



International Development Research Centre
Centre de recherches pour le développement international

MEETING OF THE CANADIAN COUNCIL FOR AREA
SPECIFIC LEARNED SOCIETIES (CCASLS)

Area Studies Is Dead: Long Live Area Studies

by

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I gather from others who know more about Areas Studies than I ever shall that there has been a debate about whether or not the world still needs Area Studies. They have been criticized as a product of cold-war security interests, merely descriptive, parochial, and oblivious of changing global forces. ('Many scholars have observed that area studies in the American academy, such as 'Africa' or 'Latin America', have been generated through a combination of colonial cartography and European ideas of civilization.' -- Volkman¹) The debate intensified around an article by Robert Bates in Africa Today², contending that there was a tension, not to say conflict, between area studies as these are generally understood and political science, that needed to be reconciled. Reconciliation would be achieved by subsuming area studies under international studies which would, not surprisingly, be dominated by political science.

You are much more familiar with this debate than I am and I mention it here only to make the point that questions are being asked about the utility of areas studies and that some would have us believe that areas studies have had their day and should be retired.

Quelles que soient les complexités du débat, comme c'est souvent le cas dans des joutes de cette nature, tous les interlocuteurs se voient contraints de revoir leur position, de sonder le mérite de leur cause et de défendre leur point de vue ou bien d'abandonner le terrain. Bien qu'opposé aux études régionales traditionnelles, Bates préconise une voie du milieu entre études régionales et sciences sociales et la mise en oeuvre de méthodologies inédites -- qu'il définit d'«exposés analytiques», variante innovatrice de la théorie des jeux. Parvenue à ce stade, je dois quitter les subtilités dialectiques du docteur Bates tout en le suivant pour partie sur ce chemin où, bien qu'opposé à l'orientation générale des études régionales et favorable à des nouvelles méthodes permettant d'étayer une théorie générale solidement ancrée, il garde toujours le souci de prendre en compte la culture politique, les arrangements institutionnels et le rôle du leadership, et cetera, qui sont les particularités mêmes que les études régionales visaient à approfondir en tout premier lieu.

I do not know to what extent the Bates debate can be credited for recent events, but these do indicate that area studies has its champions. This is the age of institutional restructuring. You know that IDRC has come through a period of restructuring (and I shall say something about this later) -- and we know that many, if not all, of you are having similar experiences in your universities. Our shared circumstance is the need to adjust to less public funding. But I have been

¹Toby Alice Volkman. Crossing Borders: The Case for Area Studies. Ford Foundation Report, Winter 1998.

²Robert H. Bates. Area Studies and political science: rupture and possible synthesis. *Africa Today*, v 44. n2. April 1997

intrigued to observe that even those with more secure funding are finding it opportune to rethink and restructure. The Ford Foundation, under its new president, Susan Berresford, has made changes to its structure and approach to programming. For us today it is instructive to learn that Ford has made new commitments to 'revitalize' area studies to encourage scholarship that takes account of the fluidity of national borders. When Ford decides to provide support it does so on a grand scale -- we are talking here of a Foundation with USD 9.2 billions in assets supporting a grants budget of USD 350 million a year--of which approximately a third go for international work. As Stanley Katz, president of the CCASLS analogue in the US, the American Council of Learned Societies remarks 'Everybody has to recognize that this is not just one of the largest foundations, but one of the most important to the development of the social sciences and area knowledge and policy in the United States and the world'.³ We know that in the debate mentioned above the Ford Foundation has cast its vote for area studies. Its program '**Crossing Borders: revitalizing Area Studies**' will invest USD 25 million over the next six years.

Where Ford goes others follow.

A joint initiative of the US Social Sciences Research Council and the American Council for Learned Societies (SSRC/ACLS) announced recently the results of the first round of the **International Dissertation Field Research Fellowship Program**. Funded by the Mellon Foundation, 45 fellows will be supported 'to address issues that transcend their disciplines or area of specialization' and to conduct dissertation research 'in all areas and regions of the world'.

I mention these two efforts by our neighbours -- our partner in NAFTA and a range of other international fora--both as evidence that area studies is indeed being supported and revitalized and to establish a perspective for our own efforts.

WHY BACK AREA STUDIES?

or

WHY WE MUST CONTINUE THE STUDY OF STRANGE PLACES?

Again I hesitate to rehearse for you the merits of areas studies -- but, given the debate on its place in current scholarship let me share with you some thoughts on what we have received in the past from area studies and what we need now in return for its share of scarce public funding.

A member of IDRC's Board of Governors, Prof Olaf Slaymaker, a geographer at UBC, at a recent meeting of the Editorial Board for a book on 'The Internationalization of the Canadian University', a joint endeavour of AUCC, CIDA and IDRC observed that the push for areas studies in the 1950s transformed the discipline of geography -- offering an opportunity to explore the power of interdisciplinary (if not multi disciplinary) research and teaching by obliging its various branches -- physical, human and political geography -- to cooperate if geography were to contribute to a more fruitful enquiry and comprehensive understanding of strange places.

Il est généralement admis que les études régionales telles que nous les envisageons aujourd'hui ont pris leur essor dans l'après-guerre, lorsque les États-Unis ont appuyé la recherche et l'enseignement destinés à promouvoir la connaissance spécialisée des régions du monde qui constituaient pour eux une menace (l'Union Soviétique et ses satellites d'Europe de l'Est) et des

³Joye Mercer. The Ford Foundation shifts its focus and structure. Chronicle of Higher Education. v3. n29. April 15, 1997.

zones auxquelles ils souhaitent étendre leur influence commerciale et politique (Asie, Amérique latine et Afrique). Les États-Unis devaient naturellement rattraper l'Europe (et notamment le Royaume-Uni et la France) qui pouvait compter sur un formidable arsenal de connaissances dans ce domaine, sans mentionner les réseaux et les influences découlant d'une longue familiarité avec ces pays et de leur passé colonial. Je suis sûre que la formation savante et la tradition érudite d'un grand nombre d'entre vous est tributaire de cette source. L'effort déployé a comporté des investissements considérables dans le domaine linguistique, des collections spécialisées, de nombreux octrois pour des voyages d'études outre-mer, des bourses de recherche et ainsi de suite.

There is anecdotal evidence that in Canada area studies had other origins. Roger Schwass, Professor Emeritus from York University, and a member of the Editorial Board I mentioned earlier, observed that at York it was the sons and daughters of Canadian missionaries who had been in China in the late 1940s who established that university's expertise in China in particular and Asia more generally.

But let's leave the history of the origins and early influence of area studies in Canadian universities to the book on the Internationalization of the Canadian University which I mentioned and which I hope will be available later this year.

Notice that the Ford program to which I referred aims to 'revitalize' area studies. But in return for putting 'new life' into this branch of scholarship, what will area studies deliver -- what contribution must it make to earn its keep and justify public support?

There are well established core activities that area studies must continue to deliver: training in a wide range of languages; the collection and collation of up-to-date country and region specific data, observation and analysis to update the shifting political and institutional arrangements, insights that signal trends that may offer threats or opportunities.

The research and teaching around these core activities will have its immediate pay off as your students take up their careers with government departments, NGOs and private firms that conduct Canada's international relations.

But something more is needed -- required -- in a world that is increasingly interconnected through the unprecedented mobility of people, ideas, information and capital. Area studies, in addition to training students and interacting with a specialist clientele, must make the effort to deepen the Canadian public's understanding of foreign places.

In this regard my first thought was to make something of the importance of 'context'. Knowledge without context is not knowledge at all: it is low-grade data. But that is trite: so let me explore further where I think the new opportunities lie for area studies.

The arguments in support of area studies are more nuanced now than in the past. Mr Axworthy has expressed in the strongest terms the need to 'democratize foreign policy'. He has set up the **Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development**; has convened a **Minister's Advisory Board** and instituted the **John Holmes Fund** to get in touch with broader public opinion of foreign policy. Before joining IDRC I was myself a member of the Minister's Advisor Board and know that your colleagues in area studies are well represented. I know Mr. Axworthy genuinely wants to involve a broader spectrum of the Canadian public in shaping foreign policy. And you as area studies specialists can/must play a more active role in this regard.

To illustrate let me take just a couple of the current 'mantras' that are easily chanted and very difficult to translate into the here-and-now of foreign policy and international relations.

Globalization:

Like it or hate it: reject it or adopt, this particular mantra is intoned by too many folk to be ignored. What do area studies have to say about globalization -- to debunk it or give it substance? How are we to understand 'difference', 'novelty' and 'choice', the stock in trade of area studies, if we accept the 'blending' the 'homogeneity' 'the end of history' that globalization threatens to bring.

Think globally act locally:

As the volume is turned up on the mantra of globalization we hear increased pleas to validate the essentials that can only be found at the local level. Increasingly 'local' is not only where you and I live it is where people of all regions of the world live. 'Local' is no longer a 'place marker': it is increasingly a 'concept' that we have to know more about. To be a global citizen I have to know and care more about what local means for an Indonesian, a Malawian a Chilean. Area studies are well placed to ask the probing questions---' What are the processes through which civilization, nations, communities, or 'areas' are defined, both historically and in the present? And defined by whom? How are we to understand particular societies and cultures, with all the deep knowledge that requires--even as we examine the wider processes -- from global capital flows, to labour markets -- that affect us all' (Volkman).

L'importance de ces questions n'échappe pas aux protagonistes qui ont le pouvoir de marquer la différence. La rencontre qui a eu lieu en février dernier entre Monsieur James Wolfensohn et l'archevêque de Canterbury et à laquelle ont participé les chefs de treize grandes religions et traditions confessionnelles du monde a exprimé le vœu que, dans ses plans économiques, la Banque mondiale soit plus attentive à la spiritualité, à la tradition et à la culture qui caractérisent les populations sur les lieux mêmes où elles vivent et mènent leur combat. Une telle ouverture ne peut se fonder que sur la solidité des études régionales, dont le titre simplifié de Congrès des sciences humaines qui se substitue à l'ancien Congrès des sociétés savantes est révélateur. L'étude des civilisations a toujours fait bon accueil au spécialiste des sciences sociales et des sciences humaines. C'est cette combinaison d'acquis de connaissances et de traditions qui donne un sens à la complexité du mot « étude » et à l'analyse circonstancielle du concept de « local ».

Consumption:

One of the major decisions you and I may have to face and that our sons and daughters definitely will have to face is to change our habits and patterns of consumption. Only by coming to terms with the concept of local -- as this can be elucidated by area studies -- have we any chance at all of moving beyond the rhetoric to international agreements on sustainable use of natural resources.

Multi-disciplinarity:

Area Studies, long before the term was in vogue, were working laboratories for interdisciplinary research and teaching. Lessons learned from your particular approach to scholarship are needed now more than ever to address issues that transcend disciplines or area specializations. 'The dissolution of old states, the rise of new identities and new expressions of nationals--all have

forced radical questioning of conventional ways of viewing the world and of the rationale of area studies' (Volkman). Here is the opportunity to convert your often precarious position outside the mainstream academic disciplines to advantage.

Partnership:

Partnership is another current mantra: it is a concept, an ideal, more often used to mask than to come to terms with the interconnectedness of things. Just as we seek to understand the complexities of the local-global dichotomy, so we also need to reexamine an important choice that genuine partnerships demand -- whether we compete or cooperate. If we believe that a sustainable future must be built on the partnerships then we are opting for cooperation (at the very least on none destructive forms of competition if such can in fact exist) then we need new ideas -- and we have to hope that many of these await us through a better understanding of the people, and circumstances in the strange places that are the focus of your scholarship.

Good ideas:

What this all boils down to is that the world needs good ideas. History tells us that some of the best ideas, many instrumental in our own economic and social development come from 'strange places.' and area studies is in the final analysis the study of strange places. We live in anticipation that these strange places will continue to yield good ideas.

We hear the term 'soft diplomacy' used these days. It has its boosters and detractors -- as all new ideas do. I find the concept attractive and have looked for ways to make it 'real'. Rereading my notes for this presentation I would suggest that the short list of challenges I have touched on above are candidates for a program of 'soft diplomacy'. By extension then, area studies has been a long standing, if muted, expression of soft diplomacy. From where I stand I see the appeal for soft diplomacy being an appeal for areas studies research and scholarship to become a more robust participant in the public debate.

AREA STUDIES AND IDRC

And it is here that I can turn to the work of IDRC in an area studies context. In the past industrialized countries and sometimes even IDRC mined the ideas of strange places, hoarded them, adapted them, plagiarised them, expropriated them, and too often lost or ignored their provenance. No longer can this be the *modus operandi*.

The **new ideas** are derived from a recognition of the inadequacies of the traditional monodisciplinary approach to science -- the "Western scientific paradigm". While few question the enormous material benefits that the practice of Western science has brought to humanity, perhaps even fewer would now deny the associated costs and the limitations of continuing along the same path as before. Some argue that basic science has reached the point of diminishing marginal returns and that we already have discovered as much as we need to know for the benefit of the impoverished portion of humanity. The task now is to apply existing knowledge to different societies and circumstances. In "The New Production of Knowledge", Michael Gibbons et al describe and analyse the "new form of knowledge production that is emerging alongside the traditional, familiar one"⁴. For want of a better term they call it "Mode 2" and describe its comparative attributes as being: applied; transdisciplinary; heterogeneous; non-hierarchical (or

⁴M. Gibbons, C. Limoges, et al *The New Production of Knowledge* Sage, 1994.

heterarchical and transient); and more socially accountable and reflexive. With respect to application, they point to the main contrast with the traditional as being "...between problem solving which is carried out following codes of practice relevant to a particular discipline" and "...problem solving which is organised around a particular application". This statement captures the essence of what IDRC is trying to achieve through the current organization of its programs (Hardie⁵). Of which more in a moment.

Grâce à certains travaux de recherches financés par le CRDI au cours des trente dernières années, nous avons acquis la conviction que les chercheurs et les institutions de recherche avec qui nous avons coutume de collaborer sont, et continueront d'être, la source de quelques-unes de ces idées innovatrices -- idées dont nous aurons grand besoin au Canada et grâce auxquelles le Canada peut devenir à son tour une source d'inspiration pour le monde. Les exemples provenant des sciences naturelles sont les plus faciles à documenter -- nous savons que le germoplasme de la variété chinoise de canola a accru la valeur des récoltes au Canada, que la résistance au virus de certaines variétés de blé d'Amérique latine peut aujourd'hui être reproduite et s'appliquer au blé canadien. Les exemples provenant des sciences sociales ont un caractère plus évasif. Les banques Grameen et d'autres réalisations de micro-crédit expérimentées avec succès dans le tiers-monde trouvent des applications avantageuses dans des collectivités pauvres du Canada et des États-Unis. Le défi consiste à trouver la meilleure manière de transmettre ces idées.

COMMON PROBLEMS BUT REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Let me share with you some recent thoughts I have had on the way in which area studies phenomena are evident in IDRC's work. (I remind you that IDRC remains very much in contact with regional realities through its offices in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, the Middle East and Asia). First let me say that unlike others who see the increased global interconnectedness as evidence that borders (land and political) are increasingly inconsequential, I believe we delude ourselves if we think they no longer matter. The nation states do matter -- for many years to come the nation states in those strange places you study will still make themselves felt. But I offer that opinion to make another point--that if we too readily diminish the importance of the established geo-political order--which is, let us remind ourselves, the current expression of long history, hard won traditions, authentic culture etc we become less sensitive to and therefore less aware and less responsive and less open to what the different regions of the world have to offer.

For the first 25 years of its existence, IDRC was structured and conducted its programming along fairly traditional disciplinary/sectoral lines. In 1995, the final transition was made from this arrangement to programming on the basis of multidisciplinary program initiatives (PIs). Instead of projects based on single disciplines or sectors (e.g economics, fisheries, earth sciences, education) that sought to solve problems, the aim of the PI concept is to emphasise first the definition of the problem and then to consider what knowledge and which disciplines can contribute to its solution. (Hardie)

The new thinking about how to do more effective research is not merely an intellectual preoccupation of scientists in the rich industrialised countries. In an interdependent and connected world, one of the first groups to become 'globalized' is the scientific community and many development thinkers in the South are also seeking alternatives to the Western model. For example, Jorge Katz, Professor of Industrial Economics at the University of Buenos Aires, has

⁵ John Hardie. The Program Initiative System in IDRC: Origins and Rationale, May 1998

argued that the models that explain the technological and innovation performance of the newly industrialised countries (NICs) as recently as the 1960s and 1970s are irrelevant to current circumstances and particularly to those of most of the poorer less-developed countries(3). There is certainly much in IDRC's experience that points to the deficiencies of our approach for many small and materially poor countries. Many of these countries have the following characteristics: extreme poverty; a rudimentary research and education infrastructure, with colonial and/or donor-dominated origins; research resources below critical mass in any discipline; and at the mercy of the power, pervasiveness and speed of change of external S&T. For such countries it becomes difficult to see how the evolutionary path and final destination in terms of the knowledge systems of large, rich nations are in any way relevant. IDRC is of course active in many countries with these characteristics, especially in Africa. (Hardie)

IDRC has three program initiatives that support research on the management of natural resources at the local level, one each in Asia, Latin America and Africa. While all three tackle the same problem I have found it very interesting to see the way in which the titles (and so the 'banner headline') of these PIs reflect the particular filters through which each region views the problem. I do not want to take this analysis too far but let me share with you my observations.

In Africa the PI is called **People, Land and Water** -- the title is elegant in that it does capture the authentic African point of view and the development challenge -- to seek harmony and forms of cooperation among a 'people', whose traditions have tended to keep them apart; to seek a new understanding on the ownership of 'land' that continues to be one of the lasting and most divisive legacies of the colonial experience; and to manage better 'water' as the fundamental requirement for food security. Only by heeding this inextricable mix of African realities can the science we offer hope to contribute to a solution.

In Latin America the PI is was called *Alternatives to Poverty Lead Resource Degradation*. Mercifully the program staff have relegated this 'banner headline' to a tag line and have settled on **Minga** as the title. This is a Quechua word that one colleague has said is the equivalent to 'barn-raising' in our own recent past. Again we have a sense of the perspective that the people most affected and the researchers offering help have of the problem of local resource management. They want to find solutions from within their own, indigenous traditions, institutions and culture and preferably with their own knowledge resources first, at liberty to decide what they will or will not accept from the western sciences and scientists.

In Asia the PI is called **Community Based Natural Resource Management**. This, you will recognize, is somewhat more pro forma -- a title/description that we in North America and Europe are also using. I am not surprised by this because it is a reminder that in Asia we recognize long-standing social arrangements, in many ways analogous to those in our own history of social and economic organization. For me the PI title reflects the same challenge we face in Canada and other industrialized nations to ensure that we do find ways to confer the power (with its responsibility and accountability) to manage the environment to the local level and to find ways of harmonizing this with high levels of government. I see a paradox where Asia is an one and the same time a region catching up with development but already having to come to terms with problems that will beset the developed world if it cannot learn the lessons Asia has to teach.

The point is that a common concern, the fundamental requirement to find better ways to manage natural resources will play itself out in different ways in different settings. And in all three of the example PIs I see the possibility of a point I made earlier -- of finding good ideas that will merit consideration in our own challenge of resource management. Revitalized area studies will offer the channel for this trade in ideas.

IDRC AND SSHRC'S NEW INITIATIVE

I want to close by sharing with you first news of an exciting IDRC SSHRC joint initiative.

You know that IDRC has over the years supported the three Area Specific Learned Societies (CALACS, CAAS and CASA) and more recently to CCASLS grouping these three societies and I understand in more recent times the CANMES. IDRC provides its support for CCASLS knowing that Canada would be the poorer for not supporting this scholarship. We are acutely aware of how fragile these institutional arrangements are in Canada. But while we shall be open to continued support I urge you to confirm our own conviction in the need for the societies by doing what you can to increase membership especially among the younger scholars and practitioners.

Pour ne pas donner l'impression que l'Afrique est laissée de côté, permettez-moi de rappeler qu'en collaboration avec l'Association des universités et des Collèges du Canada, le CRDI vient en aide aux chercheurs qui souhaitent passer leur année sabbatique en Afrique et au Moyen-Orient. En 1997-1998, le CRDI a accordé 200 000 dollars pour rendre possible le séjour sabbatique de trois universitaires canadiens et d'un étudiant diplômé désireux de poursuivre leurs travaux en Afrique, à proximité d'un de nos bureaux régionaux, et celui d'un chercheur africain qui a passé plusieurs semaines au Canada. En 1998-1999, nous porterons ces bourses de recherche à 300 000 dollars. Ce n'est pas une initiative particulièrement innovatrice mais elle répond néanmoins à ce que le personnel du CRDI dans la région juge approprié dans les circonstances.

The new IDRC SSHRC initiative will in its first stages focus on Latin America and Asia.

Let me share with you a couple of quotes that set the context for my concluding remarks.

In **Canada 2005: Global Challenges and Opportunities**, a report as part of the Federal government's Policy Research Initiative we read.

"Today, all issues are international--The traditional distinction between 'international' and 'domestic' issues is increasingly fuzzy and for purposes of research and policy-making, almost irrelevant". "[Asian] market economies are rapidly-growing key markets, where intra-regional trade and tough competition are even now reducing our market share. They are potential competitors for Canada in both natural resources and the high-technology economy of the next century" ⁶

The government's foreign policy paper **Canada in the World** states:

"Thanks to technological innovations, the adoption of outward-looking political and economic policies, ...borders have become more porous to the flow of ideas, people and capital. This has diminished the ability of states to act independently since they can no longer isolate themselves from the world without unacceptable domestic consequences... Domestic policy is foreign policy...foreign policy is domestic policy...." ⁷

⁶ Canada 2005: Global Challenges and Opportunities: Report of the ADM Sub-Committee, Draft Interim Report, February 25, 1997 (P.).

⁷ Canada in the World, Government Statement. 1995. p. <<http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/english/foreignp/cnd-world/menu.html>>

From the **Strong Report** we learn:

“Development can no longer...be cast purely in terms of ‘North’ and ‘South’ or in terms of development assistance. The most important relations between countries and regions today and in the future will, in fact, have less to do with development assistance than ever before.... If Canada is to achieve maximum impact for investments in building a more sustainable world, direct access to relevant knowledge and local conditions in the developing world will be essential. And the anticipation of future trends cannot be done without nurturing and consolidating policy-oriented research capacities in Canada. Such an approach is doubly beneficial to Canada: the respect that Canadian institutions have traditionally shown for their developing country partners, supporting researchers in developing regions to work on their own problems, has generated an enormous amount of good will and long-term relationships for Canada in unexpected but influential places”⁸

Dans **L'état d'avancement de la capacité de recherche de la politique étrangère du Canada**

⁹préparé par les soins du Centre canadien de développement de la politique étrangère nous pouvons lire cette mise en garde :

« Dans certains domaines, trop d'argent a été dépensé en conférences plutôt qu'au soutien de projets et à la recherche sur les politiques propre à ouvrir des perspectives à la politique canadienne. »

Voilà, à l'évidence, un appel en faveur de la « revitalisation des études régionales au Canada ».

Perhaps some of you, thinking back to my earlier remarks about the USD 25 million Ford will put into area studies and doing the arithmetic--applying the 1 to 10 ratio--, are waiting for an announcement of CAD 2.5 million from IDRC. Nothing like that I'm afraid. But let's not forget that the \$20 million odd that CIDA now budgets for the Tier 1 UPCD program is in a very real sense support for area studies in Canada.

The joint initiative is called: THE IDRC SSHRC CANADA IN THE WORLD RESEARCH GRANTS. IDRC will contribute approximately \$200,000 each year for the next three years and the SSHRC will contribute approximately \$300,000 in year one rising to \$900,000 in three years when renewals are factored in. The awards will be based on the SSHRC's programs for Post Doctoral Fellows and for Standard Research Grants--in the new scholar category. IDRC's funds will provide a topping up in each of these categories: four awards under the Standard Research Grants will purchase release time for the researcher and ten travel awards will enhance the Post Doctoral Fellowships. The basic idea is to provide the successful candidate with the resources needed to spend more time in the region thus deepening contacts and the research experience. IDRC will select winners for its portion of the award from winners of the SSHRC awards who are proposing work in Asia or Latin America.

In addition to IDRC staff, the IDRC selection panel will include two Asian and two Latin American researchers connected with IDRC-supported networks. We shall also approach

⁸Connecting With the World: Priorities for Canadian Internationalism in the 21st Century: A Report by the International Development Research and Policy Task Force, Maurice Strong, Chairman, November 1995. <<http://www.idrc.ca/strong/index.html>>

⁹The State of Canada's Foreign Policy Research Capacity. Maureen Molot, Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development. Occasional Paper #1.

CCASLS to identify Canadian scholars to sit on the panel. I should also mention that SSHRC will make funds available for the Asian and Latin American panel members to prolong their visit to Canada to network with scholars here.

In the first round at least, all social science and humanities disciplines currently supported by the SSHRC are eligible. While the IDRC's program priorities favour such areas as health, economic, environment, and social policy etc. this joint SSHRC-IDRC program wishes to leave open the possibility of innovative research proposals that link these 'standard' international development 'disciplines' with perspectives from a range of humanities disciplines. We hope for some of those 'new ideas' from strange places that I mentioned earlier.

Why are IDRC and SSHRC supporting these new grants?

The new grants respond to many of the points I have made in this talk.

Already there are indications that innovative knowledge-based partnerships closely aligned with direct foreign investment is the trend. Canada stands to gain a comparative advantage if it can use early opportunities to propose and test new arrangements for intellectual / research partnerships in Asia and Latin America. Researchers in Asia and Latin America need opportunities to assess their long term relationships with counterparts in Canada. These are regions from the stand point of Canadian aid that are changing most rapidly. Fundamental questions are being posed about the nature of 'official development assistance' in these regions that will require Canada to rethink its own stance on the matter.

In addition to the research reports that will be sent to the SSHRC, IDRC will require the grantee to write a separate report that reflects on the nature, rate and direction of the change they observe in the region in which they conduct the research, on the opportunities they see for IDRC to respond and on the opportunities for other forms of Canadian knowledge-based cooperation with Asia and Latin America. Grant holders will be asked to write for readers who are not specialists in their particular discipline but who have responsibilities for Canada's interests in Asia or Latin America. The report prepared for IDRC enables the grant holder to contribute to the strategic knowledge that IDRC, and others in Canada and in the regions need to guide Canada's future relations with Asia and Latin America. It is this knowledge that will confirm or confute the rhetoric of globalization; illuminate the concepts of 'local' and 'partnership'; and, inform the choice of whether Canada competes or collaborates. It is this knowledge that has the potential to repay the public investment in areas studies.

As is often the case with the things that matter most to us -- what's old is new again. In other words Canada needs 'revitalized' area studies.

Area Studies is dead: long live Area Studies