THE RISE OF INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES IN SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES AND THE CHALLENGE OF COMPARATIVE SOCIOLOGY

PUBLIC LECTURE BY
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ABSTRACT | This lecture develops the major theme of Arjomand’s most recent publications: Worlds of Difference (with Elisa Reis, 2013) and Social Theory and Regional Studies in the Global Age (2014). After briefly surveying three generations of comparative sociologists, interdisciplinary regional and trans-regional studies are shown to complement the work of the third generation of comparative sociologists on civilizational analysis and multiple modernities. Drawing examples from the interdisciplinary Persianate studies promoted by Association for the Study of Persianate Societies in the last two decades and from other recent interdisciplinary studies of other world regions for illustrations, it is argued that the rise of interdisciplinary studies in social sciences and humanities may in fact redeem the unfulfilled promise comparative sociology once offered. These recent studies offer a significant contribution to our theoretical understanding of different patterns of socio-cultural development beyond the West, whose historical experience gave birth to modern social science disciplines, and thereby undoing the erasure of the historical experience of a very sizeable portion of humankind from the foundations of social theory in the global age.

BIO | Said Amir Arjomand (Ph.D, University of Chicago, 1980) is Distinguished Service Professor of Sociology and Director of the Stony Brook Institute for Global Studies. He is the founder and president of the Association for the Study of Persianate Societies and editor of its interdisciplinary publication, the Journal of Persianate Studies. With a vast body of work published in humanities and social science journals, Arjomand is the author of several books including The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam: Religion, Political Organization and Societal Change in Shi’ite Iran from the Beginning to 1890 (Chicago University: 1984; new ed., 2010), The Turban for the Crown. The Islamic Revolution in Iran (Oxford: 1988), and most recently, Worlds of Difference (with Elisa Reis, SAGE: 2013), and Social Theory and Regional Studies in the Global Age (SUNY: 2014).

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