

11 Indigenization

Features and problems

Syed Farid Alatas

Introduction

The discourse on the indigenization of the social sciences, particularly where anthropology, psychology and sociology are concerned, has been in existence for a little over twenty years. Indigenization was and continues to be a response to what many non-Western social scientists perceive as the inability of Euro-American social science to constitute a relevant and liberating discourse in the context of Asian, African and Latin American societies. This problem was exacerbated by the fact that much of such social science was assimilated uncritically outside of their countries of origin among students, lecturers, researchers and planners. While the problem of irrelevance and its concomitants raised in the discourse on indigenization had been recognized by non-Western scholars as early as the beginning of this century, the term 'indigenization' has only gained currency since the 1970s. It could be said that indigenization is a relatively new term that addresses a problem recognized quite some time ago.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the main features of indigenization, the context of its discourse, the criteria of indigenization as understood by its proponents, and the pitfalls of the indigenization project, in the course of reflecting on the chapters of this volume as well as a number of other works. The following section provides a brief sketch of the implantation of the social sciences during the colonial period and stresses that it was in this period that the same issues addressed in the discourse on indigenization since the 1970s had already been raised. This is followed by an account of various reactions seeking to create more relevant, autonomous and progressive social sciences, including the move to indigenize the social sciences. I then move on to a consideration of the variety of definitions of indigenization and identify a common theme. After this, I turn to an enumeration of some problems and obstacles facing the call to indigenization. The final section discusses, by way of conclusion, the prospects for the successful indigenization of anthropology and other social sciences.

The implantation of the social sciences

The formative period of the various disciplines of the social sciences and the institutions in which they were taught, in much of Asia and Africa, was initiated

and sustained by colonial scholars and administrators since the eighteenth century, as well as by other Europeans directly and indirectly in vicariously colonized areas.

In Afghanistan, political economy, sociology, economic geography and political history have been taught since 1939 at Kabul University. While the foreign teaching staff were mainly Turkish (Rahimi 1984: 28), Turkish social science itself was very much influenced by the French and German traditions. In the Indian sub-continent the three presidency capitals of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras acquired universities in 1856 and were modelled after British centres of higher education (Dube 1984: 233). Dhaka University in Bangladesh was set up in 1921 based on the model of Calcutta University, and offered courses in economics, political science, sociology, anthropology and geography (Karim 1984: 84–7).

In Burma, the University of Rangoon was established in 1920 in the images of Oxford and Cambridge Universities, the first social sciences taught there being economics, history, political science, psychology, anthropology and sociology (Kyi 1984: 100–1). In Nepal, the first social science, economics, was introduced in 1943 at Tri Chandra College which was itself established by the British in 1918 (Rana 1984: 354–5).

In the Netherlands Indies, Dutch and Dutch-trained Indonesians have been teaching the social sciences since the 1920s (Bachtiar 1984: 253). In Malaysia and Singapore, social science disciplines were formally introduced with the formation of Raffles College in 1929, with the primary function being to produce second-level manpower for the colonial administration while serious research, especially in anthropology, history, law and linguistics, was conducted by colonial scholars and administrators (Chee 1984: 297). In 1949, Raffles College and King Edward VII College of Medicine, both in Singapore, were amalgamated to become the University of Malaya. In 1958, two autonomous divisions of the University of Malaya were established in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore. These eventually became two separate national universities, the University of Malaya and the National University of Singapore.

In the Philippines, the first social science to be taught, history, was introduced as early as the seventeenth century, with anthropology, economics, political science, psychology and sociology emerging during the American colonial period (Feliciano 1984: 469). The Philippine system was patterned after the American educational system. In the early part of this century, many Filipinos were sent to the United States for graduate studies, further strengthening the American influence in social science education (*ibid.*: 470).

In China and Japan, the social sciences were introduced from the West in the last century. Although not formally colonized, the mode of implantation of the social sciences in these societies was not very different from the colonies. The social sciences were introduced into Japan during the Meiji period (1868–1912) (Watanuki 1984: 283) and were influenced above all by the Germans and Americans. The social sciences began their career in China with a partial translation of Herbert Spencer's *Principles of Sociology* by Yen Fu, with a complete translation appearing in 1902 (Hsu 1931: 284; Huang 1987: 111–12).

The chronic lack of creativity and originality in the social sciences has no less been felt to be a general problem of knowledge in China and Japan than in many other non-Western academic communities that came under the colonial rule. This problem of originality is partly due to the fact that the social sciences were introduced from without. As a result, there was no continuity between the European tradition of knowledge and indigenous systems of ideas (Watanuki 1984: 283) and no organic relationship with the cultural history of the colony (Kyi 1984: 94). In the case of anthropology, what Ramstedt says of Indonesian anthropology as having been hegemonized three ways by colonial discourse, American anthropology and state nationalization agenda, is true of most countries (Ramstedt, Chapter 10, in this volume). The interesting thing about Japanese anthropology is that while it was introduced from the outside, its development received further impetus during the Japanese colonization of China in the nineteenth century, which saw a dramatic accumulation of ethnographic knowledge on China (Eades, Chapter 4, in this volume).

The introduction of the social sciences in general and anthropology in particular, in the context of colonial expansion, had defined the subsequent development of these disciplines during the post-colonial period in a number of ways, as follows:

(i) *The lack of creativity.* This refers to the inability of anthropologists outside of the Euro-American cultural area to generate original theories and methods (Sinha, Chapter 7, in this volume).

(ii) *Mimesis.* This refers to the uncritical adoption or imitation of Western anthropological models (Sinha, Chapter 7, in this volume). Eades provides an example of this, referring to the theorizing of a Chinese anthropologist well-grounded in Sahlins, Firth and Mauss as being largely irrelevant to the Chinese case as a result of the poor ethnography on which the work is based (Eades, Chapter 4, in this volume).

(iii) *Essentialism.* European discourses on non-Western societies tended to lead to essentialist constructions of these societies, 'confirming' that they were the opposite of what Europe represented, that is, barbaric, backward and irrational (Sinha, Chapter 7, in this volume). Essentialism was, therefore, a basic ingredient of Eurocentrism.

(iv) *The absence of subaltern voices.* Evans notes that in the multitude of materials gathered by Chinese, Vietnamese and Lao ethnographers, there is 'no tradition of recording minority "voices"' (Evans, Chapter 2, in this volume). Along similar lines, Chatterji notes how prominent Indian anthropologists have been too close to the nationalist project of the state (Chatterji, Chapter 8, in this volume). If we understand by 'minority' not just ethnic minorities but all other subaltern groups, then we may define such anthropology as being dominated by an elitist perspective.

(v) *Alignment with the state.* The role that anthropology played in the colonial period continues to define the present day anthropology. As such, anthropology is in the service of the state as far as the promotion of national integration, control over state policies and the creation of a national culture are concerned (Evans, Chapter 2, Ramstedt, Chapter 10 and Pieke, Chapter 3, in this volume).

As a result of such problems, a number of theories of social sciences emerged. These sought to theorize the state of the social sciences and humanities in post-colonial societies and include the theory of Orientalism (Said 1979, 1990), the theory of mental captivity (Alatas 1972, 1974), pedagogical theories of modernization (Al-e Ahmad n.d.; Freire 1970; Illich 1973), the colonial critique of Césaire (1972), Memmi (1965) and Fanon (1968), and academic dependency theory (Altbach 1977; Garreau 1985; Altbach and Selvaratnam 1989; Alatas 1995).

While space does not permit a discussion of each of these theories, it would be pertinent to mention here that academic dependency theory has much in common with Kuwayama's world system of anthropology in which there is a dominance of the core over the periphery. The situation is characterized by "scientific colonialism," in which the centre of gravity for acquisition of knowledge about a people is located elsewhere' (Kuwayama and van Bremen 1997: 54; Kuwayama, Chapter 5, in this volume).

The understanding that the social sciences in Asia, Africa and Latin America has been plagued by problems such as the five listed earlier has led to intellectual reactions among both Western and non-Western scholars. What these reactions have in common is not just the critique of the Eurocentric, imitative, elitist and irrelevant social science they find in their societies but also the call for alternative discourses. We tend to be familiar with such calls originating in the second half of the twentieth century when in fact they began in the last century. The call to indigenization is merely a more recent manifestation of earlier efforts towards more relevant social science. As noted by Sinha, 'the by now commonplace critique of essentialist tendencies in "European"/"Western" Orientalist discourses about "other" peoples and places, launched by feminist, post-colonial, post-Orientalist and deconstructionist theorists, was in a very serious way already anticipated/prefaced/embedded in the discourse about "decolonizing" the social sciences' (Sinha, Chapter 7, in this volume). It would be accurate to say that the notion of indigenization appeared *avant la lettre* in the minds of those who in the last century came to be critical of the Orientalist language and culture studies.

The call to indigenization

Among the earliest to counter Eurocentric thinking was the Indian thinker and reformer, Rammohun Roy (1772–1833). Roy lived during a period of intense proselytization activities carried out by British missionaries among the Hindus and Muslims of India. Roy was critical of the derogatory attitude of the English missionaries towards Hinduism and Islam. Replying to British objections against the literary genres of the *Vedas*, *Puranas* and *Tantras*, Roy argued that the doctrines of the first were more rational than Christianity and that the teachings of the last two were not more irrational than what is found in Christianity (Roy 1906; cited in Sarkar 1937/1985: 622).

A little cited but very important early sociologist, Benoy Kumar Sarkar (1887–1949), systematically critiqued various dimensions of Orientalist

Indology. Writing in the early part of this century, Sarkar was well ahead of his time when he censured Asian thinkers for having fallen 'victim to the fallacious sociological methods and messages of the modern West, to which the postulate of an alleged distinction between the Orient and the Occident is the first principle of science' (Sarkar 1937/1985: 19). He attacked such Eurocentric notions as the inferiority of Hindus in matters of science and technology, the one-sided emphasis on the other-worldly and speculative dimension of the Hindu spirit, and the alleged dichotomy between Orient and Occident (ibid.: 4, 18 and 35). He was also critical of the methodology of the prevailing Indology of his times on three grounds: (i) it overlooked the positive, materialistic and secular theories and institutions of the Hindus, (ii) it compared the ancient and medieval conditions of India with modern and contemporary European and American societies, and (iii) it ignored the distinction between the existing institutions on the one hand and ideals on the other (ibid.: 20–1).

Sarkar was very explicit about his call for a new Indology that would function to demolish the *idolas* of Orientalism as they are found in sociology (ibid.: 28–9). Although Sarkar tended to be Hinducentric in some of his interpretations pertaining to the history of ideas in India, this does not detract from his critique of Orientalism.

As noted by Pieke, China in the 1930s and 1940s came close to establishing an anthropological tradition of its own. A case in point is the work of Fei Xiaotong who brought British functionalist anthropology to bear upon real villages and towns in China (Pieke, Chapter 3, in this volume). One of his findings, namely that 'the way the Chinese person defines him/herself is fundamentally different from Western individualism' (ibid.), attests to the need for a judicious application of Western theories to non-Western realities. The spirit of Fei's work can, of course, be understood in terms of his overall concern with the problem of relevance.

Speaking of the 1940s, Fei was critical of the way debates among sociologists were carried out in China.

The positions taken by professors in their debates were for the most part based upon facts and theories derived from Western sociology. The various schools of Western sociology were each introduced into China by its followers. That which made Chinese sociology less identical with Western sociology lay in its relationship to the real society. Whatever the particular one, the various schools of Western sociology each reflected a portion of social phenomena, but when they were brought into China, they became empty theories divorced from social reality. This can be seen in the professors' debates at the time because their criticisms of each other always ended up in appeals to logic, and not in appeals to the facts.

(1947/1979: 25)

What was laudable in Fei's view were the efforts to extend or revise existing theories. This went beyond making descriptive statements on Chinese society and

the systematic application of Western concepts to Chinese realities. Rather, they attempted to apply Western theories to the observation and analysis of social life in China, with a view to generating explanations for problems in Chinese society (ibid.: 29).

Interest in the theme of relevance continued into the 1950s and 1960s, with the appearance of a number of papers and reports on academic colonialism and the tasks facing the Third World scholars. Syed Hussein Alatas referred to the problem of the 'wholesale importation of ideas from the western world to eastern societies' out of their socio-historical context as a more fundamental problem of colonialism (Alatas 1956). In 1968, the well-known Indian periodical, *Seminar*, devoted an issue to the topic of academic colonialism, which was understood in terms of two aspects. One referred to the use of academically generated information by overt and covert North American agencies, to facilitate political domination of Afro-Asian countries. The other refers to the economic, political and intellectual dominance that North American academics themselves exercise over academics elsewhere (Saberwal 1968: 10). It was recognized that the political and economic structure of imperialism had its parallels in the ways of thinking of the subjugated people (Alatas 1969).

The awareness of such a problem as academic imperialism was widely discussed, particularly after the Project Camelot affair of 1964–5, and led to various calls for endogenous intellectual creativity (Alatas 1981), the decolonization of knowledge (Khatibi 1967; Zghlal and Karoui 1973; ben Jelloun 1974; Zawiah 1994; Boehmer 1995), the globalization of knowledge (Hudson 1977; Taylor 1993; Bell 1994) and the indigenization of social sciences (Atal 1981). The implicit concern had been with addressing the problem of irrelevancy, assessing the progress made by various disciplines and prescribing an alternative discourse. It is in this context that the indigenization of anthropology projects must be seen.

Indigenization, however, is an amorphous term. It does not refer to a new paradigm or a theoretical perspective in the social sciences. Neither can it be referred to as an intellectual movement. 'Indigenization' is a category that subsumes the works of various authors from a wide variety of disciplines in the social sciences, most of which are concerned with the task of liberation from academic colonialism, the problem of the irrelevance of the Euro-American social sciences and the resulting need to create the conditions under which alternative discourses in non-Western societies may emerge.

The features of indigenized anthropology

The numerous works on indigenization including those cited earlier present a wide range of definitions of indigenization. These are useful to work through, with the aim of enumerating a list of traits which capture the essential features of the notion. Evans' Chapter 2, is appropriate to begin with because his discussion on indigenous and indigenized anthropology in Asia provides a definition of indigenization that is at odds with those that are presented in the other chapters of this volume as well as with the dominant thinking on the subject.

Evans suggests that communism in Asia indigenized anthropology. In Vietnam, for example, for a long time anthropological research was conducted largely by indigenous anthropologists, whose research agendas were defined by the developmental aims of the state. These anthropologists subscribed to an ideology according to which national minorities were backward and in need of development as defined by the state (Evans, Chapter 2, in this volume). Evans refers to the theoretical basis of this indigenized anthropology as being derived from a 'Stalinist-Maoist version of Marxism' (ibid.). Here, indigenized anthropology is defined in terms of having 'forced Marxism through their own (Chinese, Vietnamese, North Korean) cultural sieve, and rationalized this in all sorts of ways' (ibid.). Furthermore, because these anthropologists had aligned themselves to the state in its bid to exert control over the national minorities, Evans likens their work to a form of high colonial anthropology (ibid.).

Ramstedt is tempted to understand the amalgamation of Western anthropological theory with the Indonesian state philosophy (*pancasila*) as indigenized Western anthropology (Ramstedt, Chapter 10, in this volume). Although such anthropologists may see themselves as indigenizing Marxist or Western theories, this understanding of indigenization is antithetical to others that have been identified elsewhere.

'Indigenization has generally been understood to constitute a revolt against "intellectual imperialism" as a component of the revolt against politico-economic domination' (Bennagen 1980: 7). Pertierra recognizes the role of indigenized social sciences as a weapon in neo-colonial struggles as long as the social sciences 'act as the counter-point between the state and society' as opposed to becoming an 'instrument of the state's colonization of civil life' (Pertierra forthcoming).

Sinha views the call for indigenizing anthropology and the other social sciences as arising out of the need to "'purge" the social sciences of Eurocentrism and thus register a crucial break from the hegemony of a colonial past... ' (Sinha, Chapter 7, in this volume). She further elaborates this as a need to 'articulate and theorize global politics of academia and its complex role in perpetuating the traditional intellectual division of labor: non-Western scholars as gatherers of empirical material, which forms the grounding for theoretical arguments advanced by Western scholars' (ibid.). Thus, analysis of the problems presented by the structure of the world system of anthropology, in which the dominant discourse of the core social science powers of the United States, Great Britain and France result in conformity, imitation and lack of originality in the periphery (Kuwayama and van Bremen 1997: 54-5), is seen to be a central task of the indigenization of anthropology project.

Another feature of indigenized anthropology is its problematization of the epistemological and methodological underpinnings of the social sciences (Sinha, Chapter 7, in this volume). This would involve exposing the Eurocentrism and Orientalism that undergirds much of the social sciences.

But the indigenization of anthropology is not understood simply in negative terms, that is, in terms of a delinking from metropolitan, neo-colonialist control. It is also understood in a more positive way, in terms of the contribution of

non-Western systems of thought to anthropological theory (Evans, Chapter 2, in this volume). Non-Western thought and cultural practices are to be seen as sources of anthropological theorizing, while at the same time Western anthropology is not to be rejected in toto. The indigenization of anthropology projects are not conceived to be a 'categorical rejection of all "Western" input in theorizing' and does not 'seek to replace "Eurocentrism" with "nativism" or any other dogmatic position' (Sinha, Chapter 7, in this volume). Here, there is an explicit claim that theories and concepts can be derived from the historical experiences and cultural practices of the various non-Western cultures, whether culture is defined to be co-terminous with the nation-state or otherwise (Moon, Chapter 6, in this volume; Lee 1979; Fahim and Helmer 1980; Alatas 1993; Enriquez 1994a).

Piekie suggests, with reference to China, that one can speak of an indigenous anthropology as matured only when it has generated a corpus of knowledge that is comparative and cross-cultural. The need for comparative and cross-cultural research is based on the idea that an indigenized anthropology 'autochthonously generates its own ideas, concepts, and debates that are informed by an ongoing hermeneutics between one's own and other cultures' (Piekie, Chapter 3, in this volume). In the absence of such a hermeneutics existing ideas would simply be recycled and new ones imported from the usual Western sources. While this point is well taken, the role of comparative and cross-cultural research can only have the desired effect of indigenizing anthropology if such research is carried out by people already conscious of the problems of academic imperialism, mental captivity and relevance. Only then would comparative research yield original ideas and concepts.

We could then formulate a definition of indigenous anthropology as that which is based upon indigenous historical experiences and cultural practices, in the same way that Western social sciences are. Indigenization requires the turn to indigenous philosophies, epistemologies, histories, art and other modes of knowledge, which are all potential sources of social science theories and concepts. Such activities are deemed to decrease intellectual dependence on the core social science powers of the North Atlantic. Nevertheless, most observers and proponents of indigenization, including those of this volume, do not understand indigenization as constituting a rejection of Western social science.

The generation and use of indigenous viewpoints can be approached in two broad ways, as nicely put by Enriquez. Indigenization from within refers to the process in which key indigenous concepts, methods and theories are semantically elaborated, codified, systematized and then applied. On the other hand, indigenization from without refers to the modification and translation of imported materials that are ultimately assimilated theoretically and culturally (Enriquez 1994: 22).

Atal, on the other hand, had made the distinction between indigenization and endogenous development:

Taken literally, endogenous development signifies development generated from within and orthogenetically, which would, thus, have no place for any

exogenous influence Indigenization, by contrast, at least honestly alludes to outside contact by emphasizing the need for indigenizing the exogenous elements to suit local requirements; whether this is done by the ‘indigenous’ or by ‘outsiders’ is mere detail.

(1981: 193)

Generally speaking, what is meant by indigenization by Enriquez and by other authors, including those proponents referred to by the authors of this volume, includes both what Atal refers to as endogenous development and indigenization. It has been widely recognized and accepted that if serious efforts are to be made to bring about more ‘relevant’ social sciences, the selective assimilation of exogenous (western) elements should be considered a vital part of the endogenous intellectual activity.

(Alatas 1981: 462)

It should, therefore, be obvious that the indigenization of knowledge projects around the world for the most part seek to contribute to the universalization of the social sciences by not just acknowledging but insisting that all cultures, civilizations and historical experiences must be regarded as sources of ideas. Local scholars should contribute on an equal basis with their Western colleagues to international scholarship (Fahim 1970: 397). Referring to the indigenization of development thinking, Hettne suggests that the solution to academic imperialism is not to altogether do away with the Western concepts but to adopt a more realistic understanding of Western social sciences as reflecting particular geographic and historical contexts (Hettne 1991: 39). By and large, proponents of indigenization recognize that the Western social sciences are also indigenous in the sense that they arose in the context of concern with indigenous problems, developed on the basis of indigenously generated research agenda, and supported by indigenous academic institutions.

If we understand indigenization in this way, it becomes clear that it is the prerequisite to the universalization of the social sciences, to the maintenance of internationally recognized standards of scholarship. In fact, indigenization has been defined in precisely these terms. In Korea, for example, indigenization (*tochakhwa*) refers to proceeding from research on the historical development of Korean society to universal theory (Shin 1994: 21).

Returning to Evans’ definition of indigenized anthropology, this raises a question that from time to time emerges in indigenization debates – to what extent is the indigenization of anthropology a project in service of the state? In fact, the vast majority of proponents of the indigenization of anthropology, in particular, and the social sciences, in general, would distance themselves from this political stance. This is not to say that such scholars would be adverse to working with the state or to engaging in policy-related research. Nevertheless, they would not understand the indigenization of anthropology to mean the realignment of the discipline with the objectives of the state.

Problems with the call for indigenization

Nativism

The problem of academic imperialism, mental captivity and the uncritical adoption of Western concepts and research agendas had been perceived as having become so pervasive in the social scientific traditions of developing societies that there were, from time to time, reactionary calls among critics of Western social sciences. The result is a high degree of intolerance towards the Western social sciences in terms of theories, methodologies and the selection of problems. Consider the following viewpoint from a Muslim.

The fact that concerns us here most is that all the social sciences of the West reflect social orders and have no relationship or relevance to Muslims, and even less to Islam. If we learn and apply Western social sciences, then we are not serious about Islam.

(Siddiqui, n.d.)

This attitude can be captured under the notion of Orientalism in reverse or nativism. The idea of Orientalism in reverse was developed by the Syrian philosopher, Sadiq Jalal al-'Azm. He quotes from the work of a fellow Syrian, Georges Saddikni, on the Arabic notion of man (*insān*) which runs thus:

The philosophy of Hobbes is based on his famous saying that 'every man is a wolf unto other men', while, on the contrary, the inner philosophy implicit in the word *insān* preaches that 'every man is a brother unto other men'.

(Saddikni cited in al-'Azm 1984: 368)

Al-'Azm then continues with an assessment of the above:

I submit that this piece of so-called analysis and comparison contains, in a highly condensed form, the entire apparatus of metaphysical abstractions and ideological mystifications so characteristic of Ontological Orientalism and so deftly and justly denounced in Said's book. The only new element is the fact that the Orientalist essentialist ontology has been reversed to favour one specific people of the Orient.

(1984: 368)

Orientalism in reverse involves an essentialist approach to both Orient and Occident and is, therefore, a form of auto-Orientalism. This can be illustrated by the Japanese case. There is a tradition in Japanese sociology that is defined by *Nihonjinron* (theories of Japanese people), which is informed by essentialized views on Japanese society, with the stress on cultural homogeneity and historical continuity. This remains squarely in the tradition of Western scholarship on Japan with the difference that the knowing subjects are Japanese. Hence the term

auto-Orientalism (Lie 1996: 5). This is paralleled in Korean anthropology where there are studies founded on the assumption of a monolithic Korean culture (Moon, Chapter 6, in this volume). Also relevant in this regard is Pieke's discussion of Chinese Occidentalism (Pieke, Chapter 3, in this volume) and Yanagita's cultural nationalism discussed by Kuwayama (Kuwayama, Chapter 5, in this volume).

In Chapter 7, Sinha notes that Indian scholars continue to 'reproduce the image of India as an exotic "other," and through the particular project of indigenizing anthropology, the image of India as an "exotic" self' (Sinha, Chapter 7, in this volume), thereby continuing the Orientalist tradition in the form of auto-Orientalism. Pertierra has similar concerns when he warns that indigenized social science in the Filipino context 'risks essentializing Filipinohood by reducing its differences' because of 'insistence on unproblematically using the nation as its referent point...' at the expense of the personal, global, local and other referents (Pertierra forthcoming).

The logical consequence of Orientalism in reverse and auto-Orientalism is nativism. This refers to the trend of going native among Western and local scholars alike, in which the native's point of view is elevated to the status of the criterion by which descriptions and analyses are to be judged. This entails a near total rejection of Western knowledge.

The type of anthropology that Evans wants to typify as indigenized but which is at odds with most definitions of indigenization of social science comes close to being nativistic. This is an anthropology that is informed by a problematic notion of indigeneity, as pointed out by Evans, and which makes claims such as 'only the Chinese can really understand Chinese culture and society', and so on (Evans, Chapter 2, in this volume). Similarly, van Bremen warns of the danger for scholarship of the 'reappearance in places of the idea that anthropological knowledge and scholarship is grounded in an ethnic membership, or even the property of a presumed race, as proclaimed by some anthropologists today' (Kuwayama and van Bremen 1997: 64).

Nevertheless, it has to be stressed that the various conceptions of indigenization, particularly in the fields of anthropology, sociology and psychology, are opposed to nativistic approaches to knowledge.

The nation-state as the basis of indigenization

The nationalization of the social sciences is a process that had been taking place *pari passu* with the indigenization of the social sciences. The case of the Sinicization of Marxist sociology in China presents us with an illustration of the nationalization of the social sciences as a project that, for example, legitimized the Chinese version of socialism and China as a nation (Alatas 1998: 75–6). Because of the nationalist connotations of the term Sinicization, many Taiwanese anthropologists and sociologists eventually dropped the term. They found it more acceptable to refer to their efforts as indigenization as their subject-matter was Taiwan and not China and the recontextualization of their disciplines was to be

carried out vis-à-vis Taiwan and not China (Hsu 1991: 35). But in this case, indigenization appears to be synonymous with Taiwanization. It is, therefore, not surprising that many understand indigenization to refer to the development of the social sciences with the nation as the basis. As Pertierra notes, while there may be a quest to generate an indigenous Filipino psychology, there are no demands for an Ifugao one (Pertierra forthcoming). Indian anthropologists similarly lamented that the indigenization of anthropology had failed to take into account the social and cultural diversity of the country. It instead posited the possibility of an 'Indian' anthropology as if there was a homogeneous Indian viewpoint or way of thinking (Sinha 1998: 24).

The danger of anthropology aligning itself too closely with the interests of the state is all the more apparent when it is realized that in many developing societies, a great deal of anthropological research is funded by governments rather than private foundations, a point that Sinha notes for India. Competition for funds often results in anthropologists seeking to demonstrate their utility in policy formulation and programmatic change (Sinha, Chapter 7, in this volume). To the extent that indigenized anthropologies see themselves as liberating discourses, they may be compromised by too close an association with the state and by being defined at the level of the nation and glossing over internal diversities.

The paucity of examples of indigenized anthropology

I had earlier suggested that indigenized anthropology could be defined as anthropology that draws upon indigenous historical experiences and cultural practices for its concepts and theories. The indigenization of anthropology would require the turn to local philosophies, epistemologies and historical experiences. While there have been decades of discourse on the need for indigenized anthropology and other social sciences as well, as some attempts to do indigenized anthropology as noted in the chapters of this volume, there has been little by way of indigenized anthropological theories and concepts. An exemplar for indigenized anthropology would be Khaldunian political anthropology. While ibn Khaldun has, since the last century, been recognized as a precursor of many modern disciplines in the social sciences, there have been practically no attempts to develop Khaldunian or neo-Khaldunian theory. An exception is the work of Ernest Gellner who offered a model of traditional Muslim civilization based on a fusion of ibn Khaldun's political sociology with David Hume's oscillation theory of religion (Gellner 1981: chapter 1). This is an example of indigenization because it regards non-conventional, non-Western sources as legitimate and attempts to develop an integrated model by bringing in Western thought as well. The inclusion of Western theory is not seen as a legitimization of the indigenization exercise but rather a recognition that all civilizations must be considered as sources of not only data but theory as well.

Pitfalls of the term 'indigenization'

An important reason for the indifference or even hostility towards the various indigenization of social sciences projects around the world has to do with the term indigenization itself. The term indigenization has its pitfalls. There is a pernicious rhetoric that is a property of 'indigenization'.

First of all, the term carries with it the notion of indigeneity which itself has been mutilated to some degree (Benjamin 1995). Indigeneity refers to concrete place, not abstractly defined states and provinces. Forms of consociation based on indigeneity are 'bound up in the physical and biotic details' of the place of abode (*ibid.*: 3–4). The term indigeneity, then, connotes insularity and closeness. The adjective, indigenous, is equally unattractive because it connotes tribalism, ethnicity, native status or race (*ibid.*: 2–3).

Second, it has been argued by Syed Hussein Alatas that the term indigenization assumes that there is a local or indigenous social scientific tradition as a base from which to construct original theories, which is generally not the case.¹

Third, there is the view that indigenization implies that Western knowledge is universal and that it simply needs to be localized or domesticated and that there is nothing endogenous to be contributed to the social sciences.²

Fourth, another reason for negative reactions to the term indigenization has to do with the way it has been used in political discourse. For example, during his rule in South Korea, Park Chung-Hee had referred to the indigenization of democracy, to justify authoritarian rule with a Confucian basis.³

The aforementioned refer not to logical or conceptual problems of the idea of indigenization but rather to rhetorical properties of the term. For strategic reasons, some may choose to distance themselves from the term but not from the ideas couched in it and the programmatic action encouraged by it.

Prospects for the successful indigenization of anthropology

Obstacles to the indigenization of anthropology and the other social sciences are varied, but there are at least two which are universal. One concerns the structure of academic dependency and the other the cultural environment of academic discourse.

The structure of academic dependency is illustrated by the relative availability of Euro-American funding for research, the generally greater prestige attached to publishing in American and British journals, the higher premium placed on a Western university education and a number of other indicators. There is also the question of the intellectual dependency on ideas. For example, it will be found that the social sciences in former British colonies are likely to be dominated by Anglo-Saxon theoretical traditions.

Such a context that is presented by the structure of academic dependency is not conducive to the indigenization of the social sciences. But what are the possibilities of academic dependency reversal? Eades' account of where Japanese academics publish provides an example of a line of action. Most scholarly

publications in the social sciences and humanities in Japan appear in in-house university journals, working paper series, monograph series and other occasional publications. What is very revealing about the Japanese case is that there does not appear to be any discrimination against these in-house publications when it comes to the evaluation of academic staff for promotion (Eades, Chapter 4, in this volume). Such a practice would auger well for the indigenization of the social sciences, as it lessens reliance on European or American standards that may not be appropriate and it works towards the upgrading of local publication capabilities. It also frees academics from being tied to themes and research agendas that are determined by the contents of American and European publications.

But even if some inroads are made towards dismantling the structure of academic dependency, in the final analysis what must change is the intellectual culture in Asia and Africa. By this is meant consciousness of the problem of mental captivity and the irrelevance of an uncritically applied social science. Conscientizing can only take place through the various media of intellectual socialization, including the schools, universities and other institutions of higher learning. For example, a more universalistic approach to the teaching of sociological theory would have to raise the question as to whether sociological theory was to be found in pre-modern, non-European areas. There is also the matter of teaching the context of the rise of sociological theory, which is not only defined by the series of political revolutions in Europe since the seventeenth century or the industrial revolution, but also by colonization and the emergence of Eurocentrism. This in turn would imply changes in the way sociological theory is taught. For example, there would be more emphasis on Marx and Weber's Orientalist and Eurocentric dimensions.

In line with the view that indigenization and universalization are one and the same thing, indigenizers of knowledge do not wish to discard Western social sciences, but wish to open up the possibilities for indigenous philosophies, epistemologies and histories to become bases on knowledge. Without indigenization projects throughout the world, it is one set of indigenous (Western) discourse that dominates.

Evans suggests that what is needed in Asia is not an indigenous or indigenized anthropology 'but an anthropology that is more self-consciously and sensitively internationalised' (Evans, Chapter 2, in this volume). This is in fact what has been proposed by the vast majority of proponents of indigenization. They conceive of indigenization as not the rejection of Western social sciences, but the selective adaptation of it to local needs. The acceptance, rejection or extension of knowledge from the West is not based on the grounds of origin but rather on criteria of relevance that are established as a result of consciousness of the problems of academic imperialism, mental captivity and uncritical imitation. The call to indigenization is simultaneously a call to the universalization of the social sciences. This call generally accepts the notion of social science as a universal discourse which is constituted by various civilizational or cultural expressions all contributing to the understanding of the human condition. To the extent that the internationalization of the social sciences requires a plurality of philosophical and cultural

expressions, the indigenization of social science projects around the world must be seen as adding to the hitherto dominant Euro-American voice.

Acknowledgement

I wish to thank Dr Hsu for translating and explaining the meaning of some passages in his article for me.

Notes

- 1 Syed Hussein Alatas, personal communication, Manila, 29 May 1996.
- 2 Zeus Salazar, personal communication, Manila, 1 June 1996.
- 3 Kim Kyong-Dong, personal communication, Seoul, 21 June 1996.

References

- Alatas, Syed Farid (1993) 'On the indigenization of academic discourse', *Alternatives*, 18(3): 307–38.
- (1995) 'Dependency, rhetorics and the transnational flow of ideas in the social sciences', Paper presented at the Goethe-Institute International Seminar on Cultural and Social Dimensions of Market Expansion, Labuan, 16–17 October.
- (1998) 'Western theories, East Asian realities and the social sciences', in Su-Hoon Lee (ed.), *Sociology in East Asia and Its Struggle for Creativity*, International Sociological Association Pre-Congress Volumes, Social Knowledge: Heritage, Challenges, Perspectives, Maria-Luz Moran (general editor).
- Alatas, Syed Hussein (1956) 'Some fundamental problems of colonialism', *Eastern World*, November.
- (1969) 'Academic imperialism', Lecture delivered to the History Society, University of Singapore, 26 September.
- (1972) 'The captive mind in development studies', *International Social Science Journal*, 34(1): 9–25.
- (1974) 'The captive mind and creative development', *International Social Science Journal*, 36(4): 691–9.
- (1981) 'Social aspects of endogenous intellectual creativity: the problem of obstacles – guidelines for research', in A. Abdel-Malek and A.N. Pandeya (eds), *Intellectual Creativity in Endogenous Culture*, Tokyo: United Nations University.
- Al-'Azm, Sadiq Jalal (1984) 'Orientalism and orientalism in reverse', in John Rothschild (ed.), *Forbidden Agendas: Intolerance and Defiance in the Middle East*, London: Al Saqi Books, pp. 349–76.
- Al-e Ahmad, Jalal (n.d.) *Gharbzadegi (Weststruckness)*, Tehran: Ravaq Press.
- Altbach, Philip G. (1977) 'Servitude of the mind? Education, dependency, and neocolonialism', *Teachers College Record*, 79(2): 187–204.
- Altbach, Philip G. and Selvaratnam, Viswanathan Selvaratnam (eds) (1989) *From Dependence to Autonomy: The Development of Asian Universities*, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Atal, Yogesh (1981) 'The call for indigenization', *International Social Science Journal*, 33(1): 189–97.
- Bachtiar, Harsja (1984) 'Indonesia', in *Social Sciences in Asia and the Pacific*, Paris: UNESCO, pp. 249–80.

- Bell, Morag (1994) 'Images, myths and alternative geographies of the Third World', in Derek Gregory, Ron Martin and G. Smith (eds), *Human Geography: Society, Space and Social Science*, London: Macmillan, pp. 174–99.
- Benjamin, Geoffrey (1995) 'The sociology of indigeneity', Paper presented at the Second ASEAN Inter-University Seminar on Social Development, Cebu City, The Philippines, 28–30 November.
- Bennagen, P.L. (1980) 'The Asianization of anthropology', *Asian Studies*, 18: 1–26.
- Boehmer, Elleke (1995) *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cesaire, Aime (1972) *Discourse on Colonialism*, New York: Monthly Review.
- Chee, Stephen (1984) 'Malaysia', in *Social Sciences in Asia and the Pacific*, Paris: UNESCO, pp. 296–323.
- Dube, S.C. (1984) 'India', in *Social Sciences in Asia and the Pacific*, Paris: UNESCO, pp. 229–48.
- Enriquez, Virgilio G. (1994) 'Towards cross-cultural knowledge through cross-indigenous methods and perspective', in Teresita B. Obusan and Angelina R. Enriquez (eds), *Pamamaraan: Indigenous Knowledge and Evolving Research Paradigms*, Quezon City: Asian Center, University of the Philippines, pp. 19–31.
- Fahim, Hussein (1970) 'Indigenous anthropology in non-Western countries', *Current Anthropology*, 20(2): 397.
- Fahim, Hussein and Katherine Helmer (1980) 'Indigenous anthropology in non-Western countries: a further elaboration', *Current Anthropology*, 21(5): 644–50.
- Fanon, Frantz (1968) *The Wretched of the Earth*, New York: Grove Press.
- Fei Hsiao-t'ung [Fei Xiaotong] (1947/1979) 'The growth of Chinese sociology', in Fei Hsiao-t'ung (ed.), *The Dilemma of a Chinese Intellectual*, James P. Gough (select. and trans.), White Plains, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- Feliciano, Gloria D. (1984) 'Philippines', in *Social Sciences in Asia and the Pacific*, Paris: UNESCO, pp. 468–501.
- Freire, Paulo (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, New York: Seabury Press.
- Garreau, Frederick H. (1985) 'The multinational version of social science with emphasis upon the discipline of sociology', *Current Sociology*, 33(3): 1–169.
- Gellner, Ernest (1981) *Muslim Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hettne, Björn (1991) *The Voice of the Third World: Currents in Development Thinking*, Studies on Developing Countries No. 134, Budapest: Institute for World Economics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.
- Hsu, C.K. (1991) 'The formation and transformation of a research paradigm: a revisit of Prof. Chen Shao-Hsing's Article', *Chinese Journal of Sociology*, 15: 29–40 [in Chinese].
- Hsu, Leonard Shih-Lien (1931) 'The sociological movement in China', *Pacific Affairs*, 4(4): 283–307.
- Huang, Lucy Jen (1987) 'The status of sociology in People's Republic of China', *International Review of Modern Sociology*, 17: 111–36.
- Hudson, B. (1977) 'The new geography and the new imperialism, 1870–1918', *Antipode*, 9: 12–19.
- Illich, Ivan D. (1973) *Deschooling Society*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Ben Jelloun, Taher (1974) 'Décolonisation de la Sociologie au Maghreb: utilité et risques d'une fonction critique', *Le Monde Diplomatique*, August.
- Karim, A.K. Nazmul (1984) 'Bangladesh', in *Social Sciences in Asia and the Pacific*, Paris: UNESCO, pp. 79–92.
- Khatibi, M. (1967) *Bilan de la Sociologie au Maroc*, Rabat: Publications de l'Association pour la Recherche en Sciences Humaines.

- Kuwayama, Takami and Jan van Bremen (1997) 'Kuwayama – van Bremen debate: native anthropologists – with special reference to Japanese studies inside and outside Japan', *Japan Anthropology Workshop Newsletter*, pp. 52–69.
- Kyi, Khin Maung (1984) 'Burma', in *Social Sciences in Asia and the Pacific*, Paris: UNESCO, pp. 93–141.
- Lee Chong-Bum (1979) 'Prolegomenon to the indigenization of public administration', *Social Science Journal*, 6: 7–26.
- Lie, John (1996) 'Sociology of contemporary Japan', *Current Sociology*, 44(1): 1–95.
- Memmi, Albert (1965) *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, Boston, MA: Beacon.
- Pertierra, R. (forthcoming) 'Culture, social science and the Philippine Nation State', *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 33(3).
- Rahimi, Wali Mohammad (1984) 'Afghanistan', in *Social Sciences in Asia and the Pacific*, Paris: UNESCO, pp. 21–51.
- Rana, Ratna S.J.B. (1984) 'Nepal', in *Social Sciences in Asia and the Pacific*, Paris: UNESCO, pp. 354–73.
- Roy, Rammohun (1906) *The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy*, Allahabad.
- Saberwal, Satish (1968) 'The problem', *Seminar*, 112: 10–13.
- Said, Edward (1979) *Orientalism*, New York: Vintage Books.
- (1990) 'Third World intellectuals and metropolitan culture', *Raritan*, 9(3): 27–50.
- Sarkar, Benoy Kumar (1937/1985) *The Positive Background of Hindu Sociology*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass [First edition published in 1937 in Allahabad, reprinted in Delhi in 1985].
- Shin Yong-Ha (1994) 'Suggestions for the development of a creative Korean sociology', in *Korean Sociology in the 21st Century*, Korean Sociological Association, Seoul: Moon-Hak-Kwa Ji-Seong-Sa, 1994, pp. 15–30 [in Korean].
- Siddiqui, K. (n.d.) *The Islamic Movement: A Systems Approach*, Tehran: Bunyad Be'that.
- Sinha, Vineeta (1998) 'Socio-cultural theory and colonial encounters: the discourse on indigenizing anthropology in India', Manuscript, Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore.
- Taylor, Peter J. (1993) 'Full circle or new meaning for global', in R.J. Johnston (ed.), *The Challenge for Geography: A Changing World, A Changing Discipline*, Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 181–97.
- Watanuki, Joji (1984) 'Japan', in *Social Sciences in Asia and the Pacific*, Paris: UNESCO, pp. 281–95.
- Zawiah Yahya (1994) *Resisting Colonialist Discourse*, Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.
- Zghlal, Abdelkader and Karoui, Hachmi (1973) 'Decolonization and social science research: the case of Tunisia', *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin*, 7(3): 11–27.