G┃G A Focus │ GLOBAL

Amrita Narlikar

"Because They Matter":
Recognise Diversity—Globalise Research

Prof. Dr. Amrita Narlikar
President of the GIGA
amrita.narlikar@giga-hamburg.de

GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies
Leibniz-Institut für Globale
und Regionale Studien
Neuer Jungfernstieg 21
20354 Hamburg

www.giga-hamburg.de/giga-focus

Real-world events often seem to catch the Social Sciences by surprise leading to serious policy failures. Western scholars and practitioners rarely anticipate the moves of their interlocutors in the South but tend to "flatten" the world into one coherent homogeneity. A global approach that incorporates the historical experiences and philosophical traditions of the "South" may help us overcome the problem. A global approach means that we no longer allow the marginalisation of the "rest" – of the regions outside of the developed world's liberal core – from the mainstream debate in research and policy. This does not mean being "critical" for the sake of it, but engaging with theoretical and empirical content from the regions on its own terms. The two keywords are inclusiveness and pluralism, with an attention to the following issues.

- The recognition of cultural difference must be sufficiently nuanced so as to not paint other polities and economies with a broad brush of crude stereotypes. This requires context-sensitive empirical research.

- The methodological toolkit is eclectic, but guided by three principles: interdisciplinarity, multilevel research, and Comparative Area Studies.

- Key risks include succumbing to token inclusiveness and misinterpreting the agenda to serve a fundamentally "critical" discourse.

- Key challenges include developing a research dissemination strategy targeted at mainstreaming the marginalised, which demands publication in the top, high-impact outlets; and finding the right balance between "flattening" the world into a misperceived homogeneity and a reductionist "indigenisation".

Policy Implications

The policy implications of this approach are threefold. First, engagement by practitioners with scholars specialising in the regions is necessary to understand what other key players want. Second, a global approach does not mean idealisation of "the other". Hand in hand with such a study may sometimes come a recognition of the red lines, and an admission of irreconcilable differences for policy. Finally, grand polarised representations may not have helped policy-makers in the past. Detailed context-sensitive understanding, accompanied by an attention to how concepts travel and change across cultures, may generate some pleasant surprises on expanding negotiating space and the identification of like-minded allies.

Why We Need to Globalise the Social Sciences

The real world often seems to catch social scientists by surprise. International Relations experts failed to anticipate the end of the Cold War. Few economists foresaw the East Asian Financial Crisis of 1998 or the Great Recession that began in 2008. In neither Political Science nor in Sociology nor in any other cognate discipline did scholars predict the colossal scale of the refugee crisis that Europe faces today. And it is not just the residents of the ivory tower who find themselves unprepared for events on the ground; most policy-makers will also readily admit to having been caught off guard in their dealings on the ground.

To overcome these difficulties, I advance here a global approach to scholarship in the Social Sciences. Such an approach requires an engagement with the historical experiences, philosophical traditions, and empirical realities beyond the so-called "North" or "West", [1] and the development of an inclusive and pluralistic approach to scholarship. For policy and practice, it means recognising cross-cultural differences, and then exploring the new negotiating space that emerges from this awareness.

A global approach is important for three reasons. First, purely in terms of ethics, it is remarkable that even 50–70 years after decolonisation, such a large proportion of scholarship in the Social Sciences remains dominated by theories and empirical cases that are drawn from mainly Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. The "South"/the "non-West" remains, at best, little more than a testing ground for said theories, and a field for implementing the policy prescriptions resulting from these theories. This marginalisation of the majority from mainstream scholarship is unacceptable, especially in a world that has since 1945 claimed commitment to the equality of nations and peoples. Second, more pragmatically too, we have grounds for concern. Global shifts of power are underway. Power is diffusing from the European Union and the United States, sometimes to state actors such as Brazil, Russia, China and India, and sometimes to non-state actors. Scholarship needs to factor in these new players into the mainstream for a very simple reason: *because they matter*. And chances are, as power continues to diffuse, they will matter more in the future. Finally, at a time when there is a real dearth of creative ideas to address global problems, involving outsiders may help us to explore together some new and untrodden pathways towards mutually acceptable solutions.

I develop this agenda for globalisation in four steps. In the first section, I present the case for developing such an approach, and flag up the scholarly and also real-world benefits that this process of globalisation could generate. In the second section, I discuss the content that this global approach might entail, and provide an overview of the methodology that could be adopted to facilitate this enterprise. The third section discusses the risks and challenges, and suggests ways in which some of the pitfalls might be avoided. The final section pinpoints the reasons why the GIGA might be particularly well equipped to pioneer this novel approach.

The Case for a Global Approach

The end of the Cold War, the occurrence of global financial crises, and today's refugee crisis are all examples of social scientists and practitioners being caught unawares.

1 This category refers to countries that usually belong to the OECD group. Engagement beyond this group takes us into the "South" / the developing world / the Third World – that is, countries that tend to be seen as, and also see themselves as, rule-takers. At the GIGA, our institutional structure leads us to use the shorthand of "the regions" when we refer to the latter category.

These lapses have occurred not only on large-scale systemic issues, but also on matters of foreign policy. Take the example of the rising powers. Even India – a well-established democracy – has repeatedly flummoxed Western diplomats and politicians with its nay-saying attitude in international negotiations. Far from acting like a loyal member of a like-minded club of democracies and an upholder of the liberal international order, India has shown little hesitation in espousing alternative causes, forming alliances with other developing countries, and locking horns with the United States and other established powers. Although the West has engaged with China's sizeable market in a sustained manner, deepening trade relations have not produced the hoped-for patterns of socialisation: witness China's geopolitical expansionism in its neighbouring seas. Russia, with its annexation of Crimea, has moved away from Western norms perhaps even more than China. Adverse consequences of these unanticipated developments include the recurrence of deadlocks in international institutions, and the extension and exacerbation of crises in the face of failed solutions.

The range of problems described above have different and often multiple causes. But a crucial factor common to all of them is the fact that scholars and practitioners alike in the West have often been unable to anticipate the moves of their negotiating counterparts. This inability is rooted partly in the naïve conviction that our liberal values will slowly but surely find a worldwide appeal through processes of institutionalisation, norm diffusion, and socialisation. Additionally, having been (often rightly) accused of crude stereotyping – whether under the umbrella of colonialism or Orientalism – we have adopted new politically correct lenses that mistakenly "flatten" (Friedman 2005) the world into one coherent unity (that will emerge teleologically, if not today, then tomorrow).

For the above reasons, we often assume that other players, by and large, have the same preferences as we do, or that they *will* have the same preferences as us once they have seen the light. While attentive to the intellectual traditions of the West, we tend to ignore the diversity of cultural perspectives that affect different levels of human interactions across different spheres. [2] At best, mainstream scholarship treats the South as little more than "a provider of raw data to Western theory" (Acharya 2014). [3] By ignoring the historical experiences, philosophical traditions, and cultural characteristics of all the other parties that comprise the regions of Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East, we set ourselves up to repeat the same mistakes over and over again. A global approach may help us overcome the problem.

Content and Methodology

A global approach to Social Sciences research (and its application to the field of policy) does not simply mean a focus on the global or international level. Rather, it means ensuring that we no longer allow the marginalisation of the "rest" – of the regions outside the developed world's liberal core – from the mainstream debate. It means not being "critical" for the sake of it, but engaging with content from the South / the regions – be it theoretical or empirical – on its own terms. The two keywords that define this content are inclusiveness and pluralism. Inclusiveness refers to a willingness to work with alternative theoretical approaches and take into account hitherto excluded voices. Pluralism means a willingness to recognise the ex-

2 Other fields are also beginning to recognise the costs of this Western Bias. Henrich et al. (2010), for instance, have argued that many broad claims about human psychology are based on narrow samples from Western Societies. These sample groups (from "Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic [WEIRD] societies") provide more the outlier than the norm or standard for generalisation.

3 The exception to this trend lies in the field of traditional Area Studies. However, here the tendency has been to study the particular country or region as so unique that comparison is deemed unviable. The attention to detail in such cases is significant, but risks missing the forest for the trees.

istence of alternative intellectual philosophies, theories, models, norms, and values. Rather than assume that they must all converge to one point, pluralism requires us to work with these alternative ideas and practices to – at a minimum – identify the red lines and deal-breakers and thereby create new negotiating space towards building a consensus. Such an engagement may additionally result in our embracing new ideas that would have otherwise eluded us due to prior belief structures and prior theoretical assumptions.

Take the example of negotiation analysis: a field of knowledge that is fundamentally multidisciplinary, and has shown greater awareness than others in recognising the importance of the culture variable as an influence in negotiation processes. But returning to the case of India, there are far too few studies on its negotiating behaviour; frequently, Western scholars and diplomats have assumed a like-mindedness based on colonial legacies, shared language, and also democratic principles. India's toughness as a negotiation partner then constantly seems to come as an unpleasant surprise. Western observers have long complained of India's tendency to moralise in international negotiations. Excessive moralisation is usually seen as a sign of aggression and provocation, and this is one of the reasons why Western negotiators have been baffled and irritated by India's negotiation behaviour (Pye 1985; Cohen 2004). But if these observers were aware of India's distinctive negotiating culture, they would know that the tendency to moralise is intrinsic to a legitimisation discourse, which negotiators use with friends and foes alike. Other Indian "peculiarities" include a willingness to cause delay, an avoidance of coalitions that involve bandwagoning, and a readiness to say no (Narlikar and Narlikar 2014). All these characteristics would become more understandable, and also less of a deterrent to effective negotiation, with more awareness of cultural traditions and local constraints (which incidentally do not always include the usual interest group and party politics that mainstream Western theory focuses on). Factoring in these variables would also help towards more comprehensive theory-building.

While a global approach to the Social Sciences must take into account cultural specificities, historical experiences, intellectual traditions and other local conditions, it must also be sufficiently nuanced so as to not paint other polities and economies with a broad brush into crude stereotypes (e.g. "traditional" versus "modern"). The discussion of "Asian values" has often been pitted against Western liberal values (including respect for human rights and democratic process). Via arguments often coming from the regions themselves, Asian values are advanced as a justification for authoritarianism and for a view of human rights that prioritises the state and society over the individual. Challenging these interpretations, however, Amartya Sen (1997), points to diversity in Asia, and its many different traditions on human rights. His argument could be taken a step further with the case of India. India is very far removed from the "Asian" interpretations of human rights in terms of society and the state. Instead, ancient Indian texts speak of the rights of all creatures as individuals, which led the philosopher R. Panikkar (1982) to observe: in Indian culture "Human Rights are not Human only". The implications of this are manifold; take one general theoretical implication first and another policy-oriented one. First, if one is to have a serious discussion on human rights, one must break free not only from Western-centric assumptions, but also from the "grand dichotomy" (Sen 1997) that polarised representations of "Asian values" and "European values" create. To do this effectively, one needs nuanced and "context-sensitive" empiri-

cal research (more on this below). Second, in a way that has not been recognised thus far, on certain issues India may indeed be a much more "natural ally" of those interested in advancing liberal values, and for reasons that run much deeper than post-independence democratisation. Traditional values of certain cultures may in fact be a surprisingly complementary fit with modern Western values.

What methods might be employed to grapple with this type of content? The methodological toolkit needs to be eclectic, and depends on the research question. In some cases, rational choice approaches may be best suited to the question at hand, along with experimental studies; in others, discourse analysis; and in still others, process-tracing akin to the methods employed by historians, using a combination of traditional texts and primary sources from the regions. But at least three guiding principles may be useful, irrespective of the specific methods that particular projects employ: a) interdisciplinarity b) multilevel analysis and c) Comparative Area Studies.

Interdisciplinarity is not easy to pull off effectively, not least because it requires both open-mindedness and skill to overcome disciplinary jargons and gain from each others' methods and theoretical perspectives. Incentive structures also vary across fields and countries for interdisciplinary work. But when done well, it can generate high pay-offs. One of the reasons why the picture we have thus far of the world is skewed is because many histories, philosophies, and intellectual traditions from the regions have been largely ignored by prior analyses. The gap derives partly for the reasons already outlined in the previous section, and also because disciplinary divides allow us to live in our comfort zones and ignore relevant insights from other fields. It is remarkable, for instance, that we study the economics and politics of India – a country whose traditions continue to thrive in the present day and shape the modern – with such little attention to the country's history, literary, and religious traditions. Another example is that of China, where many scholars and practitioners seem to view the country's expansion in the neighbouring seas as simply a function of its rightful reassertion as it rises. Were they to take into account the Confucian "fundamentally hierarchic and formally unequal" (Kang 2009) view of global order, they would perhaps be more cautious in their optimism. Sometimes, a look at a country's history and cultural beliefs may inject a healthy dose of realism in both scholarship and policy. This may especially be the case if such an approach is taken while going considerably beyond the mandate of traditional Area Studies, and taking into account comparative and international contexts and implications. It can remind us which of our concepts and policies may travel across regions, where consensus can be found, which issues will almost certainly be deal-breakers, and where no meeting of minds will be possible.

The global approach, as was argued earlier, does not mean conducting research solely at the global or international level, but often requires a multilevel lens. The impact of global trends and events on regional, national, and local developments is relevant for this agenda; just as relevant is the question of how the local, national, and regional levels interact with and influence the global level, and also each other.

Comparative Area Studies (CAS) is an important tool for promoting a truly global perspective. CAS combines the context sensitivity and knowledge of Area Studies with the use of comparative methods. Comparisons include inter-regional, cross-regional, and intra-regional ones. CAS promises to overcome the weaknesses of traditional Area Studies – often criticised for its limited contribution to broader

disciplinary debates and interest in methodological advances – while honing the critical assets of in-depth area-specific knowledge and engagement with scholarly and policy ideas from the regions. CAS may hold the key to really understanding whether and how far certain theories and concepts can travel across regions and mutate. Multilevel analysis can help grapple with the extent to which certain ideas seep down to the individual level, or embedded ideas reach the highest echelons of government, governance, and markets.

From Good Intentions to Cutting-Edge Research and Effective Policy

Surely we are on the side of the angels when we speak about intellectual opening? Alas, however, the pathway to hell is also often paved with good intentions. There are at least four challenges that one must take into account if one does decide to pursue the agenda espoused here.

First, though this agenda aims at inclusiveness and pluralism, it is far too easy to use token inclusiveness as a proxy for genuine pluralism. Including the token woman or token representatives from the region does not help the cause of diversity, nor does it assist the intellectual ambition advanced in this agenda. A global approach to scholarship means embracing research of the highest quality, irrespective of the geographical location, nationality, ethnicity, or gender of the individual researcher.

Second, there is a risk that some may read this agenda as a call to arms for critical theory. This would be a serious misinterpretation. In some cases, a global approach to scholarship in the Social Sciences may result in "critical theory" development. But in many cases it may simply involve a revision of rational choice models to incorporate different types of preferences and strategies. A global approach is necessarily eclectic in the theories and methods that it relies on, which in turn depend on the type of research problem at hand.

Third, globalising the content and methodology of the Social Sciences must also be accompanied by a suitable research dissemination strategy. While some might argue that the next step to "working with the regions" might be "publishing in the regions", this would be short-sighted if such a publication strategy came at the expense of publishing in the top outlets (often still based in the United States and Europe). At its best, it would result in our preaching to the choir – that is, a readership in the regions that is already well aware of the importance of conducting studies of the regions. Globalising the Social Sciences requires mainstreaming the hitherto marginalised, and thereby fundamentally changing the mainstream. And in order to do this, there is just no way around publishing in the high-impact international journals and top-notch university presses.

Finally, all those who wish to take on the challenge of globalising the Social Sciences will have to tread the fine balance between "flattening" the world into mispercieved homogeneity, on the one hand, and reductionist "indigenisation", on the other. Laurence Whitehead (2000) has also alerted us to this challenge: of the importance of avoiding "essentialism" and "ethnocentrism" while still recognising that history and culture matter. He emphasises the importance of context-sensitive

approaches to help overcome this problem. And while Whitehead has addressed this specifically with reference to the field of Comparative Politics, such context-sensitive approaches – as typified by CAS – have relevance and applicability to other fields as well, including Economics and Philosophy.

If research were to take the directions suggested in this GIGA Focus, with an eye on the challenges and risks involved, the policy gains could be significant. First, through an engagement with scholars who pursue such a research agenda, practitioners would get a better understanding of what other key players want and whether mutually acceptable agreements are feasible. [4] Second, to study the South on its own terms does not necessarily mean idealisation of "the other". Hand in hand with such a study may come a recognition of the red lines, and an admission of irreconcilable differences for policy. Finally, as highlighted earlier, grand polarised representations may not have helped policy-makers in the past. Detailed context-sensitive understanding, accompanied by attention to how concepts travel and change across cultures, may generate some pleasant surprises on expanding negotiating space and the identification of like-minded friends and allies.

A Pioneering Role for the GIGA?

Importantly, we at the GIGA are not alone in recognising the importance of a more inclusive and pluralistic approach to scholarship. Amitav Acharya (2014) has advanced just such an approach particularly with reference to the discipline of International Relations. Laurence Whitehead (2000), Peter Katzenstein (2009), and Juergen Rueland (2014) are amongst the other distinguished scholars who have emphasised the importance of grounding Comparative Politics in the regions. Working with these and other like-minded individuals, the GIGA may be able to serve as a focal point for a systematic development of this agenda in the Social Sciences.

The GIGA already has a solid tradition of working in the regions and with the regions. It has several projects that have been operationalising the precepts advanced here. Some economists at the GIGA are conducting experiments in the regions to investigate the conditions in which people from resource-rich or resource-poor contexts are more or less likely to play variations of the "Joy of Destruction" game. Another project by GIGA scholars uses a very different starting point – of International and Comparative Political Theory – and studies norms in different rising powers to build a theory of "legitimate multipolarity". Our researchers on the International Diffusion and Cooperation of Authoritarian Regimes (IDCAR) project flip the democracy coin (and cooperation and peace between democracies) to investigate the international cooperative dynamics of authoritarian regimes. Many GIGA researchers are au fait with multilevel and interdisciplinary analyses, and some have played a leading role in developing the CAS methodology (Basedau and Koellner 2007; Koellner, Ahram, and Sil 2015).

The GIGA is strong on empirical content in the regions. It would now be well-served to use this empirical knowledge to see how existing theoretical concepts travel to and across the regions, and what aspects of theory and method need fundamental rethinking and rewriting. Future work could include studies of how the concept of democracy translates across regions; what shape capitalism takes in different societies; what visions of global order new players bring to the international

4 Note that this global approach requires a considerably lower threshold of engagement with the other party than that suggested by a more poetic but perhaps also more idealistic goal of the "six eyes principle" in "foreign culture and education policy" – that is, seeing with one's own eyes and the eyes of one's negotiating counterpart, and from the common perspective that results from this empathetic interaction (Steinmeier 2015)."

negotiating table, and how these ideas might help us build more equitable but also more resilient institutions of global governance. The GIGA is already taking vital steps in this direction: the next four GIGA Focus publications will apply the precepts presented here, and will examine how differently the phenomenon of democratisation has been interpreted and implemented across regions.

Globalising the Social Sciences requires Western scholarship and policy to take the "rest" into account. But the regions can also not turn a blind eye to developments in Europe and the United States. Even though the United States and the European Union do not constitute a part of our research mandate at the GIGA (nor does Russia, for that matter), our researchers must factor in at least those events and processes outside that have relevance for our core regions. For instance, how EU or US migration policies change has bearing on our regions and emigration patterns, and thus deserve to be taken into account. Even though the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) negotiations do not include any of the countries we study at the GIGA, the estimated impact of the mega-regionals on the multilateral trading system as well as bilateral arrangements means that the TTIP cannot just pass us by.

Our attempt to globalise the Social Sciences comes at a time when there is a need for such an initiative in the real world. Our interlocuters in the policy domain are now patently aware of the missing links that are a result of ignoring the "rest" of the world. The need for a bridge between the regions and the West is clear. At the GIGA, we may be particularly well equipped to develop into this intellectual bridge: one that connects the theories, frameworks, and cases of the West with the theories, frameworks, and cases of our regions. To work in this direction would be a privilege, and also a responsibility, for all those of us concerned with breaking deadlocks and resolving crises that afflict almost all corners of the world today.

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About the Author

Prof. Dr. Amrita Narlikar is the President of the GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies, and Professor at the University of Hamburg. Prior to taking up this appointment, she was Reader in International Political Economy at the University of Cambridge, and the Founding Director of the Centre for Rising Powers. Her research expertise lies in the areas of international trade, rising powers, and multilateral negotiations. She also maintains a strong research interest in India's foreign policy and economy, Sanskrit, and Indian philosophy.

Related Research at the GIGA

The GIGA's institutional research matrix bridges regional expertise (institutes) and central research agendas in social sciences (research programmes). Since 2015 research platforms in Beirut, Delhi, Beijing, Rio de Janeiro, Tokyo, and Tunis support scientific exchange with the regions. Preparations for other locations such as Capetown and Pretoria are underway. Last not least, every two years the GIGA awards a prize for the best journal article in Comparative Area Studies (CAS Award).

Related GIGA Publications

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Imprint

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