

MAR08-2007-007195

Abstract for an Invited Paper
for the MAR08 Meeting of
the American Physical Society

Scientists in an alternative vision of a globalized world¹

AYSE ERZAN, Department of Physics, Istanbul Technical University, Maslak, Istanbul

Why should “increasing the visibility of scientists in emergent countries” be of interest? Can increasing the relevance and connectedness of scientific output, both to technological applications at home and cutting edge basic research abroad contribute to the general welfare in such countries? For this to happen, governments, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations must provide incentives for the local industry to help fund and actively engage in the creation of new technologies, rather than settling for the solution of well understood engineering problems under the rubric of collaboration between scientists and industry. However, the trajectory of the highly industrialized countries cannot be retraced. Globalization facilitates closer interaction and collaboration between scientists but also deepens the contrasts between the center and the periphery, both world wide and within national borders; as it is understood today, it can lead to the redundancy of local technology oriented research, as the idea of a “local industry” is rapidly made obsolete. Scientists from all over the world are sucked into the vortex as both the economic and the cultural world increasingly revolve around a single axis. The challenge is to redefine our terms of reference under these rapidly changing boundary conditions and help bring human needs, human security and human happiness to the fore in elaborating and forging alternative visions of a globalized world. Both natural scientists and social scientists will be indispensable in such an endeavor.

¹Partial support from the Turkish Academy of Sciences is gratefully acknowledged.