

alternative framings of the notion of progress and to identify their implications. Does the evidence support or contradict deeply held convictions as to the best way forward? Which project emerges best, when subjected to social scientific scrutiny?

Modernity has been a key concept in classic Sociology, used to address large-scale social transformation. The transition to modernity preoccupied many of the major social theorists, from Marx and Weber to Durkheim and Simmel. But is modernity still the best way to understand contemporary social relations? Or are we now living in a postmodern era? Challenges to the concept of modernity are aimed at its apparent assumption that there was a single unilinear process of development, and that it was good for everyone. Such a notion is clearly untenable, in view of the horrors of the descent into war and 'ethnic cleansing', the diversity of paths of development, and the uneven position of different social groups in the same country. Are we not yet modern, rather than postmodern, or are there multiple varieties of modernity?

Globalization is a challenge to social theory. It demands a re-thinking of the notion that there are societies constituted as separate bounded entities. It raises questions about the taken-for-granted equation of society and nation-state. Is globalization merely Westernization or Americanization, or does it hybridize all cultures, creating new commonalities? Is it eroding differences between cultures producing convergence? Globalization requires the analysis of new types of global processes, and the re-framing of many ostensibly local or national projects within a global landscape.

Social theory is challenged to address the multiplicity of social inequalities, not only that of class. The significance of diverse inequalities for social life is recognized, but building this insight into the core of social theory rather than remaining in specialist sub-fields has proved more difficult. Traditional social theory addressed class inequality, but had difficulty when trying simultaneously to address gender, ethnicity, age, religion, nation, sexual orientation, and disability, and even greater difficulty in addressing their mutual constitution at points of intersection. Further, these social relations are more complex than class in that they involve not only inequality but also difference, thereby problematizing notions of a single standard against which to judge inequality. The challenge then is to include intersecting complex inequalities within the core of social theory.

In order to insert globalization and complex inequalities into the heart of social theory it is necessary to develop new concepts and to rethink how theories are put together. There is a need both to capture the distinctions, differentiations and nuances of complex inequalities that have been part of what has been driving the postmodern turn,

and to simultaneously keep the global horizon in sight. There is also a need to retain the conception of inter-linkages so as to be able to analyse the global level, while not falling into the mistaken simplicities of over-generalization across cultures. Developments in complexity theory offer a new vocabulary on which social theory can usefully draw in developing concepts to meet these new analytic challenges. These offer the opportunity to build a more complex theoretical framework that enables the theorization of both large-scale connections and of sudden ruptures and non-linear processes. Complexity theory enables the re-thinking of the concept of social system to address, without reductionism, multiple systems of social relations.

This chapter addresses first, the contested issue of what progress might be; second, the challenge of theorizing multiple complex inequalities simultaneously; third, the conceptualization of plural forms of modernity; fourth, the challenge of theorizing global processes; and fifth, the usefulness of complexity theory in addressing these challenges in social theory.

What is Progress?

More money or a longer life?

Is it better to have more money or to live longer? People in the United States of America have more money but die sooner than those in the European Union. Americans have over 40 per cent more income than these Europeans, but live on average for two years less (World Bank 2006c).

Is increasing income a measure of progress? Or is living longer a better indicator? There are different ways of thinking about progress, so how should they be evaluated?

What kind of social arrangements produce progress, however it is defined? Is it the greater freedom of the market in the USA as compared with greater state regulation in Europe? Is it the greater inequality in the USA as compared with Europe? Or the more violent nature of the USA than Europe?

The two divergent goals of money and longevity are associated with two quite different conceptions of progress. The first takes the economic, especially money, as an effective summary indicator of progress and of what is good and desirable; it is often used by national and international bodies of financial governance. The second is focused on the outcome for human well-being, of our capacities and capabilities, of which longevity is an indicator. Further, framings of progress include

'equality' and 'human rights'. Indeed many social and political projects have their own distinctive accounts of what constitutes the best social arrangements to produce the 'good life'.

Different social systems have different levels of success in converting economic resources into human well-being. The EU social system is more effective in this than the USA. It is the differences in social systems that are crucial to understanding the implications for individuals. The EU and US social systems link economic resources to human well-being in different ways as a result of differences in how their social systems have developed.

Different cultures prioritize different values. What is meant by progress and what are the preferred goals of public policy? Can there be a single notion of progress in the context of varying values? What kinds of social arrangements achieve progress?

Progress as a contested project

There is no simple answer to the question of what is progress. Rather, it is an essentially contested concept. Indeed, so contested that some will give up all hope that it is a useful project to engage with.

There are three main approaches to the concept and project of progress. First, that modernity is progress. For classical sociologists, analysing the transformation of society that is associated with industrialization and urbanism, modernity was progress, but a development that many saw as double-edged, with a down side as well (as discussed in the next section). A second response is to deny the usefulness of the concept and project of progress: it is too simple, falsely universalistic, and ethnocentric. Rather than a universal 'one size fits all', there are a potentially infinite number of particular ways of thinking about what constitutes the 'good life' and how to get there that are rooted in different cultures. A third position sees progress as a contested project: there are alternative conceptions, but not an infinite number; it exists as a notion that is highly contested; it is argued over in politics and policy, philosophy and theory, data, and analysis.

Within this third approach four key alternative goals of progress can be identified – economic development, equality, human rights, and human well-being – though there are others, including a respect for traditional or fundamental practices. The first is that human welfare is best advanced by economic growth and high levels of economic development. The second prioritizes equality. The third is human rights. The fourth has a focus on human well-being, which is more than just a high standard of living but includes education, health, and longevity.

These goals of progress are embedded in projects that are rooted in civil society. Sometimes these projects will become the foundation of governmental programmes. Finally, they may become embedded in practices in social formations. Today, two major competing projects claim in quite different ways to take forward some of these goals: neoliberalism and social democracy. They claim in varying ways to produce economic development, aspects of equality, human rights, and human well-being.

Economic development

The first framing of progress focuses on economic development and economic growth. Economic development is expected to increase the average income of a person and thereby their standard of living. While this approach appears to treat economic development as an end in itself, it usually rests on the implicit assumption that economic development is a means to the delivery of an improved standard of living and a further additional assumption that this is a popular policy goal. The higher the rate of economic growth, the faster will the standard of living increase. Improved economic performance is assumed to mean a more effective utilization of resources to deliver goods and services. The approach claims to be neutral as to the way in which this income is spent by people and regards this neutrality as positive. Economic growth and development is defended as the best approach to progress, on the basis that this constitutes an indication of the average standard of living of people in a country and that this is what people want because governments are repeatedly democratically elected on a mandate that prioritizes economic growth.

This approach to progress is embodied in many national finance ministries and in some parts of the global institutions of financial governance, such as the International Monetary Fund. It underpins the 'Washington consensus' on economic policy (Stiglitz 2002).

Within social science there is much debate as to the type of social arrangements that best deliver economic growth. A major focus of the discussion has been as to whether countries with the markets that are most 'free', or where markets are carefully regulated and subordinated to other social institutions, actually deliver on this. In particular, this involves analysing the contrasting nature and implications of different types of production, welfare, and regulatory regimes (Barro 1998; Hall and Soskice 2001; Kenworthy 2004). However, there are several challenges to this conceptualization of progress. These include whether untrammelled competition has social costs

that need to be set against the benefits of rapid economic growth, and whether it leads to happiness (Oswald 1997; Layard 2005). Is human well-being, equality, or human rights more important?

Equality

An alternative approach to progress is viewed through the lens of justice. This approach prioritizes justice, equality, and human rights rather than material improvements in living conditions and welfare. Various traditions articulate this issue in slightly different ways, including: justice (Sandel 1998; Rawls 1999); equality (Phillips 1995; Holli 1997); rights (Paine 1984; Kymlicka 1991, 1995); human rights (Peters and Wolper 1995; Woodiwiss 1998); citizenship (Marshall 1950); equal opportunities and equity (Acker 1989; Shaw and Perrons 1995); freedom and capabilities (Sen 1999; Nussbaum 2000); democracy, political rights and civil liberties (Gastil 1982); and recognition (Taylor et al. 1994; Honneth 1996; Fraser 1997). While there are many approaches to the notion of progress that have a justice framing, it is possible to group many of them into two categories – equality and rights.

The framing of progress as equality is a key part of the socialist and social democratic tradition (Bobbio 1997). This is a more collective and less individualist framing of justice than the others, according less priority to the individual and more to groups and collectivities. There are variations within this frame including: whether equality is conceptualized as an opportunity or an outcome; which domains and practices are included; whether it is limited to 'excessive' inequality; and how difference is addressed.

Equality may be understood either as an outcome or as an opportunity. Equality of outcomes is the stronger programme; equality of opportunities addresses processes and procedures which may possibly, but not necessarily, lead to greater equality in outcomes. For example, the attempt to increase equality of opportunity by equal treatment laws may reduce discrimination but may also be insufficient to produce an equality of outcome in the absence of structural change (Hoskyns 1996). This equality of outcome usually requires the transformation of both social systems and legal processes.

The principle of equality is often selectively applied. This equality may be regarded as a legitimate outcome in matters of longevity, where class and ethnic differences are often considered unjust. It is more commonly discussed in the economic domain (for example, in the debates over narrowing the gender and ethnic pay gaps) than in civil society where diversity is more often preferred. Further, there are some issues for which equality is considered marginal rather than

important (Phillips 1999). Some forms of inequality are regarded as illegitimate because they are 'excessive'. For example, social exclusion and poverty may be regarded as unjust because they are extreme or 'excessive', but not inequality in all its forms; social exclusion is a weaker understanding of inequality (Lister 1998).

Inequalities are often complexly entwined with differences. There is a question as to whether equality requires sameness and the use of a single standard, or equal recognition and the valuation of different contributions, or a larger and more profound transformation (Fraser 1997; Rees 1998). The equal valuation of different contributions is a step away from traditional interpretations of equality that involve a single universal standard. The notion of cosmopolitanism requires mutual respect for different ways of life rather than the adoption of a single universal standard as to what is best (Held 2004; Beck 2006).

Equality is potentially the most radical of the framings of progress. In practice, its application as a principle is often hedged with caveats and limited to specific processes, domains, and practices.

Human rights

In the rights-based approach to justice, every individual is regarded as having inviolable rights, the realization of which constitutes a just society. Each person has an equal entitlement to a specific set of rights. The tradition is predominantly individualist, with the valuation of the rights of individuals positioned as more important than the average welfare of the society as a whole. It ranges from a relatively narrow focus on civil liberties, such as freedom of speech, and political rights, such as free elections (Gastil 1982), to a wider concept of citizenship, which involves socio-economic as well as political and civil rights (Marshall 1950). In its privileging of the individual over society, rights can be interpreted as representing a Western, rather than a universal or global, approach to justice, although this is contested (Woodiwiss 1998).

The notion of rights itself has several variants, including human rights and civil rights (Ferree et al. 2002a), though today human rights predominate in political discourse. There are many theoretical and philosophical interpretations of the longstanding rights-based tradition of justice (Banks 1981; Paine 1984; Wollstonecraft 1992 [1790]). According to Rawls (1999), justice is the overarching framework for all conceptions of progress and the first virtue of social institutions. He considers that each individual has an inviolability that overrides everything else, including the average welfare of the rest of society. Rawls's approach to justice involves a rejection of utilitarian theory in

which the justice of a larger number of people can outweigh the injustice and disadvantage of a few individuals. His approach requires that every individual receives the basics as an underpinning of justice. In this way Rawls's 'social contract' approach to justice prioritizes an equal minimum level for all over the welfare of a whole society.

In the current wave of globalization, the human rights interpretation of justice is becoming increasingly important. This draws on a longstanding rights tradition (Banks 1981; Paine 1984; Wollstonecraft 1992 [1790]; Berkovitch 1999) as well as on some components of the equality framework (Peters and Wolper 1995; Woodiwiss 1998). The most important current statement on human rights is that issued by the UN after the end of the Second World War, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN 1948). This claim, endorsed by all governments in the world, states that these rights are in principle universal and not particular. However, this early UN statement on human rights has since been reinterpreted, extending and clarifying its content. The implementation of a rights-based (especially a human rights) approach to justice and progress is often made via a juridical framework. It is through the law, courts and lawyers that human rights are made available to individuals and groups of individuals.

Although there is a component of equality within the human rights approach, not least equality in accessing these rights since they are regarded as universal, this is a limited conception of equality. It is a minimalist and threshold conception – a relatively low threshold is set and must be passed. Beyond that, the framework has nothing to say.

However, the framing of human rights as universal and measured against a single standard is contested by notions of group rights, the equal valuation of different contributions, and by cosmopolitanism. Rights are not always and only linked to individuals: they may also be constituted as group rights, or as the right to a way of life, which intrinsically involves a group or community (Kymlicka 1991, 1995). This implicitly recognizes that there are different standards in relation to which rights can be claimed. The example used by Kymlicka is that of the First Nation, or aboriginal Indians, in Canada, and their collective rights to the use of certain tracts of land that differ from those belonging to the rest of Canada's citizens. A parallel issue is articulated in theories of equal rights in relation to gender, where the concern to respect difference leads to such formulations as the equal valuation of different contributions. However, there is a question as to whether such respect implies an acceptance of practices that might be considered harmful to certain minorities. There is a tension between universalism and particularism in the specification of equality and human rights, even though the traditional interpretation of these has tended to imply a single universal standard.

Human development, well-being and capabilities

well-being, capabilities
A further project, variously named human development, well-being or capabilities, challenges a focus solely on economic development and growth, but is equivocal about equality. This approach to progress replaces a focus on income with a broader conception of human development and well-being. The intellectual inspiration underpinning this approach is the work of Amartya Sen (1999), while broader support comes from practitioners in the international development community and more recently from academics. There is an increasing divergence within this approach between an outcome-oriented project rooted in the international development community and a philosophically-oriented project focused on the concept of capabilities which is separated from that of functionings.

When embedded in the United Nations Development Project (1990), this alternative approach to development promoted an approach to human well-being that required more than just income; outcomes of longevity and education were the preferred form of development. This challenge to the narrowness of the goal of economic growth that had been held up by the institutions of global financial governance such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank was at least partly successful. The adoption of the UN Millennium Development Goals, which offer a synthesis of human and economic development, by the IMF, the World Bank and OECD among others, represents a modest global political success on the part of this challenge to neoliberal conceptions of economic growth.

Capabilities are the 'substantive freedoms' to 'choose a life one has reason to value', while functionings are 'the various things a person may value doing or being', according to Sen (1999: 74–5). The distinction between capabilities and functioning parallels the distinction between opportunities and outcomes. One of the strengths of the capabilities approach (that it is open to democratic attempts to name and prioritize capabilities) is also a weakness. The flexibility and openness to political pressure in the definition of the list of capabilities mean that a wide range of interpretations of capabilities is possible. The focus on capabilities rather than on functionings deliberately opens the door to choice, but thereby makes possible a choice of inequality as a way to obtain a difference. Opportunities, conceptualized as substantive freedoms and capabilities, are hard to operationalize and to measure. Because the door is deliberately opened to choice, it is thereby opened to the possibility that people may choose inequality through their choice of a form of difference

that is linked to inequality. Choice is prioritized over equality. By contrast, the UNDP approach to capabilities problematizes choice: 'Real opportunity is about having real choices – the choices that come with a sufficient income, an education, good health and living in a country that is not governed by tyranny' (UNDP 2006). In this way, certain contexts are taken as key to providing capabilities. The focus shifts to outcomes (rather than opportunities) which are easier to measure against a common standard. The interpretation of this school of thought as developed by the UNDP, with its focus on a wide range of outcomes that are relevant to human development and well-being, is the one preferred here.

Competing projects: neoliberalism and social democracy

The different conceptions of progress – high personal income, human well-being, equality, and human rights – do not necessarily contain accounts of the means to reach these goals. Sometimes they are implied, but in many cases the means to reach these ends are contested. Would prioritizing economic growth raise incomes most effectively, even if at the expense of lesser equality or human rights? Would deepening democracy most effectively promote equality and human well-being, but at the expense of more rapid economic growth? Are there trade-offs between the different goals, or not? How are these combined in different projects in the world?

While there are many projects to reach these goals, neoliberalism and social democracy are the most comprehensive in vision and the most relevant today (Giddens 1998; Held 2004; Harvey 2005). While neoliberalism and social democracy presume modernity, and disagree over the form that modernity should take, other projects promote some aspects of premodernity, as is often the case in religious fundamentalisms. Other projects include human rights. Some have partial rather than comprehensive visions, for example feminism, cosmopolitanism (Beck 2006) and environmentalism (Yearley 1996; Cudworth 2003). Some are hybrid projects – for example, the US Bush Presidency, 2001–2009, combined neoliberalism with Christian fundamentalism – while the 'cosmopolitan universalists' combine social democracy with human rights (Held 2004), and the anti-globalization movement combines anti-neoliberal capitalism, environmentalism and feminism. This book focuses on the contrast between the two major projects, neoliberalism and social democracy.

These projects sometimes become embedded in governmental programmes and sometimes in actual social formations. The extent

to which these visions are institutionalized and implemented varies significantly. Projects can be primarily located in civil society, or may become embedded in governmental policy programmes or in actually existing social forms, both large and small. A civil society project usually aims to become the dominant state programme in order to shape actual social relations and institutions, although with varying degrees of success.

Neoliberalism elevates the notion of market effectiveness into a guiding principle for action and attempts to reduce the level of state intervention into the economy, prioritizing the individual over collectivism (Brenner and Theodore 2002; England and Ward 2007). As an intellectual project its current forms draw on the work of Hayek (1960) and Friedman (1962), which argued that freeing the market from state controls was the best way to ensure economic growth, which in turn was believed to deliver human well-being, freedom, democracy, and civil liberties. The project grew in strength during the 1980s, but has a much longer heritage; here the term neoliberal is extended back in time. In the 1980s the neoliberal programme was taken forward by the US and UK governments under Reagan and Thatcher and by global financial institutions, becoming known as the 'Washington consensus', and then spread globally as a result of International Monetary Fund (IMF) conditions on loans to poor countries including 'structural adjustment'. The policies included cutting back state welfare expenditure; the reduction in or deregulation of worker protections and benefit payments for those out of employment; the privatization of publicly owned industries, utilities and services; the expansion of the market into previously non-marketized arenas of the global commons such as the genome; and the substitution of the market as an alternative form of governance to democracy in specific areas, for example welfare provision (Brenner and Theodore 2002; Harvey 2003, 2005; England and Ward 2007). In practice, the record of neoliberalism on economic growth is contested (Stiglitz 2002). The drive to increase incentives to work shifts the balance of power, leading to increased inequalities which then compromise human-well-being (Oswald 1997; Wilkinson 2005).

Social democracy aspires to govern societies democratically, avoiding excessive inequality, promoting human as well as economic development, and enabling minorities as well as majorities to enjoy their human rights. Social democratic projects commit to the provision of education, health and care for those in need, in order to deliver human well-being for all, whether employed or not (Esping-Andersen 1990). There is a commitment to developing policies across a wide spectrum in order to deliver social justice and to reduce inequality. It is considered appropriate for the state to intervene in

the running of the economy through regulation not only to prevent market failure, but also to engage in redistribution; the state legitimately taxes and spends in order to deliver its policies.

Social democratic projects vary significantly in the extent to which they promote state or collective ownership as mechanisms to govern the economy, whether they adopt Keynesian macro economic management to reduce the severity of recessions or merely aim for stability. There has been both a retreat (Callaghan 2000) and a transformation (Kitschelt 1994) of social democratic projects into new forms as a response to the reduction in the traditional base of electoral support in male manual workers in manufacturing industries (Przeworski and Sprague 1986), dealignment in class voting practices (Crewe et al. 1977), and changing external circumstances such as globalization (Held 1995). There has also been a slow transition of the social democratic project towards the full inclusion of the concerns of gender and other minorities which is ongoing. Some forms of the project now include full employment for women and an end to discrimination against women and minorities, though a full engagement with ethno-national issues of citizenship and migration is far from complete. Neoliberal critics consider that state intervention compromises economic growth and thereby other goals.

This description of the projects of neoliberalism and social democracy has so far been a summary of ideal types and aspirations. The implications of the projects as they enter governmental programmes and become embedded in diverse social formations can be quite different.

While the self-description of neoliberalism focuses on diminishing governmental interventions into the economy in contrast with social democracy, in practice neoliberalism is associated with the greater expansion of state interventions in other domains than social democracy. In particular, neoliberalism is associated with the greater development and deployment of state violence and associated forms of coercion than is social democracy, for example, in the propensity to go to war, the build up of military capacity, and the use of prisons to contain criminality and maintain social order. So while neoliberalism appears to laud a small state, this is only in relation to the economy; in practice neoliberal governments simultaneously develop a large coercive state to maintain the domestic social order and position in the global state system. In comparing neoliberalism and social democracy, it is important not to confine the analysis to the intersection of the polity with the economy, but also to include other domains including violence.

While there is widespread consensus that the USA is a major example of the neoliberal project and Sweden of the social democratic, the

boundary between neoliberalism and social democracy is contested, with some arguing that Britain's New Labour government since 1997 constitutes a new form of social democracy (Giddens 1998) and others arguing that the extent of its use of the market principle means that it is effectively neoliberal (Arestis and Sawyer 2005). The debate concerns a number of issues regarding the state's role in securing social justice. These include the shift away from state ownership of industries and services; away from direct provision of public services by the state to being merely guaranteed by the state but delivered by the market; the development of active labour market policies, such as compulsory counselling and targeted training, to achieve full employment; and away from a goal to reduce inequality to that of reducing social exclusion and the provision of equal opportunities. The move away from state ownership and the provision of goods and services to their regulation by the state (Majone 1996) is not necessarily inconsistent with a social democratic tradition, though the reduction in the role of the state is considered by some to be a move towards neoliberalism. The emphasis on the employment and education of individuals may be interpreted either as a shift to a neoliberal accommodation to global capital (Taylor-Gooby 1997; George 1998; Brine 2006), a shift from a Keynesian welfare state to a Schumpeterian workfare state (Jessop 1999), or in keeping with a social democratic tradition that prioritizes full employment (Giddens 1998, 2001; Crouch 1999), where an appropriate response to globalization is to invest in people's human capital through state initiated training and education (Reich 1993; Quadagno 1999; Esping-Andersen 2002). These changes may well be an accommodation to a changing global environment, but full employment under decent conditions for all without coercion and state ensured access for all to education, health and care and a decent living standard, are among the hallmarks of social democracy. The shift in the conceptualization of the goal of 'equality' to that of 'social inclusion' (Giddens 1998) potentially softens the core principles of the social democratic project (Lister 1998), as does reduced concern with increased inequality caused by the growth in high level earnings and wealth from housing capital, and the evasion of taxation and regulation by private equity forms of capital (Murphy 2007), although the attention to poverty somewhat mitigates this. On this range of concerns, the UK is best considered to be situated on the boundary between social democracy and neoliberalism.

A similar debate addresses whether the EU is best considered neoliberal (Young 2000) or social democratic, which is complicated by the narrower remit of this polity, which excludes welfare payments and the different construction of its democratic processes (Majone 1998). The conclusion of this debate drawn here is that the

major division in the world today is one between a more neoliberal USA and a more social democratic EU. The contest between the varieties of modernity of these two global hegemonies is crucial for the future of global arrangements.

Contesting conceptions of progress

How is it possible to adjudicate between these contesting conceptions of progress: economic development, human well-being, equality and human rights? Are these issues to be determined by philosophers, or is it a matter of politics, with the strongest forces winning, or a matter of rational argumentation and evidence-based research? Is there a single universal standard, or will there always be particular standards for different cultures and communities? The tension between universalism and particularism runs through all of these framings of progress: between a concept of progress that is universally applicable and one that always varies by social location. Is universalism merely a disguise for new forms of imperialism, colonialism, or Westernization? The postmodern critique of modernity argues that a universally relevant concept of progress is inherently impossible. However, it can also be argued that universal standards are needed, since exceptions can be manipulated by the powerful. How, in an emergent global era, might all voices be involved in determining what global standards should be?

Is there a philosophical grounding of the decision between either a universal or community-based grounding? On the one hand, liberalism and universalism appear to offer a plea to a free-floating form of reason that is universal, drawing on a Kantian heritage (Rawls 2005). There is a claim to universally valid truth, though this usually assumes a coherent individual as the seeker/knower. On the other hand, communitarianism appears to offer grounding in the particular standards of a specific community (Taylor 1994; Sandel 1998). The latter implies that truth is always partial and situated, that we are limited by the communities in which we are located, and that there is always social situatedness and a particularity of values and knowledge (Haraway 1988). In place of the Enlightenment tradition that made universal claims to knowledge, has emerged a postmodern scepticism of the validity and usefulness of the grand 'metanarratives' linking the knowledge and progress that constituted its core components (Lyotard 1984).

Of course, both polar extremes are untenable. Many have sought a resolution or compromise, either by refining the procedures for an assessment of justice claims (Habermas 1989, 1991; Benhabib 1992), or by integrating the concerns of the individual and the community

(Kymlicka 1991, 1995). Habermas (1989, 1991) seeks a resolution by attempting to establish universally valid procedures by which truth may be established, utilizing the dynamics within an assumed desire to communicate to drive the process, and locating it within an idealized situation of equality of contribution. However, by such a location Habermas, despite his intentions, situates rather than universalizes the conditions for truth, since the conditions of free and equal contribution are actually socially specific, not least in their presumption of the implications of democratic involvement. Benhabib's (1992) attempt at overcoming the same dualism by demanding a focus on the other has similar strengths and weaknesses to that of Habermas despite her attempt to move further on (Hutchings 1997). Benhabib seeks to avoid commitment to the communitarian stance, by making an appeal to the ostensibly universally valid criteria of judgement of recognizing the standpoint of the other. But the process of recognizing the standpoint of the other is not natural and automatic, but depends upon socially variable conditions. Thus, Benhabib merely displaces the problem of universalism onto these new procedures for judgement, which are not sufficiently universal to be adequate to the task demanded of them. The act of 'recognition' requires a social process of assessment as to what constitutes the same as or different from oneself. By contrast, Bauman (1991, 1993) simultaneously rejects both poles and with them the search for certain foundations for contemporary ethics and political projects.

But despite the philosophical angst, there are nonetheless many projects that promote alternative conceptions of progress. How should they be understood? Are they best understood as predominantly political? There are protestors who oppose the priorities for globalization as proposed by the world's financial institutions, who are met with organized state and police power, as in the Seattle riots (Klein 1999). There are political struggles within global institutions, for example, coalitions of poor countries preventing the World Trade Organization from adopting certain types of liberalization of world trade that they consider would adversely affect the poor.

Today, many projects engage simultaneously with both knowledge and power, drawing on and deploying scientific research within and alongside political engagement. This can be understood as the development of 'epistemic communities' (Haas 1992) or 'public Sociology' (Burawoy 2005). 'An epistemic community is a network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence ... an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge ... a shared set of normative and principled beliefs ... shared causal beliefs ... derived from their analysis of practices ... shared notions of validity ... and a common policy enterprise' (Haas 1992: 3). Burawoy (2005) refers to the practice of public Sociology, in contrast to professional Sociology, critical Sociology and

policy Sociology. This is a Sociology that engages with contemporary issues, researching questions that emerge in civil societal struggles, which draws on the other three Sociologies, not least professional expertise, and is engaged in projects of social transformation, the pursuit of progress. There are many examples of the intermingled nature of politics and science, in which findings from research are central to the struggles over the pursuit of competing projects, including the best way to invest for development (Stiglitz 2002) and the dangerousness of emerging genomic technologies (Winickoff et al. 2005). These draw on the notion that truth is never permanently established even if it temporarily appears to be (Latour and Woolgar 1979), but is instead constantly subject to challenge and to doubt (Habermas 1987 [1981]).

In global arenas there have been several significant and successful challenges to the standards against which global progress is to be measured and in more than one direction. A change from economic growth towards a capabilities understanding of progress has been occurring within global institutions as a consequence of this mix of intellectual and political struggle. In the 1980s the clear goal of the world's financial institutions was economic growth. By 2000, in the UN Millennium Declaration, the World Bank, IMF and OECD additionally supported a capabilities approach. The eight Millennium Development Goals were to: eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empower women; reduce child mortality; improve maternal health; combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensure environmental stability; and develop a global partnership for development (UN 2005). A change in the list of UN-recognized human rights occurred in 1993 as a result of a similar mix of political agitation and research-based evidence (Peters and Wolper 1995). This was to include violence against women as a violation of women's human rights. The potent mix of a global feminist coalition and research on the extent of violence against women was crucial to this change in what were ostensibly 'universal' human rights.

With globalization, the definition of the good life and the policies to promote it are increasingly contested at a global level. Global institutions and the political and civil societal spaces they generate constitute an increasingly important terrain on which these struggles take place. There are appeals to both scientific evidence and to democratically expressed popular priorities as bases for the legitimacy of arguments. Global institutions around the UN have revised their stated goals as a consequence of these processes. There has been a shift in emphasis from a framing of progress as an increase in income to one of capabilities, while the definition of universal human rights now involves explicit reference to women's human rights. At the same time, in a perhaps contrary direction, global financial institutions have

promoted economic growth, and military force has been deployed by some polities in pursuit of particularistic goals.

Conclusions

One of the aims of this book is to adjudicate rival claims about progress on the basis of evidence and theory that go beyond philosophy. The concept of progress is not outmoded, as alleged by some postmodern critics. Yet there is no single and universally agreed upon definition of progress, rather there are many competing framings of the project. Thus, a search for a foundational basis for a detailed list of the characteristics of the good life would be in vain. While there is no single foundation for standards of progress, the formulation, encoding and institutionalization of concepts of progress in international conventions and agreements, especially those orchestrated by the UN, proceed apace. This is not the same as a global or universal agreement. Nevertheless, these activities do have consequences. There are active processes of claims-making about what constitutes progress and the proper goals of public policy. In a global era there is renewed interest in claims pitched at the level of the universal. In an era of globalization and increasing valuation and practice of democracy the contestation over the content of the concept of progress is taking new and more global forms. The contested choice of economic growth, or capabilities and well-being, or justice-based considerations of equality or human rights, affects public policy at both global and national levels.

Here, a complex realism is adopted, in which each knowledge claim is underpinned by a set of theoretical and empirical components, each of which is part of a network of knowledge claims. It is a knowledge claim rather than a value claim because of this underpinning. This is not a foundationalist claim, since the theoretical and empirical underpinning is contestable and challengeable. The 'real' can never be known for certain; not even if the best scientific procedures are followed. The concept of complex realism building on critical realism combines the notion that there are procedures by which knowledge claims are contested (subject to refutation) and can be improved with that of uncertainty, in that they can never be known absolutely. In complex realism, the testing of knowledge claims against a network of theories and empirical evidence can lead to a reduction in the errors in knowledge.

Many issues ostensibly posed as ones of value often make implicit claims as to how phenomena are interconnected. Many

claims made about the good life, progress, and human well-being are testable to a considerable degree by empirical evidence because they are claims about associations and connections between phenomena. One of the aims of this book is to assess the processes and types of social system that best realize the good life, according to different formulations, addressing its framing as economic growth, human development, equality, and human rights. When do they map onto each other? When do they diverge? What forms of social organization and social development, which varieties of modernity, are associated with each? How general a set of arguments can be made, universal or particular? This book provides evidence of the implications of one dimension of social life inequality for another, thereby reducing the speculative element in some of the debates. Chapter 9 in particular uses comparative data to measure progress in a range of countries according to the different definitions identified here.

Multiple Complex Inequalities

Introduction

Equality matters not only because it is a major contemporary framing of justice and progress, but also because inequalities affect the different forms and speed of economic and human development. Key issues include: how to theorize multiple and intersecting social inequalities in addition to class; how to theorize the relationship between difference and inequality; and the implications of multiple complex inequalities for the analysis of progress and modernity.

Why multiple inequalities? Class is not the only significant inequality. Inequalities are also associated with gender, ethnicity, racialization, nation, religion, able-bodiedness, sexual orientation, age, generation, linguistic community, and more. These inequalities affect the differences between forms of modernity as well as the key dynamics of social change.

Why complex inequalities? Unequal social relations involve difference as well as inequality. Some aspects of the different activities may be positively valued, while others will be regarded as unjust. It is this complicated combination of inequality and difference that the concept of 'complex inequalities' is intended to capture. Complex inequalities are here defined as constituted by the simultaneity of difference and inequality, going beyond the conventional treatment of these as alternatives.

Multiple and intersecting inequalities

While class has traditionally been seen as the main axis of social inequality, this is insufficient. Gender and ethnicity are also important forms of inequality, as can be the case with disability, religion, age and sexual orientation (it is illegal to discriminate on grounds of gender, ethnicity, disability, faith, age, and sexual orientation in the EU: see the European Commission 2007a). While the diversity of social inequalities is widely documented, they are infrequently integrated into macro level social theory. Specialist areas of social science have produced extensive descriptions and analysis of specific inequalities, for example, in the sub-disciplines of gender studies, ethnic and racial studies, and disability studies; however, these have not yet been fully integrated into social theory.

In order to include multiple complex inequalities in addition to class at the centre of social theory, several theoretical developments are needed. The conceptualization of each of the main institutional domains of economy, polity, violence, and civil society needs to be re-thought so as to include and make visible complex inequalities in addition to class. Each of the complex inequalities needs to be theorized as a separate system of social relations, as a regime of inequality spelling out the ontological depth of these regimes. Class is not reducible to economics, nor ethnicity to culture; rather each regime of inequality involves the economy, polity, violence, and civil society. The theorization of multiple regimes of inequality is a further challenge – to go beyond reducing one form of inequality to another, or restricting the account to description.

The concept of the economy, which is often restricted to marketized monetized activities, needs to be widened to include non-marketized non-monetized work if it is to capture gender and ethnic relations. If it is not broadened in this way, then other forms of economic activity, such as unpaid domestic care-work that is an important part of the constitution of gender relations (Oakley 1974; Becker 1981; Delphy 1984) and slavery that was an important part of the constitution of ethnic relations (Walvin 1992), will be omitted from the analysis. If the unit within which inequality is considered is widened from one country to the whole world and inequalities between generations are included, then new forms of inequalities become visible, such as global warming, which has had stronger effects on the poor South rather than the rich North of the world (Roberts and Parks 2007) and on future generations.

The inclusion of non-marketized economic sectors causes problems for some of the most frequently used measures of economic inequality, in particular income inequality. Comparing the income of employed