

# What is Hegemonic Science? Power in Scientific Activities in Social Sciences in International Contexts

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## **Introduction**

International scholarly activities in the social sciences are no longer special and unusual, and interactions between social scientists across geographical borders can frequently be seen through coauthoring, international conferences, joint research projects, scholar exchange programmes, and other international activities. Although these activities have brought collaborations to social science scholars, and have enabled them to build wider academic networks beyond the national context, they at the same time seem to have revealed an imbalance of research fund distribution, unevenness of material resources and facilities, and unlikeliness of non-English-native speakers to be able to publish their work in well-recognized, worldwide academic journals. This imbalance has been labeled as “hegemony,” the domination of certain countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and some other Western European countries in the social sciences. As part of a recent discussion on internationalization of the social sciences, numerous articles can be found that discuss the North-South divide (Connell 2007), centre-periphery (Altbach 2002) relationship, academic dependency (Alatas 2003), and hegemonic power in the social sciences. These imply that there are two parts of social science communities: the North (or West), which is the centre of hegemonic power, and the other is South, the dependent periphery. The Western, which generally means North American and Western European, social science communities are deemed as the dominant power which globally sets research problems, relevant theories, and standard of academic practices in the social sciences, while academic communities in other

countries are described as victims of domination by the Western social sciences. That is, they have fewer resources for research funds, facilities, publications, and other academic activities that are considered as relevant and necessary than the dominant academe.

In the above descriptions of the world social sciences, it seems that the key terms such as *hegemony*, *power*, and *domination* used to describe the position of Western social sciences over the rest are taken for granted and the meaning of these almost synonymously used categories are rarely carefully scrutinized. Rather, these terms are discussed as if they were “common sense” phenomena in the world of social sciences. Moreover, other common terms such as *inequality* are often considered as analogous to situations in which non-Western social science communities are dominated and ruled by certain Western counterparts. For instance, “inequality” seems to be mixed up with notions of hegemony and/or domination when discussing international academic activities in the social sciences such as cross-national research projects, publications, and theorizing. While the notion of hegemony includes the idea of antagonism between the divided science communities, the term *inequality* rather implies the idea of gradual differences. While inequality means that sciences do not operate under the same conditions and addresses the circumstances under which international science work, domination refers to the relation of hierarchies among the scientific subjects and subordination among scientists.

This paper, therefore, tries to clarify the different implications of the above-mentioned terms in order to better understand them and to enable us to discuss the current situation in the social sciences with regard to so-called scientific hegemony, which is widely perceived as a great obstacle, especially for social scientists coming from neither North America nor Western European countries in discussions about international scientific activities. I would also like to discuss issues that seem interrelated with the notion of hegemony, power, and dominance of the Western social sciences, such as the structures of social science knowledge generation, forms of valid knowledge in the social sciences, and reasons motivating social scientists to discuss international social sciences using the above categories. By stocktaking these aspects, it would be clearer for us what the topic is, and why and how we should tackle one of the important issues on the social sciences in the era of globalization.

## **The Definition of Hegemony and Perception of Hegemony among Social Scientists**

Before we start discussing what scientific hegemony is and what is not, it might be helpful to have a brief look at the definition of hegemony and other related terms. Looking up some online English dictionaries is an instructive beginning. The meanings of the major terms are defined in the following way:

Hegemony: leadership or dominance, especially by one state or social group over others (Oxford online); a situation in which one state or country controls others (Longman online).

Dominance: power and influence over others (Oxford online); the fact of being more powerful, more important, or more noticeable than other people or things (Longman online).

Power: the capacity or ability to direct or influence the behaviour of others or the course of events (Oxford online); the ability to influence people or give them strong feelings (Longman online).

Inequality: difference in size, degree, circumstances, etc.; lack of equality (Oxford online); an unfair situation, in which some groups in society have more money, opportunities, power, etc than others (Longman online).

Though there are overlaps in the definitions of these words, it seems wise to neither mix up the particular relations between subjects in these categories nor—most importantly—to apply these categories, which originate from the world of global politics and global economies, to the world of science.

The general perception is that the North/West is the dominant power in the hegemonic social science world, in which inequality, dependency, and unfair opportunities for funding, publications, and scientific knowledge provision can be found. Despite the different spheres from which these categories are taken and applied to the world of international sciences and despite of the very different meaning, describing the international sciences with the above categories seems a common sense understanding in many discourses about the international science world.

However, do these categories really represent the current status in the social sciences? And is it really possible to apply these categories from the world of global politics to the world of international sciences? What is the

motivation of scientists to discuss topics related to hegemony, domination, and inequality in the world of international social sciences?

## **Hegemonic Power of a Language?**

Globalization of the social sciences seems to bring more challenges than benefits to social scientists. For instance, as its subtitle “Knowledge divides” indicates, the World Social Science Report (International Social Science Council 2010) focuses on rather negative effects from current international scholarly activities in the social sciences. Indeed, details of what they mean by “knowledge divides” are expressed as the chapter titles and their contents (e. g., chapter 3: “unequal capacities,”; chapter 4: “uneven internationalization,”; chapter 5.1: “Hegemonies and counter-hegemonies”). Generally, the majority of the contributions implies and/or exemplifies how social science knowledge is divided. Let us take some examples from the report. The most popular and probably the only approach to gauge internationalization/globalization of social sciences is the bibliometric approach, which references the International Social Sciences Index (ISSI) to observe which regions/countries’ social scientists are cited more frequently than others, which nationality collaborates with which other nationalities, what language is the most popular for such publications, and so forth. Chapter 4 of the World Social Science Report (2010) broadly takes this approach, and concludes how “uneven” knowledge generation and dissemination in the social sciences is. Despite that Frenken et al. note that the above-mentioned resources are “known to be biased” (ibid.: 145) as the majority of the journals that are counted are English language journals, they nevertheless exploit the resources and conclude from such admittedly biased resources that “research collaboration in the social sciences is dominated by North America and Western Europe” (ibid.: 148). Therefore, according to Frenken et al., the divide between “core and periphery” in the social science has persisted during past decades. For Gingras and Mosbah-Natanson, “the globalization and internationalization of research have essentially favoured Europe and North America, the regions that were already dominant” (ibid.: 153). Ammon goes into details about the role of English language in international scientific activities. He claims that English is “an asymmetric global language whose benefits are unequally distributed” (ibid.: 155). Thus, for him, the usage of English language in scientific communication including publications and conference presentations could only benefit

English native speakers, and there is a limited flow of information, and funding, and publication opportunities for non-English speakers due to the strong structural linkage between Anglophone social science communities, which could be part of the reason for their domination. Although he suggests some solutions for improving the current situation, Ammon thinks that the English language could hamper non-English native social science scholars from participating in international activities.

As has been mentioned, gauging the level of international scientific activities via certain citation indices indicates an English-only language bias. Since these citation indices greatly rely on English journals, naturally only articles written in English would be visible beyond each science community. It is therefore not surprising that the authors cited above contributing to the World Social Science Report arrive at the same conclusion that the world social sciences is divided between North America-(Western) Europe and the rest, as they exploit the same resources. According to Archambault et al. (2006), such citation indices vastly overrepresent English-language publications while under-representing articles written in languages other than English. Hicks (2005) points out that there are other traditions and conventions for academic publications, especially in Social Science and Humanity (SSH), such as publishing books and other nonacademic media articles rather than journal articles. Despite these negative views about relying only on citations indices to gauge international scholarly activities in SSH, this approach has been used and attained a certain level of respectability among SSH scholars. Why do we use this approach, even knowing that it would not lead us to a reasonable picture of international scholarly practices?

As is widely known, citations are one of the most influential elements in university ranking such as Time Higher Education University Ranking and Academic Ranking of World Universities by Shanghai Jiaotong University, and, in a similar way, the citation indices seem to be used to decide world winners of scholars in international scholarly activities. In this sense, measuring so-called “internationality” via such obviously biased resources results in the same biases as noted above. As the World Social Science Report declares, the world of social science is divided into two parts-winners and losers-with nothing being mentioned about hegemony, power, and dominance, or that the latter is ruled by the former. Seemingly, notions of hegemony, power, and dominance could merely be a way to disguise the losers’ irritation and frustration toward winners.

Some scholars such as Ammon find the use of English as the lingua

franca of international academic social science studies problematic. Certainly, it is not so easy for any non-native English scholars to publish and/or to participate in international conferences in English. For instance, the very difficulty of the English language in a context of international scholarly activities has also been discussed among Japanese social and human science scholars (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, 2011) in order for them to more participate in scientific discourse beyond the national level. Japanese SSH scholars have discussed concerns such as infrastructure for translation service for academic publication, budgetary matters, and whether publishing scholarly work in English bring authors any incentive at all would also exist in non-English-speaking countries. Nevertheless, efforts to improve the situation relating to English publications in non-English-speaking countries are not necessarily made because English is “hegemonic” language as Ammon strongly claims. No one is forced to publish in English, but English is the language which has been broadly used when scholars from different global regions gather and try to carry out any scholarly activities together. In such cases, there is a need for using one common language to communicate. Otherwise, it would be impossible to carry out such international activities.

Whatever language is chosen as the international scientific lingua franca, what Ammon describes as problems in using English would not disappear unless everyone was able to understand and to command many languages in the world. Of course, it is undeniable that English native speakers do have advantages in carrying out any scientific activities under this circumstance in terms of linguistic ability compared with non-English speakers. However, being able to speak, read, and write perfectly in English does not mean that only English native speakers can generate relevant scientific knowledge worldwide. There are surely excellent works done by non-English speakers in languages other than English. The more important point is that such works written in languages (e.g., Japanese) that are not widely understood by non-native speakers remain only in their national context, which hinder scholars of these works from having scientific dialogues with their foreign counterparts. Thus, since we are not really “forced” to use English as the academic language, English itself cannot be “hegemonic.” Behind the complaints of Ammon and other scholars who question the use of English in social sciences, must be another unstated message: We, non-English native speakers, have many fewer advantages, or many more difficulties, in using English for academic purposes than English native speakers when we compete worldwide.

Indeed, this has little to do with the English language itself being hegemonic, but rather it blames English because of the difficulty that non-English native speakers have in taking full advantage as native speakers do to show their presence in the world social sciences.

What we could see from the above selected discussions in the World Social Science Report is that the authors have the common grounds for what they call hegemonic, uneven, and divided world social sciences. That is, there is the dominant group of social science scholars, who tend to be located in North America or Western Europe, and they have much better conditions to play important and influential roles in the world social science. It seems that those who criticise this situation want to complain that they cannot be themselves dominant due to their working environment, conditions, and being non-English native speakers. We have seen in the previous section that dominance literally means the status by which one party influences others. Apart from the relation with power, being more important and/or more noticeable is also understood as the status of dominance. Being important and noticeable has a connection with the fact that other parties find a person or group (or some groups) of people important, since one cannot be important by oneself. Being important and therefore noticeable is the consequence of the fact that other people acknowledge certain person/people as important. Without this recognition by others, no one can be either important or noticeable, and therefore dominant. Thus having influence over others could also be the consequence of becoming important and noticeable.

What, then, is the real objective of the critique phrased with the notion of a hegemonic language? A different distribution of acknowledgments? Making the winners the losers and vice versa would indeed shift their roles. But would it abolish hegemonic relations?

### **Being “Dominant”: A Means against Dominations?**

Alatas’s article on academic dependency (2003) has the same direction as the above-mentioned World Social Science Report. He refers to academic imperialism, which was originated from suzerain-colony relations in the nineteenth century and until the Second World War. This academic colonialism influenced colonized countries’ social scientific thoughts, as the Edward Said’s well-known work “Orientalism” (1978) describes and analyses. According to Alatas, the economic dependency has led to neocolonialism in the world of social sciences, and as the result, academic

dependency has emerged. He defines the West as the following countries: the United States, Great Britain, and France, which “we may call the contemporary social science powers” (2003: 602). This is so because these countries:

- (1) generate large outputs of social science research in the form of scientific papers in peer-reviewed journals, books, and working and research papers;
- (2) have a global reach of the ideas and information contained in these works;
- (3) have the ability to influence the social sciences of countries due to the consumption of the works originating in the powers; and
- (4) command a great deal of recognition, respect and prestige both at home and abroad. (ibid.: 602)

Alatas’s definition of the West and his reasoning why these Western countries can be taken as “the contemporary social science powers” (ibid.) appears to be very widely shared in discussing the issue of the skewed social science world as seen in the above-mentioned Social Science Report. Indeed, this structure of Western dominance related to producing a lot, disseminating in well-known, easily accessible worldwide journals results in making their work influential; thus they are more likely to be recognized, respected, and prestigious worldwide, reflecting on the taken-for-granted reality of current world of social science in respect to globalizing/internationalizing academic work. Therefore, it is not hard to concur with the Alatas’s claim that the Western “monopolistic control of and influence over the social sciences in much of the Third World are ... (determined) rather by the dependence of Third World scholars and intellectuals on western social science in a variety of ways” (ibid.: 602). In short, he seems to express that Third World countries are academically dependent, as the aforementioned Western countries are too dominant to dismantle the structure of their dominance.

When we discuss the dominance of certain groups of people in the social sciences, often a certain tone crops up that can be understood as viewing the dominant groups as the ones that impose their influence too much on nondominant groups. However, they cannot become dominant only by themselves. As discussed, recognition by others plays an important role for them to reach this dominant status. This is quite tricky because nondominant people also contribute to raise certain dominant people’s status higher by referring to their work in their papers and presentations. Why do the nondominant people do it? The answer is simple: They also



want to be recognized by referring to some of those well-known scholars' work to show others that he/she knows what these well-known scholars are doing. This means that, whether consciously or unconsciously, nondominant groups of scholars join this recognition game in the social sciences which the dominant group play.

What Alatas claims as “academic dependency” of the Third World scholars in social sciences on the Western social sciences, in the above sense, seems rather another way of expressing that those who have not yet been dominant in the world social sciences also somehow want to be dominant and influential in the future. While people are intensively discussing about such academic dependency as if it was the reality that has been created and imposed by “Western” countries, the core of the discussion is more geared toward the point why we, nondominant group (s) of social science scholars cannot also have chances to be winners of the world competition of the social sciences. The reward for the winners is certainly “a great deal of recognition, respect and prestige both at home and abroad” (Alatas, 2003: 602), which nondominant people could not obtain in the current situation. Similarly, Beigel (2011) refers to the World Social Science Report and notes the following: “Academic prestige was progressively concentrated and a set of international hierarchies was established—separating research completed in more prestigious academic centers from marginal knowledge produced and published outside.” From this notion, Beigel also seems to concentrate on the prestige of social science scholars. Thus, we could now slightly see some possible reasons why advocates who are against Western social science power, hegemony, and dominance are so keen to discuss these issues in relation to the international social science scholarly activities. From some literatures, we could see the relationship between being dominant/influential/powerful and recognition/prestige of individual scholars. After all, it seems that a number of social science scholars are keen to become dominant, therefore influential and noticeable, because such status would bring them reward, namely, prestige in the world. That is probably why winning the social science competition is very important.

Globalization/internationalization of the social sciences has surely brought competition to social science scholars worldwide. However, getting recognized and becoming prestigious are not only characteristics of the global competition but the same could be seen in the “dominant” West, namely, in science communities in the United States and Great Britain. Becher and Trowler (2001) attempt to exhibit ways in which academic

disciplines operate, ways to define and/or decide borderlines between disciplines, how subdisciplines emerge and are operated, how academics are rewarded and acquire prestige in their disciplines as well as what roles ethnicity and gender play in relation to their promotions and work styles, on the other. Their empirical studies and the literature exploited in their work are not limited to the social sciences, however; their main focus is to understand academic culture (s) in which work of academic people and the establishment of their career as academicians are operated. While Alatas (2003) gives us the impression that the Western dominant countries have monopolized opportunities for publications, research funds, and academic prestige, Becher and Trowler's work indicates that there is severe competition between academics working within these dominant countries. Since their empirical work took place in rather prestigious research universities in the United States and United Kingdom, we could draw a conclusion that location in the dominant West does not necessarily mean that members of such dominant academic communities are always academically dominant and powerful. For instance, as many non-Western scholars argue, publication is, as Becher and Trowler admit, important and a formal "criterion for recognition" (ibid.: 78); however, "it is not only what you write but who you are and where you come from that counts" (ibid.). They refer to some other similar studies relating to academic prestige and recognition, and come to a conclusion that one must study at a "right" —in this context prestigious— university, at least, for his/her doctoral study, and moreover, that they should be supervised by one of the "leading figures" (ibid.: 79) in the field he/she studies for his/her own future prestige. Although their work is not particularly focused on issues of internationalization/globalization of academe, it is interesting to glimpse at ways so-called Western academe in the U.S and the U.K operate. The work of Becher and Trowler somehow indicates that members of the dominant West also engage in a series of struggles and competitions among them to be recognized in any field of science.

It could be mentioned that internationalization/globalization have introduced this worldwide "winner-loser" relationship. Of course, before scientific activities acquired international dimensions such as several styles of collaboration with foreign partners, this competition was seen within the level of a national science community. One publishes more than others in a discipline in a country, and some might be better known in the field than others. Similarly, some people from certain universities in a country tend to receive more funding, facilities, and equipment for research activities than

colleagues from other universities. Besides, there are so-called prestigious research universities in a country, which receive more admiration and fame because of their status as elite universities. In this sense, what people advocate as “inequality” in relation to the international social science activities seems to exist before the social sciences took an international dimension.

As Becher and Trowler (2001) suggest, the majority of academicians are motivated toward individual prestige in their career. How prominent and famous they are in a disciplinary field is crucial, because such a status would bring a person more opportunities to get promoted within a university or to a better or more prestigious one. Once they are recognized in a country, they would have better chance to get acknowledged by foreign research institutions. This could make him/her more visible in the international scene rather than only in the national context. Again, as I quote the work of Becher and Trowler (2001), not everyone in the dominant West could have such opportunities for academic recognition. That is, one needs to start one’s academic life as a student in a very prestigious university, and preferably, one needs to be supervised by a *science celeb*. This is simply because such connections in a particular environment would provide him/her a much better and often more privileged condition to promote him/herself than the others that do not have such connections. If one does not have such a condition, he/she should create a condition by networking, publishing a lot, and by other means which make him or her very visible in the science celeb circle. If and how the international sciences contribute to the progress of knowledge is seemingly not an issue such discourses seem to raise. Is the international and noninternational science world after all about the prestige of scientists?

## **Who Is Often Quoted Must Be RIGHT: Democracy in the Social Sciences?**

Hegemony connotes the meaning of dominance, although interpretations of both words might vary from one person to another. When some people talk about hegemony and/or domination, sometimes they seem to be confused with the notion of majority. One would say that a hegemonic/dominant group of scholars get scientific approval from the majority because of the quality of their work. This seems a relevant statement; however, validity and quality of scientific work could not be measured by a number of the votes, and this assumption is only based on the number of citations in the

aforementioned resources like the Social Sciences Citation Indexes and Arts and Humanities Citation Index. Relying on the number of citations, therefore, can hardly be an appropriate and reliable way to evaluate scientific contents. However, though certainly nobody believes in such a way of measuring the quality of sciences in international context counting citations—the majority counts. Historically mistakes and incorrectness in the natural sciences occurred by similar ways to this democratic approach relying on the majority's approval. For instance, the geocentric theory of the universe was believed to be a scientifically valid theory by the majority, but Copernicus's heliocentric system finally proved to be the one scientifically true. In this sense, it is risky to introduce the democratic approach (or the "majority rule" in science) when consistency of one's scientific work is judged. Yet, as long as the number of citations is the only mechanism to judge excellence of work in the social sciences, people would blindly believe in such a mechanism, and would be keener to have their work appear in journals that are adopted as credible in the citation indices. It might be, therefore, this strong belief in and the taken-for-granted reliability of the citation indices in the social sciences that makes scholars worldwide believe that it must be excellent work if one's work is cited and is appeared in the said citation indices. This is how the democratic approach in the social sciences has received its popularity as well as reliability from social scientists in different global regions, although this belief and its mechanism seem not to be logically sound. Thus, talking about a majority as being something influential to others in the social sciences seems rather redundant. However, again, we could find a certain connection between the mechanism (the citation indices), recognition, and the notion of majority in relation to the hegemonic social science structure behind the notion of majority.

To sum up the above discussion, one of the core issues on the hegemonic science structure seems to be recognition. Especially in the era of globalization in the social sciences it is crucial to get recognized in the so-called Western science circle, needless to say, via Western norms and conventions of scientific work. The more non-Western scholars participate in this competition, the more strongly this competitive Western science system is supported. The irony of this system is that once a non-Western scholar who has complained about this system gets recognized in Western science circles, he or she can easily shift from the side of the losers to the winners. At that point, this competitive system is no longer a concern for him/her.

## **What Is Missed by All Knowledge Counting: True Hegemonic Knowledge**

When one would like to observe how Western scholars understand thoughts (or mechanism of thought) from parts of the world other than the West, a book by Nisbett (2005) is interesting. As the starting point, Nisbett informs us about a small episode of interaction between his Chinese student and himself. For him, it was natural to think that people in the world, more or less, perceived things in the same ways as he normally did. However, one of his Chinese students pointed out that Chinese people have different ways of seeing the world. This discussion brought him to write *The Geography of Thought: How Asian and Westerner Think Differently—and Why* (2005). As a social psychologist, his main focus is to clarify differences that seem to occur due to cultural differences between Asian and Westerners, and to analyse them. Based on a number of social psychological studies, he examines how Asian and Westerners are different and what the reasons are for that. The most interesting part in this work in relation to the structure of scientific work is where he discusses how these Western-Asian differences affect ways of scientific work. He exemplifies a part of these effects by indicating the number of Nobel Prizes awarded in 1990s to scholars from the United States, Japan, Germany, and France. Especially, he mentions that while only one Japanese scientist was awarded the prize, forty-four U.S scientists were awarded, Germany got five, and France three, despite that the funding for science in Japan was much more than Germany and France. This, therefore, suggests that it does not seem to be a matter of how much money a country could spend on science. Nisbett reveals that “some Japanese scientists attribute the deficit in part to the absence of debate and intellectual confrontation” (ibid.: 195). He continues: “Peer review and criticism are rare in Japan, where such things are considered rude and where there is not widespread acceptance of their role in clarifying and advancing thought about scientific matters” (ibid.). Although he does not clearly say that Japanese scientists are not as good as their Western counterparts from the United States, Germany, and France in terms of the number of Nobel Prize laureates, we could see that he implies that Japanese scientists are lacking some of the conditions that are required for generating and developing scientific thinking. Similarly, the rhetoric seems also a problem for Asian scholars.

Most Westerners I speak to about this format<sup>1</sup> take it for granted that it

is universal: How else could one communicate findings and recommendations briskly and convincingly or even think clearly about what one is doing? The truth is, however, that this linear rhetoric form is not at all common in the East. For my Asian students, I find that the linear rhetoric form is the last crucial thing they learn on their road to becoming fully functioning social scientists. (ibid.: 196)

This notion indicates that it is, indeed, for him universal that anyone that attempts to construct scientific arguments should be able to follow the Western linear rhetoric form. Therefore, it is unbelievable that Asian students who would like to be “fully functioning social scientists” find this rhetoric form least crucial. Later in this book, he also expresses how hard it is to educate such Asian students in American universities according to American or Western standard of higher education (ibid.: 211). Thus, some of Nisbett’s observations on Asian students seem relevant for understanding how a Western social scientist finds problematic the behaviours and thoughts of Asian scholars/students when it comes to scientific activities. More importantly, he strongly believes that the Western ways of science are universal despite a number of findings he and his colleagues could exhibit about the differences between Asian and Westerners in the ways how they see things and think. The fact is that he finds different ways of thinking does not prevent him from measuring any way of thinking against what he most naturally considers as the thinking of a “fully functioning scientist.”

This view, that thoughts that do not fit into his definition of what scientific thinking is, must be not fully functioning thinking, is not only Nisbett’s own personal view but a view broadly shared by Western scientists when they do research about Asian students studying at Western Higher Education institutes. Scholars and educators often discuss why Asian students tend to face challenges studying in Western universities, and how these challenges can be lessened, and indeed, many seek for reasons in different national cultural characteristics between West and East (e.g. Brown 2008, Durkin 2008). However, the noteworthy point about Nisbett is that he, unlike the above theorists about students, refers to scholars who are no longer academic trainees. Especially in the case of

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<sup>1</sup> It takes the form of: background; problem; hypothesis or proposed proposition; means of testing; evidence; arguments as to what the evidence means; refutation of possible counterarguments; and conclusion and recommendations. (Nisbett 2005: 196)

Japanese scholars his remarks about peer review and criticism seem a criticism on the absence of “normative” scientific convention in the Japanese social sciences. For Nisbett, therefore, it is beyond his imagination how Japanese and Asian social science scholars could properly develop any scientific thoughts without the “universal” format, which is the linear rhetoric form. Thus, we could see his strong message that ways to generate and deploy scientific knowledge in the social sciences should be the ways which Western scholars consider “universal.” This belief in the universality of conventions and norms in the Western science could imply the hegemonic science structure, since such a belief could reinforce and justify the Western social science system as the world standard. Consequently, what the articles contributed to the World Social Science Report (2010) as well as Alatas’s discussion on academic dependency (2003) actually reveal is that the Western (or Anglo-American) social science system does force scholars who have different academic norms and conventions to employ the Western ways of knowledge generation and dissemination. Probably this is the belief that constructs mechanism such as the use of citation indices, overrepresentation of English language in journal articles that are currently counted as internationally influential articles, and making prioritised research topics and preferred methodology, among other things. Therefore, the most fundamental element of discussion about so-called hegemonic social sciences is not about the winner-loser relationship but the taken-for-granted structure of knowledge generation and dissemination in the world social sciences.

## **The Complaint about Hegemonic Sciences**

If we take the definition of the West that Alatas deploys, what he considers as powers in the contemporary social sciences puts emphasis on rather quantitative aspects such as “large output” (2003: 605) and “global reach” (ibid.), which lead to “a great deal of recognition, respect and prestige both at home and abroad” (ibid.). If one agrees with his definition of the West as the dominant social science power, the quality of scientific work as a criterion for being important and influential seems of less concern. Then, if the quality of scientific work is not as important in discussing who hegemonizes the social sciences, and how and why, what is the role of quality of scientific work in this context? As discussed earlier, the quality of work in the social sciences often tends to be judged by the number of citations in certain academic journals, however, such judgments are less

likely to be based on academic dialogues among social scientists from all over the world to scrutinize their logical consistency and validity. In such a situation, the more one publishes in well-known academic journals, the better one presumably is as a social scientist. Moreover, by doing so there would be more opportunities that others might cite his/her articles, then, he/she would attain a higher status in terms of appearing in citation indices. This would increase or improve one's personal academic status, which might lead them to further career promotion. In this context, it matters less what is published; instead, how much is published—in other words how visible a scientist is from the Western social science circle—is more important. As the result, people who have such personal ambitious go into this very system which they hate and criticize as Western hegemony. They might think what they practice is counterhegemonic against Western social sciences. However, what they do not realise is that it is actually the opposite of what they think. They strongly support the system, which they consider an obstacle for them to participate in international scholarly activities in the world social sciences, by participating in it. How ironical it is! As long as they practice these counterhegemonic activities within the system, little is changed.

As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, a great number of scholars understand that there is a clear division of West versus non-West, North versus South, and centre versus periphery when they discuss the situation in the world social sciences. These divisions might mislead people into taking fundamentally unsuitable directions as they discuss the basic matter (s). Certainly, unequal situations of research funding, reference resources, facilities, and other things that closely relate to research activities do exist and are dependent on a nation-state's economic and political situation. It is not to be denied that there are lots of competitions in the world we live. Under these circumstances, it is almost impossible not to judge who is more successful or who has more than others, because once a competition starts there will always be a winner and a loser. Either one critiques competition as such, but if one does not do it, it is odd to advocate competitions without winner and losers. There would be no equal competitions in which everyone could be the winner. However, I point out that so far the discussion on this matter seems to have placed too much emphasis on the nature of science competition and the significance of getting access into the science celeb circle. These aspects are orientated to the self-satisfaction of scientists. This self-satisfaction, as discussed already, relies less on the scientific quality of one's work but more on



his/her fame, prestige, and popularity in the world. If one is more interested in the quality of others' work, it really does not matter if you come from the West, the South or the periphery. One's scientific thoughts are not necessarily dependent on others' ideas which are more popular and influential. At the same time, if the dominant thoughts from the West/North/centre are logically consistent, they should be scientifically appreciated.

In the context of constructing globalized social sciences, the belief in the universality of Western science conventions and norms, which were reflected in the Nisbett's work (2005), could hinder scholars who do not come from the Western science background in scientific collaborations. Japanese social and human scientists also point out such a Western-centred view as one of the difficulties in international collaborations, and they contest the idea that Japanese scholars cannot show their disagreement in scientific collaborations with their foreign counterparts (Okamoto, 2010). If the West is perceived as being hegemonic in scientific work, such a belief of the Western style of scientific work as being universal should be pointed out. Although such taken-for-granted conventions and norms in Anglo-American ways of scientific work in relation to the structure of social science work has rarely been discussed<sup>2</sup>, it is important to realize how these influence and often create difficulties in international scientific activities, because scientific hegemony is, after all, not about the competition among social scientists from different countries but the structure into which we have been swallowed. In order to better understand what hegemonic science is and whether or not such science exists, what we are aiming at by generating social science knowledge as well as the question of what we call as social science knowledge is to be answered. A discussion about hegemonic science or any other version of science does not make sense unless we know the answer to these questions and realize why we work in the field called science; without these answers, we only reinforce the existing structure of the world social sciences.

Most of the discussions we could find on the topic of hegemony, dominance, power, and inequality in the social sciences seem to assume that so-called the Western social science forced them to use their methodology, concepts, theories, and style of working. However, if one

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<sup>2</sup> One of the rare works on the issue was carried out by Kuhn and Weidemann (2005). Their work depicts that even among European scholars experienced challenges in implementing joint research projects under EU Framework Programmes.

does not want to follow such Western trends, he/she could still carry out his/her academic work without following them. In fact, this is how it is used to be in many countries' social sciences, and probably it still is in some countries and for some scholars. Thus, contra Alatas (2003), there is no reason to be totally dependent on mainstream concepts and ideas from the West. Scholars are really dependent on the Western ideas and concepts when they are also dependent on the Western social science system as discussed above. Therefore, the West/North/centre itself is an imaginary enemy scholars have created as hegemony, dominance, and power in the social sciences. If we have to tackle issues that hinder social science scholars from regions that are not included in the West, our first target should be the taken-for-granted universality of the Western social science knowledge generation and dissemination system and of norms and conventions in the Western social sciences.

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