



Revolution in the Social Sciences: Beyond Control Freaks, Conformity, and Tunnel Vision

Bernard Phillips, David Christner

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Revolution in the Social Sciences centers on integrating knowledge from sociology, psychology, anthropology, history, political science and economics in order to confront increasing worldwide problems that threaten all of us. That integration of knowledge of human behavior is essential for understanding those problems, given their enormous complexity coupled with the highly specialized nature of the social sciences and their limited communication across specialized fields. It carries further the ideas developed by the Sociological Imagination Group in the seven books it has published since its founding in 2000 (www.sociological-imagination.org): Beyond Sociology's Tower of Babel, Toward a Sociological Imagination, The Invisible Crisis of Contemporary Society, Understanding Terrorism, Armageddon or Evolution? Bureaucratic Culture and Escalating World Problems, and Saving Society.

In addition to visible problems like war and terrorism with weapons of mass destruction that are becoming ever more threatening, there are relatively invisible problems. For example, there is an increasing gap between what people throughout the world want—including a decent standard of living and freedom from patterns of hatred like racism, sexism and ageism—and what they are in fact able to get. There is, then, an increasing aspirations-fulfillment gap, largely produced by the "revolution of rising expectations" over the past five centuries. Political leaders who attempt to confront problems can only make limited progress on them, largely because of the failure of social scientists to integrate their knowledge and thus yield the understanding of these complex problems that is required.



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