

# GLOBAL DIALOGUE

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## Indian Democracy at War with Itself

Nandini Sundar

## Turkish Totalitarianism

Cihan Tugal

## The End of Lulism in Brazil

Ruy Braga

## Labor Politics in Neoliberal Argentina

Rodolfo Elbert

## The Deep Story of the American Right

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- > Student Campaigns against Sexual Violence
- > Mondragon's Third Way
- > Translating *Global Dialogue* into Romanian

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# > Editorial

## Populism of the 21st Century

**B**etween 2011 and 2014 *Global Dialogue* reported optimistically on the social movements engulfing the world – Arab Uprisings, Occupy movements, Indignados, labor movements, student movements, environmental movements, and struggles against rural dispossession. The optimism was short-lived as these movements set in motion changes that have led to a wave of reactionary populist movements and authoritarian regimes. This issue presents accounts of this right-wing upsurge: Arlie Hochschild's analysis of Trumpism and the Tea Party in the United States; Cihan Tuğal's examination of the authoritarian turn in the Turkish regime; Ruy Braga's explanation of the right-wing coup in Brazil; Rodolfo Elbert's dissection of the neoliberal turn in Argentina; and Nandini Sundar's graphic portrait of the on-going violence in India against the Naxelite movement. As we have argued on previous occasions we can see these movements in terms of Karl Polanyi's analysis of the over-extension of the market. Specifically, today the rule of finance capital has led to the globalization of precarity, giving rise to swings between right-wing and left-wing populist movements, both sharing the rejection of parliamentary politics.

We can also see financialization at work in our university systems. Thus, in this issue, Huw Beynon analyzes the dysfunctional managerialism that has overtaken the British university as it tries to stay economically afloat. He describes how the system of evaluating research "excellence" produces mediocrity, and how the dependence on fees has turned students into consumers and universities into advertising agencies, competing to maximize student "satisfaction." It is an open question whether UK's corporate model is leading the rest of the world or whether moderation will prevail as it does in the Canada described by Neil McLaughlin and Antony Puddephatt – although even here the academic world had to weather the storm of a conservative Prime Minister.

We publish four tributes to the life and work of John Urry, who sadly and unexpectedly passed away in March of this year. John Urry was one of the world's most original and prolific sociologists, a pioneer in so many areas: from the transformation of capitalism to the significance of tourism that set in motion a research program into social and geographical mobilities; from global warming to his recent and very disturbing book, *Offshoring*, that dwelt on the expanding economy of secrecy that is intensifying global inequalities and human rights violations. He will perhaps best be remembered as a pioneer of the sociology of the future, daring to forecast the catastrophes to which our planet is heading.

We have three further articles: on the burgeoning student movements against sexual harassment in the US; a defense of the great Mondragon cooperative against its detractors; and, finally, how *Global Dialogue*'s Romanian team meets the challenges of translation. We hope other teams will write about their own experiences of translating sociology from English into different national languages.

> **Global Dialogue can be found in 16 languages at the [ISA website](#)**

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



**Nandini Sundar**, leading Indian sociologist of political violence and author of *The Burning Forest*, dissects India's war in the central state of Chhattisgarh.



**Cihan Tuğal**, Turkish sociologist and author of *Passive Revolution: Absorbing the Islamic Challenge to Capitalism*, proposes Turkey as a model of 21st century totalitarianism.



**Ruy Braga**, celebrated commentator on the precarious classes in Brazil and the rise and fall of the Workers' Party (PT), analyzes the latest crisis in Brazilian politics.



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# > A Democracy at War with Itself

by **Nandini Sundar**, Delhi School of Economics, India



Salwa Judum – government-sponsored vigilantes.  
By unknown local photographer.

**Nandini Sundar** is a well-known sociologist of political violence. She has spent more than 25 years studying Bastar, an intense zone of conflict within the central Indian state of Chhattisgarh. She first lived there while doing research for her PhD dissertation, published as *Subalterns and Sovereigns: An Anthropological History of Bastar 1854-1996* (Oxford University Press, 1997). Her new and long-awaited book, *The Burning Forest: India's War in Bastar* (Juggernaut Press, 2016), describes what has become of this war zone and how it has been shaped by outside political forces, but it is also an account of her experience litigating in the Supreme Court, and the different phases of the almost decade-long and still continuing legal process seeking a constitutional injunction against vigilantism and redress for victims of human rights violations. Although she and her colleagues got a spectacular judgment in 2011, the state has simply ignored the Court's directions, and continued with its counterinsurgency campaign. *The Burning Forest* seeks to capture the mixture of institutional failure, state impunity and public resilience that go into the making of Indian democracy.

India's democracy attracts strong opinions. The dominant position, voiced by Indian politicians, the mainstream media and the country's elite, is celebratory, arguing that among postcolonial societies, India can be proud of its universal suffrage, federalism, subordination of the army to civilian rule, and independent judiciary. Activists, on the other hand, tend to be more dismissive, arguing that India's democracy is a "sham" – pointing to colonial continuities in "emergency" laws like the Northeast's Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) which empowers the army to shoot to kill on mere suspicion; frequent extra-judicial killings, custodial deaths, torture, rape and disappearances; and organized massacres linked to the ruling party, targeting minorities like Sikhs (Delhi, 1984) and Muslims (Gujarat, 2002).

Academic work on Indian democracy, concentrated in political science and dealing largely with political parties, elections, institutional frameworks, and developmental regimes, tends to take a centrist approach. In *The Burning Forest: India's War in Bastar*, by contrast, I undertake a sociological examination of an ongoing counterinsurgency campaign against what the government calls "left-wing extremism" and explore what this reveals about Indian democracy.

India's current offensive against Maoist guerrillas affiliated to the Communist Party of India (Maoist) – "Naxalites," as they are popularly called – is now a decade old. But whereas the first phase of the Naxalite movement which began in the late 1960s and was brutally crushed in the 1970s, attracted scholarly attention, there are as yet few detailed books on the contemporary phase. This is because it can be difficult to do research on such a contested and securitized field, but also because the movement is now concentrated among indigenous people or scheduled tribes and scheduled castes in rural and forested areas, in contrast to the Naxalite movement's earlier phase, which also had middle-class, urban, and student supporters. Today, most descriptions of the conflict come from journalists who have traveled with the Maoists, on the one hand, and reports from security think tanks, on the other.

Although the Maoist movement is spread across several states, the war's epicenter is a densely-forested, mineral-rich area known as Bastar, inhabited largely by adivasis or indigenous people – a region of about 39,114 square kilometers in the Central Indian state of Chhattisgarh. The Maoists first came to this area from the neighboring state of Andhra Pradesh intending to set up a retreat from repression, but the local people began to make their own demands. Starting from the 1980s, the Maoists established what is almost a parallel state – distributing land, setting up collective work groups, settling disputes, taxing contractors, and entering into the minutiae of intimate relations. As villagers participated in the making of the Maoist state, they inflected it with their own cultural traditions.

In June 2005, India's national and state governments launched an amorphous vigilante organization called *Salwa Judum* (literally, "purification hunt") in South and West Bastar, calling it a spontaneous "people's movement" against Naxalite violence. This campaign was helped by the region's underlying class configuration: settler racism towards indigenous people compounds and supports the state's modernizing drive, which is based on displacing indigenous people for mining and industry. *Salwa Judum* leaders were mostly non-indigenous immigrants or clients of powerful politicians from either the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) or the Congress Party who felt threatened by the Maoists – who are considered the major obstacle to mining and investment plans in the region.

Between 2005 and 2007, *Salwa Judum* fighters, accompanied by security forces, burnt houses, looted grain, livestock and money, and raped and killed villagers. The Maoists retaliated with attacks on security forces. About 50,000 villagers were forcibly moved into "relief camps," while equal numbers fled into forests or neighboring states. For the villagers who were displaced and divided, this was the most traumatic event of their lives, and although people gradually began returning home after 2007, conditions remain unsettled.

Officially, 2,468 people – civilians, security forces and Maoist cadres – were killed in Chhattisgarh between 2005 and 2016. The actual number is almost certainly higher, with most deaths in 2005-7, or 2009-11, during Operation Green Hunt, when the government sent in the "Central Armed Police Forces" (CAPF), one stage lower than the army, along with unmanned drones, helicopters, and anti-mine tanks.

Following standard counterinsurgency practice, the government recruited surrendered Maoists to identify their former comrades, as well as local youth who thought they were merely signing up for police jobs. Unable to return to their villages, these Special Police Officers (SPOs) now live in police camps, though they are looked down upon by the regular police forces. While some of the security personnel are trigger-happy, enjoying killing for its own sake as well as for the medals and money they receive, others feel helplessly enmeshed in this conflict. Politicians and senior security officials seem largely indifferent to the human tragedy on all sides.

Today, Bastar is the most militarized zone in the country, with security camps ringed by barbed wire every five to ten kilometers. Even though it is widely recognized that the lack of basic health, education and exploitation are the primary causes of popular support for the Maoists, government expenditure on security measures outstrips spending on welfare by a large margin.

Given the similarities to other counterinsurgency campaigns, it is worth asking whether it makes any difference if a counterinsurgency campaign is conducted in a democracy, rather than a military regime or colonial government. How have different institutions and actors – from political parties and human rights organizations to the media and judiciary – reacted?

Parliamentary politics have been irrelevant to the war, since both India's mainstream parties, the Congress and the BJP, collaborated in promoting it. While the local parliamentary Communist Party of India has played a sterling role, despite severe repression in the process, it does not have much national clout. Statutory institutions like the National Human Rights Commission have been not just disinterested, but actively compromised, while regularly-held elections and the presence of institutions of redress are seen as legitimizing the state, regardless of whether they are effective or democratic.

While the Indian media is both free and energetic, the business interests of media houses and the fact that they do not wish to upset the government beyond a certain point; the fact that regions where counterinsurgency takes place are usually “remote” from urban centers; the fact that there are almost no indigenous or low-caste reporters – all these have meant that massive human rights violations in counterinsurgency are simply not major national concerns. Cycles of reporting in Bastar have ranged from complete neglect to relatively plentiful coverage. But even this has not led to accountability by the government. Structural differences between the English and Hindi media, with the latter operating under more severe economic and political constraints, have also affected coverage.

Human rights organizations have played a central part in uncovering abuses, negotiating with the Maoists for hostages, and framing the debate around state and guerrilla violence. At the same time, a growing reliance on Internet networks by urban human rights activists often obscures critical issues on the ground. In Chhattisgarh, state support for vigilantism was accompanied by the enactment of an open-ended anti-terror law. The arrest of a well-known doctor and civil liberties activist under this law provoked



*Villagers walking long distances in protest against Salwa Judum.  
By unknown local photographer.*

concern among middle-class networks, though the campaign for his release was almost irrelevant for the indigenous citizens who remained targets of direct counterinsurgency violence without any hope of due process.

While local courts have failed systemically, leading to high incarceration rates for ordinary villagers as well as overcrowding in Chhattisgarh's jails, the Indian Supreme Court has played an important role in recognizing mass violations in Bastar. However, endless delays and adjournments, and the state's capacity to simply ignore the Court's orders, have meant that the Court's message has not translated into justice on the ground. Despite a clear injunction to the Chhattisgarh state in 2011 to shut down vigilante organizations like the Salwa Judum, to stop recruiting locals into counterinsurgency operations, to compensate victims of the conflict and to punish those guilty of violations, the state has simply persisted in its violations, as if the Court had never spoken.

Since the Modi regime came to power in 2014, several elements of the Salwa Judum have been revived; for the BJP, state-sponsored vigilantism is the normal mode of politics across the country. However, citizens continue to believe in and fight for the democratic project, even if actually-existing democracy leaves much to be desired. ■

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# > Turkish Totalitarianism

## A Trendsetter rather than a Cultural Curiosity?

by **Cihan Tugal**, University of California, Berkeley, USA



*The hard-won ceasefire of 2013, between the Turkish authorities and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), was violated by Ankara in the summer of 2015.*

**T**urkey's sharp authoritarian turn has surprised many observers: not so long ago, the country was celebrated as an exemplar of liberalism that stood out in a region marked by turbulence. Analysts now seek the causes of this transformation in President Erdoğan's personality or exceptional characteristics of Turkish culture.

But an analysis of liberal success itself gives us more clues (and forebodings for the democratic West). "Liberal democracy" was once held to be the greatest achievement of humankind, but if "liberalism" denotes the apotheosis of individual property and freedom, which in our era goes hand in hand with (neo-)liberalization (privatization of property, restructuring of the welfare state to render individuals self-sufficient, and financialization), the Turkish case shows that liberalization and democratization can proceed together only for a certain time, depending on factors like the repressive and incorporative strength of the state, as well as civic and political capacity.

Turkey's recent experiences may hold warnings for the rest of the world. Once, intellectuals believed that less-developed countries could see their own future in the experiences of the most vigorously capitalist nations. After the debacle of the 1930s, however, many suggested the reverse could also be true: Europeans ultimately experienced what the natives had lived through during colonization. Mass empowerment and individual property/freedom undermined each other at a critical turning point in history (the interwar years). Could these two broad goals dynamite each other yet again?

### > A False Liberal Heaven

Turkey used to be the most secular and democratic country in the Middle East. Its deceptive exceptionality was based on the democratization of the "Kemalist" package by conservative parties. Since the 1950s, several center-right parties gradually liberalized the nationalist, corporatist, and secularist regime that Mustafa Kemal had built in

the first half of the twentieth century. In the 2000s, a new political organization, the Justice and Development Party, further popularized the center-right agenda, combining the country's conservative and Islamist traditions, a shift that sparked popular and intellectual enthusiasm for the neo-liberal reforms that in the 1970s had induced either apathy or outright opposition across the region.

However, there was a darker side to this luminous success story. The mainstream narrative, which still represents Turkey's liberalization in the 2000s as a "model," overlooks the repression of groups who challenged the government's narrative: Alevis, striking workers, environmentalists, leftists, and occasionally the Kurds. Both the Western world and Turkish liberals chose to downplay the sectarian and cultural agenda of the Justice and Development Party, viewing repression as a small price for what the party achieved: high growth rates and the sidelining of the once-dominant Kemalist military. Environmental destruction, worker deaths, lower wages, depoliticization, de-unionization, increasing Sunni sectarianism, patriarchal violence, and urban displacement caused by these achievements (or at least, which accompanied and reinforced them) received little attention.

During the Justice and Development Party's first two terms, political and economic liberalization created many grievances *and* opened up venues to contest them. In the summer of 2013, environmental and urban movements, which had been simmering under the radar, broke their local boundaries. When spontaneous women's movements, Alevi and secularist mobilization joined them, the most massive urban uprising in Turkish history (the Gezi Rebellion) erupted. However, although millions of citizens participated, they could not create a common political platform. Labor and Kurdish leaders gave only restricted support to the Gezi protests, while the main leftist groups tried halfheartedly, at best, to channel the revolt in a more political direction. All three forces paid heavily in subsequent years for their combination of reluctance, confusion, and incapacity.

In 2013, dismayed by the government's increasingly sharp Islamic and authoritarian salvos, many liberals sided with the revolt and attempted to push it in a liberal direction, without any success: the revolt proved unable to expand its agenda beyond the protests' initial goal, that of saving Turkey's most central urban park, Gezi, from destruction.

### > Liberalism's Mutation into Totalitarianism

Despite the revolt's fractured character, the government stuck to its conspiracy narrative, cracking down violently on the rebellion. Afterwards, the governing party became not only more authoritarian, but also more totalitarian, mobilizing its base against opposition voices.

Why did this transformation happen? Liberalism multiplies points of social tension, rather than containing them

– in contrast to the tendencies of corporatism. Structurally stronger polities can contain, absorb, and repress tensions without disrupting liberalism; weaker states, by contrast, are less equipped to deal with explosive tensions within the boundaries of liberalism. Especially when regimes face strong opposition, established institutions and repression may not be enough to control protest movements. In such contexts, elites may resort to counter-mobilization, laying the basis for totalitarianism – a path shaped not only by elite calls for action, but also the presence of political and civic groups ready to respond.

Such networks were abundantly available to Turkey's Justice and Development Party, building on the party's roots in Islamist mobilization from the 1960s through the 1990s. After 2013, responding to what it perceived as intensifying threats, the Turkish regime shifted from what I call "soft totalitarianism" to "hard totalitarianism," moving first against Alevis, striking workers, environmentalists, and socialists, and later against liberals.

Ironically, the strongest post-2013 purge targeted a liberal Islamic group, the Gülen Community – itself a leading actor of soft totalitarianism, which had penetrated institutions one by one, silently emptying them of old regime figures, Alevis, and leftists. The group had managed these purges without any fanfare, in sharp contrast to today's widely publicized and ceremonial expulsions. There had been some struggles between the Gülen community and old Islamist cadres regarding how to share the spoils of power, but this did not get out of hand until Erdoğan's relations with Israel grew tense. Gülen (a cleric with deep ties to American lobbying groups and other Western power centers) was already suspicious of Erdoğan's anti-Israel tone. The game changer, though, was an attempt by a Turkish charitable association, backed by Erdoğan, to break the Gaza blockade. Gülen gave an interview to *The Washington Post*, declaring the action un-Islamic on the grounds that it defied authority. After that, the two components of the "first" Justice and Development Party regime gradually split – a development that came at a high cost for the regime, since it did not have high-quality cadres with which to populate institutions. This boosted the regime's taste for and dependence on mass mobilization and fanaticism.

To this national nudge towards totalitarianism, a more regional, but still contingent, dynamic was added: the Arab uprisings gave rise to new hopes among Turkey's hitherto dormant Islamist circles. Except small circles of liberals on the right and radicals on the left, Turkish Islamists had always dreamed of reviving the Ottoman Empire. The Justice and Development Party's leaders had toned down their militancy over the preceding decade out of a combination of political pragmatism and the prospect of new economic and political spoils, but between 2011 and 2013, the party's barely-contained imperial ambitions were bolstered, and eventually got out of control.





*Turkey's failed military coup of July 16, 2016 played into the hands of Erdoğan, leading to the deepening of authoritarianism.*

The Justice and Development Party's liberal and Western supporters had hoped the party's longstanding imperial inclinations could be institutionalized through a "soft power" approach, an outcome promised by former academic, foreign minister and then prime minister Ahmed Davutoğlu's two doctrines ("Zero Problems with Neighbors" and "Strategic Depth"). Initially, the Arab uprisings appeared likely to further entrench Davutoğlu's efforts, but he was purged in 2016. Why? Because of Erdoğan's personality? Not really. If the regime had been able to capitalize on the Arab Spring as it had hoped, it would not have needed to abandon the soft power approach. Like many other expanding capitalist powers, the business-government nexus in Turkey sought to increase its share in foreign markets. But because of labor unrest, political fragmentation, and ultimately civil wars and military interventions, Egypt, Libya and Syria — the most likely Arab outlets for Turkish capitalists — no longer looked so good for business. These geopolitical-socioeconomic bottlenecks, along with a contracting world market, restricted business expansionism. The regime now had much less cash to redistribute among its base — creating new problems both for Turkey's previously expanding Islamic business class and its welfare programs, which had bought consent from the urban poor. With less recourse to economic spoils, the regime sharpened its Islamic credentials.

In Syria, Turkey's initial economically-rational efforts to softly remove Assad and open the way to a more business-friendly Islamic government were overtaken by a sectarian effort to build a Sunni state at any cost. Turkish miscalculations contributed to the birth of ISIS, which first appeared to be a good counterbalance against the Kurds, but then undermined stability, tourism, and business prospects even in western and southern Turkey. Furthermore, perceived co-operation between anti-Assad jihadis and the only Islamic democracy in the Middle East accentuated Western narratives of Islam's incompatibility with democracy.

The aftermath of these turns have global implications. Turkey's adventurism has destroyed Syria, led to a historic wave of immigration to Europe, and thereby the strongest wave of right-wing mobilization in the continent ever since World War Two. Spurred partially by fears of militant Islamism, the rise of Europe's right sent a very clear signal to Turkey: full European

Union membership is no longer a possibility. This had become clear after 2006, but the realization did not radically reshape the governing party's agenda until the 2010s, when loss of hope in European accession interacted with the other dynamics undermining liberalization. As the Arabs rose up with cries of freedom (a yearning which Turkish elites hoped they could manipulate for business and imperial ambitions), Turkish Islamists lost their long-standing interest in courting Europe.

## > How Turkey's Path could be Repeated Elsewhere

Even though some of these dynamics are peculiar to Turkey, the overall structures that are undermining liberalism throughout the globe could create more Turkey-like cases — especially since many of these dynamics involve interactions between (and within) regions and nations, as well as interactions between national and global processes. Most importantly, the sharp, worldwide right-wing turn among Islamic circles has sent shockwaves throughout the West, inciting not only governmental securitization but also right-wing mobilization. This processual vicious circle, moreover, has more global-structural underpinnings.

Modern history's two great cycles of liberalization both kicked in at a global level. In both periods, disintegration was/is global as well as local. Following the 1920s, the unravelling of classical liberalism led to embedded liberalism in the US and Western Europe, and extremely repressive states or mass-based totalitarianism in the East. Due to emaciated social capacities and increased securitization throughout the globe, embedded liberalism looks less and less likely after today's looming collapse.

Unless intellectuals, politicians, and activists succeed in building a strong global alternative, mass mobilization could produce more lasting totalitarian states in the coming years, even in the West. Turkey's experiences stand as a warning for all of us: failed revolutions usually lead to more monstrous regimes. Especially in the present context, if solid agendas and political organizations do not crystallize after new versions of Gezi, Occupy, and Indignados, the costs could be very high for all of us. ■

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# > The End of Lulism and the Palace Coup in Brazil

by **Ruy Braga**, University of São Paulo, Brazil and member of ISA Research Committee on Labour Movements (RC44)



*Parliamentary coup in Brazil when the lower house voted to impeach President Rousseff.*

**I**n general, analyses of Brazil's current political and economic crisis emphasize the economic policy "errors" of the government, inherited by President Dilma Rousseff of the Workers' Party (PT) from her predecessor, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. While it is true that certain federal policy decisions have interfered with the dynamics of the Brazilian distributive conflict, this focus on political regulation is far too narrow to illuminate the complexity of the current crisis. These explanations tend to obscure the changes in class structure that took place during the Lula era (2002-2010), and to overlook the impact of the international economic crisis. Indeed, such analyses fail to explain how the relationship between political regulation and economic accumulation not only failed to pacify class conflict but radicalized it.

## > Strike Cycles

In the world of work, the collapse of any armistice between subordinate and dominant classes often comes in the form of a strike wave. According to the latest data from the Strike Tracking System of the Inter-Union Department of Statistics and Socioeconomic Studies (SAG-DIEESE), Brazilian workers staged an historically-unprecedented strike wave in 2013, totaling 2,050 strikes – a 134% increase over the previous year, setting a historical record. Thus, the country reversed the steep decline in strikes during the previous two decades and the trade union movement regained at least a part of its political momentum. In several capital cities, bank workers' strikes have become routine. Teachers, civil servants, steelworkers, construction

workers, bus and train drivers and fare collectors also increased their union mobilization between 2013 and 2015. Equally, strikes by private sector workers have increased significantly since 2012.

In 2013, private sector strikes represented 54% of the total. Here, it is especially worth noting an explosion of job actions in the service sector involving unskilled or semi-skilled workers – many of whom are outsourced and underpaid, subject to precarious work contracts and lacking conventional labor rights. In addition to eight national strikes by bank employees, workers in tourism, cleaning, private health, safety, education and communication were especially active, as were transport workers.

In general, union activity expanded outside the categories of employees who have traditionally been seen as central to labor militancy. Even in the public sector, strike activity rose among municipal workers, who tend to be among the more precarious workers in public administration. Overall, in both private and public spheres, strike activity moved from the "center to the periphery" of the union movement, involving increased mobilization by an urban precariat.

Given the magnitude of this strike cycle, perhaps this is the most underestimated explanation for the current political crisis: the ruling classes simply do not need a union bureaucracy that has proven itself unable to control its rank and file. From this perspective, the only credible ruling class project would involve the restoration of capitalist accumulation, by deep-

ening social dispossession through attacks on workers' rights.

The current strike cycle and the vicissitudes faced by Brazil's subaltern classes in their precarious way of life both reveal the limits and ambiguities inherent in the Lulista project. To understand the contradictions of this project involves analyzing the limits of the PT's precarious hegemony over the past thirteen years.

### > Precarious Hegemony

Understood as a *mode of regulation* of class conflict, Lulism as a hegemonic social relation was based on the articulation of two different, but complementary, forms of consent, which together produced a decade of relative social peace in the country. Brazil's subaltern classes gave *passive* consent to a government project led by the trade union bureaucracy, which ensured modest but effective concessions to workers – for the duration of a period of economic expansion.

The *semi-rural subproletariat* benefited from the *Bolsa Família* Program (Family Fund), rising from extreme poverty to the official poverty line. The urban precariat was also seduced by minimum wage increases beyond the rate of inflation, as well as formalization of the labor market and employment creation. Workers who belonged to unions benefited from a booming labor market, achieving new pay and benefits gains through collective bargaining.<sup>1</sup>

At least until the 2014 presidential election, the PT combined redistributive policies, formal job creation and popular access to credit, promoting a slight deconcentration of national income distribution. In a country famous for social inequalities, this small advance was enough to secure the consent of subaltern classes to the politics of Lulista regulation.

At the same time, the PT government managed to combine the interests of trade union bureaucrats,

leaders of social movements and an intellectualized middle class, creating the foundation for an *active consent* to Lulism organized around the state apparatus. Thousands of union members were absorbed into parliamentary advisory functions, positions in ministries and in state companies; some trade union bureaucrats assumed strategic positions on the boards of large pension funds, managed by the state as investment funds. PT members and supporters were also nominated to management positions in the three main national banks: the National Development Bank (BNDES), the Bank of Brazil and the *Caixa Econômica Federal*.

Thus, Lulista unionism has become not only an active administrator of the bourgeois state, but a key actor in directing capitalist investment in the country. Since this political-administrative power does not involve private ownership of capital, the privileged social position of the trade union bureaucracy depended on control of the political apparatus. And to reproduce this control, both the interests of its historic allies – the middle levels of the bureaucracy and the small intellectualized bourgeoisie – and its historic enemies – hostile bureaucratic layers and sectarian groups with corporatist interests – must be accommodated within the state apparatus.

Although this strategy was complicated by the PT government's acceptance of the anti-democratic rules of the Brazilian electoral game – including an effort during the first Lula government to directly purchase parliamentary support – by 2014, Lulista hegemony had achieved notable success in reproducing both the *passive consent* of the masses and the *active consent* of union and social movement leaders.

### > The Contradictions of Lulism

Nevertheless, social contradictions were already evident during the economic expansion between 2003 and 2014, foreshadowing the current crisis. Despite an impressive increase

in formal wage work, about 94% of the jobs created during the PT's first decade in power paid only 1.5 minimum monthly wages (roughly about \$US 250 per month) or less. By 2014, as the economy slowed, about 97.5% of new jobs were in this category, and were occupied mostly by women, young people and blacks – that is, by workers who have traditionally earned less and are more discriminated against.

At the same time, year after year, the number of accidents and deaths at work increased, as did rates of job turnover, with both patterns clearly indicating some deterioration in the quality of work. A deepening economic crisis and a shift towards a policy of austerity during the second government of Dilma Rousseff, installed in 2014, strengthened these regressive tendencies, prompting unionized workers to take strike action.

Although it was already beginning to falter, support from the precarious proletariat ensured Dilma Rousseff's victory in the second round of the 2014 presidential election; but this support assumed the PT government would maintain formal (albeit low-quality and poorly-paid) employment. But the cyclical contraction driven by federal spending cuts has led to increased unemployment among both the urban precariat and the organized working class: according to the latest research, Brazil's unemployment rate rose from 7.9% to 10.2% in the last twelve months.

On the other hand, the traditional middle class has evolved towards a markedly right-wing economic agenda and politics – including those who had been allied with the PT and the main trade union federation, CUT, at least until the 2005 bribes-for-votes scandal known as the “Mensalão.” It is not hard to imagine why. Progress in the formalization of employment among domestic workers led to higher salaries for maids, while the heated labor market boosted the cost of services in general – with



immediate impact on middle-class lifestyles. And the increase in mass consumption linked to higher wages for Brazil's poorer households meant that workers "invaded" spaces previously reserved for the traditional middle classes, such as shopping malls and airports.

Finally, increasing vacancies in low-quality private universities for the children of workers increased the competition for jobs previously available only to the children of the middle class. When the "Petrolão" scandal, linked to kickbacks and money laundering in the state petroleum company Petrobras, broke into the open, middle class dissatisfaction exploded into a huge wave of protest, driven by a reactionary political agenda.

Thus the collapse of the Rousseff government's support in Congress is only the most visible face of an organic crisis whose roots lie in the social structure of a country mired in a deep recession. Based on the creation of precarious jobs and the deconcentration of income distribution, Brazil's development model is no longer able to guarantee corporate profits, let alone attract the consent of subaltern classes.

### > The Palace Coup

Faced with a worsening international crisis, the main representatives of Brazilian business, led by private banks, began to demand that the federal government deepen austerity. For large companies, policies that would deepen the recessionary adjustment, increase unemployment and contain the current strike cycle seem a necessary step toward enacting a series of unpopular reforms, such as cuts to social security and labor rights.

This project has been fed by the current PT government's retreat. The fiscal adjustment applied at the beginning of Dilma's second mandate betrayed the expectations of 53 million voters who had been seduced by her campaign promises to main-



Former President Lula and impeached President Rousseff, leaders of the Workers' Party that ruled Brazil for thirteen years.

tain jobs, social programs and labor rights. The resulting unpopularity of the second Rousseff government was then further fueled by the middle-class discontent over the reduction of inequalities between social classes. When Operation Lava Jato of the Federal Police decided to focus exclusively on PT politicians involved in Petrobras' corruption schemes, Brazilians took to the streets demanding that the government fall.

This mobilization prompted the political parties which had been defeated in 2014 to embark on the impeachment process. Negotiations between the Party of Brazilian Social Democracy (PSDB) and the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB) intensified, converging on the latter's political manifesto "A bridge to the future" – essentially, a promise to ensure the payment of the public debt to the banks at the expense of spending on education, health and social programs.

Most significantly, conservative political forces took to overthrowing Brazil's government not because of what Rousseff gave to the popular sectors, but because of what she failed to deliver to entrepreneurs: an even more radical fiscal adjustment, which would

have required changing the Constitution, reforming social security and withdrawing key labor protections. Yet on the other side, the trade unions, mostly controlled by PT, are still engaged in a historic strike cycle.

Thus Brazil is currently in a position of deadlock: the coup has encountered strong popular resistance which promises to intensify, even as regressive measures undertaken by an illegitimate government are adopted by Congress, and a period of unprecedented social struggles seems inevitable. ■

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<sup>1</sup> On the activities of these three fractions of the Brazilian subaltern classes in the last decade see: André Singer, *Os sentidos do lulismo: reforma gradual e pacto conservador* (São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 2012); Ruy Braga, *A política do precariado: do populismo à hegemonia lulista* (São Paulo: Boitempo, 2012); and Roberto Vêras de Oliveira, Maria Aparecida Bridi and Marcos Ferraz, *O sindicalismo na Era Lula: paradoxos, perspectivas e olhares* (Belo Horizonte, Fino Traço, 2014).

# > Labor Politics

## and the Return of Neoliberalism in Argentina

by **Rodolfo Elbert**, Conicet and University of Buenos Aires, Argentina and member of the ISA Research Committee on Labour Movements (RC44)



Workers protesting against layoffs in industrial enterprises located in the Northern Gran Buenos Aires.  
Photo by Sebastián Lineros.

**O**n November 22, 2015, Argentines elected Mauricio Macri as President for the 2015-2019 term, by a margin of less than three percent. Macri's defeat of the *Peronista* candidate Daniel Scioli marked the end of the long *Kirchnerista* decade, 2003-2015: after a period of increasing state intervention in the economy and limited wealth redistribution, a center-right candidate with an anti-corruption discourse now leads Argentina.

Explanations for this triumph have focused on an anti-populist mobilization of the urban middle class and Argentina's stagnant economy, but any explanation of the defeat also needs to include some discussion of the changing politics of industrial workers. The seeds of the crisis of the *Kirchnerista* regime are to be found in its paradoxical combination of progressive wealth distribution and persistent working class fragmentation. Through its alliance with the Kirchners, Argentina's longstanding trade union bureaucracy had helped construct a fragmented industrial citizenship, while left-oriented grassroots unions mobilized resistance to persistent inequalities. Once the stagnant economy eroded the basis of the government's limited redistributive programs, the social fragmentation which characterized what Ruy Braga has termed "precarious

hegemony" contributed to electoral defeat. Resistance to the coming neoliberal offensive needs to include the same grassroots unions that fought economic insecurity during the *Kirchnerista* government.

In the late 2000s, just as most of the world began to emerge from the 2008 financial crisis, Argentina experienced a different kind of rebirth: a new "*sindicalismo de base*" (grassroots democratic unionism) movement seemed to foreshadow a surprising revitalization of labor, ten years after Argentina's 2001-2002 economic crisis appeared to herald the end of the country's proud trade union movement. In an impoverished neighborhood in Northern Gran Buenos Aires known as Los Tilos, for example, neighbors organized a land occupation to demand better infrastructure and housing, and to insist that companies stop polluting a nearby river. Despite the neighborhood's proximity to an industrial area, most of its residents were unemployed or worked in the "informal economy."

Surprisingly, Los Tilos' 2010 protests received strong support from nearby trade unions representing formal sector workers, mostly employed in nearby industrial enterprises. As part of the revitalization of labor, activism in many industrial enterprises of the Northern Gran Buenos Aires had

&gt;&gt;

been led by grassroots democratic unions. But even then, most national unions were still led by traditional bureaucratic leaders, allies of the *Kirchnerista* government that took office in 2003. In general, these bureaucratic unions pursued an exclusionary strategy, rarely showing solidarity with the livelihood struggles of the urban poor, and often allowing employers to hire vulnerable workers on precarious terms, as long as core workers received higher salaries.

But the grassroots labor movement that emerged in the late 2000s was different: left-leaning unions sought to unify the struggles of precarious and non-precarious workers within the workplace, to eliminate precarious contracts and incorporate all workers with equal rights.

What lay behind this surprising new labor upsurge? Paradoxically, Argentina's post-neoliberal political economy produced an unusually fragmented industrial citizenship, sustained by bureaucratic unions. After the disastrous economic and social crisis in 2001-2002, Argentina's economy started to grow as prices for its major exports began to rise. In the context of rapid growth, the *Peronista* government was able to raise taxes on agricultural exports, stimulate job creation by expanding the domestic market, and support collective bargaining agreements for established labor unions.

A drastic reduction of unemployment and rising real wages, coupled with increased subsidies to public utilities and new social policies directed to the poorest citizens, resulted in expanded consumption among the popular classes. In terms of the occupational structure, this pattern of economic growth increased the relative weight of salaried industrial workers within the total workforce.

Nevertheless, this redistributive policy had its limits. Capital was increasingly concentrated as the economy expanded, while large national and multinational corporations increased their rate of profit. Workers, on the other hand, faced high labor informality and job precarity. According to the Socio-Economic Database for Latin America and the Caribbean (<http://sedlac.econo.unlp.edu.ar>), by 2010, a full 45.5 percent of Argentina's active labor force was informally employed – an improvement over the height of the economic crisis a decade before, but a significant source of job and income insecurity for low-income households.

In 2010, Cristina Kirchner's government was still finding its way out of Argentina's neoliberal collapse, by combining limited redistribution of wealth with persistent working class fragmentation. But within a few years, the Argentine economy began to experience the full impact of the global financial crisis. Global commodity prices slumped, and the

government struggled to sustain its limited redistributive programs. In 2011, the *Peronista* political elite abandoned its political alliance with one segment of bureaucratic unions, refusing to tolerate the political ambitions of the CGT (General Confederation of Labor) national secretary. The economic and political coalition that had emerged from the crisis a decade earlier began to fray at the edges.

By 2014, the devaluation of Argentina's peso and inflationary pressures produced an indisputable increase in poverty and decline in real wages. With the erosion of the government's precarious hegemony, the *Peronista* candidate Daniel Scioli lost the 2015 presidential election to the right-wing candidate Mauricio Macri.

During its first six months in office, Macri's approach can best describe as Argentina's attempted neoliberal comeback. The government imposed a number of pro-market reforms, including massive layoffs from government agencies and cuts in important public utility subsidies, such as those that previously applied to electricity and water provision. The devaluation of the peso meant that most wages could not keep pace with inflation for ordinary consumer goods, leading (like in 2014) to a drastic increase in poverty. Along with passing aggressive new anti-labor measures, the government slashed taxes on agricultural and mining exports. There has been one national protest against layoffs on April 29, but no other nationwide action since then.

Nonetheless, despite the government's clear anti-labor orientation, national labor leaders seem to be more worried about preserving their unions' institutional power – and more concerned with avoiding personal trials of corruption than with defending workers' labor rights.

What will happen to the still-nascent movement of grassroots unions that confronted informality and precarity during the *Kirchnerista* period? Is it possible that greater portions of the working class support a strategy of solidarity with informal and precarious workers in the near future? It is too early to tell, but a look at the recent past might help. In the late 2000s, even in unfavorable environments of degraded work and bureaucratic unions, some of Argentina's grassroots unions managed to forge successful alliances with different fractions of the working class. Although these unions confronted greater challenges when they attempted to scale up solidarity to the national level, it seems clear that the labor movement's ability to confront the neoliberal comeback will depend on this type of strategy. The alternative seems to be labor leaders eager to comply with a new round of pro-market reforms – a compliance that could only come at the cost of ever-worsening impoverishment of Argentina's workers. ■

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# > The American Right: Its Deep Story

by **Arlie Russell Hochschild**, University of California, Berkeley, USA



| Donald Trump on the campaign trail.

**A**s in much of Europe, India, China and Russia, the American political right is on the move. In some ways, America's leftward cultural shift – a first black president, a potential female one, gay marriage – may obscure this rise. But it's there. Over the last few decades, conservative voices have grown louder: the most popular cable TV channel and the most popular daily talk radio show lean strongly right. Both houses of the federal Congress in Washington D.C. are in Republican hands. Republicans also control far more state legislative chambers than do Democrats, and more state governorships. In 23 of the nation's 50 states, Republicans control both houses of the state legislature and the governorship; the correspond-

ing number for Democrats is seven. Some twenty percent of Americans – 45 million people – now support the avidly anti-tax Tea Party movement, and in recent months the populist nativist Republican presidential candidate, Donald Trump won the most Republican primary votes in history.

What distinguishes the American right from its counterparts elsewhere is hatred of the federal government. The right calls for cuts in government benefits: unemployment insurance, Medicaid, college financial aid, school lunch and far more. Prominent Republican leaders have called for elimination of entire departments of federal government – Education, Energy, Commerce and Interior. In 2015, 58 House Republicans voted to abolish the Internal

Revenue Service. Some have even called for abolishing all public schools.

Grassroots supporters of these leaders feel frustrated and angry at the government. The big question which prompted me to begin a five-year ethnographic study in Louisiana – part of the heartland of the American Right – was, why? As I began interviews for my book, *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*<sup>1</sup>, the puzzle only grew. The country's second-poorest state, Louisiana has proportionately more failing schools, more sick and obese residents, than nearly any state in the nation. So it needed – and received – federal help; 44 percent of its state budget came from the federal government. So why, I wondered, were so many Tea Party supporters an-

gry? And how does anger – or any emotion – underlie politics?

While many analysts address these questions from outside the personal experience of right-wing individuals, I wanted to understand that experience from inside. So I attended meetings of Republican Women of Southwest Louisiana, church services, and political campaign rallies. I asked people to show me where they'd grown up, gone to school, where their parents were buried. I perused high-school yearbooks of my new Louisiana friends, played cards and went fishing with them. Overall I interviewed 60 people – 40 of them white, older, Christian supporters of the Tea Party. I gathered over 4,600 pages of transcribed interviews and field notes.

I also struck upon a method. First I listened. Then I drew up a metaphorical representation of their experience, stripped of judgment and of facts, a feels-as-if account which I call a “deep story.” Underlying all our political beliefs, I believe, lies such a story. In this case, it goes like this:

*You are patiently standing in a middle of a long line leading up a hill, as in a pilgrimage. Others beside you seem like you – white, older, Christian, predominantly male. Just over the brow of the hill is the American Dream, the goal of everyone in line. Then, look! Suddenly you see people cutting in line ahead of you! As they cut in, you seem to be being moved back. How can they just do that? Who are they?*

*Many are black. Through federal affirmative action plans, they are given preference for places in colleges and universities, apprenticeships, jobs, welfare payments, and free lunch programs. Others are cutting ahead too – uppity women seeking formerly all-male jobs, immigrants, refugees, and an expanding number of high-earning public sector workers, paid with your tax dollars. Where will it end?*

*As you wait in this unmoving line, you're asked to feel sorry for them all.*

*People complain: Racism, Discrimination, Sexism. You hear stories of oppressed blacks, dominated women, weary immigrants, closeted gays, desperate refugees. But at some point, you say to yourself, you have to close the borders to human sympathy – especially if there are some among them who might bring harm.*

*You're a compassionate person. But now you've been asked to extend your sympathy to all the people who have cut in front of you. You've suffered a good deal yourself, but you aren't complaining about it or asking for help, you're proud to say. You believe in equal rights. But how about your own rights? Don't they count too? It's unfair.*

*Then you see a black president with the middle name Hussein, waving to the line cutters. He's on their side, not yours. He's their president, not yours. And isn't he a line-cutter too? How could the son of a struggling single mother pay for Columbia and Harvard? Maybe something has gone on in secret. And aren't the president and his liberal backers using your money to help themselves? You want to turn off the machine – the federal government – which he and liberals are using to push you back in line.*

I returned to my respondents to ask if this deep story described their feelings. While some altered the story here or there (“so we get in another line...” or “that's our money he's giving out...”), they all claimed the story as their own. One told me “I live your metaphor.” Another said, “You read my mind.”

What has happened to make this story ring true? In a word, a loss of honor. Tea Party supporters I met were generally not poor, but many had grown up in poverty, and had seen family and friends sink back into it. But wealth was not the only source of wellbeing and honor. As white, heterosexual Christians, many also described their fears of a demographic decline (“There are fewer people like us,” one woman told me), or of becoming a religious minority (“People aren't churchd anymore,”

“You can't say Merry Christmas; you have to say Happy Holidays”). Some felt like a cultural minority (“We're the clean-living people, people who go by the rules, but we're seen as sexist, homophobic, racist, ignorant – all the labels the liberals have for us”). If they turned for honor to their beloved home, often in the rural mid-west or South, some felt disparaged as “rednecks.” Behind the deep story, then, was their loss of honor from many quarters – an honor squeeze.

A deep story describes pain (others cut ahead of you). It describes blame (an ill-intentioned government). And it points to rescue (Tea Party politics). It also provides an emotional accounting system, establishing how much sympathy is due those waiting or cutting in line, how much distrust is owed the government, or how much government beneficiaries should be shamed. This system becomes a foundation for feeling rules<sup>2</sup> – which establish what we believe we “should and shouldn't” feel – now a key target of heated political battle. Explicitly or implicitly, most service jobs require workers to abide by feeling rules (“It's wrong to get mad at the customer; he's always right”). Workers learn how to manage their feelings in training, and supervisors monitor how well they do it. Similarly, political ideologies carry feeling rules. Leaders guide sympathy, suspicion, blame, shame, and talk radio hosts and newscasters spread the word, which local and electronic communities monitor through commentary.

Left and right abide by ever-more divergent sets of feeling rules. In general, the left calls for sympathy for underprivileged groups, who are seen as deserving government help; the right does not. The left calls for trust in this part of government, the right suspects and reviles it. The left attaches dignity and entitlement to the receipt of government help, the right attaches great shame to it.

In the cultural battle between these two codes, the Tea Party supporters I studied felt dominated by the feeling





Donald Trump addressing crowds in Phoenix on one of his favorite topics – immigration.

rules of the left and resented it bitterly. “We’ve had enough P.C. [Political Correctness]” Donald Trump has often yelled, echoing a sentiment adamantly held on the right. One man told me, “Liberals want us to feel sorry for immigrants and refugees. But mostly I see a bunch of people saying poor me, poor me, poor me...” Another said, “Liberals get something from the government and we don’t – and I’m glad not to take if I’m not in need. But they want us to feel grateful for what they’re getting.” And many attached great shame to getting government help, and felt utter contempt for cheaters. “I know guys who put in for unemployment during hunting season.” Or, “A lot of people in that trailer park got on disability by claiming to have seizures. I don’t know how they hold their heads high. But they do, and the government encourages it.” Most Tea Party supporters strongly resisted the idea that anyone should feel sympathy with line cutters, gratitude toward government, or release from the shame of getting a “government hand-out.”

But not everyone I spoke to agreed. Indeed, it was as if two factions of those I interviewed heard different endings to the deep story. Traditional Tea Party supporters wanted to cut both the practice of cutting in line, and government rewards for doing so. Followers of Donald Trump, on the other hand, wanted to keep government benefits and remove shame from the act of receiving them – but restrict those benefits, implicitly, to native-born Americans, preferably white.

Trump’s pronouncements have been vague and shifting, but pundits have noted that he has not called for cuts to Medicaid. Rather he plans, he says, to replace Obamacare, which extends medical coverage to the uninsured, with a new program that will be “terrific.” Significant, too, is Trump’s distribution of shame. Though he has disparaged ex-POW hero John McCain, a disabled journalist, a female Fox News commentator, undocumented Mexicans, an American-born judge of Mexican heritage, all Muslims, and all his Republican adversaries, he has never shamed recipients of Medicaid or food stamps.

But in order to legitimize welfare for white men, Trump had to masculinize the act of receiving it. This may be a secret and potent source of Trump’s appeal. He applauds men who brawl, own guns, stand tough, act macho. Most welfare recipients are women, children and men of color. But there are many poor, or almost poor or afraid-of-becoming poor white men. If such a man needs it, Trump intimates, getting a government benefit can be a guy’s thing to do. You can slap a gun decal on your pick-up, start brawls, be macho, Trump implies, and also apply for unemployment or food stamps – stigma-free.

Importantly, many of Trump’s blue-collar white male followers face the same grim economic fate earlier visited on blacks: disappearing jobs, low wages, evidence of despair. Among such men, there are proportionately more single dads than among their richer

white male counterparts, more split marriages, more children, and harder times. If they aren’t on Medicaid now, they might be in the future – and so they face the contradiction of needing the very government help which the right, and they themselves, have long disparaged. Detachment from welfare was a key status marker, distinguishing “real men” from the “real bottom.” In my interviews with Louisiana Trump supporters, talk of his support for government benefits did not arise, at least at first. But, asked about his view of a safety net for “regular people,” one auto mechanic noted, “Trump’s not against that. If you use food stamps because you’re working a low-wage job, you don’t want someone looking down their nose at you.”

Trump tacitly absolves blue-collar white men from shame, but not non-native or non-white men. Indeed, responding to the deep story, Trump has created a movement much like the anti-immigrant but pro-welfare state right-wing populism on the rise in Great Britain, Germany, France, Austria and much of Eastern Europe. All these right-wing movements are, I believe, based on variations of the deep story, the feelings it evokes, and the strong beliefs that protect it. ■

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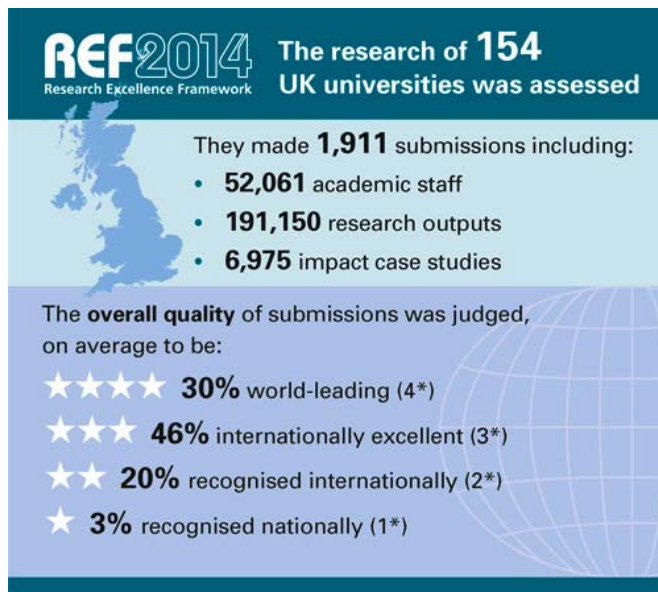
<sup>1</sup> Hochschild, A. (2016) *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*. New York: New Press.

<sup>2</sup> See Hochschild, A. (1983) *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press.



# > The Rise of the Corporate University in the UK

by **Huw Beynon**, Cardiff University, UK



Summary of the submission to the UK Research Excellence Framework of 2014.

an “elite” system: only ten percent went on to higher education, while most young adults went through a complex system of technical and vocational education, apprenticeships and “on the job” training.

Under the Thatcher government, however, the destruction of the British manufacturing sector gave rise to talk of a renaissance through a “knowledge economy,” leading Blair to emphasize “education, education, education” as he argued that 50 percent of Britain’s children should go to university. In this way, and at great speed, universities became a key part of the government’s economic strategy – a shift made clear when responsibility for higher education was moved into the Department of Trade and Industry. Today, that responsibility rests in the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, whose most recent policy white paper – *Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice* – reveals how a once utopian idea can provide the ideological platform for reactionary change.

This strategic shift was facilitated by a change in funding for Britain’s universities, involving a move away from central government funding to a system based almost entirely on student fees. In 1998, student fees were set at £3,000 per annum by the new Labour Government; since then, student fees have risen to £9,000, with further rises anticipated. There are important variations in the devolved administrations of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, but in England, higher education has been expanded through the accumulation of student debt, facilitated through a complex loan system.

**B**ritish universities are changing, in ways so fundamental that it is not easy to predict where it will end. Certainly working and studying in a university here today is a very different experience than it would have been just a decade ago. Stefan Collini recently maintained that “what we still call universities are coming to be reshaped as centers of applied expertise and vocational training that are subordinate to a society’s ‘economic strategy’” – a summary that echoes John Holmwood’s 2014 valedictory message as British Sociological Association president. He concluded that Britain’s university system now “serves a renewed patrimonial capitalism and its ever-widening inequalities.” The effects of these changes upon sociology as a discipline are not yet entirely clear, but there are some worrying signs.

## > Funding: From Central Grants to Student Fees

Historically – that is, before the Thatcher and Blair governments – British universities were quasi-independent charitable organizations. Student numbers were nationally set, and each university received appropriate funding based on various formulae. It was generally recognized as

The new funding system has been a critical driver of change. Universities compete with each other for students, with important pedagogical consequences: instead of being seen as pupils or apprentices, students are now customers. Perhaps paradoxically, the introduction of a “mar-

ket” for students has been accompanied by various forms of state surveillance.

In 2005 the Blair government replaced a labor-intensive system of Quality Assessment (something which had attempted to improve teaching through inspectorial visits and the imposition of rather standardized classroom procedures) with a National Student Survey (NSS) – something like a consumer investigation, which collected and published students’ evaluations of all courses and degrees. These data (which included the proportion of students receiving first-class degrees) quickly became incorporated into league tables of the “best” universities, brought together and published by national newspapers.

Currently the government is planning to enhance this evaluation system by introducing a more complex set of inquiries reflecting a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), which takes account of student retention and graduate employment as well as student evaluations. Although each of these measures has been shown to be fallible, the government plans to construct a new TEF grading system on the basis of which “we would expect fees to increasingly differentiate.”

### > From Research Assessment to Research Excellence

Under the “old” funding system, university staff were expected to teach and to do research with a nominal 3:2 split between these activities. Publicly-funded, academically-staffed, Research Councils made additional research funds available through a competitive bidding process. The Thatcher government, already concerned by the radical and critical voices on campuses, insisted on renaming the Social Sciences Research Council as the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC); over time this organization has been increasingly tailored to the needs of the UK economy. More importantly, perhaps, a regular (nominally five yearly) review of research activity was introduced within university departments: the Research Assessment Exercise began rather informally in the 1980s, but from 1990 performance was linked to future research funding, breaking the link with the old grant-based system.

Subsequent iterations have seen this assessment process extended. In 2015, a name change to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) involved a further radical departure – including new efforts to assess the “impact” of published research and the “demonstrable benefits (made) to the wider economy and society,” broadly defined. Expert panels will “review narrative evidence supported by appropriate indicators, and produce graded impact sub-profiles for each submission.” These profiles will be graded on a scale, from “world-leading” (4\*) through “internationally excellent” (3\*), to “recognised internationally” (2\*) and “recognised nationally” (1\*).

Over time, then, within universities, the external monitoring process has moved from the periphery to the center of discussion of research strategies, with words like “star” emerging centrally within academic discourse, alongside other strong words like “excellence,” “robust,” “rigorous” and “transparent” – constructing a seemingly incontestable narrative, one which many sociologists who should know better, have accepted. In this way of speaking, “Ref” has emerged as a new powerful noun in university departments along with “Refable,” “Ref-ready” and such like.

### > The Corporate University

These changes are part of a powerful neoliberal strategy that has transformed Britain’s public sector; the changes taking place in higher education parallel those that have reshaped the country’s health service, tax collection, policing and education more generally. Universities, competing with each other for students – now their main source of income – and competing for position in various league tables, have increasingly behaved more like profit-seeking corporates than charitable organizations.

University heads (Vice-Chancellors) no longer see themselves as the first amongst equals, but rather as Chief Executive Officers – paid accordingly, with their own pension scheme. When the current Conservative government removed a “cap” on student numbers the prospect of potentially-large surpluses – cash reserves stood at £6.5 billion in 2011 – encouraged UK universities to follow the US example of bond sales on the money markets, used to fund huge investments into new real estate. Many in the managerial elite view these new buildings as symbolic representations of their success.

In their search for more students (aka “cash”) universities, frustrated by visa restrictions on foreign students, have located large campuses overseas, offering some staff career-changing offers they can hardly refuse. While some ventures have been successful, others have been less so. In late 2015, Aberystwyth University spent half a million pounds to open a campus in Mauritius for British and international students, expecting to provide “new opportunities for students to have access to quality education, students who otherwise could not access these types of courses” – but by 2016, only 40 students had enrolled on a campus built to house 2000. As a former university head commented, scathingly: “The venture is madness. They would be better off concentrating their resources on high-quality staffing and attracting more domestic students.”

All this speaks to a sector experiencing stressful changes, with real implications for the working lives of academics. The new corporate university tends to be further centralized by each newly-appointed Vice-Chancellor, who, determined to achieve objectives under the new arrangements, establishes top-down structures supported by increasing

numbers of administrative staff. New administrative hierarchies emerge, as technical and financial “support staff” – formerly based in schools, departments and research centers but now migrating toward some central office. Increasingly, communication is conducted through email rather than personal contact, and once-simple operations, even organizing a meeting or booking a room, requires training and access to computer programs. As “metrics” become an essential management tool, they strengthen the pressure for standardization, which in many universities has been linked to new performance management systems. Performance-related pay also appears to be on the agenda – and, more significantly, so does an effort to move academic staff onto new, teaching-only, contracts.

The pathologies of bureaucratic “red tape” and of “goal displacement” in rule-governed structures, described long ago by Alvin Gouldner, are now obvious in British universities, especially in teaching and research assessment schemes – to the point where many universities now warn students that their own poor evaluations of their degree could affect its value in the labor market. The proportion of first-class awards is monitored, with encouragement for “more flexibility at the top end.” Having noted that students regularly criticize courses for providing poor “feedback,” some universities hold special sessions to explain to students what “feedback” is and when they will get it. In fact, some universities have appointed “Associate Deans of Feedback,” and some members of staff have been identified as “feedback champions.”

This “gaming” activity has been most advanced in relation to research assessment. In 2014 many universities departed from the custom of including all staff in the Research Evaluation, instead including only staff regarded as having highly-ranked publications and impact case studies. This outcome – which led to some universities being accused of “cheating” – involved various internal assessment procedures that were often invidious, and rarely collegial. Today, in the cycle leading up to the 2020 research assessment process, many universities have already put in place arrangements to monitor publications (“outputs” in ref-speak) with “Research Impact Managers” – all producing documentation in a convoluted and self-referential language of its own.

Decisions in these areas are invariably taken by high-level committees and communicated through didactic emails or “town hall” consultative meetings. Commenting on these developments, Professor Ben Martin at the University of Sussex noted the rise of “resentment, cynicism and sullen acquiescence,” a view confirmed by the latest *Times University Workplace Survey*, which found that while academics generally found their jobs rewarding, three quarters of them were deeply disillusioned with their university’s future plans and senior leadership. The survey also found that half of academic respondents worried about redundan-

cies related to metric-based performance measures. More disturbing, perhaps, half of respondents said they believe their institutions have compromised undergraduate entry standards in their effort to compete for students, and that as individuals, they feel under pressure to award higher marks.

In this vein, Charles Turner, Associate Professor of Sociology at Warwick University, recently listed the following “problems that are really killing universities”: The commitment of vast resources that could be spent on library stocks to unnecessary and poorly designed new buildings; the awarding of first- and upper-second-class degrees to students who twenty years ago would have struggled to get a lower second; the use of administrators to make key decisions over matters of pedagogy; the desperate efforts to make some degree programs appear vocational when they are not and cannot be; and the endless tide of publications that nobody in their right mind would want to read – or write (*The Guardian*, June 1, 2016).

### > The Changing Place of Sociology

Sociology emerged quite late as a degree subject within British universities: only three viable centers existed through the early 1960s. Subsequently, a rapid and remarkable rise in the numbers of both departments and of students placed sociology in a strong position within universities today. This rapid rise involved a high degree of “openness,” with few attempts to establish firm professional boundaries around the discipline – an openness which allowed sociological thought to penetrate many different fields. However, a consequence of this openness has been a drift of some specialisms into other fields; good examples being the “sociology of work”, and the “sociology of education,” twin pillars of the past now taught in Business Schools and Schools of Education.

Sociology has changed in other ways. After making radical breakthroughs in the field of deviance in the 1960s and 1970s, this specialism has been re-framed as criminology, a topic in high demand, often taught in multi-disciplinary contexts involving social policy and legal studies. Health and the environment are also areas where sociology has been able to develop applied courses with high student demand. These changes, together with the shift in the core of the discipline towards interpretative approaches and issues of identity, have led some to suggest that the power of material structures and constraints is being underestimated, weakening sociology’s capacity to respond coherently to current events.

Similar questions are posed by the current research agendas of universities and the operation of the REF. The machine-like grind of the assessment cycle and the need for “four 3\*/4\* outputs” has seen academics opting increasingly for journal articles rather than monographs, and



shortening field work to fit with the needs of the evaluation process. Some scholars have adjusted their aspirations to this process, others are giving up. Many have commented on the consequences for ethnographic work or for other research that builds on long-term contacts with communities. More generally the “performance” of a particular subject in the REF can reflect and also affect its overall standing and the ways it is viewed within each university. As such it was disconcerting to note the decline in the number of submissions in 2014 with only 29 departments involving 704 staff entered under the rubric of “sociology” (an all-time low) compared with 62 submissions involving 1,302 staff entered under the rubric of “social policy.” These ratios, being the inverse of the numbers on the ground, reflected changes in the research priorities of some sociologists toward more applied areas and the strategic choices of centralized university committees. As a consequence the panel was forced to report that it was only able to offer “a partial representation of the discipline.”

“Impact” of course, was central to this exercise: because this metric encourages researchers to work with external agencies, many academics have come to believe that critical work will be excluded or given a low rating. While there may still be room for some critical work (for example, in relation to environmental issues), the “Impact” measure in the social sciences implies a strong bias toward small-scale policy change, leading universities to actively encourage researchers to play it safe. The Research Council (ESRC) – itself the subject of close government scrutiny

– has moved purposefully toward concentrating its funding around large major awards for complex projects often involving pan-university teams. This policy could increasingly leave smaller projects adrift.

These changes have evolved over the past 30 years. Today, we seem to be near a crisis point, raising questions about the very idea of the public university as a center of critical and scientific engagement. Current government policy seems likely to lead to the creation of new private universities and further intensification of competitive pressures across an enlarged tertiary education sector.

All this raises difficult questions both for the future and purpose of universities and the place of sociology within them. Significantly, sociologists have featured strongly in resistance to these changes with John Holmwood leading a group aiming to reclaim the public university in the UK. Its own alternative policy agenda, *The Alternative White Paper for Higher Education*, was launched at a major meeting in London in June. It points to the threats posed to students and critical research by the penetration of for-profit providers into the higher education sector, and concludes with a quote from the *Magna Charta Universitatum* of 1988, signed by 802 universities from all over the world: universities are “autonomous institutions” which “must be morally and intellectually independent of all political authority and economic power” – a goal that becomes more important the more it recedes. ■

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# > The “Sociology Wars” in Canada

by **Neil McLaughlin**, McMaster University, Canada, and **Antony Puddephatt**, Lakehead University, Canada



Buttons circulating after Canadian Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, declared this was no time to “commit sociology.” He was referring to the need to get tough with terrorists rather than study the causes of terrorism.

**A**t the turn of the 21st century, several senior scholars sounded alarm bells about the state of Canadian sociology. Bruce Curtis and Lorna Weir argued that English Canadian sociology suffered from “a weak sense of sociology as a craft with distinctive knowledges, skills, and a public vocation”; they worried about the discipline’s future, as Canada’s founding sociologists neared retirement.<sup>1</sup> Robert Brym posed concerns about declining membership in the *Canadian Sociological Association*, raising worries about the general health of the discipline in Canada.<sup>2</sup> Neil McLaughlin responded by exploring some wider institutional factors, warning of a “coming crisis” in Canadian Sociology,<sup>3</sup> hoping to generate a reflexive moment, beginning a dialogue that might promote wiser institutional strategies and a broader intellectual vision. The often emotional and polemical barrage of responses to these articles initiated what we call the “sociology wars” in Canada, which still rage on a decade later.

Pat O’Mally and Alan Hunt provided some opening volleys, arguing that Curtis and Weir’s worries about a weakening discipline were tantamount to a “witch hunt,” setting up stringent disciplinary standards in order to police sociologists who might step out of line.<sup>4</sup> McLaughlin’s “crisis” article spurred on another set of critical responses, challenging him on both normative and empirical grounds.<sup>5</sup> While much of this debate helped contextualize the re-

alities of Canadian sociology, its tenor was often harsh. As Canadian sociologists prepare to host the International Sociological Association (ISA) World Congress in Toronto in 2018, we reflect on some of the core concerns raised, hoping to highlight some issues that may be relevant and useful to other national sociologies, especially those outside the United States.

Much concern about the state of Canadian sociology focused on the declining membership and meeting attendance of our national association. Annual English-language Canadian sociology meetings are held as part of an interdisciplinary *Congress of the Social Sciences and Humanities*, organized at various universities around the country. Canadian sociology meetings suffered from low attendance, especially among the top sociology faculty. Was this a sign of disciplinary decline? Jean-Philippe Warren reminded us that many other national and global scholarly associations faced similar declines.<sup>6</sup> Building on Robert Putnam’s “bowling alone” thesis, he suggested that the rise of internet communication technology enabled informal scholarly networking over wide geographical distances, so that scholars could “sociologize alone,” outside of traditional, formally organized meetings.

Yet there were other signs of weakness in the early 2000s, as sociology continued to have low status both in the uni-

versity and in society more generally. Many of these issues remain relevant today, and are probably common to other national sociologies, but they play out in particular ways in Canada, because of our unique history, and our different relationships with the United States, Britain and France.

Worries of American scholarly hegemony led to a Canadianization movement in the 1970s and 1980s, as sociologists sought to create a more autonomous Canadian sociology, through increased Canadian content and domestically-trained hires. However, this same movement undoubtedly intensified negative sentiments against American sociology, including a certain smugness that allows us to bash America and ignore our own flaws.<sup>7</sup>

Still, there is reason to worry about the weakening of our own national content, an issue undoubtedly faced by sociologists in many other countries as well. Canadian sociologists are increasingly likely to receive training from the USA, and to turn away from building on Canadian exemplars such as John Porter or Wallace Clement in favor of more globally known theorists.<sup>8</sup> What used to be a unique Canadian tradition is increasingly becoming diluted into just another participant in the global (read: American and Eurocentric) discipline.

Ralph Mathews has made an effort to re-establish a more uniquely Canadian tradition by reincarnating the “staples theory” of Harold Innis,<sup>9</sup> an important early theorist of Canadian society who argued that the geographical development of Canada’s cities was closely tied to trade routes for our natural resource economy, creating widely different geographic regions with diverse cultural imprints. Extending this frame with newer contemporary concerns about the fossil fuel industry, protections for our natural environment, and First Nations rights, we gain insight into how we are unique, both as a nation and sociological tradition. Yet what may seem “unique” to Canada might also serve as valuable points of comparison to other countries that face the same globalizing forces as they interact with local context and issues.

As a relatively new discipline that only became fully institutionalized in the 1960s and 1970s, Canadian sociology was marked by a particularly Marxist-inspired radicalism, since most major hires took place in a time of social and political conflict. This intensely “critical” orientation in our discipline is still dominant today, leading to much policy and political engagement, much to the chagrin of conservative politicians. For example, in dismissing calls for more research into the root causes of terrorism in order to better prevent it, Canada’s conservative former Prime Minister Stephen Harper infamously claimed that “this is not a time to commit sociology.” For Canadian sociologists, this statement challenged the value of sociological research, leading the *Canadian Sociological Association* to start selling “Commit Sociology” T-shirts in 2015 as a sort of rallying cry.

This longstanding critical element in Canadian sociology created a receptive audience for Michael Burawoy’s call for public sociology.<sup>10</sup> A number of Canadian sociologists chimed in to support him, or to claim that Burawoy did not go far enough in pushing for publicly-oriented research.<sup>11</sup> Some Canadians rejected the very idea of public sociology, emphasizing the importance of a professional core. Scott Davies asked for a “disciplinary divorce” once and for all, between what he saw as proper social scientists on the one hand, and dogmatic critical theorists on the other.<sup>12</sup> Canadian feminists argued that Burawoy’s call neglected potential private and state-sponsored partnerships that might help us work with publics to solve important social issues.<sup>13</sup>

And indeed, as we turn from the Harper government’s highly conservative agenda to Justin Trudeau’s liberalism, the potential for increased federal action to tackle public issues – especially those affecting First Nations peoples – is evident. Sociologists can look forward to a robust public sociology in Canada, one that remains in critical partnership and ongoing dialogue with the state.

As the sociology wars continue today, early worries about the status of the discipline remain at the forefront. William Carroll recently argued that along with all other disciplines in social science, sociology should give way to a transdisciplinary nexus united by critical realism.<sup>14</sup> The fact that this paper received the *Canadian Review of Sociology*’s best article award in 2015 reflects underlying cultural currents, as many sociologists in Canada prefer to reject their disciplinary identity and commitments.

This poses a serious obstacle for those who seek a relatively open form of scholarship, but who are not willing to trade away disciplinary advantages. Many would argue that the best recent scholarship shatters popular claims that disciplines act only as intellectual silos: disciplines actually share knowledge with remarkable efficiency.<sup>15</sup> Still, the tired rhetoric of disciplines as silos, there only to “police” intellectuals, seems to die hard.<sup>16</sup> And while disciplines can indeed serve to stifle knowledge production, we cannot ignore evidence suggesting that, on balance, they do much to enhance it. Rather than forcing a choice between insular disciplines (which is exaggerated) and total transdisciplinarity (which is utopian), perhaps it would be best to work in between these ideals, recognizing tradeoffs and avoiding the disadvantages of either extreme.<sup>17</sup>

While reflections on the discipline can be useful, they can also degenerate into rhetorical and ideologically-driven arguments, distracting from the more important task of “committing” actual empirical sociology. But a body of scholarship provides empirical and historical insights into the texture of Canadian sociology. Rick Helmes-Hayes recently documented the roots of Canadian sociology within early 20th century theology,<sup>18</sup> and Bruce Curtis has gone back even further, linking the development of social sci-



ence to 19th century “state building”.<sup>19</sup> New quantitative studies document the changing patterns of our foreign and domestic hiring practices, and of our work,<sup>20</sup> illustrating our wonderful epistemological diversity<sup>21</sup> and how our theoretical schools of thought change over time. Over the past decade, there seems to be a theoretical convergence around the work of Pierre Bourdieu, a theorist and researcher who helps build bridges between our English and French speaking wings.<sup>22</sup> As we look to the future, empirically grounded debates are welcome as a “sociology of sociology,” making for less narcissistic, and more empirically grounded, forms of institutional reflexivity.

While the Canadian “sociology wars” have been contentious, and resulted in a few bruised egos, on the whole they have been constructive. Established scholars have re-entered the fold, helping to socialize a new generation of sociologists into a positive vision. Attendance at our meetings has risen, stimulated by the creation of research clusters inspired, in part, by the ISA. There are more French language sessions at our meetings, and the *Canadian Review of Sociology*’s editor, Dr. François Dépelteau, is a Francophone. The association can boast a revived feminist sociology, largely inspired by Dorothy Smith and Canadian socialist-feminists. Further, a new research agenda stressing de-colonization and reconciliation with indigenous First Nations people spans a number of issues where public sociologists are relevant and needed.

The *Canadian Sociological Association* looks forward to welcoming sociologists from across the globe to the ISA World Congress in Toronto, in 2018. We look forward to furthering a dialogue about how to best understand and reflect on our diverse national sociologies, by learning from each other within a wider comparative context. ■

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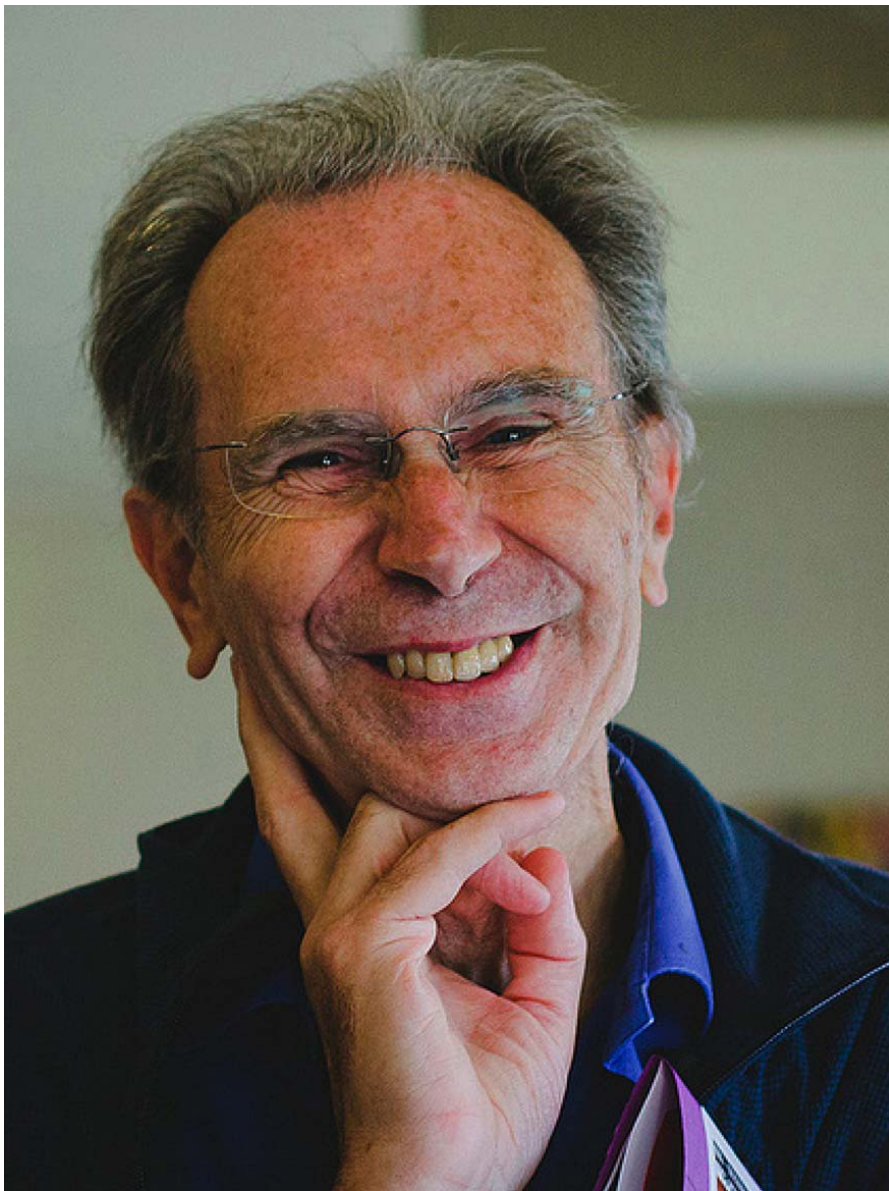
<sup>19</sup> Curtis, B. (2016), *ibid*.

<sup>20</sup> Warren, J-P (2014), *ibid*.

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# > Remembering John Urry and his Work



| John Urry.

**W**hen you've known someone for a long time, it's hard to separate the person from their work, and it's probably best not to try. John Urry contributed to social science not just by publishing, but through example, by his way of being an academic.

He showed that to be an effective researcher or teacher, there is no need to try to dominate, or to cultivate a "formidable" persona or difficult writing style. He was totally free of affectation or concern about status; his laid-back, good-humored manner belied a sharp critical mind and an extraordinary appetite for work. He was more interested in constructing than demolishing; he was critical without ever being scathing; he could disagree in an agreeable way, and he was always straightforward, in his writing and with others. He was particularly good at encouraging and drawing young researchers both to join him on his intellectual journey and to branch off in new directions on their own.

John had a love of learning, a very evident intellectual pleasure in opening up sociology to new subjects and ways of thinking – whether it was space, time, disorganized capitalism, tourism, nature, mobility, climate change, or more specific things like the social implications of 3-D printing. He was not interested in pieties to the founders of sociology, but was open to whatever theoretical concepts illuminated the particular topics that concerned him, regardless of their

provenance. He had an eye for social developments that other sociologists, more tied to mainstream agendas, missed – be it tourism, mobility, or “offshoring.” For him social theory was to be *used* and to be improved through applying it to new topics.

I can’t begin to discuss the range of his contributions in this short piece, so I’ll just comment on two periods – one early in his career, the other at the end. I first came across his work in the mid-1970s when our interests in critical realism, political economy, and social theory and space converged. Like many coming from a background in human geography, I was seeking ways of engaging with social theory. John was coming in the opposite direction, making overtures to geography. Gregory and Urry’s *Social Relations and Spatial Structures* explored the theoretical implications of this encounter, and at later points in his career – particularly in his work on localities, mobilities and offshoring – John continued to rethink the relation between space and society.

In the late 70s and early 80s, much of British social science was radical-

ized by Marxism, and John was one of those who engaged with it in an open, non-dogmatic and fruitful way. At the time, the Conference of Socialist Economists was providing a focus for radical research and discussion across a wide range of topics, with regular weekend workshops drawing researchers and activists from all over the country. It was at one of these – the CSE Regionalism Group – that I first met John. The “Lancaster Regionalism Group” was one of several research groups in the UK that drew upon radical theory to investigate what was happening in particular places. These “locality studies” were conducted against a background of ongoing debates about how capitalism was changing, many of them characterizing the new era as “post-Fordist.” While we can now see that the latter was a distraction from more important developments of financialization and neo-liberalism, John and his colleague Scott Lash combined theoretical and empirical research to produce different and original overviews of the changing face of capitalism in *The End of Organized Capitalism* and *Economies of Signs and Space*.

In his last five years he published – among other things! – three books exploring a cluster of problems related to climate change, resources and society: *Climate Change and Society*, *Societies Beyond Oil*, and *Offshoring*. As Scott Lash notes, John was always particularly interested in social futures, and most recently he helped establish the new Institute for Social Futures at Lancaster University.

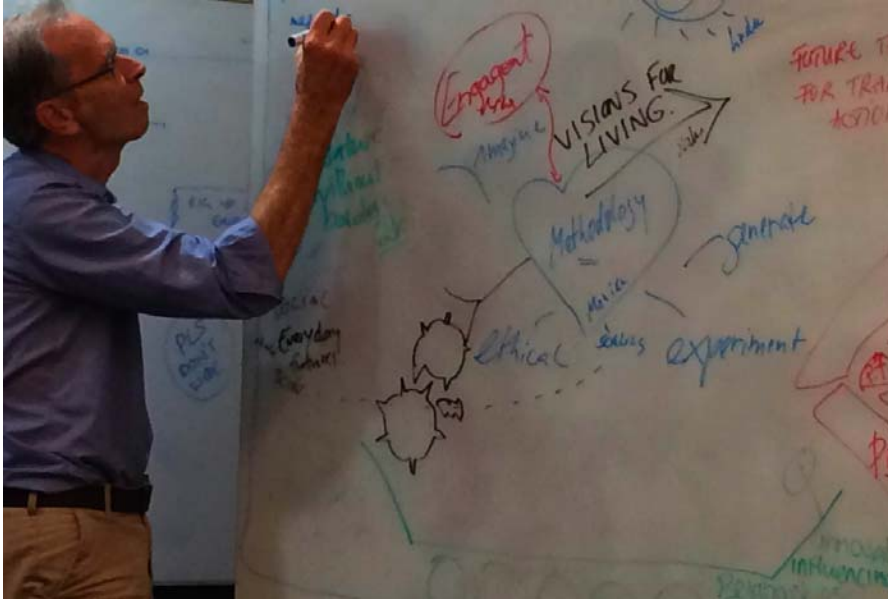
Climate change is without doubt the biggest challenge human society faces. Although many recent tomes on the future of capitalism and society scarcely mention global warming, John was one of the first social scientists to recognize the importance of fossil fuels in the development of modernity, and to think through the implications of climate change for everyday life. While most of us drive our research forward by looking in the rearview mirror, studying the past, John also looked ahead. Other worlds – better or worse – are possible, and as he showed, social scientists can and should think through and assess them. In these perilous times, I hope more follow the example he set. ■

**Andrew Sayer**, Lancaster University, UK



# > John Urry

## Sociologist of the Future



Meeting of directors of the Institute for Social Futures, Lancaster, 2015.

**J**ohn Urry, who recently passed away, was one of the UK's most cited sociologists, with some twenty books, many of them very influential. After graduating from Cambridge University, John spent his whole career at Lancaster University, where he and I were colleagues from 1977 to 1998. We wrote two books together, *The End of Organized Capitalism* (1987) and *Economies of Signs and Space* (1994). Both books spoke to the future; in many ways, John was a futurologist.

As a PhD student, John and Bob Jessop were in John Dunn's seminar on revolutions at Cambridge, a seminar that was also influenced by Quentin Skinner, perhaps the world's most eminent Hobbes scholar. Revolutions with their eschatological dimension are always somehow in the future; Hobbes is very much about state power. Perhaps these influences – revolutions and the state – gave John a feeling for the realities of the power of the state.

In 1975, John and Russell Keat wrote *Social Theory as Science*, a book that addressed sociological epistemology, in the frame of a certain "realism." The "real" was not what social agents encountered; rather, the real were the deep structures that determined empirical social relations. This was a sociological structuralism influenced by Louis Althusser's 1970s Marxist structuralism. But whereas Marxist structuralism was always determination by the economic base, Urry's structuralism was a much more general set of social structures, involving a notion of structural causation which not only determined everyday empirical experience, but drove social change and opened up the social relations of the future.

*The End of Organized Capitalism* and *Economies of Signs and Space* were favorably reviewed and much cited, and influenced (and were also influenced by) David Harvey and Manuel Castells. *The End of Organized Capitalism* discussed the accumula-

tion of capital, but argued that the new phase of capitalism was no longer governed by social and institutional organization, but instead by social fragmentation. John and I came to this argument from somewhat different perspectives.

I came to capitalist disorganization from the viewpoint of the dissolution of central (trade union and employer federation) collective bargaining. John saw the post-1980 phase of capitalism more in terms of movement and flow, and in terms of time, oriented neither to the past nor the present but to the future. Thus the book included John's chapters on time and on the movement of people in tourism – an argument which would later be developed in John's full book, *The Tourist Gaze*, which in a sense founded the sociology of tourism.

In the late 1980s John edited *Social Relations and Spatial Structures* with Derek Gregory. The key figure in this project was Doreen Massey and

her idea of “restructuring,” involving a transformation of “value chains.” A value chain would trace the sourcing of a commodity in, say, South American primary materials, and look at its transformation in a factory in, say, Mexico, and its marketing and distribution in Europe or the USA. These value chains were “stretching,” they were connecting ever-more distant places in time and space. They give us an empirical instantiation of what Giddens called “space-time distantiation” and Harvey called “space-time compression.”

This was a precursor to a much fuller sociology of global flows, which John and I addressed in *Economies of Signs and Space*. Castells had already begun to address a shift from the previous society of structures to the new globalized society of “flows,” involving a whole array of flows: flows of capital, of labor mobility, of com-

modities and goods, of environmental poisons or “bads” and of information and communication.

John developed this into a “sociology of mobilities,” which became a mainstay of his research and writing from the late 1990s until the end. He was particularly interested in how humans flowed from one place to another, in tourism, but every one of his books on mobilities included a chapter on “automobilities,” which are required and compelling reading. Here we see the world through the prism of a car, understood technologically.

John then wrote a series of books on climate change, returning to the theme of the mobilities, or flow, of “bads” – a turn that coincided with a marked shift to the left in John’s politics. I had always been to the left of John, but from about 2010, he was the stronger critic of capitalism, for ex-

ample, in his recent book, *Offshoring*. I remember a UK Research Council conference I co-hosted in Shanghai, to which sociologists and several economists were invited. An eminent, rather neoliberal, and even climate-sceptic, French economist was present; John, already towards his mid-60s, locked horns with him with the passion of a 25-year-old.

John was a sociologist of the future. I met him when we were both about 30 years of age; we were colleagues for the next 21 years, and the best of friends for the rest. Sylvia Walby, John’s partner for all those years, said that John saw me as a sort of instinctual intelligence, whose energies were always about to get out of control. I owe John an unpayable debt for his putting some structure on this wild energy. I miss him. We will miss him. ■

**Scott Lash**, Goldsmiths, University of London, UK

# > John Urry

## More than a Sociologists' Sociologist



*Low-Carbon Innovation Conference, Shenzhen, China, 2016.*

**J**ohn Urry's unexpected death shocked his family, friends and colleagues. He and I first formed a bond as postgraduate students in Cambridge University in 1967-1970, sharing supervisors and interests, interacting thereafter in the Conference of Socialist Economists as well as in sociology conclaves, and becoming colleagues again in 1990 when I was appointed to a chair in sociology at Lancaster University.

John Urry earned a double first in Economics and Politics from Christ's College, Cambridge, where he was supervised by, among others, James Meade, an economist subsequently awarded a Nobel Prize. These were years when John Maynard Keynes' work was still taken seriously in Cambridge, and where heterodox economics still had a place in political economy. John then embarked on a PhD in the Faculty of Economics and Politics (at this stage, there was no Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at Cambridge) on the topic of relative deprivation and revolution, supported by a research fellowship from the British Social Science Research Council. This was before Sir Keith Joseph, Mrs. Thatcher's hawkish Secretary of State for Education and Science, took umbrage at sociologists' rubbishing of his cyclical cultural deprivation theory of family poverty, denied that sociology was a science, and proposed renaming the SSRC as the Economic and Social Research Council. Years later, John served as national Chair of the Professors and Heads of the Sociology Group (1989-92), and was heavily involved in defending the social sciences against similar onslaughts; in 1999, he helped found the UK's National Academy of Academics, Learned Societies

and Practitioners in the Social Sciences (since renamed the Academy of Social Sciences).

In 1970, before completing his PhD, John began a lectureship in sociology at Lancaster. During 46 years of unbroken service, he contributed much to the department's strong and flexible research culture, both through his own work and through institution-building across the university. Since the heady days of expansion in the "white heat of the technological revolution" and the influence of left-wing thinking in the 1970s, universities have changed enormously and the demands placed on academics and scholars have increased hugely. Yet John always maintained his love of learning, his curiosity about social change, a self-evident intellectual pleasure in delving into new subjects and ways of thinking – whether it was power, social theory, space, time, localism and regionalism, disorganized capitalism, leisure and tourism, nature and the environment, mobilities, the complexities of global society, energy usage and climate change, urban design, the social implications of 3-D printing, and, most recently, present futures and future futures. Many of these interests converged in his efforts to establish Lancaster's Institute for Social Futures.

In their contributions to this celebration of John's life, Scott Lash and Andrew Sayer have described some of his inspiring works. My own favorite is John's rigorous and comprehensive *Social Theory as Science*, co-authored with Russell Keat (1975, re-issued 2015), which consolidated his theoretical trajectory until that point and inspired my own work in the philosophy of social sciences. However, always



interested in staying abreast of changing theoretical and substantive debates, John read widely and asked about their intellectual value added, what new insights they might generate, what anomalies and novelties they disclosed, and where they might lead. His interests were wide-ranging, involved links with the natural and environmental sciences, and reflected the strong “post-disciplinary” approach that characterizes Lancaster’s sociology department. This was a key factor in his ability to mediate among disciplines, paradigms, and epistemic communities, engage with so many students and scholars in his undogmatic and democratic way, encourage them to pursue their own interests and projects, and offer ideas and insights drawn from his massive intellectual capital, which was also renewed and expanded through these interactions.

There are many ways to become and remain a distinguished sociologist. John excelled at most of them. But he never pursued fame by deferring to power or sacrificing his intellectual integrity. He was reassuringly “local” in his loyalties and critical engagement, and always provided enthusiastic support to students and colleagues. Yet, continuing with Alvin Gouldner’s distinction between organizational identities, he was equally firmly “cosmopolitan,” with a global intellectual presence. His interests and projects spanned the natural and social worlds, and his influence spread globally through personal networks and timely interventions in emerging debates.

John was a “sociologists’ sociologist,” who knew and respected the craft but also aimed to develop it. He was

noted for cutting-edge innovations as well as for his steadfast defense and promotion of the discipline against politicians’ onslaughts. But he was also a restless intellectual spirit — the antithesis of a professional career sociologist with a tightly-focused substantive project embedded in a narrowly-defined understanding of the discipline. His unlimited curiosity created a mobile life, linking diverse fields and energizing new research initiatives and policy debates. Indeed, John worked at the leading edge of theoretical, empirical and applied fields in the social sciences, reflecting social trends and shaping innovative work. It is astonishing how much he achieved, in his own writing, in collaborative work, in developing international networks, in research management, in negotiating the endless succession of audits, and in promoting the social sciences. Equally amazingly was that he did all this without ever losing his laid-back, generous, approachable and good-humored manner.

John also had a heroic mind – believing, like C. Wright Mills (author of the classic 1959 text, *The Sociological Imagination*), that it was more important to say something significant at the risk of being wrong than to always be right by repeating the trivially true. In recent years he became more active as a public intellectual, intervening in debates and taking stands on issues crucial to the future of humankind and the planet. Above all, however, he was a great colleague, and his influence will live on through the continuing work and debates of those he inspired. ■

**Bob Jessop**, Lancaster University, UK

# > In Proximity and Mobility

## Commemorating John Urry



Conference on “Cities of the Future: Smart or Happy?”, Lancaster, 2016.

**B**ritish sociologist John Urry sadly passed away in March, just as we were celebrating the publication of our co-written article “Mobilizing the New Mobilities Paradigm” in the new journal *Applied Mobilities* – an article in which we assessed the impact of the mobilities paradigm in the social sciences over the past decade. We were also in the midst of writing an essay together for *Current Sociology* on the relation between the “mobilities turn” and the “spatial turn”; I feel lucky to have had the chance to talk with John about the origins of his thinking on space and mobility, and its relation to sociology as a discipline.

I joined the Sociology Department at Lancaster University in 1998, in part because John was there. Through his

ability to create a successful collaborative and trans-disciplinary environment, John attracted dozens of graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, visiting researchers, and new lecturers to Northwest England. After working together on several articles relating to mobilities, we co-founded the Center for Mobilities Research at Lancaster in 2003; over the next years, we held an inaugural Alternative Mobility Futures Conference; founded the journal *Mobilities* together with Kevin Hannam; co-edited a special issue of *Environment and Planning A* on “materialities and mobilities”, and co-edited *Mobile Technologies of the City*. In this rush of foundational work, there was a strong emphasis upon thinking across spatial scales, blurring disciplinary boundaries, exploring materialities and temporalities, moving beyond “sedentary”

national or societal frameworks, and exploring whether “mobilities” could provide a vision for a different kind of social science: more open, more wide-ranging, more attuned to other fields, more vital.

I am so thankful for our recent conversation, in which John traced the origins of his interest in mobilities to the spatial turn in social theory, beginning with Lefebvre’s 1974 *La production de l’espace*, and British debates engendered by another great thinker we have sadly recently lost, Doreen Massey. Her 1984 *Spatial Divisions of Labour*, examined the complex and varied movements of capital into and out of place and the resulting forms of sedimentation within each place; it was followed by Gregory and Urry’s 1985 *Social*

*Relations and Spatial Structures*, which brought together geographical and sociological contributions from Harvey, Giddens, Massey, Pred, Sayer, Soja and Thrift. This collection informed John's turn to what he called "the leisured movements of people into and out of place", further developed in *The Tourist Gaze* (1990), as well as to multiple mobilities and their spatial consequences, discussed in Lash and Urry's *The End of Organized Capitalism* (1987) and *Economies of Signs and Space* (1994). John's earlier books *Social Theory as Science* (1975, with Russell Keat) and *The Anatomy of Capitalist Societies* (1981) were also important theoretical contributions, laying the groundwork for this later direction in his work. By the mid-1990s, theorizations of the spaces of "flow" and "network" became especially significant with Castells' 1996 trilogy on *Network Society* and by the turn of the millennium the concept of "mobility" had emerged as a key term. Urry's *Sociology Beyond Societies* helped consolidate attention to mobilities as a key concept within an emerging spatial social science, or "mobile sociology" – an approach which has become increasingly influential over the past fifteen years, at least outside of the USA.

This shift to the emphasis on mobilities coincided with the founding of the journals *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* and *Theory, Culture and Society*, along with Polity Press in the early 1980s. John described these publications as part of an effort to develop a post-disciplinary social science and social theory in response to the Thatcher government's attacks on universities and especially to cuts to university social science programs.

John also described his work as oppositional to both American social science and "British empiricism." From my perspective in the United States, the anti-positivist and critical theory edge in John Urry's work helps to explain the apparent reluctance of the American Sociological Association and many mainstream US sociology departments to engage with the new mobilities paradigm – a paradigm I consider a beacon of hope for critical, engaged, post-disciplinary social science.

Despite the seeming hubris of announcing something as a "new paradigm," John was personally very self-effacing and modest, never trumpeting his own achievements. John's personal stance was thoroughly anti-

elitist and anti-neoliberal, as was materially evident in his everyday interactions, and symbolically evident in his ever-present monochromatic work uniform, usually a blue cotton shirt, blue jacket and trousers, always with an open collar and no tie. He was an egalitarian through and through, with no patience for pretensions, hierarchies, or status seeking. He welcomed students and visitors from around the world with an infectious smile, and he always made a place for all at the table.

John Urry created a new kind of mobile sociology: one that reaches beyond disciplines, enables new kinds of intellectual formations, and allows for sociology to renew its relevance in the world at large as it addresses crucial public issues – including his most recent work on climate change, resource extraction, and dark economies. The new mobilities paradigm and Urry's larger body of work continues to stand in contrast to quantitative empiricist traditions in American and British social sciences, while struggling against the hierarchies of academic departments, professional bodies, and the disciplinary closure of the neoliberal university. Sociology would do well to continue the moves he has made. ■

**Mimi Sheller**, Drexel University, USA



# > Student Campaigns against Sexual Violence

by **Ana Vidu**, University of Barcelona, member of ISA Research Committee on Economy and Society (RC02) and **Tinka Schubert**, Loyola University Andalusia, member of ISA Research Committee on Women in Society (RC32)<sup>1</sup>



Illustration by Arbu.

**T**he University of California-Berkeley has long been central to debates about sexual harassment and sexual assault on campus, not because it has an unusual number of incidents, but for the way it has responded to them. Unfortunately, this problem is very widespread at most universities. As one of many colleges dealing with the issue, UC Berkeley is known for its unusual student mobilization to combat sexual harassment – a movement that has taken off at other campuses too.

UC Berkeley has a pioneering tradition of student protests against gender violence on campus making it a leader in this effort. The issue was firstly raised in the late 1970s when sociology students formed *Women Organized Against Sexual Harassment* (WOASH), a group of women who de-

cided to act on behalf of thirteen student complainants against a sociology professor. As one of the very first cases, it helped break the silence on gender violence in higher education in the US, and broke new ground on the struggle against sexual harassment and assault in colleges.

The 1979 federal complaint that WOASH filed against the university constitutes one of the first instances in which Title IX legislation was used as a legal framework against sexual assault in academia. But WOASH did not stop there. Two years later, it created the first orientation guides for students arriving on campus, with materials designed to help students identify sexual harassment, and outlining conduct that would not be tolerated by the university – as well as providing advice to victims about where to seek advice or lay complaints in the event of unacceptable conduct.

By the 1990s, the number of complaints as well as the number of policies, resources for survivors, and specific offices to prevent and solve sexual harassment cases on campuses, had increased significantly. In 2003, “No means no” was introduced into the *Criminal Sexual Assault Act*, in order to establish “consent” as a prerequisite for sexual activity.

In the early 2010s, a new cohort of student activists around the country claimed that the university does not take complaints seriously and is thus in violation of Title IX. Complaints were filed against American universities, charging them with failing to adequately protect students against sexual violence. In 2013, the California State Legislature required UC Berkeley to reexamine its policies dealing with sexual harassment and sexual assault; a year later, in 2014, students pushed for the “Yes means Yes” consent law for college campuses, requiring an *affirmative, conscious and voluntary agreement* in any sexual contact, recognizing that victims cannot always say “no.”

In 2015, student activism became more vocal than ever, creating a context of solidarity and support from the university community, and encouraging college members to act against gender violence. Recently, social pressure from faculty and department members persuaded a famous Berkeley astronomy professor and Nobel Prize candidate to resign over sexual harassment complaints that stretched back many years. Shortly afterwards, the University of California created a committee to investigate the university procedures for dealing with faculty facing charges of sexual assault.

The struggle against sexual violence at US college campuses has involved both social activism and legal changes. The 1979 protests by WOASH were crucial in creating the context, setting a precedent by speaking up, and by filing complaints against harassers and against the University for tolerating harassers. These protests helped to change campus culture, raising public awareness across the country, creating a culture of respect and zero tolerance of sexual harassment by any university member. Sexual assault on college campuses is now widely recognized as a problem for the entire community – a shift that means survivors can now turn to both formal and informal mechanisms for support.

Student activists on campus continue to challenge and improve policies on Berkeley’s campus – in a tradition that can be seen to be at work, for example, in the main entrance to the campus, where students publicize their various social concerns. Even on the bus to Berkeley, conversations about sexual harassment can be heard. On campus, students can be seen protesting, while an “exhibit” of painted T-shirts with diverse claims against gender violence is visible near the administration building. Lectures on sexual assault are now a regular feature on campus, and the student newspaper publishes the latest news about campus gender violence on its front page.

In the US, the campaign against sexual harassment has been carried out, with national and local conferences, as well as a national association dedicated to the effort. One prominent campaign involves an effort called *End Rape on Campus*, founded by survivors and activists. Other initiatives include the Cal TV program, *A look into sexual assault*; a documentary titled *The Hunting Ground*; and books and novels such as “*Again and again*.” In the political sphere the United States Government opened a website called “Not Alone, together against sexual assault” publishing resources, data, legislations and useful information for schools, students, and everybody concerned about the matter. The White House itself and the National Campus Leadership Council promoted the *It’s on Us* campaign to raise awareness, to act and prevent campus sexual assault in what is considered a national problem. The government claims to *Take the Pledge*, not to be a bystander, but to be part of the solution. *It’s on us* aims to achieve a cultural shift surrounding sexual assault on college campuses and to provide every victim with the resources they deserve.

Actions taken by students at Berkeley as well as at other American university campuses have not only changed institutional responses to sexual harassment but also have influenced student mobilizations globally. As mentioned, strong solidarity networks among survivors are key all over the world, and will accelerate the progress of this struggle. For instance, in Spain, student campaigns have emerged over the last years despite a silence imposed by feudal structures and the threat of retaliation from aggressors. The *Solidarity Network of Victims of Gender Violence at Universities* is now promoting a strong movement across Spain. However, even in these times, very few faculty members engage in this struggle, and if they do they can face serious reprisals. The network was created by activists and survivors of the first complaint filed against a Spanish university professor for sexual harassment. Facing the lack of institutional response, they decided to mobilize themselves, to contact the media and to be a reference network for all those students and survivors of college sexual assault. The network was subsequently recognized as a “best practice” by the Spanish Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality.

The social movement and the activism of US students around issues of gender violence have inspired students on Spanish campuses and elsewhere. Such movements, supported by strong public engagement, will play a major role in building universities that future generations deserve. ■

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<sup>1</sup> Research for this article was conducted while Ana Vidu was visiting the University of California, Berkeley and Tinka Schubert was visiting the Graduate Center of City University of New York.

# > Mondragon's Third Way

## Reply to Sharryn Kashmir

by **Ignacio Santa Cruz Ayo**, Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain and **Eva Alonso**, University of Barcelona, Spain



A mural in the town of Mondragon.  
Photo by Christian Weber.

ing, many critiques – including Kashmir's – aim to show that Mondragon has degenerated into a standard capitalist firm with precarious working conditions. This critique usually has two elements: the proliferation of temporary workers and the international expansion of non-cooperative subsidiaries. In the present article, we offer some data showing that instead of giving up their cooperative principles, Mondragon's members see these challenges as opportunities to strengthen and enhance their model. In our own research, we identify a third way for the cooperative, a new non-capitalist competitive cooperative model.

For more than 60 years, the creation of quality and sustainable jobs has been Mondragon's central goal. According to its 2014 Annual Report, Mondragon is currently a group of 263 organizations, including 103 cooperatives and 125 production subsidiaries companies. Together, the Group is responsible for 74,117 jobs. Throughout its history, Mondragon has been able to create jobs and to maintain them even during economic recession; whenever possible, the jobs created are permanent ones. Today, most of the non-cooperative jobs can be found in three areas: the distribution sector, Spanish industrial subsidiaries and international industrial subsidiaries.

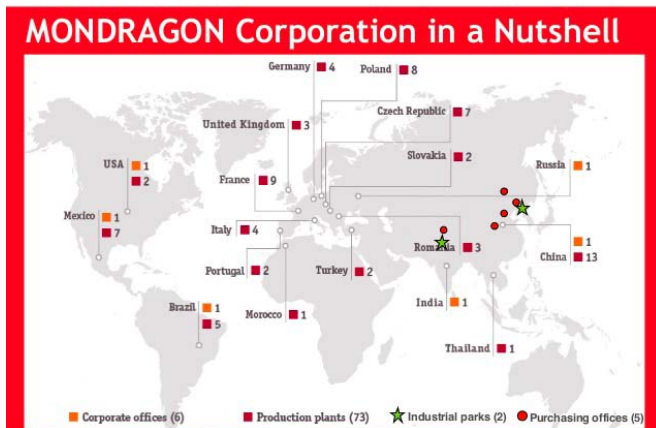
**A**s scholars conducting research on cooperatives, we would like to thank *Global Dialogue* for opening up debate about coops, and for allowing us to respond to Sharryn Kashmir's assessment of the Mondragon Cooperative published in *Global Dialogue* 6.1 (March, 2016).

Critical commentators of cooperatives, such as Spain's famous Mondragon Cooperative, often argue that "facing competition, coops either degenerate into capitalist firms, or founder." Given that Mondragon is clearly not founder-

Mondragon uses three distinct strategies to convert temporary jobs into cooperative ones. In the distribution sector, Mondragon uses the EMES plan (*Estatuto Marco de la Estructura Societaria*). Eroski, Mondragon's distribution group, acquired another distribution group (Caprabo), and then merged the supermarkets of the two groups. In 2009, the Eroski General Assembly approved the EMES plan, giving all workers an opportunity to become partners in worker cooperatives. Although this plan is still in force, the Eroski cooperative has found itself in a difficult situation, facing huge losses, and is now in the midst of a pro-

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The global reach of Mondragon cooperatives.

cess of internal restructuring to reduce and refinance the accumulated debt. This is not the best context for inviting (non-cooperative) workers to become members.

A second strategy involves the conversion of industrial subsidiaries into mixed cooperatives, allowing workers to become members – an alternative which is only feasible when the companies are viable, and when both cooperative partners and subsidiary workers are willing to extend membership. This has happened in several cases: Maier Ferroplast Limited which belonged to Maier Cooperative Society (2012); the Victorio Luzuriaga Usurbil cooperative (2004); Fit Automotive (2006); and Victorio Luzuriaga Tafalla cooperative (2008). These are neither unusual nor isolated examples of how to cooperativize industrial subsidiaries.

The third strategy concerns international subsidiaries outside the Basque Country which are said to represent the degeneration of the cooperative model. The Group has created international subsidiaries to assist the maintenance or even expansion of employment in the parent cooperatives. From this point of view, this strategy has been successful, since the internationalizing cooperatives have created more jobs than those that stayed at home. Contrary to what some critics claim, figures show an increasing percentage of workers who are members. According to Altuna (2008), in 2007 members composed 29.5% of employees. By 2012, members made up about 40.3% of the total workforce.

In 2003, Mondragon's Eighth Congress decided that the Group's main aim would be to expand cooperative values, promoting participation (in management, capital and benefits) by extending the Corporate Management Model into Mondragon's international subsidiaries. Though the effort is well-intended, many obstacles stand in its way. The transformation of these companies into a cooperative business model involves well-known economic, legal, cultural and investment barriers (Flecha and Ngai, 2015). For instance,

some national legal frameworks do not recognize cooperative models; many workers lack the economic resources needed to become a member; and in some subsidiaries, many workers don't understand the very meaning of a cooperative. Mondragon's culture arose over 60 years in the Basque Country, and has been transmitted from generation to generation. Transferring this culture to another context is not easy. Nevertheless, there have been some successes. For instance, Angel Errasti (2014) describes the integration of trade union representatives into the Administrative Council of the subsidiary created by Fagor Electrodomésticos in Poland, which represented a breakthrough for worker participation in company management.

Mondragon raises many complex questions about the role of cooperatives in today's competitive global economy. Mondragon's cooperatives must operate in a competitive world so that, sometimes, failing to internationalize would risk losing the chance of creating new jobs in Spain and abroad. Although cooperative companies are a minority and capital companies set the rules of the market, this does not mean that there is only one path to survival in a global economy. The Mondragon group has been able to approach internationalization in innovative ways. When subsidiaries are created abroad, Mondragon's priority has been to maintain jobs and preserve locally-rooted cooperatives, rather than to outsource or offshore production.

Mondragon has also succeeded in maintaining better working conditions than other cooperatives or capitalist companies. Even those who have been critical of Mondragon acknowledge this contribution as it is well known that today's cooperative members hope that their offspring will have access to similar cooperative jobs that are both stable and of high quality. This principle of creating sustainable and quality jobs is also transferred to international subsidiaries. Thus, Luzarraga and Irizar (2012) show that in addition to complying with national and local regulations, Mondragon's subsidiaries have improved labor conditions, for instance, in wages or training opportunities. Although Mondragon's cooperative movement may not have been able to singlehandedly change the dynamics of global capitalism, it has nevertheless continued its historic effort to create a better world for workers and their communities. ■

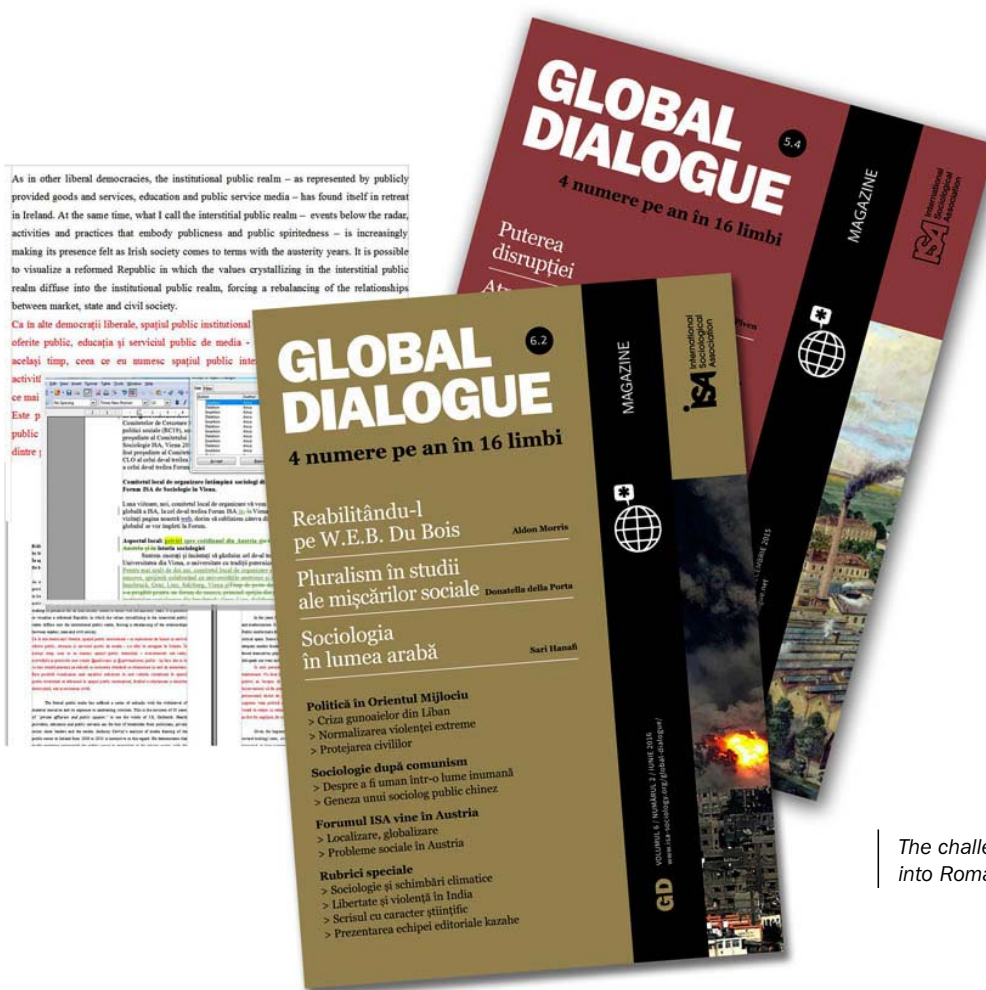
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# > Translating *Global Dialogue* into Romanian

by **Costinel Anuta, Corina Bragaru, Anca Mihai, Oana Negrea, Ion Daniel Popa, and Diana Tihan**. University of Bucharest, Romania



### *The challenge of translating Global Dialogue into Romanian.*

**T**his article describes the genesis and structure of *Global Dialogue's* Romanian editorial team, focusing on its development and working process, as well as some of the team's idiosyncratic practices.

The Romanian editorial team was initiated by Professor Marian Preda, who encouraged postgraduate students to get involved as part of their doctoral training, and by Pro-

fessor Cosima Rughiniş and Ileana-Cinziana Surdu, who helped the team develop its production processes. Ileana guided the team every step of the way and greatly contributed to shaping its current operations.

After receiving the English versions of articles for *Global Dialogue*, the team sends out invitations to colleagues who have already been in the editorial team and to students in the University of Bucharest's graduate program in Sociol-

ogy. Among the most convincing incentives for joining the team is the experience it offers to practice sociological and linguistic skills in reading, processing and translating each article – with the added incentive of ISA student membership after helping with five issues.

Once the English drafts are placed in a Dropbox folder, the articles are translated over the next two weeks. Each translator is asked to translate a certain amount, usually between four and ten pages, depending on the issue. The third week involves a peer-review process, where each team member reviews an article previously translated by another colleague. The English and the Romanian versions of articles are constantly compared, in order to best capture the text's original meaning and style. During the fourth week, another team member, newly engaged in the process, reviews each article, seeking to maintain compatibility across articles (e.g. harmonizing the citation style of the magazine; deciding upon which synonym would fit the best), and finally, the team proofreads and edits the Romanian articles.

Still, things do not always run smoothly: each of us has had to work on social skills, including patience and adaptability. One of the thorniest challenges is rendering the meaning of the English original into fluent and natural Romanian; sometimes, we have had to coin suitable terminology for relatively new concepts such as “trickle-down”

economy, which we encountered in one of the articles from issue GD5.4. This challenge stems from the structural difference between English (a Germanic language) and Romanian (a Latin language), two languages which sometimes use conflicting rules of syntax and word order. Heated debates over which wording or phrasing would be the best translation offer good opportunities, not only to brush up our English, but also to polish the use of our own native language. At times we struggle to find Romanian phrasing for sociological concepts which are rather new – a debate that is often settled when a volunteer can bring evidence that a Romanian sociologist has used a translated version of the English terms. Thus the translation challenge helps us in two ways: it improves our linguistic proficiency and strengthens our general knowledge of sociology in the process. Meeting the translation deadline, while still debating theoretical topics, is another challenge – especially since all members have to fit their work on *Global Dialogue* into their academic and professional schedules.

Given the wide variety of topics covered by the magazine, joining the *Global Dialogue* family requires considerable experimentation with various academic and local cultures. Throughout the entire process of translation, each team member brings her or his expertise so that every issue of the Romanian version is the fruit of enthusiastic involvement, keen interest and utmost dedication. ■

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