, aiming at supporting sustainability transformations, work or erode under these conditions? Global governance is not only about power, institutions, standards, and enforcement mechanisms but also about building blocks of a global cooperation that can be emerging and changing as well as weakening and strengthening. What do we know about cooperation of humans in very complex systems that transcend established physical, political, and cultural borders and in which people interact with each other in noncontiguous space and across time zones?

## THE WAY FORWARD

*Global Perspectives* aims at publishing original contributions of the highest academic standard. *Global Perspectives* sees itself as the intellectual home of academic work that, taken together, can help advance a twenty-first century social science agenda. Such work will reveal characteristic tensions: global in focus and regionally bounded; cross- and even transdisciplinary while remaining relevant to major social science disciplines; normatively neutral yet aware of politics; conceptually ambitious yet engaging the growing complexity of facts; evidence-based while also questioning underlying methodological assumptions; and intensely scholarly and open to the multimedia options of journal publishing. In these respects, *Global Perspectives* invites and encourages diverse voices from academic communities across countries, disciplines, fields, and cultures to create a forum that advances the global literacy of the social sciences.

*Global Perspectives* will be an evolving journal, both thematically and technically. Organized by subject sections, it is enriched by invited perspectives through annotations that debate and enhance the global as well as the interdisciplinary implications of articles. Over time, the various contributions of *Global Perspectives* can be organized as themed tracks. To make such a thematic evolution technically possible, *Global Perspectives* uses current publishing technology and software to allow for swift publication and annotation of accepted contributions to broaden and enhance their impact.

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Visit: [https://pure.au.dk/portal/en/persons/hagen-schulzforberg\(150b1f5b-9570-4dcd-8030-111f86fd1ad7\).html](https://pure.au.dk/portal/en/persons/hagen-schulzforberg(150b1f5b-9570-4dcd-8030-111f86fd1ad7).html) to see additional information.

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