"caste" was the primary category used to differentiate between different communities, as was the case in India during the period between 1827 and 1871, no census was held until the census of 1911, the census in Sri Lanka was a fair one.

Until 1824 Sinhalese and Tamils were perceived not as clear-cut ethnic groups but first and foremost as members of a number of caste groups of various sizes. In 1835, a detailed statement of the population was prepared from headman returns and registers of births and deaths. The population was then grouped under the following heads: "whites" (9, 121), "free blacks" (1,194,482), slaves (27,397) and aliens and resident strangers (10,825). These categories were no longer those of castes, but expressed a greater sense of inclusion-exclusion which permeated colonial situations. By the 1871 census the term "race" appeared for the first time along the category of nationality.

In 1871 there were recorded 24 races in Ceylon. There was a certain amount of incoherence in these categories. "Sinhalese" and "Tamil" were races as well as nationalities. Yet the term "nationality" was also introduced to describe groups numerically too small to be called "races"; such as, for instance, Abyssinian or West Indian. The structure of the census which divided Sinhala into low and high country reveal an absence of significant Sinhala-Tamil geo-political polarization during colonial rule. Rather, it indicates that regional differences between groups speaking the same language, as for instance, between the low-country Sinhalas, were more salient than between coastal Tamils and Sinhalas. The salient geo-political borders, albeit colonially engineered, were not ethno-national or between north and south, as is posited in the Pali-Vamsas, but coastal and high country.

The colonial census reveals a systematic simplification of the diversity of the island's people and cultures by scholars and British colonial administrators. At the same time, categorical confusion and indeterminacy in the pre-1871 census also reflects the absence of a modern "scientific," which is to say, race-based system of classification of human cultural differences. When juxtaposed with the later census they reveal a story of how the colonial racial imagination was developed, articulated with reconstituted local categories for marking difference and affinity.

By the 1881 census there was a clear consolidation of communal differences in the colonial census, and presumably racial imagination. There were only seven races left, namely, Europeans, Sinhalese, Tamils, Moormen, Malays, Veddas and Others. The number of nationalities had decreased slightly from 78 to 71 and from then on "races" became the main category of classification as the shifting diversity of the island became more or less fixed. It is a case of "plus ca change" – the more it changes the more it remains the same.

Colonial Attitudes

Hardly surprising then that the Superintendent of the Census, E.B. Denham, should write of Ceylon at the Census of 1911:

> However radical the changes which are taking place in the manners and customs of the country, any attempt to understand the character, prejudices and outlook of an Eastern people must be based on a realization of the innate conservatism of the East.

Edward Said has noted that one fairly characteristic European response to Asiatic societies was the denial of change: the temporal fixing of visual, spatial and racial diversity and intermixture. The conservatism of Asia was a standard feature of orientalist discourse that served to place the natives in the colonies outside time and history. Said has examined the representational structures of orientalism, but it is also arguable that the notion of race which posits international sameness in the face of external diversity and change also enabled the positing of changelessness of Asiatic in the face of obvious cultural hybridity and transformation. Darini Rajasingham Senanayake has argued that race conceptions functioned as a deep and invisible time-line for positing internal or genetic sameness in the face of external changes, mixedness or miscegenation in the colonies.

In Ceylon there was no equivalent term among any of the local languages for the European concept of "race." The Sinhala term for race "jathi/jathiya" was, and still is, used to connote "race", "ethnic" and "nation," not to mention caste. The translation of "race" to "jathi" enabled and enables a certain categorical slippage that permits mapping religious, linguistic and cultural differences along a single over-arching frame of race.

Patriarchy and the Erasure of the Mother and Multiple Identities

Patriarchy literally means the rule of the father, and by implication the erasure of the mother – for many the more important part of one's socio-biological and cultural identity, in everyday life. The convention in the Euro-American world has historically been patrilineage in establishing identity. One takes one's father's name, religion etc. In Sri Lanka, the patriarchal Roman-Dutch law reinforced by English law, meant the erasure of the mother.

One interesting case is that of the mixed population. If one's father is Sinhala and the mother is European, Burgher, Tamil or Muslim, the children are Sinhala. The mother is erased. If the 'mixture' is the same (Sinhala/English), but the father is English and mother Sinhala, the children are 'Eurasian.' This rule applies to the many Sinhala/Tamil/Muslim mixed marriages where patriarchy prevails in terms of the children's ethnic category.

Feminists have thus argued that this is also a constitutive element of male dominance. In any case patrilineal practices consolidated in the colonial period served to erase cultural mixedness, hybridity and multiculturalism and perpetuate the myth of pure ethnic identities.

The process of translation and transformation begun in colonial times put in place the cognitive structures of the configuration of identity politics in Sri Lanka where Sinhalese and Tamils have emerged as singular ethnic groups. For the post-colonial period, communal, or what are now termed ethno-racial or national, identities were mapped on to conceptions of race, thereby changing existing identity configurations. What is clear is that linguistic and religious categories have been consolidated along an ethno-racial fault line in post-colonial Sri Lanka. Thus, despite the fact that Hindus and Buddhists share a pantheon of gods and many common religious practices, they are viewed as belonging to different religions. Likewise, though Sinhalas and Tamils have intermarried over the centuries, Sinhalas and Tamils are construed as exclusive categories in the census.

It is hence imperative that the census in Sri Lanka be pluralized to reflect the diversity, mixed and multiculturalism of the island's peoples also as a means of conflict resolution. For it is arguable that those who are mixed are least likely to do harm to the other, since the other is within us rather than the enemy outside. Let us pluralize the census as one long-term strategy for undoing colonial and scientifically false race-based identity classifications and recognizing diversity within and without us – also as a small step towards reconciliation and conflict resolution.

The False-Truths of Classification.

We recommend a recent film (in Sinhala) called "The Census" based on a short story in Malayalam. As an introduction to the film says," the census-taker in Karoor Nilakanthas Pillai's story *The Wooden Dolls* (1963) tells Nalini, the woman he interviews, that the census is concerned with the 'truth.' The government needs verification on the lives of its citizens, their civil status, professions, age, parenthood, patterns of internal travel etc. But what is the truth, particularly when it comes to the life of this poor woman, living in a rural village in Kerala? This is where the census form, influenced by, and in collusion with an age-old patriarchy which classifies women in particular ways, constructs a sexual division of labour, and genders their roles in everyday life, comes into confrontation with another lived reality, more 'truthful' to the woman in question. Karoor's short story, through the lively, witty and poignant dialogue between the census taker and Nalini, foregrounds this anomaly with subtle irony." It has been filmed in a local setting by Robert Cruz . ■

IF IT'S FAIR, IT'S GOOD: 10 TRUTHS ABOUT GLOBALIZATION

Amartya Sen

Even though the world is incomparably richer than ever before, ours is also a world of extraordinary deprivation and of staggering inequality.

We have to bear in mind this elemental contrast when considering widespread skepticism about the global economic order and the patience of the general public with the so-called anti-globalization protests, despite the fact that they are often frantic and frenzied and sometimes violent.

Debates about globalization demand a better understanding of the underlying issues, which tend to get submerged in the rhetoric of confrontation, on one side, and hasty rebuttals, on the other. Some general points need particular attention.

Anti-globalization protests are not about globalization: The so-called anti-globalization protesters can hardly be, in general, anti-globalization, since these protests are among the most globalized events in the contemporary world. The protesters in Seattle, Melbourne, Prague, Quebec and elsewhere are not just local kids, but men and women from across the world pouring into the location of the respective events to pursue global complaints.

Globalization is not new, nor is it just Westernization: Over thousands of years, globalization has progressed through travel, trade, migration, spread of cultural influences and dissemination of knowledge and understanding (including of science and technology).

Globalization is not in itself a folly: It has enriched the world scientifically and culturally and benefited many people economically as well. Pervasive poverty and lives that were "nasty, brutish and short," as Thomas Hobbes put it, dominated the world not many centuries ago, with only a few pockets of rare affluence. In overcoming that penury, modern technology as well as economic interrelations have been influential. The predicament of the poor across the world cannot be reversed by withholding from them the great advantages of contemporary technology, the well-established efficiency of international trade and exchange, and the social as well as economic merits of living in open, rather than closed, societies. What is needed is a fairer distribution of the fruits of globalization.

The central issue is inequality: The principal challenge relates to inequality — between as well as within nations. The relevant inequalities include disparities in affluence, but also gross asymmetries in political, social and economic power. A crucial question concerns the sharing of the potential gains from globalization, between rich and poor countries, and between different groups within countries.

The primary concern is the level of inequality, not its marginal change: By claiming that the rich are getting richer and the poor getting poorer, the critics of globalization have, often enough, chosen the wrong battleground. Even though many sections of the poor in the world economy have done badly, it is hard to establish an overall and clear-cut trend. But this debate does not have to be settled as a precondition for getting on with the central issue. The basic concerns relate to the massive levels of inequality and poverty — not whether they are also increasing at the margin.

The question is whether the distribution of gains is fair: When there are gains from cooperation, there can be many alternative arrangements that benefit each party compared with no cooperation. It is necessary, therefore, to ask whether the distribution of gains is fair or acceptable, and not just whether there exists some gain for all parties.

The use of the market economy can produce different outcomes: The central question cannot be whether or not to make use of the market economy. It is not possible to have a prosperous economy without its extensive use. But that recognition, rather than ending the discussion, only begins it. The market economy can generate many different results, depending on how physical resources are distributed, how human resources are developed, what rules prevail and so on, and in all these spheres, the state and the society have roles, with in a country and in the world.

The market is one institution among many. Aside from the need for public policies that protect the poor (related to basic education and health care, employment generation, land reforms, credit facilities, legal protections, women's empowerment and more), the distribution of the benefits of international interactions depends also on a variety of global arrangements.

The world has changed since the Bretton Woods agreement: The current economic, financial and political architecture of the world (including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other institutions), was largely set up in the 1940s, following the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944. The bulk of Asia and Africa was still under imperialist dominance then; tolerance of insecurity and poverty was much greater, the idea of human rights was still very weak; the environment was not seen as particularly important; and democracy was definitely not seen as a global entitlement.

Both policy and institutional changes are needed: The existing international institutions have, to varying extents, tried to respond to the changed situation. The World Bank, under James Wolfensohn's guidance, has revised its priorities. The United Nations, particularly under Kofi Annan's leadership, has tried to play a bigger role, despite financial stringency. But more changes are needed. Indeed, the power structure underlying the institutional architecture itself needs to be reexamined in the light of the new political reality, of which the growth of globalized protest is only a loosely connected expression.

Global construction is the needed response to global doubts: The anti-globalization protests are themselves part of the general process of globalization, from which there is no escape and no great reason to seek escape. But while we have reason enough to support globalization in the best sense of the idea, there are also critically important institutional and policy issues that need to be addressed at the same time. It is not easy to disperse the doubts without seriously addressing the doubters' underlying concerns. ■

The writer, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, was awarded the Nobel Memorial Prize for Economics in 1998.