Book Plan: ***The architecture of knowledge***
Innovating approaches towards new social science paradigms

The proposed book will focus on the ongoing changes in the construction, organisation, presentation, dissemination and use of knowledge, particularly as it pertains to social and human sciences and their relations to other scientific and cultural domains.

To demonstrate these changes, the book will present analyses which challenge current paradigms of conceptualisation of knowledge that prevail amongst scientific communities, politicians, decision-makers and, of course, the general public.

The book will examine the hitherto dominant "world order" of understanding realities that has marked discipline and inter-disciplinary dialogue and discourse. It will then review and analyse such changes that, in the last 30 years or so, have affected institutions, beliefs, rules, practices and behaviours and the impact they have left on science, politics and daily life. Finally, the book will present alternative, interdisciplinary methodology to construe a new insight which will make better sense to the complex world of knowledge.

Each of the chapters composing the proposed book will stand alone, suggesting a fresh outlook at a particular issue from those treated in the book. Combined, however, they will create a synthesis pertaining mainly to the following matters:

1. The ever developing **dialogue** between and within various scientific disciplines produces highly significant inter-disciplinary mutual influence. There is a fertilising process that takes all disciplines involved forward, which is much more important than usually believed.
2. The evolving role of people - the **persons** involved. Once the object of disciplines, they have become more and more the subject of them. In this sense, people are no longer expected to fit into theories. Rather, they operate, change and develop theories so as to adapt them to human needs, aspirations and organisational dynamic frameworks.
3. The role of **gender** oriented consciousness. From sheer disregard to gender issues, the relevance and role of gender has increased and became more and more significant while changing its very nature. It began, some decades ago, in attaching the question of gender to women only – which led, amongst others, to affirmative action and other policies aimed at the resolution of discriminatory reality. It eventually developed into the understanding that the question of gender should be treated as societal issue – overall social problem the core of which is not mere technical "equality". Affirmative action policies proved unsatisfactory – partly because they are themselves discriminatory. On the other hand, it has been realised that changing practices through mere education will take much too long a time. The understanding has slowly evolved that the main issue should be the activation of evenly spread distribution of gender participation in social activities, such as science or politics.
4. The weight and role accorded to **creativity**. This can also be seen as a form of deviation or divergence from ordinary patterns of belief and behaviour. It increasingly becomes involved in scientific work, as a supportive tool and source of innovation, especially in social sciences.

In conjunction with these observations, the book will explore some recent evolution of social sciences as related and as they interact with other scientific disciplines.

Tentative Table of Contents

SECTION 1: The Big Picture

Chapter I: G*eology of Knowledge*

This chapter should offer a general overview of social sciences and the way they look at diverse realities. The starting point would be such an approach as that of Manuel De Landa who says that all "structures" - mountains, animals, plants and trees, languages and social institutions are products of precise historical processes.

Chapter II: *The Virtual History*

e.g., Niall Ferguson and the use of counterfactuals in history – and also: Historians' Fallacies. Another view that might be examined here is the relationship between technology and technological development and political and economic realities. (e.g., *Tools of Empire*)

Chapter III: *Mathematics, Complexity and Social Sciences*

This Chapter would draw up a strategic picture of European resources and networks, analysing and assessing recent and ongoing developments in the use of mathematics and other general theories of complexity and networks as reflected in the general field of cultural dynamics. Also, this chapter should identify and draw new perspectives (and opportunities) for better understanding the social processes of culture transmission and the evolving of cross-disciplinary research methods. Here such observations as Ilan Asia's "cultural genetics" could be pursued so as to offer possible manner of looking at the issues at hand.

Chapter IV: *Communications and Social Sciences*

Communications examined as an innovative methodology for social inquiry and means of explanation. Here we follow the shift of focus in social sciences from issues related to production to those pertaining to consumption and from social groups (classes, masses) to individuals. Another part of this shift is that from structured groups and social and political committed activities to daily modes of behaviour of individuals. As a result, conventional approaches employed by social sciences must be, at least, assisted by new analytical tools that address individuals. These can be found, for instance, in the domain of communications which offers understanding of behaviours, expectations and goals of individuals.

Specific focus will be placed on the inter-action of the two facets of innovation/development system (on the one hand the triple helix and on the other hand the innovation triangle) that address issues of consumption from the viewpoint of communications.

SECTION 2: Multidisciplinary Issues

Chapter V: *Environment and Social Sciences*

Care for the environment exceeds the domains of laws or new technologies. It should necessitate promotion and implementation of actions pertaining to both production and consumption. However, environmental matters are not neutral and the definition of what is good or bad depends more on opinions and beliefs than on consolidated knowledge. While there is an unquestionable increase in the interest expressed in environmental issues, it does not automatically imply that the solutions offered out will be the right ones.

Chapter VI: *Changes in Landscape and the Evolution of Society*

This chapter aims at connecting social science and evolution with changes in landscape. This connection is more often than not disregarded. This has to be explored along with the question of the kind of dynamic relation between society as a whole and its own landscape(s). Another question here is whether it is possible to draft future and achievable scenarios of the interconnections and their potential changes.

Chapter VII: *The Urban Environment*

The town is probably the most complex social system in the world. Formerly, analyses considered towns in terms of series of functions (political, economic, social, etc.). Current research and reflection tend to use more sophisticated approaches in order to explain both the concrete and symbolic status of the town, daily life in it as well as its evolution over the time. The town is also considered as the focus of the processes of creativity and innovation hence - an important subject of analysis, linked such topics as clusters, networks and other assets.

Chapter VIII: *Individual Talent, Social Networks and Deviance*

Creativity is a central issue of the debate today, especially in connection with the innovation processes. Design and creativity are seen as resulting from nourishing individual talent within favourable environment. Yet creativity can also result from daily necessity of individual and social groups to ensure their subsistence. In either case, individual talent has to be regarded not just as a personal endowment, but also as the result of social practices and links.

In a very challenging environment, both in the social science and in economic perspective, deviance often means innovation and creativity, breakthrough thinking equals finding new patterns, new methodologies and most of all new epistemologies.

Chapter IX: *Knowledge-Based Society*

The more society depends on ICT, the more likely socio-economic and socio-cultural gaps expand. Also, the gulf between different types of privileged and less privileged threatens social cohesion. Economic drives and knowledge-based products and services seem to assume greater roles in life, but if unchecked, significant sections of society might end up as deprived. Herein lies the challenge of current and future society – how to balance access to knowledge-based society to all, encouraging, at the same time, participation and democracy.

Chapter X: *Networks, Projects and Firms (the topics of Manuel Castells + Complexity)*

These are the main topic of Manuel Castells: though the enterprise is still the key actor of the economy, work (production as well as services) is actually organised by projects, which implies that parts of a firm work with parts of other firms, institutions and even individuals: hierarchical organisations are declining and substituted by networks and complexes.

Chapter XI: *SMEs, the Economy and Society*

SMEs are the backbone of modern economies. As such they are focal points for variety of human activities. Besides the economic aspects, SMEs are social organisations, family-related webs, political references, components within grid networks and above all – potential power-base for active participation in societal processes. This chapter will examine all of these facets of SMEs as related to the concept of knowledge-based society.

SECTION 3: Inclusion

Chapter XII: *Gender Distribution, Participation and Democracy*

The issue of gender is a complex one. Initially, it was considered as a “question” related to one particular gender, that is: women. Thus, solutions were designed to create conditions that might “ensure” equality that was, more often than not, mere “technical”. Two main approaches evolved – that of affirmative action – or positive discrimination, which sought immediate mending of inequalities. The other stipulated that it would be only through education that change in consciousness could be achieved and thus bring about equality between women and men. Both approaches proved unsatisfactory. Affirmative action is in itself a discriminatory means. Also, it deters women whose advancement in their career, for example, was achieved regardless of their gender (or so it had been perceived). Education has its own obstacles. One, it is a long – some would say too long – a process. Also, those educating the youth are themselves tinted with the “wrong” type of gender consciousness. And there are many other problems beyond these. There is, however, a new approach to the issue, which will be presented in this chapter. Here, examination begins from the recognition that the issue of gender is an overall social issue rather than a problem of specific gender. The chapter will also present an analytical tool for resolving disparities in gender distribution of access and participation, ensuring more evenly distributed gender participation in ALL societal activities and in access to social amenities.