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Working Paper

Rethinking modernization: legacies of Parsons and Hilbert

Veröffentlichungen der Abteilung Sozialstruktur und Sozialberichterstattung des
Forschungsschwerpunktes Sozialer Wandel, Institutionen und Vermittlungsprozesse des
Wissenschaftszentrums Berlin für Sozialforschung, No. FS III 96-406

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Suggested citation: Tiryakian, Edward A. (1996) : Rethinking modernization:
legacies of Parsons and Hilbert, Veröffentlichungen der Abteilung Sozialstruktur und
Sozialberichterstattung des Forschungsschwerpunktes Sozialer Wandel, Institutionen und
Vermittlungsprozesse des Wissenschaftszentrums Berlin für Sozialforschung, No. FS III 96-406,
<http://hdl.handle.net/10419/50224>

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FS III 96-406

Rethinking Modernization: Legacies of Parsons and Hilbert

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Paper, presented at the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin, May 14, 1996

November 1996

Abteilung „Sozialstruktur und
Sozialberichterstattung“
im Forschungsschwerpunkt III

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Tiryakian, Edward A.: Rethinking Modernization. Legacies of Parsons and Hilbert.

Discussion Paper FS-III 96-406. Berlin : Wissenschaftszentrum, Berlin, 1996.

URL: <http://bibliothek.wz-berlin.de/pdf/1996/iii96-406.pdf>

Rethinking Modernization: Legacies of Parsons and Hilbert

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I Introduction

It is a great pleasure for me to share with you some observations regarding rethinking a line of sociological analysis, really a perspective on social development, that had an initial vogue the 1950s until about the end of the 1960s. It then came under heavy attack from voices of the Third World - about which part of the world the analysis had been largely preoccupied - and under heavier attack still from a very different (or a seemingly very different) line of analysis in the 1970s. The latter alternative gained dominance in the United States in viewing societal development *not* as directed by goal-oriented actors, and *not* as a function of multiple factors interactive with each other, including cultural and political factors, but really as an unfolding "mega" process of world-wide capitalistic incorporation, which once achieved - and that achievement was just about completed - would then make possible one further transformation: a global socialist overhauling of the capitalist engine. Readers will have readily recognized in these two modes of analysis (sometimes called "theories") what came to be called, respectively, "modernization analysis" and "world system analysis". They shared the spotlight of macroanalysis until the mid-1980s.

What happened in Berlin in November 1989 (and its follow-up consequence of reunification the following year) was, needless to say, a world historic event: the breach in the Berlin Wall was equally a breach in much of the analyses of social change and social development that had prevailed. A breach in what a paradigm has laid out calls for rethinking at least some of the basic premises of that paradigm. The coming down of the Wall and other events of the 1980s prompted me at the

beginning of this decade to start rethinking our paradigm of large-scale societal development and societal change (Tiryakian 1991). The present paper, then, is a continuation and extension of this sociological cogitation.

You will notice that first I mentioned "1989" but then I slipped in the phrase "events of the 1980s". Are these the same? By "1989" I mean the unexpected sociopolitical events that shattered at least one major part of the Communist world, the Soviet Empire, and which registered at least a hypothetical "6" or "7" on a sociological seismic Ritter scale in another part of that world, China.¹ But by "the events of the 1980s" I mean, aside from sociopolitical events, the emergence in world recognition of the arrival of East Asia on the economic scene of globalization, that is, of the emergence in East and Southeast Asia of a new set of major players, with high growth rates, controlled inflation, a favorable balance of trade vis-a-vis already industrialized societies, *and with this economic transformation taking place without increasing inequalities of income between the upper and the lower strata*² - *in fact, growing income inequality has been more marked within Western societies that had made major claims of achieving "welfare states"*.

So, as we started the present decade, we had two anomalies that neither the earlier modernization analysis, nor its arch rival, world-system analysis, could incorporate in their presuppositions: the stellar economic performance of the East in comparison to the West and the internal collapse of the most advanced socialist system the world has known. In many instances, the "East" - and here I mean, let us be clear, predominantly the "core" Sinitic civilization societies (in particular, China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan) with their new "semiperiphery" (Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines) - did not use democratic political institutions, except for Japan.³ The net result of the vast set of transformations that we have seen in the past ten years, and some of the earlier postwar (that is, post WWII) transformations is to offer a very large modern, if not contemporary, laboratory to reformulate how we approach societal development. I have started this line of analysis, in parallel with others (including Wolfgang Zapf and Klaus Müller in Germany, Piotr Sztompka in Poland, Rudolf Andorka in Hungary, Bruno Grancelli in Italy, Ronald Inglehart and Anthony Jones in the United States⁴). I call it provisionally a "neo-modernization" perspective, but would welcome suggestions for a more glamorous or distinctive term: labels matter far less than what they signify.

II Some Presuppositions

Paradigms, theories, modes of analysis are interrelated; what provides a boundary or a frame for a given paradigm, its theories and modes of analysis are a set of presuppositions which, following Imre Lakatos (1970), function as positive and negative heuristics in guiding scientific inquiry. So in this vein, and without seeking to be in any way comprehensive but rather suggestive, let me advance some of the salient presuppositions of neo-modernization analysis, several of which relate to those of the earlier modernization paradigm, but not all.

1. By modernization will be understood *the purposeful, reflective, intended upgrading of a unit or a set of units to increase the productivity of that unit, or in social terms, to increase the wantsatisfaction of concerned actors⁵ and to increase the number of social actors concerned.*
2. Modernization as a process of upgrading either a part of the societal whole or the whole itself has thus to be *relativized in time and space* in that it is not something that happens in "modern" societies of the 19th and 20th centuries. Earlier periods also saw upgrading in units or component of units, upgrading which, in several instances, became institutionalized and long-term lasting.⁶ Clusters of innovations facilitating upgrading in several spheres of human activity (and not just the economic) contribute to the formation of a geo-political *center of modernity*, where several aspects of modernization are taking place more or less at the same time. Again, there are no intrinsic features - certainly not those of the nature of the polity - that assure the permanence of a given center as having a "leading edge" in the ability to upgrade.
3. Neither processes of modernization in a given unit nor the set of units as a whole continue indefinitely, nor at the same rate. In some instances, upgrading may remain at a plateau, or it may decline. Likewise, a center of modernity may become stagnant, less innovative, and decline relative to other emergent centers.⁷
4. Modernization is always a possibility for actors (but not a probability that it will occur or that it will occur as intended). The degrees of freedom available are greater than one (for otherwise this would imply a deterministic structure that acts independent of actors' decisions), since actors can avail themselves in deliberate choices of the resources of the human and non-human environment.
5. The modernization of a total societal unit, that is, of all its major components, is a very rare event.⁸ It is more likely that modernization proceeds unevenly throughout a societal whole.⁹
6. Not only are the variables operative in processes of modernization interactive but particularly in the case of cultural as well as technological factors, their values in a given time pe-

riod may be volatile. In a related manner, a real factor in modernization is the intersubjective complex set of attitudinal dispositions - or *mentalités* - which actors, both elites and non-elites, bring to the "definition of the situation". These dispositions are significant intervening variables in enhancing or limiting the efficacy of human agency in bringing about desired change - they include such factors as the willingness of risk-taking, trust of others, (un)willingness to postpone gratification, and the like.¹⁰ This socio-psychological "bundle" can function as a facilitator, as a detractor, or some combination thereof, for the intended modernization, particularly when the "bundle" becomes attached to broad-based social movements such as nationalism and religious revivals.

7. The intended upgrading and the intended course of development by actors are always subject to correction from unanticipated consequences and reactions by either other units of the societal complex and/or by external units. Modernization as an intended process is subject to contingencies that may or may not be provided for by the actors seeking to modernize a given unit or a system of units.

The above are meant to suggest some of the tacit aspects of the approaches to development processes taken on by neo-modernization. There is a stress on the development capabilities of actors in a given system, there is a stress that societal systems *cannot* be reduced to a single parameter which determines their outcomes, and there is an acknowledgment that there are social costs as important as monetary ones involved in any attempt of changing existing arrangements. Stated somewhat differently, neo-modernization analysis gives a primary emphasis to multiple *endogenous* factors in providing impetus and resources for modernization, and among these factors we might mention those of human agency itself; that is, to invoke Parsons again, there is a "voluntaristic" frame of reference in viewing modernization as a (collective) form of social action. In more mundane terms, actors have the capacity to change for the better their situation by harnessing cultural values, environmental resources and institutional mechanisms, even though the actions undertaken may also produce unforeseen adaptive costs and strains. Societies - no less than individuals - have more than one "script" at their disposal, even if there has been an institutionalization of one to the detriment of others.

III Modernity as a Setting of Surprises

At the start I referred to the political implosion of the Soviet Empire and the economic explosion of East Asia (explosion in the sense of the region becoming a major actor in the global economy) as major societal transformations that were not anticipated in the paramount development models of social change. The Soviet case in particular has been the stimulus for an already vast amount of reflection and reinterpretation - and this should occupy not only historians of the Soviet Union, but also social scientists who are benefiting from the new climate of open research in the post-Soviet world from Eastern Europe to Siberia. It was the key background stimulus for a special focus in the May 1995 issue of The American Journal of Sociology. The focus was, as stated by the editor of the symposium, "whether events such as those of 1989 should - or could - have been predicted" (Hechter, 1995: 1521).

The historian-sociologist Charles Tilly in regarding revolutions on a comparative basis opted for a relatively modest perspective that as a distinct phenomenon, they show coherence [Zusammenhänge] but only "in its variation and in its continuity with nonrevolutionary politics, not in any repetitious uniformity. Its sequences and outcomes turn out to be path, time, and situation dependent, not constant from one revolution to the next" (Tilly 1995: 1605). For Tilly, then, predicting revolution as exemplar of societal discontinuity is not really the mandate of sociology; what is appropriate and feasible is that we seek to account for why and how different societal settings produce "different varieties of forcible seizures of power over states" (ibid., 1602).

The economist Tisnur Kuran introduced a strong reservation regarding predicting revolutions because in an authoritarian/totalitarian regime - we might say, in any other than a genuine democratic regime - there is no 1:1 correlation between what actors *say in public* and what *they feel in private* on any given issue. Consequently, in any given society, cognitive, economic, and social processes may be making it even easier to spark a revolutionary bandwagon without any sensing the potential for social change. The society may be on the verge of a massive explosion, therefore, with everyone continuing to believe - and indeed its members continuing to claim - that it is quite stable" (Kuran, 1995: 1533). He made a further observation that well needs to be heeded:

Preference falsification is a problem not only for undemocratic countries. Even where the right to express offensive views enjoys legal protection, there exist sensitive issues on which people think twice before venturing an idea in public (1995: 1538).

The third perspective in this symposium on anticipating/predicting the unexpected was voiced by Randall Collins who took the maximalist position, so to speak, that not only is prediction the *raison d'être* of sociology qua science but that in the case of the revolution of 1989, his own **geopolitical theory** had led him years before it occurred to predict the Soviet collapse although the theory did not offer "a theoretical basis for predicting what kind of regime would follow" (Collins, 1995:1565). It certainly would be a tour de force for a sociologist who has not done primary research on Soviet societies to have had a much clearer crystal ball polished in neglected geopolitical theory that last flourished at the turn of the century. Neither modernization analysis nor world-system theorists had, to my knowledge, made such predictions in advance of 1989.¹¹ There are two difficulties with Collins' claim to predictive fame. First, my reading of his original pre-1989 pieces relevant for his argument showed that he had indeed discussed, in the context of geopolitical analysis

derived from turn-of-the-century figures like Mahan, Mackinder and others, the fate of the Soviet Empire but based on comparative discussions of other and older empires, what he "predicted" was that the Soviet Empire would *decline* in a period ranging from 50 to 300 years because it had become overextended! Somehow, the power of geopolitical theory is blunted by that temporal dimension, and I need not tell you that "decline" is hardly a synonym for "collapse". Moreover, some empires decline while their states endure (as in the case of the Spanish, French, and British empires), but the Soviet case entails in short order the collapse of an empire *and* the Soviet state.

The second difficulty with Collins' analysis is that one could use the same geopolitical arguments of overextension of "marchland" areas to say that the United States structurally faces the same fate as the Soviet Empire. In fact, Collins briefly acknowledges one "competitor" for forecasting the implosion of the Soviet Empire, d'Encausse's insightful anterior studies of differential demographic birth rates in the Soviet Empire giving population advantages to ethnic minority groups, which, she argued, would weaken Russian hegemony that had constructed the Empire (d'Encausse, 1978, 1991). Collins flips aside the possibility that the same fate awaits the United States, given similar differential birth rates between the traditional white population and the ethnic and racial minorities. He sees the superiority of the American system enabling it to stay indefinitely as a world power. In assessing present conditions, I am much less optimistic regarding the intermediate future, and I think there is as much empirical evidence to support this more guarded perspective as Collins adduces for his optimism.

If I found the arguments of Tilly and Kuran more in keeping with "the evidence" than Collins', I also want to develop the point that sociology has to widen its horizon as to what constitutes large-scale social change and the relation of large-scale social change to modernity. That is, we have to go beyond "revolution" as the focal point of sociological attention in respect of social change: it might be well if we started to think of "revolution" as part of a large set of "surprises" which may characterize our own period of modernity.

Just what do I mean by "surprises"? I mean by this that if we take overall conditions that give a societal system a certain coherence at t_0 , a "surprise" will be registered at t_1 , if the configuration (or structuration) differs significantly from what most observers and actors anticipate from t_0 to be the prevailing conditions at t_1 .

I have alluded to the sociopolitical transformation of Eastern Europe „1989" and to the socioeconomic transformation of East Asia. These were „big surprises" in terms of accepted models of social development. That a major contributing factor to the rapidity of the decline of Soviet hegemony was the resurgence of *nationalism* in Eastern Europe, in countries that had been "Russified" if not „Sovietized" was as much of a surprise for a Marxist historian such as Hobsbawm as it was for Gorbachev. Nationalism as a persisting force of modernity - and not as an anachronism of the pre-WWII European scene, but as a factor of social mobilization in both Western democratic societies and in non-democratic societies - has finally been given the attention it deserves,¹² which does not mean, of course, that it has been viewed favorably, because too much of the phenomenon is associated with its „dark side". The „dark side" has certainly been given prominence in the past four or five years because of other settings where „nationalism" is seen as a destabilizing force, the Transcaucasus and particularly ex-Yugoslavia, which 10 years ago was taken by various scholars as an exemplar of a viable multi-ethnic state.¹³ If these are some of the most visible locales manifesting unexpected strength of nationalism and its variant, „ethnonationalism" (Connor 1994), there are many others, such as the October 1995 Quebec referendum which narrowly missed giving

the Quebec nationalists a mandate to begin proceedings of a „velvet divorce“, the recent formation of a center-right Spanish government made only possible with the support of the nationalist parties of Catalonia and the Basque area (in return for new concessions of autonomy), and, still more recently, the Indian nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) receiving more seats than the long-entrenched Congress Party (which had begun its career originally as a nationalist, anti-colonial pan-Indian movement).

Let me propose other "surprises" of our own recent modernity. Here I have in mind unforeseen qualitative shifts in the sociocultural and sociopolitical environment of the public sphere. The implosion of the Soviet world was completely unforeseen just 10 years ago, and perhaps we need to remind ourselves of the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists in the past decade moving the hypothetical clock of Armageddon closer to "midnight" (or is it "high noon"?) shortly after not only Reagan's powerful war cry against "the evil Empire" but also the implementation of SDI and the deployment of Pershing missiles on German soil. For a little *Gedankenexperiment*, if in 1985 you had invited persons in either the United States, Germany or the Soviet Union to wager either that the Soviet world as such might no longer exist in 1995 but that the rest of the world would be intact physically, or that the Soviet world and the United States might mutually destroy one another in an accidental thermonuclear war before the year 2000, which wager would (reluctantly) have drawn the most bets?

Now let me go back to the 1950s, the first "normal" decade after WWII. At one level, the decade itself was a very good surprise socioeconomically, in the United States, in Western Europe, in Japan. A global recession did not occur, which had been anticipated, and both "winners" and "losers" in the war made very rapid peacetime recoveries. Social scientists in the United States extrapolated from that setting a society marked by: (a) rather steady but not very exciting progress (economically and socially), (b) one following the lifecycle of "the organization man", with an "other-directed" character, echoing what Tocqueville had much earlier noted as the "conformist" aspect of modern democracy, American style, and (c) for good measure, the socio-religious-ethnic identity provided without much effort by simply being "Protestant, Catholic, or Jew".

Unexpectedly, ten years later the sociocultural and sociopolitical scene was vastly different with new social movements, predominantly those of university-age youth, challenging institutional authority of every sort, with the counterculture, the drug culture, sexual revolution mixed in with a militant civil rights movement, and "revolution" becoming part of the daily discourse. Of course, this was very salient in the United States but by no means peculiar to it, since Germany experienced much of it, and the French student movement of May 1968 imported stimuli from both Berkeley and Berlin.

This is not the place to discuss more fully the global aspects and significance of "1968", but my point is that this enormous set of cultural changes - *which modernized many crucial aspects of the lifeworld and social conduct* - was not anticipated in the social analyses and theories prevalent in the 1950s.¹⁴

In a complementary fashion, in the latter part of the 1960s, say from 1965 on, what social science theories and models anticipated the sharp turn to conservatism in the 1970s (and into the 1980s)? I mean more than the political conservatism that for nearly a quarter of a century has prevailed in Western countries.¹⁵ I also mean the predominant turn to political and cultural conservatism of the younger adults. For some observers, this conservatism is to be deplored as manifesting a set of self-centered, hedonistic, "do-your-own-thing" values instead of communitarian or idealistic

values. Whether the changing economic climate of the past 10 years or so has seriously dampened the spirit of social initiatives that gave a momentum to the youth movements of the 1960s or whether we shall have in the early part of the new century/millennium another shift from conservatism to radicalism remains to be seen.

Yet another "surprise" of our modernity has been the upsurge in the public sphere of religious "fundamentalism" in the United States, in Islamic countries, and in other cultural settings (Martin and Appleby 1991). Just as the transformation of a socialist societal complex into a capitalist market orientation was very unexpected in terms of models of economic development, so it might be said that the transformation of a secular public sphere in which the religious voice had been marginalized or moved to the outer periphery was equally unexpected in terms of a cultural development perspective stressing "secularization" as a necessary feature of modernization. And although "secularization" can refer to several conditions and processes, one overriding conception which had been accepted as a given in the dominant sociology of religion circles of the 1960s was the view that as modernity advances, religion becomes more and more "privatized", a matter of individual taste but *not* one of public concern, certainly not a basis for framing the political agenda.

One last set of surprises merits mention. In the last two years we have had what I call "good surprises" in the form of peace initiatives in three settings that had been marked by extreme ethnic conflict: Northern Ireland, Israel and Palestine, and South Africa. To be sure, peace *initiatives* are not the same *as peace settlements*, but that such initiatives have taken place, however long, arduous, and full of bumps the road may be, is still a very net gain in the 1990s from the conditions in each of these settings in previous decades, marked by chronic violence.

If I have spent some time discussing "surprises" - good and bad ones - it is because I think a rich research agenda for neo-modernization analysis is the comparative study of the surprises of modernity, so as to provide us with perhaps a more adequate *theorization* of modernity.¹⁶ Certainly, Germany is a propitious sociological soil for the study of surprises and modernity, having had more than a fair share of "bad surprises" in the dim past and more recently of "good " ones.

IV The Legacies of Parsons and Hilbert

In my final section of this paper, I would like to invoke the names of two major theorists, who should be of particular significance to a German audience, although their relevance for my discussion transcends national consideration.

Talcott Parsons is an apt choice because his theoretical writings provided a core theoretical grounding for much of modernization analysis; and his "German connection" is one that stretched from the beginning of his academic career at Heidelberg, where he "discovered" the spirit of Weber, to the very end, when he died peacefully in Germany after receiving an honorary degree at Heidelberg. But what is the legacy in the context of my discussion? It is essentially twofold.

First, although one may say that his analyses dealt predominantly with the complex functional *differentiation* of systems of action into sub-systems, Parsons was well aware that there is an obverse or a reciprocal problem of social order, and that is the question of *integration* (Parsons 1960). The sphere of "value-consensus", the dynamics of what he termed the "L" (for "latency") cell did not get as much treatment. Today, the situation of the United States in particular, but that of many other societies as well where the problematics of national identity revolve in a very critical way in the separation of a "significant other"¹⁷ from the "nation" - that is, *where the solidarity of the societal community is becoming increasingly challenged by centrifugal forces of fragmentation and so-called "identity politics"* calls for urgent theoretical and practical attention be given to the question of *integration*. One possible result of the lack of integration is the *disintegration* of the societal community, and we have in Europe instances of variations in disintegration: the "velvet divorce" of the (ex-) Czechoslovakia Republic that had held together after WWI; the "separation" without formal divorce of the Flemish and the Walloons; and the acrimonious divorce and disintegration of another post-WWI construct, Yugoslavia. The "integration" of other nation-states should not be taken for granted, for I am convinced we live in a period where the *decoupling* of "nation" and "state" is widely taking place and cannot be assumed to be a "given". It is part of the legacy of Parsons, I would reiterate, that we give theoretical attention based on comparative analyses to the question of "integration".

For Germany, "integration" poses a triple challenge of modernization: the integration of Germany into the European Union, the integration of non-German immigrant populations (especially the second and now the upcoming third generation) into the educational, cultural and political mainstream of Germany, and lastly but perhaps most importantly, the *socio-psychological* integration of Eastern Germans to feel "at home" in a new Germany; this also entails a modernization of thinking on the part of Western Germans that East and West must be on the same plane to do "nation-building" for the 21st century together, collaboratively.

David Hilbert needs as little introduction to a German audience as Parsons, but to an audience of mathematicians, rather than social scientists. Hilbert, who as a child breathed the same air of Königsberg as had Kant 100 years before, was acknowledged at the turn of this century as one of the world's greatest mathematicians.¹⁸ Hilbert was part of the German delegation to Paris for the great International Exposition of 1900, and because of his stature was given the task by his colleagues of preparing the keynote address for the Second International Mathematical Congress, which attended the Exposition. Hilbert prepared a paper that, in its published version, contained 23 "problems" that taken together gave coherence to mathematics as a single field; he specified what constituted a "problem" in terms of general criteria: it should be *clear and easily comprehended*, it should be *difficult yet not completely inaccessible*, and it should be *a guidepost to hidden truths* (Hilbert 1976). In formulating the specific problems as he did, Hilbert enabled a most important stocktaking or inventory of the empirical knowledge of mathematics, of what was known and what had to be addressed. The posing of the problems provided the field of mathematics with a sense of wholeness and provided its practitioners with concrete challenges of seeking to solve them. I would propose that Hilbert's general criteria for stating a problem as well as formulating a list of problems to signal what a scientific field has done and needs to do are very much relevant for rethinking modernization analysis, and more broadly, dynamic macrosociology.

As we head into another turn of the century - or even more, into a turn of the millennium - to draw a list of "problems" which interrelate the social sciences, in terms of what we know and what we do not know, particularly regarding Development", seems to me to be an endeavor of the highest importance.¹⁹ No small part of the challenge of this undertaking is that we do so by „bracketing" ideologies regarding causal factors as to what are development paths and their endstates.

This is also where another legacy of Parsons converges with Hilbert's. Because 50 years ago this year, Parsons brought together a restructuring - yes, a modernization - of the training of sociologists by chairing a new department of "Social Relations" which brought together under one administrative and training roof, sociologists, social psychologists, clinical psychologists, and social anthropologists. It was an unparalleled effort at the *integration* of disciplines so as to develop a common analytical language and a common mode of analysis of "the human condition". Much was accomplished, including the stimulus for a great deal of the interdisciplinary aspects of modernization analysis. But unfortunately, Social Relations was not permanently institutionalized, and after 20 years, it "imploded", not as violently as the Soviet Union, but just as much at its level.

Today, I would say, the various "real world" parameters and conditions, including the emergence of globalization in various spheres, and not just the economic one, are producing interesting and challenging mixtures of "order" and "chaos". I don't think the training imparted in most departments - at least the ones in the United States with which I have some familiarity - are adequate, either to specify the key "problems" of our disciplines, or to provide provisional answers to pressing, urgent problems of our own phase of modernity, including several problems of "integration". To be more specific, a critical problem for the social sciences, following the inspiration of what Hilbert posed for mathematical sciences, would revolve around the problem of trust. Trust has begun to receive the theoretical and empirical attention it deserves as a key aspect of the social order, and even as a variable, for example in the transition or maintenance of democracy (Barber 1980; Eisenstadt 1995; Fukuyama 1995; Misztal 1996; Sztompka 1996). What we need to establish empirically and comparatively is something like this: *under what conditions can trust, damaged by actions of A*

toward B, be rebuilt? "Distrust" and "mistrust" are extremely corrosive of the social fabric, and the greater the level of distrust, the greater the social costs for all parties and their societal system as a whole.

In the United States, "trust" in government is at a dangerously low ebb,²⁰ and "trust" of blacks and whites regarding the judicial system in cases involving both has also declined to a similar low level. Is it possible for the two communities to rebuild trust? Is it possible for Muslims in Bosnia to rebuild trust in their Serbian neighbors after what they have been through? Is it possible for Palestinians and Lebanese to trust Israelis after murderous bombing raids? Is it possible for Israelis to trust Arabs after wanton terrorist attacks? Is it possible for Afrikaners to trust the new ANC government in South Africa? Needless to say, trust is a reciprocal relationship and if A comes to mistrust or distrust B, that implies the same on the part of B. If we tour the world today, we find that the condition of "trust" has become an important domestic or internal question for a great many societies. I doubt that there is a single answer regarding how to rebuild trust, but it seems like an empirical phenomenon with much variability, one that I think is as interesting and probably more fruitful for social scientists to study today than the fetish with "revolutions".

I stated that I didn't think our present graduate training programs are adequate to deal with "trust" or related broad aspects of our evolving global reality and its mixture of "order" and "chaos". Departments in the social sciences tend to have boundaries that may provide some depth but also limit horizons. There are, to be sure, some models that aspire to be general theories which link scholars in several disciplines; the one enjoying large success in the United States is "rational choice", a "modernization" of classical utilitarian theory. I cannot get very excited about it as a mode of accounting for societal changes since it makes no room for the cultural matrix of social action, for culture as a variable, nor for changes in sentiments, nor for personality as a variable in social situations. Its accounts of real world changes are more ad hoc, ex post facto explanations. But in any case, what would be in my judgment most desirable is some sort of renovation of an interdisciplinary "social relations" program for graduate studies, one in which sociology, comparative history, cultural studies, and a broad spectrum of psychology would be a core cluster, but with exposure to other fields such as political economy, and, for advanced students, even comparative civilizational analysis (Eisenstadt 1986; Huntington 1996). I admit this may be very difficult to implement, since the original "Social Relations" came into being under circumstances that might not be reproduced today, including the fact that it started shortly after the end of a war, when sometimes "fresh beginnings" are easier. Perhaps the emerging "age of globalization" (Albrow 1996) with new challenges to understand "global - local" relations and their dynamics, will be the spur for seriously undertaking the "modernization" of graduate training in the social sciences.

I close by asserting that rethinking what *are* the problems of our several disciplines - what we do know, what we don't know, what we might be able to know - and rethinking creative ways of dealing with these problems is to make capital use of the joint legacy of Parsons and Hilbert. And since I prepared this communication in Germany, perhaps it is apt to close with Hilbert's own words:

Wir werden wissen.

Wir müssen wissen.

Notes

1. It might be added that "1989" - just as "1968" - is both a year but also a period around the year. For the vast sociopolitical transformation and ultimate implosion of the Soviet world, "1989" really began shortly after the accession of Gorbachev as Party Secretary and it closed with the formal dissolution of the Soviet Party in 1991. Similarly, "1968" was a climax, at least in the United States, to the rapid sociocultural and sociopolitical movements that began to take over the landscape of the public sphere during the Johnson administration and which did not wind down until well into the Nixon administration.
2. As indicated, say, by a Gini-coefficient index of inequality.
3. I mean post-WWII Japan with its parliamentary system and demilitarization.
4. For representative collective works, see Zapf (1990) and Grancelli (1995).
5. Ultimately, "upgrading" translates into improving the quality of life in various sectors of the human condition. It does not refer solely to economic conditions, but to political, cultural, and social ones as well. I do not argue that such upgrading is a continuous unfolding, which attached the first formulation of modernization analysis to the "progress" paradigm of the 19th century. Nor, on the other hand, do I see "downgrading" as the underlying process of modernity, which might obtain from certain Marxist and post-modern perspectives, respectively.
6. What is more a related *supposition* than *presupposition* since it is subject to empirical verification is that an intended upgrading of all units or sectors of a societal system and at the same time only begins with the French Revolution (in the first few years of the First Republic) and thereafter appears on a few limited occasions.
7. Just what is the territorial demarcation of a center needs greater specification. Nation-states have usually been taken as units of comparative analysis, which might lead us to treat a center as a country. However, it should be taken into account that a center may be a region within a country acting as a pole of innovation and attraction for the rest of the country, as well as for populations outside, *or* the center may be a broader territorial cluster of societies in relative propinquity to one another. To illustrate, Italian city-states formed a center of modernity in the 14th and 15th centuries, while the Paris-London-Berlin "triangle" might equally be taken as a center of modernity for the period 1880-1910.
8. I would say there are a few societies that seemed to upgrade all their components - economic, cultural, political and technological - with the 19th century offering perhaps the greatest concentration of such, as in the cases of Great Britain, Germany, France, Japan, and the United States.
9. Indeed, it might be argued that by placing an emphasis, or a societal priority, on one sector, deficit attention attends other sectors, which will show up as societal problems subsequently. For those familiar with the Parsonian A-G-I-L schema of societal functions, this presupposition serves to indicate that if priority is set on economic development and technical efficiency (the "A" cell), shortages may occur in the "I" cell. Or, if high emphasis is placed on value-consensus ("L"), as in today's fundamentalism, economic development will be deprived. The Soviet system seems to have been a situation where a high emphasis was placed on the political/ideological factor ("G") over economic considerations; when Gorbachev sought to modernize the system via economic restructuring, deficits in the "L" and "G" sphere became evident.
10. Parsons' "pattern-variables" presented some of the subjective orientations of "self to "other" as *variables* that typify modernity. In recent years, important cultural and political changes may lead us to question the association of some patterns as necessarily "modern". Thus, the *return of "mechanical*

solidarity", albeit in a "modern" form in both advanced modern "democratic" societies (particularly the United States with ethno-racial and gender identities) and not-so-industrialized or democratic ones, or the efficacy of "collectively orientation" as a positive factor in the economic development of East Asia, suggest that modernization does not have a necessary pairing or cluster of "modern" (in this context, the variables of "achievement" and "self-orientation") in contradistinction to "traditional" value-orientations. What needs to be emphasized is that advanced modernity may well entail a pluralism in value-orientations, on the one hand, and on the other, a modernization of at least some "traditional" value-orientations. Again drawing on the United States, "affirmative action programs" were enacted to promote the incorporation of minority groups into the larger society, but these programs were, in effect, giving weight to "particularism" over "universalism".

11. For that matter, in going over various leading public affairs journals published in 1990, I have not found articles anticipating that Russia would turn its back on Communism and that the Communist Party would dissolve itself. Things happened at an incredible rate of change from 1988-1991, and one expert's guess was as good as the next.
12. The attention does not come just from scholars and intellectuals, but also from practical politicians. Although all parties other than the "extreme right" shun the label "nationalist", most parties in France, for example, have coopted a key emphasis of LePen's Front National demand for making France for the French" by severely restricting immigration and immigrant benefits.
13. In a similar vein, in the 1970s Lebanon was hailed as a successful Middle East exemplar of Lijpart's "consociational democracy".
14. The leading theorist of the 1950s, Talcott Parsons, had in some essays (on Germany and on race relations in the United States) discussed the strains on a system brought about by modernization. In the case of Germany in the 1930s, the strain had proven too heavy; in the case of the United States, the value-system and institutional commitment, Parsons felt, were sufficient to provide an upgrading of the condition of blacks without changes in the nature of the polity. In a sense, Parsons' analysis has, until now, proven to be a better understanding of the dynamics of American society than that of his radical detractors in the 1960s.
15. I would also include in this the administrations of Mitterand in France and Gonzalez in Spain - socialist in name, but overall conservative in action.
16. As I understand it, Ulrich Beck's discussion of modernization in terms of risks (Beck 1986) should be very congruent with the above discussion of modernity as a setting of surprises. In a sense, all endeavors at upgrading, which is a key feature of processes of modernization, entail a certain level of risk; perhaps the ultimate risk in a global civilization of modernity is *not* to seek modernization, that is, to seek to keep the various parameters of the A-G-I-L and their interchanges "frozen".
17. It should be obvious that the "significant other" I intend is not that of George Herbert Mead. I am talking about blacks as "significant other" for whites and reciprocally in the United States; of Turks and "Ossies" for "Germans"; and reciprocally, of Russians for Latvians in Latvia and reciprocally, and so on.
18. My source materials for Hilbert comes from the excellent biography of Reid (1986). Hilbert's rival for preeminence in mathematics 100 years ago was the equally renown French Poincaré. *Inter alia*, the national rivalry between the two had an interesting parallel in the contest for discoveries between the French Pasteur and the German Koch in the field of microbiology.
19. For a complementary discussion of social problems, see the recent article by Neil Smelser (1996).
20. This is typified by presidential aspirant Robert Dole early in the 1996 presidential campaign making public statements that he would not trust President Clinton to babysit with a child (and not because the president's saxophone might keep a child awake!).

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