

GLOBAL DIALOGUE

Revolutionary Moments in Tahrir Square

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Yokohama: The Harbor of Hope

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NEWSLETTER

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> Editorial

The world has changed since we last went to press. Cairo is springing up all over the planet. The Arab insurgencies – the jury is still out on whether we can call them revolutions – have demonstrated once again just how difficult it is to anticipate the outbreak of social movements. We are better at understanding the way they spread and unfold, once they surface. Thus, our two lead articles focus on revolutionary processes: Mona Abaza describes what it was like to be in and around Tahrir square in January and February 2011, while Sari Hanafi examines the combination of social actors now battling for the social transformation of Tunisia and Egypt.

Our third article takes us from human earthquakes to the terrestrial one that devastated Japan, creating a major nuclear accident. For 15 years Koichi Hasegawa, a sociologist of the environment, has been asking whether Japan needed another Chernobyl before it would change its nuclear policy. We still don't know the answer to that question. As head of the local organizing committee for the 2014 ISA World Congress in Yokohama, Dr. Hasegawa gave a moving speech to the Executive Committee meeting in Mexico City on the Japanese response to the earthquake and tsunami. We publish it here. For its part the ISA Executive Committee redoubled its commitment to the success of the 2014 Congress.

In this issue we also report on the deliberations of the Executive Committee, March 21-25, and the parallel International Conference on Inequality, organized by Raquel Sosa Elízaga, Vice-President for Program. In her history corner, Jennifer Platt writes about the famous Mexico City World Congress of 1982. This was the first time the ISA held its World Congress in a 'Third World' country. It started the round of debates about international sociology that continue to this day. In this issue, for example, Sujata Patel takes on the question of global sociology and cosmopolitanism from the standpoint of diverse national traditions. We also have reports from the European Sociological Association, from the Turkish Sociological Association, and from the US branch of *Sociologists without Borders*. Finally, there is a new column on the violation of the human rights of sociologists with cases from Turkey and Hungary.

We continue to reach out to ever-wider audiences. We now have a popular Facebook page as well as a new look to our website that includes a section on Digital Worlds. Through the initiatives of Sari Hanafi, Mounir Saidani and Ishwar Modi, *Global Dialogue* now appears in Arabic and Hindi, making 9 languages in all. Sociology is on the move!

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Cover Photo by Mona Abaza





Peaceful Protest in Tahrir Square.
Photo by Mona Abaza

> Revolutionary Moments in Tahrir Square

by Mona Abaza, American University of Cairo

I happened to be in Cairo when the catalytic demonstration of the 25th of January occurred. I did not participate in the first demonstrations. It has been many years since I had been politically active. I have to confess that the violence and brutality, witnessed in numerous previous demonstrations, were certainly the main reasons that kept me away from the street.

From the first day, the police were ruthless with the demonstrators. Friends who were active in demonstrations from day one recalled the violence. Rubber bullets, spraying water and massive teargas bombs were thrown at the protesters. The city was burning. The offensive and the miasma of teargas were to be felt for several days in the city. On the 25th of January three people were reported dead along with a considerable number of wounded.¹

Mubarak had paralyzed the trains nationwide. This unintelligent controlling measure did not stop the angry people from pouring into the city. Indeed, the public visibility of the people grew every day in the streets after the 25th of January. The demonstrations obstinately continued. Day after day, people increasingly occupied all the streets of Cairo. They were all heading towards the Square. The city was collapsing with attacks on police stations. Thugs were all over and looting was going on in various quarters. The more the police forces became violent, the more determined protesters became and the more they gained visibility in the streets. The cities of Alexandria, Suez, Port Said, Mansura and Mahalla al Kubra were all experiencing the same massive human insurgency of angry protesters. In Cairo, demonstrations departed from Shubra, from Mattariya, Bulaq, Dokki, Mohandessin, Nasr City and Heliopo-

lis and they clogged the main bridges of the Six of October and Kasr al-Nil bridge. Brutal confrontations were recorded. Anger against the brutality of the regime was mounting as was the determination to resist. This time things will be different, it was said. Protesters lost their fear, they resisted through barricading themselves, through praying communally while confronting the columns of black police, and by throwing stones when they were attacked. They did not fear the green police vans that ran into them. Then the police forces started to retreat out of fear – they could not deal with the growing fearlessness of the moving compact army of bodies. They ran away from the powerful but pacifist crowds. Suddenly all policemen disappeared. Cairenes woke up one morning and found the entire city without one single policeman. The army then entered the city with their tanks.

Many like me, who were not political activists and who were afraid of the violence perpetrated in crushing the protesters, decided finally to march to the square. Middle-class mothers descended onto the streets. My friends' sons and daughters experienced a metamorphosis in their lives. These youngsters, who led their parents to the street, had been protesting since day one. They found their new selves in the life of the Square. Several youngsters were proud of their newly discovered skills in street fighting.

Then the spectacular first one-million-demonstration turned into a historic moment that mesmerized the Egyptians themselves. It was the euphoria of the newly discovered freedom and the collective longing for dignity. Words fail me to describe how more than some 2 million people marched peacefully and in an orderly manner towards one main space: the Tahrir Square. The organization was spectacular. A clear sense of order was masterminded by the young protesters to penetrate and then move through the square in a peaceful way. It was most remarkable. The people were amazing in their care for each other so that nothing would go wrong. The square was encircled by army tanks and soldiers, who checked the IDs to make sure that no thugs of the regime would get in, and no weapons

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could be used inside the square. At checkpoints, men and women were segregated so as to be controlled by 'popular committees' consisting of highly disciplined anti-Mubarak groups of young men and women. Bags and wallets were checked. Knives, scissors and potentially dangerous tools were confiscated. Control checkpoints multiplied since the thugs of the regime were a constant threat. Then there was the careful orchestration of the way people circulated around the square.

> The Carnage of 2nd of February

The second of February will remain an unforgettable date for both my daughter and myself. The night before, Mubarak had made his second speech on television in an obvious evil and threatening tone. He persisted that he would not give up his throne. It looked like his wrath would soon descend on the disobedient nation. On the second of February, in the afternoon, we went to the Tahrir Square with two of my friends and my daughter with the intention of meeting other friends and of staying there for a while. My friend Samia proposed that we pay a visit to our common friend Pierre who owns two magnificent large flats on the ninth and tenth floor overlooking the square and the angles of Talaat Harb and Bab al-Luq street. Around 4 pm, the attacks by the armed thugs of the regime coming from the direction of the Egyptian Museum started. We saw many severely wounded men carried by groups of men leaving the square from the checkpoints that were guarded by the demonstrators and the army tanks. Many were shot in their head and the eyes. The 'battle of the camels' had already started, but luckily the protesters managed to arrest the thugs who entered the Square with camels and horses. By then my two friends had opted to return back to the island of Zamalek where we are all staying. I remained with my daughter, thinking that it was too risky to walk back with her. I was already panicking after having seen so many wounded people.

Around 5:30 pm a large crowd of the thugs of the regime came from Ta-

laat Harb Street heading towards the square. They threw Molotov cocktails. They were shooting live fire towards the protesters and they were burning anything that was in their way. In particular, they set fire to cars, which they would then turn upside down. One could clearly see that the army tanks did nothing to stop the burning of cars or the fighting of thugs. The anti-Mubarak protestors could only defend themselves by barricading the checkpoints with some metal shields that were collected from the construction field of the former Hilton hotel, which was under renovation. Their only weapon was to collect stones and throw them. The streets were in total chaos and many were wounded. That night, it was reported that four were killed and hundreds wounded. From what we saw, it was clear that the death toll must have been much higher than reported.² Luckily, the thugs were pushed back and they failed to enter the square.

We spent the night in Pierre's flat. Pierre was busy putting the hundreds of photos that were taken from his balcony on all possible Facebook accounts available. It was the first day Internet had been restored after some five days of blocking its use. Pierre's charming decadent, *Belle Époque* flat was turned into a large shelter. Several beds and blankets were on the floor.

The two large flats on top of the square were transformed into hosting lots of people coming and going. There were several French, Italian, American and Egyptian reporters, also photographers; several mothers whose sons and daughters were in the square and the many young and old demonstrators who took refuge when things became nasty downstairs. Some of the protesters I met happened to be my former students at the American University. I was delighted and yet truly frightened for them in the way that they had turned into determined fighters. One of my best female students had been camping in the square for four days and looked completely exhausted. Other protesters turned out to be the sons and daughters of my friends. There were also friends of the demonstrators who did not know anyone in the flat but they were still welcomed. As violence escalated during

the night, the number of visiting protesters increased (we were probably some 50 or 60 people). A few protesters were wounded in their faces, hands and legs.

A television set was broadcasting continually in a separate room. We kept on coming and going through this room. Some were lying asleep in front of the TV, being utterly exhausted. We were all trying frantically to alternate between two main things: to move around the three large balconies and follow what was going on the Tahrir Square and the two side streets of Talaat Harb and Bab al-Louq. Then we would run back inside to follow the news on TV, in order to discover the direction of the next attack of the thugs. Al Jazeera channel was the reference point to locate what was really going on beyond the square. We could not see the attacks coming from the Museum of Antiquities, neither could we see the thugs who were attacking the protesters from the Six of October bridge with petrol bombs, but we saw them instead on TV. We also saw on TV how the thugs set fire to the trees on the Square, which made us all panic at the thought of a possible bigger fire that might catch the surrounding buildings. The TV screen was our only guide in detecting the danger. But there was a common feeling amongst all of us in the flat. Our hatred of Mubarak had no limits. We all had the same idea: tonight's carnage was exactly one day after Mubarak's refusal to step down. If he remains one more week, the damage will be beyond imagination. His egomaniacal madness had no limits.

Most, if not all of us, had our mobiles on (the curfew, or blackout on the mobile phones had been lifted). All the mothers were phoning their sons and daughters in the Square. They were describing the images they were seeing on TV to the ones in the Square. Some mothers were begging those down there to come up. The reporters were phoning their colleagues stranded or possibly lost in the skirmishes on the other side of the Square.

The square, on the other hand, was packed with people who kept on revolving around the center the whole night

until dawn. Women and children were camping in the middle of the square. Some loudspeakers, located near the Omar Makram mosque were playing religious slogans, other loudspeakers were playing patriotic songs from the sixties. At a certain point, very late at night, the protesters began rhythmical drumming on their metal shields. These different sounds showed how well organized the protesters were. The orchestrated cacophony was meant to keep them awake and warn them about the direction of any forthcoming danger. There was something apocalyptic about all this noise, especially if we add the constant hovering overhead of the helicopters.

The several mothers who spent the night at Pierre's waited for their daughters and sons who were in the square to come up. As we watched the news unfold in the late night, many of us were in tears. One mother was talking on her mobile phone begging her daughter to give up protesting. I glued myself to my daughter and thought that I wished that all this would be over.

> Contagion

In writing these reflections, my daughter became my main guide in remembering the succession of the events of the night of the 2 of February. Both of us seemed to have experienced a similar problem. We both suffered from an unconscious vagueness in our attempts to evoke the memory. We became both convinced that much of it had to do with the tension of the situation and the constant shifting between trying to observe the Square and following the continuous flow of the TV images. My daughter described the night at Pierre's as a surrealist moment. One thing is evident: the pervasive television images have effectively colonized our memory and consequently reified reality.

Had Adorno and Horkheimer witnessed the role of Al Jazeera in the Egyptian revolution, they would certainly have given a second thought to their prophecy regarding the 'culture industry' and the banalizing effect of television. Clearly, the revolution would not have been as successful had there not been satellite channels

which exposed the flagrant discrepancies between propaganda and reality, and the ridiculous lies of the state television propaganda. Satellite channels gained even more significance when Facebook, mobile phones and the Internet were blocked by the regime.

For the coming years, academic research agendas will be kept busy studying the unprecedented role of Al Jazeera in the making of Arab revolutions. The revolution's great victory was Al Jazeera's too. The journalists made no attempt to disguise their subjectivity and their support for the street. Their habile movement and clever anticipation of the ransacking of their offices and the escalating witch-hunting they underwent, only enhanced their heroic image.

The contagious rebellious spirit that ran through Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain, Libya and Oman mesmerized the world. It simply exposed the power and velocity of image transmission through the medium of the television. There was clearly a common denominator in the protesting slogans and the demands that spread like fire through the Arab world. Arab revolts evolved around broad issues: dignity, recognition, injustice, blatant corruption and despotism.

It is a fact that the Egyptians have been famed for their wit and their lightness of being, through which this revolution succeeded in seducing large publics in the West. For sure, it was a bloody revolution, but that was not it. Time and again, commentators did not cease to repeat that the Square reinvented itself as a magnet for counterculture and popular artistic imagination, for wonderful ironic musicians and dancers. The famed Egyptian sardonic *nokta* (the joke) and the most amazing improvised public performances discovered their heyday in the square.

The children of the revolution taught the West a lesson on the beloved notions of cosmopolitanism and democracy. The application of these two claims has been denied for so long to the Global South under the infantilizing excuse that it lacked maturity. These values once again proved to be no longer exclusive to the West.

When the Egyptian 68 movement came finally to the streets, it coincided with a national debate about genetic degeneration of races and the integration of Turks in Germany by a parochial Sarrazin. (For a discussion of the Sarrazin affair, see Helma Lutz, "From Cosmopolitanism to Public Sociology," *Global Dialogue* 1/3.)

It might be premature to compare the Egyptian revolution to the Russian and Chinese revolutions. But what makes the Egyptian case fascinating is that the Internet, Facebook, mobile phones, and twitters turned out to be vital tools in transmitting information in the quickest possible way. This revealed how a controversial technology – often negatively assessed as being a product of an affluent consumer culture and consumerist lifestyles – was evidently used here for insurrection against the iron curtains of the clinically mad Arab despots. But technology here was only a medium; it was certainly not the message. The medium was all about velocity, and the message was genuinely what was going in the street. Manuel Castells was right in pointing to the role of cyberspace in creating new parameters of a network society. He speaks of a new informational language and new codes. Many who saw Tahrir Square were mesmerized by the cleverness of the young protesters of the 6th of April movement who created the most effective and yet the shortest, concise ever, anti-Mubarak slogans. These concise slogans were the main means that rallied thousands if not millions of supporters. Some slogans consisted of one simple word like "irhal" (leave), and "baatel" (illegitimate). Was this the effect of the codified and abbreviated language of electronic communication, as Castells prophesized? There is no real answer to that. ■

¹ Evidently a much higher number had died from the first day since there are still hundreds of people missing.

² Later the press stated that this number understated the real death toll. Many died in the hospitals and the government had issued an order not to provide death certificates so as to disguise the high number of casualties.

> The Arab Revolutions: Who Are the Actors?

by Sari Hanafi, American University of Beirut, ISA Executive Committee



Photo by Mona Abaza.

Unity in the Egyptian Revolution: Green (above) – “Revolution until Victory” and in Red (below) – “We, the poor will defend our country and defend the Revolution from the thugs and officers of the Ministry of Interior”.

Over the last four months political earthquakes have shaken the Arab World. These revolutions have toppled the presidents of Tunisia and Egypt and are making their way to Yemen, Bahrain, Libya, Jordan and Syria. No matter how one defines the success of these uprisings, it is clear that they are forcing dictatorial regimes toward political reform.

The importance of these revolutions resides in the meeting of social and democratic demands. We should remember, for example, that the Tunisian uprising had its beginnings in Gafsa, two years ago, in a protest over bread and unemployment. Dissident bloggers and Facebook users in the Tunisian city of Jarjis demanded the release of political prisoners and freedom of expression. In both Tunisia and Egypt, the revolutions were initiated by young, unem-

ployed university graduates and the working class, and, again, they were marked by the call for both social and democratic reform.

The protestors' sensitivity to unemployment and their hostility to the neoliberal and neo-patrimonial regimes are linked to their sense of justice, dignity and freedom: freedom to join political groups and parties, freedom of expression, freedom of religious practice, freedom to write about corrupt people in the government. We shouldn't forget that the so-called 'Tunisian economic miracle' is in the capital and northern coastal cities but not in the interior of Tunisia or in the south. The Arab youth felt that they had become a *homo sacer*, in the sense of the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben, meaning that this was the revolt of 'bare lives', of defenceless hungry bodies that the regime has stripped of political identity and the right to belong to such groups as the Islamic Renaissance Movement al-Nahda, the Tunisian Communist Labor Party and the Muslim brotherhood.

When the two presidents of Tunisia and Egypt, Ben Ali and Mubarak, became sovereigns making the ultimate deci-

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sion over whether to enact a law or to suspend it, whether to 'take life or let live', they violated Egyptian and Tunisian rights – arresting, torturing, murdering and economically ruining their countries.

In a book that I edited last year called *The State of Exception and Resistance in the Arab World*, the Tunisian sociologist Mohsen Bouazizi wrote about the silent expressions of opposition among the Tunisian youth and how indifference and carelessness are deployed against the regime. But what Mohsen Bouazizi didn't see then is how a figure such as Mohamed Bouazizi, who is from the same city as Mohsen – Sidi Bouzid –, could become so alienated from the social life as to become, echoing Touraine's words, a subject: the driving force of a social movement.

Mohamed's body, like that of other young Tunisians, was a target for the oppressive regime and its disciplinary authority, which aimed to strip it of its political identity. Thus, by committing protest-suicide, Mohamed created a pattern of resistance whose effectiveness is achieved at the moment of the body's self-immolation. As the Palestinian researcher May Jayussi put it, we are at a moment similar to when the Palestinians in the occupied territories challenged the sovereign authority that sought to turn them into humiliated subjects – subjects who could be killed without any recognition, i.e. death without value. Mohamed Bouazizi and his fellows, who died by committing suicide, became actors who deliberately sacrificed themselves and by that act, inverted the relationship with the sovereign authority.

However, despite all the oppression of Ben Ali's regime and the use of a permanent state of exception, this regime was not a total institution, controlling everything. After all, it is often the case that oppression is a sign of weakness rather than strength, as we saw when the 'mighty' regime of Ben Ali could not get the army to follow the oppressive rule of the police. The system also failed to silence the opposition, especially in the diaspora. This offers a ray of hope to all those struggling for democratization – to learn how to use the regimes' weaknesses to produce change in the order.

Indeed, the symbolic dimension of these Arab revolutions is remarkable. In Egypt, the revolutionary youth are educated individuals – men and women, Muslim and Christian – who use mobiles and laptops to communicate their revolution while, at the same time, carrying handmade signs. This revolution is fully indigenous. There are no USAID or other international agencies funding glossy placards and brochures or workshops in five-star hotels. In complete contrast, the supporters of the calcified regime came with their horses and their camels, bricks, knives and sticks.

In the Arab revolutions, the Arab-Israeli conflict was not absent. Both Egyptian and Tunisian regimes, being part of what is called the 'axis of moderation', had a political discourse that was deeply at odds with popular feelings, which saw their regimes' moderation as a green light for Israel's colonial project and the siege of Gaza. I was surprised to see that even in a pro-government newspaper like *al-Ahram*, there was criticism of Mubarak for having

received Netanyahu on January 4, the day after Israeli demolished four houses in East Jerusalem and after the bombing of Gaza in which three Palestinians were killed.

Hence, the Israeli phobia of these revolutions is well grounded. The new Arab regimes will have popular legitimacy, not requiring a Western power to support them. Most probably, Egypt will restore its position as a leading force of Pan-Arabism, strengthening the will of the Palestinian people to resist Israel's colonial project. In interviews, protestors repeatedly used the word 'dignity', something they had been denied by the ousted regimes. These Arab revolutions give us food for thought about what kind of social movements are emerging in the Arab world and the interplay of internal and external actors.

> Actors of the Social Movement

Two groups of actors played a crucial role in these revolutions. First, the educated non-affiliated youths deftly combined with political parties and unions that traditionally give such movements the needed momentum and mobilization. Second, there was the working class, whether members of unions or not. Many analysts, deliberately or not, miss the importance of the latter group and mythically present the youth as classless and non-ideological. In reality, these revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt represent emerging social movements that combine the classical form based on social class with a new form in which the struggle for civil rights prevails. In addition to working-class identity, the individuals construct themselves in the space between social integration and disintegration, what Touraine calls commitment and non-commitment, armed with the power of reflexivity. For instance, some activists from the 6th of April Movement are members of the Muslim brotherhood, but they also criticized the Brotherhood's actions and how quickly it entered into dialogue with the old regime.

In Tunisia, Mohamed Bouazizi's act sparked an uprising which began as an unorganized and spontaneous event but which was soon taken over by labor unions. The General Union of Tunisian Workers was masterful in dealing with the regime: In Northern Tunisia, especially in the capital, the leaders of the union were negotiating with the regime while their counterparts in the south were opposing it. The Bar Association also played an important role in expanding the protestors from youth to all ages, and from the regions to the capital, Tunis. One might note the prominent place of lawyers, and even judges, in social movements across the Arab and Islamic world, from Egypt to Pakistan.

As for Egypt, the revolution was started by the 6th of April Movement as a youth movement in solidarity with the labor strikes in Al-Mahalla al-Kubra. They used Facebook, Twitter and SMS, to mobilize thousands of demonstrators on January 25, and, with the help of the political opposition they reached millions of protestors in al-Tahrir Square in Cairo, Alexandria, Swiss (where workers demonstrations were prominent), Zakazik, Mansoura, etc. Each demonstrator became a 'journalist' carrying a mobile phone and filming state repression, thereby bypassing the official media. Indeed, we are in a period of revolutions where political

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and civil rights supersede ideological claims. Arab regimes as well as some Arab and western scholars and journalists thought that the Arab street could only be mobilized by political Islam. Both the Tunisian and Egyptian cases show that although Islamic movements are important, by themselves they cannot succeed, rather there is a need for alliances with other oppositional groups. The strength of Islamic movements resides in going beyond simplistic slogan “Islam is the solution” toward freedom and democracy – joining forces with other oppositional parties.

But what about human rights associations and civil and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)? Many donors and international organizations limit their view of civil society to these ‘depoliticized’ associations, thinking they would be the ones to carry the winds of change. These associations played an auxiliary role in relation to the syndicates and opposition parties, disseminating information about casualties and death tolls, urging international powers, at both official and unofficial levels, to take firm positions against the regime. Therefore, one of the most important features of civil society was the synergy between syndicates and parties and NGOs. It is time for donors who focus only on NGOs to extend their support to all those institutions not only to avoid the inflation of NGOs, but to strengthen the syndicates and parties which will, in turn, feed the NGOs with fresh talent.

In contrast with the Eastern and Central Europe revolutions, these two revolutions do not have a unified opposition leadership. Rather, we witness revolutions without leaders, fragmentation without organization, although over time this has improved. Mass media, although less important, nonetheless did inform people of what was going on, especially when the national Tunisian and Egyptian TV stations were completely misinforming their publics. On January 26th, Egyptian TV showed a cooking program, as if nothing was happening in the streets. Channels such as Al Jazeera, BBC Arabic and France 24 transmitted images sent to them from the mobiles of the activists, providing information and analysis. I should stress that Al Jazeera turned from the ‘principal of non-interference’ in internal Arab affairs to a stance of ‘solidarity’ with Arab public grievances.

> What Next?

Finally, we can only hope that this wonderful uprising is a starting point for a process of democratization – a process that will be full of minefields. Whatever else, people will no longer be convinced that the only choice is between the stability and security of a dictator and the danger of Islamic extremism. Mao Zedong’s old motto is pertinent: “There is great chaos under heaven – the situation is excellent.” For the immediate future we should expect many difficult moments and a lot of negotiation with the Army that has taken power in both Tunisia and Egypt. ■

> History Corner

by Jennifer Platt, ISA Vice-President
for Publications

With the Executive Committee holding its annual meeting in Mexico City (March 21-25), plus the bonus of a seminar with Mexican colleagues, it is appropriate to write on aspects of the history of the ISA in Mexico. Until the 1990s Latin America as a whole provided only about 4% of ISA’s individual members, but they occupied a larger share of positions in Research Committees and on the Executive, which has almost always had Latin American representation. Gino Germani (Argentina, Vice-President 1962-6) and Fernando Cardoso (Brazil, President 1982-6) were especially prominent. The first member of the EC based in Mexico, however, was Francisco Zapata, a political exile from Chile, for 1978-82; he was nominated by Alain Touraine, with whom he had studied in Paris. The next was Jorge González, for 1994-8.

A major highlight was the World Congress of 1982, held in Mexico City – the first ever in a country of the Third World. Under ISA President Ulf Himmelstrand the general theme was ‘Sociological Theory and Social Practice’; the local arrangements committee was led by Gerardo Estrada of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. The numbers of participants were unexpectedly large, so that an emergency printing of more programs was required – and, perhaps more importantly, some of the effective participation probably did not come only from those registered to attend.

Local students objected strongly to both form and content of the meetings. The program had few papers which dealt with Mexican problems; at the time, those were acute, with devaluation against the dollar and nationalization of banks. For many Mexicans sociology was oriented to political activity as much as to a purely academic style of work, so the failure to focus on such issues was strongly criticized. This demand was met by the improvised organization of a large number of sessions additional to the official programme, but held in the same building, with Mexican speakers and topics. The fact that the meeting was almost entirely conducted in English was also attacked. A large demonstration at a plenary session demanded translation into Spanish (not then an official language of the ISA) – one banner had the slogan ‘Cervantes yes, Shakespeare no’; other sessions were also interrupted to make this demand. ISA’s finances did not then (and do not now) permit professional simultaneous translation except for plenary sessions, but arrangements were made for students to offer translation for some sessions. (Artur Meier, writing a later report on the Congress, suggested that these demonstrations were not really just a language conflict, but an assertion of national cultural identity in the face of wider US hegemony experienced as imperialism.) Similar protest was made when in 1990 the World Congress was held in Madrid, and Spanish was then finally made an official language of the ISA.

> Solidarity With Japanese Sociologists

The ISA Executive Committee would like to express sympathy and solidarity with the victims of the terrible Japanese earthquake and tsunami as well as of the nuclear accident they have precipitated. We know that the Japanese people will continue to confront this unprecedented tragedy with fortitude and a renewed collective spirit. We would like to express our commitment to Japanese sociology in any way feasible, but especially to the success of the ISA World Congress of Sociology in Yokohama in 2014. We know that this event is the culmination of 100 years of Japanese sociology. We doubly appreciate that in this time of great anxiety and distress two members of the Japanese Sociological Society – its President, Professor Shujiro Yawaza, and the head of the Local Organizing Committee for the 2014 Congress, Professor Koichi Hasegawa – managed to attend the meeting of the ISA Executive Committee in Mexico City. Professor Hasegawa presented the following report to the Executive Committee, which we reproduce in full below.



Disaster Prevention Center.
Photo by Koichi Hasegawa.

Along the beautiful and deeply-indented coast line of North-East Japan, the tsunami destroyed every fishing port, sweeping away wooden buildings, and leaving just steel structures. This picture of the devastated town of Minami Sanriku shows the frame of its three-story disaster prevention center. From among the more than thirty officials working in the building on March 11, only eight including the town mayor were miraculously rescued from the roof top. The others died, including a young woman whose job it was to broadcast evacuation instructions over the community wireless system. Her voice rescued many people, but she was swept away. The newly erected electricity pylons mark the fighting spirit of hope and determination to rebuild Japan.

> Yokohama The Harbor of Hope

by **Koichi Hasegawa, Tohoku University, Sendai, Chair of Local Organizing Committee for 2014 World Congress of Sociology, Yokohama**

Disastrous earthquakes and tsunami waves hit the Pacific Ocean side of north-east Japan in the afternoon of March 11th. The City of Sendai, where I live, was one of the most severely damaged areas. My family and I were fortunate enough to survive. When the earthquake struck, I just happened to be working on the budget for the ISA World Congress of Sociology. A peaceful Friday afternoon suddenly turned into a disaster. A series of massive and never-experienced tremors attacked me, my family, and the entire area. Almost all my books and folders fell to the floor. And the next moment, I was in the midst of piles of books and papers that rose a meter high. Even now, two weeks later, I still cannot believe what has happened. I feel I've been part of a movie, not real life.

Just like San Francisco and Los Angeles, Japan experiences many earthquakes. Japan is located on the boundary of four tectonic plates. Thus, to some extent, earthquakes have always shaped the history of Japanese society, and the Japanese people always expect and are prepared for big quakes. However, no one anticipated the continuous and multiple shocks that rocked north-east Japan – three large-scale ones occurred one after another within the

first five minutes. This is the reason why the tsunami from the 9.0 quakes grew so unexpectedly fast and why the damages from the waves were beyond our imagination.

Yet, considering the number and size of the earthquakes, the fourth largest in the world, and the high population density of Japanese society, damages ended up relatively small. Communities were well-prepared with quake-resistant buildings. Schools and neighborhoods had routinely conducted emergency drills for earthquakes and tsunami.

I am very proud that so far no riots or plundering have been reported. Even after the worst damage, even in the most severely affected areas, and even in Metropolitan Tokyo, people behaved calmly, joining lines for food, water and delayed transportation. Many foreign reporters were impressed that a sense of order, characteristic of Japanese culture, prevailed even under this catastrophe.

Almost 10 thousand deaths have already been reported, mainly in coastal areas, and over 16 thousand people are still missing after two weeks. These earthquakes and tsunami are the worst natural disasters of modern Japanese history.

To change Japan's energy policy, did we need another nuclear disaster like in Chernobyl?

Many of us are deeply worried about the nuclear reactors in Fukushima. As an environmental sociologist and a scholar of social movements, I have been totally opposed to Japan's energy policy of promoting nuclear power. In 1996 I published a critique of that policy in a book titled *A Choice for a Post Nuclear Society*, which urged the Japanese government to terminate its nuclear power policy. When I was invited to give public lectures, I often raised the following question. "In order to change the Japan's energy policy, do we need another nuclear disaster like Chernobyl?" It is extremely unfortunate that my warning from 15 years ago had to come true. The Japanese government has missed and neglected several chances to learn lessons from the Three Mile Island disaster, the Chernobyl nuclear disaster and other less well-known accidents. I regret to say that I have a sense of powerlessness and emptiness with regard to this issue.

**> Our Venue is Safe
Against earthquakes**

I can understand if you all start thinking twice about travelling to Ja-

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Koichi Hasegawa, Chair of the Local Organizing Committee for the Yokohama World Congress.

pan for the next ISA World Congress in 2014. But let me tell you – you will want to come and see how revived Japan will be by then. The history of Japanese society is one of overcoming disastrous experiences – the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923, WWII Air Raids on Tokyo and the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, and most recently the Kobe Earthquake of 1995.

The City of Yokohama and the conference venue, PACIFICO Yokohama, did not experience any major damage from the recent earthquakes. After them, the City of Yokohama informed me that buildings are made ready for large-scale earthquakes and regularly monitored for safety. Our meeting venue is constructed so as to be completely earthquake-resistant. And a tsunami in Yokohama is unheard of. In its 152 years of history, there has been only one tiny wave recorded and that didn't cause any damage. The shape of the Yokohama Bay makes it hard for tsunami waves to get into the area. Yokohama and its people are very well prepared for earthquakes.

> The Japanese LOC Will Do Its Best

The Japanese Local Organizing Committee is a broad national team

which began its work in June, 2008. The 17 members come from all over Japan and work in diverse areas of research. We are doing our best to build the best organized World Congress of Sociology ever. Collaborating with the Executive Committee of the ISA and the Japan Sociological Society, we are learning from experiences and the lessons of Gothenburg Congress. As regards PACIFICO Yokohama, within one site there are two closely located buildings, providing 80 meeting rooms for research committees and other groups. It takes no more than 10 minutes to walk between any two rooms.

The Japanese LOC is preparing five thematic sessions on the following topics:

- Natural and Human disasters, and the recovery of local society
- Low fertility, rapidly aging society, and changing gender relations
- Civil society issues: CSOs, NGOs, social movements
- Compressed modernization and globalization in the East Asian context
- Social research and education in the field of sociology

These topics are very closely related to the theme of the Congress: *Facing an Unequal World: Challenges for a Global Sociology*. We are also stressing East Asian perspectives, and we are collaborating with Korean, Chinese and Taiwanese sociologists.

> Make Yokohama the Harbor of Hope

PACIFICO Yokohama is located in the area of Minato-Mirai, called the 'Harbor of the Future', also meaning 'Harbor of Hope'. Yokohama has long been the hub of East-West interactions and the center of Northeast and Southeast Asian exchanges – bridging Asia and America, and linking Northern and Southern parts of Asia to the world. It was the Harbor of Hope for the youth leaving Asia for abroad before the time of air travel. Many entered Japan through Yokohama with

hope for greater opportunities. Currently Yokohama is one of Japan's global cities and vividly shows many faces of diversity, displaying fascinating differences and dynamics based on different ethnicities, challenging the stereotypical image of a homogeneous Japanese society.

One of our concerns is the number of registered participants. Our target is to attract more than 5000 delegates as was the case for the Gothenburg Congress. I am afraid that the number of participants might be less because of negative images concerning big earthquakes and a nuclear accident.

But I know you are NOT 'armchair sociologists'. You are all brave sociologists facing social reality. Please urge your colleagues, friends and students, to come to Yokohama in three years time, in 2014, to see and experience a renewed and fortified Japanese society. Your commitment to visiting Japan and to participating in the World Congress will be a major boost to Japanese society and Japanese sociology. Please make sure you come to Japan and see the people and its culture with your own eyes, so that you can experience and feel Japan's recovery. Let us make Yokohama, again, the Harbor of Hope, a place for brave sociologists facing an unequal world and seeking alternatives and sustainable futures. The Yokohama congress is yours. Thank you all for your kind support. ■

> An International Sociology With Diverse Epistemes

by Sujata Patel, University of Hyderabad, India

Global Dialogue has initiated an interesting debate regarding international sociology. My intervention is directed to Ulrich Beck's two contributions on the theme of 'the cosmopolitan turn' (*Global Dialogue* 1:2 and 1:3) and also alludes to the comments made on this subject by Raewyn Connell (*Global Dialogue* 1:2). This comment restricts itself to three ideas: methodological cosmopolitanism, methodological nationalism and global sociology.

Cosmopolitanism, as Craig Calhoun says, is in fashion. Instead of elaborating its various meanings and trajectories, I use it in its common understanding – the recognition of the 'other' in all its forms, or to put it more evocatively, as the editorial of the 2000 issue of *Public Culture* does: "in its wide and wavering nets" it "catches something of our need to ground our sense of mutuality in conditions of mutuality...". Surely only when we recognize this mutuality and difference, is it possible to combine what Beck states are the "contradictory perspectives (Northern and Southern) systematically on the level of sociological analysis".

My question is: Why does Beck's methodological cosmopolitanism not recognize one of the most significant experiences of sociological scholarship in the various regions of the south? This has not only been discussed by Connell in her book, *Southern Theory*, but it has also been elaborated by many scholars from the Global South. It has been termed and identified as academic dependency and its manifestations have been explored within teaching and learning processes, in the curriculum, in the processes of research, in the formulation of criteria adopted for accepting articles for journals and books, and ultimately in defining where one publishes and what is academic excellence.

What are the reasons for the continuing prevalence of these academic dependencies? The answers are many and it starts with the explorations of the relationship between colonialism and its forms of knowledge. However, its prevalence in the form of the 'captive mind' syndrome (in the words of Syed Hussein Alatas), even after the formal demise of colonialism, has led many to explore the theories regarding modernity and thus sociology. Scholars have argued that European and North American sociological theories are ethnocentric and that its Eurocentric episteme has constrained the developments of a genuinely inclusive discipline that may be termed 'cosmopolitan'.

A Eurocentric imagination understands itself in terms of its own self image. This self saw its growth located in European Enlightenment which created a new rationalist and humanist subject. With reason and science, this subject conquered time and space, thereby ensuring and fulfilling

the demands of human progress. Instead of perceiving modernity as a world economic system (a capitalist production system together with its market), sustained by a political formation (a system of nation-states, each legitimated through law), a social organization (in the form of classes, gender, races, ethnicities) together with cultural practices (such as leisure, good life), the Eurocentric imagination reified it to mean, as Arif Dirlik argues, a 'culturalist' process internal to Europe. This self emerged not only in terms of its own endogenous development but also in and through the organization of colonial and imperialist processes of domination. However, European scholars have evaluated and continue to evaluate this discourse not in its mutual relationship with colonialism, but within the confines of its own endogenous history and its language. This orientation continues today to explain the processes of high, radical or second modernity within Europe and North America and organizes the discussion of methodological nationalism.

> Methodological Nationalism

Critical to the theory of methodological nationalism are two concepts, that of space and place. Theorists have tried to keep these analytically separate, but oftentimes there is a conceptual fuzziness in their use. Most often space is understood as an abstract discourse of enumerating social interrelations, while place is perceived to be the physical location where it is actualized – places are produced in terms of a mix of social relations. Over time, these places 'stretch out' and identify themselves in terms of a 'consciousness' and associated symbolic meanings (such as in case of a city, Buenos Aires or a nation-state, South Africa). And in turn, these identities allow solidarities to be constructed against other places/territories, such as the national (Singapore against Malaysia) and supranational (Indonesia against Holland) by utilizing bonds and solidarities of 'local' places (Tahrir Square).

Methodological nationalism confuses the complex articulation between space and place when it argues that the conceptions of the nation, nationality and nationalism have impinged only negatively on the framing of social sciences (both in the way theories were organized and methodologies and methods were implemented). It may have done so in the colonizing imperial countries, such as France and Germany where the 'founders' of sociology elaborated the disciplines' canons, but this contention cannot be accepted for the entire world. For, nation and nationalism have also positively implicated themselves in discourses in ex-colonial countries, such as India. An examination of the history of the discipline of sociology in India allows us to understand these complexities.

Social science, when it developed in India, used a nationalist conception to question colonialism's use of anthropological theories and methodologies to structure a discourse of 'Indian' society as a non-modern society. The growth of nationalist ideologies, in the pre-independence phase and later, allowed for an interrogation of received colonial knowledge that assessed 'Indian society' from the 'outside', asserting a need to study it from the 'inside', thereby facilitating the creation of a sociological language in debate with theories developed within European sociology. With the initiation of a nationalist modernist project, that used higher education for creating opportunities for mobility, these nationalist-oriented social sciences came to play a critical role in conceptualizing planned social change and development.

“...Why does Beck's methodological cosmopolitanism not recognize one of the most significant experiences of sociological scholarship in the various regions of the south?...”

Thus, in the case of India, as in other ex-colonial countries, methodological nationalism was a self-conscious embrace of a place/territory to create a set of guidelines to confront colonial discourses of social sciences. Identification with the 'place' allowed 'national' intellectuals to build intellectual solidarity against dominant colonial knowledge. Second, the recognition of this place-bound solidarity facilitated the growth of an 'alternate' discourse. This then became the principle for organizing the institutionalization of knowledge systems through a gamut of policies and regulations. These policies determined the protocols and practices of teaching and learning processes, establishment and practices of research within research institutes, distribution of grants for research, language of reflection, organization of the profession and definitions of scholars and scholarship.

This genealogy needs to be highlighted and valued in juxtaposition of the negativities outlined in the debate of methodological nationalism. Rather than restricting an understanding of international sociology, nationalist sociologies from ex-colonial countries have enlarged it. On the one hand, these have asserted alternate ways of assessing contextual processes thereby underlining the many particularities that have structured the world and on the other, have highlighted the inequalities that structures international sociology. This heritage has relevance today and cannot be wished away.

This is not to assert that the reduction of 'society' to place/territory (as defined by the nation-state) within na-

tionalist sociologies of the ex-colonial countries, has not created methodological problems. It is clear that these sociologies have made invisible and/or discounted the place-bound voices and experiences of the 'local' 'weak', and the 'marginal' subalterns. If sociologies of the end of the 20th century questioned the supranational, it also dominated and universalized its own infra-local. The moot question is: what kinds of frames are needed to create an international sociology that can include in its analysis these conflictual and contradictory processes of dominance-subordination that have organized its differential epistemes and silenced the many others in the world?

> Global Sociology?

I am with Beck when he asks, "how can social and political theory be opened up, theoretically, empirically as well as methodologically and normatively, to historically new, entangled modernities which threaten their own foundations?" We may debate whether 'entangled modernities' is the correct categorization to use in order to examine the interconnected world capitalist system that was structured in uneven and combined processes, since the 15th century till today. But it is clear that we need to move on and away from the representations that have organized its discourse (as in sociology) from the 18th century onwards in terms of the binaries of the universal (Eurocentric)/particular (ex-colonial and national). Simultaneously, we have to ensure that when we do this, we do not use a universal episteme that once again creates a 'captive' mind, both in the words and language we use and their meanings.

Unfortunately the terms 'cosmopolitan'/'cosmopolitanism' and 'global' have had a long history within European modernities and remain overburdened with these histories and thus their meanings. I have thus preferred to use 'diversities', because in many languages, including English, its usage has been multivariate and its meanings range from a simple assertion of difference to an elaboration of an ontological theory of difference that recognizes power as a central concept in the creation of epistemes. Symbolically it also implies a dispersal rather than homogenization. Also, in its effects (as an ontological theory), its usage allows these epistemes not to be placed in a single line and considered equal in terms of each other. Rather these remain in various mutual relations with each other and in turn are organised by conditions of their own mutuality. These conditions are structured by various levels of space/place dynamics within a matrix of power. Individually these are neither superior nor inferior and collectively these remain distinct, various, universal but interconnected. They present and define their own theories to assess their distinct and different perspectives of sociologies and its theories and practices.

The challenge today is to create this language and the intellectual infrastructure that can recognize this matrix of power when it promotes the many voices of sociological traditions. ■

> Facing Inequality: An International Debate in Mexico City

by **Raquel Sosa Elízaga**, **Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, ISA Vice-President for Program**



Göran Therborn, Member of Program Committee, addressing Conference on Inequality at UNAM.

Alongside the Executive Committee Meeting of the ISA in Mexico City, March 21-25, 2011, the Faculty of Political and Social Sciences of the National Autonomous University in Mexico City collected together prominent Mexican, Latin American and other international colleagues to debate inequality. In three lectures, the President of the Association, Michael Burawoy, Rolando Cordera and Göran Therborn explored the scope of the study of inequality, its origins and development in the social sciences and the various implications for the contemporary world.

Three panel discussions involving eighteen colleagues from different countries gave us a comprehensive overview of the theoretical debate around inequality, knowledge of its different social and cultural expressions, and perspectives from different regions. We explored the risks of deepening inequality and how organized communities could address inequalities, which have worsened dramatically over the last thirty years.

From a critical perspective, several colleagues argued that we are at

a crossroads of civilization, that the overuse of natural resources and environmental destruction threaten to affect the chances of reproduction of life on the planet. From our concern with wars and disasters to the experience of water struggles, all the participants showed awareness and commitment to the principle of avoiding predation and to searching for real alternatives that would protect our collective existence.

In every session, the study of this complex phenomenon recognized the overlapping and intersecting inequalities involved in discrimination, racism, violence against women, ignorance and indifference to the needs of communities and towns, denial of cultural diversity, and the rise of new groups, sectors and social classes. We were able to draw on speakers' knowledge of inequality in countries such as India, South Africa, Mexico and other countries in Latin America, Lebanon, Japan, the UAE, the US, Spain, the Philippines, Sweden, France, Russia, Britain. It was an instructive examination of the different meanings and degrees of inequality in diverse cultural contexts. The weaving of this complex

web forces us to rethink not only our explanations but also proposals for overcoming inequality and the problems it generates.

Finally, different conceptions of justice were present in our discussion, from those introduced by John Rawls and Amartya Sen, to the sociological contributions of Göran Therborn, David Harvey and Pierre Bourdieu. Understanding the relationship between inequality and exclusion, inequality and violence, inequality and power relations and their impact on the organization of public space demonstrate the limitations of narrow disciplinary perspectives. The urgency of the situation globally calls on sociology to influence public debate.

This was the first of a series of forums, workshops, and seminars that will engage the question of inequality in the world today – discussions that will continue in the ISA Forum in Buenos Aires (2012) and culminate in the Yokohama World Congress in 2014. This should inspire new directions in sociology that is now enjoying international resurgence. ■

> Executive Committee Meeting in Mexico City, March 21-25, 2011

by Michael Burawoy, University of California, Berkeley and ISA President



The ISA Executive Committee meeting in the beautiful Botanical Gardens of UNAM, Mexico City.

We agreed that I would set up a number of subcommittees to deal with questions concerning the human rights of sociologists, early-career sociologists, ISA prizes, and the affiliation of ISA to other international organizations.

What follows are summaries of the reports of the individual Vice-Presidents.

Margaret Abraham, Vice-President for Research

The Research Coordinating Committee (RCC) had a productive meeting in Mexico City. It addressed matters arising from the previous RCC meeting in Gothenburg. This included posting online the updated Aims and Requirements for Research Committees and approving the recommendation to increase the minimum number of members required to establish a Research Committee (RC) from 25 to 50 ISA members in good standing, and 25 members to establish a Working Group (WG). Margaret Abraham presented reports on Congrex (based on input from RCs, WGs and TGs – Thematic Groups) and on the plans for the 2012 Forum in Buenos Aires. The RCC discussed these reports and other RC related matters including the RC51 Board elections. It also reviewed proposals for two new Thematic Groups: (1) Institutional Ethnography and (2) Senses and Society. The former was approved while the latter is under review. A major portion of the meeting was devoted to the review and approval of ISA Research Committee grant applications for 2011.

Jennifer Platt, Vice-President for Publications

ISA journals have been doing well, with increased submissions, circulation and citations. However, editors' workloads have increased, and some

The ISA Executive Committee spent 5 days meeting in Mexico City, generously hosted by the Faculty of Political and Social Sciences at UNAM, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, in particular by its Dean, Dr. Fernando Castañeda Sabido, who is also President of the Mexican Sociological Association, and Dr. Raquel Sosa Elízaga who is also Vice-President of the ISA for Program. The 5 day marathon began with a day-long meeting of the Program Committee, and then meetings of the Publications Committee chaired by VP, Jennifer Platt, the Finance and Membership Committee chaired by VP, Robert Van Krieken, the National Liaison Committee, chaired by VP, Tina Uys, and the Research Coordinating Committee, chaired by VP, Margaret Abraham. The Executive Committee met as a whole for two days at the end of the week. Simultaneous with the meetings of the various committees our hosts organized an exciting conference, drawing on Mexican and ISA sociologists, addressing the theme *Facing Inequality: A Challenge for the Contemporary World*, prefiguring the debates at the ISA World Congress in Yokohama.

I reported on my various visits to different countries since being elected President at the Gothenburg Congress and then presented progress on our new Digital Worlds: the new newsletter, *Global Dialogue*, now appearing in 9 languages 6 times a year; the open university, *Global Sociology, Live!*; our own *Sociotube* devoted to sociology in action; and finally our blog, *Universities in Crisis*. They have all been well received and the ISA now has an active Facebook page that has drawn a lot of attention. I emphasized the importance of connecting teams of young sociologists across the globe to work on these Digital Worlds.

Part of my commitment to Digital Worlds is to create greater openness and transparency both in the operations of the Executive Committee and in its relation to the National Associations, Research Committees and general membership. So we will now publish a short annual report of our proceedings, like this one, in *Global Dialogue*, including the EC's major decisions. We also discussed a set of principles that would govern our decision-making and deliberations, including recognition of 'conflict of interests'.

previous local financial support has been withdrawn; a (successful) bid, supported by details of current costs, was therefore made for increased funding. Efforts are being made to identify regional problems in accessing digital content, so that policy can be adapted as required. A volume translating important work written by scholars from North East Asia is planned in connection with the Yokohama 2014 World Congress of Sociology.

No complete application for the next editorship of the *International Sociology Review of Books* was received by the deadline; it was agreed to extend this, and to encourage further candidates to apply. The editor of *Current Sociology* has run workshops for potential authors, and a 'Meet the Editors' session was held in Mexico City. Similar activities will be organized at as many meetings and training activities as possible.

Raquel Sosa, Vice-President for Program

The Program Committee for the World Congress in Yokohama (2014) is composed of the President, the Vice-Presidents for Research and National Associations, 4 members of the Executive Committee, the chair of the Local Organizing Committee and 6 social scientists chosen for their expertise, and representation of different academic traditions and regions. The committee is chaired by the Vice-President of Program. Its basic task is to shape the scientific program and debates that will take place in Yokohama by organizing the various plenaries, 'author meets critics' sessions, integrative sessions, etc. in accordance with the theme: *Facing an Unequal World: Challenges for a Global Sociology*.

At its first meeting, the Program Committee determined the overall schedule of the program and the four main themes for plenaries: multidimensional analysis of inequality, dynamics of inequality, issues of justice, and finally, alternative ways of overcoming inequality. We hope that these guidelines will be stimulating for our Research Committees and National Associations and that they will serve to nurture fruitful academic

exchanges as well as proposals to address one of the most pressing problems of the contemporary world.

Tina Uys, Vice-President for National Associations

The National Associations Liaison Committee (NALC) discussed the applications for regular collective membership and website development and regional conference grants from the National Associations. Applications from the Argentinian, Bangladesh, Irish, Lebanese and the Mozambican Sociological Associations were approved. Members of the NALC were appointed to act as liaisons for the new members.

When discussing the grant applications the NALC considered it important to clarify the requirements for the two grants. A website development grant is awarded for assistance in *establishing* a functioning website for a national association. Support for a substantial revision of a website is a low priority. It was also decided that National Associations should be encouraged to provide the home page of their websites in one of the official languages of the ISA. The aim of a grant for a regional conference is to provide funding for fostering dialogue across national borders in a region or for cross-region workshops. Website development and regional workshop grants were awarded to the Albanian Institute of Sociology and the Kyrgyzstan National Association; the Spanish and Portuguese National Associations received a joint grant for the organisation of a regional workshop. It was also decided that the progress report that each grant recipient has to submit, should be made available at the following EC meeting.

The call for proposals for the NALC conference in 2013 was approved and will be distributed to all National Associations. Discussions were initiated about a possible theme for the conference. Finally, the NALC is considering conducting research on the history, membership, activities, structures and constraints of each National Association with a view to determining ways in which the NALC can assist National Associations.

Robert Van Krieken, Vice-President for Finance and Membership

The Finance and Membership Committee met on 22 March 2011 and reported to the Executive Committee on 25 March. After considering a number of membership issues, including the question of differentiating the Life Membership fee for Category A, B, and C countries and the problem of increasing membership in Category B and C countries, a membership sub-committee was formed to report with recommendations to the next EC meeting in 2012.

As the NALC did, so did the Finance and Membership Committee approve the applications for collective regular membership. The contracts and budgets for the two major forthcoming conferences – the Forum in Buenos Aires in 2012 and the World Congress in Yokohama in 2014 – were discussed as they approach finality.

It was decided to make provision for donations to the ISA when commencing or renewing ISA membership. The provisional 2011 budget was revised in light of applications for grants from National Associations and Research Committees, from the President for his *Global Dialogue* newsletter and from the Publications Committee.

Finally, a summary budget was finalized for 2010 which will be made available to the membership on request.

Other Items

We discussed reports from our representatives to the UN (Jan Fritz, Rosemary Barberet and Rudolf Richter), to the International Institute for the Sociology of Law (Ramon Flecha and Benjamin Tejerina), Global Development Network (Emma Porio). We heard from Tina Uys about progress on the next Laboratory for PhD students in Johannesburg. We also composed a message of solidarity with Japanese sociologists, reasserting our commitment to the 2014 Yokohama Congress. We ended on a note of thanks to our hosts for their overflowing hospitality, and to the indefatigable staff of the ISA Secretariat for facilitating our complex meeting. The ISA marches on with more members and more activities. ■

> Without Borders

by Judith Blau, University of North Carolina, President of US Chapter of *Sociologists without Borders* and Alberto Moncada, President of *Sociologists without Borders International*



| Judith Blau, President of SSF.

Médecins Sans Frontières was, of course, at the forefront of the 'without borders' movement that accelerated with globalization. This list is hardly exhaustive, but indicative of the broad extent of the movement: Architecture without Borders, Clowns without Borders, Engineers without Borders, Farmers without Borders, Monks without Borders, Music without Borders, Reporters without Borders, Soccer without Borders, and Teachers without Borders.

Sociologists without Borders/Sociólogos sin fronteras (SSF) is part of that broad movement. Founded in Spain in 2002, it then expanded to other countries – Brazil, Chile, Iran, Italy, Malaysia, Puerto Rico, and the United States. Like other 'without borders' organizations its mission statement emphasizes equality and peoples' global responsibilities to one another, and additionally highlights the importance of human rights, participatory democracy, equitable economies, and sustainable ecosystems. SSF is critical of imperialism and neoliberalism. The turn towards a 'public sociology,' advocated by Michael Burawoy, has been especially welcomed by members of SSF.

Sociology is turning, understandably slowly. A few decades ago there was little questioning of the positivist and

rationalistic assumptions that dominated university departments and research settings, at least in the United States. This began to change in the 1970s with feminist perspectives (in the US by Sociologists for Women in Society – SWS) and African American perspectives (in the US by the Association of Black Sociologists – ABS). The members of the Marxist Section of the American Sociological Association (ASA) always reminded us of the bigger picture. Newer sections of the ASA are evidently not neutral: Aging and the Life Course; Altruism, Morality and Social Solidarity; Children and Youth; Disability and Society; and Education (among others). It is hard to imagine that those who do research on children are indifferent to their welfare, and some of these researchers may very well be advocates for children. In other words, public sociology has pervaded the discipline in the United States.

What role does the US chapter of SSF play in American sociology? First, we have a list-serve and a discussion board <http://ssfthinktank.org/> that are global.

Second, we are represented on the advisory board of the Human Rights Coalition of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, which an ASA Section could not do.

Third, we attend, as an organization, the World Social Forum, which an ASA Section could not do. Fourth, we can 'lobby' the ASA, which an ASA Section could not do. Two of our resolutions have been approved by ASA Council: a statement on human rights, and another to protect the rights of endangered sociologists around the world. We have our own journal, *Societies without Borders* <http://societieswithoutborders.org/> which, consistent with our philosophy, is open-source.

Being footloose and independent of the ASA (while being its friend) has big advantages, consistent with our 'without borders' philosophy. We can take positions that are not in sync with those held by many sociologists. Do we advocate the free flow of money and resources to the Global South? Of course. Do we advocate the end of imperialism and hegemony? You bet. Do we advocate the end of privatization? Sure. Do we advocate the free flow of peoples? Migration without borders? Absolutely! ■

> Editorial Board

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Spain: Gisela Redondo.

Taiwan: Jing-Mao Ho.

> Celebrating 20 Years of The Turkish Sociological Association

by Birsen Gökçe, President of the Turkish Sociological Association.¹



President Birsen Gökçe addressing Turkish Sociologists on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the TSA.

The Turkish Sociological Association was founded in 1990 in Ankara. When it was first founded, it had 40 members -- today it has 600. In 1999 it was granted the status 'Association for Public Interests' by a Decree of the Council of the Ministers. It does not have any branches. Since its founding 20 years ago, this Association has won recognition and reputation at a national level for its scientific congresses and its research. We are an association whose services are actively sought.

The Association has conducted 22 research projects, nearly 20 conferences, 22 books and numerous collaborative meetings with non-governmental organizations. Moreover, since 1998, we have published a total of 130 scientific articles both in Turkish and in English in our peer-reviewed Journal of Sociological Research, including 10 translations and 8 research projects.

Besides promoting research, the Association seeks to spread the knowledge it produces and therefore values its relations to the wider community. The Association cooperates with voluntary organizations, foundations, associations and engages in the planning of community-related activities. Moreover, it cooperates with both national and international organizations to carry out research projects.

In this vein, it has undertaken projects with the support of the Ministry of Family and Social Research, the Ministry of the Southeastern Anatolia Regional Development Administration (GAP), and the Ministry of Health at the national level. On the national and international level, it has pursued projects with the support

of the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the European Union, UNICEF, NATO and the World Bank.

The Association's most important activity is the organization of the National Congress. To date, six congresses have been held. Their most important aspect is the close collaboration with sociology departments in the peripheral Anatolian Universities organized through sociological research conducted on Turkey's socio-economic problems. The congresses provide a platform for the exchange of thoughts, viewpoints and knowledge between senior professors and younger faculty, among colleagues from different parts of the country and with colleagues from sister disciplines.

The first congress was on "Current Sociological Developments," and took place at Ege University in Izmir, in 1993, three years after the founding of the Association. The second was on "Migration" that took place in 1996 at Mersin University. The third, on "New Sociological Challenges in the World and Turkey," emphasized the topics of alienation, conflict, and integration. It took place at the Anadolu University in Eskişehir in 2000, while the fourth congress on "The Changing World and Inequalities" was held in Cumhuriyet University in Sivas in 2003. The fifth congress was on the "Current Societal Problems in Turkey" and took place in 2006 in Malatya's İnönü University. The last congress in 2009 was held at Adnan Menderes University on "Social Transformations and Sociological Approaches."

At the beginning, because sociology was taught in philosophy departments, it uncritically adopted Western social theories and neglected research with the result that young people did not understand the discipline properly, and indeed were estranged from it. Today the situation has improved as it is more often taught as the study of social problems using scientific research methods. Indeed, contemporary sociology has the potential to be an umbrella discipline whose methods are used in all the social sciences, but un-

fortunately associated disciplines, such as economics, law, and psychology often neglect or isolate social dimensions when they study Turkey.

Today, the wider public uses the term sociology as if it were magical. Journalists, columnists, politicians, and everyone else who advances explanations for social phenomena are trying to be sociologists. What shouldn't be forgotten is that one does not learn sociology merely by living in a society, in a family. It is not uncommon to encounter university professors who say: "I was born in a village, lived in a village, and therefore I can teach rural sociology!"

Our goal is to help youth, armed with a background in sociology, to work in the public arena and transfer their sociological thinking to society. Equipped with specialized understanding, sociology graduates assume the important role of writing research-based reports and making policy recommendations to public decision-makers.

During the era of the Five Year Development Plans, the employment of sociology graduates was considered important and they were commissioned at various Ministries. However, as a result of the changes made in the law of employment in 1980, sociology graduates lost many such opportunities of public sector employment. Since its inception, our Association has been struggling to reverse these changes. Even today, sociology graduates, qua university graduates, can serve in only six public institutions. After a long political process, last month, the Council of Ministers signed a new decree that would once more allow sociology graduates to be employed in a variety of agencies.

The twentieth year is only the beginning; there's still a lot to be done. For this, we need fresh blood. Finally, I want to underscore that we still need to overcome many obstacles to the reception of sociology in the wider society and its institutions.

I'd like to thank you again for joining us today. I wish our association a happy 20th anniversary. ■

¹ This is an Abridged Version of President Gökçe's address to Turkish Sociologists in Ankara, December 28, 2010.

> National Associations in Europe

by Roberto Cipriani, President of the ESA Council of National Associations

Representatives of 21 Sociological Associations took part in the meeting organized by the European Sociological Association in Paris, October 28th, 2010. ESA President Anália Torres, ESA Past President Claire Wallace and members of the ESA Executive Committee were present too. Our special guests were Jean-Michel Baer, Director of Research for Science, Economy and Society from the European Commission and Rifka Weehuizen from the European Science Foundation.

ESA has two backbones: the Research Networks and the National Associations. By statute, the National Asso-

ciations play a significant role in the ESA as they propose candidates for election to the ESA Executive Committee and for the post of ESA President.

This is a brief report about the characteristics of each national association, leaving for another time the main topics discussed which included the Bologna process, and the downsizing of the social sciences in the majority of European countries.

Such is the state of European national associations of sociology! ■

European National Associations of Sociology

- **The German Sociological Association** has 2500 members and offers infrastructure for collective research. Indeed, they have become quite professional in recent years and are active in promoting research in Europe.
- **The Norwegian Sociological Association** plays a major role in connecting people through various networks.
- **The Turkish Association** was founded in 1990 and has 500 members. Since Turkey has applied for European Union membership, Turkish sociologists are more focused on Western sociology.
- **In Romania**, there is a militant sociology, which seeks to enhance social development, leading to various policy initiatives. At the same time there is a focus on micro-social issues at the expense of global issues. The result is an isolated sociology. The number of research institutes has fallen, but they now publish a web-based review.
- **The French Sociological Association** is very young, only founded in 2002, but they have 1000 members and 40 different research networks.
- **The Portuguese Sociological Association** has 2600 members. It is a scientific association as well as a professional one. They try to bring together people who are teaching, researching, but also those working in enterprises.
- **The Westermarck Society in Finland** was founded in 1954, and its journal was launched in 1965.
- **The Swiss Sociological Association** has 550 members, about the same number for 20 years. They have 12 research committees which hold conferences in the year between ESA conferences. It is a multilingual association, and its conferences are trilingual (French, German and English). They also publish a trilingual journal.
- **The statutes of the Hungarian Sociological Association** have recently been changed, and now they can launch research projects of their own. They organize yearly conferences.
- **In Austria**, we find many 'homemade' careers, and a loss of identity. The Bologna process leads to fragmentation because the Bachelor's and Master's degrees differ considerably as far as content is concerned.
- **The Spanish Federation of Sociology** is linked to autonomous regional communities in Spain. There are many activities within these regions and a variety of different journals. The Federation also organizes meetings and publishes its own journal.
- Half of the **British Sociological Association** members and half the PhDs do not work in sociology departments. The British government has recently changed its funding policy, and there have been several large public demonstrations. Studies are becoming very expensive.
- **The Italian universities** are experiencing a double crisis: organizational and financial. It is difficult to evaluate the impact of the organizational issues, but there is a major financial crisis as far as salaries are concerned.
- **Sociology in Poland** is a very prestigious science. Its identity was built up during the communist period. There are more applications for MA than for BA degrees, which means that many applicants come from other disciplines, with limited sociological knowledge.
- **The Vojvodinian Sociological Association** is a non-profit and non-political organization. Its research projects are beset by financial problems and multicultural divisiveness. There are 25 ethnic groups.
- **In Denmark**, there are good salaries in all fields, so this causes a kind of brain drain from the academic field. Furthermore academic standards are so high that it is very difficult for students to enter Danish universities.
- **The Macedonian Association** is a small one. It is an academic association closely connected to the major universities, but it also has professional interests.
- **The Albanian Institute of Sociology** has 130 members and organizes national conferences every year.
- **There are three sociological associations in Russia**, all of them based in Moscow. Sociology enjoys a certain prestige. Sociologists are often close to policy makers.
- **Sociology in Israel** has been well established since 1948. Today its association is quite large; they organize a conference every year, with around 1000 people attending.

> Guilty of Being a Sociologist?

by Frédéric Neyrat, University of Limoges



Gendarmerie accompanying Pinar Selek.

One might think sociology is now sufficiently established as a discipline to raise only scientific issues. However, a recent seminar in Limoges¹ was devoted to the political obstacles faced by social science inquiries. Sociological research, in particular, has been discredited, and violently so, from various non-scientific viewpoints in the realms of politics, media and the law.

Two cases testify to the threats that sociologists may face. Most significant is the case of Pinar Selek. Since 1998, she has been repeatedly accused of a bomb attack on an Istanbul Spice Bazaar. All the expert reports have established that the explosion was caused by a gas leak, and the courts have found her not guilty three times – the last time being in February 2011. But all decisions were appealed, and again so in February. Pinar Selek is indeed guilty of having behaved as a sociologist, of having conducted an inquiry that broke the taboo of the Kurdish question. She interviewed PKK militants and refused to give away their names to the police when she was arrested and then

tortured. According to some circles within the Turkish State and police, it is a crime to challenge national myths or question official discourse on the Kurdish or Armenian questions.

The second case is from Hungary where renewed nationalism has launched a hate-driven and anti-semitic media campaign against Agnes Heller and her 'clique' (four other philosophers) as charged by influential Hungarian media investigating this 'cosmopolitical' conspiracy. Agnes Heller, 81 years old, is a philosopher and a sociologist trained by Georg Lukács. She has taught in different countries including the United States where, in the 1970s, she occupied the Hanna Arendt Chair at the New School, after escaping the persecutions of the communist regime. Since the beginning of this year, she has been accused of misappropriating, along with her colleagues, 2 million euros for 'foggy and useless' texts. Unsubstantiated charges try to slander her reputation, asserting that she has brought her fatherland into disgrace. In fact, nothing but her political engagement is being targeted.

Like other intellectuals, she stood against the new Hungarian law that curtails the freedom of the media and denounced the authoritarian drift of the Viktor Orbán administration.

If some sociologists are victimized in these ways, that is because the authorities find sociology to be threatening. It deals with issues some states would like to ignore once and for all; its inquiries challenge the veracity of official claims. Sociologists are also attacked as intellectuals, even as they follow the Weberian scientific ethic. Indeed, it is precisely because of their scientific commitments that attempts are made to discredit them. ■

¹ Sylvain Laurens, Frédéric Neyrat, *Enquêter: de quel droit ? Menaces sur l'enquête en sciences sociales*, Bellecombe-en-Bauges, Éditions du Croquant, 2010.