foreign exchange empire, which has the ring of truth. We are told that it is now not just a means of financing economic activity, *but an end in itself.* In 1988 the total volume of international trade within the Triad was $600 billion *annually.* The daily volume of foreign exchange trading was also $600 billion! The greater the fluctuations, the greater the profit, as the buying and selling of money makes more money. This is now an *industry* of mammoth proportions.

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Inquiry and Change. A Troubled Attempt to Understand and Shape Society *by Charles E. Lindblom*
(Yale University Press and Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1990), pp.xii + 314, US$29.95, ISBN 0-300-04794-0.

"I cannot identify a single social science finding or idea that is indispensable to any task or effort" asserts Lindblom (p.36), specifically mentioning economics but referring as well as the more social of the social sciences like sociology and psychology. The social sciences have become familiar with such attacks since their prominence in the heady days of the student protests in the 1960's. Lindblom's criticism is a part of a new wave of discussion that came into the popular press in the February 3, 1992 issue of *Newsweek* in an article, Sociology's Lonely Crowd, playing on the famous book of that name. The *Newsweek* authors report "some critics believe the discipline has become as weak as the subjects of its research". Both sources are sceptical about the substantial contribution of the social sciences to practical affairs. An Australian contribution, Pusey's diatribes against economic rationalists in Canberra, would seem to argue that economics has too much influence on practical affairs! Lindblom's focus is on social problem solving: "A social problem arises only when people look at a state of affairs in a particular way: specifically with a desire for its improvement" (p. 4). This has typically referred to health and welfare issues like youth unemployment or aboriginal health. However new issues like communications policy would fit the definition just as well. In fact the communications revolution is seen as central to the problems identified with the social sciences: "the technological revolution in communications, in computation, and in the storage and retrieval of information places many analytical tasks exclusively in the hands of persons who can operate the new technologies" (p.9).

The essence of Lindblom's criticism is that wants, preferences, needs and interests are not accessible to empirical social sciences methods. They are constructed in public probing and inquiry rather than being given or fixed: "Inquiry will displace conventionally scientific investigation for another reason: ends as well as means call for choice" (p.10). He argues that the way such inquiry should proceed is "in a broad, diffuse, open-ended, mistake making social or interactive process, both cognitive and political" (p.7). The process of inquiry is, however, limited by the processes of socialisation which we all undergo which create perceived givens and opposing irrational values and goals. Lindblom describes this as an impairment and is highly critical of social scientists for celebrating the process of socialisation without criticising its reliance on "censorship, and deception that in turn promote ignorance" (p.71). Thus social

sciences are doubly guilty, not only for going about finding goals, and wants in the wrong way, but also for creating a positive version of socialisation which Lindblom sees as a negative process. Lindblom stresses the importance of conflicting views in value choices versus consensus either given or imposed. These conflicting views become part of the marketplace of values and wants in "a self-directing society". In such an ideal society lay people's wants and values are probed, they are consulted and participate in the decisions necessary to solve social problems.

Eventually Lindblom reinstates social science in social problem solving when it works hand in hand with lay contributions: "at its most powerful it operates like an earthmover reshaping the contours of an impaired and otherwise defective lay knowledge" (p.167). Its key contributions to lay debates are its clarity of definition and systematic methodologies. Thus the contribution of the social sciences is accepted but on revised terms and a vision of a new society in which everything is essentially contested in endorsed. These views are part of a continuing discussion in political theory going back to the classics and presented in the provocative and generalised style of a good quality university politics seminar.

As we begin to reconstruct the societies of Easter Europe and to reform the political processes of rapidly developing Asian countries such a book has high utility. Its value lies more in promoting the debate than in resolving it and this is recognized by the author in the subtitle, "a troubled attempt etc.". There are obvious questions that remain unanswered in this attempt to provide a model of reconstructing civil society. If we are to raise children in a "state of Nature", i.e., free of socialisation, how do we avoid the less attractive potential of human kind for murder, rape and destruction? It is in solving this problem that the social sciences provide a positive report on the process. Thus in making a fair point about the destructive potential of socialisation, of which the Balkans provides a contemporary case in point, Lindblom does not attempt to deal with the full range of issues which arise from his argument. He has a point in stressing the potential of market models to deal with conflict of values and the neglect of such thinking in the social sciences other than economics. Just as clearly discussion, inquiry, probing or whatever one wishes to call it cannot solve all problems. There is also an alternative ideal model which might be derived from Japanese society, namely "the socially disciplined society". In this society probing and inquiry is conducted with bounds set by strong socialisation; however, the socialisation leaves enough flexibility for solving social problems. This may not be an American ideal but on the basis of current evidence it is a workable and human social form.

There are other more minor quibbles with the argument and text that arise from its generality. Hasn't the author heard of sensitivity analysis and decision theory? His very brief and general treatment of these topics is unsatisfying given the emphasis he gives to social problem solving and his assertions about the inabilities of social science in the area. Finally, his argument seems to me an extension of an American bias in democratic problem solving. Not many societies have the same valuation of conflictual interpersonal interactions and of full participation in social and political decisions. I suspect that many Australians would rather get on with their private affairs than have their values probed and spend time in conflictual meetings. This was the way that the major change in our superannuation system came about, namely through a Keating-Kelty type deal with public discussion somewhat after the decision was set in place. More

open discussions in communications policy do not necessarily support the effectiveness of that mode of public process. Lindblom's text thus demonstrates his own impairment, namely he takes as given the American values he is socialized into, rather than being free of them!

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Information, A Resource for Development *edited by B.G. Goedegebuure, H.R. Arango Sales and G. Sotolongo Aguilar*
(Elsevier Science Publishers, Amsterdam, 1991), pp.ix + 235, US$95.00, ISBN 0-444-89116-1.

These proceedings of the 45th FID (Federation Internationale Congress d'Information et de Documentation) held in Havana, Cuba, September 1990 include two welcome addresses, the Presidential address and 18 invited and contributed papers from the technical sessions. This covers, of course, only a small part of the Congress which provided some 233 papers and 19 keynote speeches.

Such congresses tend to be occasions for the promotion of new technologies and, judging from these published papers, the 45th FID Congress was no exception. However, as the welcome address by the President of the Cuban Academy of Sciences made clear, the Congress theme, *Information, A Resource for Development,* was to be interpreted in a broad sense: information is a decisive element in social and economic change. "Knowledge engineering and information production [may] be on an equal footing with goods production and distribution" in the information society, but "in Third World countries" there is "a battle being fought against underdevelopment, exploitation, discrimination and poverty . . . 15 per cent of the world population has access to 85 per cent of telecommunication services and two thirds of that population have no telephone service available" (pp.4-5). In his FID Presidential address, Michael Hill went further with the reminder that "the use of information for economic development leads not only to new or improved products but also to new ways of working which the individuals involved may not deem improvements at all, especially if the "improvement" results in unemployment" (p.10).

Hill concluded that information professionals have a dual task: "first to provide facts about policies in a constructive and convincing way; and second to help Government with its task of steering society into making greater use of the resource that *information* presents" (p.19. Reviewer's emphasis). From this perspective, national information policy assumes great importance.

K. Harris (Community Development Foundation, UK) sought to provide "Alternatives to the state and commodity models of information policy". He sees the commodity model as a threat because "information is only collected, processed, stored and made available where there is perceived to be a market for it" (p.103). In contrast, the state model incorporates an "exaggerated concern over content and use, leading to restrictions on availability or access due to