The Myth of Social Progress, Revisited

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Our history books refer to it
In cryptic little notes,
It's quite a common topic on
The Transatlantic boats;
I've found the subject mentioned in
Accounts of suicides,
And even seen it scribbled on
The backs of railway guides. [1],[#N1]

Where's the universal standard?
I push you to confess
Is it not self-interest,
What you call social progress?

Everyone says they're for it,
But look at our human mess,
Are we really heading towards it?
O tell me the truth about progress.

[2],[#N2]

Abstract: *While countless organisations today claim to be promoting 'social progress' or 'social justice', very few actually define what that means or refer to any objective, universal standard that can be used to measure it. While there does seem to be an international legal consensus on measures of 'progress', there is little agreement among social scientists as to whether cultures (or societies) really do have the potential to transform their social and political systems given that the potential for social justice may be dependent on (or constrained by) the natural environment and the human technologies that organise economic production in those environments, and may be independent of social justice movements or moral appeals. This double article is in two parts.*

The first part presents the historic and religious origins of the idea of objective measures of human progress and notes how ancient religious assumptions about it are accepted on faith but largely untested. It offers measures and definitions of social justice and social progress as well as comparisons with the universal standard offered by the international community that can serve as a basis for agreement on measuring it and testing how and whether it occurs. The second part of the piece seeks to test the idea of social progress empirically. It summarises some previous work on determinants of political systems and social change that has been unable to document any cases at all of real internally driven 'social progress' that goes beyond either adaptation to environment or diffusion or hegemonic change. This has been called 'progress' but without any scientific justification for referring to it in this way.

The piece also presents a twenty to thirty year retrospective case study of social innovations through university education that demonstrates the difficulty if not impossibility (or paradox) of actual social transformation and explains why it may be a myth.

Keywords*: social justice, progress, social innovation, development, cultural change*

Introduction:

One of the questions often asked about technological progress is whether technology has made people better off: happier, with more leisure and more fulfilment, or whether we have simply domesticated ourselves in electronic sweatshops and artificial environments with different sets of worries and lower qualities of relationships (Sahlins 1972).

Perhaps asked less often and considered more blasphemous (and 'politically incorrect' today, from several perspectives) is the question of whether changes that are considered to be signs of 'social progress' and 'social justice' actually represent either. Is some objective and measurable 'social progress' really occurring or is the idea simply an ideological justification for contemporary industrial cultures and the forms of minor or temporary social changes that serve existing technological or other social needs (such as labour equity and homogenisation across gender and ethnicity) while requiring tradeoffs in other values, such as loss of cultural identity and other freedoms?

Social theorists have continued to debate the idea of whether the current views of social progress (or 'civilisation') in industrial societies today are really anything more than their subjective justifications for cultural hegemony and whether the word is just a synonym for the current ideology of global powers (Norbert 2000; Goody 1977) with 'civilisation' equated with the use of handkerchiefs and toilets (Liston and Mennell 2009) or social changes such as the openness of factory jobs for women or the assimilation of minority cultures (Lempert 2014y). In an era heralded as one of greater social equality on the basis of expanded representation and 'rights' for women and ethnic and racial minorities, for example, there are questions about who these rights actually serve (Duncan 2011; Harris 1983). Minorities and women have risen to high positions in major empires and global powers, but that often appears to have meant little in terms of global policies of peace tolerance or cultural freedom (e.g., President Barack Obama, part African, in the United States; Communist Party leader Josef Stalin, of Georgian descent, in the Soviet Union/Russian Empire; Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, a woman, in Britain; and President Alberto Fujimori, Japanese, in Peru). Many countries now show improved status for their minorities and for women, but at the same time they promote these signs of opportunity, there are greater divisions between rich and poor, with minority cultures, traditions and languages as well as connections to ancestral lands, all but erased (Lempert 2010; unpublished trilogy).

There is now a recognition among social scientists that there are certain concepts of social relations that can be objectively measured, such as the 'social justice' concepts of cultural survival and cultural diversity, economic equality, and individual opportunity (Lempert 2014xx). Moreover, social science can measure these concepts on which there are now at least universal international treaties that recognise them across cultures. Social science can also measure the linkages between these concepts and other long-term survival characteristics of humans, such as global peace and security and scientific and technological understanding and advance. Nevertheless, when it comes to actually applying these measurements to 'social change' organisations to see if they are really achieving 'progress' or on reporting on overall long-term changes in contemporary societies, there are actually few people doing such tests and fewer agreements on the conclusions.

Are processes of 'social progress' and 'social justice' really underway or are such claims just an ideological veneer that hides the homogenisation of people for different inequities and injustices to serve the requirements of contemporary economic systems? Is some ideal of 'social progress' really a possible result of human choice, or are changes that occur already determined by the requirements of biology, environment, and/or technological factors that shape contemporary cultures?

While countless organisations today claim to be promoting 'social progress' or 'social justice', very few actually seek to define just what that means. Even where there is international legal agreement on measuring social progress in a commonly accepted and 'neutral' way, there is little agreement among social scientists as to whether cultures (or societies) really do have the potential to transform their social and political systems. The potential for social justice may, itself, be dependent on (or constrained by) the natural environment and the human technologies that organise economic production in those environments, and may be independent of social justice movements or moral appeals.

The first part of this article presents the historic and religious origins of the idea of objective measures of human progress, and how ancient religious assumptions about whether it actually does or can occur are accepted on faith but largely untested. It offers measures and definitions of social justice and social progress as well as comparisons with the universal standard offered by the international community that can serve as a basis for agreement on measuring it and testing how and whether it occurs.

The second part of the piece seeks to test the idea of social progress empirically. It summarises some previous work on determinants of political systems and social change that has been unable to document any cases at all of real internally driven 'social progress' that goes beyond either adaptation to environment or diffusion or hegemonic change. This has been called 'progress' but without any scientific justification for referring to it in this way. The piece also presents a twenty to thirty year retrospective case study of social innovations through university education that demonstrates the difficulty, if not impossibility (or paradox), of actual social transformation and explains why it may be a myth.

PART I: The History of the Idea of an Objectively Measurable Human Progress and its Occurrence in Human Development

Methodology Overview:

In order to establish a basis for objective examinations of 'social progress', there is a need to clarify and establish a consistent terminology as well as identify a consensus set of 'objective' measures for what it is. Only when these terms are clear is it possible to examine the various claims made for 'social progress' to see which if any of the claims for progress, of society as a whole or for specific social interventions, actually fit the definition and measures. If societies are not 'progressing' and if 'social change' interventions are actually doing something else, we can then examine the reason for claims that they do; whether they represent unclear thinking or a mythology that has some other purpose.

The first part of this article examines the social science terminology that can be used to define and measure social progress and then links it with specific measurements, in the following two sections.

– *Terminology: Defining and Distinguishing Social Progress*: While terms continue to be created in the area of 'social justice', 'social progress' and mechanisms to supposedly bring them about such as 'social innovation' or 'social intrapreneuring', the lack of clear definitions and relationships between these terms often distracts from examining whether forms of 'social change' actually represent 'progress' and how it is being measured. This section examines all of the terms together to see how they relate, where they come from, and what they do and do not do.

– *Measuring Social Progress: Searching for the Universal Standard*: In fact, there are now measures of 'social progress' that can be derived logically and that exist independently as a consensus in international law, but both are rarely used. There is a way to derive these measures 'scientifically' using some axioms of individual and cultural/group equality, as well as to find a set of 'social contract' processes for maintaining these equalities. This 'positivist' approach to 'natural law' can be used to reveal the underlying logic of a social justice system. At the same time, there is a set of 'universal' international consensus principles in international law that provide such measures. It is possible to uncover them and present them together in a list (of thirteen measures) using the principles of legal 'statutory' analysis (Lempert 2014v). However, these thirteen do not match the list that the United Nations (U.N.) itself has created for social justice. Nor does it match another list of goals that elites in the international community have recently created.

Historical Background:

The idea of an 'objective' 'social progress', as it is commonly understood, may actually be a contemporary ideology that has been promoted only in industrial societies following the period of the Renaissance. Though it appears to date back to ancient times and may come out of a system of beliefs that are central to Western religions (Judaism), it may in fact simply be a religious belief with unreal assumptions about human cultures. Apart from Judeo-Christian beliefs, the idea of 'social progress' does not seem to appear in any other cultures. Nor do there appear to be any measures of what it might be until the past few decades.

The historical derivation and basis of the idea of 'social progress' is summarised in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1 presents the four key elements of 'social progress' that are also the four key elements of Judaism as it evolved in the Near East from other cultures and beliefs starting some 3,500 years ago. The first column presents the four elements as they are found in Judaism, including beliefs of individual free will, of a single 'God', of a method of how societies would advance in parallel to the advance of technology, and the idea of historical processes moving linearly as a result of human action. The second column translates these ideas into modern beliefs (such as the idea of 'God' as an idea of a 'good' or 'universal' and 'natural' concept of rights and justice). While human technologies have been developing now for some 10,000 years and represent scientific progress as well as the rise of complex social institutions, the idea that societies could also progress and transform according to some kind of social standards may have first originated with the Jews in the Ancient Near East (Cahill 1998). Even if these ideas had other origins or developed simultaneously elsewhere, the model of Jewish thought and the development of Jewish laws and philosophy set a framework for considering these issues that remains relevant today.

The important column here is the third column, which presents the current status of these four assumptions today. Almost all of them remain assumptions that are hotly contested by modern social science theories. Though there has been no firm proof that the assumptions are wrong, there is also little to suggest that they are more than religious beliefs. Moreover, the features of society that would need to hold true to achieve 'social progress', such as the existence of a meritocratic social science and an objective technology of social science, also may hardly exist today, further suggesting that the idea is an impossibility or myth (Lempert, Briggs, et al. 1995; Duncan 2014; Lempert 2014a).

Table 2 summarises the history of ideas in human societies on 'social progress' and suggests that there is not a single society that has offered any measure of what it is. While a number of Western philosophers, starting in the eighteenth century, have suggested that such progress may be possible or that contemporary societies might be examples of it, their arguments have largely been challenged or refuted.

Late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century authors trying to define the 'idea of progress' and to discover its history, were left mostly with contradictions and few measurements (Bury 1920; Painter 1922; Spalding 1939; De Benoist 2002; Nauert 2006). Bury simply understood it as the 'movement of civilisation' in a 'desirable direction' for a 'happy existence' (Bury 1920: 2).

Historically, in the study of 'progress', we find a mix of the 'philosophy of the good' with the philosophy of history (whether history follows a law or can be subject to law). These ideas place the four elements of social progress set out in Jewish tradition into a modern context. Few authors take them together as a whole, other than perhaps Marx, offering both process and advocacy (Marx 1867).

The sceptical, cynical view that suggests change is a myth has been around for more than a century. Robert Michels' 'iron law of oligarchy' (1911) posited that representative democracy was just a legitimating façade for elite control. Piven and Cloward go further in arguing that distribution of resources through social programmes is a method of 'regulating the poor' rather than working towards social justice and progress (1972).

The Christian view continually reasserts itself in the belief that this world cannot be changed and that people can only conform to it in the hope of being 'saved' and going to heaven in the next world. There is an idea that human nature is fixed and that a 'God' establishes a 'fate'.

The assumption is that we can measure real change through actual power relations and change in cultural strategies, and distinguish it from resource allocation and from rituals.

Only recently have there been clearer attempts at measurements and terminology for these ideals as well as some scientific tests of the process. However, there appears to be little attempt to structure the idea to measure whether it occurs and to create technologies to further it, according to those measures, if it does. This article, by contrast, attempts to briefly establish that framework.

Table 1. Ancient Judaic Religious Assumptions behind Social Progress and the Modern Social Science Equivalent (and Challenge)

Ancient Assumptions (Four Elements)	Modern Equivalent	Continuing Challenges (Assumption or Testable Proposition)
1) Individual Free Will not Fate of the Gods Creates a Possibility (and Moral Obligation) of Learning and Responsible Choice	Free Will and Individual Ability to Create Change through Persuasion and Reason/Intellect trump Determinism, Destiny/Fate, Magic and Human Nature ruled by Passion, Biology and Short-Term Self-Interest	– Debates over Social and Biological Determinism, a Function of Environment, challenge the idea of Culture as 'Created'; – Self-Destructive, Suicidal Behaviours, Demagoguery and Mass Persuasion and Debates Over 'Rational Actors' and Ability to Make Rational Long-Term Interest Choices, challenge idea of rational choice
2) Single God or Single Universal Human Concept of 'the Good' (Inner Conscience) and Rational Morality based on Golden Rule and Logic	Natural Rights/ Universal Concepts of Rights and Justice based on Long-Term Rational Self-Interest, Learning and Reason exist and can be agreed upon as human universals	– Idea of cultural diversity and different kinds of reason and logic challenges the idea of a universal concept of rights. Nevertheless, there does seem to be a universal morality that can be derived from some axioms of relations and a logic of human survival that is not forced by cultural hegemony (e.g. Globalisation and/or Convergence of Systems) though this is also partly questioned (Duncan 2014; Galbraith 1967)
3) Method for Progress and Choice is Based on Learning,	Knowledge Society, Empirical Science and Social Science,	– Social science finds that educational systems and social sciences exist to

Achieved through experiment and discussion, and Recording of Knowledge to Build on It	Discovering Natural Laws of Human Societies, Free Exchange and Competition of Ideas and Selection on Merit, promote technical progress and social science technologies and progress.	reinforce existing hierarchies and replicate society rather than to allow for merit, competition and social change and such meritocracies and empirical social science are ultimately replaced by dogma, and the humanities when elites have no competition; – Empiricism and scientific objectivity also have limits and may prevent social science from finding answers
4) Social History, like Technological History, can be Linear rather than Cyclical. Societies can be Perfected by Combining the Above (Free Will and Universal Concept of 'the Good'/Long-Term Interest) in the present (without relying on an 'afterlife' or 'heaven')	Same.	– Darwinian theory of evolution suggests that adaptation is not 'linear' but in the form of 'adaptive radiation' with change relative to the environment but not subject to any absolute standards; – Natural processes are cyclical rather than linear but just in long cycles of adaptation and collapse.

Table 2. Different and Evolving Cultural Views of 'Progress'

Culture and Era	View of 'Progress'	Measurability and Legal Mechanisms for Enforcement
Ancient Hebrews/Jews perhaps based on earlier Near East beliefs, from Eleventh Century B.C.E.	See the expanded Table 1.	Jewish laws define certain standards of equity and human rights (e.g. commandments/duties) but it isn't clear if these are measures with enforceable mechanisms.
Indian Buddhism, Sixth to Fourth Century B.C.E.	Reduction of human suffering through empathy and distribution	None.
Ancient Greeks, Third Century B.C.E.	Increase of knowledge and mastery over the forces of nature (including politics, economics and society)	None. There were some absolutes offered of the good, such as Plato's Republic, but there was still a belief in cyclicality without the possibility of progress (Bury 1920: 7)
Ancient Romans, to First Century	'Unity of the World' under a 'commander' (Bury 1920: 24)	None.
Early Christianity, first Millennium	Human beings are born with evil and only individuals can choose to 'save' themselves. Society cannot be perfected.	None.
European Enlightenment, Sixteenth Century	Knowledge and science can increase human life and health and happiness (Comte 1853)	None, only general reference to scientific progress and improvements in living standards and health
European Natural Rights and Social Contract Theorists, Eighteenth Century	(Rousseau 1762a and b) (Condorset 1795)	None explicitly, but the idea of social contract implied law and axioms of equality that are developed and described by the author.
European Utilitarians, Nineteenth Century	'The greatest good for the greatest number' (Mill 1863)	None.
European Darwinist Beliefs, Nineteenth Century	Linear evolution of societies to greater complexity is social progress (Spencer 1857; Sumner 1881; Morgan 1909)	None. Whatever exists in the most powerful society seems to define the standard.
/Alternative View	Adaptive Radiation (Darwin 1851)	No progress is possible.
/Alternative View	Cyclicality of civilisations and social forms (Spengler 1928; Sorokin 1937)	No progress is possible.

	with complexity unstable and unnatural (by physical laws such as the Second Law of Thermodynamics, the critique of Bertrand Russell)	
/Alternative View	Marx's belief in linear progress but in a different trajectory (Marx 1867)	Measures exist, but seem to be limited to a homogeneous equality of condition with enforcement by 'the people' through undefined mechanisms.
Late Twentieth Century	Linear industrial urban development and global assimilation is social progress (Rostow 1960); incorporates Neo-conservative view that human condition cannot change, only technology can improve lifestyle.	None. Whatever exists in the most powerful society seems to define the standard.
/Alternative View	Neo-liberal (Christian) view that change occurs only on a personal, individual level while society is fated.	None. No progress is possible because human nature is fixed.
/Alternative View	Nihilism (Nietzsche 1886)	None. No progress is possible.
/Alternative View	Cyclicality of Politics through critical elections (Burnham 1970) and demographic based social movements (Elazar 1978) or neo-Malthusian explanations (Lempert 1987 and 1995).	None. No progress is possible.

Terminology: Defining and Distinguishing Social Progress:

In the English language, there are some eight different terms in the sphere of 'social change' including the term 'social progress' (to be examined in the next section). Some of these are relatively recent. The lack of clarity of definitions and the missing elements in the definitions of some of the terms is what leads to confusion in understanding, identifying, and seeking to achieve (or measuring the prospects for) actual 'social progress'.

Table 3 presents an array of these terms. The table starts with the two key terms of 'social progress': 'social justice' and 'social progress', then presents the areas of society in which the social changes implied by these terms are to take place: the 'social structure' and 'social strata'; followed by the techniques or tools that are described as bringing about these changes: 'social innovation', 'social entrepreneurship', 'social intrapreneuring' and 'social services'.

Column 1 presents the term and its historical origins and Column 3 presents the one or more definitions for the term, showing the imprecision and disagreement that exists on these very basic terms. Given the definitions, Column 2 attempts to offer some synonyms.

The real analysis in the table occurs in Column 4. The test of 'social progress' is really the level at which the change occurs and how lasting it is. Simply transferring money to a person or group can raise their status quickly but it is a short term change that may have no real deep impact on the society or culture. In considering 'social progress', the real test is whether there is a deep rooted cultural change that is long lasting. The next section examines these measures more closely. Here, in defining terminology, what is clear is that depth and time are the two key dimensions or elements that are part of the test.

What Table 4 shows is that some definitions of 'social justice' are consistent with the idea of 'social progress' and that the focus of 'social progress' is a change in the 'social structure'. However, almost all of these new terms that are being used today to claim 'social progress' and 'social justice', in the area of techniques, seem to have little or nothing to do with 'social progress' because they are not linked to changes in the 'social

structure' that are real cultural, long-term changes. In fact, there is now an entire technology of claimed 'social change' that has nothing to do with 'social progress' or the deeper definitions of 'social justice'. At the same time, there do not seem to be any terms for any kinds of technologies that can or do achieve deep rooted 'social justice' or 'social progress'. That is quite surprising.

This short-circuiting of definitions is not unique to this area of terminology. The author has examined a number of terms in the area of 'development', finding that most of the organisations claiming to be doing 'development' today are actually not doing it at all, but have substituted other agendas (Lempert 2014v; 2015b), and similarly in the area of 'sustainability' (Lempert and Nguyen 2008; 2011), with paradoxes preventing them from occurring. So, this could be happening in claimed areas of 'social progress' as well, which means that what is needed are a clear set of measures and probably additional terminology (the following sections).

The reason for the mistakes and lack of clarity in the terms is that they do not define the type of social change that is occurring. The dimensions of time and overall cultural context (a set of relationships existing relative to an environment over a long period of time, three generations or more) and impact are missing from the definitions, leading to a de-linking of these terms with actual measurable 'progress' (improvement over time) or cultural change. Social entrepreneurship is now defined as promoting 'social value', but this is an empty concept. What is 'social value'? Over what time period for what measured ends?

None of the techniques have any relation to social structure changes. The focus is on a 'social problem' and its symptoms but not on the society. There is no link to root causes, only to 'the problem'. Indeed, there are no 'cultural entrepreneurs'. There is no standardisation or measurement.

Moreover, the focus on short term impact on social variables (simply offering charitable benefits or social services to particular social groups to improve their current well-being) prevents real, fundamental deep structural (cultural) change. The result of these changes is most likely assimilation and colonisation of social strata or quick treatment of symptoms, with change occurring at only a superficial level.

It appears that most of the current 'social change' or 'social justice' approaches are part of an ideology that may just be designed to assimilate certain groups without any fundamental social changes. In examining the source of the current technologies that are presented in the table, as 'social innovation' and 'social entrepreneurship' it appears that the approach is largely taught in business schools and described in business journals (Peredo and McLean 2006). It can largely seen as business ideology taking over social services. It is largely the application of 'efficiency' and market mechanisms to charity and has little to do with culture change or structural change.

In examining those who are financially driving this approach, it is also clear that this is not a grass roots movement for 'social justice', but is actually top-down. The idea is driven by a few large donors like the Skoll Foundation and Michael Young, at a handful of business and policy schools in major universities (Bornstein 2004: 264). (Alvord, Brown and Letts 2004; Abu-Saifan 2012; Mair, Robinson and Hockerts 2006; Drayton 2002).

Approaches today that are described as social justice appear to be just the World Bank ideology of productivity, growth and treating of poverty (Lempert 2015).

Table 3. Glossary of Existing Contemporary Social Change Terms, Including Multiple and Competing Definitions, and Whether they Allow for Measurement of Deep Rooted Changes or Focus on the Culture

Term and its Origin	Synonym	Definition	Does it Have a Cultural or Long-Term Time Dimension?
Related Terms (Conceptual)			
Social Justice, eighteenth and nineteenth century (1840, Luigi Tapparelli, according to http://thefreedictionary.com)	Economic equality/ Redistributive Equity	1) A social change that raises the relative status of a group towards equality through 'distribution of wealth, opportunities and privileges' (Oxford English Dictionary www.oxforddictionaries.com).	Not necessarily by this definition, but it could.
	Social (and economic and political) equality	2) 'Full and equal participation in economic, social and political aspects' (uslegal.com).	Yes, this is the basis for measurements for individuals or groups, though there is no overall scheme for how they fit. It is a part of the equation.
	Human development	2) 'To promote human dignity, equality, peace and genuine security' (Website of defunct Journal of Social Justice at DePaul University).	Yes. These suggest universal goals and measures, though they are not detailed or presented in any kind of structure.
Social Progress	Human Development	Currently undefined. [See text]	Yes. [See text]
Related Terms (Institutional Aspects of the Society that are the Focus of the Changes)			
Social Structure		'a characteristic pattern of relationships' of people in society (http://thefreedictionary.com [http://thefreedictionary.com]), including groups (strata); social roles (including age, gender, ethnic relations, urban and rural differences) and institutions. Similarly, the distinctive, stable arrangement of institutions whereby human beings in a society interact and live together (http://dictionary.reference.com).	Yes. For cultures, anthropologists define 'structures and functions' within a group (Malinowski 1944) while sociologists expand the interactions in complex society to look at relations of cultures, ethnic and racial groups and urban/rural groups in a complex system. Social change at the cultural and social level implies changing the nature of these relationships in ways that still meet the 'functional' needs.
Social stratification	Class and caste	'The hierarchical structures of class and status in a society' (http://thefreedictionary.com [http://thefreedictionary.com]).	Possibly. Social strata exist as part of a cultural strategy. Shifting strata or certain groups may or may not a cultural change, but

			eliminating stratification without harming subcultures would be.
Techniques of Social Change			
Social Innovation, the 1960s and 1970s, with Peter Drucker	Civil Society Promotion	'Strategic concepts, ideas and organisation that meets social needs of all kinds [...] that extend and strengthen civil society' (Drucker 1993).	No, though there is an ideological implication in some definitions of an extension of business and productive efficiency or the model of an urban technological society with 'non-governmental organisations' and 'civil society' following a standardised model.
Social Entrepreneur/Social Entrepreneurship, in 1980s with Bill Drayton	Social Innovator	1) Someone who 'recognises when a part of society is not working' and acts to fix the 'social problem' (but not the society) (Drayton 2002).	No. 'Social problems' are not necessarily defined in terms of structure, only temporary absolute or relative needs.
	Social Efficiency	2) The 'application of sound business practices' (a method) to produce 'social value' (the goal). The value may just be improving non-profit organisations to cover 'diminishing public funding' or just giving a benefit to a specific group (like jobs for blind people) (Peredo and McLean 2006).	No, though there is an ideological implication here for a change following a standard model.
	Humanitarian/ Charity	3) Someone who creates 'social value' (Abu-Saifan 2012).	No. 'Value' has an economic implication of a short-term transfer.
Social Intrapreneur/ Social Intrapreneuring	Internal Efficiency Expert	Changing the mission of an organisation from within but maintaining its social function.	No. The focus is only on organisations and their efficiency, not on the overall culture and role of organisations.
Social Service	Welfare/ Social Insurance	The activity of social institutions to fulfil the existing purposes of a society. These can include: health, education, security, counseling and intervention. 'Organised efforts to advance human welfare' (www.thefreedictionary.com [http://www.thefreedictionary.com]).	No. It is just a service to transfer resources to individuals. There is no focus on the overall role of services in the culture.

Measuring Social Progress: Searching for the Universal Standard:

Until very recently, there were no measures of 'social progress' at all, other than the conceptual ideas of 'social justice' and a United Nations Declaration on Social Progress and Development from 1969 that is long and internally contradictory. It is possible to actually derive the measures of social progress scientifically, using axioms, as well as to 'extract' the consensus principles that have been universally accepted by the international community, to see that both approaches to define and measure social progress are consistent.

The Logic of a Social Justice System: An Axiomatic Approach to Discovering the Requisites of Social Justice and Social Progress: There is one very simple underlying principle that can be used to derive the measures of social justice, and there are other principles for assuring that it is sustainable and thus meeting the definition of social progress. The starting principle is the 'Golden Rule'. The only trick to applying it is to understand the levels at which it works, and then to list the factors that are the keys to equality and maintaining equality at each of the levels.

The basic principle of social justice, the 'Golden Rule' is the rule of equality and symmetry of action: 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.' This is the basis of the idea of 'social contract'. In practice, the equality that is key to social justice is at two levels: the level of individuals and the level of groups or cultures. In law, those principles are those of individual rights and cultural or community rights, and they are placed in the context of systems in terms of balances of power of individuals through various political and oversight powers and of communities through various balancing of powers in 'federal' systems.

Two other key concepts for achieving social justice are the ideas of maintaining systems in balance (assuring that cultures are integrated appropriately with their environments and are sustainable) and assuring survival and balance of systems at all levels, not just within one country or region, but globally (assuring peace).

There already is a science of sustainability and survival for cultures (Lempert 2010; Lempert and Nguyen 2011) and for balancing and understanding relations of cultures and groups (Lempert 1987; 2014g). There are also biological and psychological measures of human needs and aspects of human development, as well as social measures of how communities most effectively meet human needs (Lempert 2014v). These lists, as recognised by the international community in international laws, treaties and agreements, and in one combined list are presented in the section below. The basic list consists of thirteen elements in four categories.

The additional requirement for social justice to be measurable social progress is that it have long-term system changes that are sustained. Assuring the achievement of these elements is a legal question on mechanisms for enforceability and cultural change. A short term redistribution of resources may create immediate equality, but it will not be sustainable unless there are mechanisms of enforceability. Creating enforceability is the purview of law as well as of legal culture; establishing a system in which institutions to maintain the long-term balances are embedded in the culture. In the ideal, a system of social progress links mechanisms of political equality and political oversight with social-(economic) equality (equality of opportunity and meeting of basic needs), with those of ecosystem sustainability.

The author has described such legal mechanisms both in agrarian federal systems and in modern industrial states in the form of model constitutions that offer real enforceability of rights and oversight for individuals and cultures as well as sustainability (Lempert 1994 (in brief); 1996; unpublished trilogy) based on classic principles of social contract and rights (Brutus 1787). In the world today, no such systems actually exist, but all of the mechanisms and concepts, such as private attorney generals, citizen panels for oversight of

government and large organisations, socialised access to lawyers, balanced federalism with oversight and checks of military and police powers and judiciary, and full resource accounting, have existed or been tested in some form.

To achieve these theoretical changes at the structural level (social structure and culture) may or may not be possible and is the subject of a following section. However, the principle of the relationship of environment and technology to political, cultural and social systems is now well established in social science. Moving towards systems of 'social justice' may require adapting the environment and technology to fit the ideals, and that may be impossible (Lempert 2014a, 2014g, unpublished).

A Derivative Natural Law Approach to the Universal Principles of Social Justice: ('Statutory Analysis'): What the universal consensus suggests: The international community has, in fact, agreed on a list of thirteen principles of social justice that could be used as a basis for seeking to achieve long term structural changes that would constitute social progress. This list, however, is buried in a number of international agreements and is not recognised in a single document, though it could be. The existing list that the United Nations produced in a declaration in 1969, and a private list recently generated by one foundation, add to the contradiction and confusion (Lempert 2014xx).

Table 4 presents a comparison between the thirteen principles of social justice (in four levels: individual, societal, cultural/community and global, and the original version of the U.N. Declaration on Social Progress and Development (1969) to show how the declaration deviates from the original principles that the international community established, but never presented as a list.

This list of thirteen principles, on the left side of the table, comes directly from the basic U.N. treaties on rights and development that date from the founding of the U.N. in 1945. Later treaties like the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child (the 'CRC') from 1989 and recent declarations like the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) which echo and elaborate some of the earlier principles. These treaties have been adopted by almost all of the U.N.'s member nations, though with some exceptions.

The author used standard methods of statutory analysis and compilation of legal 'treatises' to isolate these thirteen principles and to group them according to the axioms noted in the preceding section (Lempert 2014x) and has also used them to elaborate what are the 'Universal Development Goals' (i.e., the international consensus principles for social progress, translated into a set of measurable goals) for the international community (Lempert 2014xx).

The treaties that are at the basis of this analysis are:

United Nations Charter (1945); U.N. Convention in the Rights of the Child (1989), United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992), U.N. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948).

U.N. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966). U.N. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966).

U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), (2007).

U.N. International Declaration of Human Rights (1948).

Table 4 shows how the 1969 U.N. Declaration on Social Progress and Development failed to include certain key principles that are now recognised as universals by the international community and that were latent but not fully recognised in 1969; such as sustainability and cultural survival. The 1969 Declaration promoted an agenda of unlimited 'growth' through technological diffusion that is now largely recognised as a failed

ideology that cannot coexist with social progress. The 1969 Declaration mixes equity with globalisation and urbanisation, promoting 'economic growth and international trade' (Article 23 and 'rural urban equity' (Article 8), universal acceleration of 'the process of industrialisation' (Article 17), as well as a nation-based not a culturally based system with 'permanent sovereignty of each nation' (Article 1 d)).

Although some international experts who work in development have offered a recent set of measures for social progress that they term the Social Progress Imperative and index, with 52 indicators, supported by the Skoll Foundation (Skoll World Forum), one of the promoters of 'social innovation' (www.socialprogressimperative.org [http://www.socialprogressimperative.org]), it promotes the same inconsistencies as the 1969 U.N. Declaration. It offers twelve categories in three areas and includes such corporate interests as 'private property rights' as well as specific individual rights taken out of context of cultures such as 'women's average years in (State) schools' and 'freedom of movement (of labor)'. Many of the measures are subjective and ideological. The index scores countries and links the U.N.'s Millennium Development Goals (UN 2000; 2013) and Millennium Challenge Corporation Goals, offering a list of human needs, well-being and opportunity for individuals, but nothing on cultural rights or cultural sustainability or on peace. The only environmental concerns are biodiversity and greenhouse gases.

Not surprisingly, and demonstrating its underlying philosophy, the country score tracks urbanisation and use of technology as measured by GDP (Gross Domestic Product). It is offered as a corollary to economic growth indices, but is really just another 'growth' index promoted by economists in a way that distorts the international consensus on social justice and social progress.

Table 4. Universally Recognised Aspirations for Social Justice and their Partial Acknowledgement in the U.N. Declaration of Social Progress and Development (1969)

1. Individual Social Justice and Development Objectives:		
	Elements	**UN Declaration of Social Progress and Development**
1.	Physical (body) development:	Yes, by implication under Article 5, calling for the 'full utilization of human resources' and for 'equitable distribution of wealth' (Article 7), as well as the guarantees of basic needs to eliminate poverty and malnutrition (Article 10).
2.	Mental development:	Yes. Article 5 calls for the 'full utilization of human resources' including 'creative contributions', dissemination of information, and equal opportunities. Article 13 calls for 'sharing of science and technology' and Article 10 calls for the elimination of illiteracy.
3.	Spiritual (appreciation of natural world) development:	Not yet recognised. This predates the 1992 Rio Declaration and the Child Rights Convention, 1989.
4.	Moral (appreciation of others as individuals) development:	Not yet recognised. This predates the list of Rights of the Child, 1989.
5.	Social (appreciation of community) development:	Abandoned. This declaration does not reference the Covenant of Civil and Political Rights of 1966. It predates this in the Child Rights Convention, 1989.
6.	Cultural (appreciation of one's identity) development:	Ambiguous. There is a strong emphasis on the family as the basic unit of society (Articles 4 and 22) which would imply the importance of family education over State education and the goal of protecting cultural pride and identity even if not protecting culture, itself. The wording is not as strong as in the Child Rights Convention of 1989 and the UNDRIP of 2007.
2.Societal Level Social Justice and Development Objectives::		

	Elements	UN Declaration of Social Progress and Development
7.	Social equity/ Social progress/ Equal opportunity for individuals	Yes, this is the main goal of the declaration, affirmed in Article 7 ('equitable distribution'), Article 5 ('full utilization of human resources') and 'equal opportunity', along with Article 6 ('right of work and free choice of employment'. Several guarantees are spelled out in Article 10 (elimination of hunger, malnutrition, illiteracy, poverty, and promotion of the right to housing) and Article 11 (social security). It reiterates the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948.
8.	Political equity/ Equal rights for individuals:	Dubious. It is implied through reaffirmation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (in Article 5), but it is never stated. This declaration does not reference the Covenant of Civil and Political Rights of 1966.
9.	Peace/ Tolerance/ De-militarisation for individuals:	Abandoned. This declaration does not reference the Covenant of Civil and Political Rights of 1966. The language is much stronger in the Child Rights Convention, 1989 and the UNDRIP, 1997.

3.Cultural/ Community Level Social Justice and Development Objectives:

	Elements	UN Declaration of Social Progress and Development
10.	Sustainability/ (sovereignty) of cultures:	Undermined or perhaps not yet recognised since it predates the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 1997 and the Rio Declaration, 1992. Article 3 calls for the 'right of people to self determination' but does not establish cultural rights, only 'national independence' under 'permanent sovereignty of each nation. Article 17 agrees to 'accelerate the process of industrialization' which would destroy traditional cultures.

4.Global Social Justice and Development Objectives:

	Elements	UN Declaration of Social Progress and Development
11.	Social equity/ Social progress/ Equal opportunity of cultures:	Ambiguous. Article 18 reaffirms other treaty agreements on 'economic, social and cultural rights', but there is no attention to equal opportunity to protect cultures and their consumption patterns, including the ability to live in rural communities, only to mono-cultural through a concept of 'sharing of science and technology' (Article 13), 'economic growth and international trade' (Article 23), 'rapid expansion of national income and wealth' (Article 7) and the 'family as the basic unit of society' (Articles 4 and 22) rather than culture as the basic unit. The implication of the treaty is that rural and urban areas must be economically equal (Article 7) rather than politically equal, which suggests a top-down effort to erase traditional cultures.
12.	Political equity/ Equal rights for cultures:	Undermined. There is no idea here of workable federalism. Article 3 calls for the 'right of people to self determination' but does not establish cultural rights, only 'national independence' under 'permanent sovereignty of each nation. Article 17 agrees to 'accelerate the process of industrialization' which would destroy traditional cultures. The UNDRIP of 1997 is stronger.
13.	Peace/ Tolerance/De-militarisation for protection of cultures:	Partly. Article 27 calls for 'Disarmament'. The UNDRIP of 1997 is stronger.

PART TWO: Empirically Testing the Possibilities of Social Progress: Is Social Change Possible?: Determinism versus Free Will:

The Challenge

Part II of the article seeks to empirically test whether social change is really possible and, if it is, to what extent given the reality that human cultures seek to replicate and protect themselves, and that there may be certain innate characteristics of human social hierarchies that also restrict social equality. Testing the possibilities of social progress directly raises questions of genetic and cultural determinism versus beliefs in free will. This part of the article applies the universal consensus measures for 'social progress' identified in Part I. It reviews the literature on human history to look for examples of social progress, and examines a specific case study of a social change intervention.

While the question of 'social progress' has largely been one for philosophers rather than hard social science and seems to remain so today, early social science in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century did not shy away from the assumption that social and cultural change could be predicted by finding the right variables and that social behaviours were at least partly determined by underlying natural laws (Durkheim 1893; Weber 1947 [1922]). Some of these assumptions are still tested, included linking environmental and biological variables to predictions of political and social systems and change (Diamond 2009; Harris 1977; Lempert 2014a).

There are a number of tests of large scale transformations (technological changes and violent regime changes) as well as smaller induced changes (like 'social innovations'), and it is possible to propose or even create other tests of whether, to what extent, and how or why social progress does or does not occur. Such empirical examination requires a clear terminology to distinguish between different types of changes and whether the causes are driven by nature, by technology, by cultural diffusion or hegemony, by endogenous choices or by other means.

This part of the article empirically tests this question starting with definition of terms; review of the historical record; presentation of a case study, and suggestions for thought experiments and future testing in this area. In brief:

– *The Theory of 'Social Progress' as a form of 'Social Change' and More Precise Terminology for Measurement*: Given the measures and a clear definition of 'social progress', current terminology in the field can be improved to distinguish a number of types of 'social change' of which 'social progress' is only one type. Previously, several types of 'social change' have been considered to be 'social progress', even though they may be just randomly induced change that does not meet the definition of 'progress'.

– *Review of the Evidence: The Lack of Internal Cultural Changes Constituting Social Progress*: Indeed, there are many historical examples of 'social change' that can be examined for 'social progress'. None, in fact, seem to meet the definitions.

– *A Case Study of Induced Social Change*: A case study of an induced attempt at 'social change' with the goal of 'social progress' helps to shed light on social processes underway when changes are introduced. The experience with introducing one carefully constructed social change intervention is that it led to many kinds of social change, but not to 'social progress'. Several cultural mechanisms appear to work to maintain social orders and to prevent 'social progress'.

– *Some Thought Experiments and Potential for Future Testing: Induced Technological Change and Social Change*: Though there may be no current examples of actual 'social progress', it is still possible to imagine how it might occur and to generate experiments and thought experiments to test it in the future.

The Theory and More Precise Terminology for Measurement:

Since societies appear to have a pre-disposition to promote the mythology rather than the reality of social progress, it is important to know how to distinguish it to see if it really occurs. As noted above in Part I, the current terminology used in the fields of 'social justice' and 'social innovation' promotes distortions and deceptions. A more precise terminology is needed for distinguishing different types of social change to see whether cases appear that can fit into the measure of actual, rather than mythical, social progress. It is easy to create such a terminology.

Table 5 introduces a set of more precise terms than those currently in use, for distinguishing types of social change. The terms distinguish between three categories of social change: adaptive social changes (that are driven by the environment or technological advance); restorative social changes that re-establish sovereignty and sustainability of a culture that is subject to outside control; and transformative social change, that may or may not be 'social progress'. The category that would indicate 'social progress' is the one of transformative social change that is driven by internal choice. It differs from change driven by outside influences.

There are a total of seven social change types in the table. The table also presents examples and short-hand terms for describing them. Each of the types presented in the table was suggested to the author by actual examples in the human historical record. Perhaps there are others. Admittedly, those that are here may have some subjective elements and may overlap.

Of all of these categories, the only one for which the author is unable to suggest historical examples is the category of transformative social change that represents actual social progress.

Table 5. Suggested Social Change Terminology for Distinguishing Social Progress from other Types of Social Changes Currently Visible

Term and its Origin	Synonym or Antonym	Definition or Explanation of Examples where it is Seen	Examples
Adaptive Social Change (Types presented in recent chronological progression)			
Internally Adaptive Social Change (to Natural Environment or Technology)	Cultural Evolution	All cultural changes as humans adapt to new or changed environments or technologies result in new relationships that will naturally be characterised as 'progress' because of the survival advantages.	End of serfdom, rise of corporate industrialism in Russia, U.S., Europe, elsewhere, nineteenth century.
Competitively Adaptive Social Change (to Competitive Human Environment) [Partly Overlaps with Above]	Homogenisation and Assimilation (Marx calls it 'Proletarianisation')	Meritocratic advance of disadvantaged groups to spur productivity in competition with other societies, generally with assimilation of their cultures.	Women's rights and Minority civil rights (in ways that homogenise the industrial labour force without other cultural changes), early and late twentieth century as well as U.S. Civil War, nineteenth century.
Internally Adaptive Social Change (for Efficiency, perhaps with declining resources) [Partly Overlaps with Above]	Social entrepreneurship for efficiency	Productivity changes that bring all resources and people into the global market, though they do so 'locally'.	Grameen Bank and other micro-credit schemes; Appropriate technology, described as local 'empowerment'. Late twentieth century.
Replacement Social Change (to Accommodate Technology and Transition in	'Civil Society' Development	An existing institution is destroyed and the public defends or replaces it through privatised or community run activities	Replacement of social welfare functions of government with private services or community services or Non-

Authority and Institutional Structures)		that were previously governmental or other social institutions (family, church, community groups and political structures).	Governmental Organisations (Leadbeater 1996); Community gardens and land reclamation; Late twentieth and early twenty-first century.
Restorative Social Change			
Restorative Social Change	Post-colonialism; Autonomy movement	Indigenous peoples still existing as communities pool local resources to resurrect local autonomy and practices against colonial, urban or global authorities in ways that re-establish sovereignty, sustainability, identity and culture	Plan Pueblo (described in Alvord, Brown and Letts 2004) and indigenous economic and political movements for local autonomy like those in Latin America, late twentieth, early twenty-first century.
Transformative Social Change			
Transformative Internally Driven Social Change (if positive, social progress)	Social Progress; Democratisation	Promotion of structural changes and cultural changes, meeting the integrated set of definitions of social and cultural progress and rights established by the international community for cultural, individual, society and global levels in ways that are sustainable.	? (Does it occur? Is it possible?)
Transformative Externally Driven Social Change (if hegemonic)	Cultural Imperialism	Destruction of traditional practices and local authority structures and replacement with copies of forms from more powerful societies to copy (Wallerstein 1979).	Most 'civil society' projects as a 'development' intervention; Ashoka International's 'blueprint copying' (Bornstein 2004: 256). Equality for women (to promote industrialisation needs for export processing factories and other labour exploitation). Late twentieth century.

Review of the Evidence: The Lack of Internal Cultural Changes Constituting Social Progress:

According to a French adage that may be a statement of a 'law' of culture, 'The more things change, the more they stay the same'. As others say, 'Meet the new boss, same as the old boss.' The anthropological term for this is 'syncretism': what appear to be 'new' cultural forms really just fill a slot with similar functions and roles to the previous ones. These 'laws' seem to summarise historical studies of 'revolutions' and other supposed major transformations, noting that little or nothing really changes other than perhaps the leadership. A review of some of those studies, as well as some of the smaller induced changes of 'social innovation', suggests that there are no real examples of transformative internally driven social change. An understanding of how cultures work also makes it clear why the current movement of 'social innovation' and rise of 'non-governmental organisations', that some observers claim as transformative social change, cannot fulfil the requirements of the definition of social progress. Social and cultural realities, which these observers do not present, seem to prevent real social progress.

The places to look for social change on a large scale, to see if social progress is occurring, are in societies that undergo 'revolutions'; and in the opposite, societies that claim to be 'developing' and 'evolving' in ways that constitute social progress. Neither type seems to offer examples. That does not mean that social progress cannot occur. It just means that these examples do not demonstrate it.

Some of the utopian transformations of 'socialism' could be seen as seeking to transform the culture, but the reality is that the cultures largely reasserted themselves with the major changes being in technology and meeting the needs of technology. This author has looked closely at Russian society and finds mostly continuity between the Tsarist and 'Soviet' and contemporary periods, with most changes a sign of technological change and convergence, without 'socialism' or 'revolution' as many Western authors like to project (Lempert 1995; Duncan 2014). It isn't that the changes 'failed', but that policy could not trump culture. In the Soviet Union, by the 1930s, most of the attributes of the Russian empire had reappeared, except for the monarchy. As in other industrialising states, the power was a representation of the institutions. The environmental and competitive cultural forces prevented real change. Similarly, most of the 'revolutionary' changes in Viet Nam appear to be 'coups d'état' rather than revolutions, with the new leadership in different periods simply taking the place of previous leaders. New cultural forms are largely those imposed by outside hegemonic, colonial pressures without any real local freedom of choice and evidence of change (Lempert, unpublished two volumes). Where there is change, it is more likely hegemony imposed from outside than endogenous change, and it is misrepresented in order to cover up the outside influence.

The author's study of politics in the United States largely demonstrates that what is viewed as social progress was driven in response to pressures from specific immigrant groups for accommodation (particularly the Jews, who have an ideology of social progress). Yet, as they assimilate, the pressure from these groups for continued progress seems to disappear. The case of the Jews and pressures for social progress seems to replicate itself in a number of contexts, including Europe and the U.S., from the early twentieth century to today (Lempert 2016).

Most of what appears to be viewed as social change and as pressures for social change in the form of social movements, where such pressures are not introduced by immigrant groups or from outside hegemony, seems to be a Malthusian dynamic of population pressure and demographic cycling and adaptation (Lempert 1987, 2012; Spengler 1928).

Examples of both social movements and small scale interventions (i.e., social innovations) that are claimed to be social progress are presented and analyzed in Table 6. These also do not appear to be creating social progress. The examples include union movements, collectivisation approaches, local participatory democracy and micro-credit schemes; all forms that are the most common examples in literature in sociology, 'progressive politics', and the social innovations field. Although all of these may have initially had short-term impact, the counter-reactions of social forces have worked to either co-opt, marginalise or reverse these changes such that no real structural change and social progress has occurred.

Though not presented in this table, Alvord, Brown and Letts (2004) offer seven examples of different approaches that are representative of social innovations. None of them meet the definition of social progress. None have an environmental or sustainable development component and none challenge the outside power structure. The closest is the idea of local cooperatives with local funds in Latin America (the group they study is Plan Pueblo). They mobilise local assets. This is similar to the strategy of political leaders like Bolivian President Evo Morales. What they are actually doing is restoring community authority and maintaining agricultural economics. This is an example of a cultural restorative approach and it is presented in that category in Table 5.

Similarly, the idea that approaches to local democratisation or local community control banking will percolate upwards with political or economic democracy (two of the examples in Table 6) also seem to be fantasies. This local empowerment model in international development seems to be a way of regulating the localities, forcing more of their resources into the national economy, and avoiding political challenge to national power elites by assuring local stability. Once the local businesses or power structures expand, they seem to quickly link to the larger patronage systems at the national level rather than to generate larger aspirations. The exception is in colonised systems where local majorities or regional minorities re-establish a form of local control.

To explain why 'the third sector' ('civil society') and 'social entrepreneurs' today are not achieving the 'social progress' that is claimed, one merely needs to place these interventions in their social context to understand what led to their emergence and how they were to be funded or sustained. The social phenomena they represent meet the definition of adaptive social change, but are not examples of endogenous and sustainable change.

Proponents of 'social innovations' through civil society do not generally acknowledge that the reason for most of these innovations is to replace destroyed social institutions that otherwise offered social services. The industrial revolution has concentrated economic and political power and has destroyed not only government social functions that were redistributive (education, social and legal services), but also other social institutions (religious institutions, family, local leadership and existing civic organisations). As one author notes, the movement is driven by the phenomenon of 'concentrated corporate power' and failure of government. This is a sign of adapting to regressive policies rather than a sign of progress (Bornstein 2003: 8).

The methods by which these innovations are sustained also confirm that they are not changing the social structure and may not be sustainable. They are driven by concentrations of wealth and individual wealth (e.g., 'freedom, time, wealth, health, exposure, social mobility and confidence', which presumes a middle class and technological society) (Bornstein 2003: 7). In 2001, in the middle of this great transformation, the amount of funding for this sector was only 5 per cent of the economy, with half of that from corporations unlikely to promote social change, but using funds for promotional purposes, a bit less than half from religious organisations that mostly support charity rather than social change, and the rest from established foundations, also with ideological goals (Bornstein 2003, 271). The major examples of 'success' are in fact small banks and corporate investments (Bornstein 2003, 279). This is not sustainable.

Indeed, analysis of the source of funds for these changes suggests that they are conservative rather than transformative, coming from wealthy individuals and their foundations whose interest is to maintain institutional power and stratification rather than to challenge it (Boris and Steuerle 2006; Dowie 2002; Roelofs 2003).

The terminology used in the social innovations movement also reveals it as a system-protecting ideology that intends hegemonic social transformations abroad and socially adaptive changes in rich countries, rather than any real progress. The goal of social innovations overseas is 'blueprint copying' of 'the American blueprint' (Bornstein 2003: 259), while the approaches in the U.S. are largely those of business investments and efficiency or increased government efficiency rather than fundamental social justice and social change.

Table 6. Social Justice Interventions and their Results in Terms of Social Progress

Social Justice Intervention/ Social Entrepreneurship	Long Term Impact	Assessment: Failure, Co-Optation
Micro-Credit Systems: Community Credit (Alvord, Brown and Letts 2004) or	Intensification of resource use and continued population growth.	Co-Optation: Unless part of an overall sustainable development strategy with rights protections or restorative of destroyed financial systems, it simply

appropriate technologies for the 'poor' (Bornstein 2003)		extends unsustainable production and consumption, often exploiting child labour.
Israeli Kibbutzim/ Agricultural Collectives/ Communes (Trahair 1999)	Transformation of marginal and unused land areas for production.	Failure : Collective labour was simply an initial scheme fitted to certain lands for transformation, but they have mostly discontinued, become businesses, or just quaint tourist attractions.
Community Run Social Services (Leadbeater 1996)	Accelerated destruction of government services and transfer to private hands where they are inadequate and less regulated.	Co-Optation: Unless they transfer back community services to accountable public management, they promoted overall privatisation of services and defunding of government rather than participatory citizen control and oversight.
Pension Fund Socialism (Drucker 1977)	Disappeared as soon as it created a potential challenge to the existing authority structure.	Failure: Counter-reaction of corporate managers led to short term hiring, destroying pension systems and weakening collective labour rights.
Community Level Democratisation Approaches other than those of minority communities re-establishing sovereignty	Little or no upwards democratisation from the periphery that would change the larger system.	Co-Optation: The approaches never lead to changing demands or higher level changes, but instead seem to define bounded spheres of control while increasing local production and stability in ways to benefit national elites.
Union Movements and Collectives, including guild socialism (Cole 1920)	Little or no democratisation of economy or political systems for communities.	Co-Optation: Transformed unions into patronage systems for national elites and local control, top down or: Failure: Unions and worker control eliminated by counter-reaction of corporate managers to break unions through global strategies.

A Case Study of Induced Social Change:

As a graduate student, the author of this article was a firm believer in social change interventions to achieve social progress and sought to change societies by introducing an innovative approach to education that was 'democratic' and 'experiential'. Now, thirty years later, the results of that social experiment are in. The results provide a test case of how cultures resist progress and how change really relies on outside pressures rather than internal ones. Indeed, many changes have taken place in higher education that are in parallel to the changes that were introduced in the author's model of 'democratic experiential education' (Lempert Briggs, et. al. 1995). All of them dropped the components of social progress and went forward with the goal of achieving other efficiency or adaptive political objectives without any fundamental social change.

The model for 'democratic experiential education' at the university level offered several components of social and cultural change that fit into the notion of 'social progress' while also meeting needs of efficiency. These are shown in Table 7 in the second column. For the purposes of comparison for this article, nine elements are described for this innovation in higher education, presented in three categories: adaptive social changes that offered greater efficiency in learning; restorative social changes to protect identities of students and communities; and three elements of transformative social change and meritocracy that would empower students and democratise universities and professions in ways that were responsive to communities from bottom-up, rather than the current top-down system of financing, grading, and preparing students to fit in existing slots.

The author began to introduce these changes at two major universities (Stanford and the University of California, Berkeley) and then began to offer a model overseas programme (to Brown University and Harvard

University students) in which students designed an alternative, rights and community based national development plan for Ecuador that was presented to the President of Ecuador and to the Ecuadorean press. In 1986, the author incorporated the project as a non-governmental organisation in the state of California as 'Unseen America Projects, Inc.' and began to widely publicise the approach nationally and internationally, including publication of two books describing the approaches and offering 'how-to' materials, along with other academic and popular articles and outreach.

Some thirty years later, the approach is largely unknown and the direct visible impact is that of only a few courses. There has been social change in higher education and it has included many of elements of this model, but almost none of those elements are those of social progress.

Three different alternatives that have adopted some of these components (possibly a result of the project, but possibly entirely independently) are shown in Table 7 in the third to fifth columns. It is clear from the table how social changes have been for incorporation of minorities and efficiency in education in different forms, all stripped of the social progress components.

– Clinical education, a model simply of supervised practitioners once restricted to medical schools and trade schools (presented in the fifth column in the table), has now been adopted in several professional schools, but mostly for low level technical skills, offered to the poor in ways that ultimately maintain inequalities and benefit elites by subsidising the training of professionals serving elites, and without any empowerment of students or communities, or change in the existing 'church' model of the university. Faculty are now often split into 'theorists' and 'clinicians' in ways that offer no challenge to theory or ideology through empirical testing, but simply train students to more effectively implement policies of elites to serve those ideologies.

– Similarly, the model of internships, in which students perform largely menial tasks in the role of supervised unpaid employees in existing organisations (presented in the fourth column of the table), has been widely adapted to make use of student labour. Students provide services to the poor, but without any kind of real social change.

– The incorporation of minorities into university teaching through reverse discrimination hiring policies that have brought minorities into the teaching ranks (shown in the third column) has promoted more perspectives in the university, but in ways that continue to disempower students. The approach may also be degrading the overall teaching of skills and serving of the community by turning the university into fiefdoms of indoctrination and advocacy at the expense of social science and development and of teaching of real technologies of social progress.

– Though not shown in the table, there has also been an increase in field education at the university level in the form of international travel programs and 'externships'. Rather than promote democratisation, empowerment and community involvement, many are in fact tour programmes presented as education.

The mechanisms in society that prevented social progress in this case are presented in Table 8. The shading of the table shows the political backing of the different approaches by the various constituencies, and offers a picture of how approaches offering the least social progress are those that receive the most support.

In analysing the constituencies that supported or blocked these different approaches, it becomes clear why the approaches that opposed social progress were favoured over those that did. Even though the democratic experiential education approach potentially offered the greatest benefits to communities and to students, these are the constituencies with the least power in the university and society and that are largely unorganised. By contrast, the other approaches were favoured by interests with power inside and outside the university system. They appealed to short-term rather than long-term interests. For the democratic

experiential education model to have succeeded, it would have had to start with already empowered students and community members as well as resources. But since the goal of the innovation was to address the disempowerment of students and the community that already existed, it obviously could not 'lift itself up by its own bootstraps'. It could not expect that the political interests it was challenging would give up their authority and suddenly support a better long-term approach due to a sudden goodness of heart or long-term vision of the future.

Table 7: Adaptation of Social Changes at the University Level

Features Introduced Beyond Existing Classroom Education	Democratic Experiential Education	Quota Representation and New Area Studies and Texts	Internship 'Service Learning'	Clinical Education
Adaptive Social Change/Social Innovation (Efficiency) – Experiential Education				
High Level Social Science Modelling through Field Work	Yes – since the entire curriculum is on an empirical model with laboratory work integrated with theory.	No – The ideology of representation prevents it.	No – The goal is to train people to serve the institutions.	Unlikely – The focus is on lower level technical skills and there is no empirical work in the theory/ideology components of the curriculum that remain.
Practical Professional Skills through Field Work	Yes – potential for full level skills.	No – The goal is advocacy rather than skills.	Possible, but usually not well supervised to negotiate skills training.	Yes – but usually lower level technical skills.
Encounter communities unlike those of students	Yes – study of communities is integral to social science learning.	No – It encourages isolation of groups in the classroom around their own group.	Possible, depending on the type of internship.	Yes – if the goal is to provide services to communities not usually served.
Provide a social benefit to the community, including an understanding of inequalities	Yes – the model of the university is integrated with the community not just businesses and donors using it for their purposes.	No – It just replicates classroom teaching.	Possibly, depending on the internship.	Partly – if the goal is to provide services to communities not usually served, but the model is still one of elites paying for quality services and students offering low quality as part of training.
Savings or Social Benefits through Student Teaching at Higher Quality	Yes – with some oversight for quality control.	No.	No. There are savings, but there are too many settings to monitor quality.	Yes – with some oversight for quality control and funding of services.
Restorative Social Change – Protect Identities				
Shaping of Curriculum to allow students to avoid subjective biases	Yes. The democratising feature and objective grading do this.	Yes – but danger of narcissism and promotion of doctrines.	Possibly, depending on the internship.	Unlikely – The service is usually viewed as top-down charity.
Transformative Social Change/Social Progress – Democratic Education				
Contract Grading not Subjective	Yes.	No – the same ideological-based	Possibly, depending on how the projects	Yes – since the setting is skills

Gate-keeping		grading systems.	are set up.	oriented.
Responsiveness to and Empowerment of Students through Student Design and Teaching	Yes.	No.	No. The setting is still institutional, employer–employee.	No. The setting is still institutional, employer–employee.
Look for innovative solutions for the community that are not yet being addressed rather than funnel students to existing organisations	Yes – the model of the university is integrated with the community, not just businesses and donors using it for their purposes.	No – It just replicates classroom teaching.	Possibly, depending on the internship but the model is institutionally-based and the community benefit depends on whether there are representative community organisations.	Partly – if the goal is to provide services to communities not usually served, but the model is still one of elites paying for quality services and students offering low quality as part of training.

Table 8. Political Reality of Social Change at the University Level

Constituencies Benefitting from the Approach	Democratic Experiential Education	Quota Representation and New Area Studies and Texts	Internship 'Service Learning'	Clinical Education
University Students	Potentially cheaper, higher quality, more fun, but requires initiative and time commitment.	Spoon-fed narcissism that may feed short-term needs, though it leaves them with few skills and job opportunities.	Spoon-fed resume building for technical positions after graduation.	Spoon-fed skills learning for technical work.
Community Members	Directly responsive to community needs with visible benefits and reduced educational costs.	Public relations belief that they are being represented even though there may be no direct benefits.	Increased services due to student labour.	Direct benefit of low-cost services.
Current Faculty Members	Reduces authority to exploit students for ego benefits and conformity.	Increases authority of all groups to build patronage networks and self-promote even though it requires some sharing of power with new groups.	Time savings to faculty (subcontracting out) even though possible lower quality.	Treated as separate without challenging teaching of theory/ideology/dogma, though it partly reduces their authority.
University Administrators	They perceive risks of change and would need to build new constituencies and accountability measures.	Little change in procedures.	Reduces university cost by contracting out teaching.	Increases some oversight responsibilities in working with the community.
Existing Civil Service Organisations	It is threatening because students will seek to hold government accountable and make it more	Maintains ignorance of government and an indoctrinated citizenry that follows ideological appeals.	Direct benefit of cheap or free labour to NGOs while reducing demands for better	Possible subsidy through partnerships.

	democratic and efficient.		government services.	
Political and Economic Elites/Power structure including Feeder Businesses for Graduates	Disfavoured because it creates a challenge to existing authority structures of all kinds at all levels.	It works to co-opt minority groups into the existing system without any significant change in skills or institutions.	Labour force trained to accept existing organisations rather than challenge the system.	Better trained labour force allowing for cost savings with students less likely to form their own competitive organisations.
(Foundations and Other Funding Constituencies)	No visible 'charity' transfer or measure, no poster child, and no infrastructure that they can put their name on.	Good public relations opportunity for new departments, and chairs, with funding to token beneficiaries.	Continues approach of giving charity to NGOs in ways that maintain the status quo.	Continues approach of giving charity to NGOs in ways that maintain the status quo.

Some Thought Experiments and Potential for Future Testing: Induced Technological Change and Social Change:

Nothing in this article proves that social progress is impossible and that there are no conditions under which it might occur. However, the social science evidence suggests that social structures adapt to environment and technology and cannot be created independently of these underlying forces (Lempert 2016 forthcoming). No matter how hard contemporary scholars claim that cultures are 'socially created' and entirely the product of the human mind, these fundamental rules of causality are not reversible just because we might wish them to be.

At the same time, environment is not completely deterministic. Humans do invent and choose different technologies for their environments and now have the capacity to use technology to partly change environments. If humans have the technology to shape the environment, it would be possible to choose those environments and technologies that allow for particularly social structures of which some will be more 'just' and 'progressive'. At the same time, it may be possible, though difficult, to destroy those controlling technologies that reinforce existing hierarchies of power. Some authors have tried to imagine these newly shaped human environments with 'post-technological' forms of social organisation (Bell 1972; Brown 1981; Roszak 1978; Toffler 1980).

Conclusion:

Without any clear evidence of the occurrence of social progress or its possibilities, several questions arise. If social progress really is not possible, why support the myth that it is, rather than simply reinforce the religious belief that it cannot occur in 'this world'? If it is possible, but there are no clear examples of it, why would elites create so much expectation of its possibility, but then deny the skills and tools to bring it about, rather than just suppress the belief in the possibility?

In universities today, there is a paradox in teaching 'social justice'. On the one hand, scientific studies in what was 'social science' have come under attack and have been replaced by philosophical discussions, advocacy and affirmation of identity. The approach has been to eliminate the ideas of determinism of human social behaviours in a way that is similar to the Church's attacks on Darwin a century ago. Efforts to predict social

behaviours based on primate study, environmental and biological factors, and ideas of social evolution have been discarded in disciplines like social anthropology and replaced by a belief that society is 'culturally created'. The links between social and cultural anthropology and the study of primates (physical anthropology) as well as to social science of history (archaeology) has been effectively cut in most universities today. In their place is social science turned to 'humanities' with no use of scientific methods and simply advocacy and philosophy (Lempert 2014y), with teaching positions serving for politics and representation (Duncan 2013).

Meanwhile, there are growing numbers of courses in new departments that do not come from traditional disciplines that claim to teach 'inequality' and 'social justice' at the same time that these studies are detached from social science.

With a dismantling of social science, there can be no prospects for developing the technologies that could lead to social progress if it were possible. Yet, paradoxically, at the same time social science is destroyed, there is little possibility to develop the predictive theories that might show social progress to be impossible. The goal may, in fact, be to return the culture to its nineteenth century and earlier beliefs, with religious appeals to ending injustice while reinforcing a sense of powerlessness and reliance on magic (Lempert 2010).

Endnotes:

1. From W.H. Auden's poem, 'O Tell Me the Truth About Love,' written in the 1930s and published in (1999). *Tell Me the Truth About Love*. New York: Faber & Faber. [#N1-ptr1]

2. These final two stanzas are those of the author, following the style of Auden's poem. The inspiration for a poetic introduction and the reference to Auden was from an anonymous reviewer of this piece. I have placed an ambiguity directly in the poem in the description of progress as 'self-interest'. Cultures have a self-protective and self-advancing self-interest in describing themselves as promoting 'progress' but may not be. This author and many social scientists believe that there is a measurable long-term human self-interest that represents 'progress'. Assuming it is identifiable and a human universal, is it possible? [#N2-ptr1]

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