GLOBAL DIALOGUE

3.4

5 issues a year in 15 languages

Fernando Henrique Cardoso Looks Back

Sociology as a Vocation

Chizuko Ueno,
Vladimir Yadov

Bulgaria Yesterday and Today

Mariya Ivancheva,
Martin Petrov,
Georgi Medarov

Social Science in Malaysia

Shamsul A.B.,
Rahman Embong

> Favela Tourism

> Behind the Garment Disaster in Bangladesh

> Your Paper Has Just Been Outsourced

> Tunisian Sociology after the Revolution

> Cinematic Sociology

> Cheaper Books for ISA Members

> Editorial

For a New Sociology

Collective indignation continues to blaze a trail across the world – of late, carrying its torch from Gezi Park and Taksim Square to the major cities of Brazil and now, as I write, Egypt is being reignited by a popular uprising of unprecedented proportions. The crowds in Tahrir Square display a great refusal of the (re)expropriation of politics, albeit with uncertain and tragic outcomes. These culturally interdependent yet politically independent protests that now span the planet call for a new theory of social movements, and, from there, a new sociology that reaches for the global.

Such a new sociology must grapple with the intertwining of politics and economics, so in this issue *Global Dialogue* exposes the political underbelly of capitalism's third wave of marketization, known colloquially as neoliberalism. Thus, Mallika Shakya analyzes the geopolitics of the distribution of garment production that has produced the disaster in Bangladesh while Bianca Freire-Medeiros describes the promotion of favela tourism in which successive political regimes of Brazil capitalize on poverty. Jeff Sallaz analyzes how publishers are making unbelievable profits from outsourcing, by relying on us (or our libraries) to buy back at inflated prices the very products we produce! Moving further afield, in an engaging personal history, Rahman Embong tells us how sociology has been pushed aside as the top Malaysian universities seek out those disciplines that will deliver short-term profits with long-term political quiescence.

Where, then, might we find such a new sociology? I've been following a postcommunist generation of critical sociologists emerging in Eastern Europe – Poland, Ukraine, Romania, and East Germany. In these pages three young sociologists from Bulgaria challenge the terms of national debates. Martin Petrov describes the life course of the down and out – the detritus of both new and old regimes, competing for distinction on the streets of Sofia. Georgi Medarov traces the complex patterns of backward-looking politics targeting former communists – thereby giving them a ghostly existence – but with the additional motive of exonerating Bulgaria from its fascist past. In so doing attention is deflected from fascist tendencies of the present. Mariya Ivancheva reflects critically on her own early embrace of the democratic transition by traveling as far as Venezuela to explore the dilemmas of another socialism and to see what lessons and insights it holds for Eastern Europe. All three are trying to weave a sociology that interrogates the past for a way out of the present.

A new sociology requires new methods to excavate the polyphonic layers of history and society. There's no better place to begin than Jordanna Matlon's interview with Joyce Sebag and Jean-Pierre Durand about their program in cinematic sociology at the University of Evry. In line with their cinematic project I would like to extend an open invitation to submit photo-essays (a high-resolution photo plus a 300 word interpretation) for publication in *Global Dialogue*.

> ***Global Dialogue* can be found in 15 languages at the ISA website**
> **Submissions should be sent to burawoy@berkeley.edu**

Fernando Henrique Cardoso, *two-time President of Brazil (1995-2003), one-time President of the ISA (1982-86), and pioneering sociologist, recounts the advantages and disadvantages of being a sociologist as President.*

Chizuko Ueno, *celebrated Japanese public intellectual, activist, and sociologist reflects on the up-hill road to feminism and assesses its historic gains in Japan and the tasks ahead.*

Vladimir Yadov, *pioneer of Russian sociology during the Soviet period, defender of the autonomy of sociology in the Putin era, former Vice-President of the ISA, and beloved teacher of many, describes the challenges he faced.*

2

> Editorial Board

> In This Issue

3

> President as Sociologist

An Interview with Fernando Henrique Cardoso

Fernando Henrique Cardoso.

After being Minister of Finance, Fernando Henrique Cardoso was elected President of Brazil for two terms, 1995-2003. He was President of the International Sociological Association (1982-1986), toward the end of the Brazilian dictatorship. He was already then a world-famous sociologist with pioneering work on the interaction between dependence and development in Latin America. His dissertation was a classic study of slavery in southern Brazil. The interview here is based on remarks he made at the closing session of the meetings of the American Sociological Association in 2004, one year after he left the office of President.

MB: President Cardoso, how has being a sociologist shaped your experience as a President, a President of a country, and not a small country but the huge country of Brazil?

FHC: I would say that I believe that what is important in political life, as well as in academia, is to believe in something. If you don't have a vision, if you don't take a stand it is impossible to leave an imprint on a community or a country. You must have convictions. This is probably the opposite of what has always been said about "political man." Of course I read, as you do, Weber. And Weber made the distinction between the ethic of conviction and the ethic of responsibility. But he never segregated each one as the driver of political action. Instead, he took both ethics into consideration. He himself was a German deputy, and highly nationalist. So he had values.

Provided you have conviction, and provided you are able to express it at the appropriate time – that is to say, when your time in politics coincides with people's sensibility – one can become a political leader. Without that capacity it is impossible. You can be elected, but without conviction, without profound convictions you cannot become a political leader. And in my case, I would stress that what moved my

generation was not our passion for economic development, although we had that. Democracy was our main devotion.

At the time when I became directly involved with politics we were still living under an authoritarian regime. We suffered daily from the lack of freedom. You could see people being exiled, or people in prison – people being tortured: that was the main incentive for our engagement. This implied the reaffirmation of our democratic creed, of our democratic convictions.

MB: Democracy is a vague and abused word, what does it mean to you?

FHC: You have different types of democracies, different variations of the same value, with different configurations. In today's world democracy is not just about being able to engage with a political party and in electoral life. I must say that I never was a party member in the proper sense. I never was an apparatchik. I hate apparatchiks. Once in my first political campaign for the Senate I said in a speech to a room full of members of my political party – that opposed the military – that militants are boring people.
I don't think that you can look at politics just in terms of political parties. I think nowadays what is important is to

>>

have the capacity to get in touch with ample sectors of society in general, and to express values in accordance with the diffuse sentiments of people.

So to be effective as a "political man" requires some capacity to seduce, to communicate, to generate emotion. To some extent you have to be an actor. In a good sense of the term: not because you are playing a role as in a theater. It's not that. You have to have the capacity to communicate and feel emotion, and to transmit emotion. Maybe I became a political leader because I like people. Being president I tried to be in contact with ordinary people. Presidents tend to be very distant from simple people in general. But presidents have waiters. We have people who take care of us, even when we are in the swimming pool. We have drivers. We have security guards. These are the people surrounding a president in day-to-day life, not just politicians and upper-class people. I tried to talk to them, and to give them the feeling that they could speak to me as a person. Not as a president. And I tried to listen to them as to how they really felt about different things. I think nowadays what is important is not to be an actor, in the sense of a performer, but to be able to influence affairs by transmitting emotion that shows you are genuinely committed to what you are expressing. This also requires not losing the sense of being a human being.

MB: And sociology, does that help you to be human?

FHC: Sociology helps a lot. Very often in Brazil people competing with me – my adversaries – used to say, "Well, this is a man who was never poor in his life. He speaks better French than Portuguese." They said things like that just to disqualify me. But they missed the point. Being a professor in foreign countries, as I had been, taught me a lesson: I had to speak more simply and directly than ordinary intellectuals do.

I remember when, as an exile from the military dictatorship, I started giving classes in Chile. Portuguese and Spanish are very close, but they are not the same language. Brazilians understand Spanish, but not the other way around. The Chileans protested at every word I tried to pronounce in Portuguese. So I was obliged to avoid complex words, I had to simplify.

Also as a sociologist it is important to be – and you are trained to be – in contact with people. And when the opposition said "Oh, this man has no capacity to relate to poor or simple people," I smiled because I started my career as a sociologist living with black people and dealing with race relations. So I visited lots of slums and favelas, shantytowns in the southern part of Brazil. Later I conducted research with workers. Then I moved to the study of entrepreneurs. But I started my career in close contact with simple people. So I never had difficulties in dealing with people.

I had also followed courses in anthropology. We actually studied the three disciplines together: sociology, economics, and anthropology. And you know how anthropologists are – my wife was an anthropologist –, they look at very specific things. And they like to talk to everyone, take notes, reflecting on small changes in behavior. It is important for a politician to have the capacity to understand others and dialog with them. This enhances one's ability to influence others, provided you have the capacity to be an actor, in the sense I stressed before: to express your true sentiments in a straight and sensitive manner.

MB: But can sociology also be a handicap?

FHC: Yes, indeed. I remember I was shy when I started my first political campaign running for a senatorial seat. To run a political campaign in Brazil means to touch people. And they grab you back with great force. At the end of the day you are really very tired, exhausted by so much passion. A political campaign – at least in Brazil – is a physical interchange; it's people to people. It's not just talk. You have to touch. You have to be close to people. This requires some training. So when I started it was not easy.

>>

5

But, of course, talk is important and it's not easy for an academic to speak to crowds. You have both to simplify and be very affirmative. And not try to make great statements, because people just don't like that. It is not easy for an academic to adapt to that situation. I remember at the beginning I tried to give a different speech at each meeting I addressed. And, don't forget, in a political campaign we have in one day perhaps eight or ten meetings. I was ashamed to repeat the same ideas. So I tried to imagine different stories for each audience. This was a disaster.

Because no one really gets what you want to convey, you have to repeat yourself again and again. You have to simplify and repeat. So in those circumstances it's not easy to be a sociologist and a politician. But when you move from that situation to TV then we have an enormous advantage. In my first electoral campaign for a seat in the Senate to represent the state of São Paulo – at a time when Brazil was still under the military rule and we were campaigning against it – I went on a TV network to debate with my opponent. I was rather calm throughout the debate. That was because I was trying to give a lesson, or something like that.

When I went back home my friends were in state of total despair; this is impossible, they said, you don't have the energy, you don't transmit the feelings that a politician must express. The actual impact on the audience was quite the opposite of this pessimistic analysis. Because TV requires much more a kind of dialogue – a more intimate conversation than public speech at a meeting – so we have this additional advantage, being sociologists and teachers, we have mastered direct dialogues with students. For us it's not that difficult to take advantage of TV in political life. It is enough to perform as a good teacher, expressing your ideas in a simple and convincing way.

MB: As President how did you deal with political parties?

FHC: In the case of Brazil, as I said before, what is really important is the capacity that leaders have to present a vision to the nation – not to the parties. The leader must convince the majority of the population, even at the cost of bypassing the political parties.

Parties, very often, are more likely to block than promote change. They're not prepared to deal with innovation. So you have to bypass the party structure. At the same time, you have to realize that ultimately you depend on the political structure to succeed. This means you cannot go against it. If you enter into direct conflict with the political system you run the risk of ending up as some kind of dictator or of being impeached.

You can manipulate the masses and mobilize them against Congress. Using TV this is not too difficult. But this path leads toward dictatorship. You need to have a firm democratic conviction and not turn the masses against Parliament because Parliament can be an obstacle to the changes you are trying to implement. You have to be prepared for permanent negotiation with Congress. Here again being a trained sociologist has some advantages, because you understand what are the real interests at stake – not just by looking at the different parties, but by looking at the different groups and circles or even persons within each party. And, on top of that, and more importantly, keeping your eyes on the public interest.

MB: You had your fair share of national crises. What have you to say about responding to crises?

FHC: You have to always keep your cool in times of crisis – for example, in the moments of wild speculation in the international financial system – and steady the course, otherwise everything may collapse, which can sink both you and your government. Having the analytical capacity to understand the broader picture in times of crisis helps you to keep cool. You must be able to act at different levels, close to people in some circumstances and with the capacity to be aloof, so as not to rock the boat, but rather provide a roadmap and steer a course toward where you want to go.

In these moments, the prime duty of the Head of State is to safeguard the long-term interests of the Nation without which it risks collapse. And when this happens rebuilding the whole system takes a lot of time and always implies that the people will end up paying a huge social cost. That is also why it is so important to have the capacity to surf when the winds are favorable, seize the opportunity and forge ahead. This will also make you stronger in dealing with the bad moments when most of all you have to prevent the disintegration of the whole system.

To what extent is this tied to sociological training? To a large extent, I would say. Of course, there are other characteristics related to personal biographies, and to other kinds of capacities. But basically I would say that our training as sociologists gives us a broader horizon, gives us the capacity to understand the interplay between different groups and also gives us some sense of relativism, the realization that there is not one overriding truth or unique way of doing things.

MB: Have you any final sociological thoughts on the political process?

FHC: In my view the political process in contemporary democracy requires a permanent process of deliberation. Going back to Rousseau's idea of a general will, I would say that nowadays the general will is redefined everyday by everyone in society. We must open space for this to happen, so that more and more people can engage in the process of deliberation. People no longer accept representation just in terms of the vote. Legitimacy today is not only linked to voting; it requires a permanent reaffirmation of the values and the cause you care for, you are struggling for.

I have several times received many millions of votes. I was twice elected for the presidency with the support of more than 50% of the electorate. But this awesome mandate is not enough. You need to reestablish, to reaffirm your legitimacy on a daily basis. It's almost as if each day you are starting from scratch. Those who think that they have gained people's trust once and for all deceive themselves. You must keep and renew this trust continuously by the reaffirmation of the values that guide your action.

So I will give you one last and only piece of advice: don't enter politics – it's very difficult! ■

6

> The Vocation of Sociology

On Becoming a Feminist in Japan

by Chizuko Ueno, University of Tokyo, Japan

Chizuko Ueno.

Chizuko Ueno, a leading Japanese sociologist, feminist critic, and public intellectual, has been a pioneer in women's studies and the author of many books, including *Patriarchy and Capitalism* (1990), *The Rise and Fall of the Japanese Modern Family* (1994, English translation 2004), *Nationalism and Gender* (1989, English translation 2009), *The Erotic Apparatus* (1989), *The Politics of Difference* (2002), *A Thought for Survival* (2009), *Misogyny in Japan* (2010), *Sociology of Care* (2011). She has a long involvement with feminist activism and today she is President of the prominent non-profit organization Women's Action Network (http://wan.or.jp/). See her address entitled "Forty Years of Japanese Feminism," http://worldwide-wan.blogspot.jp/ where she draws up the balance sheet of losses and gains for Japanese women over the last 40 years.

Sociologist is a convenient term of self-identification. In the name of sociology, I can consider any of my everyday activities as a subject for research, from reading comics to overhearing passengers on the bus. As a sociologist, I have developed a deep skepticism toward the society I live in. I can't tell whether it is my skeptical disposition that shapes me as a sociologist, or the sociological training that has made me skeptical. All I know is that the sociological habitus leads one to look around for what is wrong, insane, stupid, strange, unreasonable. In return, people often think sociologists are insane, stupid, and strange. This habit prepared me well for gender studies, because the gendered world is full of insanity, stupidity, strangeness, and irrationality. In my young days, I remember saying, "What is considered as

>>

7

un-common sense today will turn out be common sense tomorrow!" In many ways, my prediction turned out to be true, as far as gender is concerned.

Some 40 years ago, when I was a university student in the 1970s, the academic community was still a man's world in which women were out of place. Men and women joined together in the student movement but it turned out to be a serious disappointment for women. Student activism was a boys' game but not a girls'. Male comrades in the front line were as sexist as the conservatives.

After the collapse of the student activism, I went to graduate school in sociology, but only as a moratorium from the real world without any academic aspiration. There I encountered women's studies that had just been introduced from the USA. It was an eye-opening experience, and I learned that it was perfectly all right to study myself. I was struggling with the question of who I was, in which being a woman was a central issue. It was my luck that I was not the only one to think that way.

I take a pride in pioneering women's studies in Japan, since it did not exist prior to us. Women's studies scholars of my generation are all self-made. We formed a study group, learned from each other, published periodicals, and tried to reach out to our readers. As a young sociologist, who was bored with the existing sociology, I first came across my own research topic on gender and sexuality, with which I could deeply be involved, and on which I could barely write without emotional feeling of anger.

Women's studies in Japan were born and grew outside of academia. At the beginning we did not expect to get a teaching position, research funds, subscriptions to the authorized academic journals, so that we created everything in our field. Women's studies were not recognized as a serious academic discipline. But within ten years, that is, in the 80s, some academic journals started to cite from our periodicals. In twenty years, in the 90s, I was offered a teaching position in gender and generation studies at the University of Tokyo, supposedly Japan's most prestigious university. There students in my class freely choose such research topics as the representation of women in girls' comics, gay and lesbian communities, the discursive structure of a website for single mothers, and the history of masturbation. Following such themes, they feel free to write their dissertations for B.A., M.A., and even Ph.D., although it must be said their future academic career is not guaranteed.

Sociology helped me to develop women's studies. Borrowing a word from Gayatri Spivak's postcolonial writing, it was like "fighting with the tool from your enemy." As an author of *Patriarchy and Capitalism* (1990), I succeeded in persuading a male readership that there was something amiss in their relations to women. One of my readers said to me, "After reading your book, I came to realize what my wife has been complaining about." To the contrary, what he should have done first was to listen to his wife. But in order to have them understand their own problems, we had no other way than to use the hegemonic language. It is similar to the postcolonial situation, when we use English to survive in the academic community, where globalization means anglophonic centrism. Accordingly, I became bilingual, both English and Japanese, male and female languages, academic and everyday language, standard and local languages and so on. The place of sociologist has to be in-between, so that Karl Manheim's theory of marginal man (woman) is still valid.

Women's studies served as a functional equivalent to women's activism in the academic community. A question was followed soon after by the institutionalization of women's studies. We were responsible for that but with what results? Has the challenge of women's studies changed what were male-centered disciplines? Or have women's studies adjusted themselves to the existing disciplines through their institutionalization? The question is similar to women's participation in the military. Does women's participation change the military, or is it that women are militarized through their participation? Which comes first? Sad to say, history tells us the latter comes first, that the institution is able to absorb its dissidents.

We are still struggling against basic principles of academic disciplines such as objectivity, neutrality, testability, and refutability. But, without any value judgment, how can we find an appropriate research topic? Without any value commitment, how can we make a claim for something to be wrong? Without any hope for a future society, how can we manage to continue such a painstaking research endeavor, from which we expect so little reward?

Reaching the age of retirement as an emeritus professor, I can only say I am glad to be a sociologist, as sociology has become a part of myself. ■

8

> The Vocation of Sociology
Sociologist as Life Destiny

by Vladimir Yadov, Institute of Sociology, Russian Academy of Sciences and former ISA Vice-President, 1990-1994

Vladimir Yadov.

Vladimir Yadov was a pioneer of sociology in the Soviet Union, where the subject assumed a precarious existence as a "bourgeois" science. At Leningrad University he was a central figure in creating the first sociology laboratory in the 1960s, followed by the publication of *Man and His Work* as well as the first textbook on methodology which defined the new profession. He developed a social-psychological theory of the self-regulation of social behavior and was elected to the leadership of the European Association of Experimental Social Psychology. In post-Soviet Russia he became the Director of the Institute of Sociology at the Russian Academy of Sciences, developing a multi-paradigmatic approach to sociology. For many years he was an ambassador of Russian sociology abroad and between 1990 and 1994 he was Vice-President of the International Sociological Association. He is the leader of the liberal-democratic wing of Russian sociologists opposing the rise of conservatism. He is much beloved by the many students he has trained from the beginning of Soviet sociology to the present.

I became a sociologist back in the early 1960s, and today, when it is time to summarize the results of my life's journey, I feel very fortunate about that turn in my life. For many years the official media in the Soviet Union labeled sociology as a "bourgeois pseudo-science." However, after Stalin's regime was dissolved in the late 1950s, we had a period of modest liberalism. My colleagues and I managed to set up a sociological laboratory at Leningrad University, and, at the same time, a sociology division – Section for the Study of New Forms

>>

9

of Labor and Leisure – was established at the Institute of Philosophy of the USSR Academy of Sciences. In a way, it was the beginning of a sociological movement. Yet, all pioneers of sociology had different educational backgrounds and had to learn a new profession as extramural students, or as we might say today as distance learners, from textbooks (mainly in English), which were difficult to obtain and, therefore, had to be distributed by "samizdat" – carbon copies with the translations typed on cigarette paper.

Communication with sociologists from Poland, where the sociology profession was firmly established as an academic discipline, despite the "iron curtain," was vital. Joint research projects were conducted within the framework of collaboration among Eastern European countries. I was lucky to be engaged in close communication with Jan Szczepański, while Zygmunt Bauman educated me in theory, and Stefan Nowak spent many hours explaining all the nuances of field research. Today, as Dean of the Sociology Department at the Humanitarian University of the Russian Academy of Sciences I continue to have close collaboration with the Department of Sociology at the University of Warsaw, where Krzysztof Kosela has inherited the tradition of his mentor, Stefan Nowak. The custom of professional cooperation among the elder generation is now transmitted to the next generations.

In 1958 Soviet authorities gave us permission to establish the Soviet Sociological Association, but under strict ideological control. Its bylaws stipulated that historical materialism is the foundation for Marxist sociology. The government decree that constituted the Association required its members to promote the virtues of Marxist sociology at international conferences. One way or another, the attendance of young sociologists at congresses of the International Sociological Association prompted new professional contacts, and friendly relations were established between Soviet sociologists and their colleagues from other countries.

Sociology is a common university discipline in present-day Russia. However (unfortunately), sociologists do not have the feeling of professional solidarity. The sociological community is divided into several autonomous associations. One of the manifestations of the post-Soviet "cultural trauma," as Piotr Sztompka has put it, is polarization in the evaluation of Soviet and post-Soviet sociology. The polemics around the publication of Viktor Vakhshtayn's article is the best illustration of this point.[1]

Society's diseases – corruption, ethnic conflict, and others – are the leading research subjects today. Yet the methodological level, even in academic research projects, tragically remains below the level of thoroughness of the leading sociologists of the Soviet era. One of the reasons for this is the inadequate flow of talented college graduates who are reluctant to take low-paid teaching jobs. In the view of the general public, the profession of a sociologist is associated with "the pollster", and so many people lump sociologists in with journalists, among whom there are an irresponsible few who are capable of "adjusting" data to suit the situation, or formulating questions with predetermined answers.

In any environment, a sociologist has to have a civic responsibility no less than professional knowledge and experience. As I communicate with students I remain an optimist. Although very few of them choose this profession as a service to society, in the near future I expect a new generation to step onto the stage of history and give sociology a professional shape that is worthy of our craft. ■

[1] V. Vakhshtayn, "On the Lamentable State of Post-Soviet Sociology." (*Global Dialogue* 2.3); Zh. Toschenko and N. Romanovsky, "On the Real State of Sociology in Russia: Opposing Vakhshtayn's Polemics" (*Global Dialogue* 2.5); V. Vakhshtayn, "We have it all. But do we have anything?" (*Global Express* 8.20.2012).

10

> The Traveling Favela

by Bianca Freire-Medeiros, Getulio Vargas Foundation in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Santa Marta as conceived by artistic duo J. Koolhaas and D. Urhahn. This redesign of the favela, carried out by its inhabitants, represents an impressive example of aesthetic intervention guiding the "tourist gaze" at Santa Marta. Photo by Bianca Freire-Medeiros.

Favela tours in Rio de Janeiro, township tours in Cape Town and Soweto, slum tours in Mumbai, Manila, Jakarta, Cairo, Nairobi. Since the early 1990s – and in a context of accelerated economic integration, neoliberal urban governance regimes and globalized media cultures – territories located in the megacities of the global South are turned into a tourist commodity with a monetary value agreed upon by promoters and consumers.

Twenty per cent of Rio de Janeiro's population is comprised by favela residents: about 1.3 million people live in some one thousand communities with very different levels of urbanization and quality of life. In the international imagination, along with carnivals, football, and sexy women, favelas have become part

>>

In Santa Marta the international tourist's camera meets King of Pop as painted by world-famous Brazilian artist, Romero Britto. Photo by Bianca Freire-Medeiros.

of the stereotypical image of Brazil. In the Brazilian imagination, as a vast bibliography demonstrates, favelas have been turned into a central discursive and material reality upon which major issues – inequality, violence, citizenship – are projected, debated, and dealt with by various social actors. In the process, emerges the "traveling favela": a space of imagination and a mobile entity. As a global commodity and a trademark, it is being used in advertising campaigns for the widest possible variety of products, from Citroën and Nissan cars to Ikea furniture, in spicing up restaurants, stores, and clubs worldwide. As a tourist destination, on the one hand, it is part of global narratives and practices that re-signify poverty as an object of consumption; on the other hand, it is part of the expansion of the so-called reality tours which promise direct and safe con-

tact, under close supervision of professional personnel, with marginal territories, idealized as the perfect opposite of the world from which the tourist comes.

In Brazil, the authorities initially ignored – and often openly reproached – the existence of growing flows of tourism toward areas that they had always sought to hide. Meanwhile, Brazilian elites claimed that favela tourism is a despicable activity which denigrates the nation's image and traps the poor in a zoo-like display. Now, however, various social actors and institutions are reinventing the traveling favela following principles of city marketing and urban entrepreneurialism in anticipation of the FIFA World Cup (2014) and the Olympic Games (2016). Two iconic events, almost fifteen years apart, help us make sense of this significant shift and how it is being consolidated today.

>>

> January 1996

Michael Jackson travels to Brazil to shoot his music video *They Don't Care About Us*, directed by Spike Lee. The Santa Marta favela, in Rio de Janeiro's affluent South Zone, is one of the sites chosen for the video, which aimed to expose the indifference of the authorities and elites toward urban poverty.

While the Santa Marta population mostly celebrated the event, government authorities reacted with indignation. Governor of the Rio de Janeiro State at the time, Marcello Alencar, challenged Jackson to prove his good intentions by helping the favela financially. Former football superstar and then Minister of Sports, Pelé, claimed it would ruin Brazil's chances of hosting the 2004 Olympics.

The political temperature rose when the key Rio de Janeiro papers claimed that the price of the locations and the hiring of 50 residents to provide security during the film shooting had been negotiated between Spike Lee and Marcinho VP, Santa Marta's drug king. The district attorney demanded the film be halted, arguing that serious damage was inflicted on the tourism industry. Lee called Brazil a "banana republic," aggravating the sense of injured pride among public officials.

> August 2010

Santa Marta favela welcomes then-President Lula, Rio de Janeiro State governor, Sérgio Cabral, and Rio de Janeiro City mayor, Eduardo Paes, for the spectacular launching of the Rio Top Tour program. With the support of the Brazilian Tourism Ministry, Rio Top Tour is one of several actions which fall under the umbrella of the Pacifying Police Units (UPP, by way of the Portuguese acronym)[1].

President Lula presented the Rio Top Tour program as a way of making the most of the touristic potential of pacified favelas through the inclusion of the inhabitants themselves. Furthermore, they would have governmental support to realize their touristic potential. Ironically enough, the event took place where Michael Jackson shot his music video and where now a bronze statue of the King of Pop stands, which along with precarious shacks and a beautiful view of the ocean, has become a major tourist attraction in Santa Marta.

> May 2013

As I write this piece, a process of market qualification for the touristic favela is taking place not only in Santa Marta but in several "pacified" favelas. This process is supported by the State and by civil society at large, including some significant leadership from within the favelas themselves. The governmental forms, in Foucauldian terms, operate not through external coercion, but precisely through the attribution of freedom and autonomy to favela residents who are now seen as potential touristic entrepreneurs.

Paraphrasing Boltanski, the worthiness of a specific favela as a tourist attraction is now measured by the efficiency of the services it can provide for tourists, by the performance of the residents as hosts, and by its capacity to deliver what is expected from a generic favela, i.e. poverty, some level of disorder, controlled violence, and joy. Following this logic, tourists are also evaluated in terms of their market worth: they are seen as customers who, through their presence and their various purchases – tickets, souvenirs, beverages and food, etc. – contribute to the social and economic development of a specific favela.

It is important to acknowledge that we are not witnessing here a retreat of governmental action. While the traveling favela is traveled to and travels around the world with governmental consent, mobility patterns within the actual grounds of pacified and non-pacified favelas are still highly controlled and inhibited by legal and/or illegal apparatuses of power. What we see, therefore, is a reformulation of strategies, tactics, and procedures for regulating territories which are more and more engulfed by the market. ∎

[1] As in April 2013, 32 favelas were "pacified" in Rio de Janeiro following basically the same strategy: the government publicly announces an occupation before the BOPE (Special Force Unit) goes into a specific favela, giving criminals time to flee and avoiding any violent confrontation between them and the police.

13

> Behind the Garment Disaster in Bangladesh

by Mallika Shakya, South Asian University, Delhi, India

Two victims amid the rubble of a garment factory that collapsed in Savar, near Dhaka, Bangladesh. Photo by Taslima Akhter.

>>

The collapse of a factory building in Savar, Bangladesh in April 2013 killed more than 1,100 garment workers. Despite the public outcry, little has been said so far about the underlying systems of exploitation that permitted a disaster of this scale.

Those familiar with the turbulent history of the garment industry know that this industry has been prone to accidents, and that the Bangladesh disaster was something that could have happened anywhere in Asia or Africa. Even then, workers and their unions were slow to react when the Rana Plaza building collapsed in Bangladesh. Instead, the loudest reaction came from the garment wholesalers and consumers in Europe and America, which put a certain spin on the interpretation of this disaster.

> **"Orientalist" Reporting**

"Another preventable tragedy in Bangladesh," reported the *New York Times*, a statement echoed by the BBC, *Globe and Mail*, Reuters, and others, who refused to see this crisis as anything but yet another third-world mishap that has to do with greedy businessmen, corrupt politicians, incompetent bureaucracy, and the large swath of poor with no other options but to put themselves in the line of death. The orientalist perspective was also rationalist, which persuaded the bourgeois shoppers that a solution lay in arrest of the factory owners or fining of their multinational buyers.

The media initially put the blame on Sohel Rana, the owner of the ill-fated building, who had reportedly said that the building was safe to enter and work in. Four days later, after the death toll had reached 400, a small group of buyers were made to pay moderate compensation for the victims. A week later and after 700 deaths were confirmed, European Union threatened to revoke Bangladesh's eligibility for duty-free gar-

ment exports into the EU market. A month later and after the death toll exceeded 1,100, Bangladesh government amended the national labor law for the garment industry to allow labor unions. Soon after, the United Nations challenged the legitimacy of the World Bank's indicators for *Doing Business*, which had earlier preached the flexibility of labor as a precondition for industrial competitiveness.

Labor organization is at the heart of the garment disaster. Most workers in Rana Plaza died because they had been forced to continue work even after the building walls had cracked and all other businesses had evacuated. Garment workers had no unions to challenge the factory owner. That an industry employing 3.5 million people in a modern, democratic nation remained unorganized points fingers not only at global and local capitalists who control this industry but also to the development practitioners who regulate it. International aid organizations have had a hegemonic presence in third-world industrialization, and they have been complicit in making workers invisible, as can be seen in projects like the World Bank's *Doing Business* indicators and the ILO's regime of international codes of conduct, both of which preached that labor productivity and safety would be better if it stays in the hands of capitalists and their labor inspectors. Owing to the hegemony of this doctrine, labor unionism in the garment industry has been forestalled, not only in Bangladesh but elsewhere in Asia and Africa. The rationale for the depoliticization of labor comes from the reductionist understanding of industrialization as solely a function of supply and demand in the market, and its disembedding from the complex political economy that sets the stage for human entrepreneurship.

> **The Multifibre Arrangement (MFA)**

It is erroneous to think that "markets" alone are responsible for the

After the Multifibre Arrangement trade patterns were reorganized under intense competition with ever-more precarious patterns of garment production.

>>

garment beast that now extends its claws into far-flung corners of the earth. It is true that the labor-intensive nature of this industry often attracted immigrant workers and later gave rise to mobile shop floors. The nineteenth century American sweatshops were heavily (wo)manned by Eastern European Jewish migrant workers while the mid twentieth century saw much of garment work swiftly shift to East Asia. But the latest episode of global garment industry dispersion has to do with the complex trade apparatus diligently put in place by the government of the United States, thereby engineering the way garments are manufactured globally today.

The Multifibre Arrangement (MFA) of 1974 dictated in great detail – item by item and design by design – how many pieces of a garment an individual third-world country could export to the United States. Every piece of garment exported from anywhere in the world between 1974 and 2004 had to earn an individualized "visa" before entering the American shores. With America's strategic interest at stake, potentially rival countries like China were given lower "quotas" while smaller countries like Bangladesh and Lesotho were given higher quotas. It should not come as a surprise then that the garment industry in Bangladesh, virtually non-existent until the early 1970s, expanded exponentially to employ 3.5 million workers within just a few decades.

MFA was initially conceived as a temporary tool but it received four extensions – in 1977, 1981, 1986, and 1994 – which deepened its entrenchment and raised hopes for its permanence. However, once the World Trade Organization (WTO) was founded in 1995, it decided that MFA would be eventually dismantled in December 2004. The end of MFA fundamentally transformed the global garment industry – while countries like Nepal and Indonesia saw their industries virtually collapse, China and Bangladesh emerged as the winners of post-MFA competition. This supported neoliberal development that preached rock-bottom wages, unprotected conditions of work and insisting on buyer-regulated labor safety as the necessary evils for industry competitiveness.

MFA's short time horizons along with the neoliberal preaching of "necessary evils" explain why most factory buildings in Bangladesh were built haphazardly, without acquiring the necessary clearance from the state agencies. The mayor who had issued construction permits to Rana Complex and hundreds of others, did so because the Dhaka building safety agency, the state body authorized to carry out this task, simply could not keep up with the explosive growth of the Bangladesh garment industry at this time. Under these circumstances, to make a lone producer and a select few of his buyers culprits of this devastating accident of unprecedented scale, and to let the bigger powers off the hook, is to spank a racist while turning a blind eye to the regime of apartheid. The crisis that triggered an unprecedented social upheaval leading to an erosion of political and social harmony in Bangladesh is as much about the failures of the global trade apparatus and the apathy of their developmental counterparts as it is about the Rana Complex and Joe Fresh. ■

> Your Paper Has Just Been Outsourced

by Jeffrey J. Sallaz, University of Arizona, USA

This is what the work of outsourcing looks like in the Philippines.

Like most scientists, I long had but a fuzzy conception of what happens to my papers after they've been accepted for publication in one of sociology's journals. If pressed, I might have supposed that the journal editor hands my paper off to an experienced copy editor working in the office next door. For decades, the material constraints of the medium – namely, the fact that paper manuscripts have mass and thus cannot be freely or speedily transported across vast distances – encouraged exactly this: a spatial concentration of the academic

>>

publishing process. Journal offices, editorial staff, and printing presses were usually found in the same region, city, or building, and linked to one another through various organizational and interpersonal ties.

But this model is increasingly falling by the wayside. While spending the last several years researching the "knowledge process outsourcing" (KPO) industry in southeast Asia, I've conducted fieldwork inside several firms that specialize in the provision of services to publishers located in the global North. These firms employ vast armies of young people and pay them the minimum wage to work long hours as copy editors, typesetters, e-conversion specialists, and so on, which makes them resemble the large assembly plants of foreign corporations, found all over the global South.

> The Behemoths of Publishing

If KPO firms are the Foxconns of emergent knowledge supply chains, who are the Apples? To answer this question, we may refer to an ongoing transformation in the field of scientific publishing. Rather than a diffuse network of publishing outlets housed in academic departments, we today find a handful of what a recent *Chronicle of Higher Education* editorial referred to as "publishing behemoths."

These are large, publicly traded firms that have been aggressively acquiring ownership rights of academic journals. Although journals in sociology (along with those in fellow "soft" fields such as the humanities) have thus far not been the target of many such acquisitions, the same cannot be said for those in the "hard" sciences. Journals in these fields are increasingly in the hands of global publishing conglomerates that operate as profit-making vehicles.

The most notorious example of such a "behemoth" is Elsevier B.V. This Amsterdam-based publisher is

owned by the larger Reed-Elsevier group, which is listed on the London Stock Exchange and multiple other exchanges. According to *The Economist*, Elsevier B.V. owns over 2,000 academic journals and controls 25% of all content published in the scientific and medical fields. In 2012 it reported profit margins of 40%.

Currently, many scientists are boycotting Elsevier-owned journals because of the exorbitant fees that the firm charges individuals and institutions to access their articles. But the business model utilized by Elsevier and its brethren extends beyond the *dissemination* of scientific findings. It has seeped into the entire process of *producing* scholarly work.

> Organizing the Supply Chain

Publishing firms are leveraging many new technologies that scientists themselves use in their research and to collaborate with colleagues. Email, file transfer protocol (FTP), word processing software, cloud data-basing, and the like are all rendering obsolete the long-standing imperative to collocate the various aspects of the publishing process. Just as an author can email a Word document to a journal's editor instantaneously and free of charge, so too can the journal then forward this document to vendors located anywhere in the world.

The new scientific publishing conglomerates such as Elsevier have seized this opportunity by cultivating a network of vendors to whom they outsource an ever-growing array of publication services. These vendors compete amongst themselves to win one or two year service agreements, and they do so by promising acceptable quality at the lowest of prices. This entails applying to the publication process the full array of supply chain management techniques that are currently *en vogue* inside factories and call centers. Jobs are deskilled, automation relentlessly pursued, and workers are driven to continuously in-

crease their output lest they be written up or replaced.

To give an idea of the complexity of the production process inside these KPO vendors, I can report that should your next paper be accepted by a journal that utilizes this outsourcing model, it will pass across the desktop computers of between 40 and 50 front-line employees in the global South, each of whom are paid about 0.50 USD per hour to do various things to it.

For example, at one such firm where I conducted fieldwork for over a year, the production process unfolded as follows. Authors whose papers had been accepted for publication would email their final paper as a Word document to the journal. The journal would then send the paper via FTP to a data warehouse in the Philippines, where multiple "pre-editors" and "document processors" would do things to it like fix its margins, insure proper formatting of the references, and insert XML tags. The paper would then be sent to one of the company's facilities in India, where recent college graduates who had undergone a crash course in copyediting would speed-read the paper to correct any obvious typographical or grammatical errors. Now the paper would be sent back to the Philippines, where typesetters would convert it into a journal-specific PDF template, before sending it to India where teams of quality analysts would inspect the PDF for errors.

To this point, all of those who have worked on the paper would have possessed a basic fluency in English. But now, the final PDF is sent to Vietnam, where the company employs legions of non-English speakers who earn a fraction of their Filipino and Indian counterparts. They go through each file and do such rudimentary tasks as checking the spacing and margins on each page and removing any blemishes on the PDFs. But the journey is not yet over, as the files are then sent back

>>

to the Philippines, where an entire new production line collates various papers into the final versions of the print and electronic journal editions. From start to finish, the entire process takes scarcely more than a week or two.

> Foxconning Science

How should we, as social scientists committed to basic principles of social justice, react to this outsourcing of a key component of the scientific enterprise? There is no easy answer. Calling for boycotts of outsourcing journals merely to protect the jobs of existing workers would be to fall prey to potentially xenophobic strands of protectionism. If an Indian or Filipino copy editor can do the job as well as an American or Canadian, why should they be precluded from doing so?

If, on the other hand, the quality of our papers was being systematically compromised by this system, then we would be justified to act in

just such a manner. But, the occasional anecdote aside, it seems that the outsourcing model is for the most part delivering the goods. Just as, at the last ISA conference, I noticed no shortage of Macbooks and iPhones despite the fact that the typical attendee surely disapproves of Apple's ruthless management of its Asian supply chains, it may be that we are willing to countenance the Foxconning[1] of science as long as it succeeds in getting our papers published in ever-shorter periods of time, across a wider and wider array of outlets (from paper journals to online editions to e-books), and with but a minimal diminution of quality.

At the least, we could demand greater transparency as to what happens to our papers and manuscripts after they have been accepted for publication. Publishing firms go to great lengths to obscure from authors the elaborate supply chains they have cultivated over the past decade, for instance by not allowing copy editors to reveal their nationali-

ties or location when corresponding with authors. But this flies in the face of standard practice in many manufacturing and service industries. US auto firms report what percentage of each vehicle's parts was produced in the US versus abroad, while Apple itself stamps onto each product the "Designed in Cupertino, Assembled in China" disclaimer. The new breed of corporate/academic publishers should not be allowed to have their cake and eat it too. If they are going to simultaneously leverage global supply chains to cheapen the production process *and* charge ever-increasing fees for their products, then we scientists, who are *both* producers and consumers in this peculiar industry/field, deserve to be better informed as to the lives and working conditions of those who labor to turn our initial ideas into polished papers. ∎

[1] Foxconn is the Taiwanese-owned firm that assembles many of Apple's products and that achieved notoriety following a spate of suicides at its Chinese assembly plants in 2010.

19

> Cheaper Books
for ISA Members

by Sujata Patel, University of Hyderabad, India, and Editor of Sage Studies in International Sociology
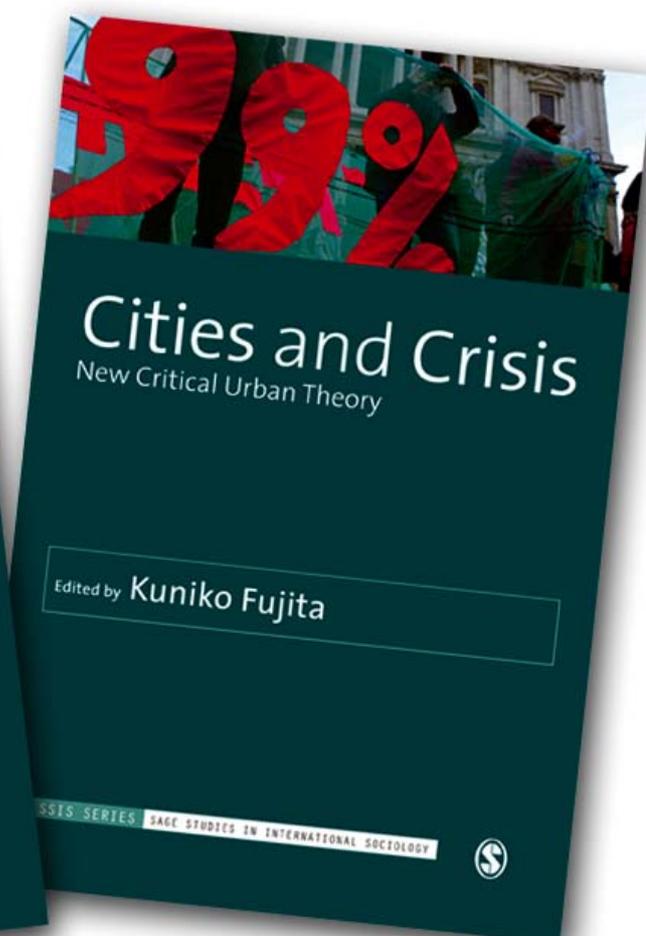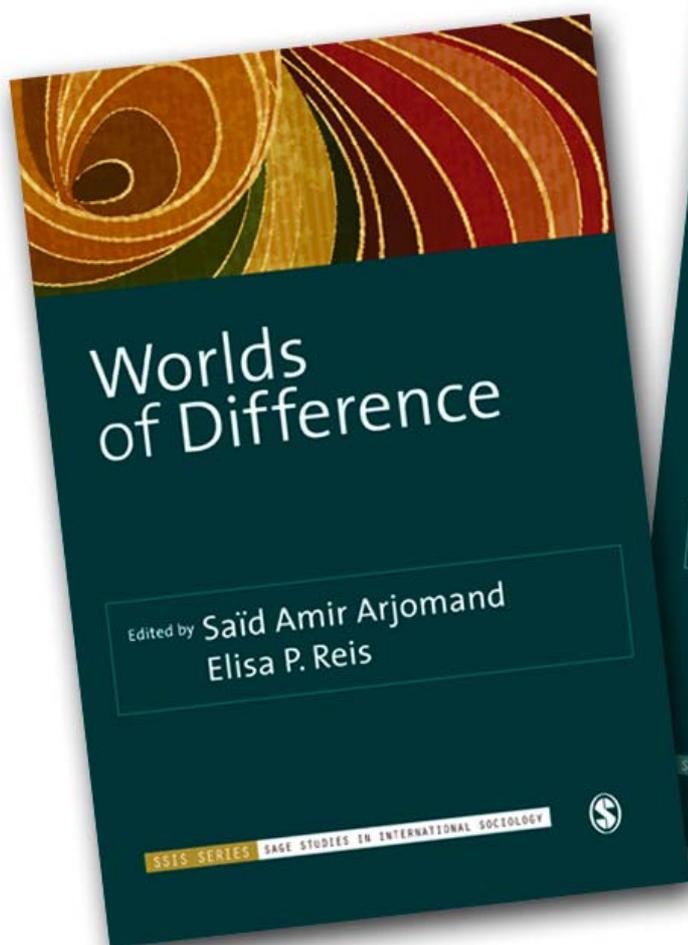
The first two books in the SSIS Series to be produced in India at bargain prices.

ISA members will be very happy to know that henceforth all books published under *the Sage Studies in International Sociology* (SSIS) title will be available to them for 9.99 pounds sterling, almost a tenth of their old price. And this includes post-

>>

age. We initiate this new price structure with two new books: *Worlds of Difference* edited by Said Arjomand and Elisa Reis and *Cities and Crisis, New Critical Urban Theory* edited by Kuniko Fujita. ISA members in India will have access to these books via Sage India at Rs 750 each. (Release date: August 2013). See http://www.isa-sociology.org/publ/isa_handbooks.htm.

We are also starting a new list: *Key Texts of World Sociology*. The Key Texts project of ISA promotes the publication of seminal texts of sociology in the world outside the Atlantic region. These texts will bring together the most influential sociology of the various regions of the world. At this moment we propose to publish Key Texts from 1) East Asia (China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan), 2) Latin America, 3) Central and Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia), 4) Africa, and 5) the Arab region.

SSIS is one the oldest publication series of the ISA. Originally titled *Transactions of the World Congress of Sociology* and published since the Association's first congress in 1949, it was given a new form as SSIS by ISA in 1974. Since then it has continued to publish the proceedings of the World Congresses, Research Committees and conferences of National Associations as well as other important titles. Published as both authored and edited texts and available as monographs, handbooks and reference volumes, these books (numbering more than 60) have made a major contribution to the discipline by introducing and steering discussions and debates in the field and its various specializations.

Despite this recognition and acknowledged importance, sales of SSIS books have been low. Given the high prices (between 80 and 90 pounds) its reach even in the Global North has been restricted to libraries. In the Global South one does not even see them in libraries. For the last three years – with the active support of the ISA's Publications Committee, its Vice-President and the ISA's President – I have been trying to persuade Sage Publications (London) which publishes SSIS books to produce them in India where books are priced very low (around 10 pounds). Unfortunately, we came across an intractable problem: the classification of published books as international (those published in the Global North) against regional (those published in any part of the Global South). Books published in India or any other developing countries are published and marketed for that region and priced accordingly, while books published in any part of the Global North are published and marketed for the global consumer and sold at international rates. All international publishing firms (such as Sage, Oxford or Routledge) with offices in underdeveloped countries have trade agreements with its branches in underdeveloped countries that enforce this differential price structure.

However, what was intractable became manageable. We were able to persuade Sage to transfer the production of SSIS books to Sage's India arm and ensure that ISA members can avail themselves of a huge discount on all future publications. We will also be able to sell the books in India (to non-ISA members) at Indian prices (though not so in other regions of the Global South where these will be sold at international prices). We are extremely grateful to Sage for supporting this initiative and ensuring that we take the first steps to break the inequities of the global publishing business. I would urge ISA members to take this opportunity to make this new policy a success. Do buy SSIS books and consider this series for your future publications. ■

> Caught between Two Socialisms

by Mariya Ivancheva, Central European University, Budapest, Hungary

Misión Ribas is one of many social justice programs, or Bolivarian Missions as they are called, implemented under rule of Hugo Chávez. It provides remedial high-school level classes to high-school dropouts.

While studying in London in 2004, I attended a meeting for solidarity with Venezuela that focused on the Bolivarian educational reforms. The guest lecturer, Venezuelan educator Oscar Negrin, started by saying: "In Venezuela instead of making children memorize abstract terms, we teach them the most important words – 'mother,' 'peace,' 'Chávez'." My heart pulse quickened as I recalled an episode from my school days in socialist Bulgaria. Rehearsing for a class concert our teacher, comrade Toneva, asked me to hold the hand of my mother and recite a poem saying "the best mother in the world / is the Party-heroine." I did not know who the Party was. I only knew that the best mother in the world was my mother and told this to my teacher. After a moment of tense silence, she changed my poem, and a year later in 1989 asked us to forget "comrade" and call her "Missis." Back in London, I walked out of the hall: Negrin and his audience saw the back of the child from the classroom in 1988, the girl who, in the early rallies of the democratic transition, had jumped, because – as the popular refrain went – "those who don't jump, they are red." While walking out of that Venezuelan solidarity meeting two feelings were fighting inside me: the satisfaction that I followed the anti-communist standards of my family and the Bulgarian academy, and the concern that I judged the end of socialism prematurely and perhaps too positively.

>>

Today, after one and a half year of fieldwork on the higher education reform in Venezuela, I know how superficial my satisfaction was and how justified – my concern. I came to this topic not as a cure to my anti-communism. I was intrigued by a peculiar contrast between two universities established by former opposition intellectuals in the aftermath of a regime change from socialism to liberal democracy (Eastern Europe) and vice versa (Venezuela). The Central European University (CEU), where I was doing my doctoral studies, was founded in 1991 by millionaire George Soros, Eastern European dissidents and Western liberal intellectuals. An English-language private graduate school, it exposed local intellectual traditions as fascist/ ethno-nationalist or totalitarian/ communist. It educated its target students – "the new post-socialist elites" – in the "universal" values of Western liberal democracy and Anglo-American science.

By contrast the Bolivarian University of Venezuela (UBV) – the subject of my PhD dissertation – was designed by President Hugo Chávez and a field of socialist intellectuals. It was inaugurated in 2003 after the attempted coup d'etat against the Bolivarian regime of Chávez and the strike of highly-skilled petrol industry workers. Staged with the financial aid of the US Pentagon, these two events showed Chávez's policies of redistribution of the oil rent were intolerable to the Venezuelan pro-American elite who had a monopoly of knowledge over the working of the rentier economy. To counter this domination, as part of the higher education policy *Misión Sucre*, UBV offered equitable, decentralized mass higher education to over half a million poor Venezuelans. It was imbued with the values of local situated knowledge, interdisciplinarity, and applied public science for the benefit of marginalized communities.

I went to Caracas with the acute awareness that being from Bulgaria and from CEU, I would become suspicious of the authorities: a fear which felt justified when I heard at the first public lectures I audited at UBV that the CEU was a "fascist" institution "training spies of the CIA". It took me less than a month, however, to realize Venezuela was not a "totalitarian regime" and I was not being spied on. I had come to a country with free elections where commercial media were openly showering abuses against the democratically elected government. Exposed to the anti-elitist rhetoric and inclusive educative practice of my informants – socialist intellectuals, members of Venezuelan student movements during the "liberal democracy" (1958-1998) – I soon realized the source of my prejudices. I was a product of the Bulgarian and Eastern European post-socialist academy: an elitist and wannabe elite establishment, which embraced uncritically Western values. In a permanent feat of self-colonization Bulgarian intellectuals, sociologists included, understood the academy as a safe heaven from which they could collectively experience and express shame of their "uncivilized" compatriots in a "backward" country. Respectively, higher education was based on a not-even-hidden curriculum championing "good" against "bad" students with no mention of, let alone struggle against, the class inequalities that caused these differences. The determination to follow Western norms, citation indices, and rankings went together with the insistence on "objective" science that stigmatized commitment as "ideological," unless it served the free market.

While I embraced the principles of UBV, I was realizing its challenges and attendant contradictions. Even though the "end of history" – the final victory of liberal democracy over socialism – was declared in 1989 in Eastern Europe, in Venezuela the Cold War was far from over. Against the historical experience of Chile in 1973, the Cuban embargo, and the threat of a new coup d'etat in Venezuela, the government could not use coercion to advance reform. University education was highly affected. The academic autonomy, defended by the Venezuelan student Left in bloody battles throughout the twentieth century, was now ironically used by their antagonists. Resisting reform at the old public universities and denying recognition to the new "Bolivarian" ones, conservative academics helped recreate the former stratification on a new level. Budgets and accreditation were still decided by official bodies, dominated by them. The high demand for places in education for the poor pressed the government to employ mostly people with Bachelors degrees to teach at UBV and its decentralized facilities. The need to both "upgrade" the credentials of UBV's teaching staff so that its programs would be accredited and to use the university as a tool of profound social change created a double standard. Bolivarian academics had to both master the exclusive jargon of traditional academic disciplines, *and* to manage the cultural codes of poor communities. They had to both live up to the norms of academic distinction, and to beat it on its own ground.

Coming from the former socialist world it took me extra effort to open my eyes to the realities of 21st century socialism. Now I face new challenges. Trying to explain the contradictions of the Venezuelan system, I am often declared a right-winger by leftist Western academics and "fellow travelers" who wish to see the Latin American "pink tide" of socialism in rosy shades only. In Bulgaria the fact that I do not declare Venezuela "totalitarian" makes local journals reject my work as "partisan." Thankfully, my professors and colleagues at CEU best understand the ongoing academic Cold War. And still, one thing is sure: walking out of that hall in London, I would still have such a long way to go. ■

> Tall Tales
from Sofia's Streets

by Martin Petrov, Sofia University, Bulgaria
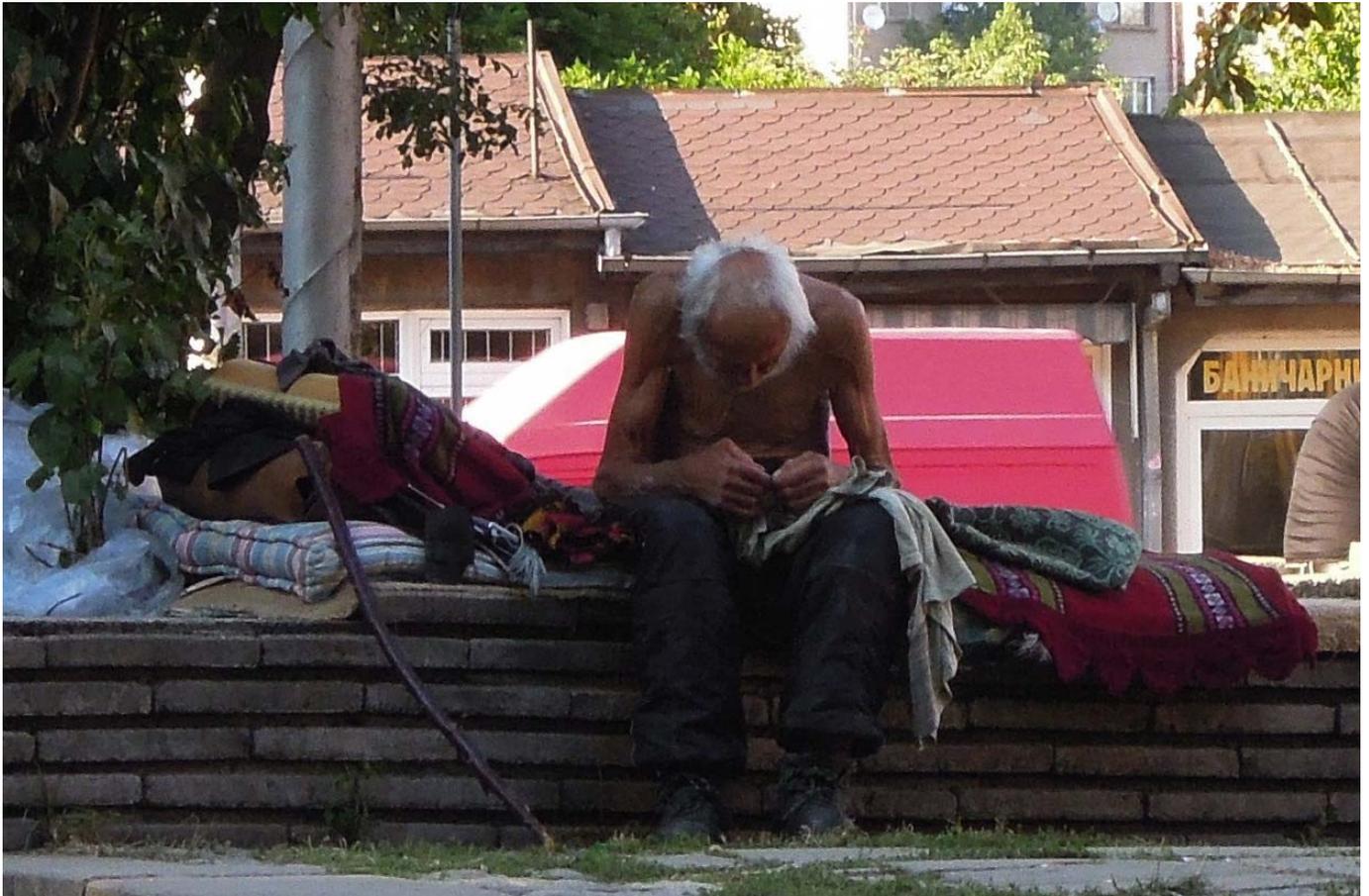
Down and out in Sofia – a real clochard.

They have no property and take no part in the production of capital, not even by returning empty beer bottles. They inhabit a public space where they drink their medical alcohol bought from the pharmacy and diluted with water from public fountains in a bottle fished from a garbage can – all right next to the chic open-air bars that have taken bites out of the park in front of the national theatre. Yet they are not foreign to the symbolic order produced by capital. To the contrary – they are very sensitive to it and have developed strategies to inscribe themselves within it all too well. They are the tramps, Sofia's *clochard* intelligentsia.

I met E. when I was a BA student in philosophy. He worked as a nude model at the Art Academy and would hang around the Sofia University when he wasn't posing. A friend from my course would find heroin

>>

for him (or vice versa). E's name is highly unusual for Bulgaria. His father was an Italian Jew and his mother a French Jew. His father was the right-hand man of former Prime Minister Lukanov of whom it is said that he "appointed" the new Bulgarian millionaires in 1990, distributing Communist Party money to people from the socialist state's intelligence service. After Lukanov's assassination in 1996, E's father had to disappear from the country never to be seen again. E's mother worked as an accountant for the above-mentioned intelligence agency. After 1990 she became interested in the supernatural[1] and wrote a book entitled *Man, Spirit, Cosmos: Energy-informational Exchange*. She then went into a monastery in Nepal never to be seen again.

I'm not saying all these stories are true, I'm not saying they are not – they are a collection of exotica that really did happen in Bulgaria during the last decades. So is the story of E's own life. Being a nomenklatura child, before 1989 he studied in an art high school in Weimar. Then in 1990 he was at the Magura – a corner in Sofia, famous for people illegally exchanging dollars and deutschmarks, and where many of the *nouveaux riches* are said to have made their initial capital. There he would offer betting on which cup the ball was under or he would guess which card people were thinking of. He then graduated acting at the Drama Academy in Sofia, lost a job in a theater because of alcohol and drug problems, and fell from the trapeze playing as an acrobat in a circus.

I met him again a couple of years ago. He had no job but had stopped heroin and was squatting in an attic. He earned the money he needed for alcohol and cigarettes by reciting poems to people in the park. He still told stories of how he had crashed his dad's Mercedes. Soon after he got kicked out of the attic too. I also met his friends and other social outcasts who drink their beer or medical alcohol from the nearby pharmacy in the little park in front of the National Theatre. The first thing that struck me about them was that it wasn't only E. who had stories to tell – each one of them would present himself through some exotic characteristic and each had a story about it. One was a Russian, interested in studying Slavic languages and culture, another was Armenian, a third was a cowboy, wearing shabby cowboy boots and a Crocodile Dundee hat with a feather. Apparently this identification with exotic lands so far away and so different from their everyday reality of seeking out pennies and shelter in always the same streets and parks in the center of Sofia served to compensate for their loss of a socially recognized identity and any sort of life expectations.

But also everyone from this group remembered better times in recent years. One had been kicked out, together with his two little boys, by his wife, another had never managed to keep a job after graduating from university. Many of them had higher education. And thanks to some relative, friend or simply thanks to the cultural capital that remained from their former life, they were not in so desperate a state as the sad stooped shadows who went around the park collecting glass bottles left behind by fashionable Sofia youths who like to gather there too. So the strategy of self-exoticization also set them apart from the even more wretched who had no such story and spoke only to themselves. As E. likes to say "I'm not a *clochard*. I am a *cloch-art*."

They all seemed to be friends but once I was alone with any of them he would start telling me of what terrible people the others were: X had run away with the change passers-by had given them for a beer, Y was still on drugs, Z had slept with a horribly ugly girl. Deprived of basic means of subsistence, recognition, and life expectations Sofia's *cloch-arts* feel an exceptionally painful need for self-distinction and dispose of no other means (such as consumption) whereby to achieve it except for their sheer creativity and sometimes a bit of spite. ■

[1] Quite a fashionable topic in the first years after the fall of the socialist regime. See Martin Petrov, "The Discourse of the Supernatural in Bulgaria of the early 1990s." *Sociological Problems* 2010 1-2: 268-283 (in Bulgarian).

> Bulgaria's Postcommunist Debate about the Holocaust

by Georgi Medarov, Sofia University, Bulgaria

This image from the Jewish Historical Museum, Belgrade, shows Bulgarian policemen overseeing the deportation of Jews from Bulgarian-occupied Skopje (Macedonia) to the German death camps in March 1943.

As we know from Maurice Halbwachs, social memory is intimately linked with forming collective identities. After 1989, the heated public debates about the fate of the Bulgarian Jewish population during the WWII, tell us much about the way the past can shape the politics of the present. In the 1990s the Holocaust became a major symbolic resource in forging political subjectivities, namely the ability to distinguish between the former communists and the new anticommunists. Both parties shared common post-political utopia for the future: European integration, neoliberalization, democratization, etc. And, as the Bulgarian sociologist Andrey Raitchev has observed, distinctions were projected onto the past. "Was there fascism before socialism?" became the central theme. The anticommunists engaged in conservative historical revisionism. Their main slogan was "45 years [of communism] is enough!" and they claimed that fascism was a communist exaggeration to legitimize the socialist regime and justify its abuses of power. The former communists, on the other hand, often called their opponents revanchists and even fascists, because they papered over the atrocities of fascism. This is an old debate, but it took on Bulgarian characteristics when it became entangled with the fate of the Bulgarian Jewish population – a fate that is subject to conflicting interpretations.

> Two Narratives of Bulgaria's Treatment of Jews

During WWII Bulgaria joined the Axis powers and annexed almost all of current Macedonia, Northern Greece and parts of modern-day Serbia. The Jewish population of the "old" territories of Bulgaria was extremely repressed (stripping away of civil rights, anti-Semitic legislation, dispossession, work camps and so on), but the Final Solution was resisted by both the

>>

antifascist militants and segments of the elite, and was averted at the last moment. In the "new" territories, on the other hand, this was not the case and the "foreign" Jewish population was finally deported to Treblinka.

These events fueled both the former communists and the anti-communists with arguments. Sociological research of the party newspapers of the 1990s, conducted by the Institute for Critical Social Studies, shows that the former communists were focusing on the extermination of the Jewish population in the "new" territories to prove the "fascist essence" of the pre-socialist regime. The anticommunists, by contrast, focused on the fact that the Final Solution in the "old" territories was averted, largely due to resistances within the elites. They downplayed the role of the antifascist militants – strong among the communists – often portraying them as "criminal."

Both narratives shared an inability to recognize the arguments of their opponents as legitimate. The Bulgarian sociologist Lilyana Deyanova dubbed the phenomenon post-communist negationism. Negationism is not limited to the past, but marks the incapacity to acknowledge the very existence of the "other's" position. It is often accompanied by calls to criminalize the "incorrect" memories of the "other" – nicely fitting in with the wider European concern and the trend of imposing new memory laws. Subjectivities embedded within this mode of social memory see their opponents in an extremely antagonistic way. The political adversary is debunked as radically different – abnormal, unpatriotic, a traitor and a liar, a foreign intruder into the national body. In this "anti" discourse, the nation is thought of as harmonious totality. These stale debates reduce politics to either - or. Were the Jews saved or not? Was Bulgaria democratic or fascist? No other option was there.

After 2001, stable political identifications collapsed along with the two-party model that represented them. As regards the fate of the Jewish population, it was the anticommunist narrative that prevailed. The post-war communist trials were officially deemed illegitimate, including the ones against fascists, collaborators, and executioners. The deportation of Jews from the occupied territories was explained away as "we had no choice," or "these territories were not truly ours." Nevertheless, paradoxically, this took place within a discursive framework that tended to praise the territorial expansion as "liberation" and "unification of Greater Bulgaria." Recent years have witnessed not only the consolidation of that narrative, but its projection onto Macedonia, which is accused, by Bulgarian political and media mainstream, of "falsifying" history. So that the recently built Holocaust museum in Skopje is portrayed as "fake," "empty," and so on. It is not just the "communists," but also the Macedonians who are now seen as the enemy, spreading lies about Bulgaria's involvement in the Holocaust.

> **Avoiding the Realities of Fascism**

Politics of memory since 1989 have effectively displaced reflection on the specificities of Nazi anti-Semitism and of fascism itself. One simplistic theory of fascism, existing during state socialism and stemming from Dimitrov's (Bulgaria's communist leader) classical definition (reducing fascism to its class content), was replaced by another. The Holocaust was reduced to shallow moralism with a slightly chauvinist twist, aimed at telling "us" whether "we" are good or evil. The much needed debate on fascism is avoided by putting the blame on an inexplicable foreign force that imposed its "discrimination and intolerance" but was luckily resisted by the "traditionally tolerant civil society." The realities of Bulgarian fascism are downplayed by emphasizing fascism's (lack of) formal characteristics. There was no mass party that called itself fascist – hence no fascism existed. There is almost no reference to the huge literature on fascism, apart from reductionist comparisons of the "two totalitarianisms." For instance, there is no reference to Zeev Sternhell's analysis of fascist ideology and its Sorelian desire to go beyond left and right. But what is also missing is fascism's vitalism, its de-universalization of citizenship, its cult of youth and its activism, the Nazi concept of "Judeo-Bolshevism," its fascist anticommunism, etc. In short, there is an attempt to avoid any notion of fascism that may invite uneasy parallels with the contemporary post-political utopias. Unfortunately these lacunae are not limited to the political mainstream – they have penetrated deeply the academic world, including many sociologists.

Political and journalistic mainstream glorifies the "Bulgarian heroism" and the wartime "civil society" that "saved the Jewish people in Bulgaria," superimposing currently popular concepts onto the past. The mainstream is blind to the fact that while indeed there were many who resisted, there was also a strong pro-Nazi "civil society," including both movements and officials, who resolutely pushed for the strict implementation of the Final Solution. This poses the question of which "civil society" resisted? Whose Bulgaria stopped the deportation? What lies hidden behind the essentializing and ahistorical talk is that there was (and still is) more than one Bulgaria.

Recently, however, there has been a resurgence of critical inquiries and publications into the matter, mostly by historians and sociologists. In late 2012 the largest human rights NGO organized a landmark conference entitled "Know Your Past," aiming to disseminate serious academic work to the wider public. Yet these efforts failed to trigger a wider debate. Furthermore, what these new reflections risk is that the critique of the mainstream and its praise of the "nation of saviors" may turn into its opposite – despising a supposed mass of "willing executioners." ◼

> Social Science
in the Making of Malaysia

by Shamsul A.B., The National University of Malaysia (UKM), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Raymond Firth (1901-2002), an influential figure in the colonial formation of Malay anthropology.

Long before they were officially introduced as university subjects with their own academic departments, anthropology and sociology contributed to the construction of the colonial knowledge that informed the idea of Malaya and, after 1963, of Malaysia.

During the colonial era, colonial knowledge provided the "define and rule" framework to govern, which, in turn, justified the implementation of the "divide and rule" principle in the day-to-day running of the state. The Royal Society of Great Britain and Ireland, established in 1823, was the main vehicle for social science to enrich colonial knowledge and the technology of rule in Malaya and then Malaysia. It had a branch in the Straits Settlement of Malaya and Borneo, established in 1878, and run by the British East India Company from Calcutta. The Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society had its *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (JSBRAS). In 1923, it was renamed the *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (JMBRAS) and, in 1964, it became the *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (JMBRAS). The Society also published its own MBRAS Monographs.

For around 135 years, the idea of Malaysia was shaped through the Society's publications, whose content included materials on history, geography, literature, language, culture, community studies, botany, and zoology. The main contributors were mainly colonial civil servants who were mostly trained in anthropology (Diploma of Anthropology) in Oxford, Cambridge, or London before being posted to Malaya. John Gullick (1916-2012) was one such officer, who served in Malaya and wrote at least a dozen books on Malaysian history and society, framed as historical sociology. Many of these were later adopted as textbooks in local universities.

It is no surprise, therefore, that after the Second World War, the first researchers sent by the Colonial Office to Malaya were two world-famous academicians, the social anthropologists Raymond Firth, who came to study the state of social science research in Malaya, and Edmund Leach, who came to study the socio-economic condition of the society in Malaya and Sarawak. Firth and Leach were followed by their students who conducted extensive fieldwork in the early 1950s in Sarawak focusing on the Chinese and the indigenous groups, in Singapore examining the cultural habits of the Malays and Chinese, and in Negeri Sembilan on the only matrilineal society in Malaya, and in Johor on the impact of the Ki-

>>

yai Salleh millenarian movement on Sino-Malay relations. They produced a collection of high-quality monographs published in the UK and elsewhere.

The next generation of students to study under Firth in London included Abdul Kahar Bador (who studied Malay traditional leaders), Mokhzani Rahim (the Malay credit system) and Syed Husin Ali (Malay peasantry and leadership). They all returned to teach at the University of Malaya (UM) where they were joined by the Amsterdam-trained sociologist, Syed Hussein Alatas, famous for his book *The Myth of the Lazy Native* (1977), which contributed to the ideas of Edward Said's *Orientalism*. These scholars formed the nucleus of the teaching and research of anthropology and sociology.

In the aftermath of the ethnic riot of May 13, 1969, the four above-mentioned social anthropologists played an important public role in the "healing process" through their participation in the activities of the National Consultative Council, bringing peace and stability in the country. A Ford Foundation Report, entitled *Social Science Research for National Unity: A Confidential Report to the Government of Malaysia* (1970), adopted by the government, led to the introduction of anthropology, sociology, political science, psychology, and communication studies as university teaching subjects, which would lay the basis for the Malaysian Association of Social Sciences, established in 1978.

The government also established a Department of National Unity, in July 1969, very soon after the ethnic riot. Many of its directors and officers were anthropologists and sociologists who had graduated from the new departments and from the older Department of Malay Studies at UM. Indeed, until the 1980s, many top civil servants in Malaysia were graduates of these same departments.
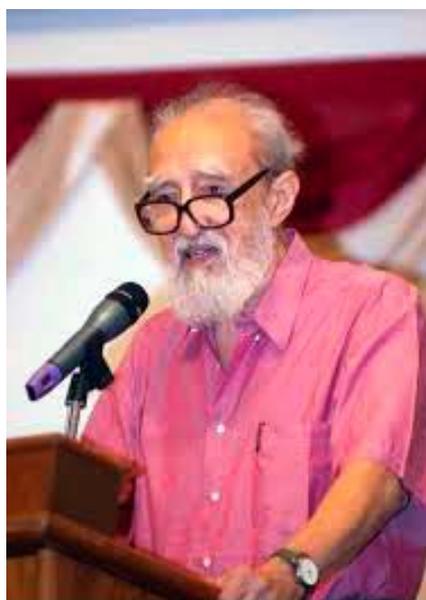
Syed Hussein Alatas (1928-2007), one of the great Malaysian public intellectuals, a politician as well as a founding father of Malaysian sociology, renowned for his critique of colonial thought.

The first batch of anthropologists and sociologists graduated from UM and UKM in 1974 and 1975, respectively. They were well received both in the public and private sectors, where they readily found employment as much-needed "generalists," who could make sense of contemporary issues and serve their clients. Their ability "to peddle culture" in multi-ethnic and culturally diverse Malaysia was in high demand, which continued into the 21st century. A Malaysian lecturer in anthropology, Tan Chee Beng, who edited the *Bibliography of Ethnic Relations in Malaysia* (1999), made particularly important contributions to the study of ethnic relations. In 2005, the Malaysian Cabinet mooted the introduction of a compulsory "Ethnic Relations Course" for all students enrolled in the twenty public universities in Malaysia. The module for the course was prepared by a team led by myself and in 2007 I was entrusted with the establishment of a full-fledged Institute of Ethnic Studies (KITA) at UKM.

In short, anthropologists and sociologists have played a critical role in the making of Malaysia, in particular, helping to maintain social cohesion. They remain the quiet achievers indispensable to the "Idea of Malaysia," a plural society, ethnically complex, yet in a state of stable tension unusual in such societies today. ∎

> The Life and Times of a Committed Sociologist

An Interview with Dato Rahman Embong

Dato Rahman Embong.

Rahman Embong, distinguished Malaysian sociologist and long-time public intellectual, traces the interweaving of his biography and the development of Malaysian sociology from the colonial period through the postcolonial struggles and then repression to the new opening after 1991.

MB: Let's begin at the beginning. Growing up under colonialism, how did you manage to obtain your education? This seems like an extraordinary achievement.

RE: Let's set the scene. Michael, you have recently been to Malaysia, a thriving oil-rich country of 28 million people that aspires to achieve a high income, developed nation status by 2020. It has come a long way from the agricultural backwater and commodity producer it was at Independence in 1957. During your visit, we brought you to see the capital, Kuala Lumpur to feel its pulse, and also to see the new administrative center, Putrajaya, built on land previously planted with rubber and oil palm, itself originally a jungle inhabited by Orang Asli, the indigenous people. Some regard the administrative center as a real splendor, an opulent state-of-the-art city, the envy of many developing countries. It was Prime Minister Mahathir's dream to leave this behind as his legacy for posterity.

However, now let me turn to my background. I was born into a "middle" peasant family, not rich but not too poor either. My birthplace was Terengganu, then the most backward state on the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia (then known as Malaya). I was born in 1944, towards the end of the Japanese occupation, when conditions were very hard

>>

for most families due to food shortages and rationing. My father was a *padi* farmer and an imam of a local mosque, who wouldn't send his children to English school as he wanted them to go to an Arabic or religious school. He also cursed the British who ran away and surrendered when the Japanese invaded Malaya.

My father and mother were very hard-working people, tilling our *padi* fields to support eight children who were growing up, with me as the youngest. Other families in the village also tilled their land. These peasants did not fit the insulting "lazy native" syndrome the Orientalists talked about – a myth debunked by the late Syed Hussein Alatas in his now classic 1977 book.

My father died in 1949, five years after I was born. I was told he died of malaria, after being delirious for days. We felt so sad. Unlike today, the hospital was far away, there was no clinic, no doctor and, at that time, we didn't even know what had hit him. With my father's passing, it was a tough life for my mother, who had to support the kids by becoming a rural peddler, selling vegetable produce, home-baked cookies, tobacco, and other goods from one small village market to another.

Being the youngest, and still in school, I was spared the ordeal of doing odd jobs like my elder siblings. But I did follow my mother on many of her rounds to the rural markets, helping to carry her over-sized baskets with my small hands. It was a cash-and-carry rural exchange economy that my mother was part of in those days.

There was virtually no electricity or piped water in the village. Nor were there tables or chairs in the family house. At night I had to light flickering kerosene lamp and do my homework while lying flat on my stomach. My elder male siblings went to Malay primary school, followed by one or two years in an Arabic or a religious school, but then they abandoned their education for work. But I was set on a different trajectory. My mother and elder siblings didn't want me to follow in their footsteps; they wanted me to go far beyond the village. So after finishing Malay primary and basic religious education, and passing the entrance exam, I joined the only government English school in town. I was inducted into the "Special Malay Class" – an express class that enabled me to jump to Primary Six in my third year. As I was a top student, I was later offered a scholarship to enter the Royal Military College on the west coast of Malaya, an elite multi-ethnic school set up by the British in 1953 to train local military officers and also potential government administrators. There were five of us who went to the college in 1960 from the whole of Terengganu. I was the only one from my generation who managed to fly far beyond the local district and later the country.

The then commandant of the military college, its director of studies and many of the teachers were British. Though they were good, their patronizing attitude helped to nurture anti-colonial sentiments among us. You have to remember that period was only a few years after Independence in 1957, and the Malaysianization policy took effect only from the late sixties and early seventies.

After finishing high school at the college in 1964, I was sent to "mother" England on a Federal Government scholarship with a view to serving the elite Malaysian civil service after completing university education. Several other top Malay students were offered similar scholarships to the UK.

MB: How did going to England and getting degrees at Leicester and then at SOAS shape your intellectual and political development?

RE: Studying in the UK was a decisive turning point in my life. It opened up and deepened my intellectual horizons and strengthened my ideals. I went to Leicester in 1965 to study sociology, and after obtaining my BA in 1968, I pursued my MA in Area Studies in the London School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), which I obtained in 1970. My lecturers then were some of the leading scholars in Britain and Europe. In the late sixties, London – and for that matter Britain and Western Europe – was seething with student activism, and anti-US imperialism, especially against its war of aggression in Vietnam. The Chinese revolution and the Cuban revolution were also an attraction to many. I was exposed to various schools of thought in sociology – from structural functionalism to Marxism and social constructivism – and read all sorts of books and left-wing journals like the *New Left Review* and *Monthly Review*. That's the context in which I became politicized and radicalized. Many Malaysian students of my generation in London were also inspired with similar activism.

MB: What happened when you came back to Malaysia? The country had already been independent for fifteen years so how did you fit in?

RE: I came back on 31 December 1970, nineteen months after the bloody race riots of May 13, 1969 in Kuala Lumpur. When in the UK, I kept in close touch with happenings at home. The news of the 1969 riots hit us like a thunderbolt. I was a student leader then, and with my friends, we organized various activities like forums and seminars to educate the students – Malays, Chinese, Indians, others – and unite them. We fervently argued that the issue was not race, but class.

Back home, a new university with Malay as the medium of instruction was being set up next to the more established University of Malaya whose medium of instruction was English. The new university was Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (National University of Malaysia – UKM), set up in May 1970. It was the fruit of the struggles of Malay nationalists who wanted a university in the national language, Malay, to take in mainly students from national schools. The Malay language policy took effect fully in all universities by the 1980s. Mind you, the students then were an elite group, constituting only 1% of the 18-24 age cohort, unlike today when the proportion in tertiary institutions has shot up to 30%.

MB: What about sociology?

RE: There were important developments in sociology during those days. The Harvard Advisory Service in the Prime

>>

Minister's Department, headed by Professor Samuel Huntington assisted by professors Manning Nash, Myron Weiner, and Nathan Glazer, had just submitted to the government a report entitled *Social Science Research for National Unity*, following the 1969 riots, recommending the setting up of departments of sociology, anthropology, psychology, and political science in Malaysian universities to address problems of national unity and also to train experts to deal with the conflict situations of nation building. It was then that UKM set up a Department of Anthropology and Sociology and began to actively recruit academic staff. So, when I reported for duty to join the civil service upon my return, I was told to go to UKM. I was told UKM needed someone like me who had a Master's degree, all the more so from London, to teach there. In my heart, that was what I really wanted – a university teaching post.

MB: It sounds like the early 1970s saw the flourishing of social science, albeit under the auspices of the Harvard team and its concern with nation building. Is that correct?

RE: It is true the late 1960s and early 1970s in Malaysia was a period of flourishing social science and humanities, the era of great debates. But let me put the Harvard team in perspective. For the record, I was the fourth member in UKM's fledgling anthropology and sociology department, the first three being graduates from the University of Malaya. In fact, already in the 1960s, before the Harvard team's recommendation, elements of both anthropology and sociology were already taught under the Culture Stream in the Department of Malay Studies at the University of Malaya (UM). Prominent among the sociologists were Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana, Syed Hussein Alatas (he later moved to Singapore) and Syed Husin Ali. So, while we can argue that sociology and anthropology in Malaysia were "the children of modernization and nation building," the Harvard team was not the sole midwife as the scholars in UM had already laid the foundations.

The great debates varied between disciplines. The literary people were prolific, insisting on the institutionalization of national literature, advocating "art for society" as opposed to "art for art's sake"; the historians were repudiating the colonial (read: orientalist) perspectives on history; the economists held what was called "The Great Economics Debate"; and we the young sociologists and anthropologists were waging a paradigm war against positivism, structural functionalism, and modernization theories including those advanced by members of the Harvard team.

On another front, it was also the beginning of the Islamic *dakwah* movement as part of the student and youth movement. The campus was rife with student and intellectual activism opposing the US imperialist war in Vietnam and Israeli aggression in Palestine. Internally, we supported the struggle of the landless peasants and the homeless urban squatters, we campaigned against poverty which, then, affected about 50% of all households, and opposed corruption and the "get-rich-quick" mentality of the ruling elite.

For me personally, it was a continuation of the academic life and student activism of my London days. With sociological theories as my guide, I taught two popular courses – sociology of development and political sociology – while my colleagues taught other courses such as rural sociology, urban sociology, race relations and so on. I started a monthly journal in 1973 called *Truth*, which was banned after seven months. What my friends and I did was not just academic and critical sociology, but it was already public sociology – though we didn't have the term then. Our position was clear: there is no such thing as value-free sociology, and modernization theories of development served multi-national corporations. In line with Gunder Frank, we argued that development and underdevelopment were two sides of the same coin, and the sociology of development inherited from the West was as "underdeveloped" as the countries it was supposed to address.

MB: Then the repression came. Tell me about it and how sociology was affected.

RE: The year 1974 was another decisive turning point in many people's lives. The first national conference on the role and orientation of sociology, anthropology, and psychology in Malaysia was organized in UKM in August that year. I was chairman of the organizing committee. It was a lively conference where intense debates took place about the kind of sociology and social science we should encourage and promote. It was another expression of the paradigm war. Lecturers from various Malaysian universities together with researchers and students participated actively. It was then that we proposed the formation of the Malaysian Social Science Association (MSSA) which materialized in 1978.

The student movement and intellectual activism, which had reached its climax in 1974, would not last long as it was soon suppressed. Mass arrests took place in December that year, targeting student leaders and intellectual activists. That was the turning point of that period with grave repercussions for the subsequent country's history. Anwar Ibrahim, the present leader of the Malaysian Opposition, then the most influential leader of the Muslim youth movement, was arrested and detained. After his release, Anwar was recruited by Prime Minister Mahathir and rose to become the Deputy Prime Minister until their relationship fell apart and he was sacked in 1998. The rest is history.

Among academics, one of the most senior sociologists in Malaysia then, Syed Husin Ali from the University of Malaya, was arrested and held in detention for six years until 1980. Interestingly he managed to keep his job as professor in the university despite his detention. His prestige was high among scholars, and not long after walking out of prison gates, he was elected President of the Malaysian Social Science Association, a post he held for ten years until 1990.

In 1975, subsequent to the mass arrests, the government tightened the University and University Colleges Act which was first promulgated in 1971 by introducing various

>>

amendments, which curtailed academic freedom and university autonomy. This was a repressive act that for many years crippled intellectual and student life at the universities, an act which was only relaxed last year.

MB: It was not until after 1991, when there was a negotiated compromise with the opposition, that universities opened up again but what were you doing all this time?

RE: Well, as you may have guessed, I escaped arrest, but had to leave the country after the 1974 crackdown. I was out of the Malaysian academia for almost twenty years, but I followed its developments closely and never stopped researching and writing.

I came back in 1992, a few years after the end of the Cold War. The government's opening up and accommodation combined with UKM's professional approach to dissenting academics enabled me to rejoin the university in the same department in 1995. Things have changed so much compared to the earlier days. Universities and the government have been under market pressures and accepted market imperatives, and education came to be treated as a commodity rather than a public good. The traditional social sciences and humanities, including sociology and anthropology, lost their shine to science and technology, and to management studies. The faculty of social sciences and humanities in my university was restructured, and sociology and anthropology lost its status as a department. So from being arguably the strongest anthropology and sociology department in the country's history in the 1970s, it was reduced to the mere program it is today.

Many senior sociologists and anthropologists of my generation have retired or have moved on. However, one prominent social anthropologist from the former department is still active today. He is founding director of a very important research institute – the Institute of Ethnic Studies in UKM, doing academic and public policy work.

As for myself, I left the department before it was restructured and became a full-time research fellow at UKM's Institute of Malaysian and International Studies, a multi-disciplinary social science research unit, formed in 1995. I became a professor in sociology of development in 2001, and was made emeritus professor in 2009.

When I came back to the country, one of the first things I did was to reconnect with the Social Science Association. I was elected MSSA President in 2000, and like Syed Husin Ali, I held the post for ten years. After stepping down, I was made the association's Special Advisor – a post I hold until today.

MB: You have seen Malaysian sociology develop for over four decades, where do you think it is heading?

RE: Despite the changed conditions, I see light at the end of the tunnel. There is a revived interest in sociology among the younger scholars, despite the emphasis on multi-disciplinarity. They can see the power and relevance of sound social theories and sociological perspectives together with strong methodologies to analyze social conditions and suggest change. The spirit and idealism is still there. Though the number is small compared to other disciplines, it is growing. The MSSA is helping to see that such interest and numbers grow, and this opportunity to dialogue with you, Michael, as President of the International Sociological Association, is most timely. It helps to generate deeper interest and broaden our outlook. We look forward to working together and I'm sure this collaboration will be a fillip to push sociology and social sciences forward in Malaysia. ■

33

> Tunisian Sociology after the Revolution

by Mounir Saidani, University of Tunis El Manar, Tunisia

Mohammed Bouazizi, the Tunisian young fruit seller who became the iconic figure to ignite the Arab Spring.

Three contradictory aspects of the current Tunisian situation are shaping the work of sociologists: tremendous political change, an expanded freedom of expression, and the advent of a new wave of social movements. Given the rapidity of social change, Tunisian sociologists have largely responded in individualistic ways.

> Post-Revolutionary Context

The Ben Ali dictatorship ended on January 14, 2011. Since then the country has experienced a "war of all against all" with many of the conflicts revolving around the new "public enemy" – the Salafists – who are regarded as the most dangerous threat to the so-called "Tunisian way of life." Even charity, welfare, philanthropic, cultural associations and NGOs have become, almost despite themselves, embroiled in conflicts in the deeply divided political arena. The fact that there are about 150 political parties and some 15,000 associations does not make for an easy comprehension of the situation.

Social statistics and other kinds of data are now more available but the extremely disorganized administration and the very slow reform of its mode of operation do not necessarily help to create a more accurate picture of Tunisian society. With freedom of expression as manifested in the proliferation of magazines, newspapers, social media, public and private TV channels (altogether more than ten) and radio channels (about fifteen, largely FM), the streets and squares have become arenas of political struggle and laboratories of public opinion making.

Past actors are part of the present struggle, old interests become today's challenges and there is a dark political opacity which makes the work of sociologists risky. Social movements, especially after the elections of October 23, 2011, are less controllable. Local general strikes, sit-ins and clashes with security police have spread throughout the country, especially in the small towns of the central-west region of Tunisia, the cradle of the revolution. Local leaders become more accountable to popular protest, which itself works through the expansion of social networks. Social prophecy is beyond the reach of public experts and scientists. Social movements voice new needs and strive for new goals, whether they be environmental, ethnic, regional, or related to gender. Analysis of social movements has to be renewed each day.

> Sociology in Times of Turbulence

The 60 academic sociologists in the three sociology departments in Tunisian universities fall into three categories. There are those who publish books on the turmoil – they are not numerous, perhaps four or five. About the same number publish articles. The majority don't publish claiming that "the ongoing social movement cannot be analyzed due to its chaotic and rapidly changing character." Before the revolution there weren't more than two or three sociologists dealing with social movements and related

>>

issues. For the first year of the post-revolutionary period, the sociologists belonging to the second category were quite comfortable, writing articles of a theoretically unrisky character or simply about themselves. Weekly and even daily newspapers were their usual outlet and their articles dwelt on what was generally happening in the country. More focused articles sought to identify the actors in the uprising. Some of these sociologists wrote their impressions on blogs or Facebook.

At the beginning there was little media interest in sociological voices and views but this has changed with every passing month. With regard to spreading their knowledge, Tunisian sociologists are experiencing a new relationship with media outlets in which the demand for their services is part of a political strategy to deal with social issues in new ways. Some academic sociologists have become members of editorial teams of theoretical or intellectual magazines, while others are involved in research centers without any academic structure. Neither group produces scientific knowledge. What sort of job are they doing in these places? One cannot be very optimistic, given the conditions under which they work. The next question is whether these new media outlets give new opportunities for a public sociology or whether they are simply a political gimmick that descends into polemics.

One Tunisian sociologist who publishes books said, "All that I have published has been due to my personal efforts. No one gives me any support." Another one retorts: "We, the not-highly-ranked academic sociologists, have no opportunities. Most of the activities, even those organized inside the university, are only for those who have already been 'recognized'." Thus, young sociologists face a particularly difficult situation: "When one has to cope with the situation all by oneself, young sociologists will be absent." Nevertheless, we do have a new publication entitled *Penser la société tunisienne aujourd'hui : La jeune recherche en sciences humaines et sociales* [Thinking Tunisian society today: The young researcher in the humanities and social sciences] which brought together about twenty articles written in French, produced after a writing workshop held in July, 2010 in collaboration with the Institut de Recherche sur le Maghreb Contemporain (IRMC). On the other hand, since the end of the dictatorship, the Tunisian Sociological Association, which is more than 25 years old, was not able to organize more than a few meetings for sociology students.

One of the responses adopted by Tunisian sociologists has been to try to publish abroad and secure greater visibility that way. But the first international sociological symposium, organized under the title "Sociology of Arab Revolutions," held in March 2011 in Sidi Bouzid, the birthplace of Bouazizi – the street vendor who set himself on fire and became the catalyst of the Tunisian Revolution –, attracted no more than seven Tunisian sociologists, one of whom had settled in Beirut, an Algerian, and a Lebanese who came from England.

Other sociologists try to build relations with social movements: "I am, myself, a social movement activist. I try to advance my position through expounding a sociological view," said a colleague. Another testifies, "It is not easy. Social activism in Tunisia is new and both opposition politicians and government supporters create many obstacles. Training, grounding concepts, enrolling actors must be done simultaneously and in a democratic way. There must be respect for the internal dynamics of the teams. This has become harder when you are alone without any weapon other than your will." Since the beginning of the 2011-2012 academic year, young researchers have shown a growing interest in social movements, especially for their Master's Degree but also, in fewer numbers, for their PhD. Many of these studies are based on field work, surveys, and other types of scientific investigation and they focus on the role of youth, on social media, and on the memory of participants.

> New Opportunities for Research

The conditions of research are much more open than before. The old fear of political and administrative reprisals, which had restricted freedom of expression, has been lifted and interviewees feel free to declare their views and experiences. Researchers are able to use photos, videotaped testimonies and, sometimes, diaries. Nevertheless, new theoretical frameworks are still in an embryonic stage of development.

One can say that Tunisian sociologists examining their changing society still face considerable obstacles in developing a new vision for their research. Still, the rapid and deep social change in the post-dictatorship period is leading toward a more scientific approach to the study of society. The question remains, however: will sociologists be able to take advantage of the expanding opportunities to fulfill their new obligations to the development of society? ∎

> Cinematic Sociology

An Interview with Joyce Sebag and Jean-Pierre Durand

University of Evry, France

Joyce Sebag.

Jean-Pierre Durand.

Joyce Sebag and Jean-Pierre Durand are a husband-and-wife team of cinematic sociologists at the University of Evry's Center Pierre Naville, just outside Paris. After having devoted two rich decades to the sociology of work, in 1995 Sebag and Durand's lifelong fascination with the image led them to launch the Master's program Image and Society. Their MAs and PhDs gain a unique combination of cinematic training rooted in social science expertise, with degrees awarded contingent upon the production of a sociological film. During this time Sebag and Durand also produced three documentaries, *Dreams on the Line* about new conditions of work in a California car factory, *Nissan: a History of Management* about the strategy of a multi-national firm, and *50 Years of Affirmative Action in Boston*, about affirmative action in America. As a result of their efforts, the Association Française de Sociologie recently recognized cinematic sociology as an official field of study. They are interviewed by Jordanna Matlon, postdoctoral fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study in Toulouse.

JM: Why do you refer to what you do as cinematic, and not visual sociology?

JS: I think that visual sociology has existed for a long time, and it's more an analysis of photography and film than a way to think with images. We want to try to find a way for sociology to enunciate things with photography and film.

JM: What would you consider the specific skills of a cinematic sociologist?

JS: When you study something you think you have accomplished something very rational and you have a great distance from it. You think that you are "outside" the object. And one reason for using media for support is that you show that you are always inside the research.

JM: And that's an inevitable part of the method.

>>

JS: Yes. Film is a way to say that science is not "outside" people. It is included "inside" the people being portrayed or studied. Your point of view is here. The documentary is a space of reflection. We do research to create this space for reflection, and as a way to debate with people who are not in the situation of being a sociologist, and, at the same time, to create something new. It is a meeting place. It is a way to enter into a multiplicity of points of view.

We see that these people in the film are the actors of the research. You can see they are. They think. They are not only objects.

JPD: I would like to say that if sociologists are appreciating the use of movies and video relatively late – late as compared to anthropologists – I think it's because in sociology we began by studying people who are in the same place as ourselves, not in Africa, Indonesia, or so on. When sociologists speak about their own countries they make a choice concerning the topic of study, the slice of reality. Moreover, when you write, it's very easy to make this choice. And what is most important for sociologists is not what we say, it's what we omit – the residual. When you are making cinematic sociology it's much more difficult to choose, to omit the residual things.

JM: Can you give me an example of a choice you've made or something from your experience?

JPD: For example, in [our documentary] *Dreams on the Line* we didn't speak a lot about unions with the workers. Just a little. And some of them said very, very bad things about unions. Unions are for…

JS: Lazy people.

JPD: Lazy people. One said that. And a woman said, "I am a worker, I cannot strike." If you are writing, you would leave it out because it's maybe one second in a long interview. But in fact here we used that comment to show why and how people accept new conditions, such as Japanese rules of work. And the unions have to go along with their members, and so they keep silent.

JS: We saw people at work very hurried and tired, under a lot of pressure. But when we shot these people they seemed very calm and very relaxed. So we had to show how calm they seemed. But then in parallel we also interviewed them and everybody said, "It's hard work, it's such hard work." But it is not a Charlie Chaplin movie. It all seems very quiet. So we juxtapose the interview to show that what you see, when you make a field observation, is sometimes not the reality of people's feelings. And we called it *Dreams on the Line* because everybody dreams to escape this, escape the line.

So this movie is a way to start a conversation. It is a challenge to the simplification of reality, a simplification that does violence to reality.

JPD: As Joyce has said, it is a subjective sociology, but it is also a rational knowledge. We had our point of view. We assume our own subjectivity, but it's much more difficult than writing a book or a paper. Because sure, we can make choices – we shoot or we edit and so on. Sure. But when you film, you cannot simply leave out inconvenient facts. It's a big problem. I wrote maybe fifteen books, and I know how to show what is important and how to argue in a book. But with a film you cannot argue in the same way because the facts – social facts – are in front of you. Sometimes sociologists can be magicians, but you can't be when you are doing cinematic sociology.

JM: How do you see your role in society as a cinematic sociologist?

JPD: I believe our role is to show what is hidden in social life. For that we may need to explain things rationally but to be heard and to attract the attention of people we have to work with we need to deal with emotions too. In writing I think it is more difficult to show the layers of our emotions, such as controlled emotions.

JS: For example, we conducted a powerful interview with a woman in our film about affirmative action in a deprived neighborhood of Boston. The way she responded demonstrated her dignity, her control. In this way she challenged those who would choose to use violence. I think it is important to show the dignity of people.

JM: Do you think that in cinematic sociology the specific use of the emotive for persuasion may leave it open to critique about manipulation? Or perhaps it provides another way to gain understanding?

JS: There is not just one way to understand something. Our understanding is not only rational. Understanding with feelings is understanding too. Indeed, you may be able to understand more. But, it is true, you can also be manipulative in writing a book and maybe even more easily.

But film also changes the relationship you have with people you meet in the field. I was on the line in a car plant near Paris, doing ethnographic research. A worker said to me, "you say you do research and we help you. But we are nothing after the research, we get nothing in return. It's okay for your career."

JM: Like exploitation.

JS: It's like exploitation. But when you see people speaking in a film they exist. Maybe you explain to them, maybe it's another kind of exploitation. But at least now we can say to them, "you exist." You think. You speak. And the spectator can see their physical expressions and hear their tone of voice.

And it's very important to show that these people are not shadows, but real human beings. And that they think. You hear their words and see their faces. We are not giving them a part, they take their own part in the film.

JM: What are the challenges you face as a cinematic sociologist?

JPD: Many people – the public, sociologists, and a lot of scientists – lack the capacity to read images, pictures. At

>>

school we learn to read and to write words, but we never learn to read pictures. There are some specialists of film: film analysts, photo analysts, photo critics, and so on. But there is a very big gap between these professionals and the public. It's a problem because the public – and a lot of sociologists – cannot read an image. That is probably our biggest challenge as visual and cinematic sociologists.

JS: There needs to be training in the analysis of images, and to make film we must understand what it means to make an image.

JPD: In a picture you have the feel of the picture. But if you see the picture, you must also think about where the picture is taken and what is *outside* of the frame.

JS: When you show an image there is something outside of it.

JPD: Here is the frame, but you are most of the time outside the frame.

JS: For sociologists it is the same. You are looking for what you see and what you don't see.

JPD: The context.

JS: The context. What is outside the field, what is hidden by the people who are in front of you.

JPD: And a lot of people just consider the facts of what is in the frame. But that way you cannot understand the links to the wider society, the "big picture."

JM: You've spoken about the training necessary to understand images. I imagine it's even more relevant when it comes to making good cinematic sociology. Can you tell us about how you began the Master's program at the University of Evry?

JPD: The University of Evry opened in the early 90s as one of four universities on the outskirts of Paris. I was appointed as an industrial sociologist. We had a very clever president of the university who was in favor of innovation. Joyce went to him to discuss the possibilities of sociology of film and he said, "I have no money but if you can find money I'll support you."

JS: Jean-Pierre found it. He was working in the car industry conducting research, and management offered financial support for the university. They gave us money and we bought our first camera. Furthermore, to organize this training at the university, in the first year I said, "Okay, if you want to belong to and teach in this program you must follow all the training of your colleagues." That is you must learn sound, screenwriting, directing, editing, everything, but also take courses in sociology, history, anthropology, and history of the documentary, image analysis. We all did this for a year. After that we asked the Ministry to recognize the training we had established and they did. So in 1997 we started the Master's *Image and Society.* The program requires every student to make a movie for their thesis. They must do it on their own.

A scene from Sebag and Durand's second film on affirmative action, now in production, entitled Mississippi, Columbus, Boston : une trajectoire familiale [From Mississippi to Boston: a Family Trajectory]. *The film retraces the path of an African-American family from slavery to Harvard.*

JPD: This Master's was the only one that required a double competency: technique, cinema, writing and so on, but also social science.

JM: And when you said this is the only one with a double competency, is that in France? In the world?

JS: I don't know about the world! In France now they're trying to develop others. But maybe it was the first.

JPD: Now we have twenty Master's students per year and seven PhDs.

JM: Since you've trained mostly professionals at this point, do you feel that as academics that is a loss, that you're not carrying your tradition of cinematic sociology? Or do you think that these practitioners also consider themselves cinematic sociologists?

JPD: It depends on them. Some are very invested in social or political life. Indeed, some students come to this Master's as activists. We show them activism is not enough to make a good documentary, because when you are an activist you have one point of view, and you don't want to see other things. For that, we need maybe six months to show them they must change their mind, to adopt a larger view. These kinds of people, once they understand that, they can be very good filmmakers because they have a social commitment inside of them.

JM: So as regards your PhD students, do you think that they will be interested in teaching?

JPD: Some of them would like to be documentarians, but at a higher level. And others would like to be teachers, yes, academics. But they understand it's very difficult because sociologists in general have first to recognize cinematic sociology as a field in its own right and we have a long way to go. We are working toward that. There are maybe only three or even four universities that are open to cinematic sociology. There are not a lot of positions, and that's one of our problems. We are at the beginning of the process. ■