

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

**The Impact of Global Transformations on Traditional
Societies: Avoiding Ecological Fallacies in
Operational Planning Models**

by

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Methods in Traditional Environmental Research

The Fordist model of economic development has dominated the latter decades of the century. Reaching the limits of the Fordist forms of production, and transforming the global economy are the principle elements that led to current political and economic crisis. An expanded capitalism, a disintegrated state socialism, and a new division of labor have prevailed as governments and businesses responded to the weaknesses of Fordism. These transformations exist physically by the increasing regional disparities within one nation, the widening gap between the city and its rural hinterlands, and between rich and poor quarters within the same city. These transformations have had serious implications for economic development, redistribution of power and wealth, social change, and value system.

Planners use conventional quantitative research methods to account for regularities among the different units of analysis. They employ these methods to examine formal relations of similarity. These methods depend on the use of secondary data and taxonomic groups as units of analysis. The end product is a description of the system. It lacks explanatory penetration of the causes of change in the system.

The recent transformations impose limitations on the use of conventional quantitative methods. The problem of ecological fallacy, that is to infer about individuals using secondary data, makes generalizations to other population extremely difficult. This sheds serious doubts concerning the validity and reliability of operational models derived from conventional quantitative research methods and utilized in developing countries. There is a need, then, to review the use of current planning operational models in developing nations.

This paper briefly outlines the impact of reaching the limitations of the Fordist model for production. Then, it illustrates its impact on the social, economic and political structures in developing countries. Next the paper discusses the issue of ecological fallacy, its association with these transformations, and attempts to recommend means to control these limitations.