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Global Hegemonism and the rise of Comprador Intellectualism

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One of the attendant effects of globalisation and the hegemonising forces unleashed thereof has been the rise of comprador intellectualism. This is a genre of intellectual analysis which by its failure to elaborate on the class character of globalisation tends to uphold, consciously or unconsciously, the dominant liberal doctrine underpinning globalisation. The tragedy associated with this intellectual capitulation is that it has rendered futile, any efforts to expose the ills of globalisation on the intellectual frontier. The relegation of Marxism and the propagation of an intellectual genre bereft of class analysis has pre-empted the revolutionary movements of the workers, students and other revolutionary forces in the third world economies. The posting of Marxism as unhappy spirit begging to be laid to rest have thus provided an opportune moment for fragmentation of social thought. Far from the fact that comprador intellectualism arose out of the collapse of the Socialist project, it is a critical component of globalism as it reflects the all-powerful trend-setting tendencies of the global hegemonism which is so pervasive as to impose conformity and what can be believed to be acceptable intellectual currents. The posting of knowledge as power via the structuring but indeterminate discourses that are thereby produced, and the corresponding possibility of deconstructing empowered discourses, becomes itself extremely powerful as an orientation to analysis and understanding in research and intellectual discourse.

Key words: Hegemonism, *globalisation*, *Marxism*, Democracy, fragmentation, Africa.

INTRODUCTION

The experience of social science research in the third world is indicative of a discipline currently under siege from global hegemonism. This hegemonism more overtly discernible in the political, social, cultural and economic spheres is subtly manifesting itself in the intellectual sphere through epistemological and methodological dimensions that are, far from being critical (as they purport to be), have consciously and unconsciously contributed to the reproduction of this global hegemony. To be radical today is to use all the prowess of your oratory and analytical skills of Marxism or Leninism to uphold the liberal conclusions of a Locke or a Montesquieu. Shiviji (1991).

Drawing on the work of Michael Foucault on the nexus

between knowledge and power, the paper will attempt to explore how this global hegemonism is being refracted in the social sciences by showing how comprador intellectualism tend to reproduce the asymmetrical relations of power in global knowledge productions. The first part will elaborate on how hegemonism reproduces itself and what are the attendant effects on social sciences. The subsequent parts will elaborate on the refraction of hegemonism in social sciences by giving a detailed outline of comprador intellectualism. That is the lack of a critical approach to research practice and knowledge production as key symptoms. The main point or the key argument will be that the posting of knowledge as power via the structuring but indeterminate discourse that are

thereby produced, and the corresponding possibility of deconstructing empowered discourse, becomes itself extremely powerful as an orientation to analysis and understanding in social science research. This will be taken as the starting point for advocating new directions in research practice, theory and concept building that would advance the democratisation of the global order.

HOW HEGEMONISM REPRODUCES ITSELF

The late 20th century has witnessed the rise of powerful globalising economic, political, and cultural trends underlined by the neo-liberal ideology. Hence in economic terms there is apparently a universal movement towards the adoption of the neo - classical liberal economic fundamentals on a world scale. This was well captured by Cox and Sinclair (1991) when he pointed out that the market appears to be bursting free from the bonds of national societies, subjecting a global society to its laws.

A corollary to this economic hegemony is political universalism as shown by attempts to advance liberal democracy. This is a type of democracy with a minimalist definition of viewing democracy in terms of multi-partyism, periodic elections, and governmental succession by constitutional and electoral procedures guaranteed under the rule of law. This type of political organisation of society is variously enforced through pre-conditions and strings attached to bilateral and multilateral aid in the less developed world.

In the cultural sphere, the interpenetrating contexts generated by globalising phenomena, together with associated mobile, translocal and diasporic communities have greatly contributed to this global hegemony. In as much as pluralism is upheld under globalisation, there is no denying of the fact that communities are both tied into and constructing trans-local networks, such that while people might be organising and acting at local spatial scales, they are consistently framing their identities with reference to larger scale and global contexts hence the deliberate conceiving of the idea of a mass culture. These developments have created serious challenges for social science research in the sense that they have greatly impacted on knowledge production as well. Global hegemony in political, economic and cultural spheres reflects unequal power relations among social groups on a world scale. In the intellectual sphere this equals intellectual capitulation to liberalism by the radical school.

Before delving much into outlining the knowledge/power nexus in the practice and production of knowledge in social science, it is pertinent to try and understand the political and economic dimensions of this hegemonism and the impact on knowledge production. On this aspect I shall draw much on the work of Cox and Sinclair (1991). An attendant effect of

globalisation that gave rise to unequal power relations on a world scale has been the fragmentation of social forces. This subsequently fragmented social thought and thereby creating this hegemony in the social sciences. One effect of globalisation that brought about the fragmentation of social forces has been the location of production system at points of greatest cost advantage. This economic system is sustained by among other things, cheap and malleable labour. This has been achieved through the inexorable weakening of the power of labour unions by fragmenting labour through the creation of a segmented periphery of relatively disposable short-term, temporary, part-time, subcontracting, putting out, and underground economy producers. This is a shift from economies of scale of Fordist-Taylorist mass production to the economies of flexibility of post-Fordism. The latter development has been termed the MacDonaldisation of the work force. Whereas the Fordist-Taylorist system afforded solidarity among the labour force, the MacDonaldisation turned labour into a mass of low-paid, insecurely employed, unprotected workers. Further divided along lines of gender, religion, ethnicity and national origin, these workers perceived each other as enemies rather than the system that exploits them. Cox and Sinclair (1991). Combined with large-scale unemployment caused by the substitution of physical manpower with technology, this tended to produce fear and concern for personal survival rather than collective protest among workers. This has been the case particularly in the third world and Africa in particular. As pointed earlier on, this fragmentation of labour is at the heart of the hegemonism in social science.

The fact that the working class now has a fragmented objective existence and a problematic common consciousness, has undermined the ability of social scientists in the third world to build theories on a social fact that obviously seem to have a different objective existence from what they (social scientists) perceive. It also complicated the development of conceptualisations that uses class analysis as its standpoint. For this paper the dearth of Marxist analysis will be taken as a significant by-product of this new hegemonism in global affairs. For the social sciences, the fragmentation of the labour body means they can no longer speak meaningfully of the working class as a united social force on the national let alone world level. This fragmentation pre-empts the basis upon which social thought should be conceived rendering invalid the intellectual framework of class analysis. Marxism as a political discourse identifiable with social science research has foundered on this fragmentation because labour which has been a critical constituent that had given practical meaning to its assumptions, now has a fragmented existence.

This fragmentation upon which hegemonism thrives have not only pre-empted social thought, but also fragmented it. The emergent social structure under the fragmenting influence of hegemonic forces complicated and divided social thought on the categories of gender, ethnicity, religion, and region, which are often the basis of

segmentation of social forces. Hegemonic forces thrive on segmented social forces. However these social forces also comparable to social facts in classical positivist social science parlance have the potential, if they can merge their consciousness and concerns for a new political discourse. Hegemonism and the resultant fragmentation of social thought justifiably explains why the left have been said to have failed to recast social thought in tandem with the changing structures of production. Cox and Sinclair (1991), argued that the left have either remained mired in its Keynesian positions of the 1960s and even more than usually fragmented by the polemic sectarianism or seemingly accepted the neo-conservative rationale of globalisation without being very clear about how this is to be reconciled with socialism's commitment to social equity. The collapse of the socialist project that shall be explained in the latter part of this paper helped to accentuate this fragmentation of social thought but did not cause it in the first place. Just like the fragmentation of social thought, the collapse of the modernisation project of Socialism and the Nation State were results of an unrelenting attack by the hegemonising forces.

The social sciences have to develop new concepts if they are to whither this storm of hegemonism. According to Shiviji (1991), what matters in the end is not what words are used but what conceptions are applied and in whose interest. This is a call for transformative intellectualism but not to transform intellectuals, which in the latter case, would be tantamount to capitulation to the liberal wing. Transformative intellectualism in this case is what one may define as a critical engagement with discourse in order to advance the interest of the downtrodden masses. In confronting globalisation through transformative intellectualism, scholars should be careful not to capitulate to the hegemonising forces by rationalising transformation of intellectuals at the expense of transformative intellectualism. This understanding is informed by a view to globalisation as more of the same. That is contemporary globalisation is driven by the same desires, intend and assumptions that have driven modern expansionary processes of exploration, imperialist settlement and colonialism. The motive for social science research which is to change or develop new concepts should not be confused with capitulation. Social science research has to retool intellectually and develop a new critical perspective on the relationship between global change and social power without dropping the standpoint of class analysis. As Fanon pointed, it is also hard to see current instances, processes and formulation of resistance and struggles as fundamentally different from those which accompanied capitalist industrialisation and colonialism, and which now accompany globalising neo-liberal governance frames and US unilateralism. If concepts have to be recast therefore, this should be in the interest of none

other than the working classes! Hence Marxism is still very critical as an anti-thesis to the new global hegemonism in social sciences.

Besides its fragmentation, social thought have also been left vulnerable to hegemonising forces in the wake of the reconstitution of the state under globalisation. Traditionally, the role of the state has been conceived as a buffer protecting the national economy from disruptive external forces and to encourage economic development for the benefit of its people. This has changed now to one of adapting domestic economies to the perceived exigencies of the world economy. Government accountability to foreign creditor nations far outweighed accountability to their own citizens as conditions for access to borrowing and for roll-over of existing debt became more closely tied to integration with the global economy and to the adoption of economic policies conducive to world economy interest. The impact on social science research is that any research findings deemed to expose the powerful financial interests would not receive support from the government. The onuses of adjustment have also fallen on social services including education. With the pervasiveness of hegemonism, this policing of the academia also account for the shunning of the radical scholar by funding organisation. This has greatly inhibited the development of critical research in the social sciences that had grown astronomically in the period preceding the rise of liberation movements in Africa. Drawing from what has been discussed on the political and economic facets of this hegemonism and how it has impacted on social sciences; attention now will be turned to elaborating in detail the development of this hegemonism in the practice and production of knowledge in this discipline

REFRACTION OF HEGEMONISM IN SOCIAL SCIENCE PRACTICE.

The paper shall now advance a Foucauldian perspective that power permeates knowledge production. This comprise of all assumptions regarding social phenomena and all practices of research. It follows that the infusion of power in research praxis as in social relations more generally characterises the present predicament in social science research. In light of the new configurations of power in the international system it has emerged that both researcher and researched are located within, and maintaining power relations with all the attendant exclusions and privileges that goes with it. This has impacted, albeit with unwelcome effects, on social science research practice. The type of questions asked, the choice of methods used and the choice of interpretations of the material generated all tend to mirror the interests of the powerful, who as in the present scenario, are those that favour bourgeoisie democracy. Commenting on this Foucauldian perspective Sullivan and Brockington (2004) pointed out that processes of signification and meaning

/interpretation are infused by power, which means that particular discursive constructions of reality become dominant or hegemonic. Knowledge thus is produced, exchanged and constructed discursively, such that inequalities are maintained and magnified by the discourses supporting particular empowered assumptions and structures. This becomes the famous Foucauldian equation that power = knowledge with the sustained ignorance of other knowledges, both conscious and otherwise, further fostering exclusion and maintaining the power of particular discourses.

This is the situation that characterises the present scenario in social science research. Taken to its logical conclusion it calls into consideration the politically constitutive role of the academic.

The relegation of Marxism in current social science research point to this intellectual power struggle fostering hegemony. However it has to be pointed out that advocating for the inclusion of Marxism in knowledge production is by no means to give it the status of a catechism, but is done in the interest of generating well informed, rather than fuzzy and agnostic positions. Underlying the production of informative epistemologies is an intellectual approach that engages a variety of discourses. For the social sciences this would afford the raising of such questions as the relevance of mainstream intellectual productions to the interest of the large masses and popular classes. Currently there is a tendency by radical scholars to shun Marxism for fear of being labelled old-fashioned or demagogic. This marked the intellectual capitulation characterised by the laughing out of the intellectual court of the radical perspective with the eventual appropriation by radical scholars of the dominant discourses. Radical concepts are now being derided as leftist fads or scorned as demagogic. Nzimande and Sikhosana (1995), pointed to this hegemonism by problematising the dearth of Marxist analysis in most of the South African scholars' writings. They pointed to a tendency to simply abandon some of the fundamental concepts of Marxism-Leninism (for example, dictatorship of the proletariat and vanguardism) without adequate theorisation of why they are no longer applicable. This has engendered a tendency in the social sciences of talking about democracy stripped of its class content. The greatest challenge for the social sciences research particularly in imperialist dominated countries has been none other than the production of comprador intellectualism (referred in other circles as institutional intellectualism). This is an intellectual genre that fails to critically engage with and elaborate on the class character of the dominant discourse for the purpose of advancing anti-imperialism and class struggle in the interest of social transformation and emancipation.

Comprador intellectualism as part of this new hegemonism in global affairs is a culmination of a conscious or unconscious production of intellectual analysis that

tends to uphold dominant discourses. Analyses that are purportedly given as alternatives incrementally differ from the parent discourse but they retain much of the scope of analysis of the original or parent discourse. In the end the knowledge that is generated have sustained dominant class interests at the expense of the popular masses. This problem currently grips social science research. The defection to the right by some leftist scholars like Social Democrats, for example, illustrates this hegemonism. Intellectuals on the left like Social Democrats have accepted the neo-conservative rationale of globalisation (the new hegemonism) without being very clear about how this is to be reconciled with socialism's commitment to social equity. This is purely compradorian as also signified by the conflation of popular concepts with bourgeois projects. This has seen the coining of concepts that nevertheless far from being significant in understanding the causal dynamics underlying social processes tend to create more confusion. The invention of such terms like 'market socialism', 'socialist civil society', in (Slovo, J (2005) for example, point to a change in orientation to research and to the interpretations of findings which signifies an incrementalist epistemological orientation to discourse analysis as opposed to a transformatory epistemological orientation that affords a more broader and critical engagement. This discourse hybridisation is a very important characteristic of comprador intellectualism, that comprador intellectualism upholds class interest of the powerful is illustrated by the problem currently be-devilling social science research in the field of Development. Researchers in this area have failed to proffer adequate theoretical prescriptions to operationalise development strategies that would deliver third world countries from the clutches of poverty largely because their compradorian approach inhibited the transcending of the normative and mainstream intellectual conceptualisations of Development. Transcending the normative and mainstream in this case means an intellectual approach to research and concept development aimed at transforming the world for the benefit of the proletariat. Himmelstrand et al. (1994) commenting on this aspect noted the stagnation of development theorisation pointing out that development theories have gone full circle. This is an acknowledgement of the failure by intellectuals to transcend the normative and mainstream intellectual conceptualisations. This comprador intellectualism becomes a critical component of the new hegemonism in global affairs as it reflects the all powerful trend-setting tendencies of mass media which is so pervasive as to impose conformity and what are globally believed to be accepted intellectual currents. Hence certain discourse becomes the 'in thing' with the attendant frames of analysis becoming fashionable. Consequently elitism becomes the order of the day. These elites to a larger extent determine the frameworks and propagate the parameters of intellectual engagement to create hegemony in intellectual circles.

In comprador intellectualism there is a tendency to

accept certain terms as generally fundamental and sacred. This is an acceptance made at face value without an attempt to transcend the set parameters of intellectual analysis under which these terms are used. Hence in current social science research terms like 'democracy', 'good governance', 'civil society', for example, has become so fashionable and current that one rarely asks questions on the history of the emergence of these concepts and their significance and the problems they raise. As pointed by Narsoo (1994), the use of the term civil society for example, has become all things to all people. This implies that researchers have tended to accept and use the term in a pragmatic sense without adequate examination of its historical and theoretical meaning. Hence according to Narsoo (1994), it has become fashionable to invoke the magic term civil society as panacea for the ills of the failed East European regimes, the decline of the welfare state, the ailing economies of the African continent. This is the neo-liberal understanding and usage of the concept civil society that strips it of its class content. This is a reflection of the new hegemonism in global affairs that is currently be-devilling research work. No doubt therefore that this global hegemonism in its onslaught have belittled the contribution of other discourses particularly the Marxist-Leninist analysis. In this context social science research therefore has tended to reflect dominant class interest. Lacan (1977) made reference to the pervasiveness of dominant class interest in knowledge production. He pointed how research shaped by such parochial interest degenerate into elitism to the detriment of other epistemologies. He noted that the production and maintenance of hegemonic discourses require points de capiton. These are words and symbols that act like upholstery buttons in fixing the fabric of meaning onto the structures of language. These are key signifiers around which discourse revolves and through which power is reproduced (Stott 1992). As in the case of current social science research words like 'civil society', 'good governance', 'participatory development' etc, assume that status. They comprise the Meta language the self-referential truths claims of particular discourses. Their deployment permits, and is required by, the 'language games' through which participation in discursively empowered communities is made possible.

The NGO sector, which is a major player in social science research, has greatly contributed to the reproduction of comprador intellectualism. Girded by the theoretical underpinnings of the so-called Alternative Development Paradigm whose major point of departure is the principle of the bottom-up approach, have tended to pre-empt critical intellectualism by diffusing the potential of class conflict through their palliative care. Employing a technocratic approach to development, the NGO society particularly the donor funded ones resembles an exclusive intellectual society. Knowledge

generated is completely out of touch with the urgent social crises of the poor but reflects modernity's desire driven assumptions of social stasis and manageability (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980). Overallly this has worked to the advantage of the hegemonising forces in global affairs. That the researcher is by definition constructed within the particular intellectual morays of the academy and bolstered by the structural inequalities that consolidates decision-making power among those already holding wealth and power; it is no wonder that hegemonic tendencies have threatened social science research in third world intellectual set-ups. In selecting questions, methods, locales, theoretical frames the researcher is faced by insurmountable obstacles from powerful globalising forces. There are institutional obstacles ranging from a lack of support from local academic institutions to publish work in local contexts, to threats of litigation if one publishes analyses that expose local resistance to powerful International NGOs, donors and corporations. This even explains why epistemological productions of the colonial period that reflected the interest of the colonial masters received much funding and publicity with the sustained ignorance of other knowledge. The practice of social science research has therefore worked to prop up the reproduction of the rules and assumptions that underpinned the global asymmetric relations of power in knowledge production.

Research practice in less developed countries is dominated by power inequalities between the researcher and the researched. These inequalities, which range from economic to inequalities in levels of education have to a larger extent accounted for the stifling of the voice of the researched, largely because in the course of conducting fieldwork these structural inequalities work to confer some distance between the researcher and the researched. It is also this distance that becomes essential to the ways in which social and economic differences are constructed and maintained eventually authorising dominant and dominating discourses of the other of field work and of modernity more generally. For example, taking Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism, social phenomena is determined by the ways people experience their existence and thereby make choices based on this experience (Jean-Paul Sartre, 2004). Now in a context of sharp inequalities between the researcher and the researched, this aspect is not captured as the researcher assumes an authoritative voice. This understanding is essential in realizing that the by-product of social science research under such conditions in the third world become socially produced texts and building blocks in the construction of accepted discourses.

THE WAY FORWARD FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

Having thus gone far in trying to understand how this new hegemonism has been reproduced in the practice of social

science research and by highlighting the infusion of power in research praxis as in social relations more generally, it is an acknowledgement of the politically constitutive role of academic engagement. There is a possibility of deconstructing this hegemony on the intellectual frontier. This will necessarily raise some questions such as what are the probable reasons for this hegemonism to become so pervasive. Why has there been intellectual capitulation by the radical scholar or according to Cox and Sinclair, why has there been no critical thinking on the left. Discursions on the dearth of critical thinking on the left have pointed to a number of factors. Samir Amin (1997) has argued that the collapse of the great modernisation projects particularly Socialism and the Nation State in the late 1980s, account for this hegemonism in intellectual circles. Amin's view is that faced by the collapse of the modernisation projects humanity is at a loss on how to project the course of history. Social thought is now characterised by fragmentation. This fragmentation according to Amin, provide fodder for wayward conceits that direct it away from its needed reconstruction. His conceptualisation of history and the consequent impact on social thought is that it (history) has moved out of a period of the former sort that foundered on the current crisis. In other words, the hegemonising tendency is an attempt by the bourgeoisie, albeit with the connivance of the intellectuals on the left, to manage as well as possible this meaningless history. Implicitly, it's a proclamation to the effect that what is happening goes in no direction that anyone can discover, let alone hope to influence. This engenders the acceptance of the essential features of the established system including the notion that the market dominates everything. To some extent what Amin argues holds water particularly in light of the view that the crisis in Eastern Europe and the failure of democracy in Africa and the apparent success and stability of western bourgeoisie democracy have created pessimism in the former. Hence as Amin (1997) puts it. the motives leading to these conclusions are understandable: they stem from disarray consequent to the exhaustion even collapse of the great projects marking the preceding stage of history especially the socialist project but also that of the nation state.

Indeed there is no doubting that the collapse of the socialist project dealt a serious blow to social science research on leftist scholars. However what needs to be borne in mind is that there is nothing to celebrate in the capitalist project, which is also plagued with serious challenges. The moment one begins to understand these problems, it will be easy to appreciate why the collapse of the socialist project should not be taken as a reason to accept hegemonism in all aspects including the practice of social science research. Modern day capitalism is reeling from a host of problems that include pollution, crime, social inequalities and the

associated political tensions, and environmental problems (Batiwala, 2002). The popular masses have not relented in their struggle against capitalism. Such social forces are emerging among women, environmentalist, peace activists, indigenous people, trade unions and churches. What this implies and which should be the way forward for social science research is that a re-orientation to research is possible. One that employs the Marxist perspective has to be revived. For it is the strong contention of this paper that only through a research practice that make use of class analysis, can social science researches begin to shake off the hegemonising forces.

It is through the use of class analysis in research and knowledge production that the structural relations of power and inequality that tend to authorise dominant and domineering discourses can be unravelled. This will go a long way in showing that knowledge production under globalisation is related to power and hence society can refute any intellectual analysis as definitive. This affords the delineating of the power relations and structures that are projected by the hegemonising discourses. The posting of knowledge as power via the structuring but indeterminate discourses that are thereby produced, and the corresponding possibility of deconstructing empowered discourses, becomes itself extremely powerful as an orientation to analysis and understanding in research, and Marxism is quite critical.

Collorary to the use of class analysis is the adoption of a deconstructionist research approach, which is a pertinent framing of globalising phenomena as infused with and sustained by bio-power. That is the influence and control of sovereign authority over the bodies, mind and subjectivities of all those constructed as its citizens hence the need to emphasizes the importance of considering, exploring and critiquing the art of knowledge production. One such other way is querying of the objective reality of the truths claims regarding reality proposed by particular discourses. This requires a critical assessment of what are termed key signifiers that hold a discourse together. One would have to query the historical origins of such key signifiers and delineating the social contexts that made their deployment possible. As a proposed recommendation for social science research, this will necessarily call into examination of terms like 'civil society,' 'global civil society', 'participatory development', 'democracy' and many such other terms around which hegemonism is made possible. This is a suggestion to the effect that it is possible to deconstruct or unpack the apparent fixity of meaning implied in language to show that words, images etc, can be read and situated socially, such that they indicate something of the contexts of value in which they were/are produced (Foucault, 2004). The implications for research of this deconstructionist approach are quite profound. They include analysis and reconsideration of implicit and situated assumptions built into all secondary material. Such an approach to social science research also is demanding of the researcher, because it implies and even demands a

similar willingness to reflect on, and deconstruct, one's own subject positions and assumptions. As put forward by Bourdieu (1990), to attempt critique of one's own habitus or constrained agency/intentionality in any endeavour. This may sound like a call for a consideration of some philosophical issues, which however, is not the task of this paper, but the above considerations are critical to social science research endeavour under the onslaught of globalising phenomena.

The deconstructionist approach to research becomes very pertinent and critical in third world contexts where the aspect of inequality can bring a lot of distortions. For example, by demanding critical reflection on one's own subject positions and assumptions in the process of research and interpretation, it can be a very critical approach in subverting biases in discourse production that are power related. Hence the aspect of inequality which has hitherto fostered hegemony in social science research can be dealt with not by taking it as given, but by objectifying the objectifying distance assumed by the modern researcher and the social conditions that makes it possible. This also requires self-analysis and a critique of the power/bio-power constraining all individual readings and experiences of reality, and thus again places subjectivity as central to research practice and interpretation.

In this regard phenomenological and embodiment approaches to field-based research and writings have much to offer in terms of validating ways of knowing and experiencing the world that are not easily shoe-horned into hegemonising discourses. That subjective and experiential dimension of research are receiving increasing emphasis stems from the fact that the felt aspects, both bodily and psychologically of what people do, once they become the concern of the researcher, they enable the closing of the gap between abstract idealisation of phenomena and the practicalities that shape it. This is because any social phenomenon is concretised as embodied experience, and that embodiment is an existential condition in which the body is the subjective source or intersubjective ground of experience (Heidegger, 1962). Similarly, the bearing and the experiences of the researcher in conducting field work; the interpretations of research findings and the write up become part of the process and primary material of research. Here again its a turn towards considering the power and other phenomena embodied by the act and process of writing and producing research as discourse, which requires a parallel reflectivity regarding one's own empowered location as a producer of knowledge. According to David Crouch (2001), such an approach to field work, thinking and writing makes possible acceptance of the nuanced complexity of what people do, and of how they explain and express these doings, which the researcher may find very beneficial. This obviously goes against the tendency of engendering homogenous cultural perceptions that plays into the

hands of hegemonism. For research in the third world societies, phenomenology and subjective experiential research affords the generation of first hand information, in view of the fact that much that has been written and known about the third world by western researchers in most cases lacks grounded experience, but is abstracted knowledge from the internet and the powerful influence of the mass media in constructing stereo-typical epistemologies. Phenomenology and embodiment enhances understanding of people's actions and body language, the perceptions of their actions, and what they verbalise regarding these actions, and the impacts of body and self of the actions of others. Indeed there is a potential for creating an alternative and well-grounded understanding of the causal dynamics underlying social processes in the third world through this approach.

Drawing from what has been discussed, there is an urgent requirement for social scientists to critically reflect on the art of their practice and the quality of epistemologies produced thereby. This reflection should be informed by a realisation that the most critical issue is not what words are used but what conceptualisations are used and in whose interest. This underlines the importance of the Marxist perspective in unravelling the class nature of knowledge production. In addition, the requirement for critical reflection on the practice of research demands the deconstruction of the methodologies that have been used in trying to understand social phenomena and processes in the third world so far.

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