

# GLOBAL DIALOGUE

5.2

4 issues a year in 15 languages

## US Sociology in Crisis

Ivan Szelenyi

## Global Sociology in Question

Gurminder Bhambra

## The Futures We Want

Markus S. Schulz

## After Charlie Hebdo

Stéphane Beaud,  
Mabel Berezin,  
Elisabeth Becker

## Global Symposia:

- > **Sociology in Pakistan**
- > **Commemorating Ulrich Beck**
- > **Irish Sociology**

MAGAZINE



International  
Sociological  
Association



VOLUME 5 / ISSUE 2 / JUNE 2015  
<http://isa-global-dialogue.net>

GD



# > Editorial

## The Future of Sociology, the Sociology of the Future

**T**his issue inaugurates a new series on the future of sociology. The renowned Hungarian sociologist, Ivan Szelenyi, offers a diagnosis of the triple crisis of US sociology – political, methodological and theoretical. US sociology has lost its political moorings that attracted and stimulated students in the 1960s and 70s; it has lost its methodological advantage, unable to keep up with the causal analysis offered by field experiments that now thrive in political science and economics; and it has lost its theoretical imagination that derived from an engagement with classical thinkers. US sociology has lost its way, no longer appealing to new generations of students. Could this be true?

Writing from the UK, Gurminder Bhambra is critical of any exclusive focus on the North, such as Szelenyi's, but also of "indigenous" sociology, global cosmopolitanism and modernization theory, whether it takes Eurocentrism as its point of departure or its point of reference. None of these can achieve what her proposed global sociology seeks, namely the recovery of colonial and postcolonial experiences shaped by transnational *connections*. But can there be a global sociology without *participation* of the South? Two young sociologists from Pakistan, Laila Bushra and Hassan Javid, describe obstacles to the very existence of sociology (not to mention global sociology) in many countries of the South, although Pakistan does have a national sociological association and 19 individual members of the ISA.

Nor can we forget the deepening presence of the South in the North. In the aftermath of the *Charlie Hebdo* killings Stéphane Beaud gives us a sense of the debates among French sociologists while Mabel Berezin describes the insurgency of right-wing politics across Europe. Based on her field work in mosques in Germany, Spain and the UK, Elisabeth Becker makes palpable the deep fear circulating through Muslim communities.

Markus Schulz, ISA Vice-President for Research, moves us from the future of sociology to the sociology of the future, the theme of the ISA Forum in Vienna, July 10-14, 2016. He opens us to the importance of diagnosing our future, and alerting us to its dangers. The future is within human grasp and sociology should recognize its place in shaping it. Schulz's vision is inspired by Ulrich Beck who died on January 1st, 2015 – a tragic loss for sociology and the international community. He is a sociologist whose influence and inspiration has ranged far beyond our discipline. Here we celebrate his pioneering contributions with reflections from Germany, Argentina, South Korea, and Canada.

Finally, we continue our series of national sociologies – this time from Ireland. Four articles reflect on the global transformation of Ireland: the impact of the globally induced economic crisis, the response of a renascent public sphere, the transnational character of the Irish family, and the implications of European support for the Irish women's movement.

> **Global Dialogue can be found in 15 languages at the [ISA website](#)**

> **Submissions should be sent to [burawoy@berkeley.edu](mailto:burawoy@berkeley.edu)**



**Ivan Szelenyi**, distinguished Hungarian sociologist reflects on his long and diverse experiences of US sociology and prefigures its demise.



**Gurminder Bhambra**, leading sociologist from England criticizes conventional approaches to global sociology and offers her "connected-sociologies" approach.



**Markus S. Schulz**, ISA Vice-President for Research, introduces the theme for the ISA Forum in Vienna, July 10-16, 2016: The Futures We Want: Global Sociology and the Struggles for a Better World.



**Global Dialogue** is made possible by a generous grant from **SAGE Publications**.

## > Editorial Board

**Editor:** Michael Burawoy.

**Associate Editor:** Gay Seidman.

**Managing Editors:** Lola Busuttil, August Bagà.

### Consulting Editors:

Margaret Abraham, Markus Schulz, Sari Hanafi, Vineeta Sinha, Benjamin Tejerina, Rosemary Barbaret, Izabela Barlinska, Dilek Cindoğlu, Filomin Gutierrez, John Holmwood, Guillermina Jasso, Kalpana Kannabiran, Marina Kurkchyan, Simon Mapadimeng, Abdul-mumin Sa'ad, Ayse Saktanber, Celi Scalón, Sawako Shirahase, Grazyna Skapska, Evangelia Tastsoglou, Chin-Chun Yi, Elena Zdravomyslova.

### Regional Editors

#### Arab World:

Sari Hanafi, Mounir Saidani.

#### Brazil:

Gustavo Taniguti, Andreza Galli, Renata Barreto Preturlan, Ângelo Martins Júnior, Lucas Amaral, Rafael de Souza, Benno Alves.

#### Colombia:

María José Álvarez Rivadulla, Sebastián Villamizar Santamaría, Andrés Castro Araújo, Katherine Gaitán Santamaría.

#### India:

Ishwar Modi, Rashmi Jain, Pragya Sharma, Jyoti Sidana, Nidhi Bansal, Pankaj Bhatnagar.

#### Iran:

Reyhaneh Javadi, Abdolkarim Bastani, Niayesh Dolati, Mitra Daneshvar, Faezeh Khajehzadeh.

#### Japan:

Satomi Yamamoto, Hikari Kubota, Hatsuna Kurosawa, Masahiro Matsuda, Yuka Mitani, Ayaka Ogura, Hirotaka Omatsu, Fuma Sekiguchi.

#### Kazakhstan:

Aigul Zabirowa, Bayan Smagambet, Gulim Dosanova, Daurenbek Kuleimenov, Elmira Otar, Ramazan Salykzhanov, Adil Rodionov, Nurlan Baygabyt, Gani Madi, Anar Bilimbayeva, Galimzhanova Zhulduz.

#### Poland:

Adam Müller, Anna Wandzel, Jakub Barszczewski, Justyna Kościńska, Justyna Zielińska, Kamil Lipiński, Karolina Mikołajewska, Krzysztof Gubański, Mariusz Finkielstajn, Martyna Maciuch, Mikołaj Mierzejewski, Patrycja Pendrakowska, Weronika Gawarska, Zofia Penza.

#### Romania:

Cosima Rughiniș, Corina Brăgaru, Andreea Acasandre, Ramona Cantaragiu, Alexandru Dutu, Ruxandra Iordache, Mihai-Bogdan Marian, Angelica Marinescu, Anca Mihai, Monica Nădrag, Balazs Telegdy, Elisabeta Toma, Elena Tudor.

#### Russia:

Elena Zdravomyslova, Anna Kadnikova, Asja Voronkova.

#### Taiwan:

Jing-Mao Ho.

#### Turkey:

Gül Çorbacioğlu, Nil Mit, Rana Çavuşoğlu.

**Media Consultants:** Gustavo Taniguti, José Reguera.

**Editorial Consultant:** Ana Villarreal.

## > In This Issue

Editorial: The Future of Sociology, the Sociology of Future	2
The Triple Crisis of US Sociology <b>by Ivan Szelenyi, Hungary</b>	4
Global Sociology in Question <b>by Gurminder Bhambra, UK</b>	8
The Futures We Want <b>by Markus Schulz, USA</b>	11

### > AFTER CHARLIE HEBDO

French Sociologists Debate the Killings at <i>Charlie Hebdo</i> <b>by Stéphane Beaud, France</b>	13
Extremist Politics Before and After Charlie Hebdo <b>by Mabel Berezin, USA</b>	16
Notes from the Field: Europe's Harvest of Fear <b>by Elisabeth Becker, Germany</b>	19

### > SOCIOLOGY IN PAKISTAN

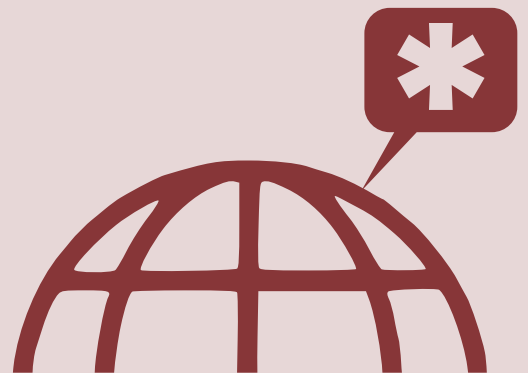
Searching for Sociology in Pakistan <b>by Laila Bushra, Pakistan</b>	22
Prospects for Sociology in Pakistan <b>by Hassan Javid, Pakistan</b>	24

### > COMMEMORATING ULRICH BECK

Ulrich Beck, a European Sociologist with a Cosmopolitan Intent <b>by Klaus Dörre, Germany</b>	26
Ulrich Beck in Latin America <b>by Ana María Vara, Argentina</b>	28
The Influence of Ulrich Beck in East Asia <b>by Sang-Jin Han, South Korea</b>	30
Ulrich Beck's Divergent Influences in North America <b>by Fuyuki Kurasawa, Canada</b>	32

### > SOCIOLOGY IN IRELAND

Ireland's Journey to Economic Disaster <b>by Seán Ó Riain, Ireland</b>	34
In Defense of the Public Realm <b>by Mary P. Corcoran, Ireland</b>	36
The Irish Women's Movement <b>by Pauline Cullen, Ireland</b>	38
Celtic Connections – Ireland's Global Families <b>by Rebecca Chiyoko King-O'Riain, Ireland</b>	40



# > The Triple Crisis of US Sociology

by **Ivan Szelenyi**, New York University, USA



In *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology*, 45 years ago, Alvin Gouldner predicted the fall of Parsonsian structural-functionalism and the rise of a more reflexive sociology – a warning that now seems oddly misplaced, since by 1970 Parsonsian sociology was dead and sociology was entering its most exciting epoch. Along with Gouldner, sociologists like Seymour Martin Lipset, C. Wright Mills, S.M. Miller, Lee Rainwater, Pierre Bourdieu, David Lockwood, Ralph Miliband, Claus Offe, Ralf Dahrendorf – along with others from then-socialist Eastern Europe, including Zygmunt Bauman, Leszek Kolakowski, and the Praxis group in Yugoslavia – were offering a refreshingly new critical sociology. Ironically, the crisis Gouldner predicted seemed to have been resolved: the discipline was finding its way out of structural-functionalism's dead-end street, blossoming instead into a Mecca for radical – and very smart – students. Once a boring list of impenetrable, empirically untestable concepts, introductory sociology courses became an exciting terrain of political mobilization and intellectual contestation.

| Ivan Szelenyi.

**Ivan Szelenyi** is a distinguished and decorated social scientist, bringing sociology to bear on the important questions of our time. He began his career in Hungary in the 1960s, working in the Hungarian Statistical Office and then in the Academy of Sciences until he was forced into exile as a result of his critical works, most notably, the book he wrote with George Konrad, *Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power* (1979) – one of the most significant and original treatises on state socialism to come out of Eastern Europe. He moved to Australia where he founded the department of sociology at Flinders University, and from Australia he moved to the US where he held distinguished professorships at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the Graduate Center at the City University of New York, the University of California, Los Angeles and then Yale University. Most recently he became founding Dean of the Social Sciences at New York University's Abu Dhabi Campus. His research into the redistributive effects of markets under state socialism and his study of the trajectory of socialist entrepreneurs remain, to this day, path-breaking. He is one of the few social scientists to have grappled with the transition from state socialism to capitalism combining historical and comparative analysis, authoring with his students Gil Eyal and Eleanor Townsley, *Making Capitalism without Capitalists* (1998). He has published research on both the wealthiest elites and the most excluded populations in post-communist Hungary. He is much loved and revered by his many students scattered all over the world, and is famous for his lectures on the history of social theory. There are few in a better position to assess the fate of US sociology – from a standpoint both within and without.



But today, Gouldner's long-ago prediction seems prescient: the social sciences have undergone fundamental changes. Neo-classical economics, rational choice theory and experimental research design appear victorious; sociologists are still searching for a response. Students, now more conservative and worried about careers and pension funds, have lost interest in radical theories. Sociology departments struggle to attract enough majors to justify the size of the faculty, often offering "sexy" (and often not very demanding) courses just to raise enrollments<sup>1</sup>.

Our discipline appears to face a triple crisis. First, sociology has lost its political appeal (and its radical mission). Second, it has not yet found an appropriate response to the methodological challenge from economics or from rational choice political science. And third, sociology appears utterly confused as to whether it has a common theoretical core (the "great books" with which every sociologist should be familiar), or whether such a core is even desirable.

### > The Political Crisis

Forty years ago, sociology was the discipline which attracted radically minded young faculty and students. It was the "thing to do" if someone was interested in radical reform, or even revolution. In the late 1960s or early 1970s, sociology faculty (especially the older ones) tended to be conservative, but their students were left-wing radicals.

Today the situation is the opposite: we still have radical faculty, but our students tend to be "young Republicans." And if you are a Republican, why on earth would you major in sociology rather than economics or rational choice political science? Suddenly our problem is not that we cannot find enough seats, but that we cannot fill our lecture halls.

This is what I call our "political crisis," which cuts both ways: we cannot attract students in sufficient numbers, and sociology is less and less likely to offer scenarios for radical social reform.

### > The Methodological Crisis

But sociology's crisis also reflects a "methodological revolution." Like Auguste Comte, who insisted the "science of society" must involve the same methodological rigor as "scientists" studying nature, social scientists have long sought to justify the "science" in their disciplines' labels, by establishing "causal relationships" between "variables."

Can those who study social (and economic) phenomena make believable claims about causality? Max Weber, suspecting that we cannot, opted for "interpretative social sciences." While sociology has had astonishing success with survey research based on random sampling – predicting the outcomes of elections with samples of a few hundred for populations of hundreds of millions – this success did not get us an inch closer to testing hypotheses about causality.

To test hypotheses about causality, one must be able to assign part of the population to an "experimental group," which will be exposed to a certain stimulus ("treatment"), leaving the rest in a "control group" isolated from such a stimulus.

In contrast to experiments, survey research invariably suffers from the "selection problem," unable to tell with any scientific rigor whether the outcome in population A is different from population B because A was already different, or because it received a different "treatment." A simple ex-

ample: we know that people who are married live longer. But how can we tell whether they live longer because they were married, or whether healthier people are more likely to marry (and would have lived longer anyway)? If I could assign some fourteen-year-olds to an experimental group who will marry, and others to a control group who can never marry, revisiting all their health condition years later, I could offer a rigorous scientific answer to the question of causality – but such random assignment is of course impossible.

Social researchers have tried to dig themselves out of this hole. Some have tried to identify “causal mechanisms,” writing a “narrative” suggesting  $x$  may cause  $y$  (for example, that married people drink less and eat more regularly, hence living longer). This is a noble effort – I have tried it a number of times in my own research – but it is not very persuasive for “normal scientists.” Survey researchers have tried other technologies, but neither panel studies nor life history interviews resolve the fundamental problem; panel studies invariably lose population over time, and life history studies often suffer from subjects’ selective memories.

Some economists and political scientists have turned to lab experiments. Lab experiments with completely controlled environments offer a great solution in terms of random assignment, but at an incredible cost: external validity, that is whether the results are valid outside the experimental situation. Lab experiments always fall short on random selection: we cannot generalize from the findings of lab experiments, where the subjects usually are middle-class college students. (Another “solution” lies in so-called “field experiment” where random selection can be applied, but these rarely involve random assignment.)

Nevertheless, economics and political science offer a logically coherent (though as I elaborate below, empirically problematic) solution to the causality problem. Sociology, however, is on the defensive. Hence it finds itself in a methodological crisis.

### > The Theoretical Crisis

Sociology is not in much better shape theoretically; it has arguably been on a downward slope since the 1980s. I am certainly not nostalgic for the Merton-Parsons kind of unified theoretical orthodoxy; structural-functionalism was replaced by what I view as a healthy theoretical dialogue, mainly dominated by the Marx-Weber debate but leaving room for alternatives, including symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology.

I have to confess that even in the golden days of the 1960s or 1970s, sociology faculty often fought over which authors should be included in required sociological theory courses. Today there is even less agreement – especially as, in a desperate attempt to retain a constituency, sociology tries to appeal to interdisciplinary programs such as

women studies, African-American studies, Asian-American studies, Chicano studies, cultural studies, etc. These are all legitimate fields of instruction and scholarly inquiry, but including them in sociology blurs disciplinary boundaries.

The comparison with economics and political science is instructive. Economists seem to generally agree on the theoretical bases of their discipline. Almost all the economists I know have a common understanding as to why students take Principles of Microeconomics and Principles of Macroeconomics, before moving on to more advanced courses. There is little disagreement as to what should be taught in these courses; the syllabi are so standardized that any economist with a doctorate can teach any of those courses – though it is important to note the astonishing neglect of “classical” theorists, which means that students rarely confront long-standing controversies. Classic theoretical controversies may yet come back to haunt the discipline – as Keynes and Marx did during the 2008-9 global fiscal crisis.

In contrast, however, most sociology departments either cannot agree what an introductory course should be (instead offering a range of electives with strikingly different theories and epistemologies), or they offer an introductory course that is rather like a fruit salad, mixing sexy topics with a boring telephone directory of “basic concepts.” Is economics doing it the right way, or is sociology solving the problem of “introduction” to the discipline more reasonably? I will come back to this question in the last section of this article, but it seems clear that while introductory courses in economics establish a disciplinary consensus, sociology appears on the verge of chaos.

Even more troubling: as we disagree on the “classics” of our field, we become less certain about the questions our discipline should pose. Sociologists once were in rough agreement over which problems they “owned”: inequalities (in power, income and life-chances, by class, race and gender), educational and occupational attainment, social mobility. Now, however, we not only find it difficult to identify our research questions, but – much to our embarrassment – economists and political scientists appropriate what used to be our turf. Is it not painful that the most important recent books on social inequality were written by economists, like Thomas Piketty and Joseph Stiglitz? Have we been left behind?

### > A Way Out of the Crisis?

Let me conclude this rather pessimistic message by revisiting the virtues and strengths of the sociological approach to social reality, and by warning my colleagues to be careful about imitating new trends in economics and political science.

The strength of the sociological approach was reflexivity. A long tradition of sociology – from Karl Marx (“The ideas

of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas”) and Karl Mannheim (“... opinions, statements, propositions and systems of ideas are interpreted in the life situation of the ones who express them”) to Alvin Gouldner (*The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class*) – asks who the speaker is, and what the (political) role of the sociologist is. As long as sociologists look for the “voice of the voiceless,” they will find their constituency.

True, students became more conservative, but after 2008–9 there has been increased discontent with the inequalities of global capitalism. As sociology returns to the concerns of the majority – class, racial and gender inequality, power, poverty, oppression, exploitation, prejudice – the good old days when students were sitting in the steps rather than leaving empty chairs in lecture halls may return. Michael Burawoy’s call for “public sociology” is a cautious call for this – and, notably, Berkeley’s sociology department is doing quite well, with full classrooms and high-quality graduate students. If sociology retains its political mission it could recapture from economics the investigation of big social issues, as well as the critical vision that was so characteristic of the classical sociology of Marx or Weber.

Many of our colleagues try to resolve the methodological crisis of our discipline by turning sociology into a “normal science” much like economics or rational choice political science, modeling behavior (relying on lab experiments) rather than trying to describe reality with as much precision as possible. But as I pointed out, while lab experiments allow us to test causal hypotheses, their fatal problem with external validity may explain why so many “scientific predictions” of neo-classical economics have, in fact, proven false.

In a faculty seminar at New York University, Abu Dhabi, my dear colleague Gilles Saint-Paul from the Paris School of Economics once asked: is economics a science? His answer was persuasive: how could it be when it uses poor-quality data, and models which cannot be falsified? Gilles suggested, instead, that economics is a “cultural activity,” which frames the terms of debate rather than offering falsifiable predictions.

I confess I find the question “why” more rewarding than “how,” and I have difficulty accepting anything which is not falsifiable as good social research. But like Weber, who termed objectivity “objectivity,” I tend to describe social sciences as “sciences.” None of social sciences are “sciences,” if science means a body of proposals where causal relationships can be tested. Social action is “voluntaristic” in the Hobbesian or Parsonsian sense, assuming an “agent” who can make choices (though within given circumstances). As Marx so astutely observed, “men make their own history but [under circumstances] transmitted from the past.” People make choices, and these choices

are only in a stochastic and not in a deterministic relationship with their existence. Weber was right: we can interpret what people do, but we can never tell which of their actions are “rational,” nor can we predict what rationally they can or will do.

In this respect interpretative sociology is ahead of rational choice economics (or political science), and sociologists make a mistake in trying to imitate their more “scientific” colleagues in economics or political science.

Sociology has one further advantage over other “social sciences”: sociologists tend to use a critical reflexivity about data. This is often even more true of qualitative researchers than of “quantitative scholars.” Ethnographers educated by Howard Becker knew it best: one has to “immerse” oneself in social conditions before one can know what the right questions are. Careful ethnographers – and, of course, some survey researchers – demonstrate how much care is required to capture social reality.

Sociology is better off if it accepts its identity as a “science” rather than Science properly speaking. Yes, we should ask “why,” but remain skeptical as to how good our answer to this question will be. In this respect, economics and political science would be better off if they would learn some modesty from sociology.

So what is the bottom line? Sociology is indeed in a triple crisis. It responds the wrong way to the “scientific” challenge coming from neo-classical economics and rational choice political science. It either imitates them or moves into “trendy” or “sexy” interdisciplinary fields just to regain a lost constituency.

Instead, I suggest we return to the classical tradition of Marx and Weber, to a time when sociology confronted BIG issues. Neo-classical economics and rational choice political science may pretend to be science, but it would be as foolish for sociology to try to become another “normal science” as to abandon rigor to become the politically correct narrative. Instead, why not return to the classical tradition, when sociology asked the great questions and, in its reflexive, interpretative mode, mounted a serious challenge to economics (and the then-nascent political sciences)? Why not a left-leaning, critical neo-classical sociology? ■

Direct all correspondence to Ivan Szelenyi <[ivan.szelenyi@nyu.edu](mailto:ivan.szelenyi@nyu.edu)>

<sup>1</sup> All commentators agree there was a jump in sociology enrollments and majors between 1965 and 1975 and a sharp decline during the 1980s. (See David Fabianic, “Declining Enrollments of Sociology Majors,” *The American Sociologist*, Spring 1991; Bronwen Lichtenstein, “Is US Sociology in Decline?” *Global Dialogue* 3.2, and [http://www.asanet.org/research/stats/degrees/degrees\\_level.cfm](http://www.asanet.org/research/stats/degrees/degrees_level.cfm)). While the number of BA/BSc degrees awarded increased steadily since the lows of the 1980s, sociology enrollments and BA awards are still behind their peak of the mid-1970s.

# > Global Sociology in Question

by **Gurminder K. Bhabra**, University of Warwick, UK and Board Member of ISA Research Committee on Conceptual and Terminological Analysis (RC35)



| Gurminder Bhabra.

**Gurminder K. Bhabra** is a leading figure in the development of postcolonial sociology. She addresses sociology's parochialism by showing how the experience and contributions of the colonized have been rubbed out of history. Her recent book, *Connected Sociologies* (2014) elaborates the arguments presented here – critical of Eurocentric approaches to globalization that hide the centrality of non-European “others” in forging the world we know today. She has written about the marginalization of African-American sociology from the core of the US discipline and how contemporary notions of citizenship ignore its historical underside, namely its close ties to colonialism and slavery. She is the editor of an exciting new book series, *Theory for a Global Age*.

“**G**lobal sociology” has been proposed as a way to redress the previous neglect of those represented as “other” in dominant “Eurocentric” constructions of modernity within sociology – and as a path towards a rejuvenated sociology for a newly-global age. This path involves three main components: (1) a shift to a multiple modernities paradigm; (2) a call for a multicultural global sociology; and (3) an argument in favor of a global cosmopolitan approach. While these approaches ostensibly take “the rest of the world” into consideration, I suggest that they do so under terms which are inadequate.

In contrast, I argue for a “connected sociologies” approach built on postcolonial and decolonial critiques of Eurocentrism, as a better way of understanding a shared global present. The central concern of “connected sociologies” is to rethink sociology, putting histories of dispossession, colonialism, enslavement and appropriation at the heart of historical sociology and the discipline more generally. Only by acknowledging the significance of the “colonial global” in the constitution of sociology, I argue, can we understand and address the postcolonial and decolonial *present* that would be the terrain of a properly critical “global sociology.”

Sociology and modernity are typically represented as co-constitutive, with the emergence of the modern world – and its associated economic and political revolutions – requiring a new, “modern” form of explanation. Alongside this understanding, which attributes modernity to Europe, is the idea that the rest of the world was external to these world-historical processes. Colonial connections and processes are understood to be insignificant to modernity in its supposedly originating locations, as well as to modernity’s suppression or deformation elsewhere. While historical accounts of these revolutions – and, thus, of modernity itself – have not remained constant over time, the historio-

graphical frame – of autonomous endogenous origins and subsequent global diffusion – within which these events are located continues. This is so, even where the claim is for a new “global sociology.”

### > Multiple Modernities

Multiple modernities, for example, replaced modernization theory as a distinct research paradigm within historical sociology in the late 1990s. Modernization theory had already come under serious criticism from Marxist approaches as well as from theorists of dependency and underdevelopment. In arguing for multiple modernities, scholars sought to avoid two fallacies: first, the idea that there is only one modernity – that of the West, to which others would converge; and second, the idea that looking from West to East necessarily constitutes a form of Eurocentrism. These scholars argue that while it would be Eurocentric to assert the idea that there is only one modernity, especially one that has already been achieved in Europe, theories of multiple modernities nonetheless take Europe as the reference point in their examination of alternative modernities. In this way, they effectively defend the dominant approach by suggesting that the “fact” of the European origins of modernity cannot be denied. In contrast, I suggest that it is precisely this “fact” that *must be* denied, once global interconnections are properly recognized and understood.

### > Indigenous Social Science

More recent arguments for a “global multicultural sociology” draw on themes from earlier engagements with the “indigenization” of the social sciences, calling for the development of autonomous or alternative social science traditions. These long-standing arguments for “global sociology” have not always influenced mainstream sociological debates within the West, but have nonetheless sparked much discussion including here in *Global Dialogue* and its precursors. A key point within this debate has been the call for the development, or recovery, of autonomous sociological traditions that would be informed by local and regional experiences and practices. As with multiple modernities, however, there is little discussion of what these autonomous traditions might offer to a *global* sociology. If the limitations of existing approaches are seen to stem from a failure to engage with scholars and thinkers from outside the West, then the main problem is presented as one of marginalization and exclusion. The solution to this becomes the call for a putative equality, through recognition of difference, and through an effort to redress the “absence of non-European thinkers” within the discipline. While this is unquestionably an important issue and may indeed enable the creation of a (more) multicultural sociology in the future, it does little to address the problematic disciplinary construction of sociology in the past, or the continued ramifications of this construction in the present.

### > Cosmopolitan Sociology

Now I wish to turn briefly to the third approach identified above, the claim for a new universalism centered on a globally cosmopolitan sociology. Cosmopolitanism, in this context, is presented as a normative imperative, in which a vision of a cosmopolitan future could shape the politics of the present. This, in turn, is supplemented by efforts to reconstruct sociology through a cosmopolitan paradigm based on potential global inclusivity. The issue of inclusivity remains “potential,” however, as for most theorists of cosmopolitanism it remains dependent on “them” being included on “our” terms. Universalism is considered necessary to avoid the relativism of local knowledges, including that of Western sociology, but there is no discussion of how cosmopolitanism could be used as a perspective to consider the *cosmopolitan connections* absent in standard disciplinary histories. Acknowledging such histories would allow us to rethink sociology’s concepts and categories starting from a consideration of the other, rather than seeing the other as a problem to be accommodated.

All of the approaches discussed above conceptualize the global through an additive approach, which celebrates a contemporary plurality of cultures and voices without addressing the historical roots (and routes) of the present configuration of the globe. All three regard the global as constituted through contemporary connections between what are presented as previously historically separate civilizational contexts – instead of recognizing that the histories of colonialism and enslavement are central to the development of the “global.” Approaching the “global” only as a recent phenomenon, the sociological reconstruction that these approaches urge is to be applied to future endeavors, implying the adequacy of past interpretations and conceptual understandings. This, I suggest, maintains the existing hierarchies of the discipline. Simply calling for voices from the periphery to enter into debates with the center implies that sociology could be different in the future, but fails to acknowledge that in order for this to happen, sociology would also need to relate differently to its own past (and to the pasts it considers significant for an understanding of the discipline).

### > Connected Sociologies

The perspective of “connected sociologies,” with which I wish to conclude, starts from the recognition that events are constituted by processes that are always broader than the selections that are made. It recognizes a plurality of possible interpretations and selections, not as a “description” of events and processes, but as an opportunity for reconsidering what we previously thought we knew. The different sociologies in need of connection are themselves located in time and space, including in the time and space of colonialism, empire, and postcolonialism. These new sociologies will frequently appear discordant and challeng-

ing, and they may be resisted on that basis (a resistance made easier by the geo-spatial stratification of the academy). The consequence of different perspectives, however, must be to open up examination of events and processes such that they are understood differently in light of that engagement. Put another way, engaging with different voices must move us beyond simple pluralism to make a difference to what was initially thought; not so that we all come to think the same, but that we think differently from how we had thought before our engagement.

The idea of the political community as a national political order, for example, has been central to European self-understanding and to European historical sociology. Yet many European states were as much imperial states as they were nation-states – often prior to or alongside becoming nation-states – and so the political community of the state was always much broader and more stratified than is usually acknowledged. While the political community of the British Empire, for example, was historically a multicultural community, this understanding rarely enters contemporary political discourse – where the boundaries of political community are imagined as congruent with the territorial boundaries of the state, understood in national terms. By silencing the colonial past, the postcolonial present of Europe (and the West) is elided. The political repercussions of such selective understandings can be clearly seen in the debates on immigration that disfigure most national elections in Europe.

Elections mark a period when the terms of the political contracts that bind people together are up for negotiation. While these contracts invariably involve the negotiation of present conditions, they occur in the context of particular historical narratives of belonging: by definition, “migrants” are excluded from the history of states, understood in national terms. Excluded from the history of political community, “migrants” are also excluded from rights within the polity and are increasingly being asked to leave that polity.

If, however, we understand the histories of nation-states as broader than accounts of activities of supposedly “indigenous” inhabitants, then the arbitrary reduction of history to contemporary national boundaries clearly misidentifies people associated with more expansive histories as migrants, instead of viewing them more properly as citizens. Migration is integral to the narrative of national, and European, identity; to understand migration as central and as constitutive of the histories of states is to understand that migrants are also historically citizens, not just potential citizens-in-waiting.

A “connected sociologies” approach, then, requires starting from the perspective of the world by locating oneself within the processes that facilitated the emergence of that world. By starting from a location in the world, we necessarily start from a history which links that location to the world, identifying and explicating the connections that enable understandings always to be more expansive than the identities or events they are seeking to explain. The more common approaches to global sociology discussed above sidestep the issue of the history of the global, regarding as significant only those connections believed to have brought European modernity to other societies. By contrast, a “connected sociologies” approach requires that we locate Europe within wider processes, address the ways in which Europe created and then benefitted from the legacies of colonialism and enslavement, and examine what Europe needs to learn from those it dispossessed in order to address the problems we currently face.

The “connected sociologies” approach points to the work needed to make good on the promise of a reinvigorated sociological imagination in service of social justice in a global world. ■

Direct all correspondence to Gurminder K. Bhambra  
<[G.K.Bhambra@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:G.K.Bhambra@warwick.ac.uk)>

# > The Futures We Want

by **Markus S. Schulz**, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA  
and ISA Vice-President for Research, 2014-18

## The Futures We Want

Global Sociology and the Struggles for a Better World



*Expecting the dawn of a new day, pilgrims, mountaineers, and tourists from around the world had spent the night struggling up steep slopes to the summit of Japan's Mount Fuji to see the sunrise on the horizon. This photo – taken by Markus Schulz after the 2014 Yokohama World Congress of Sociology with its theme “Facing an Unequal World” – captures the upcoming ISA Forum that continues this conversation but emphasizing how this unequal world can be transcended, how different social actors, animated by expectations, struggle in diverse ways in a myriad of settings, and how global sociology can contribute to this project.*

As Vice-President for Research, **Markus Schulz** defined “The Futures We Want: Global Sociology and the Struggles for a Better World,” as the theme of the Third ISA Forum to be held in Vienna, July 10-14, 2016. Here he recounts the inspiration behind the theme. For more details on the Forum go to:  
<http://www.isa-sociology.org/forum-2016/>

**T**he globalized planet is marred by unabated injustices, rampant conflicts, and environmental destruction. Yet, hopes for a better world persist. Dreams are nourished by courageous struggles from the jungles of Chiapas to the townships of Johannesburg, from the streets of Arab capitals to the neighborhoods of Chicago, from the pathways of migrants to the virtual spaces of new media. Utopian energies have not been exhausted but can inspire scholarly innovations. Unprecedented risks and opportunities demand new ways of thinking.

Globalization has unleashed enormous productivity gains and produced tremendous wealth. Yet, it also exacerbated inequality, marginality, and poverty. Markets, states, societies and the relations among these spheres are being profoundly restructured as globalization connects multiple social scales in ever more intense ways. No nation, city, neighborhood or community is left untouched. The effects and experiences are highly uneven and often contradictory. Never before in history have so many migrants been on the move, and impending environmental changes are likely to increase this trend. New transnational spaces have increased cultural diversity, while mobility becomes an increasingly salient axis of inequality. The new information and communication technologies helped to accelerate globalization. Yet they unite as much as they divide, and facilitate as much as prevent free exchange. New forms of control, surveillance, and warfare are emerging.

Deterministic models and military response logics have proved too shortsighted, too costly, and ultimately counterproductive to peace and security. Sustainable solutions require deeper and methodologically more open analyses of underlying problems. Outcomes of the new transnational dynamics are not the result of some inevitable forces, but are socially shaped by institutionally conditioned, yet reflexive human agency, thus a result of decisions and choices, whether these are intended or not.

In many of today's national sociologies, the future appears spectacularly neglected. Why is that so? Among the locally varying reasons, one view seems to be particularly widespread. It argues against dealing with the future because we cannot know anything about it, and since we should not talk about what we cannot know, we should better be quiet about the future.

This position runs counter to the fact that we all lead our daily lives based on innumerable assumptions about the future, short-term and long-term, small and large. Whether we deem something possible or impossible, likely or unlikely, desirable or undesirable has consequences. Anticipation, aspiration, expectation, hope, imagination, planning, projection, and vision are inherent aspects of future-oriented human action.

Once we accept the need for sociology to become more forward-looking several tricky questions arise. How can we conceptualize the future? What are the most fruitful ways, and how do we assess competing modes of engagement? Finding answers to these questions is a task to which a range of theoretical approaches can contribute.

In the past, the future was often assumed to be predestined, predetermined, or at least progressing in a certain direction and thus, with the proper approach, predictable. During sociology's foundational period, religious beliefs in some future telos appeared to give way to the positivist search for social laws, the knowledge of which sociologists – in traditions from Comte to Durkheim – thought to be useful

for administering society. Marx shared similar assumptions when he pronounced the laws of history pointed to a necessary triumph of the oppressed proletariat over the bourgeoisie, though he did recognize in his more empirical-historical writings that there were no automatic formulae but plenty of room for contingent action. Scholars from, or engaged with, the Global South (e.g. Amin, Cardoso, Dussel, Guha, Quijano, Nederveen Pieterse, Saïd, Santos, Spivak) have challenged the pervasive modernization models according to which the so-called Third World was behind in its development and could overcome its presumed backwardness only by following the path of the Global North.

The dissociation of social experience from expectation unleashes theoretical innovation along with specters of radical uncertainty. What is could have been different. The existing reality could have been differently shaped through indeterminate human action, in more or less reflexive as well as more or less conflictual or cooperative ways. This consciousness of indeterminacy is increasingly thematized in contemporary social theory through the explicit inclusion of social agency and multiple historical trajectories. It finds today its expression in the emphasis on autopoiesis, creativity, imagination, and vision.

Sociology's re-orientation toward the future can thereby benefit from a whole range of empirical, analytical, and normative approaches in exploring the tiny worlds of micro interaction as well as the broadest macro trends that affect the entire planet. For example, recent advances in action theory overcome positivist restrictions and narrow instrumentalism. Theories of collective action and social movements can help to recognize alternative visions formulated from the grassroots and to gain a better understanding of political contestation. Time-diagnostic approaches can help to discern pertinent trends. Critical theories can help to pinpoint the value decisions at stake, unmask the working of vested interests, and identify differential consequences for different sectors of society.

Pressing problems of increasing social inequality, human rights violations, climate change, environmental degradation, and the underlying failures of distribution, recognition and governance require forward-oriented scholarship that can go beyond narrow business perspectives and corporate interests and that can reach across borders in search of sustainable alternatives. The current economic crisis seemed to have discredited the economic approaches that were dominant since the 1980s but a broader social-science perspective has still to fill the void. New conceptual perspectives and methodological tools are needed for research on possible, probable, preventable, and preferable futures. If sociology is to become more relevant, it needs to embrace a more forward-looking orientation and engage with the manifold futures envisioned by different social actors. ■

Direct all correspondence to Markus S. Schulz <[markus.s.schulz@gmail.com](mailto:markus.s.schulz@gmail.com)>

# > French Sociologists Debate the Killings at Charlie Hebdo

by **Stéphane Beaud**, École des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS), Paris, France



Paris Metro. Photo by Fabien Truong, January 12, 2015.

**C**an the social sciences offer “on-the-spot” commentary about the events of January 7-9, 2015 (the deadly attack on *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris and the anti-Semitic killing at a kosher supermarket)? Or is it better to keep our distance, letting *media intellectuals* – that French species so hostile to the sociological endeavor – take over? To remain silent seems particularly difficult after the events that both shattered French society and set it in motion – as demonstrated by the great (and ambiguous) citizen march of January 11.

Soon after France’s 2005 riots, Gérard Mauger suggested a first line of research: examining sociologists’ perspectives on these events. After the attacks of January 7-9, 2015, popular media outlets published articles by sociologists working in different theoretical traditions, providing an opportunity to explore the public positions of diverse sociologists – public positions that are inseparably theoretical and political. Written immediately after the attacks, these columns have re-launched a long-standing controversy: what type of causality should sociologists prioritize in explaining events such as these? What importance should we give to individual conduct or social background? Are explanations rooted in social causes – necessarily macro-sociological and structural – sufficient? Or do these analyses absolve individuals of moral

>>

responsibility? Conversely, would a focus on the strictly individual logics abdicate our sociological role?

The controversy has generated great debate. One of the first sociologists to enter the fray was Hugues Lagrange – researcher at the National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS) at Science Po – who drew on his research on juvenile delinquency in the Parisian suburbs. Rejecting “politically correct” explanations for delinquency, he views *ethno-cultural origin* as an independent factor, rather than as the product of discrimination or a synthesis of socio-economic or residential dynamics. The social profile of the brothers Kouachi and Amedy Coulibaly (sons of post-colonial immigrants, underperforming at school, raised in the marginalized *cités* by an unstable family, with prison records, etc.) matched “his” previous informants – a point Lagrange hammers home in *Le Monde* (January 14, 2015). His title, “Have the courage to see the moral faults of a desocialized minority,” captured two dimensions. On one side, he acknowledges that a segment of French youth, raised in marginalized neighborhoods (the Parisian suburbs or *cités*) and subsequently cut off from society, are “desocialized,” trapped in an intransigent and hostile subculture. These youth seek to reconstruct their “damaged self-esteem” through entering new religious practices, including Salafism or other forms of radical Islam. But, Lagrange writes, instead of probing problematic tendencies (male chauvinism, sexism, homophobia, violence, or anti-Semitism) that characterize this “lost” fraction of French youth, French intellectuals are “inhibited by a sense of guilt linked to colonialism, [they] do not dare confront the moral faults and the bad behavior of minorities from colonized countries.”

The next day, Didier Fassin – an anthropologist at the EHESS (The School for Advanced Studies in Social Sciences, Paris) and Princeton – took up the gauntlet, bluntly reaffirm-

ing every sociologist's obligation to objectively examine “social causes.” Youth in *sensitive urban zones* experience social and spatial segregation, high unemployment rates and precariousness, as well as stigmatization and racial discrimination (at work, at home or from the police), he writes. Reminding social scientists that their role, critical at a time of historical effervescence, is to avoid what historian Marc Bloch called “the habits of judgment,” Fassin concludes, “our society has produced what it now rejects as an infamous monstrosity.”

Laurent Mucchielli, CNRS researcher and juvenile delinquency expert, similarly offers a long-term perspective (*Mediapart*, January 2015). France has not accepted its past as a country that massively recruited workers from its former colonies in North and sub-Saharan Africa between 1960 and 1980, with two major consequences: first, immigration was not subject to integration policies, and second, French society struggles to recognize itself as a “totally multiracial and partially multicultural society.” Acceptance would require considering Islam “as part of the basic ingredients out of which we build ourselves, suspending fear, questioning, and legislation against it” (like the 2004 law prohibiting veils at school). Mucchielli calls for a “resolutely constructive position that builds common citizenship, social cohesion and collective identity.” In my own research, I share this stance, explaining these facts in terms of social and economic pauperization, religious stigmatization and racial discrimination – a useful and even necessary explanation, yet far from satisfactory today.

There are, I think, two paths to progress. First, Cyril Lemieux (researcher at the EHESS) illustrates a “theoretical” position in his article “Unease in sociology” (*Libération*, January 30, 2015). A leading figure of an emerging current calling itself “pragmatic” sociology, Lemieux addresses the limits of the explanatory models deployed by “certain sociologists” –

probably a cryptic reference to the “critical sociologists” loosely inspired by Bourdieu. These sociologists forget, he writes, that their task must include not only exploring structural dynamics, but also “to take seriously the wishes [of these young jihadists] to become perfect Muslims.” Lemieux targets sociologists who dismiss the citizen march – some 3.5 million people united under the slogan “I am Charlie” – as a kind of political or symbolic manipulation. Citizens took the streets that day, Lemieux argues, because they “felt the need to do so in a way that was immanent to their moral and political education,” and he concludes by reaffirming his faith in citizens’ self-reflexive competence – a competence he argues “critical sociologists” have rejected.

A second, more empirical approach considers facts that do not “fit” macro-sociological or structural analytical frameworks. The childhoods of the three assassins were marked by poverty and other difficulties; the Kouachi brothers were orphaned in their early teenage years and were placed in childhood support institutions in Corrèze. Yet they were not entirely deprived of institutional support, nor were they victims of flagrant discrimination. For example, Amedy Coulibaly benefitted from an apprenticeship at Pepsi-Cola, during which time he met Nicolas Sarkozy at the Elysée Palace. Similarly, Saïd Kouachi was employed by the City Hall in Paris as a “recycling ambassador,” although he was fired in 2009, apparently because his strict observance of religious precepts (refusing to shake hands with women and praying five times per day) distanced him from his co-workers.

This view notes that not all French jihadists are post-colonial immigrant descendants recruited from poor suburbs. Some young professionals, including socially-integrated ones, have embarked on jihad; some young converts were raised in “pavilions” far from the *cités*. Countries like Denmark, that have no colonial history and have treated “minorities” very dif-

ferently, are as threatened as France. How do we explain this? By “reducing” our inquiries to macro-sociological factors (poor suburbs, unskilled immigrant youth, discrimination, institutional racism), do we accidentally reinforce the very stereotypes that define these youth as something “dangerous”?

The sociology of religion may help understand the motivations behind the religious attachments of these youths, allowing us to recreate the dynamics of conversion to a sectarian movement, and to identify characteristics of the recruited. This type of explanation would need to be linked to a sociology of indoctrination recreating the logics of extremist movements, as well as whatever support they may obtain from ambiguously-legal margins of Islamic practice. We should also consider the context of the attack at the *Charlie Hebdo* offices, trying to seriously examine the aversion of these Muslim youths towards *Charlie Hebdo*’s anti-religious

humor – an aversion hard to understand for both youth and adults raised in the 1968-culture embodied by *Charlie Hebdo*, which calls itself a “stupid and vicious magazine.” Thus, Julie Pagis (CNRS researcher), has trouble perceiving the specific significance of *Charlie Hebdo*’s mockery of Islam (in contrast to other religions) – this was an attack on a dominated religion that represented the only positive affiliation these youth can claim, and, furthermore, the attack brought to mind memories of the humiliating experiences of their parents’ colonial and working-class past.

Thus, we can question the different assumptions of sociologists, as well as the way the media constructs sociology’s symbolic authority. An essential question, of course, is who gets to speak, and who doesn’t? Following the attacks, descendants of Maghreb and African immigrants – successful entrepreneurs, artists (actors, musicians, comedians, writers), and athletes – began to speak up. Academics

too, especially sociologists, raised the question posed by W.E.B. Du Bois, who asked in relation to African-Americans: “How does it feel to be a problem?” As sociologists, we could also evoke the difficulties we encounter in conducting serious research of the social worlds from which the brothers Kouachi and A. Coulibaly came. We lack rich ethnographic accounts of the *cités*, a world that has been so deeply transformed over the past decade. We need to sponsor research grants to study these questions, and to support fellowships for sociologists who come from this background. ■

Direct all correspondence to Stéphane Beaud  
<[stephane.beaud@ens.fr](mailto:stephane.beaud@ens.fr)>

# > Extremist Politics

## Before and After Charlie Hebdo

by **Mabel Berezin**, Cornell University, Ithaca, USA and member of ISA Research Committee on Sociological Theory (RC16)



Marine Le Pen,  
future presidential candidate.

16

**A**round the world, political leaders and the broader public originally viewed the *Charlie Hebdo* murders as attacks against freedom of expression, a core democratic principle. However, it quickly became apparent that these murders had much broader political and social significance: the next day, the murders of four people in a Jewish supermarket prompted international journalists to write about the return of the 1930s.

*Charlie Hebdo* was France's and Europe's Sarajevo moment – meaning that the attacks might provoke political crisis in France and beyond. An unrelenting debt crisis, harsh austerity policies, layered refugee crises, high unemployment rates particularly among youth, anti-Semitic attacks on synagogues and Jewish cemeteries – all these phenomena have strengthened right-wing nationalist parties across Europe.

France's National Front and its leader, Marine Le Pen, have been at the forefront of this upsurge. In 2011, Marine Le Pen inherited the party leadership from her father, a provocateur whose anti-immigrant rhetoric defined the party for decades. Marine Le Pen's goal was to make the National Front a party of governance, not provocation, and she focused on austerity, the euro crisis and unemployment as her issues. Readers unfamiliar with the National Front's history often comment that they do not understand why her "sensible" positions evoke fear in some quarters. Marine Le Pen – who recently wrote in the *New York Times* that "Islamic fundamentalism" is a "cancer on Islam" that hurts "our Muslim compatriots" – is part of a trend where European publics view formerly marginalized parties as normal.

### > Speed and Political Volatility

But the deeper threats to robust European democracy lie elsewhere. The first is the speed with which the European

&gt;&gt;



*The neo-Nazi Golden Dawn movement in the Greek Parliament.*

political landscape has shifted, and the volatility of voter preferences and emotions; the second is the negative synergy between political and economic crises produced by events such as Charlie Hebdo.

Spring 2012 was a turning point – the manifestation, to borrow from Eric Hobsbawm, of a “springtime of angry peoples.” European politics seemed to speed up: one electoral upset followed another. Political extremes of left and right began to make electoral headway. Although François Hollande won France’s presidential election, Marine Le Pen came in third place. Combined, the extreme left and right attracted more votes than either the sitting president, Sarkozy, or his Socialist challenger.

Not long afterwards, Greece’s overtly neo-Nazi party, the violent anti-immigrant Golden Dawn, displaced a traditional rightist party, while a little-known Socialist coalition, Syriza, displaced the Socialists. In late 2014, just weeks after the *Charlie Hebdo* murders, Greece held elections again – and today Syriza governs Greece, while the Golden Dawn is the country’s third largest party. Electoral instability also occurred in Sweden, which is not a member of the European Economic and Monetary Union and is not plagued by European Union mandated-austerity measures.

In Sweden’s recent parliamentary elections, the right-wing Sweden Democrats surged from only 6% of the vote in 2010 to 13% in 2014.

During the same period, Italy’s Five Star Movement came first in a 2013 election, while Spain’s left-wing Podemos movement gained considerable ground. Although Germany’s rightist anti-immigrant movement Pegida is only a few months old, it may yet acquire a constituency – especially in a context where Thilo Sarrazin’s 2010 *Germany Is Doing Away With Itself* was a runaway bestseller.

### > Negative Synergy and Political Mood

Despite significant differences, these parties and movements share common features: a commitment to their respective nation-states, distrust of European integration and antagonism towards globalization. They are anti-euro, often favoring exiting the monetary union, and they share an intense dislike for austerity policies.

Charlie Hebdo brought new urgency to discussions of immigration and integration. If stringent EU-imposed austerity allowed politicians like Le Pen to describe the neo-liberal and global agenda as dangerous, the killings at

>>

*Charlie Hebdo* gave added weight to claims that Islamic fundamentalism exists and is a threat, or that immigration is a problem. Although this has long been an argument of the European right, the French Prime Minister made it his own after the attacks when he spoke of “ethnic and social apartheid in France.”

In 1919, John Maynard Keynes wrote, “The events of the coming year will not be shaped by the deliberate acts of statesmen, but by the *hidden currents*, flowing continually beneath the surface of political history, of which no one can predict the outcome [emphasis added].” Keynes’ comments on the economic and physical decay of post-war Europe eerily evoke contemporary Europe.

Are we seeing a repeat of the 1930s in Europe and a return of fascism? Though the Golden Dawn explicitly espouses Nazism, the goals of both the French National Front and Sweden Democrats are nationalistic, not authoritarian; disturbed individuals like Norway’s Anders Breivik should not be confused with coherent political programs. Predicting the return of dictatorships like those of the 1920s and 1930s would be naïve, rather like predicting the return of the manual typewriter. European nation-states today are procedurally democratic: even Hungarian President Viktor Orban’s espousal of “illiberal democracy” still offers lip service to democracy.

None of this is to say that there is no cause for worry: Europe’s “hidden currents” today are dark, and collective

moods evoke historical parallels. In his posthumously-published memoir about 1930s Germany, Sebastian Haffner identifies hope, despair, fear, and misguided anger as undeniable preludes to Hitler’s rise. Similarly dark moods prevail in Europe today. In France, respondents in a recent national poll identified “lack of trust,” “depression,” and “sluggishness” as the qualities that best define their state of mind. “Enthusiasm” came last – a finding that is hardly surprising, when conservative journalist Éric Zemmour’s *French Suicide* [*Le suicide français*] is France’s bestselling book today.

Absent the economic crisis and austerity policies, it is unlikely that extreme parties of the left or right would be so attractive. Since the 1970s, however, economic policies and visions of mutuality have not worked well. Similarly, immigration and integration policies that reference either nineteenth-century nationalism or multicultural idealism need to be re-conceived. To get beyond the present moment, European leaders need to imagine and implement new forms of social solidarity that include and engage all citizens. Leaders need to restore a sense of collective hope – a capacity to imagine a future. Economic recalibration is a place to start – but economic policies alone will not suffice. European leaders need to think realistically about the meaning of community in political spaces that are still often national in scope; they will need to swim against the not-so-hidden currents – or risk being overtaken by events such as Charlie Hebdo. ■

Direct all correspondence to Mabel Berezin <[mmb39@cornell.edu](mailto:mmb39@cornell.edu)>

# > Notes from the Field: Europe's Harvest of Fear

by **Elisabeth Becker**, Yale University, USA



*Elisabeth Becker at a mosque, in celebration mode.*

**E**thnography entails entering the worlds of others, both observing and participating in their daily lives. Unlike archival work, survey research, or experimental methods, ethnography is vulnerable to real-world events that can interrupt, redirect or unravel research. Such was the case with my study of mosques in three countries of Europe, after the killings of the *Charlie Hebdo* journalists.

I chose mosques as my ethnographic site in order to enter the cultural and spiritual worlds of Muslims in Europe, and to understand how they face undeniable stigma assigned to

their identity. I wanted to learn about the daily life of Muslims from the inside, from their perspectives and within their houses of prayer. I wanted to learn about their everyday lives by participating in them, rather than analyzing the complicated broader political situation surrounding Islam in our time. Entering the field – mosques in Berlin, London and Madrid – required personal transformation. Both as a fashionista and a feminist, I struggled with what it meant to present myself respectfully while respecting my sense of self. First I fumbled, scarves falling into my face or to the ground. And yet, soon I found myself swathed in the silk of these scarves, wearing a

>>

loose *hijab* on bus rides through central Berlin, which earned me stares; comfortably ordering curry at Algate East, London; emerging from a neighborhood mosque in Madrid, which earned me glares. As I came to live the life of a Muslim I felt fear in its multifarious forms.

I was not afraid of the German man who fell off of his bicycle when he turned astounded by my wearing a headscarf. Nor was I afraid of the right-wing Pro-Köln movement, a small group with a loud voice that had sought to block the building of a large mosque in the Catholic city of Köln. I was certainly not afraid of mosques. The only fear I experienced in the initial stages of my research was the judgment of older Muslim women who could not comprehend what I was doing in their mosques. I was neither insider nor outsider; I was dressed appropriately but dissimilarly; I was married to a Muslim man. These women often adjusted my scarf, added another layer (by throwing an extra, thicker, scarf across my shoulders), pulled down the cuffs of my pants and up my socks. They sought to cover me to “help me” to belong in a space where outsiders rarely linger – let alone learn Arabic letters. They even asked to call me Fatmah, because they could not at first comprehend what an Elisabeth wanted from participation in everyday mosque life. They wanted to re-name me, to protect their safe spaces, to be sure of their claim to what I already knew to be theirs. Yet these early fears remained small and mundane, fears for my fieldwork and for myself as a researcher as I tried to balance on the edge of two worlds in a divided Berlin.

In the celebrated multicultural mecca of London, my second field site, I felt more myself. The lines seemed more distinct, between me and the women I befriended, who lived their entire lives in accordance with the calls to prayer. And yet, perhaps paradoxically, this distinction allowed the same lines to blur. I could easily see

beyond the bracketing of this entire group to an “other” – sharing with the women I got to know worries for our children, a taste for tangy curries and despite our drastically different styles, often an aesthetic eye. These same women also questioned my “real” motivation for being at the mosque, and most were convinced that my academic goals were secondary to concerns for the child growing in my womb.

I arrived in Madrid a week before the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks, enjoying *café con leche* and long walks through Retiro Park. My mosque research began slowly, if at all. When I asked locals about mosques, most looked at me with questioning eyes. “Are there mosques here in Madrid? Do you mean in Cordoba?” they often responded, suggesting serious detachment from these very real lifeworlds. When I asked identifiably Muslim women, they laughed: “Mosques could not be in the center of the city, they could never be in the capital.” From what I experienced, a long-standing fear exists in the Muslim community in Spain. It was not born from the attacks in Paris, yet these attacks exacerbated it. Prior to *Charlie Hebdo*, in the first mosque I visited to the north of Madrid, women shooed me away. I asked to participate in group activities and they falsely claimed there were none. In the second, to the south of the city, a man at the door asked me if I was sure I had come to the right place. When I nodded, he gleefully led me to a group of women watching their children perform – children who kissed my son’s cheeks with broad smiles while their mothers looked at me with questioning eyes.

However, following the attacks the mosques became no longer filled with suspicious faces, but almost empty. In the week after the attacks, I sat alone in a small neighborhood *masjid* only open for prayers, awaiting appointments with ghostly women who never came. Even the city’s largest mosque emptied, its main room locked out-

side prayer times. I arrived with my baby in tow to find only a few women, two chatting, two praying, one sleeping, none responding to my greetings. The feeling of fear crept under my bones and I exited this mosque in haste. For the first time during my research, I felt that something was very, very wrong.

I found fear in Madrid, which grew in the aftermath of the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks, in the sudden emptiness and increased security surrounding as well as within mosques. Policemen with kalashnikovs arrived at *Puerta del Sol* – “the door to the sun” –, the center of the city, the sound of sirens splintering the air as I rocked my child to sleep. Rowdy protests led by a Spanish offshoot of the right-wing Pegida Movement (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamicization of the West), founded in Dresden last October, occurred outside of mosques despite being outlawed by local law enforcement. After the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks, mosque walls across the country, and the continent, were sprayed painted, “Go back to your country,” or even “Death to Islam.” I found others fearing me as I entered mosques, avoiding contact, creating distance both inside and outside of their doors in Madrid. They questioned my presence, suddenly certain that my motives could not be innocuous, that I could not be there for my research, for my child or for myself.

It was only after the attacks in Paris that I considered halting my research, for fear that I had deeply underestimated the political situation I had come up against. My idea had been to bracket the political from the social and cultural worlds of those who attended the mosque. In reality, the political had badly shaken these social and cultural worlds, and me with(in) them. Regardless of their backgrounds, mosques received threats. For the first time I felt afraid to be inside of mosques. Following the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks, friends in the US wrote me about abuses in Saudi Arabia and those perpetrated

by ISIS (the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant), asking how I could so deeply associate with Muslims. Was I not ashamed? Was I not afraid? The conversation I held with a group of Spanish Muslim youth echoed over and over in my mind, in which they explained that they constantly have to defend themselves against atrocities committed by extremists in other corners of the globe.

I found fear in Madrid, and it followed me when I returned to Berlin. Friends wearing headscarves spoke of staying at home after the attacks in Paris, they spoke of the uncertain smiles they received on the subway and how they were considering moving out of Europe. Old Turkish men in Berlin tipped their tea glasses as they talked about going back (to the Turkey of another time). A young Muslim boy in Berlin recounted to me the threat received by his *hijab*-wearing sister on the local bus weeks after the Paris attacks as she helped to lift a non-Muslim disabled woman onto the bus platform. Passengers refused to make way. "Someone should stab

her," announced a man on the bus, not whispered and without shame. A month later the same young boy asked me why three Muslim youth in North Carolina were killed. "Without a reason?" he asked, incredulously, tears welling in his eyes. An eleven-year-old rubix cube master, fanatic only for Ferrero Rocher chocolate – even this child is afraid.

The global face of our world makes us all vulnerable, all filled with fear. Nationalist right-wing movements try to exploit this fear of others and they deny the fact that we all live at the edge of different worlds. Here, in Germany, the right-wing Pegida movement has taken to the streets of Dresden with new force, 18,000 public faces seeking to "resist Islamization" through hatred suggesting that there are many, many more. Chancellor Angela Merkel may say Muslims belong in Germany, and I do not deny the symbolic importance of her words, but the long faces I see, the threats against neighborhood mosques, suggest that othering continues to define today's Europe. It is

somehow obscured by the acts of fanatics – from the assassins who carried out the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks to ISIS militants who continue to commit brutal murders.

Whether researcher or citizen, we do not know how to fight this many-sided, divisive fear, when it creeps under our own skin. Increased security and increased suspicion only hinder our cause. We must be able to join hands with our neighbors – of different races and creeds – while fighting extremism civilly, through the very same civic tradition we seek to protect. As an outsider-insider, as a researcher at mosques straddling these two different worlds, my fears moved from the mundane to the existential in the aftermath of the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks. I too find myself retreating, bound by the boundaries I sought sincerely to bridge; boundaries I do not believe in, yet can no longer navigate around. ■

Direct all correspondence to Elisabeth Becker  
<[becker.elisabeth@gmail.com](mailto:becker.elisabeth@gmail.com)>

# > Searching for Sociology in Pakistan

by **Laila Bushra**, Lahore University of Management Sciences, Pakistan

**S**ociology in Pakistan is hardly an established discipline in the western sense. Hamza Alavi, whose key works were published in the 1960s and 1970s, was our first and only internationally-recognized sociologist. Since Alavi, no serious sociological work has come out of, or been written about, Pakistan. There have been important contributions by historians, political scientists, and anthropologists, and a recent deluge of books on Islamic militancy and its links with the Pakistani military and geopolitics. But theoretical and self-consciously sociological perspectives are missing, and Pakistan lacks local sociological associations or journals.

Pakistan's only "actually existing" sociology, today, includes a total of five sociologists (three trained in the US, two in England) teaching at a private university called, rather embarrassingly, the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS). Of these five, two have shifted the focus of their teaching and research to philosophy and political science respectively, and one is currently on leave. Given our history and context, there is little reason to expect much improvement in the near future.

In the mid-1990s, LUMS – the most prestigious private business school in Pakistan – launched the country's first four-year undergraduate program taught exclusively by faculty trained in Europe or North America. Thus there emerged an exclusive, expensive, and tiny island of American-style undergraduate education in Pakistan's vast ocean of dysfunctional public education. While the LUMS program only offered majors in economics and computer science at the time, the curriculum included a few humanities and/or social science courses. However, unlike the two majors, which each includes a standard set of courses, the humanities and social sciences courses were mostly supply-driven, taught by adjunct professors or professionals (like diplomats or psychologists) who happened to be locally available.

From the beginning, students responded positively to an entirely fresh approach (by Pakistani standards) of social science teaching, although they came to LUMS primarily for its two prestigious and professionally promising majors. Over time, the social sciences gradually evolved from being an appendage into a separate major, primarily to accommodate the increasing number of students who were unable to meet the rigorous requirements of economics and computer science but still wanted – and could afford – the coveted LUMS degree. The department also expanded to service an overall increase in the number of students on campus.

The LUMS undergraduate program is now twenty years old, and the department of humanities and social sciences has come a long way. A core group of permanent faculty members has invested considerable effort in refining the curriculum, and defining their own position in the university by consolidating disciplinary clusters instead of indiscriminate hiring based solely on a western degree. As the only full-time sociologist around, I was adopted by the larger group of anthropologists at the time. The department chair – himself an anthropologist – recently succeeded in replacing the generic social sciences major with a number of discipline-specific majors: politics and economics, political science, anthropology-sociology, history, and English, with minors in psychology and philosophy. We have organized at least one inter-disciplinary international conference every year, and collaborated with some international scholars. But we are plagued by old problems of faculty supply and student demand, along with new challenges including administrative hostility.

Aside from a handful of faculty members who are based in Pakistan for personal or research reasons, most of our staff treat teaching at LUMS as a transitional assignment while they look for better opportunities in Europe and North America, or, more recently, in East Asia and the Middle East.

**“We are a country  
without sociology, but one  
in urgent need of  
sociological analysis”**

Many take extended leaves to work on short-term adjunct positions abroad in the hope of finding a permanent job.

The higher administration actually does not consider faculty turnover to be a serious problem. Their preferred model would be a broad, unstructured social sciences major, which would not rely on specific disciplines or faculty, and could potentially be serviced entirely by adjunct or visiting faculty members. Indeed, LUMS central administration resisted the introduction of new majors for over two years, and their lack of respect for our disciplines is routinely reinforced by trends in student demand. We are never short of interested students, but few are willing to turn that interest into a commitment out of choice rather than compulsion. Year after year, the administration sends us figures for major preferences declared by students at the time of admission – and our majors make up the bottom tier. Within this tier, the only major behind anthropology-sociology is history. Our courses are heavily subscribed, but our majors continue to be a back-up option.

One success we can claim is that many students convert to our disciplines when they apply to graduate schools, and their admission rate has been consistently impressive. Even here, however, most choose applied programs, hoping these will grant access to jobs with media houses, think-tanks, or donor organizations locally and abroad: development studies, media studies, public policy, and more recently urban studies. Given that our students are smart, motivated, and ambitious, they will continue to make such pragmatic choices. I expect at best one or two students every year to make a purely academic decision – and even that will rarely be in favor of sociology.

If Pakistan is not coming to sociology, perhaps sociology can make more of an effort to come to Pakistan. I do not envisage many western-trained sociologists – including Pakistani nationals – choosing to settle here if they have better career options. And it has been difficult to engage senior sociologists with Pakistan even on a temporary basis. Between 2008 and 2011, I coordinated an international speaker series, inviting established scholars for short visits to inspire and mentor both students and faculty members. We had some success with historians and political scientists, but not a single one of the several senior sociologists I approached took up the invitation. One would hope that in the future, both young and senior sociologists will respond more positively to our invitations for academic events. On our part, we also need to engage actively with ISA initiatives, including the global classroom.

But perhaps the most promise lies with sociology graduate students from across the world. Pakistan is not only the most “dangerous” country in the world, but also the most misunderstood. Few aspects of its state and society have been systematically analyzed. Graduate students looking for challenging dissertation topics would do well to consider working on Pakistan. Recent doctoral graduates could also consider the benefits of working in a small teaching environment like our university: motivated students, substantial teaching autonomy, a reasonable teaching load, and opportunities for collaboration with colleagues from other disciplines. We are a country without sociology, but one in urgent need of sociological analysis. ■

Direct all correspondence to Laila Bushra <[laila@lums.edu.pk](mailto:laila@lums.edu.pk)>

# > Prospects for Sociology in Pakistan

by **Hassan Javid**, Lahore University of Management Sciences, Pakistan

**W**hen I started looking for a job in Pakistan, I knew that opportunities for sociologists were few and far between. Like many other parts of the world, a historical, state-led emphasis on science and engineering has placed social sciences and humanities in relatively peripheral positions in most of the country's universities. Even where sociology departments do exist, institutional constraints often restrict the space available. In the public sector, for example, government interference in curriculum design and academic freedom combine with professional rivalries borne of competition for secure (and often politically partisan) government jobs to produce an environment that is not particularly conducive to effective teaching or research. In the private sector, universities have largely sought to exploit the demand for degrees in economics, business, and information technology, all associated with greater financial returns for graduates. In both the public and private sectors research is virtually non-existent, with little incentive to engage in it, and even less institutional support.

In this context, I applied for a position at the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), a private sector institution considered one of Pakistan's top universities, and one of the few places in the country with an evident commitment to supporting the social sciences and humanities. When I applied to LUMS, its School of Social Sciences and Humanities was undergoing a period of restructuring: whereas previously the university offered an undergraduate degree in social science, within which students took a range of courses from different disciplines, it now sought to provide more specialized, discipline-specific degrees. As such, even though I had applied for a position as a sociologist, I was asked to join the newly-formed department of political science.

Given my background in political and historical sociology, and my interest in questions concerning the state, class,

and democratization in South Asia, the prospect of working in a political science department was not something I considered problematic. Political science had both the space and the demand for additional faculty; after economics and finance, political science is the most popular program at LUMS, with almost 150 fresh undergraduates enrolling every year – a sharp contrast with the joint anthropology and sociology program, which usually attracts ten to twenty new majors each year. While this can be explained by the widespread (if not necessarily accurate) belief that political science is more marketable than other social science degrees, the effect on faculty recruitment is clear. Barring increased student demand, less popular disciplines like sociology are likely to remain marginal, understaffed and underfunded.

Working in Pakistan comes with its own constraints. Even at a relatively privileged place like LUMS – which has done an admirable job defending free expression and debate – it is often necessary to contend with shortages of academic and scholarly resources, inadequate material and institutional support for research, and the absence of graduate students and programs. These difficulties are compounded by the absence of a broader community of peers and colleagues working within a similar disciplinary framework.

Pakistan is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious country with almost 200 million people, saddled with a legacy of colonial rule, experiencing rapid urbanization and economic change, transitioning to democracy with a culture of ram-bunctious, contentious politics, and witnessing the emergence of new (and sometimes old) forms of social and political mobilization. However, especially in the aftermath of 9-11, research on and in Pakistan has revolved around Islam and militancy. As more and more funding has been funneled towards these areas of inquiry (particularly from the West), and as greater numbers of researchers have devoted time and energy to these questions, there has

**“In both the public and private sectors social science research is virtually non-existent”**

been a corresponding decline in other areas of research and scholarship. Within political science, this has meant most departments are increasingly oriented towards International Relations and Security Studies. At the same time, an emphasis on quantitative methods and research has dovetailed neatly with the interests of foreign donor organizations and government planning bodies; much social research in Pakistan revolves around narrow, “policy-relevant” questions that can only apparently be addressed by economists using econometric modelling. For all its complexity and diversity, Pakistan is often viewed as little more than a hub of violent religious extremism, whose governance problems can be resolved through equations demonstrating the efficacy of specific policy proposals. This bias is reflected in much recently-published work on Pakistan; even books on leftist politics and agrarian political economy clearly shoehorn Islam into their titles and narratives.

As a sociologist in Pakistan working in a political science department, I increasingly find that the only conversations about research, society, and theory, take place within these parameters. In my own work, however, I have explored the relationship between the state and South Asia’s entrenched elites, focusing on how colonial-era institutions and interventions, particularly in the agrarian economy, have had enduring impact on the capacity of the property-owning classes to articulate and pursue their interests over time. I remain interested in examining the implications of this pattern for Pakistan’s contemporary democratic politics, and I am also keen to investigate how

elite power has been reconfigured and reproduced amidst tremendous economic, political, and social change.

In the absence of a clear link to Islam or policy, however, interest in these questions remains limited. The same can be said for other issues, including ethnicity, gender, and urbanization. Furthermore, sociologists remain conspicuous in their absence. In searching for collaborators and colleagues interested in questions similar to my own, I have found myself working with economists and political scientists who, while very good at what they do, are nonetheless blinkered by their own disciplinary perspectives, as well as the wider imperatives of donor-driven research and related constraints on how questions are framed, researched, and answered. Friends in history and anthropology, two other major areas of research and scholarship in Pakistan, report similar problems, but even so, the conceptual and methodological gap between those disciplines and my own is frustratingly large.

Sociology in Pakistan has struggled to assert itself, ceding space to disciplines like economics and political science with stronger institutional links to donors and the government. This is unlikely to change in the near future: the same market forces and vagaries of global politics that have undermined sociology in Pakistan have also led many promising graduate students, at home and abroad, to pursue careers in alternative disciplines. Nonetheless, Pakistan remains fertile ground for sociologists looking to pursue interesting and challenging questions. ■

Direct all correspondence to Hassan Javid <[hassan.javid@lums.edu.pk](mailto:hassan.javid@lums.edu.pk)>

# > Ulrich Beck, a European Sociologist with a Cosmopolitan Intent<sup>1</sup>

by **Klaus Dörre**, Friedrich-Schiller-University, Jena, Germany and member of ISA Research Committees on Sociological Theory (RC16), Sociology of Work (RC30), Labor Movements (RC44), and Social Classes and Social Movements (RC47)



*Ulrich Beck in 2014, receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award for the Most Distinguished Contribution to Futures Research from the International Sociological Association's Research Committee on Futures Research (RC07).*

Ulrich Beck's *Risk Society* triggered an intellectual earthquake in Germany upon its initial publication. Beck asserted the controversial position that social reality no longer corresponded to sociologists' terminology, arguing that a quasi-revolutionary shift towards a new variant of modernity had occurred within the seemingly intact institutional shell of industrial modernity. Whoever sought to comprehend this shift would have to break with the dominant "Marxist-Weberian modernization consensus" and its assumptions of linearity. Beck considered mainstream sociological theories of modernization – especially the process of capital accumulation (Marx) or the linear growth of rationalization and bureaucratization (Weber) – to be "supra-subjective constraints" prescribing a grammar for social ac-

tors, to which all social activities were expected to conform. A theory of reflexive modernization, he argued, would have to break with assumptions of linearity, replacing them with an argument of self-endangerment: "further modernization [is] dissolving the contours of industrial society." Over the course of an autonomized process of modernization, industrial society was being "overrun, even 'abolished,' just as industrial-society modernization disembedded status-based and feudal society and re-embedded itself."

Beck viewed three developments as indicators of the transition to a different modernity. The *first* involves the unforeseen side-effects of industrial production, which in Beck's view have become the actual driving force of history. Ecological risks and the irre-

versible effects they entail constitute a serious global threat – a "democratic *Allbetroffenheit*," a threat that concerns all of us, ultimately making no distinction between workers and capitalists. Progressively overtaking the "logic of wealth distribution," Beck argued that the "logic of democratic risk distribution" can no longer be understood in terms of class struggle, rationalization or functional differentiation. As Beck put it: poverty is hierarchic, smog is democratic!

This ecological social conflict is, *secondly*, accompanied by an individualization of social inequalities. While the gaps between social groups may not have decreased during the postwar decades, they were raised up one or even several levels, in a kind of "elevator effect" (*Fahrstuhleffekt*). Even the poorest possess, on aver-

age, significantly more than previous generations, and can choose from an individualizing array of choices.

Traditional social milieus have been progressively eroded: class and stratum are no longer experienced in one's lifeworld and thus represent mere statistical figures. The individual remains the last productive unit of the social within the lifeworld experience, forced to become the planning center of his or her own patchwork biography, lest he or she run the risk of being at permanent disadvantage. Subjects are "set free" from the social forms of class, layer, or gender roles and instead "released" into the practical constraints of social organization.

This is where for Beck, *thirdly*, civil society's sub-politics emerge, as the unforeseen side-effects of industrial production dissolve the boundaries between the political and non-political. Scientific-technological progress becomes liable to social categories of legitimation and justification. Regardless of whether the subject is nuclear power or genetic engineering, experts must always be prepared for so-called laymen with alternative knowledge to intervene in debates. In this way, the ecological social conflict changes the political coordinate system as a whole. Obsolete distinctions between left and right become fragile. The new Right promotes the unleashing of rapacious, uncontrolled market forces and accelerated technological progress, while an ecologically enlightened new Left adopts conservative principles of preservation, applying them to a natural environment that has always been processed and socialized. The emergence of ecological movements and green parties, along with corresponding programmatic changes in other political forces, represent developments which can be accounted for, to a significant degree, by the shifting boundaries between the political and the non-political.

Over his career, Ulrich Beck sometimes modified *Risk Society's* core theses, but above all he *refined* them. Ultimately, he stood by them to the very end. While *Risk Society* was perhaps a rather German book, particularly its section concerning the individualization of social risks, Beck soon proceeded to address the world risk society which had emerged as a result of the globalization of ecological threats. Beck argued consistently against the "methodological nationalism" he considered pervasive throughout sociology. In its place, he advocated a cosmopolitan perspective, capable of taking trans-national spaces and cross-border sub-politics into account, even within the complex dislocations of the world risk society. In his efforts to formulate a theory of reflexive modernization adequate for theorizing contemporary societies, Ulrich Beck soon found prominent allies, such as Anthony Giddens, Scott Lash and Bruno Latour.

Were we to take preliminary stock of Beck's contributions, his sociological reading of the ecological social conflict may turn out to be the most convincing aspect of his work. His deliberations on the definition – and knowledge – of ecological risks, as well as his discussion of the "countervailing power of danger," remain highly topical. Indeed, the risks associated with climate change take center stage in today's framing battles and political negotiations. They can of course be temporarily sidelined (as is currently occurring in the context of the Euro crisis) but will almost certainly return all the more forcefully in the form of social upheavals.

Beck's lasting achievement is to have identified this reality and to have translated it into sociological terminology. True, his diagnosis of a "capitalism without classes" is called into question today by a veritable "return of class," as class differences within

states become more pronounced even as economic imbalances between states worldwide decrease. Social dislocations, declining growth rates and ecological catastrophes turn the "logic of wealth distribution" and the "logic of risk distribution" into mutually reinforcing drivers of an economic-ecological "pincer crisis." The elevator to the top has been replaced by a kind of paternoster effect, elevating one group precisely *because* it is sending other groups downward.

While Ulrich Beck clearly saw these developments (which incidentally suggest the ongoing relevance of elements of classical theories of capitalism), he was unable or unwilling to analyze a non-traditional class formation. Yet Beck had an extraordinary sense for the *Zeitgeist*, for new and unexpected developments. More recently, as a cosmopolitan and democratic European, Beck raised his voice against a "Merkiavellism" that subordinates southern Europe to perpetual indentured servitude, thereby threatening the European Idea and its often flawed implementation.

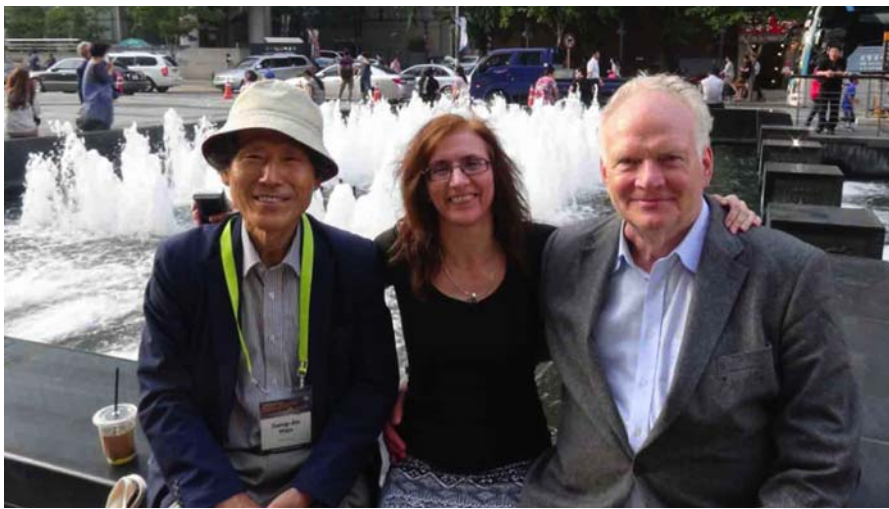
Ulrich Beck left behind an impressive intellectual footprint. Without him, I surely would not have become a sociologist in the first place. He has passed much too soon, and his loss leaves a gap that will be impossible to fill. It will take some time for German as well as European sociology to even realize what has been lost with Ulrich Beck. The theory of reflexive modernization remains a fragment. To reassert its original potential for innovative thinking may be one way to address and further develop Ulrich Beck's intellectual legacy. ■

Direct all correspondence to Klaus Dörre  
<[Klaus.Doerre@uni-jena.de](mailto:Klaus.Doerre@uni-jena.de)>

<sup>1</sup> Translated from German by Jan-Peter Hermann and Loren Balhorn.

# > Ulrich Beck in Latin America

by **Ana María Vara**, National University of San Martín, Argentina and Board Member of the ISA Research Committee on Environment and Society (RC24)



Ulrich Beck with Ana Vara and Sang-Jin Han.

**H**ow to assess the impact of Ulrich Beck's work in Latin America? A work that so subtly and thoroughly connects human beings, the environment, and techno-scientific knowledge has a lot to say to citizens and social scientists of the subcontinent most usually defined by its nature, and its abiding pursuit of industrialization.

There is a deep affinity between the notion of risk society as developed by Beck in his writings over three decades, and the thinking about the dependent position of Latin America that writers and intellectuals of the region began to elaborate in the early decades of the twentieth century. Aimed at exposing the neocolonial situation of Latin American countries after independence, this discourse denounces the voracious exploitation of natural resources disguised as progress, in the hands of foreign actors with the complicity of local elites. It has become the common sense and is behind theorizations such as "dependency theory" of the 1970s, and current discussions on "extractivism" and "neoextractivism." We cannot talk of a direct correspondence between Beck's theorizations and this discourse, but of a dialogue that illuminates each other, whose main arguments I would like to retrace here.

Beck's foundational characterization of risk as an inevitable byproduct of "techno-economic development" (1992:

20), draws attention to the ambivalence of this process, its two-faced nature. In Beck's words, the "bads" that result from the "goods" of industrialization are more acutely visible in those lands of Latin America, which provide the natural resources that fuel this process, with the ensuing social and environmental impacts. And the problem of the distribution of risks is also more noticeable and morally compelling in a region marked by inequalities. In this sense, Beck's theorization constitutes a crucial contribution to the understanding of long-standing phenomena in the region.

Additionally, in Europe and the US, *Risk Society* was mostly read as a work that talks about the "democratic" character of risk, emphasizing the fact that no boundaries can be drawn to contain acid rain or the radioactive cloud that originated in Chernobyl. However, from the beginning Beck was conscious of the relationship between risk and power, and of the unequal distribution of risks within and between countries. Having in mind the Bophal disaster, in India, and the heavily polluted town of Villa Parisi, in Brazil, he wrote:

The worldwide equalization of risk positions must not deceive us about *new* social inequalities *within* the affliction of risk. These arise especially where risk positions and class positions *overlap* – also on an international scale. The proletariat of the global risk society settles beneath the smokestacks, next to the refineries

and chemical factories in the industrial centers of the Third World. (1992: 41, emphasis in original)

Yet, initially Beck seemed to think that the imposed risks were blindly accepted by citizens of developing countries as the price to pay for development: “For these people the complex installations of the chemical factories with their imposing pipes and tanks are expensive symbols of success” (1992: 42). But the study of the discourse that developed in Latin America during the twentieth century points to protests against this kind of projects from very early on.

As early as 1930 Nicolás Guillén, who would eventually become official poet of the Cuban Revolution, wrote in his poem, “Sugar Cane”:

The black man  
beside the cane field.  
The yankee  
above the cane field.  
The land beneath  
the cane field.  
Blood that is draining away from us!

He was denouncing the socially and environmentally destructive way US companies produced sugar in Cuba in those times.

So far, we have talked about the production and distribution of risks. But the very *definition* of risks is another of Beck’s fundamental contribution to understanding these processes in Latin America. Who has the power to define what constitutes a risk? Those who control “relations of definition” are also in a position to benefit from their power. In discussing “the inequality of global risks” within world risk society, Beck wrote:

Whoever wishes to uncover the relationship between world risk and social inequality must reveal the grammar of the concept of risk. Risk and social inequality, indeed, risk and power, are two sides of the same coin. Risk presumes a decision, therefore, a decision-maker, and produces a radical asymmetry between those who take [decisions], define the risk and profit from them, and those who are assigned to them, who have to suffer the unforeseen side effects of the decision of others, perhaps even pay for them with their lives, without having had the chance to be involved in the decision-making process. (2014: 115, emphasis in original)

Is it possible that this situation will change? Is it possible for the powerless to be heard some time in the future, for Latin America to overcome the neocolonial conditions under which some processes are still taking place? In his last published articles, Beck claimed that a “metamorphosis of the world” is underway nowadays as a result of “the positive side effects of bads.” It implies a “scale of change beyond our imagination,” and is mostly a consequence of climate change and how it has changed us: “our way of being in the world, our way of thinking about the world, our way of imagining and doing politics” (2015a: 75-76).

Although he stressed the differences between “dependency (theory)” and “cosmopolitization (theory),” he warned:

Metamorphosis, in principle, is unfinished, unfinishable, open-ended, and may be reversible. Even if the power relations have been opened up, even if there is more (anticipation of) equality and symmetrical distribution of dependencies, does this imply that the cosmopolitan relationships *cannot* again be instrumentalized by neo-imperialistic strategies? No, definitely not. Cosmopolitization is not unidirectional. It therefore includes the possibility of reinforcing imperialistic power structures. (2015b: 122, emphasis in original)

He admitted that his ideas on “metamorphosis of post-colonialism,” as he called it, were “underdeveloped” (*Ibid.*: 121). His sudden death interrupted this reflection. In any case, in Latin America, social scientists and ordinary citizens will continue learning from him. It is significant that many of his books (like *Weltrisikogesellschaft*, *Fernliebe*, with Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim, and *Das deutsche Europa*) have been translated into Spanish earlier than into English. He was a scholar and an intellectual, active in public discussions – a kind of figure most cherished in our region and a double reason for our admiration. ■

Direct all correspondence to Ana María Vara <[amvara@yahoo.com.ar](mailto:amvara@yahoo.com.ar)>

#### References

- Beck, U. (1992) [1986] *Risk society. Towards a New Modernity*. London: Sage Publications.
- Beck, U. (ed., 2014) *Ulrich Beck. Pioneer in Cosmopolitan Sociology and Risk Society*. London: Springer.
- Beck, U. (2015a) “Emancipatory catastrophism: What does it mean to climate change and risk society?” *Current Sociology* 63(1): 75-88.
- Beck, U. (2015b) “Author’s reply.” *Current Sociology* 63(1): 121-125.

# > The Influence of Ulrich Beck in East Asia<sup>1</sup>

by **Sang-Jin Han**, Seoul National University, South Korea and former Board Member of ISA Research Committee for Social Classes and Social Movements (RC47)



*Trying to put a brave face on the Sewol tragedy in South Korea, Beck suggested that a “bad” thing can sometimes have unintended “good” consequences – a greater attention to safety issues and a debate over the organized irresponsibility of the government.*

**P**ublic attention is shaped within the landscape of discursive formations, along with historical processes of social change. Ulrich Beck’s influence in East Asia – especially China, Japan, and South Korea – is best demonstrated through a description of the region today, of its problems and possibilities, and through a discussion not only of the contemporary public perception of risks but also of why sensitivity about the future is acutely high in the region today.

East Asia represents the world’s most successful story of post-World War II modernization, a success which has been exceptionally compressed, consequential and transformative, helping citizens recover their sense of pride and self-confidence. But the unintended by-products of rapid modernization driven by bureaucratic-au-

thoritarian developmental states, have penetrated every aspect of citizens’ lives. As a consequence, the benefits of compressed modernity often seem as magnificent as the risks are catastrophic, and attention frequently shifts chaotically from the bright to the dark aspects of development.

East Asia’s normative traditions, such as Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, remain intact despite Western cultural imperialism. By drawing attention to the life-threatening risks stemming from capitalist globalization, these traditions – originally quite conservative – ironically began to spark popular criticisms of risk society, as a serious violation of human dignity, coexistence, and humanity-oriented (people-centered) politics.

There are three unambiguous reasons for Beck’s popularity in the re-

gion. First, Beck’s concept of risk society has been received as deeply realistic, exemplified by catastrophes like Japan’s Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster (2011), Korea’s Sewol Ferry Tragedy in Korea (2014), or Beijing’s “yellow dust” – dust storms and air pollution. Second, in addition to describing risks, Beck offers a new vision for the future, namely reflexive modernization or a second modernity. This vision matches East Asia’s search for its own identity and a better future that does more than merely duplicate Western modernity. Third, Beck’s advocacy of a participatory approach to risk governance is also stimulating, as it breaks away from both a conventional model of state governance and a technological approach to risk management.

Beck’s visit to Seoul in July, 2014, exemplified the degree of his public

>>

recognition and the extent of his influence. The country was still reeling from the sinking of the MV Sewol in April. The government's incompetence sparked public outcries of grief and anger over the loss of hundreds, including many young students on a school trip. Against this backdrop, Beck gave a public lecture at the jam-packed International Conference Room of the Korea Press Center. Though he focused on climate change, Beck nonetheless offered words of comfort, pointing to citizens' clamor as a catalyst for change. Suggesting that a "bad" thing could sometimes have unintended "good" consequences, he noted that the terrible Sewol tragedy had spurred attention to safety issues and debate over the government's organized irresponsibility.

Later Beck joined the inaugural forum for Seoul's Megacity Think Tank Alliance (MeTTA) with the theme "Beyond Risk toward Safe City." On live television at Seoul's City Hall, Beck emphasized a vision for new politics:

All of the common problems faced by East Asia have already come to light. Nations are interconnected [...] but they confront each other over historical problems. If they fail to give birth to the union of Asia, then there is no reason why [Asian] cities can't take over [...] Cities such as Seoul can move towards a model of "United Cities," rather than Nations. Cities are now becoming cosmopolitan and "global" megacities are becoming ever-more cosmopolitized [...] this is a starting point for inter-city cooperation.

The sudden passing of Beck shocked Korean society, and conservative and liberal media outlets alike paid their

respects to him. Seoul's Mayor Park Won-Soon extended his condolences, stating, "I will strive to make Seoul a model city which can overcome the numerous risks which Professor Beck warned about through citizen participation and intercity cooperation." Korea University Professor Kim Mun-Jo wrote a tribute for *The JoongAng Ilbo*, while Research Professor Hong Chan-Sook of Seoul National University wrote a heartfelt remembrance for *The Kyunghang Shinmun*, drawing on her experience as his student in Munich: "He always offered a helping hand and warm comfort for his pupil who had come from a far and unfamiliar country in the East."

In *The Hankyoreh*, I described Beck as the warmest and most passionate Western scholar whom I have ever met. At Mayor Park's request, Beck had agreed to launch a "Seoul Project" for participatory risk governance starting in January of 2015, expressing great enthusiasm for this project in our last Skype conversation on December 22. He even proposed a "Parliament for Risk Actors in East Asia," an idea he had taken from Bruno Latour shortly after an early December workshop in Paris. This March, when the Seoul project held its kick-off conference, the famous monk Ven. Myoung Jin, whom Beck and his wife met during their 2008 visit to Seoul, led a memorial service for Beck.

In Japan, Beck first gained recognition in environmental sociology, and in the early 2000s, his concept of individualization became increasingly popular. But Beck became especially visible after the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster: in a 2011 interview, he elaborated on the nature of risk, but also urged Japanese citizens to get involved and

to prevent industry and professionals from monopolizing decisions.

The impact of Beck's theory of risk society in Japan after Fukushima paralleled his impact on the world after Chernobyl. Upon his death, obituaries in leading national newspapers such as the *Asahi Shimbun*, *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, *Mainichi Shimbun*, *Yomiuri Shimbun*, *Sankei Shimbun*, and many local newspapers outlined his achievements; Beck's close associate Professor Munenori Suzuki of Hosei University described Beck as "a broad-minded intellectual giant who examined risk."

Beck was perhaps less well-known to the Chinese public, but he was a formidable presence in Chinese academe: at least 8,000 Chinese academic journal articles mention Beck and risk society. Despite his lower public profile in China, major newspapers and media reported the news of Beck's death. In a full-page article for *Wenhui Daily* entitled "Four Keywords of Beck's risk society theory," Professor Sun Guodong from Fudan University summarized Beck's contribution through the keywords "second modernity, reflexivity, subpolitics, cosmopolitanism." Professor Wu Qiang of Tsinghua University wrote an article about Beck for *New Century Magazine*. Many academics dedicated entries on their Weibo "micro-blogs" to Beck. As in Japan and in Korea, the death of Ulrich Beck was deeply mourned in China. ■

Direct all correspondence to Sang-Jin Han  
<[hansjin@snu.ac.kr](mailto:hansjin@snu.ac.kr)>

<sup>1</sup> The author wishes to thank Sae-Seul Park, Professor Midori Ito, Mikako Suzuki, Professor Yulin Chen and Zhifei Mao for their contributions in collecting the necessary information from Korea, Japan and China.

# > Ulrich Beck's Divergent Influences in North America

by **Fuyuki Kurasawa**, Department of Sociology, York University, Toronto, Canada and Board Member of the ISA Research Committee on Sociological Theory (RC16)



Ulrich Beck at the 2014 ISA World Congress of Sociology in Yokohama.

Given Ulrich Beck's unrelenting commitment to cosmopolitanism – something that he not only theorized, but lived and deeply felt – perhaps it is appropriate that a commemorative article about his role in North American sociology should be written by a Japanese-French-Canadian sociologist. While I had long been familiar with Beck's work, I first met him when he visited Toronto in the mid-2000s. I vividly remember his fascination with the city's embrace of architectural modernism (symbolized by its City Hall designed by Finnish architect Viljo Revell) and his enthusiasm for its ethno-cultural pluralism – Toronto being one of the world's richest social laboratories for the study of diversity. Of course, these themes were among Beck's core intellectual concerns, and as we walked and talked, I discovered that, beyond their intellectual resonance, reflexive modernization and cosmopolitanism were practical, everyday questions for him.

In assessing Beck's impact in North America, we need to distinguish between at least three territorial-cum-intellectual sociological worlds. His greatest influence is probably on French-language Québécois sociology – not surprisingly, given its historical ties with European sociological thinking. Several of Beck's central concepts and lines of argument serve as reference points for major Québécois sociologists, who have engaged with notions of risk society and reflexive

modernization in writings on modernity and postmodernity (Michel Freitag, Joseph Yvon Thériault), on the rise of individualization (Daniel Dagenais), and with Beck's notion of cosmopolitanism in reflecting on pan-American transcultural practices (Jean-François Côté). In fact, the most established Québécois journal of sociology, *Sociologie et sociétés*, devoted a special issue to cosmopolitanism in 2012, using Beck's writings as a point of reference.

A second North American sociological world is formed by English-Canadian sociology, which – befitting its position as an intersection between European and US sociological poles – is marked by an intermediate degree of engagement with Beck's *œuvre*. Although perhaps less visible in English-speaking Canada than in Québec, his writings have affected at least three disciplinary subfields: the sociology of securitization and surveillance, notably regarding the links between new security regimes and risk assessment (David Lyon, Sean P. Hier, Daniel Béland); environmental sociology, via case studies of institutionalized public management of locally-based risk problems and sites (Harris Ali); and Canadian political economy, especially in relation to precarious employment (Leah Vosko).

US sociology, by far the largest, of the three North American zones, is the one within which Beck's work left the

lightest imprint; US exceptionalism is particularly striking when compared to Beck's influence in Europe, Asia, or South America (to which the other articles in this issue of *Global Dialogue* attest). It may be tempting to fall back upon the well-worn and rather facile juxtaposition of US empiricism and European theoreticism to explain this anomalous situation, but more substantive factors are at play. From an institutional perspective, no US-based network of Beckian collaborators or followers disseminated his ideas via leading US sociology departments (Michigan, Wisconsin, Chicago, Berkeley, Harvard, etc.) or journals (*American Journal of Sociology*, *American Sociological Review*, etc.). Moreover, instead of aiming for a unified analytical framework, Beck preferred to write articles in an essay style, through which he could develop a shifting conceptual apparatus in reaction to rapidly changing socio-historical circumstances. Hence, his concepts were not readily made operational for the purposes of detailed and precise empirical investigations of various domains of social life. In this respect, his rather muted visibility within US sociological circles resembles that of Zygmunt Bauman; the limited impact of both these thinkers stands in sharp contrast to Bourdieu's quasi-canonical presence. Additionally, to use Michael Burawoy's influential taxonomy, Beck was a traditional public sociologist whose work does not fit neatly within the strictures of US professional sociology. His public intellectual activity – most recently, his critiques of German Chancellor Angela Merkel (or, as Beck called her, “Merkiavelli”) and her project of a German-centric Europe – was not widely known in the US, though it reflected the kind of publicly and policy-minded sociology for which Burawoy, Orlando Patterson, Michèle Lamont and other prominent US-based sociologists have been calling.

At the same time, however, Beck's influence can be found in many segments of US sociology. Major figures, including Jeffrey C. Alexander, Craig Calhoun, and Saskia Sassen, have substantially engaged with his writings, while the notion of risk society has become a central tenet of US environmental sociology and certain strands of the sociology of science and technology (particularly those dealing with the organizational management of risk and technoscientific risk policy). Interestingly, Beck's call for methodological cosmopolitanism was heeded *avant la lettre* in US-based feminist sociological analyses of intersectional modes of domination, world-systems theorists, comparative-historical sociologists studying civilizations or empires, multi-sited global ethnographers, and political sociologists exploring transnational “contentious politics,” amongst others. This is to say, then, that an implicit – oftentimes unsuspected – affinity has been operating for years between Beck's critique of methodological nationalism and some of the most dynamics currents of US sociology.

To continue his legacy, I would propose four research themes that build upon his interests. The first would examine the socio-political implications of ever-accelerating cycles of emerging global risks. This would include understanding the highly selective processes whereby organizations symbolically and politically constitute certain developments as urgent risks (e.g., terrorism) while neglecting others (e.g., systemic poverty and structural violence). Second, we should foreground the impact of global forces on social phenomena – no matter what their analytical scale – and thereby problematize, rather than take for granted, the character of “the social” as our object of study. Third, we should try to better understand the functioning of actors and institutions that present egalitarian and culturally pluralistic collective projects sympathetic to cosmopolitanism, but, just as importantly, make sense of anti-cosmopolitan, jingoistic forces that are a significant presence in global civil society. Fourth, we could develop data collection and methodological tools that do not solely or implicitly take the nation-state as their default unit of analysis, in order to compare and contrast supra- or sub-national phenomena, actors, and institutions (such as cities, regions, or transnational corporations). Beck has, indeed, set an agenda as well as a framework for addressing the pressing issues of our time.

Beck and I last met in December (2014), at a Paris workshop on cosmopolitan data and research methods, when he spoke with great enthusiasm of his forthcoming book, *The Metamorphosis of the World*. He saw it as his *magnum opus*, an argument for a new social scientific worldview and frame of reference that could analyze the metamorphic changes that we are witnessing today. This was but the latest of his visionary ideas, and yet more evidence of his “big picture” intellectual creativity. On the last night of the workshop, I had dinner with a friend at a small traditional bistro, the kind that is disappearing quickly from Paris's central *arrondissements*. As we were leaving the restaurant, we realized that Beck and his wife, Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim – a first-rate sociologist in her own right – were just ahead of us and thus must have dined there as well. We didn't want to intrude as they walked away, but we caught a brief glimpse of them, walking hand in hand, before they gradually were swallowed by the chilly, foggy air of that Parisian night. This will be my lasting memory of Ulrich Beck, a man of great intellect and a gentle soul, wandering the streets of our social world. His death is a great loss to me on a personal level, to sociology, and to the social sciences as a whole. ■

Direct all correspondence to Fuyuki Kurasawa <[kurasawa@yorku.ca](mailto:kurasawa@yorku.ca)>

# > Ireland's Journey to Economic Disaster

by **Seán Ó Riain**, National University of Ireland Maynooth, Ireland

**I**n the 1990s, Ireland was known worldwide as the fast-growing “Celtic Tiger.” Booming exports driven by foreign investment got the headlines, but the real story was a massive growth in employment in a country historically marked by high unemployment and emigration. At the end of the 1990s boom, Irish society had hitherto unimaginable resources available, including economic, institutional and cultural riches. The Irish economy had been stabilized, significant developmental gains were made, and the massive burden of repaying a huge national debt left over from the 1980s was about to be lifted.

By 2008, however, those resources had disappeared in smoke, apparently exploded to pieces by the financial crisis. The 1990s poster child for liberal global economics had been transformed into a cautionary tale of capitalism at its most reckless.

What led to this dramatic transformation? Three of the grand themes of contemporary capitalism – financialization, international integration and “liberal” economic policies – intertwined to make Ireland’s crisis particularly dramatic. First, the 1990s boom had built on productive investment in new industries supported by lively developmental state agencies, but the 2000s saw the rise of property speculation, with cheap credit and speculative “flipping” of residential and commercial buildings driving a real estate bubble. Ultimately this led to a banking crash, and massive bank debts were loaded onto the public.

Second, Ireland’s financialization had been driven to dangerous heights by the changing dynamics of European integration. In the 1990s, European public funds supported a high proportion of Ireland’s investment. In the 2000s, however, huge inflows of private lending dominated the economy, and Irish banks became heavily indebted to international lenders. As a matter of policy, the European Union promoted increased financial integration – including through the creation of the euro as a unifying currency – even as many national governments and the European Commission reduced social and capital investment. Where once Europe had invested heavily in the future, it now speculated on it.

Third, Ireland’s own national politics helped turn the pressures of international financialization into a domestic disaster. The government of the late 1990s combined populism and neoliberalism in a dangerous cocktail, cutting almost all taxes and becoming ever-more dependent on a property sales tax to fund increased spending. When the credit and real estate bubbles burst in the crisis of 2008, Ireland was left with a huge hole in its public finances – and in response, Ireland shifted abruptly to dramatically increased taxes and drastic cuts in spending.

Ireland’s story offers some important lessons about actually existing economic liberalism. Often classified with the Anglo-American “liberal” family of capitalisms, some features of Ireland’s experience are familiar. Cutting capital gains tax and providing tax breaks to boost investment, relying on the stock market to provide oversight, insisting on “light touch” banking regulation and limiting state capacity to even gather information about bank activities – all these crucial and familiar “market mechanisms” contributed directly to Ireland’s disastrous crash.

There were other elements too, of course. A highly centralized government system gave enormous power to a small group of key ministers, facilitating a narrow and closed view of economic development while weakening democratic governance. Fiscal policies that drove the speculative bubble ever higher while weakening the national tax base laid the foundations for later austerity. A welfare state that focused on cash payments rather than universal public services undermined public support for protecting social services. All of these were political factors that had a major impact. But each is also a characteristic of the “liberal” world of capitalism. The Anglo-American liberal economies tend to have more hierarchical public and private organizations and to give more power to government parties; they tend to run budget deficits and emphasize benefits linked to income rather than universal services. These features may not be aspects of “markets” but they are most common in liberal capitalisms – and are therefore common elements of actually existing liberalism.



More than six years after its crash, Ireland's economy is now showing signs of a fragile and uneven recovery. In particular, employment is growing and tax revenues are increasing, while budget deficits are narrowing. However, Ireland's ability to move forward is threatened by the same three trends that contributed to its crash. While banks are not lending as recklessly as they once did, they provide little credit to productive businesses, and the government has only just created a long-promised state investment bank. Both finance and property are once again being boosted as growth sectors, so rising rents and prices are putting pressure on households and small businesses.

Alongside this emerging re-financialization, the Eurozone's policy response has been famously inadequate. Perhaps it is not surprising that European leaders have

**“Where once Europe had invested heavily in the future, it now speculated on it”**

pursued “austerity” as even Europe's social democracies have historically been reluctant to run budget deficits and expose themselves to international financial markets. But it does seem surprising that these same social democracies have consistently rejected serious attempts to balance current spending cuts with significant investment plans to boost growth or social well-being. A current investment plan, channeled through public agencies, is dwarfed by a new round of “quantitative easing,” which shovels funds into private finance.

Finally, Ireland's current government is rushing once more to cut taxes, not surprisingly a popular move with a beleaguered population. This brings into focus a challenge for the forces opposing current European and Irish austerity policies. Contrary to common perceptions, balancing budgets has not been a tactic of Europe's economic liberals, but of the EU's social democrats. They have sought social solidarity in a social contract based on high employment, strong social services and egalitarian wages – all wrapped in a protective shell of prudent finances. The Irish and European approaches today emphasize only the shell, including precious little of the social protection. The re-discovery of an older social democratic project involving prudence, protection and economically and socially productive activity – an approach too long marginalized within European Union policy debates – is long overdue. ■

Direct all correspondence to Seán Ó Riain <[Sean.Oriain@nuim.ie](mailto:Sean.Oriain@nuim.ie)>

# > In Defense of the Public Realm

by **Mary P. Corcoran**, National University of Ireland Maynooth, Ireland



*Manifestation of a renewed civil society – allotments in the outer suburbs of Dublin. Photo by Mary Corcoran.*

**A**s in other liberal democracies, the institutional public realm – as represented by publicly provided goods and services, education and public service media – has found itself in retreat in Ireland. At the same time, what I call the interstitial public realm – events below the radar, activities and practices that embody publicness and public spiritedness – is increasingly making its presence felt as Irish society comes to terms with the austerity years. It is possible to visualize a reformed Republic in which the values crystallizing in the interstitial public realm diffuse into the institutional public realm, forcing a rebalancing of the relationships between market, state and civil society.

The formal public realm has suffered a series of setbacks with the withdrawal of material resources and its

exposure to unrelenting criticism. This is the outcome of 30 years of “private affluence and public squalor,” to use the words of J.K. Galbraith. Health providers, educators and public servants are the butt of broadsides from politicians, private sector cheer leaders and the media. Anthony Cawley’s analysis of media framing of the public sector in Ireland from 2008 to 2010 is instructive in this regard. He demonstrates that media reporting represented the public sector in opposition to the private sector, with the public sector most commonly associated with “cost,” “burden” and “spending” whereas the private sector was mostly associated with “investment” and “wealth creation.” We have become so used to this polarizing device that it almost passes without notice.

In the years leading up to the crisis, Ireland was reconfigured through

financialization and marketization. It was not just the public goods and services sector that were undermined. Public intellectuals found it increasingly difficult (or in some cases inconvenient) to inhabit a critical space. Some have claimed that public intellectuals did not protest enough against the rampant market fundamentalism choking Irish political life and culture. Public intellectuals found themselves playing second fiddle to fast-talking technocrats. The voices of those who did speak out went unheard or unheeded.

Given the hegemonic role of the Catholic Church in a largely theocratic (and very inward-looking) state, civil society has always been relatively poorly developed and underresourced, at least compared to other European countries. The country has few authoritative institutions beyond the boundaries of the state that offer a platform for elaborating and defending the value of “the public” whether it applies to our public goods and services, our public intellectuals or the public realm in our cities and towns.

Crisis can also, however, be viewed as an opportunity. Ireland is going through a period of economic retrenchment, political volatility and psycho-social reflection. We “lost the plot,” “lost the run of ourselves” and we lost our economic sovereignty. But we have also become more resilient and more resourceful – most visible in the interstitial public realm in our cities, towns and neighborhoods. Here we find evidence of animation and renewal as people embrace their public, civic and social selves through a range of everyday practices in production and exchange; in participatory, democratic and direct forms of action; conducted via in-between and virtual spaces. Even a cursory exami-

nation of everyday life demonstrates the presence of “spaces of potential” in our interstitial public realm, often fashioned from below, nurtured by active citizens and alive to the human need for civic interaction.

Productive spaces such as urban allotments and exchange spaces such as farmers markets have been flourishing in cities and their hinterlands in recent years, challenging the mass consumer model, reconnecting people with nature and raising awareness about issues of environment and sustainability. Public libraries have been quietly reinventing themselves for the 21st century and constitute an outstanding example of service provision embedded in localities and addressing the needs of newcomers, whether Irish or immigrant. A senior police officer confided that the most integrated space in the city of Dublin is a public library in the newer West Dublin suburbs.

There are any number of examples of activity-based spaces of potential, which help to animate the public realm from the ground up: the annual Liffey swim, the Dublin marathon or the “forty-foot” public bathing point in South Dublin are open to all, attract people from all walks of life, have low barriers to entry and are public expressions of our (Irish) joy in self-flagellation! Up to 700 festivals and events are staged annually over the length and breadth of Ireland. These “staged” spaces of potential which generally rely on huge volunteer and goodwill efforts on the part of local communities remind us of the pleasures to be derived from art, food, history, music, literature and poetry.

“In-between” spaces of potential include pop-up art galleries, stores and performances (often in ghost

buildings left over after the property crash), flash mob events and the newly popular car boot sales. Such impromptu events enliven our public spaces, make us re-examine some of our presuppositions (recycling, upcycling as well as cycling itself are increasingly popular). Virtual spaces of potential operate through computer mediated communication, and afford opportunities for political organizing, entrepreneurial fund-raising and a vibrant creative commons.

The work of the Gaelic Athletic Association – a volunteer organization which is frequently the first port of call for those seeking to build communities in commuter towns and green field suburbs – plays an important role in fostering a sense of identity, belonging and public stewardship. Democratic/participative spaces encompass initiatives as diverse as “Claiming our Future,” a federation of civil society groups that have come together to explore how best to achieve a more equal, inclusive and sustainable Ireland; the Men’s Shed project which provides a meeting place for older men to congregate and enjoy craft-based activities and leisure time pursuits; and the highly effective Anti-Water charges campaign that overflows the streets. All of these spaces of potential constitute important sites of civic engagement that have the effect of re-animating the Irish public realm from below, so that the citizenry see that there is more to public life than the economy. It is also about society. As this interstitial public realm grows and diffuses it has the potential to re-capture the institutional public realm as part of the wider project of renewing the Republic. ■

Direct all correspondence to Mary Corcoran  
<[Mary.Corcoran@nuim.ie](mailto:Mary.Corcoran@nuim.ie)>

# > The Irish Women's Movement

by **Pauline Cullen**, National University of Ireland Maynooth, Ireland



*The first wave of the Irish women's movement included Cumann na mBan – a women's Republican paramilitary organization that fought in the 1916 Easter Uprising against British rule.*

Ireland's long history of patriarchy is matched by the ongoing evolution of its women's movements. Today's complex, transnational feminism finds its precursor in the colonial era. The first wave of the Irish women's movement dates from the mid-19th century, with the franchise secured for women in 1918 while still under British colonial rule. First-wave feminists played a role in the nationalist movement, but their demands were sidelined later, during the construction of a conservative Catholic post-colonial Irish state. In the 1970s, the second wave marked a critical period of radicalism and consolidation, with important gains on issues of violence against women and women's reproductive rights. The 1980s, in

contrast, were a period of social conservatism, high unemployment and emigration, marked by a significant backlash against gains made by women's rights advocates, including constitutional bans on divorce and abortion.

The 1990s brought a lull in feminist activism, marked by the decentralization and fragmentation of the women's movement into a network of localized community and voluntary groups. Nonetheless, the legalization of divorce, the decriminalization of homosexuality, and increased labor force participation of women provide evidence of feminist activism and a shift in societal attitudes. During this period, feminist activists successfully publicized many previously

stigmatized issues, while securing state support for equality, contraception legislation and funding for a variety of women's services. The 1990s were also punctuated by litigation on reproductive rights through the European Courts, a strategy that had mixed results in terms of constitutional change. This third wave culminated in a movement that was increasingly professionalized and mainstreamed into a form of state feminism.

Recently, in reaction to economic recession, the resurgence of activism by the Catholic Right, and state-led austerity, new contemporary groups have emerged in the Irish context. The Irish Feminist Network (IFN), founded in 2010, aims to mobilize younger women; Pro-choice groups continue to mobilize support for reproductive rights, an issue that continues to politicize successive feminist generations. The crisis has also negatively affected women's collective infrastructure and capacity for agency – evidenced in a series of cuts to gender-equality agencies and public services, as well as in programs supporting women and families. Remarkably, austerity's disproportionately negative impact on gender equality coexists with relatively strong feminist political efforts, including energetic protests against the recession's consequences for gender equity.

While global forces such as the Great Recession and the increasingly neoliberal direction of Ireland's developmental paradigm undoubtedly have direct implications for Irish women and Irish feminism, the role of international forces in the Irish women's movement has been a point of debate: while some authors see the movement as homegrown, others view it as contingent on international resources. The European Union (EU) has been often characterized as an important factor in Ireland's debates over gender equity. In the 1980s and 1990s conservative resistance to the EU's "modernizing influence" on Ireland's divorce and abortion laws continued to shape feminist mobilization, while EU gender-mainstreaming and the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) have more recently opened opportunities for feminist advocacy and the gender equality paradigm. In the Irish politics of gender, comparisons to Europe provided greater legitimacy to feminists who challenged national policy. On the other hand, of course, domestic Irish feminist activism has been crucial: the Europeanization of Irish gender equality policy and substantive progress have been achieved through protest, lobbying and litigation. In 2014 over 30 pieces of Irish legislation with a bearing on gender

equality had origins in EU membership. The EU has also offered feminist groups the opportunity to work transnationally as members of pan-European women's organizations such as the European Women's Lobby.

However, the EU does not offer a panacea for deeply-rooted and pervasive gender inequality in Irish society: at the European level, gender equity policies remain focused on wage-earning female European citizens. It can be argued that the EU today offers fewer opportunities for advancing gender equality in the Irish context than it did in the past, as pressure towards de-gendering is common at both the national and EU level. Similarly, neoliberal concerns with the rights of individuals and efficiency of organizations and markets combine to support "equal opportunity" strategies, which may erode old gender divisions but have also reconfigured gender relations, sometimes creating new burdens for women. In the Irish case, improvements in women's "human capital" and their participation in paid employment are seen as hallmarks of progress, but too often, social reproduction, caring, structural discrimination, or power imbalances between women and men remain outside the accepted framework.

Beyond the EU, Irish feminist groups have long sought to pressure the Irish state through UN monitoring processes for international conventions, including the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing platform. The 2014 International Committee on Civil and Political Rights report on Ireland strongly recommended action on gender equality and greater participation of women.

Ireland continues to rank low in terms of women's representation in economic, political and public life, and arguments for including women in senior political and economic decision-making roles remain relevant, as do calls for changing Ireland's patriarchal political culture. Nevertheless, the success of the Irish economy during the Celtic Tiger era and the success of the women's movement have opened new possibilities. Irish feminisms today are best understood as complex, adaptive and differentiated; characterized by a capacity to engage with a range of social, cultural and political perspectives; and entangled with a variety of local, national and transnational movements. Even on this complex ground, feminist political agency remains crucial to realizing gender equality. ■

Direct all correspondence to Pauline Cullen <[Pauline.Cullen@nuim.ie](mailto:Pauline.Cullen@nuim.ie)>

# > Celtic Connections: Ireland's Global Families

by **Rebecca Chiyoko King-O'Riain**, National University of Ireland Maynooth, Ireland



| *Ireland is inundated with Global Love.*

Once famous for its emigration, Ireland is today a more global nation, the result of immigration during the boom of the 1990s and 2000s. Contrary to many expectations, not all immigrants who came to Ireland during the boom went “home” to Poland and elsewhere during the economic bust of 2008. Indeed, many stayed and started families. As regards the Irish themselves, while many left in the 1980s, many also returned during the boom – particularly the more highly educated, bringing back global experiences and often non-Irish partners, children and transnational networks. All of this has worked to make Ireland an increasingly global hub of communication.

By 2011, the Irish Census found that 17% of the Irish population indicated that they had not been born in Ireland, an increase of 25% from 2006. Again in 2011, 12% indicated they did not have Irish nationality. While 85% of the population indicated that they were white and Irish, there was also an 87% increase between 2006 and 2011 in the population with non-Chinese Asian ethnic background

(mainly Indian, Pakistani, and Filipino), most of whom were under the age of 40. Over half a million (514,068) of the 4.5 million Irish residents spoke a foreign language at home in 2011 and, unsurprisingly, Polish was by far the most common, followed by French, Lithuanian and German. On top of these demographic changes, technology also enabled new transnational practices. The rapid expansion of broadband and wireless capabilities in Ireland and abroad have meant that 81% of people in Ireland in 2012 connected to the world via the Internet up from 61% in 2008.

What do this increasing volume of contacts and the rise of intimate transnational connections between Irish and non-Irish people mean for relations within and beyond Irish society?

Families – in their diverse forms – are at the crossroads of intersecting institutions that shape cultural understandings of love and intimacy, determining which loves and intimacies are seen as legitimate and which are not. These understandings often take the form of repertoires of emo-

tional behaviors. These transnational families and emotional practices have become ever more central to Irish everyday life. We know from the Census 2011 that there are “mixed Irish/non-Irish” households. This could be family members with different nationalities such as Irish-born children and their Nigerian-born parents who live together or groups of friends from different nations living communally in a single household. Some ethnic groups have particularly high rates of living in such “mixed” households, including those from the USA (72%), UK (64%) and Nigeria (77%).

With increasing ethnic/racial diversity, mixed Irish/non-Irish households, and a diversity of family forms in Ireland, Ireland has experienced the growth of a family-based multiculturalism, what Ulrich Beck calls “global families.” These families are often interracial, intercultural, interfaith, and multilingual, connected to others outside Ireland and across the world through electronic media. 29% of Internet users in Ireland in 2012 reported they used webcam technology to videoconference, thereby creating and maintaining transnational emotional support networks.

How are these increasingly diverse families serving as a hub for social networks connecting Ireland to the world? As already suggested, one of the main vehicles for transnational connections is not economic, but emotional and cultural ties, increasingly sustained through the use of digital technology. The use of Skype webcam technology allows families in Ireland to create spaces of “transconnectivity,” simultaneously practicing belonging across vast temporal and geographic distances. This in turn subtly shapes how people “do” emotion work with multiple platforms (polymedia) of digital technology. Elliott and Urry argue that the increasing

use of technology has led people to “bank” their emotions into technological devices (such as text messaging and photos on line) for withdrawal at a later time – “the individual might be said to be engaged in an act of ‘emotional banking’ depositing affects, moods, dispositions into the object world and storing such aspects of self-experience until they are withdrawn for future forms of symbolization and thinking” (Elliott and Urry, *Mobile Lives*, 2010: 39). In addition to emotional banking, these transnational families also engage in practices of what I call “emotional streaming,” through continuous and ongoing interaction using the webcam.

Skype webcam is not simply used as a voice call with a small visual aspect – sitting at the computer screen in a face-to-face headshot. Instead, continuous webcam use is more like “streaming” a video or movie on line and is used as a “window” into the movement, noise and chaos of everyday life over hours, not minutes. Using Skype, sometimes daily and for long periods of time, to stay in touch with their loved ones, makes users solidify emotional ties and create a sense of belonging across space and time. The use of the webcam helps transnationally connected families to cope with and respond to conditions of time and space intensification – de-intensifying emotional interaction by leaving the webcam on all day and enabling ongoing long-distance interaction.

New households in Ireland are changing not only the demographic structure of the society but also the geographic reach of the family itself. With these new technologies, families are changing the ways that Irish people – and the increasingly diverse people they are connected to – live their emotions and their intimate lives. ■

Direct all correspondence to Rebecca King-O’Riain  
<[Rebecca.king-orain@nuim.ie](mailto:Rebecca.king-orain@nuim.ie)>