GLOBAL DIALOGUE

9.2

3 issues a year in 17 languages

> Editorial

Sociologists not only aim to foster discussions within the discipline but also are engaged in public debates and controversies. Over the last decade Nandini Sundar, a most renowned Indian sociologist and social activist challenged the boundary between academia and activism and confronted social injustice in India through political action. In the interview opening this issue of *Global Dialogue*, Sundar talks about the past and current situation of India's "war in Bastar" and about the difficulty of being a good scholar and a good activist in these hastening times.

Our first symposium "Transformations and Alternatives" starts with two texts that trace sociological reflections on alternative societies and possible futures through the history of sociology and discuss why this kind of reflection is necessary to combine sociological critique with emancipatory ideas. A text from Latin America highlights political struggles for a solidary society and the role of concepts like *Buen Vivir*. A contribution from Qatar contrasts possible futures of the Arab world. Articles from South Africa and Zimbabwe introduce empirical research into how people deal with major changes in their lives (in this case brought about by climate change) and what obstacles desired policy changes may face.

Erik Olin Wright, a scholar whose life and work was dedicated to the ideas of equality, freedom, and community passed away in January 2019. With him we lose a sociologist whose work on class, Marx and "real utopias" did not only inspire colleagues across the globe but also activists fighting to build a more just and democratic society. Two close friends from different parts of the world pay tribute to his life and work.

In our second symposium Birgit Riegraf, Lina Abirafeh and Kadri Aavik invited scholars from around the world to present their research on the relation between "Gender and Social Inequality." The articles highlight different aspects of this relation like gender inequality in research funding from a European and Nordic perspective, the status quo and the fate of Gender Studies in the Czech Republic, the route and obstacles of gender inequality in the Arab Region, and gendered labor in the Asian context. The articles give us an insight into the debates about social progress or the backlash in gender equality and spark the discussion on how sociology as a discipline can offer tangible solutions for equality and social justice. Contributions point to the need of social action and the necessity to keep the struggle for gender equality going to further pave the way towards an equal society.

As part of our regional focus on "Sociology from (South) Africa" the first article highlights the persistence of poverty and inequality in South Africa and puts this as a warning to Africa as a whole. The second text discusses the rising popularity of and controversies around charismatic churches in South Africa and addresses the silence of sociological voices on this matter. The following two articles debate the situation of mining workers in South Africa, one showing how the rhetoric of inclusion contradicts the exclusion of women from doing certain tasks while the second piece presents an ethnographic study of black unemployed ex-mine workers and shows the effects unemployment has on their confidence and self-worth. What we can learn from the working people of Tanzania is brought to us in an article that examines the food system in Dar es Salaam. Focusing on the history of Zimbabwe, the next piece examines the modes of accumulation and political reproduction that transformed and sustained Zimbabwe's predatory state. With a wonderful photo-essay Alexia and Edward Webster round off this symposium by combining insights about Johannesburg's history with remarkable photographs of that city built on gold.

Finally, the article included in the Open Section of this issue examines solidarity in times of right-wing populism in Europe by focusing on Austria and Hungary. ■

Brigitte Aulenbacher and **Klaus Dörre**,
editors of *Global Dialogue*

2

> *Global Dialogue* can be found in 17 languages at the ISA website.

> Submissions should be sent to globaldialogue.isa@gmail.com.

ISA International Sociological Association

GLOBAL DIALOGUE

*Reflections on the **transformations and alternatives** to the current organization of societies have always been a part of sociological thought, as has empirical research on societal changes and transformations. These contributions from around the globe give theoretical as well as empirical insights into these issues.*

*On a global scale, women still account for a large proportion of the poor and marginalized. The articles gathered for this symposium debate the relation of **gender and inequality** in different spheres – from research funding and neoliberalism to state and labor.*

3

*This section provides an insight into theoretical perspectives and empirical **research from South Africa** debating issues concerning not only this country but also Zimbabwe and Tanzania as well as Africa as a whole. A photo-essay about the history of Johannesburg gives a visual comprehension of the city.*

> In This Issue

> **" The hardest thing in times of crises is to remember that we also have a responsibility to keep doing research. Sometimes sociological writing seems like a personal project which benefits no-one other than the author, sometimes it feels pointless especially if it's not ground-breaking, but at the end of the day we are paid to add whatever little incremental knowledge we can to the world."**
>
> Nandini Sundar

> Burning Forests
An Interview with Nandini Sundar

Nandini Sundar is Professor of Sociology at the Delhi School of Economics, Delhi University. Her recent publications include: *The Burning Forest: India's War in Bastar* (Juggernaut Press, 2016, and new edition under the title *The Burning Forest: India's War Against the Maoists*, Verso, 2019); an edited volume, *The Scheduled Tribes and Their India* (OUP, 2016); *Civil Wars in South Asia: State, Sovereignty, Development* (co-edited with Aparna Sundar, SAGE, 2014); and *Inequality and Social Mobility in Post-Reform India*, Special Issue of *Contemporary South Asia* (co-edited with Ravinder Kaur, 2016). She has also authored *Subalterns and Sovereigns: An Anthropological History of Bastar* (2nd ed., 2007); co-authored *Branching Out: Joint Forest Management in India* (2001); edited *Legal Grounds: Natural Resources, Identity and the Law in Jharkhand* (2009); and co-edited *Anthropology in the East: The founders of Indian sociology and anthropology* (2007). Sundar was editor of *Contributions to Indian Sociology* from 2007 to 2011 and has served on the boards of several journals, research institutions, and government committees. She was awarded the Infosys Prize for Social Sciences (Social Anthropology) in 2010, the Ester Boserup Prize for Research in Development in 2016, and the Malcolm Adiseshiah Award for Distinguished Contributions to Development Studies in 2017.

Sundar has been engaged in human rights litigation and activism since 2005. In 2011, the Supreme Court of India banned state support for armed vigilantism in a landmark judgment, Nandini Sundar vs. State of Chhattisgarh. She writes regularly for the media on contemporary issues, and her writing is available at http://nandinisundar.blogspot.com.

Here she is interviewed by **Johanna Grubner**, a PhD researcher at the Johannes Kepler University, Linz, Austria and assistant editor of *Global Dialogue*.

Nandini Sundar.

JG: Your critically acclaimed book Subalterns and Sovereigns: An Anthropological History of Bastar *was published in 1997 and focuses on the nineteenth- and twentieth-century history of Bastar. Can you tell us about the initial interest and motivation that led you to focus your work on this area in central India?*

NS: When I started out on my PhD in the late 1980s at the department of anthropology, Columbia University, I was inspired by the work of Marxist historians like E.P. Thompson and Eric Hobsbawm, as well as anthropologists like June Nash and William Roseberry with a political economy focus. In India, scholars were debating the subaltern school of history. I knew I wanted to study colonialism, the expansion of capital, and peasant rebellion/contemporary social movements, but it

>>

5

took a while to figure out where and how. In 1990, I visited Bastar for the first time, and it seemed to have all the ingredients I needed for a PhD – generous people, ongoing social movements, a rebellious past… and nobody had really worked on this history.

JG: In your latest book The Burning Forest: India's War Against the Maoists*, you discuss the results of your continued research and fieldwork in the area of Bastar. Could you briefly describe the specific social and political conflicts taking place in this area today?*

NS: For the last century or more, central India has been exploited for its forest and mineral resources, a process that has intensified in the early 21st century. Large corporates have been given mining leases, displacing local communities and causing environmental and social distress. People have been resisting displacement through a variety of movements. One form this has taken in the last couple of decades is through participation in armed guerilla activity with the Communist Party of India (Maoist). The government's counterinsurgency operations have involved a large number of extrajudicial killings, the massive proliferation of security camps, and militarization of the landscape. Currently, both the government and the Maoists are intransigent about adopting armed methods, though they both claim to want dialogue and peace in the interests of the people.

JG: In The Burning Forest*, you call the status and understanding of democracy and democratic practices in India into question and state that "India is a democracy with all institutions […] but what they mean may not be what we expect." Could you outline this critique for us?*

NS: Elements which are often considered essential to democracy, like elections or welfare measures, are often used to delegitimize alternative modes of protest as well as forms of life that do not fit in with the state's vision of jobless growth. These include forms of coexistence with the forest as well as a range of artisanal productive practices. Even in "normal times" electoral representation is problematic because of the structural inequalities under which it functions, such as the enormous sums of money that are required to fight elections, making parties dependent on big business and facilitating a variety of corrupt practices. However, during counterinsurgency or conflict, the use of the democratic apparatus as an instrument of oppression rather than of representation is especially pronounced. For instance, people are forced to vote to legitimate the political order, and parties and organizations are selectively banned. Currently in India, large sections of the media have been co-opted by the right wing and are functioning as hate propagandists masquerading as nationalists. Increasingly all the institutions that support democracy are being hollowed out, such as the judiciary, regulatory

authorities, etc. Democratic politics – through the appearance of separation of powers and popular consent – functions as an outer limit on the possibility of thinking through creative alternatives.

JG: The social and political conflicts in Bastar involve the state, as well as a number of different political and social groups with different structures and different political and social aims. Can you speak about the theoretical framework you draw upon, as well as the empirical approach you apply to capture these differences and why you consider them to be useful?

NS: My underlying theoretical framework is always broadly Marxist. In *The Burning Forest*, however, I have tried to do an ethnography of democracy through the various aspirations people bring to the process, as well as the way different institutions like the media, judiciary, and political parties have responded. We see how impunity and precarity are co-constructed, but also how people have the will to survive and fight. I have tried to appeal to a generalist audience, so the critique is implicit. The choice of methods and sites was determined largely by circumstances. Since I was so centrally involved in what I was writing about – as a litigant against human rights violations – certain spaces were more difficult to access, such as the world of the police and security forces. However, other spaces became available to study intimately, such as the legal process involved in filing public interest litigation and how the judiciary functions.

JG: In your experience, can sociological field studies such as the one you conducted in Bastar help us to gain insight into the social structure of conflict more generally? And if so, could you tell us about some of those elements of your work that you find particularly pertinent when viewing social conflicts beyond the context of Bastar?

NS: There are many resonances between what is happening in Bastar and what is happening elsewhere, especially in resource-rich areas with indigenous people. I have learnt a lot from the literature on Latin American movements and state violence as well as from studies on counterinsurgency, including the British use of emergency legislation and strategic hamletting in Malaya, Vietnam, etc.

There are many ways that one can treat a subject like this, and I can think of at least three alternative books I could have written: around vigilantism and questions of authority, proxy authorship by the state, and individual culpability; around law and its fleeting appearances and the way in which this frames the state; or around the conflicted emotions of civil war. Further, unlike the excellent sociological/anthropological work on the Latin American armed left, we do not have a solid study of the Maoist movement which

looks, for instance, at the changes they have brought about in land distribution and the local agrarian political economy. I think that is something worth doing.

JG: In situations where democratic principles are challenged and basic human rights are violated, what would you consider to be the responsibilities of the social sciences and specifically of sociology as a discipline?

NS: We all have multiple responsibilities – as citizens, as sociologists, as teachers. There are times when we feel called on to don our citizen hats – attend a demonstration, sign a petition, give evidence in court, or whatever. At other times, our responsibility to our students and colleagues takes over and the relentless grind of academic life precludes other kinds of activities. The hardest thing in times of crises is to remember that we also have a responsibility to keep doing research. Sometimes sociological writing seems like a personal project which benefits no-one other than the author, sometimes it feels pointless especially if it's not groundbreaking, but at the end of the day we are paid to add whatever little incremental knowledge we can to the world. In these days of academic precarity, it's important also to keep reminding ourselves that having a job is a privilege.

JG: You are considered to be an academic as well as a social activist. Would you agree with this description? And how would you describe the typical relation between academia and politics in India and how this has affected your work?

NS: I have always been involved in various civil liberties and anti-communal platforms, but it was because I was deeply invested in Bastar as a researcher that I was driven to nearly full-time human rights activism in 2005. In 2007 when we initiated litigation in the Supreme Court against vigilantism and state atrocities I did not imagine, however, that we would still be in court in 2019. We got a great judgment in 2011 banning state support for vigilantes and ordering compensation to all victims, but the government refused to implement it, so we are still struggling for justice. In 2016, the Chhattisgarh police filed a vindictive and false complaint against six of us for murder, bearing arms, rioting, etc., along with charges under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, one of India's main anti-terror laws. Luckily we got reprieve from the Court and were not jailed, but the charges were only lifted in February 2019.

Over time my activism in Chhattisgarh has waned as other people have come in to work on this issue. Personally, I find it hard to be a good activist and a good academic, if for nothing else but the time this takes. At one level, many Indian social scientists are involved in some form of activism, because the problems around us are so visible and pressing. But there are others who are supercilious about activism, claiming it detracts from objectivity and appropriate theorizing. Under the Modi regime, preserving the university as an academic space has itself become a challenge, as seminars and workshops have been banned, speakers have been disinvited, students have been charged with sedition and beaten up, and books – including mine – are being taken off syllabi for being "anti-national."

JG: As your work has already gained a great deal of attention, surely many people will be curious about your intentions for the future. Can you tell us a little about your plans as an activist and scholar for the years to come?

NS: In part, it depends on India's political future, and how universities will be treated under future regimes. I have several projects in mind, including a study of the making of India's constitution, and the contribution of student movements to national politics, but I'm not sure which of them I will end up focusing on. I would like very much to do research on another continent, but am not sure if and when that would be possible. A lot of this also depends on getting leave from my university, which is increasingly hard to come by these days. ∎

Direct all correspondence to <nandinisundar@yahoo.com>

7

> A Brief History of
Sociological Alternatives

by **Matt Dawson**, University of Glasgow, United Kingdom

Thinking about alternative ways of organizing society has always been an integral part of sociology. Photo: C. Duncan/ Flickr. Some rights reserved.

"So, what's the alternative?" I can't be the only sociologist to be asked what alternatives sociology has to offer to the social problems it so carefully catalogues. It was partly this questioning, and my occasional inability to answer it, that encouraged me to write *Social Theory for Alternative Societies*, where I attempted to outline a collection of alternatives offered by sociologists. Doing so taught me that there is a rich history of sociological alternatives. As others have pointed out, a discipline which, as sociology increasingly does, bases itself on critique and questions the inevitability of what *is*, automatically confronts the question of what *could be*: the question of alternatives. For sociologists grappling with this quandary today, an awareness of the history of these alternatives would be useful.

What we see when we study this history is the close connection of critique and alternative. Even Karl Marx, who famously quipped that he was not "writing recipes for the cookshops of the future" used ideas of what communism could look like – eradication of private property, the lessening of the division of labor, work becoming our "foremost need" etc. – as ways to enhance his critique of capitalism. The same can be found for later Marxist writers, whether it was Henri Lefebvre using the alternative of *autogestion* (self-organization and management) to illuminate the ways in which everyday life was manipulated, Herbert Marcuse highlighting the "new subjectivity" for humanity suggested by the "great refusal" movements of the 1960s and 70s or Angela Davis' advocacy of prison abolition as a response to the pernicious prison-industrial complex. These Marxists were united in seeing some visions for alternatives as useful and necessary to question the permanence of what is.

Sociologists from other perspectives shared this view on the intimate connection of critique and alternative, across

>>

8

numerous contexts. Émile Durkheim offered multiple alternatives, including the banning of inheritance. Inheritance was presented as incompatible with the emerging modern France with its focus on individualism and meritocracy, while also exacerbating problematic forms of economic inequality, therefore it should be banned. In Scotland, Patrick Geddes sought to overcome the overcrowding and unhealthy conditions of the industrialized city with a system of "conservative surgery" which redesigned cities with a focus on civic spaces. The old town of Edinburgh still shows the impact of his ideas in the Patrick Geddes Heritage Trail. Meanwhile, in the US, W.E.B. Du Bois responded to changing regimes of racial inequality with different alternatives. He moved from an optimistic, liberal belief in science and education expressed in his advocacy of "Negro Academies" to a radical claim for black economic segregation to indicate the possibility of an alternative beyond capitalism.

Given C. Wright Mills' claim in *The Sociological Imagination* that sociology is trying to make society more democratic, it is unsurprising to also see alternatives which focus on enhancing democracy. In Chicago, George Herbert Mead highlighted the difficulty for the "genius" of all people to be expressed in a democracy which reduced politics to the battle of "personalities" and instead advocated a set of social reforms – social settlements, city clubs, immigrant protection leagues, strike arbitration, suffrage campaigns, special needs education – which ensured all citizens had the chance to express themselves democratically. Meanwhile, exiled in London, Karl Mannheim outlined a system of "militant democracy" with a set of strictly enforced central democratic values and a "new ruling class," educated in sociology, to avoid the rise of fascism.

Feminist sociology has also made a significant contribution to the quest for alternatives. Selma James and Mariarosa Dalla Costa, responding to previous writers such as Margaret Bentson who had advocated socializing housework, presented wages for housework as a way to overcome the inequities of patriarchy. They also hoped through this to make women a central part of the revolutionary struggle for a socialist society. Later, responding to worries that pornography had "sexualized hierarchy" and reproduced notions of women as primarily sources of satisfaction for men, Andrea Dworkin and Catherine MacKinnon sought to ban pornography. In response, feminists such as Lynne Segal and Sheila McGregor argued that rather than seeking to ban pornography we should seek out more feminist expressions of sexuality.

These alternatives, and others such as Anthony Giddens' "Third Way," Ulrich Beck's advocacy of "A Europe of Citizens," or those of the many sociologists who have contributed to the debate on the basic income suggest a need for sociology to consider the nature of its public interventions. While Michael Burawoy's advocacy for "public sociology" has encouraged sociologists to reflect on the nature of their public activity this has, at times, been removed from historical examples of public sociology. However, when we look at this history through the lens of how sociologists have offered alternatives, we find rich examples for the current day, from Geddes' urban redesigning, Mead's community organizing, Davis' anti-prison activism to Mannheim's radio lectures. Such a focus also reminds us of the role fiction has played in allowing sociologists to outline their alternatives. Perhaps most significant here is Charlotte Perkins Gilman's feminist utopia *Herland*, with its emphasis on collective child-rearing and sustainable relationships between humanity and nature.

Ruth Levitas has suggested that, since we spend significant effort critiquing forms of inequality and power with the assumptions these could be removed, sociologists carry "silent utopias" in their work. I hope this short piece has shown that often sociologists have not been silent about the alternatives they have to offer. Sociology has a rich history of alternatives to seek inspiration from, debate and critique. When we are asked "so, what's the alternative?" we have many answers to offer. ■

Direct all correspondence to <Matt.Dawson@Glasgow.ac.uk>

9

> Future in the Making

by **Rainer Rilling**, University of Marburg, Germany

Who and what shapes our future?
Photo: S. Vastano/Flickr. Some rights reserved.

The term "transformation" has a short yet diverse history. It ranges from everyday to political-scientific descriptions of all kinds of change, from political regime change and the development of post-colonial orders into liberal democratic capitalisms, to the different varieties of a globalizing capitalism and finally, even more broadly, to the "Great Transformations" of the human-nature relationship, of the state-socialist orders into capitalist ones and beyond. While often focused on the controversy about how and with whom different actors could get from "here" to "there," transformation narratives have often in a rather curious way neglected certain aspects of a "politics of the future."

"The future is already here; it is just not yet distributed evenly." That is what William Gibson, who invented the term "cyberspace," is said to have stated a quarter of a century ago. However, he kept silent about the current or future distribution of this future – even though the question already pressed to the fore centuries ago. The emergence of modern relations of time in bourgeois modernism not only revolutionized the hitherto valid distinction between past, present, and future and changed the meaning of "future" from passive to active ("the future is made"), it also moved profit-making and calculation with coming time – that is, futures – into the center of the new economic system. Ultimately, the pre-capitalist societies focusing on the past were transformed into capital-accumulating societies focusing on the future. It is also since then that strategic projects aiming to broadly land grab the "continent of the future" have existed.

Through the universalization of markets and capitalized money and their territorial as well as social "disembedding" (Karl Polanyi), what came into being were such strategic formats as the "present futures" (Niklas Luhmann) that now exist always and everywhere. Today these are, for example, the global bets on the future of the dominant money-power complex of the financial industry, the promises of security and the expansion of the "future apparatuses" of the preventive, violent, and military state or the calculations made on ecological sustainability and economic profit through the transformative coupling of geoengineering and a post-fossil fuel "green capitalism." More than anything else, the construction of a complex arrangement of technological-social innovation through the

>>

so-called Industry 4.0, big data, the digital society, smart spaces, and digital dominance signifies the great promise of a global consolidation into a project for the transformation of the informational-industrial productive forces of contemporary capitalism.

There is much to suggest that this will once again revolutionize the large bundle of time-related individual and socio-cultural behavior patterns as well as social practices that have emerged since the nineteenth century, such as precaution, prevention, preemption, preparation, and adaptation (resilience), which embody a strong and sustained commitment to the future.

These large formats are at the same time public and private segments of capitalist capabilities for the future and are supposed to clear a way for profit and power in the uncertainties of the respective futures. Their dynamics are neither short of violence nor of crisis, precisely because, despite their lack of simultaneity, they have developed their own bodies as well as modes of power and are thus an extraordinarily transformative and planetary force.

At the same time, each of these projects that aim at exploiting the "continent of the future" generates ever new globally effective visions, utopias, myths, and expectations (Jens Beckert) of great depth and breadth, which underpin the systemic viability of contemporary capitalism. These projects function as "generators of sense" (Georg Bollenbeck) and contribute pieces of guiding interpretations of the world and their "present futures."

What happens when we construct, tell, calculate, write, hope, plan, or fantasize about the future? As a result, futures are made present (actual, real). Futures are defined by naming, interpreting, and framing, and, by doing so here and now, they are brought into the present – becoming "present futures." All these futures at stake were and are named, understood, interpreted, and brought into their respective presents, thus making them current and ready for decision-making. The whole process is accompanied by the endeavor to minimize the difference between the then actual "future presents" and the current "present futures," for each "present future" is kept between a here and now and a then and there. Present futures are present but at the same time absent because they have not happened, are not there yet, and may never happen. It is these presences in the present of something that has not happened, or that may never happen, that make such present futures the very subject of decisions, actions, or non-actions.

So it is about who leaves which "time print" (*Zeitabdruck*) of a present future in the future present. Secondly, it is necessary in the present to make decisions about ideas, models, imaginaries, narratives, and actions oriented towards the future that can be used to generate trust, credibility, acceptance, approval and, ultimately, security that this particular future present – though indefinite and not foreseeable – will actually occur. That is the punch line of "future politics." It stands on shaky feet – but they are the feet of giants.

However, developing present futures also means taking them away from others, as British futurologist Barbara Adam put it: "We make and take futures" – for example, those of the exploited, the extremely poor, the homeless, the undocumented, prison inmates, or refugees. Here, any powerful and hegemonic future-making prefigures, shapes, and erodes the future present of those who follow. Crises, poverty, hardship, and austerity compress their time into the essential: survival in the distress of this present. Thus, it leaves no time for the attractiveness of the future, a better life and its imaginaries. Austerity is an uninterrupted attack on the future of the poor. To close this field of the future – this "warehouse of possibilities" (Luhmann) – and to exclude everything from power which could run contrary to dominant projects through concurrent substructures is a signum of the dominant future politics here and now.

However, it is not the reach of the great cultural models and narratives of capitalist promises of the future but their power to shape and their stability that have clearly eroded over the last 50 years. Over the last decade, the experience of the economic crisis, the rapid collapse of social-democratic-liberal patterns of order, and the rise of violent politics from the right have accelerated this destabilization. Nationalist and fascist narratives – not about markets but about guilty elites – are being revived and updated. Financialization and the financial crisis since 2008 devalued and destroyed millions of imagined future presents. The new, predominantly cultural paths of the future that have been reactivated or combined from these experiences and possibilities since the turn of the millennium therefore increasingly rely on mega-trend breaks and disruptions in the economy in order to enforce regressive retro-cultures from the right. Thus, political counter-narratives of the past gain weight and stabilize themselves institutionally and economically.

Those who want to criticize, reform, or radically transform today's capitalism obviously have to deal with the fact that capitalism is for the first time in history a society of the future which operates with probable, plausible, and possible futures – whose current mantra, of course, is the massive invocation of narratives of the politics of the past. ■

Direct all correspondence to Rainer Rilling <rillingr@mailer.uni-marburg.de>

11

> The Many Voices of *Buen Vivir*

by **Mateo Martínez Abarca**, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico, and Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, Portugal

Illustration by Arbu.

During recent years in Latin America — especially in the Andean region — an important debate has taken place concerning the idea of *Buen Vivir*. First as a proposal forged in the heat of indigenous struggles in the 1990s, then as part of an intense discussion in leftist intellectual and academic circles, and finally, in countries such as Ecuador, as a decisive concept in the drafting of a new national constitution in 2008 (and thus translated afterwards into public policy), *Buen Vivir* is a powerful idea that has gone a long way in a very short time. But what is *Buen Vivir* after all? Should one consider it a proposal with practical relevance for the construction of an alternative society, not only in Latin America, but across the world?

There are many ways to define *Buen Vivir*, depending largely on the place of its enunciation. In precisely this sense, it is an idea that assumes both the tone and force of the voice invoking it. *Buen Vivir* therefore doesn't have the same meaning for all indigenous peoples, or for all indigenous women, eco activists, intellectuals, NGOs, or even the government of Ecuador. *Buen Vivir*, whose literal translation from Spanish to English would be "good living," ultimately points to a rich yet elusive concept-under-construction, which cannot be easily stabilized, because it is being constantly built and rebuilt, negotiated, and re-negotiated.

For indigenous peoples, for instance, *Buen Vivir* cannot be understood without taking deep steps into a particular philosophy and representation of reality. In Ecuador, Kichwa peoples use the concept of *Sumak Kawsay* as an equivalent to *Buen Vivir*. *Sumak Kawsay* can be defined as a utopian idea rooted in *Pachamama* (roughly trans-

>>

12

lated as Mother Earth), in which all social relations between humans and nature are built into community vis-a-vis principles of complementarity, reciprocity, solidarity, and equality. For Kichwa speakers, *Sumak Kawsay* can be understood as the opposite of *Llaki Kawsay*, or "bad living," the unfortunate character of life in the absence of community. Bolivia's Aymaras have a similar yet different concept called *Suma Qamaña*. The Guaraní peoples of Paraguay call it *Ñandereko*, while Mapuches from Chile and Argentina refer to *Küme Mongen*, and so on…

For intellectuals and scholars, particularly in the Latin American left, *Buen Vivir* maintains a strong relation with the problems of development, growth, and extractivism. Under the capitalist organization of life, economic growth rests on the commodification of human productive activities and of nature itself (taking into consideration even "non-productive" human and natural processes). Thus, *Buen Vivir* would be the radical antithesis of market society's modes of valuation: an affirmation of use value over exchange value, as nineteenth- and twentieth-century material theorists might frame the distinction. In this sense, *Buen Vivir* would not only mean endeavoring to act upon a post-growth societal logic, but also building an entirely different post-capitalist economic rationality.

In any event, *Buen Vivir* should be understood as a critique of modernity based on different, non-western ontologies — including those typically framed as Marxism — amidst a crisis of colonial, Eurocentric patterns of global power. In terms of its theoretical development, *Buen Vivir* draws multiple insights from critical theory, postcolonial theory, feminism, cultural, race, and gender studies, and political ecology. But its historic relevance derives mainly from the narrow, oftentimes harsh lived experience of social movements, particularly indigenous movements, which have propelled the translation of their reflections and commitments into a set of ideals to guide their struggles. By the same measure, *Buen Vivir* consistently escapes reification, the fluidity of the concept constituting one of its great advantages against the frequent theoretical stagnation of other utopian-like proposals.

On several occasions communities invent new, highly practical concepts out of the idea of *Buen Vivir*, addressed to specific challenges in the course of their struggles. An example of this would be the notion of *Kawsak Sacha* or "living forest," elaborated by the indigenous people of Sarayaku, who live in Ecuador's Amazon basin. This proposal was born as a response to the threat of oil exploitation in their territory and had as one of its foremost goals to nurture the community's "life project" as an alternative to the imposition of extractive models since the early 2000s. A few years later, Sarayaku and allied agencies presented a *Kawsak Sacha* initiative at the COP 21 Paris Climate Summit in 2015, and subsequently at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Hawaii in 2016.

Buen Vivir has not merely reenacted "ancestral worldviews" — although it does rescue and revitalize several traditional elements from the historical memory of indigenous peoples. Rather, the concept adheres to a very advanced construction of ideas and practices constantly adapting to the rhythms of a reality in which the continuing exploitation of labor and nature remains central. It is a typical mistake among academics and activists from the Global North as well as the Global South to imagine *Buen Vivir* as the latest flavor of New Age spirituality, whereby groups of indigenous people and their allies gather to play drums under the full moon while the world collapses around them. To view *Buen Vivir* through such rose-tinted, rational-pragmatist lenses would unintentionally promote the depoliticizing of a proposal that is, in its most unadulterated form, an intrinsically and deeply political challenge.

Interpretative mistakes such as these, and the depoliticized cooptation of its principles by certain governments as a doctrine exclusively of and for state logics, has discredited *Buen Vivir* as a radical transformative proposal. This seems to have happened in Ecuador, where *Buen Vivir* has been part of the national Constitution since 2008. Despite its kernel for transformative potential, the subordination of *Buen Vivir* under a specific project of a government aligned with the so-called "pink tide" in South America, ended up bureaucratically exhausting its potential for Ecuadorian society as the regime sank into an intensive extractivist agenda, authoritarian practices, and a string of corruption scandals. And yet, the momentary setback of this ingenious counter-political experiment has also stimulated a process of necessary self-critique, renewal, and learning amongst the multiple subaltern constituencies that continue to identify with and believe in the project. And in the end, it will be the multitude of these voices who will utter the last word about the future of *Buen Vivir* as a philosophical and political instrument in their struggles. ■

Direct all correspondence to Mateo Martínez Abarca
<abortocronico@gmail.com>

13

> The Other Future
of the Arab World

by **Abdelkader Latreche**, sociologist and demographer, Qatar/Algeria

At a demonstration in Algeria, a placard reads: "You have stolen everything: our identity, our history, our revolution, our independence, our ressources, our past and present. But you will never steal our future." Photo: Abdelkader Latreche.

Forecasting, prospecting, or shaping the future of the Arab countries or of the Arab world is a challenging and difficult task. Challenging, because it deals with countries over-fascinated with the future, split between the splendors of the past and the miseries of the present. These are societies in eternal debate between the traditional (*qadim*) and the modern (*jadid*), and in permanent dialectic between rupture and continuity in the search for a better tomorrow, including the eternal search for the renewal of the myth of the "Arab Nation." Difficult, because the Arab countries have been in a phase of change since the nineteenth century: after decolonization came the building of the nation-state; thereafter came different types of crisis caused by divisions and conflicts and the search for renewal (*tajdid*). By taking on the struggle for emancipation, renewal (modernism) rebels against traditionalism and generates ruptures. That is also why the Arab countries always appear weak and wanting to redo everything; in their revolutions for freedom, similar to those of the nineteenth century in Europe, the present is always opposed to history, whose

symbols must be destroyed. In contrast, the future is synonymous with renewal, rupture, and modernism, as seen in the nineteenth-century Arab revival movement that denounced the stagnation of the Arab society and promoted the emergence of a new modern political space.

The idea of the future of the Arabs, of the "Arab Nation," or of the Arab countries has always been present in Arab thought, political movements, and parties, before and after the independence of the Arab countries. This idea, which cannot be dissociated from the contemporary history of the Arab countries, in particular the movement of renaissance (*Nahda*), decolonization, modernization, and the building of new nation-states, was exclusively associated with the idea of Arab unity and/or Arab common action for decades. Social and popular efforts related to the Arab dream are still ongoing in various literary, artistic, sports and other fields. Clearly, the idea of the future of the Arabs transcends both generations and time. But it has become more challenging, in particular with the future demographic growth of the Arab population.

> The other future

Since their independence, the Arab countries have shown their willingness to modernize the management of the state by creating and adopting new national and regional institutions, legal and legislative frameworks, and diverse national and regional development policies. These national and regional efforts have necessitated the mobilization of immense quantities of national resources and have always been dependent upon one primary source of wealth — oil or gas, tourism, or agriculture. A crisis in the primary sector — such as the fluctuation of oil and gas prices — creates large deficits and stops public investment, and thus results in economic as well as social crisis. The uniqueness of the Arab economies and their total dependency on one sector cannot continue; the Arab countries have to manage their economies differently and change the ways in which they use their resources, especially oil and gas. This

>>

14

major change, or "rupture," needs a real diversification of the economy that goes beyond the oil and gas industry, enhances the value of productive work, and encourages and supports local productive initiatives in an inclusive way. It requires the elimination of all exclusive practices based upon gender, age, religion, ethnicity, and economic, social, regional, and tribal affiliation, among others. The future stability of the Arab countries requires the reform and modernization of their political systems to enable participation of all components of the population, and a break with the notion of a leader for life (*président à vie*), which dominated the Arab political scene throughout the twentieth century. The other institutional rupture concerns improving the efficiency of national political institutions and the modernization and professionalization of regional Arab institutions; these need to be empowered, and made more autonomous of politics.

The "other" future of the Arabs involves a rupture or break with all attitudes by adopting new strategies based upon the intensification and enhancement of local (individual or group) initiatives, in order to create "new citizens" who participate in the economy, politics, and society. This participation requires the organization of civil society through the creation of different free and autonomous social and professional associations, as well as the ongoing involvement of different groups of people, such as entrepreneurs, professionals (lawyers, engineers, teachers), students, young people, women, and social institutions, in the general development of society. It also requires a general debate over the elaboration of national policies. This does not mean a reduction in the competencies of the state, but an increased involvement of non-governmental partners in order to create an inclusive form of governance that will strengthen the relationship between the governing and the governed.

This rupture in both behavior and thinking also involves a responsible and courageous discussion of types and modes of governance, and of the status of women in the Arab countries, avoiding all forms of populism. Likewise, the place of Islam in society has to be discussed calmly in order to reaffirm its centricity within the state.

The future of the Arab countries by the end of the 21st century will not depend exclusively on institutional and behavioral ruptures or breaks: it will also depend upon how the Arabs see their place, role, and function in the world, both as nations and as a region. Are they eternally going to be producers solely of oil and gas and importers of various useful and non-useful consumer products? Is the Arab region always going to be a region of conflicts and war, producing more and more refugees and excluded people? Or, are the Arab countries going to form a stable region, without conflicts and displaced people, and with strong social protections and a performing education and health system? What will the new Arab generations produce in terms of industry, medicine, technology, and science? What will be their contribution(s)?

The interaction of different institutional and behavioral ruptures and breaks should go hand in hand with the emergence and elaboration of the new role and place of the Arab countries in the world. This does not require special institutions or legislation as much as a belief in the possibility of another Arab world. This could be the starting point of a new internal discussion of the future that the Arabs want. This future will not be limited to improvised political reforms, re-unification or union, but will aim at the elaboration of a regional vision based upon the pragmatic, fundamental, and common interests of the Arab countries, the maintenance of stability, the prevention and resolution of conflicts, prosperity, security, inter-regional exchange(s), and co-operation.

The future of the Arabs in the end of the 21st century has to be created and planned now in order for future generations to inherit the foundations of a New Arab World, foundations that have to be initiated and designed internally, not imported or designed artificially. It will not be a total rupture or break with all the achievements of the past; in past centuries, the Arab countries experienced enormous changes and reacted to events, and these should be used as a foundation to build the future. The future has to be considered as a priority now, in order to avoid reproducing the same misadventures, frustrations, and defeats of both the past and the present, in particular with the growth and multiplication of internal and external challenges in the near and distant future.

The objective conditions for the emergence of a new prosperous Arab world, to which the Arabs, but also their neighbors and friends, aspire, are diverse. Where ruptures and breaks are necessary, they must take place through dialogue and exchange, not through violence and exclusion. This is one of the most important challenges for both present and future generations of Arabs. For this reason, the future of the Arabs must be a priority concern of all Arabs today, not the concern of one sole country but a regional concern. ■

15

Direct all correspondence to Abdelkader Latreche <ablatre@yahoo.fr>

> How Stigma Constrains Policies:

Waste Pickers in South Africa

by **Teresa Perez**, University of Cape Town, South Africa

South African Waste Pickers Association. Copyright: SAWPA.

Last month I finished packing the last of my belongings to move back to the UK after seven years in Cape Town. Anything that I didn't want was placed outside my home and gone within an hour. Waste pickers had collected, sorted, and sold my things. This for me was a fast and convenient way to minimize waste, while simultaneously supporting people to generate an income. For others, I was being irresponsible by attracting and encouraging homeless people to the neighborhood, who no doubt spent the money on alcohol and illegal substances. Neighbourhood watch groups would express little wonder at the burglary next door a few weeks later: these so-called "waste pickers" are the eyes and ears of criminals.

Such polarized attitudes can be explained by the way that policies have yet to overcome the stigma faced by waste pickers. Negative stereotypes affect the likelihood of waste picking becoming a "green job" or of waste pickers becoming employees in the recycling industry. The phrase "waste picker" has negative connotations, which has led to calls to use other words such as "reclaimer." My use of "waste picker" echoes language used by the South African Waste Pickers' Association (SAWPA) and the Global Alliance of Waste Pickers, who advocate for better working conditions. Despite their efforts, there is no consensus about the circumstances (if any) under which waste pickers should be supported.

> Policy and image

Ambiguity about waste picking is exacerbated by the variety of positions taken at different policy scales and between regions. At a global level, waste picking falls under the International Labour Organization's "decent work" agenda. Waste pickers are portrayed as important in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This means waste pickers are potential workers in the green economy in the

>>

global South. Unlike their counterparts in the global North, sometimes known as freegans or dumpster divers, waste pickers are not aligned with environmental movements. Waste pickers are rarely seen as people making an active choice and instead are associated with desperation. This image is significant at a national level. On the one hand, governments can opt for more labor-intensive methods of minimizing waste that could employ waste pickers, but are indicative of high levels of poverty. On the other hand, they can pursue technological solutions such as "waste-to-energy" that emulate modern European methods, but create fewer jobs and are unlikely to be filled by people currently working as waste pickers.

Cape Town became home to Africa's first large-scale waste-to-energy plant in 2017. In light of electricity shortages and the return of regular outages at the time of writing this piece, any alternative to the nationalized utility provider (Eskom) is an easy sell. A further benefit espoused at the plant's launch was that workers (approximately 80) would not have to pick through waste like those at rubbish dumps. In fact, unlike other local governments that have helped waste pickers to form cooperatives, waste picking at landfill sites is outlawed in Cape Town. This variation within South Africa is possible because, although national legislation (The Waste Act) stipulates that local governments must have a waste management plan, the means of achieving zero waste is entirely at the discretion of local policy makers. In urban areas striving to become "world cities," a modern image is important for attracting foreign investment. Street waste pickers are removed from central business districts in preparation for high-profile events such as hosting the FIFA World Cup. Any street-level reclaiming tends to be viewed by local officials as voluntary but is largely discouraged. This is in part due to residents' complaints, especially in historically "white" suburbs where residents connect grime with crime.

> Residents' perceptions

The expansion of green jobs involves public participation. The success of curbside collection schemes relies on residents separating their waste and being happy for former waste pickers to access and sort through their household refuse. At the moment, waste pickers struggle to present themselves as potential workers and what they do as a public service. There is an air of suspicion around who these people are that sift through bins, and what their motivation is. Based on looks alone, waste pickers are no different from destitute vagrants. Often labelled as "bergies," it is assumed that rifling through bins is a last resort

for people who have severed their ties with friends and family, relationships that "normal" people would be able to rely on in times of need. Waste pickers' physical appearance can also add to a sense that they are not trustworthy. Many waste pickers have prison tattoos, scars, and other physical signs that serve as discrediting markers. This makes it difficult to present themselves as people who have successfully exited out of crime by making a job for themselves. Instead, waste pickers appear somewhat unapproachable. The lack of interaction means residents rely on other sources of information to judge waste pickers.

In affluent suburbs, private security firms fuel prejudice and discrimination by advising against giving to waste pickers; this feeds the sense of fear that their business relies on. Similarly, neighborhood watch groups are unable to differentiate between people trying to make a living and someone about to break into their house. Residents have joined with councilors to create street patrols that practice profiling according to "race," age, and gender, reporting and removing anyone regarded as a threat to safety and security. Residents' WhatsApp groups use "BM" as a code for "black man" to keep track of the undesirable types of people seen in the neighborhood. Street waste pickers must therefore continually negotiate and re-negotiate their access to streets and household rubbish. As it stands, waste pickers are unlikely to be perceived as potential service sector workers by the general public. Other than pockets of government support in parts of South Africa and the work of advocacy groups, waste pickers have remained marginalized. Therefore policies aimed at helping waste pickers to form collectives or become employees, as seen in parts of South America, do not reach people who are stigmatized as a nuisance.

Exacerbated by inconsistent policies at the global and local scales, stigma is a constraint for waste pickers in South Africa. Pervasive stereotypes, entrenched by historical disdain for unregulated (non-European) workers, prevents them from gaining the level of support required for their participation in the green economy. Waste pickers are interpreted as vagrants, dependent on alcohol or illegal substances, incapable of rational thought, and a threat to safety and security in affluent suburbs. Waste picking is seen as backward, dirty, and an inefficient way to minimize waste. This negativity persists all the more in light of policies that annex waste pickers and waste picking as signifiers of being a developing country. Hence, in cities conscious of attracting tourism and business, mechanized forms of recycling are likely to remain more popular than their labor-intensive counterparts. ■

Direct all correspondence to Teresa Perez <tpz031@googlemail.com>

> Adapting to Climate Change: Smallholders in Zimbabwe

by **Christopher Mabeza**, Zimbabwe Open University, Zimbabwe

That global climate is changing is beyond reasonable doubt. The impacts of climate change are being felt disproportionately across the globe with people in the developing countries bearing the major brunt. Zimbabwe is no exception. There are climate change fingerprints all over Zimbabwe's rural landscape. Increased rainfall variability has caused havoc as smallholders lurch from drought to drought with their livelihoods becoming more and more precarious. Discussions tend to ignore the role smallholder farmers play on the frontline of the climate change crisis. In the wake of this existential threat, smallholders have conjured amazing adaptive strategies to climate change. Tragically, their innovations are often the groomsman and hardly ever the groom in policy formulation, courtesy of perspectives that wrinkle their noses at the critical role local innovations play in helping rural communities adapt to climate change. Transfer of technology appears to influence much of how policy perceives adaptation to climate change. Yet this article argues that smallholder strategies are critical in rural development.

Relentless experimentation is at the heart of smallholder farmer initiatives in rural Zimbabwe. Such initiatives are disarmingly revealing about their tenacity. The innovations are a pursuit of many dead ends. These strategies do not constitute a silver bullet solution to smallholder fragile livelihoods. They are silver buckshot solutions. Silver buckshot solutions are a suite or array of partial fixes for adapting to climate change. This means therefore that there is no single solution, but multiple solutions working in unison to address the impacts of climate change.

The Shona of Zimbabwe have adapted to climate variability since time immemorial. They are the largest ethnic group in the country. They pride themselves as hard workers with zero tolerance for laziness. They mainly till the land as a way of ensuring that they have food on the table. Their livelihoods depend on rainfed agriculture. Among these farmers are individuals who have become experts in farming and adapting to a changing climatic environment. These accomplished farmers are known locally as *hurudza*. In some instances, these productive farmers are known as *mutambanevhu* (one who "plays" with the soil). They are relentless experimenters. Most of their innovations are premised on water conservation.

Water harvesting is increasingly becoming a viable option for farmers to adapt to increased rainfall variability. This is a viable option given that in these marginal environs rain is said to come rapidly and to leave rapidly. In rural Zimbabwe, a farmer who is world-renowned as a water harvester, the late Zephanaih Phiri won an award from the National Geographic for his water harvesting skills. He harvested water that cascaded down a rock outcrop near his home. He would say, "I marry water and soil so that they won't elope and run off but raise a family on my plot." This meant that his innovations would prevent soil erosion, ensuring that he captured most of the water for use in irrigating his crops. Most smallholder farmers harvest run-off water and channel it to small dams they have constructed at their homes (see Picture 1). They use the water to do market gardening. Others who call themselves "erosion killers," build a wall across a gully thereby converting it into a small dam which is also used for the purposes of market gardening (see Picture 2). By so doing, they curb gully erosion.

1. *A small dam on a smallholder farmer's plot. The water is used for watering his tomato crop in the background.*

>>

2. *This small dam is a product of "erosion killing."*

In some rural areas of Zimbabwe, some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have launched Conservation Agriculture (CA) to help farmers adapt to climate change. CA is premised on minimum soil disturbance and water conservation. Most of the farmers who practise CA use grass for mulching (see Picture 3). Some innovative CA farmers use old tins to make rain gauges (see Picture 4). They keep recordings of rainfall from these devised rain gauges.

Increased climate variability in rural Zimbabwe has led to an unfolding phenomenon, a "blue revolution." The blue

3. *Grass is used by these farmers for mulching.*

4. *A farmer practicing conservation agriculture (CA) in Shurugwi with an improvised rain gauge made from an empty tin.*

revolution is fish farming. Fish farming is "greener" than livestock production in the sense that it emits less greenhouse gases. It is heartening to note that fish farming is becoming a major activity in some parts of Zimbabwe. Smallholders construct fish ponds at their homes (see Picture 5).

Other farmers are raising free-range chickens, or what I prefer to call "chickens without borders." Farming chickens without borders has become a popular adaptation intervention by many smallholder farmers. These farmers have realized that there is opportunity in adversity. This is premised on the understanding that the only reasonable response to change is to find opportunity in it. Some farmers are rearing as many as 2,000 chickens without borders. They sell their chickens in the neighboring towns and especially in the capital Harare where there is a huge demand for organically grown chickens. Thus, business is very brisk and the farmers hope to increase the number of their chickens.

5. *A smallholder farmer's fishpond.*

6. *Mopani worms (*amacimbi*).*

Enterprising farmers are diversifying their livelihood options. They harvest non-timber forest products such as mopane worms, known locally as *amacimbi* (see Picture 6). *Amacimbi* are a delicacy and have a readily available market. Proceeds are used to buy food and pay fees for school children.

Smallholder farmers are playing a critical role in the climate change adaptation discourse. They understand their environments better than policy experts. They are key repositories of knowledge that can be harnessed in helping communities to adapt to climate change. It is up to policy makers to take on board these innovative silver buckshots by smallholders. ■

19

> Erik Olin Wright: A Real Utopian[1]

by **Michael Burawoy**, University of California at Berkeley, USA

Erik Olin Wright speaking about his concept of "Real Utopias."
Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung/Flickr. Some rights reserved.

Where did it begin? It's difficult to say. Erik himself liked to trace his interest in utopias to 1971 when he was a student at the Unitarian-Universalist seminary in Berkeley, avoiding the draft. It was then that he organized a student-run seminar called "Utopia and Revolution" to discuss the prospects for the revolutionary transformation of American society. He then worked at San Quentin State Prison as a student chaplain, joining an activist organization devoted to prison reform.

This prepared him well to be a graduate student at Berkeley in the heady days of the early seventies and he became a major figure in the intellectual project of those days: to reinvent sociology as a Marxist discipline. So Erik's dissertation challenged mainstream sociology not on ideological grounds but on scientific grounds. He demonstrated that a reconstructed Marxist definition of class could explain income disparities better than existing models of stratification and human capital theory.

At the same time as he was challenging sociology, Erik was reinventing Marxism. The middle class had long been a thorn in the side of Marxism – it was supposed to dissolve yet it seemed to get bigger. Together with Luca Perrone, Erik solved the problem by introducing the concept of "contradictory class locations." There were three such contradictory class locations: small employers between the petty bourgeoisie and large-scale capital; supervisors and managers between capital and wage labor; and semi-autonomous employees between wage labor and the petty bourgeoisie.

Taking up a position as assistant professor at the University of Wisconsin–Madison in 1976, Erik began to develop a research program of class analysis. As existing surveys were not designed to map his new categories, he administered his own national survey, designed to capture his class categories. In this era of Marxist ascendancy, his ideas spread and soon he had organized teams in a dozen other countries, fielding parallel surveys.

>>

If there is one trait that threads through his scholarly work – and indeed through his life – it is the determination to get things right. This not only entailed developing a close dialogue between theoretical elaboration and empirical research, but also deepening the internal logic of his analytical schemes. You can trace the evolution of his thinking through his books, starting with *Class, Crisis and the State* (1978), followed immediately by the publication of his dissertation, *Class Structure and Income Determination* (1979), and then to the deeper shift that came with his adoption of John Roemer's notion of exploitation in *Classes* (1985), and his response to his critics in *The Debate on Classes* (1989).

In 1981, Erik joined a group of brilliant social scientists and philosophers, among whom he was most influenced by the philosophers G.A. Cohen and Philippe van Parijs and the economist John Roemer. They pioneered "Analytical Marxism," known more colloquially as "no bullshit Marxism," clarifying the foundations of Marxism in a no-holds-barred grilling of each other's work.

Although from its beginning Marxism had an allergy to utopian thinking, after 1989 the political conjuncture called for just that. Erik took up the challenge. Directly contesting the pathos of the new conservatism he advanced a socialist agenda by laying out alternatives to capitalism, but discovering their nuclei within capitalist society.

The new project began in 1991, the very year the Soviet Union collapsed. Erik inaugurated a series of conferences to discuss "real utopias" – not some speculative ideal world but real alternatives that can be found within actually-existing societies. Conference topics included associative democracy, market socialism, participatory democracy, universal income grants, and gender equality. The conference papers were published in a book series that Erik assembled, culminating in his own magnum opus, *Envisioning Real Utopias*.

Erik was returning sociology to its founders – Marx, Durkheim, and Weber – who had been less squeamish about building their theoretical architectures on moral values than the professionals of today. Erik was explicit in defining sociology's project as understanding the institutional possibilities for realizing those values.

In the last years of his life Erik discovered that these real utopias were very appealing to activists. He spent much time traversing the world talking to groups keenly interested in hitching his ideological-intellectual framework to their own projects. So he set about rendering *Envisioning Real Utopias* in an accessible form, removing the clutter of academic chatter, creating a handbook of anticapitalism which he fittingly called *How to Be an Anti-Capitalist in the 21st Century*.

Those in the trenches of civil society were enthusiastic to hear this positive message. Here was an intellectual paying tribute to their largely invisible labors, contesting capitalism against all odds, enduring insults and reprisals.

Erik leaves us with both a way of thinking and a way of being. Let me be blunt. I know of no one who thought more lucidly, more cogently, more speedily, more effortlessly than Erik; no one who so effectively cut to the chase as to what was at stake in any issue, any paper, any book. We can't be like him, but we can be inspired by what he has laid down, to follow in his footsteps, guided by his map, refashioning it as we move forward. ◼

1. This is a shortened version of an article published in *Jacobin* in January 2019. The original can be found here.

> Remembering Erik Olin Wright

by **Michelle Williams**, University of Witswatersrand, South Africa

I am one of the many people who was able to count Erik Olin Wright as a mentor, collaborator, friend, and fellow traveller. Many tributes have focused on his enormous intellectual contribution, his legendary supervision and mentoring, his engagement and commitment to finding pathways beyond capitalism, and his contribution to Marxism. While I too experienced these aspects of Erik, I want to focus on my personal experiences with Erik the humanist with his many quirky passions, infectious imagination, and passion for the creative side of humans.

I first met Erik in the late 1990s on one of his annual visits to his closest friend Michael Burawoy, my supervisor (I was in graduate school at Berkeley). During one of our first conversations, Erik said to me, "You know I'm your uncle." To which I replied "Really? I don't follow." He then explained that Michael was my academic father and his brother, so that made Erik my uncle. I immediately felt this was his way of incorporating me into his world, I later realized how deeply this captured Erik's warm embracing of others as part of his family – he always found ways to include people into his enormous network, often through fictitious kinship. From the very beginning, Erik's avuncular role carried through in all our engagements – whether he was explaining the difference between and difficulty in theory building and concept building, or our long discussions about the democratic impulses of the communist parties in South Africa and Kerala, or debates about what makes an initiative anti-capitalist, or sharing our favourite non-fiction and fiction books, or seeing plays (he loved the political plays that South Africa excels in), or discussing recipes and how to adapt his famous chicken Coq au Vin to a vegetarian dish (what he called Coqless Coq au Vin – which I was very sceptical about until I tried it!). Erik always engaged passionately and cheerfully. His annual visits to Berkeley were also a moment of glee for Michael's students because Erik would always cook a fabulous meal and invite us to Michael's flat (during the remainder of the year we always had to bring food to our meetings at Michael's flat as he is no cook).

My connection with Erik deepened in relation to our common commitment to finding anti-capitalist alternatives, especially in relation to cooperatives and the solidarity economy that we explored with my partner Vishwas Satgar. While we agreed on the importance of thinking through concrete alternatives, we did not always agree on the details – I often disagreed with his fiercely analytical approach, introducing ideas of culture, the importance of meaning-making, and the sheer messiness of reality. In these engagements, Erik never betrayed any frustration or displeasure but rather seemed to love the pursuit of ideas, and even managed to give me the impression that he was not disagreeing, but also not agreeing. He was generous too – I know of at least two occasions where he wrote authors – Rohinton Mistry and Zakes Mda – to thank them for their political fictional work. When he saw Mda's play *The Dying Screams of the Moon* on one of his visits to Johannesburg, he was nearly in tears and said it was the best play he'd ever seen.

> "**Erik was always the avuncular, loving, passionate, and humanistic person who was also one of the most important sociologists and Marxist scholars of our times**"

While I met Erik in Berkeley, over the past twenty years since our first encounter, most of our friendship was through travels to many far-away places: Kerala, Barcelona, Goteburg, Buenos Aires, Padua, and he made three visits to South Africa. Our first far-away encounter was in 2000 in Kerala, India (I was just beginning fieldwork in Kerala). It was in Kerala that I learned how Erik would connect with people of all ages everywhere he went: on one occasion he sang 'She'll be coming down the mountain' to the delightful giggles of a group of schoolchildren in a mountainous village in rural Kerala. Perhaps my favourite encounter was when Michael and Erik were both in Johannesburg. Over a dinner with just the three of us, I had the enormous good fortune to watch the two of them engage in a debate over Marxism for over an hour. Not only was the content of the discussion interesting, but the manner of their engagement was extraordinarily fun to watch. Erik's equanimity was deep! In fact, Erik's moods never seemed to be affected by much (including sleep deprivation, discomfort, or exhausting schedules). At least in my experience, Erik was always the avuncular, loving, passionate, and humanistic person who was also one of the most important sociologists and Marxist scholars of our times. Hambe Kahle Erik! ■

> Relating Gender and Inequality:
An Introduction

by **Birgit Riegraf**, Paderborn University, Germany, and member of ISA Research Committee on Women, Gender and Society (RC32), **Lina Abirafeh**, Lebanese American University, Lebanon, and **Kadri Aavik**, Tallinn University, Estonia and University of Helsinki, Finland
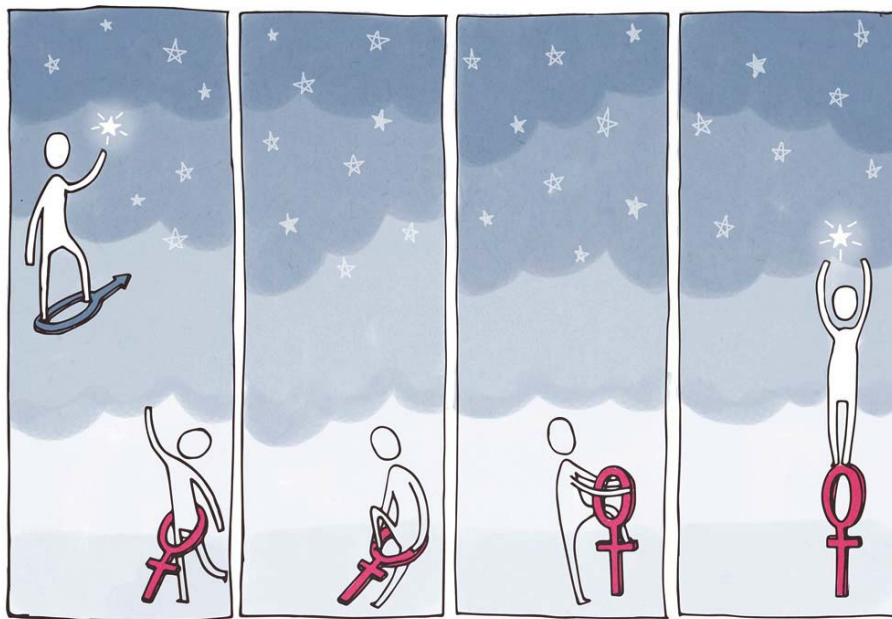
Reaching equality is not a personal or private matter. It needs to be addressed on a structural, political, social and economic level. Photo: Nguyen Hai Ha/Flickr. Some rights reserved.

23

Gender and social inequality are key spheres of study and analysis in sociology, gender studies, and countless other disciplines. An important common finding in these research fields is that women account for a large proportion of the poor and marginalized worldwide. According to the 2018 World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report, it will take 202 years to close the world's global economic gender gap.

Economic inequalities take many forms; for example, according to The Global Gender Gap Report 2018 women are able to own land in only 41% of countries surveyed. In professional spheres, only 34% of managerial positions are held by women. The role of women in the informal economy is another gendered challenge. Women make up the majority of the informal economy, and are reported to spend twice as much time on unpaid tasks as men. Because the informal economy is unregulated, women are left uniquely vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Many of these statistics could be significantly improved through meaningful policy change. That said, women are their own best advocates; yet they remain largely underrepresented politically. Of 149 countries surveyed for the report, only 17 currently have women as heads of state. Further, only 18% of ministers and 24% of parliamentarians worldwide are women.

Despite great progress towards broader gender equality in some countries, there still remain significant gaps in opportunities for women based on the full range of their intersectional identities, such as race, class, and sexuality, among others. While some more privileged women benefit from the progress, others continue to live in precarious conditions. Within individual states, differences between women of varied social and cultural backgrounds are increasing. These differences have a great impact on social security and opportunities for women. For example, according to UNICEF data, the United States has a relatively low maternal mortality rate, ranking 54th out of 182 countries surveyed. At the same time, the maternal mortality of

>>

black women is more than triple that of their white counterparts in the US, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

While many states are continuing to make progress, the rates of progress are varied. The Global Gender Gap ranks the Middle East and North Africa as having the largest regional gender gap, but their rate of progress to improve conditions for women is actually better than that of the North American region. It is estimated that South Asia could close its gender gap in 70 years – almost a century before North America, the Middle East and North Africa. When that region is further examined, however, one might ask if that statistic is remotely meaningful to displaced Rohingya women in Myanmar, who live in extremely precarious circumstances due to ongoing ethnic cleansing. Statistics such as these force us to question how we define and measure progress regarding gender inequality.

The contributions to this volume of *Global Dialogue* shed light on the considerable socio-spatial differences in how gender and social inequality are related and shaped. The purpose of the volume is to present a starting point for these different dynamics and create space for further research and discussion, ideally with implications for social and policy change for women.

Liisa Husu opens these considerations with the observation that, despite the great advances women have made in higher education across the world, the trend that the higher the position, the fewer the women, persists. In her paper "Gender Challenges in Research Funding" she discusses the implications of underrepresentation from the perspective of European and Nordic Countries.

Blanka Nyklová outlines in "Challenging Gender Equality in the Czech Republic" how neoliberal ideology and conservative attitudes shape gender and social inequality in Central Europe, with a focus on the Czech Republic. She uses the concept of distorted emancipation to highlight privileges accrued by some women at the expense of others.

In "Persistence and Change: Gender Inequality in the US" Margaret Abraham discusses how we observe successes in the fight for equality in the United States, coinciding with setbacks. She argues that these achievements towards equality and justice are not self-evident, and that we have to move forward in our social actions and in sociological analysis.

Lina Abirafeh examines gendered inequalities in the Arab context in her article "Gender and Inequality in the Arab Region". The region has long suffered economic and political insecurities, compounded by socio-cultural obstacles and a system of entrenched patriarchy. This toxic combination stalls – and in many cases, reverses – progress toward gender equality. The region will not achieve peace or prosperity without full equality for Arab women.

Nicola Piper's article "Gendered Labour and Inequality in the Asian Context" examines gendered labor and inequality in the Asian context, noting that their large, sustained population movements have become a focus for scholars and practitioners. In particular, female migrants are concentrated in feminized sectors and often lack rights and protections. Their challenges and vulnerabilities are at the heart of gender inequality in the region.

In his article "IPSP: Social Progress, Some Gendered Reflections", Jeff Hearn reflects on the process and outcomes of the International Panel on Social Progress' (IPSP) report. He focuses on the recommendations in the report on how gender should be conceptualized. ■

Direct all correspondence to:
Birgit Riegraf <birgitt.riegraf@uni-paderborn.de>
Lina Abirafeh <lina.abirafeh@lau.edu>
Kadri Aavik <kadri.aavik@tlu.ee>

24

> Gender Challenges
in Research Funding

by **Liisa Husu**, Hanken School of Economics, Finland, and Örebro University, Sweden, and board member of ISA Research Committee on Sociology of Science and Technology (RC23), and member of ISA Research Committee on Women, Gender and Society (RC32)

Gender inequality in academia and research careers is a persistent and global concern. Only a third of researchers are women, globally and in Europe. The entrenched pattern that the higher the position, the fewer the women, persists. This is despite great advances women have made in higher education across the world. An overwhelming majority of professors are male, and the pace of change towards a more gender-balanced professoriate is very slow, as indicated by recent European and Nordic statistics.

> Is research funding gender-neutral?

Access to research funding is one key issue in career advancement in academia and research, both for women and men. In most countries, this means success in the search for external research funding, often obtained through hard competition. Research on the gender dynamics of research funding has not demonstrated a systematically lower funding success rate for women in all funding contexts, but rather painted a more complex picture, with several gender challenges. These have to do with individual researchers, research groups and universities, funding organizations, research content, and research policies. These challenges can be related to funding allocation, funding gatekeepers, peer review, funding organizations, their management, policies and practices, and the very definition of what and who is excellent, as well as who defines excellence. Recent and ongoing research on gender and research funding has highlighted the need to look critically at the whole research funding cycle and funding environments in a broader and more comprehensive way.

A broader understanding of gender dynamics in research funding comprises the whole funding cycle, analyzing potential gendered patterns in: application behavior (who applies), applicant pool (who is eligible to apply), research group composition, funding instruments, the call texts, guidelines for applicants, eligibility criteria (age or position), assessment criteria, assessment procedures, potential biases in evaluation, recruitment of peer reviewers, peer review process, success rates, amount of funding applied and allocated, research content, funders' policy statements in general and related to gender equality, overall transparency of the funding systems, monitoring and availability of statistics by gender, and long-term career impacts of obtained funding.

Of special interest are the so-called excellence-marked funding instruments: centers of excellence, different excellence initiatives, distinguished professorships, and the like. Several recent empirical studies and monitoring have shown that these excellence initiatives have frequently benefited more male than female researchers, even in countries with high overall levels of gender equality, such as Sweden.

Formal and informal academic networking plays an important role in the pursuit for funding. Research funding in many fields is increasingly a group rather than an individual endeavor. Research on gendered patterns of academic networking and integration into research environments is highly relevant in this respect.

> The European experience

Research funding is one of the key issues in national and regional research policies. At the EU level, and in national policies in some European countries, the issue of gender in research funding has been raised since the late 1990s-early 2000s as a policy concern. European Union research funding has been organized as "framework pro-

>>

25

"*Political will or lack of it plays an important role in how public funding organizations prioritize gender equality and address gender challenges in research funding*"

grams" since the mid-1980s. The first European framework programs notably lacked social science aspects, except in an assisting role for technology, and were silent on gender. Only from the fourth framework program (1994-1998) was funding for social science research included, and gender issues started to be raised on the agenda. A gradual broadening has taken place since the late 1990s, from initially addressing "women in science," to interrogating gender in science, including gender dimensions in the research content, in addition to the more traditional focus on gender balance of researchers and research groups as well as decision makers and evaluators. In the European Research Area (ERA), gender equality is one of the five priorities. This refers to three issues: gender balance in research teams, gender balance among evaluators, and gender dimension in the research content.

Part of the European policy work was the first systematic review in 2009 on gender and research funding in 33 countries. It found a great variation across Europe in how gender issues were addressed by national research policies and national funding agencies, ranging from "relative inactivity" and hardly any monitoring of national research funding by gender in many countries, to various proactive measures, monitoring, and active engagement to promote gender equality in the national funding system, in a few countries, including the Nordic region.

The flagship of European research, the European Research Council (ERC), was established in 2007 to fund excellent bottom-up research of early career, mid-career, and advanced researchers in any discipline and in any country, with a budget of 13.1 billion for 2014-2020. However, despite gender concerns in EU research policy, the ERC initially lacked gender equality among its governance principles. When the ERC finally started to monitor its funding allocation by gender, the results showed that in 2007-2013, men's success rate was 30% and women's 25% at the starting grant level, while for advanced grants it was 15% for men and 13% for women. Only in one field there was no gender difference at the starting grant level: the physical and engineering sciences, a very male-dominated research area. Clear differences in success rates in favor of men were found in fields with traditionally many women, such as life sciences, and human and social sciences.

Political will or lack of it plays an important role in how public funding organizations prioritize gender equality and address gender challenges in research funding. For example, the Nordic societies are highly ranked in international gender equality comparisons, but also in global innovation indexes. Gender equality is high on the research policy agenda, especially in Norway and Sweden. In Sweden, public research funding organizations, such as the Swedish Research Council and the national innovation agency Vinnova, all have governmental directives to gender mainstream their activities. In monitoring development, the Swedish research funders use not only statistics but also qualitative social science tools such as gender observers in the funding committee meetings.

Gender balance in public research funding boards has been a realized policy goal since the early 2000s in Finland, Norway, and Sweden, whereas in many European countries the boards continue to be male-dominated. Gender balance in the funding boards is not only an issue of equal representation and justice; equal representation in these gatekeeping positions is also important because it provides inside knowledge into how the funding system works and boosts scientific networking of those involved. ■

26

> Challenging Gender Equality

in the Czech Republic

by **Blanka Nyklová**, Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Science, Czech Republic

Logo of the dissolved Gender Studies department in Brno.

This year celebrates 30 years since the lifting of the Iron Curtain in Europe's semi-periphery, or 30 years of uneven neoliberalization hailed as the only possible path to democracy. The ascent of democracy was seen as a move to meritocracy, erasing former power structures based on Communist Party membership. Media from the period shows that meritocracy, which justifies the inequality of those seen as undeserving on personal grounds, was cheered with much enthusiasm as enabling the leap towards the geopolitical center. Yet, the Czech Republic is currently run by an oligarchic Prime Minister who was a secret agent before 1989 and who, like most Czech billionaires, managed to translate his privileged pre-1989 position into economic power through the process of privatization. At the same time, almost one-tenth of the population find themselves in a debt spiral due to intentionally harmful distraint legislation, with some 70,000 homeless people and 120,000 more facing the loss of their home. Here I outline some of the consequences of the political rationality underpinning neoliberalization for social/gender inequality in the Central European Visegrad Group countries, with a specific focus on the Czech Republic. Using the fate of the discipline of gender studies, I further explore the impact of this rationality when applied to questions of equality and justice.

Neoliberalism has become a conceptual shortcut that explains the causes of inequality, including gender inequality, in today's globalizing world. As such, neoliberalism is understood as a return to the free market as the ultimate determinant of all aspects of life. Critical theorists have attempted to counter this oversimplification by examining its functioning in interconnected areas. In 1998, French anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu associated neoliberalism with the destruction of collectives and toxic atomization of the workforce, which was eroding the capacity of individuals to resist the forces of global capital. For almost two decades now, British cultural theorist Angela McRobbie has focused on how cultural representations of economic empowerment based on approaching one's life as a project – such as in the literary and film character, Bridget Jones – impact the lives of young women who identify with her. US political theorist Wendy Brown has focused on the effects of market logic not just on the economic dimension of social life but, more importantly, on the political rationality of democratic institutions.

> Neoliberalization and gender in the Visegrad countries

The above authors use concrete examples, yet they are often treated as offering a universally valid theory of neoliberalism, leading to calls for a contextualized study of the phenomenon. Central European Visegrad countries provide a laboratory within which to observe the consequences of differential implementation of the instructions of organizations such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to facilitate democratization. Especially after 2000, critical studies of neoliberalization in its geopolitically contingent form have grown in number. Analyses of gender inequality and its transformation show that the modern emancipation project has resulted in what Zuzana Uhde calls "distorted emancipation," a situation where the empowerment of certain groups of women comes at the expense of other women through the commodification of previously outside-of-market spheres such as care. Distorted emancipation is not only incomplete, but furthers

>>

27

new injustice and cannot be fought without grasping the key role played by capitalism in sustaining it.

In the Czech Republic, women constitute around 20% of members of parliament; the gender pay gap persists at 22% in general, and at 10% for the same position in the same enterprise; women make up 98.5% of parents taking what is one of the longest parental leaves in Europe; and sole parent families are headed by mothers in 90% of cases. Women have faced rising levels of economic instability since 1989 and are disproportionately more likely to be threatened by poverty; elderly women face higher risks of poverty, with economic and social inequality exacerbated in specific regions of the country and by ethnicity/migrant status. More importantly, gender culture in the Czech Republic and Visegrad Group countries in general, is marked by conservatism and sexism, allowing for the distorted emancipation to go unchallenged; women's emancipation and efforts to increase it are even blamed for some of the region's economic woes.

Scholars specializing in gender studies have demonstrated how conservatism in gender relations and neoliberalization have mutually sustained each other. Radka Dudová and Hana Hašková show that parental leave policies after 1989 were just an extension of those designed before 1989 as part of refamilialization policies. Libora Oates-Indruchová and Hana Havelková focus on the unacknowledged contribution of the women's and feminist movement to some of the Communist-era emancipatory policies, while Kateřina Lišková shows how a double standard around sexuality was reintroduced in late-1960s medical discourse and has prevailed since. None of these contributions would have been possible without the proliferation of gender studies and feminist theories in the region.

> The fate of gender studies

The fate of gender studies in the region may help us understand the persistence and mutation of gender inequality in a democratic project underpinned by neoliberalism. The establishment of the discipline was linked to the funding of

local feminist activism by US and later EU donors in a context of scarce local funding. Gender studies was introduced in two major Czech universities around 2004, partly due to the window of opportunity provided by neoliberal higher education reforms necessitating larger student numbers. However, the very same political rationality has facilitated the recent dismantling of gender studies programs not just in Hungary but also in the Czech Republic, negatively affecting the capacity to do gender-oriented research in Central Europe. As Wendy Brown has noted, neoliberal rationality is ultimately normative – the rule of market logic is not assumed but is actively institutionalized at the expense of any differently-founded rationality, such as the emancipatory rationality underpinning much of the feminist project. In a gender conservative region marked by an extraordinarily easy rejection of any openly political action targeting unequal social relations as Communist-era social engineering, the neoliberal political rationality first aligned well with some feminist efforts, including those striving to institutionalize gender studies. The ban of gender studies in Hungary uses exactly the same political rationality but, importantly, frames it as economic (on the false grounds of lack of demand for gender studies graduates in the labor market) and therefore *apolitical*. This serves the political purposes of countering possible social critique and earning popularity with the anti-gender movement (described on these pages by Agnieszka Graff and Elżbieta Korolczuk in 2017). In the Czech Republic, the closing of the Brno gender studies program in 2018 was justified by claims that the program was not "profitable," in that it failed to attract students in a public education system dependent on student numbers.

The parallel between the two cases is striking even if the motivations are – at least explicitly – different. While in the Hungarian case the political reasoning became apparent when the discipline was painted as strictly ideological and not scientific, in the Brno case neoliberal political rationality was institutionalized by the university leadership when it failed to address the ethics of their decision. To truly counter gender inequality – in its economic dimension, but also in terms of tolerance for sexual violence and endorsement of sexual harassment by public figures and politicians – its embeddedness in neoliberal political rationality must be made explicit. If we are to successfully counter the normative tenets of neoliberalism, we have to acknowledge these dependencies, as they otherwise threaten to blunt the normative logic underpinning feminist critiques of social and specifically gender inequalities. The 30 years since 1989 have clearly shown that neoliberal political rationality is doomed to fail when tasked with removing inequality, since it is in fact invested in protecting its actual roots. ◼

Direct all correspondence to Blanka Nyklová <blanka.nyklova@soc.cas.cz>

> Persistence and Change:
Gender Inequality in the US

by **Margaret Abraham**, Hofstra University, USA, former President of the International Sociological Association (2014-18) and member of ISA Research Committees on Racism, Nationalism, Indigeneity and Ethnicity (RC05), Sociology of Migration (RC31), Women, Gender and Society (RC32), and Human Rights and Global Justice (TG03)

The Women's March and other important protest movements flared up in 2017 and 2018, leaping to the forefront of the resistance against entrenched and exploitative systems. miawicks9 from Pixabay.

A record number of women were elected during the 2018 November midterm elections and now serve in the 116th Congress of the United States. The election witnessed historic firsts, electing the first two Native American women, two Muslim women, the first openly bisexual woman, and the youngest woman ever elected to Congress. A woman was reelected as Speaker of the House, the only woman to ever hold this post. On February 5, 2019, Stacey Abrams, who lost in a controversial gubernatorial race, made history by becoming the first African American woman to deliver the Democratic response to a US President's State of the Union address. Abrams spoke about the need to address racism, voter suppression, and immigration, and she strongly criticized President Trump for the government shutdown, which had caused severe and unwarranted distress and devastation in people's lives.

The struggle and victory in these small steps shines a spotlight on the larger fight for gender equality and justice. These small victories connect to a long history of collective struggle to break down hegemonic structures, and to bring to light the many pervasive and deeply imbedded systems and cultures of oppression and inequality that exist in society. Small steps are a sign of hope, but they are not enough. We must keep going to bring about social transformation and structural change.

> The American context

Despite having more women in Congress, America has pervasive gender inequality.
• Despite media attention, the pay gap continues, with white women earning 20% less than men, and women of

>>

29

color earning less than that.

• Female-dominated occupations, such as childcare and restaurant service, continue to be at lower levels on the wage ladder.

• Men make up the vast majority of the top earners in the US economy.

• According to the Institute of Policy Studies Analysis of World Bank Indicators, women perform twice the amount of unpaid labor that men do, including: childcare, eldercare, and housekeeping.

• Median savings for men were at $123,000, compared to $42,000 held by women in 2017.

• The American Association of University Women report that Black women graduate with higher debt than any other demographic.

• The US Census Bureau declares that women of color experience the highest poverty rates in the nation.

• Transgender unemployment is three times the US average.

• African American women's imprisonment rate is twice that of White women and African Americans are incarcerated at more than five times the rate of whites.

• One in three women in America report having experienced sexual violence in their lifetime.

> **Moving forward**

On January 21, 2017, under the auspices of the Women's March on Washington, millions of people took to the streets within the US and across the globe to protest Trump's election. It was a continuation of the work that the women's movement and many different movements and organizations had been doing for years: #BlackLivesMatter, #SayHerName, #MeToo, to name just a few. Over the years, these and other groups have helped to mobilize and make mainstream the notion of "intersectionality" (a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw) and its broad umbrella of interdependent and overlapping matrices of oppression. The scale of the Women's March demonstrated the collective power and need of the global community to confront the persistence and prevalence of patriarchal and misogynistic structures in government and society.

The Women's March and other important protest movements, as a viable means of organizing and communicating for change, erupted in 2017 and 2018, leaping to the forefront of the resistance against entrenched and exploitative systems. A younger generation are using technology and multiple means to mobilize and address critical global concerns while making gender equality and intersectionality integral to the issues addressed. These various move-

ments have helped communities to mobilize to address issues of reproductive rights, gender, intersectional violence, migrant rights, labor rights, citizenship rights, racial justice, freedom of speech, environmental justice, and more. They create a momentum that offers hope but also a challenge. It will take a majority of society, coming together, to ensure that enduring change is steadfastly made, through small steps and seismic shifts.

Research and activism have demonstrated how pervasively state and social systems are entangled with gender inequality and oppression. Violence against women and gender-based violence is the result of gender inequality, unequal power, corruption, and control. Gender violence is systemic and deeply rooted in patriarchy, but it is also intersectional in terms of both its origins and consequences. Patriarchal structures and relationships must be challenged.

One way that change can arise is through an intersectional approach to dismantling and addressing all forms of inequality and oppression: racial, economic, ableist, etc. These are a part of patriarchal structures, practices, and histories. We need to recognize and resist the siloed perspectives and myopic means that divide us, that force vulnerable populations to compete against each other in the interests of the privileged few. We need to reimagine new ways of countering the forces that are subverting equality and justice and causing harm, not just to humans, but to the planet as a whole.

In the search for alternative paradigms, sociological perspectives that are sensitive to all voices are vital. Sociology has already offered valuable insights on gender inequality, yet there is much that requires our attention. The challenge for sociology is to seriously consider the following questions: What will it take to spark the sociological imagination toward equality (including within our own discipline and institutions)? What are the kinds of theories and tools that can actually help dismantle systemic inequalities? How can we not be co-opted by the forms of funding that reproduce inequalities, and instead have our research show the pathways toward equality? How can sociology collaboratively offer the promise and possibility for publics to hear each other across the divides that are being fueled by divisive politics? Can sociology, together with other disciplines, through research and action, offer tangible solutions for true equality and social justice? Clearly, we will need the small steps and the seismic shifts, so that equality can become a dream realized. ■

> Gender and Inequality
in the Arab Region

by **Lina Abirafeh**, Lebanese American University, Lebanon
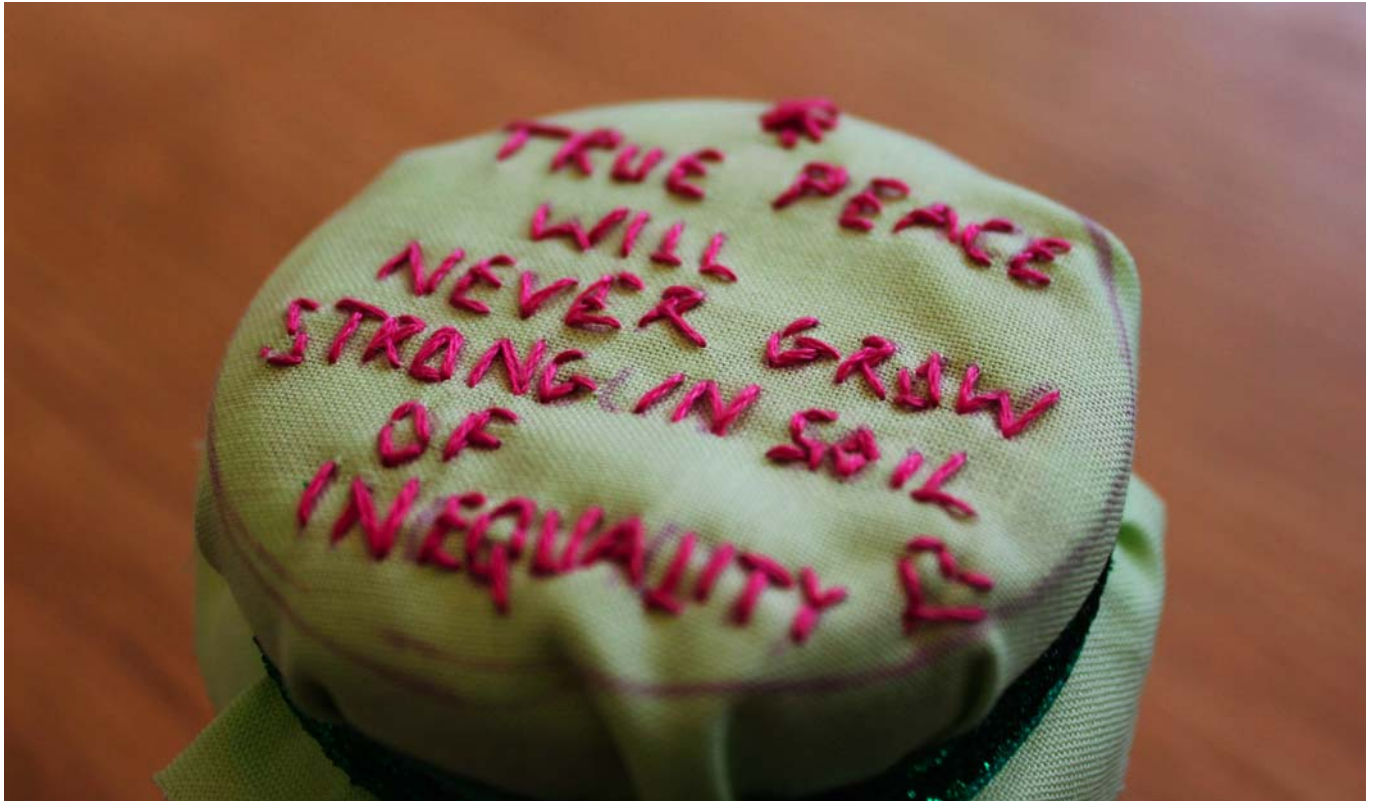
Credit: Jasmine Farram.

While gender inequality is an unfortunate global reality, the Arab region faces not only the greatest gap, but also significant challenges in redressing this inequality. The region has long suffered economic and political insecurities, compounded by socio-cultural obstacles and a system of entrenched patriarchy. This toxic combination stalls – and in many cases, reverses – progress toward gender equality.

This is further compounded by multiple protracted humanitarian crises, such as those in Syria, Palestine, Yemen, and Iraq. Throughout the region, instability is becoming the norm. These conflicts have destroyed systems of social protection, reduced access to safe services and support, displaced communities, and increased vulnerabilities, bringing new insecurities for women. In times of conflict, gender equality goals quickly disappear from the agenda.

The 2018 World Economic Forum *Global Gender Gap Report* provides critical insight into the extent of gender inequality in the Arab region. The report measures four dimensions: Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment. At present, the Global Gender Gap score stands at 68%, meaning that, globally, there remains a 32% gap to close. The Middle East and North Africa face the greatest distance from gender parity: 40%.

Countries in the Gulf, such as the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait, have reduced gaps in terms of economic participation and health, but gaps remain in wage equality. Qatar increased women's political participation – from no women in parliament in 2017 to nearly 10% in 2018.

Despite its poor record in terms of women's equality, Saudi Arabia has reduced wage inequality and increased women's labor force participation. However, oppressive systems like male guardianship remain in place, restricting women's freedom and mobility.

Jordan and Lebanon remain largely unchanged, despite

>>

Lebanon's minimal progress on the ratio of women in parliament. Oman has a larger gender gap than in previous years due to decreased economic participation.

Women hold a mere 7% of managerial positions in the four worst-performing countries in the world, three of which are in the region – Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen. Of the eighteen countries covered in the region, twelve have regressed. At the current pace, the region would need 153 years to close its gender gap.

> **Gender inequality: The case of Lebanon**

Lebanon presents a worthwhile case on point, despite its progressive appearance. The 2018 *Global Gender Gap Report* ranked Lebanon as one of the worst countries for women. The ten worst countries for gender equality globally include Saudi Arabia, Iran, Mali, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad, Syria, Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen – and Lebanon. In 2016, Lebanon was in 135th place out of 144 countries. In 2017, the country dropped to 137 of 144 countries. And in 2018, Lebanon ranks 140 out of 149 countries – behind most neighboring Arab countries, including Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Jordan, and Bahrain.

Lebanon's extended episodes of civil strife, political deadlock, and economic limbo have sidelined the gender equality agenda. While the country seems to foster, at a surface level, a more liberal and progressive environment for women, the reality is far from equal.

Lebanon has ratified major international conventions including the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. The country has established national women's machineries in the form of the National Commission for Lebanese Women in 1998 and the Ministry for Women's Affairs in 2016. And Lebanon continues to create (although not fund or implement) national strategies for women's empowerment. Despite these developments, the country lags behind on gender equality.

Women's participation in political life remains unacceptably low. In June 2017, parliament turned down the proposal for a 30% women's parliamentary quota in Lebanon. This was a significant setback for women's rights activists. There are currently only six women in a parliament of 128 seats. Lebanese women continue to enter politics "in black," as widows of former politicians, rather than representing themselves. As such, they continue to replicate sectarian interests rather than feminist interests, further fueling divides that have long impeded Lebanon.

Despite high literacy rates and levels of educational attainment among women, the gender gap remains pronounced in economic participation and opportunity. In 2017, women comprised approximately 25% of the total labor force, reflecting high levels of gender inequality in Lebanon's workforce. The rate of unemployed adult women is double that of men. Neither employment policies nor laws protect equal opportunity, pay, or work-life balance. Lebanese women continue to be an under-utilized economic force, frequently relegated to feminized sectors and the informal economy – without adequate remuneration or protection in the form of minimal social benefits and wages, or safe working conditions. Additionally, women are under-represented in senior roles, particularly in male-dominated sectors.

Reform efforts in Lebanon are impeded by fifteen separate laws for the country's diverse religious communities. These Personal Status Codes determine women's fate in terms of marriage, divorce, inheritance, children, and so on. This is the most egregious manifestation of the country's entrenched patriarchy. These codes endorse inequality between spouses and openly discriminate against women in all aspects of their lives. As a result, women's bodies and lives are regulated by the different religious courts in the country.

The Lebanese legal system does include protections against some forms of gender-based violence, but consistent and equal enforcement is severely lacking, and incidents continue with relative impunity. Intimate partner violence is the most widespread form of gender-based violence in the country. In 2014, the Law on Protection of Women and Family Members from Domestic Violence was adopted by the Lebanese Parliament, but this new law failed to recognize marital rape as an offense.

In 2017, Parliament abolished Article 522 of the penal code that allowed the prosecution to drop charges against a rapist if he marries his victim. Also in 2017, a law was drafted to criminalize sexual harassment in public places and work places. To date, it remains a draft.

Despite years of advocacy, no law exists that prohibits child marriage in Lebanon, leaving the power within the hands of the religious courts. This issue is exacerbated in the case of refugees: rates of child marriage among Syrian refugees are increasing as a response to the ongoing crisis, and girls forced into marriage do not have access to legal protections from the Lebanese government. This serves as an urgent reminder that escaping conflict does not necessarily bring safety for women and girls.

The case of Lebanon reflects that of the Arab region as a whole: there is much more work to be done to achieve equality. The region must commit to accelerating this change; waiting 153 years is not an option. ■

Direct all correspondence to Lina Abirafeh <lina.abirafeh@lau.edu>

> Gendered Labor and Inequality

in the Asian Context

by **Nicola Piper**, Queen Mary University of London, UK and member of ISA Research Committee on Poverty, Social Welfare and Social Policy (RC19)

Asia is home to significant "South-South" or intra-regional migration. According to estimates by the International Labour Organization, there were 150.3 million migrant workers in 2013 of whom 83.7 million were men, and 66.6 million were women. The United Nations calculates the proportion of women in Asian migration stocks at about 42.7% compared to 48.4% globally. Much of this is due to sharp increases in the numbers and proportions of male migrants in Asia, which has outstripped the increases in migrant women.

Between 1990 and 2000 only three of the top ten bilateral corridors were within Asia but between 2010 and 2017 that number had increased to six. The corridor between destination countries of the Gulf sub-region (classified as "West Asia" by the United Nations) and source countries located in South and Southeast Asia is particularly prominent due to the extremely high percentage of non-citizen residents in the Gulf countries: Qatar and United Arab Emirates have the highest proportion of migrants to total population at 90% and 88% respectively, many drawn from within the continent and increasingly from Africa. Other key Asian destinations for Asian migrants are economically high-performing countries in Southeast Asia (Singapore, Malaysia) and East Asia (Korea, Taiwan, Japan). The main source countries of migrants are the Philippines, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Vietnam.

Having experienced large-scale, sustained population movements since the 1970s, Asia's migration patterns and features have unsurprisingly become subject to rising interest among scholars and practitioners. One unique feature of intra-Asian migration is its dominant regulatory framework, which comes in the form of strictly temporary employer-tied permits, providing migrants the opportunity to work abroad for two to four years, subject to renewal. The majority of low-skilled low-wage workers cannot avail themselves of the chance for family unification and permanent settlement. Temporary contract migration is epitomized by the "single worker" phenomenon, with male migrants generally responding to the need for workers in the productive sectors (e.g. construction) and female migrants primarily in the reproductive − that is care-related − sectors, especially in domestic work, although they can also be found in manufacturing and other types of jobs.

The domestic and care sectors in this region are clearly dominated by women migrants. In West Asia where domestic work also includes gardeners, drivers, security guards, and cooks, male migrants tend to be employed in this sector too: 10% of all domestic workers in the Arab region are men. According to the International Labour Organization, at least 53.6 million women and men above the age of fifteen are reported to be in domestic work as their main job, with some sources suggesting a figure as high as 100 million. Domestic worker employment constitutes at least 2.5% of total employment in post-industrial countries and between 4% and 10% of total employment in developing countries. In gender terms, women are the overwhelming majority of the domestic workforce (at 83%), which represents 7.5% of women's employment worldwide. The mostly female domestic workers often travel thousands of miles to take up insufficiently regulated or even unregulated, insecure and generally low-paid jobs, while leaving behind their own families.

Concepts such as the "care chain," which have become widely used in global migration research and policy, draw on the experiences of migrants from Asian countries. Migrant women meet the need for care workers in the more developed economies, resulting in a care deficit in the migrant women's home countries. That the commodification of care at the base of global care chains in the form of migrant domestic labor has far-reaching socio-economic implications that extend beyond macroeconomic prognoses has been largely ignored, and the social and psychological implications of families left behind have been unaddressed by policymakers.

The fact that most of the intra-Asian migratory workforce labors in low-wage sectors has implications for the revived debate on the links between migration and development.

33

"*Government policy frameworks are predominantly concerned with controlling migration and extracting economic benefits from foreign workers, paying mere lip service to the human rights of migrants*"

Much of the positive spin placed on migration-development in recent years is based on the presumption of skill gains or "brain circulation" from which countries of origin are to benefit. This ignores the work that the majority of temporary labor migrants, especially migrant women, actually engage in. Throughout South and Southeast Asia, large numbers of "low-skilled" workers enter foreign employment under highly constrained circumstances. Often this is under short-term contracts, as part of the *kafala* system − the employer-tied visa sponsorship scheme used extensively in the Gulf − or through a web of private recruitment brokers or agents who manipulate both ends of the migration process. Critical research has demonstrated that this commodification of care work does not lead to any acquisition of "human capital," and has no impact on wages and living standards. "Skills" are not even procured, let alone developed. The invisibility of reproductive work obfuscates the developmental repercussions of these resultant care deficits. This has implications for sending countries: the exodus of migrant domestic workers has been met with enthusiasm for the large remittance inflows it has generated, but without sufficient consideration for the socio-economic or developmental implications of the widespread care deficits it creates. The predominant governmental discourse and policy framework that focuses on remittances alone serves to instrumentalize migrants' contributions, and ignores the social costs of migration to families.

This development paradigm ignores women migrants' personal experiences and the costs involved in migration, thereby failing to pay attention to their rights, protections, and unique subjectivities. Government policy frameworks are predominantly concerned with controlling migration (i.e. the exit and entry of individuals and their access to labor markets or jobs) and extracting economic benefits from foreign workers, paying mere lip service to the human rights of migrants.

In sum, Asian states generally refrain from formulating gender-sensitive migration policies that facilitate women's cross-border labor mobility. Rather, some countries impose legal restrictions on women's labor migration, typically under the guise of protection. Yet labor laws in most host countries poorly protect the rights of women migrants, who are subject to intersecting structural factors and discriminations based on gender, class, age, ethnicity, and nationality. These factors further compound the challenges they confront.

As a result, women migrants who are concentrated in feminized sectors of the economy where wages are typically low (such as domestic work or garment manufacturing) cannot access the same labor rights and social protections as workers in other sectors. Structural inequalities, gender discrimination in labor markets in countries of origin, and restrictive immigration controls coalesce so that women generally have fewer pathways to migrate, and will be more likely to turn to recruiters (individuals and organizations who they pay to facilitate their migration process). Women are more likely than men to migrate via lower skilled temporary worker schemes or undocumented channels to labor in often unregulated sectors without trade union representation. High levels of socio-economic insecurity, geographic isolation, and political disenfranchisement of female temporary migrant workers are at the heart of gendered inequality in Asia. ■

Direct all correspondence to Nicola Piper <n.piper@qmul.ac.uk>

> IPSP: Social Progress,
Some Gendered Reflections

by **Jeff Hearn**, Hanken School of Economics, Finland, Örebro University, Sweden, and University of Huddersfield, UK, and member of ISA Research Committee on Women, Gender, and Society (RC32)

Close to 300 researchers are involved in the International Panel on Social Progress Report. Credit: Sofie Wolthers (2015).

The International Panel on Social Progress (IPSP, https://www.ipsp.org/) was conceived around 2012 and early 2013, as a large independent non-governmental social science operation, paralleling in some ways the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The idea was discussed at the "Think Global" conference in May 2013 (https://penserglobal.hypotheses.org/35), and then officially started in summer 2014, with the first meetings of the steering committee and the scientific council shortly after. The key leaders of this whole process have been Marc Fleurbaey (Princeton University) and Olivier Bouin (RFIEA), with the support of many leading social scientists such as Amartya Sen, Helga Nowotny, Ravi Kanbur, and Elisa Reis.

The overall aim has been to: produce comprehensive coverage of the dimensions of social progress; make up-to-date social science more accessible and relevant; feed social actors and citizens, including but not only govern-ments, with ideas about possible futures; influence public debates; and increase interest in social justice and long-term prospective thinking among scholars.

It was in April 2015 that I received an invitation to the first large-scale author congress, with up to 200 leading social scientists from across the world, held in Istanbul in August 2015. The invitation was to join one of the collective sub-groups or chapters, entitled "Pluralizing family, gender, sexuality." As it happens, between the invitation and the event, "Pluralizing family, gender, sexuality" became renamed as "Pluralization of families," with gender being "mainstreamed." This meant some rejigging of who was in which sub-group; eventually I ended up in the penultimate chapter, "The multiple directions of social progress: ways forward," as well as working to form a cross-cutting group on Gender (more on that soon). A second large congress was held in Lisbon in January 2017.

>>

In the published IPSP texts there are over 282 authors, including contributing authors. With various committee and scientific board members, the total rises to about 350. Initially, political scientists made up about a quarter of the authors; sociologists and economists each just under a fifth; the remainder were across other social sciences, with a few from the humanities. A majority was from Europe and North America, with a substantial minority from across the globe; about 60% were identified as male.

Key IPSP principles included: working in a bottom-up, peer-based collegial way; non-binding support and funding from c.50 partner funders, universities, and other institutions, independent of governments and lobbyists; high value given to pluridisciplinary approaches and stakeholder feedback. Authors were encouraged to handle disagreements with humility and respect, agreeing to disagree and acknowledging the limits of expertise. IPSP aimed to be *conditionally* prescriptive: "if your objective is this, then the best way is that." Key elements of social progress identified were: equal dignity, basic rights, democracy, the rule of law, pluralism, well-being, freedom, non-alienation, solidarity, esteem and recognition, cultural goods, environmental values, distributive justice, transparency, accountability.

The outcome of this work has been three large collective volumes, *Rethinking Society for the 21st Century: Report of the International Panel on Social Progress*, along with a multi-authored single volume, *A Manifesto for Social Progress: Ideas for a Better Society*, all from Cambridge University Press. IPSP authors are also active in many fora, e.g. T20 (the international think-tank network of the G20 which met in Germany in 2017 and Argentina in 2018), *The Conversation*, journal special issues, and a docu-film: https://www.instagram.com/a_new_society/.

Some idea of the spectrum of concerns is seen from the broad chapters in the three volumes: *Volume 1. Socio-Economic Transformations*: Social Trends and New Geographies; Social Progress: A Compass; Economic Inequality; Economic Growth, Human Development, Welfare; Cities; Markets, Finance, Corporations; Future of Work; Social Justice, Well-Being, Economic Organization; *Volume 2. Political Regulation, Governance, and Societal Transformations:* Paradoxes of Democracy and Rule of Law; Violence, Wars, Peace, Security; International Organizations, Technologies of Governance; Governing Capital, Labor and Nature; Media and Communications; *Volume 3. Transformations in Values, Norms, Cultures:* Cultural Change; Religions; Pluralization of Families; Global Health; Education; Belonging; Multiple Directions of Social Progress; The Contribution of the Social Sciences to Policy and Institutional Change. For each topic, the current situation, historical and prospective trends, directions of change inspired by social justice, and drivers and barriers for such change are examined. Cross-cutting topics are: Science, technology and innovation; Globalization; Social movements; Health; and as noted, Gender. The cross-cutting gender group commented on chapter drafts, and produced a checklist advising chapter authors on addressing gender, including such necessary points:

• gender *relations*, gender *power relations*, and *gendering processes*, not only gender as a noun, variable, or specific gender categories;
• *gendered construction and differential gender power of both women and femininities, and men and masculinities*;
• interpreting gender as meaning "*women and men*" may downplay *gender diversity*, *further genders and LGBTIQ+ positions*;
• the very different ways gender relations are organized in and across *different societies*, as generalizations across gender regimes may be flawed;
• children, "*girls" and "boys"* not to be downplayed;
• care and consistency in distinguishing "*gender equality*" and "*gender equity*";
• gendering processes and gender regimes in what may be represented as "*gender-neutral" or "non-gendered" arenas*, e.g. international relations or transportation;
• sexuality, including *non-normative sexualities*, not reproducing *heteronormativity*;
• *futures of gender and sexuality*, e.g. implications of new technologies;
• gender constructed *intersectionally*, at all levels, from identity to global social relations.

Overall, the IPSP Report has sought to gather state-of-the-art knowledge about the possibilities for structural social change, and synthesize knowledge on the principles, possibilities, and methods for improving societal institutions. Many recommendations have been made, for example, from the penultimate chapter alone, on: overcoming obstacles to sustainable social progress; expanding non-capitalist forms of market activity and the role of the state or community in meeting human needs; building vibrant cooperative market sectors; conversion of capitalist firms into cooperatives and worker takeovers; democratizing large capitalist corporations; unconditional basic income; universal care services; naming and changing the powerful and the privileged in institutions and policy; building transnational, inter-organizational alliances for policy development with learning from the Global South; extending equality agendas into "unmarked" and transnational policy arenas; democratizing democracy; and participatory budgeting. ■

Direct all correspondence to Jeff Hearn <hearn@hanken.fi>

36

> Poverty and Inequality:
South Africa as a Warning to Africa

by **Jeremy Seekings**, University of Cape Town, South Africa, member of ISA Research Committee on Poverty, Social Welfare and Social Policy (RC19), and former Vice-President of ISA Research Committee on Urban and Regional Development (RC21)

Looking for a job in South Africa, where the absolute number of unemployed people doubled in the last 25 years.
Photo: Jeremy Seekings.

Poverty and inequality in South Africa have rightly attracted considerable attention. Absolute poverty rates in South Africa – calculated using standardized measures of monetary income – have long been and remain exceptionally high given the country's GDP per capita. This is, of course, because South Africa has a very unequal income distribution. High income poverty and inequality are rooted in South Africa's history of racial dispossession and discrimination before and under apartheid. After 25 years of democratically-elected government, however, income poverty remains stubbornly high and inequality has probably increased. It is clearly not the case that democracy necessarily reduces either income poverty or inequality.

> The persistence of poverty and inequality in South Africa

The persistence of poverty and inequality reflects diverse factors. In our 2005 book, *Class, Race and Inequality in South Africa* (Yale University Press), Nicoli Nattrass and I argued that inequality survived apartheid because it was no longer driven by explicit racial discrimination. Under apartheid, white South Africans not only accumulated property and financial assets but also human capital (through racially discriminatory public education) and social capital. (We should have added also cultural capital.) This meant that racial discrimination could be abolished without undermining the privileges of most white South Africans. Democratically-elected governments after 1994 dismantled the last vestiges of explicit racial discrimination and introduced considerable affirmative action in favor of black South Africans. But most white South Africans continued to enjoy the privileges of class. Conversely, whilst some black South Africans benefitted from the removal of racial restrictions (and then from affirmative action) and prospered, many black South Africans continued to suffer from the lack of any kind of capital. Without skills, social capital, or land, four out of ten adult South Africans were unemployed.

In our 2015 book, *Policy, Politics and Poverty in South Africa* (Palgrave Macmillan), Nattrass and I focused on why there was not stronger political support for pro-poor policies after

>>

37

the transition to democracy. We acknowledged that some government policies have been pro-poor. Social assistance programs in South Africa redistribute an unusually large share (between 3% and 4%) of GDP from rich taxpayers to mostly poor households. This does reduce poverty, but not inequality. Nonetheless, poverty as well as inequality persists. This is primarily due to the high unemployment rate. Not only did the unemployment rate grow over 25 years of democratic government, but the absolute number of unemployed people doubled. Few of the benefits of economic growth have trickled down to the very poor, except through redistribution via tax-financed social assistance. We argued that this reflected, in part, the stifling effect of labor market policies on labor-intensive sectors.

> **A growing Africa-wide phenomenon**

South Africa's history is often thought to make it an exceptional case. But the persistence of poverty and rising inequality in South Africa is a foretaste of a growing Africa-wide phenomenon. Between 1990 and 2015 the proportion of the global population in extreme income poverty fell by two-thirds, from 47% to 14%. The estimated total number of people living in extreme income poverty fell from just under 2 billion people in 1990 to 836 million in 2015. In Africa, however, the overall poverty rate declined much more modestly, from 57% to close to 40%, whilst the absolute number of people living in extreme poverty in Africa actually rose. As in South Africa, poverty persists despite economic growth. Too few of the benefits of growth trickle down to the poor. The growth elasticity of poverty in Africa between 1990 and 2015 was only -0.7, compared with -2 for other regions, meaning that every 1% of economic growth in Africa reduced poverty by only 0.7%, whereas the same growth elsewhere reduced poverty by 2%. Economic growth in Africa has fueled inequality more than poverty reduction.

In Africa, unlike South Africa, the poor hitherto have mostly been peasant farmers in rural areas. Peasant farmers in many (but not all) areas have low productivity and are vulnerable to asset-destroying drought. Governments have often neglected the rural population. The "development" imposed on peasant farmers has rarely brought major benefits. Much of Africa was once characterized by abundant land and a shortage of labor. Now it is increasingly characterized by scarce land and a labor surplus. Raising the productivity of peasant farmers is clearly necessary to improve national food security and to reduce rural poverty. It is very unlikely, however, to absorb the growing labor force. The result is already evident: rising unemployment rates among young people, many of whom migrate to urban areas, and who are then seen by political elites as posing a political threat.

> **The need for labor-intensive manufacturing**

In South Africa and increasingly across the rest of Africa, poverty reduction requires the expansion of labor-intensive non-agricultural sectors. Almost every historic case of sustained economic growth and poverty reduction has involved a phase of labor-intensive manufacturing. In our new book, *Inclusive Dualism: Labour-Intensive Development, Decent Work, and Surplus Labour in Southern Africa* (Oxford University Press, 2019), Nicoli Nattrass and I use the classic work of W. Arthur Lewis – the only economist of African descent to win the Nobel prize for economics – to examine the role of clothing manufacturing in the expansion of employment and poverty reduction. The clothing industry is important in its own right, as a potentially major source of employment for the poor. The four million clothing jobs in Bang-

ladesh might be low-wage, but they have played a major role in poverty reduction, as rural women move into higher-productivity, higher-earning employment. The clothing industry also serves as the canary in the coal mine, indicating the health of the environment. In a coal mine, the health of the caged canary was an indicator of the danger posed by gas to mine-workers. Similarly, if a country with surplus labor does not have a growing clothing industry, something is wrong with the policy environment.

Inclusive Dualism includes a detailed discussion of the lessons from South Africa, where employment in clothing manufacturing has declined at the same time as unemployment has been rising. Most alarmingly, the employment elasticity of growth in manufacturing in South Africa has probably been negative, meaning that increased manufacturing output has coincided with declining employment in the sector. Labor productivity has risen, as employers have invested in more capital- and skill-intensive technologies, but employment has fallen. This is, of course, a recipe for persistent if not rising inequality and poverty. We attribute this to what we call "decent work fundamentalism," i.e., the pursuit of "decent work" without regard to the consequences for (un)employment. Until South Africa and other African countries provide the kind of environment in which clothing manufacturing can flourish, poverty and inequality will remain.

Data on poverty in Africa are from the UN's *Millennium Development Goals Report* (New York: United Nations, 2015), Kathleen Beegle *et al.*'s *Poverty in a Rising Africa* (Washington DC: World Bank, 2016), and Zarobabel Bicaba *et al.*'s "Eliminating Extreme Poverty in Africa: Trends, Policies and the Roles of International Organizations," *Working Paper 223* (Abidjan: African Development Bank, 2015). ■

38

> Pentecostalism and Charismatic Christianity in South Africa

by **Mokong S. Mapadimeng**, Human Sciences Research Council, South Africa, and member of ISA Research Committees on Sociology of Arts (RC37) and Labor Movements (RC44)

The pastor of a pentecostal church spraying Doom, an insecticide in the face of a congregation member.

The 1994 democratic elections in South Africa marked a watershed moment of change represented by the official collapse of the colonial apartheid order and its replacement by democratic black majority rule. These changes were accompanied by several others, and in particular changes in the old institutions, structures, and their attendant practices. Among them was the upsurge in the Christian religious movements that manifested through Pentecostal and/or charismatic Christian churches. While these churches are not new to South Africa, having apparently first emerged during the turn of the twentieth century, they grew exponentially throughout the country in the immediate post-1994 period, both in the urban centers and remote rural villages.

The exponential growth of these churches was however not without problems and controversies. Of late, we have witnessed and read reports of endless controversies in which these churches are said to be engaged in practices perceived as being contrary to true Christian faith. Amongst these practices are the feeding of people with snakes, grass, petrol, and pesticides as part of spiritual healing and fighting of demonic spirits (see pictures 1 and 2). At the time of writing this piece, there were ongoing court cases against the Nigerian-born pastor, Timothy Omotoso of the Jesus Dominion International (JDI) church, charged with allegations of sexual assault, human trafficking and racketeering, and the Malawian-born multimillionaire pastor of the Enlightened Christian Gathering (ECG) church, Shepherd Bushiri, and his wife, charged with fraud and money laundering. Also recent was the video clip that went viral of the Congolese-born pastor Alph Lukau, in which he claimed to have just prayed and managed to bring a dead man lying in the coffin back to life.

The endless controversies about these churches, including charges that they operate like private businesses and yet benefit from not paying taxes due to the absence of a regulatory framework, prompted the South African government to appoint a commission of inquiry to investigate these controversies and alleged illegal business practices. This task was assigned to the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (CRL Rights Commission). The investigation was meant to address the perceived problem of fraudulent churches that are viewed as causing harm to people's emotions and spirits. The view is that some of these churches have been established for commercial gain by church leaders despite their members living in poverty.

What is striking amidst the rising popularity and controversies of Pentecostal and/or charismatic churches

>>

The pastor of a pentecostal church feeding an alive snake to a congregation member.

is the lack of sociological accounts. This is attributable to the fact that in South Africa, sociology of religion is still largely underdeveloped. As a result, it leaves unanswered and unexplored a whole range of sociological questions related to these churches including the following: how does one explain the sudden mushrooming and exponential growth of these churches, and their popularity amongst South Africans? Which segments of the South African society are actively involved as congregants for these churches? Who are the leaders of these churches and what makes them so charismatic? How does one explain what appears like passivity on the part of the congregants as agents, to what are perceived as toxic and dangerous practices within these churches? What about the regulatory frameworks for religious organizations in South Africa, and are they being flouted?

As a modest attempt to provide a preliminary sociological account, I enlist a theoretical perspective on religion and its role within society. This perspective examines how religion is understood i.e., what it is and what its role and influence are in society. At the definitional level, there are some disagreements, which James A. Beckford attributes to the fact that religion is a social construct founded in and informed by specific sociopolitical and historical contexts which

give it diverse and dynamic, unfixed meanings. This view is helpful to understanding the exponential growth of Pentecostal and charismatic churches in post-1994 South Africa. This was a political moment which promised a "better life for all," an ideal that has never been fully realized. This is so despite some improvements made through large-scale provision of basic services to the poor. South Africa's perpetually slow annual economic growth, presently recorded at just 2.2%, has failed to generate significant levels of employment (official unemployment is over 27%). Poverty and inequalities are worsening, with the country's Gini coefficient of 0.63 one of the highest in the world. These are exacerbated by moral degeneration and rampant corruption marked by looting of public funds by politically connected elites for self-enrichment. At the time of writing this article, two commissions of inquiry were ongoing, investigating alleged state capture by corrupt corporate interests, corruption, and fraud.

This context explains the exponential growth and popularity of charismatic churches amongst South Africans. These churches promise their followers blessings in the form of a miraculous end to their sufferings from poverty, ill health, and unemployment, as well as in the form of material wealth. To this end, they encourage congregants to make finan-

cial donations which ultimately leave the pastors super rich. Beckford was spot on in observing that religion is a non-homogenous, complex, and varied social construct which depends on the ends it is harnessed to achieve. The unique charismatic elements of Pentecostalism, including the miraculous healings, have been exploited for self-enrichment by pastors who pose as prophets performing miracles. While for Steve Bruce, religion's influence is enhanced by the belief that the rewards for doing God's will on earth would follow in the next life through eternal bliss and far greater riches than the mundane world can offer, the present wave of Pentecostalism and charismatic churches in South Africa emphasizes material rewards in the current world.

It is not easy to conclude without pointing to the historical effects of colonialism achieved through Christian missionary churches and the western education system. Specifically, the Christian churches' missionary role has been to convert Africans away from their pre-colonial faith centered on *Badimo* or *Amadliozi* (ancestors) as spiritual mediums for access to *Modimo/Unkulunkulu* (God). This has resulted in converted Africans dismissing *Badimo* or *Amadliozi* as demonic spirits, signifying a successful project of colonization cemented through an education system that rests on colonial theoretical concepts and categories. This attests to Bruce's view that religion could either promote cohesion by binding people together under the name of God or a common cosmology, or change and disrupt the pre-existing order. ■

Direct all correspondence to:
Mokong S. Mapadimeng
<mmapadimeng@gmail.com>

40

> Space Invaders:
Underground Women Miners

by **Asanda Benya**, University of Cape Town, South Africa

Working in the mines.
Photo: Asanda Benya.

It has been fifteen years since women joined the underground workforce in South Africa's mines. Currently there are close to 50,000 women in mining, about 10.9% of the permanent mining employees. While close to 11% of the mining workforce are women, and legislation facilitating and accelerating their inclusion has been adopted, the industry continues to imagine and present itself implicitly as masculine and depicts only men or male bodies as suitable for underground mine work. This suitability of male bodies for underground mine work is almost naturalized and eternalized, in discourse and in mining occupational culture.

The naturalization of male bodies in mining has inadvertently facilitated the exclusion of women, despite legislation that seeks to redress past exclusions. As I argue elsewhere, women in South African mines are "included while excluded." Indeed, they are seen, to use Nirmal Puwar's words, as "space invaders" and as such, are producing a "state of disorientation and ontological anxiety." They have not only been accused of negatively affecting productivity and safety but have also been stigmatized both inside the mines and outside for not conforming to societal norms about femininity, and their morals have been questioned.

While in theory women can do any underground job, in reality they are barred from taking up certain jobs. In all the shafts where I conducted my research, women could not be rock drill operators, and very few were lashers or winch drivers. The few winch drivers I worked with hardly ever drove winches underground. Using protectionist discourse, mines strategically refuse to recruit, train, and allocate women to some occupations underground. This is despite the fact that protecting them from "strenuous underground jobs" also renders them financially disadvantaged since they cannot, in some instances, claim the same production bonuses as men.

Below I refer to one of many incidents underground which illustrates how the exclusion of women, wrapped in cultural and protectionist discourse, is furthered and entrenched daily with many recruited to be complicit, to cement and ingrain it while rhetorically preaching inclusion.

>>

41

In the early stages of my research, while still training to be a winch driver, I was told women were not allowed in the drilling class. Reasons for their exclusion were based on their bodies, which instructors and the mine considered improper and "too fragile" for the operation of the drilling machine. Instructors argued that drilling machines would negatively affect women's wombs. In my case, after persisting and eventually being allowed to join the drilling class, I was strictly instructed to only observe and not touch anything because "the hot stopes and drilling" were for men and incompatible with women's anatomy. The design of the machines and the ventilation in the stope were not cited as reasons.

After a few sessions at the training center and a few days of observing, all new recruits were given a chance to try out the machines and were encouraged to imitate as closely as possible the instructors and experienced workers – from how they sit with their legs straddled across, and thighs tightly closing in on the machine, to their breathing and bodily rhythms. When it was my turn, however, the lesson was different. The instructor went from initially refusing to let me operate the machine to telling me that women cannot straddle machines. Yet, to insert the machine and be stable one has to straddle the machine. My in-structor, however, told me to bring my legs together. He said my *"legs must both be on one side, like a lady."* This is despite repeatedly seeing him *shove* the machine-boys down, telling them to open wide their legs, straddle the machine and *feel* it between their thighs and *"hold it tight and push it in."* He told me to bring my legs together and move them to one side *"otherwise you won't be able to have babies… you are killing your eggs."* Workers also remarked that a woman straddling a machine looks "indecent."

As expected, when I followed their instructions and drilled "like a lady" with both legs on one side, the machine dragged me. *When I switched it off to tell them that it is impossible to drill in that position, before I turned my head back to them, the instructor said "you see I told you that women cannot drill, I've been in mining for a loooong time, I know what I'm talking about. Women cannot do this, it's impossible… this machine is heavy" (all the workers I could lay my eyes on were nodding in agreement)* (Field notes, Rustenburg, April 2012). For these men, my being dragged by the machine was a confirmation of the "unsuitability" of women's bodies for drilling, not their "special" instructions against straddling the machine.

These preconceived prudish ideas about women's bodies are not only at the training center but filter into the daily work underground. As I document elsewhere, there are many cases where women are prevented from doing their work underground, or reduced to assistants who clean and fetch water for teams, or removed from their working places and separated from their teams especially if the team works in the hot stopes. I call this the informal job reallocation and it has led to women's isolation from their teams and alienation from their work and has had both short-term (not qualifying for production bonuses) and long-term dire effects around promotions.

These are not isolated incidents, but rather, are systemic and reinforce the peripheral status of women in mining, despite their legislated inclusion in underground work. I use the examples above to illustrate the significant and very real, yet invisible differences in how men and women are trained and treated at work and how preconceived notions about women's bodies as fragile and weak leads to their exclusion, thus rendering them "second-class" workers underground. It is clear that legislation alone is insufficient – it is the deeply ingrained masculine occupational culture and norms that need to be challenged and changed. ■

42

Direct all correspondence to Asanda Benya
<asanda.benya@uct.ac.za>

> The Extra-Economic
Effects of Unemployment

by **Thabang Sefalafala**, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

Discussions on the experiences of unemployment by scholars, analysts, policy makers, and the public often focus on the economic effects of unemployment, neglecting in the process extra-economic factors that are every bit as important. What is often intimated is how unemployment is primarily a problem of material hardship and poverty. Men's inability to provide for the material needs of their households is seen as a fundamental source of threats to masculinity, of humiliation, and shame.

Debates on unemployment, especially in policy circles but also beyond, often largely focus on the economic effects of unemployment, therefore privileging conceptions and understandings of unemployment as mainly a livelihood problem.

Between 2013 and 2014, I conducted an ethnographic study of black unemployed ex-mine workers retrenched from the goldfields of the Free State province in South Africa. The findings present insights which confirm this view but also challenge it. That is to say, they do not dismiss the economic effects of unemployment, but they also show that there is more to their suffering.

Nineteenth- and twentieth-century capitalism powerfully synthesized wage work as an anchor of personhood and masculinity. Large numbers of African men were recruited from rural areas and inducted into wage work. Proletarianization implied the powerful production of shared collective proletarian identities, in which wage work signified a decent life, especially as a male breadwinner.

As wage work assumed authoritative significance over representations of a decent and dignified life, a South African and global crisis of wage work has emerged. The rise of unemployment has seen a growing number of work seekers unable to find jobs. In addition, jobs in the neoliberal capitalist period often lack the characteristics associated with traditional jobs. They often lack voice, security, and benefits. Despite the deep crisis of wage work, suggesting the exhaustion of its ability to fulfill the traditional responsibilities apportioned to it, wage work remains central to conceptions of dignified humans in the modern world.

As a result, large numbers of people's everyday life is one of deep, protracted economic instability and insecurity. In South Africa, the social security system, lauded by some as the most comprehensive on the African continent, does not cover the unemployed. As such, unemployed youth and other categories of the labor force lack any meaningful prospects of stable and predictable income to meet their basic needs.

My research shows that retrenched ex-mine workers' experiences of economic insecurity were often shaped by the masculine self-formation associated with mine work, including as breadwinners. For example, one of my interviewees called Raseboko, an ex-mine worker, stated that unemployment erodes a man's status because he can no longer provide for his family. He said: "Unemployment has taken away my status as a man. A man gets his status from providing for his family. If I cannot provide for my family, what status is there?"

Unemployed men lose confidence, feel worthless, and may even contemplate suicide due to abrupt changes and maladjustments associated with unemployment: "You cannot provide for your family as a man. The pressure from my family was too much, I even thought about committing suicide. I felt that I was nothing, no one important to my own family. Useless. I cannot see what I am still living for." They experience envy at seeing other men provide for their families, and are unable to sustain participation in community burial and saving clubs.

On the surface, the data seem to support the idea that the detrimental effects of unemployment mainly relate to economic hardship and poverty. Yet, economic hardship and poverty are not exclusive to the unemployed; the "working poor" are employed but materially deprived people.

Ex-mine workers drew on provocative images of black injured bodies with missing parts to describe what it meant to them to be unemployed. It meant a certain kind of "de-classification," that is the process of being cast into a different, or lower, state of existence than before. Images of sick and battered black bodies were used as metaphors to describe disjointed and broken social and moral orders. This conveys the idea that such an existence was for them an anomic state of being in the world.

Wage work no longer appears as an external activity in which they engaged instrumentally, merely to construct and develop sustainable livelihoods; it becomes an embodied object of desire.

>>

43

"To lose a job did not only mean the loss of income, but moral debasement. That is, the loss of being and existing in the world in ways that are commensurate with dominant wage work and capitalist relations, norms, and values"

The embodiment of wage work implies a deeper, more existential, moral authority such that the absence of wage work transcends the economic, social, and psychological implications and powerfully appears as an intangible condition of anomie, experienced as a sense of loss.

To lose a job did not only mean the loss of income, but moral debasement. That is, the loss of being and existing in the world in ways that are commensurate with dominant wage work and capitalist relations, norms, and values.

Thus, the humiliation and stigma of the unemployed is not merely because their livelihoods have been compromised. It is because, in a wage-centered discourse, unemployment is a crisis, because it represents a condition of maladjustment to a certain kind of hegemonic shared and collective order. Limiting our understanding of unemployment as fundamentally a problem of livelihood would lead us to the idea that simply administering some kind of cash transfer such as a Basic Income Grant (BIG) or unemployment grant would solve the problem. However, ex-mine workers rejected cash transfers as a comprehensive response to unemployment. Their rejection of a certain kind of cash transfer was not because they saw no value to it, but because to them, it did not replace what had been lost.

If wage work fails, the future depends on developing a strategy to de-center it and re-imagining a new shared and collective system. Thinking of alternative post-work ideas would have to confront the fact that a powerfully embodied desire has been systematically produced.

Ex-mine workers were not thinking of alternatives, they wanted jobs. This illustrates the challenge of thinking about alternatives. The moral commitment to wage work blinds the unemployed, policy makers, and analysts to possible futures outside wage work.

For post-work alternatives to be feasible, ex-mine workers, policy makers, and society more broadly would have to imagine a world in which wage work is no longer central to conceptions of dignity. ∎

44

Direct all correspondence to Thabang Sefalafala
<Thabang.sefalafala@gmail.com>

> How to Feed the World:
Learning from Tanzania

by **Marc C.A. Wegerif**, University of Pretoria, South Africa

The Ilala Fresh Produce Market in Dar es Salaam. Photo: Marc C.A. Wegerif.

Moving to Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, I was fascinated by the *duka* (small shop) selling food and household goods on almost every street. I was equally fascinated by the people's markets — vibrant social spaces, full of many small traders who know each other and most of their customers — which were within walking distance of the places where I lived. This interest resulted in my research on how Dar es Salaam's close to five million residents are fed. This has important lessons for sustainably feeding our growing and urbanizing world population.

> Following the eggs

Early on I followed the eggs that were sold, in any quantity, from a stack of reused 30-egg cardboard trays, at my local *duka*. To see where they came from I cycled with Samuel, who delivered the eggs. After 22 kms we reached Samuel's peri-urban home and sat under a tree eating

>>

Samuel delivering eggs to a duka (small shop) in Dar es Salaam.
Photo: Marc C.A. Wegerif.

lunch with his family. Samuel keeps 100 chickens and buys eggs for cash from chicken farmers in the neighborhood. He buys 600 to 900 eggs in the evening and rides into town to sell them the following morning. At that time, his three trips a week made a profit that was two and a half times the minimum wage for a full-time agricultural worker. Quantitative analysis found that around a million eggs a week were transported into town just on bicycles along the road Samuel used. This environmentally friendly way of distributing fresh eggs is a key supplier to the city and is how thousands of people create reasonable quality livelihoods for themselves.

Further research revealed how the egg industry is integrated within a wider food system. Samuel buys chicken feed from a feed factory close enough to carry the sacks home in a wheelbarrow. The feed factory obtains the core ingredient of maize bran from local mills, of which there are over 2,000 in Dar es Salaam. Chicken droppings are used as manure for horticulture, and the vegetables grown are sold in markets and to neighbors.

My research followed other foods important to the majority of people in the city: maize, rice, milk, beef, and green vegetables. While the nature of the foods was different and the geographic sources ranged from the city itself to the far corners of the country, the organization of the food production and distribution had similarities. Much of the green vegetables and milk, like the eggs, comes from urban and peri-urban production complemented by produce trucked in from hundreds of kilometers away. Rice and maize is grown by millions of farmers in the hinterland, most with just a few hectares of land, who produce for home consumption, replanting and selling to traders. The traders, working with local agents who are often farmers themselves, reach into remote villages and pay cash even for small quantities, then aggregate it for transporting, mostly to Dar es Salaam, sometimes via regional markets. The traders arrange transport, processing, and distribution to retail outlets like the *duka* and people's markets. The trucks are hired as needed from many different transport businesses. Much maize milling and rice husking is done by paying per sack or kilo to use milling machines owned by local business people.

> A "symbiotic food system"

This food system providing most of the city's food comprises multitudes of small-scale actors, from farmers to retailers, who together deliver at a city feeding scale with no corporate and little direct state involvement, aside from tax collection. I call this a "symbiotic food system" as other terminology, such as "informal," doesn't do it justice. Symbiotic doesn't mean all relations are equal, but they are mutually beneficial and not predatory, or they wouldn't be sustained. The actors operate in socially embedded economic relations that involve a tension between competition and working collaboratively; a striving for autonomy as well as solidarity. In some cases, such as with municipal markets, there are formalized structures with elected committees and stated rules that fit common pool resource management principles. More often, however, collaboration takes place organically with no explicitly stated rules, structures, or contracts. Interdependent actors, with relatively equitable status and common cultural repertoires, trade with each other and work together, based on established norms and relationships of, at least, familiarity. Reciprocity is part of these norms, but not confined to narrow and direct material exchanges. Collaboration – such as sharing transport and information, market traders watching over each other's stalls and assisting with childcare – overcomes resource constraints, and creates valuable so-

46

>>

cial networks. This is not based on purposive solidarity (although solidarity develops through its practice) or altruism, but rather on what works within a particular context. That context, in Tanzania, includes protection of agriculture from international competition through tariffs and other measures, and a history of state interventions that limited capital accumulation by a few.

An important form of mutual assistance is how new entrants — whether farmers, traders, or retailers — get started. Invariably, people start their own enterprises with assistance from others – family, friends and acquaintances — already in the same business, who show them the opportunity and ways of working and introduce them to key actors. From a narrow economic perspective, they are helping to create their own competitors, but they are also creating future collaborators. Samuel started egg trading after another trader showed him the routes and shops he could supply. Rice and maize traders begin by traveling with an existing trader to the producing areas and being introduced

to traders and farmers. Shopkeepers normally start as shop assistants, serving as a form of apprenticeship allowing them to learn and save money to start their own business. Such mechanisms expand the system through replication, keep it equitable, and induct new entrants into the established norms.

All the foods produced in Tanzania and distributed through the symbiotic food system are cheaper from the *duka* and people's markets than from the supermarkets. In addition, these outlets make the food more accessible as they are close to people, sell in any quantity the eater wants (or can afford), stay open late, and provide interest-free credit to regular customers they know. Farmers also get better prices selling through the symbiotic food system than if they supply supermarkets or other corporate value chains.

> **Impacts on the food supply system**

Three international supermarket groups have collapsed or pulled out
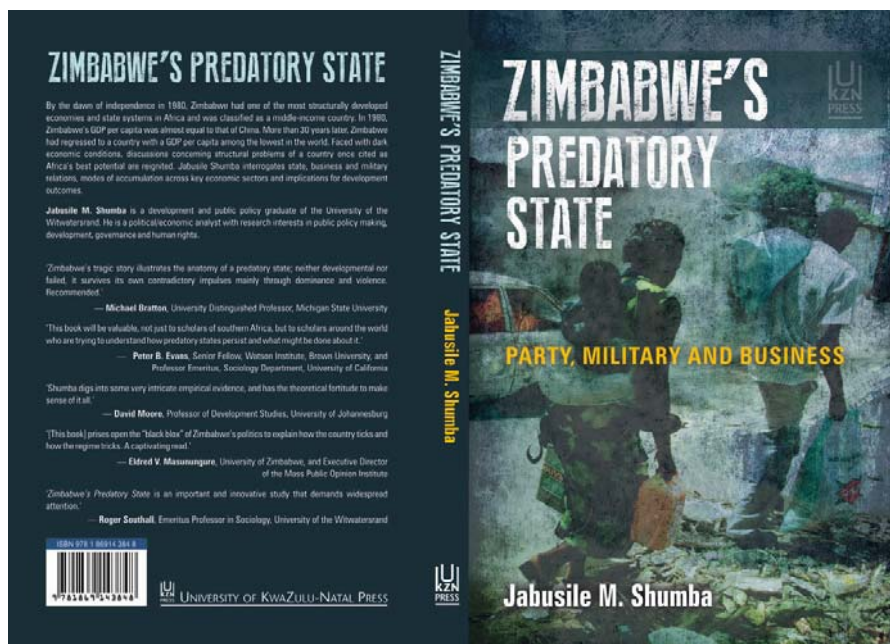
of Tanzania since 2014. A number of planned large-scale agricultural investments, including large land deals, have also collapsed or fallen far short of their targets, including the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor that was backed by corporations, including Monsanto, Yara, and Unilever, as well as by multilateral bodies (e.g. G8, World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization) when launched at the World Economic Forum in 2010.

Despite these failures, food is on the shelves in Dar es Salaam. Tanzanian maize and rice production, still by small-scale farmers, has increased substantially over the last fifteen years, keeping pace with a city that has doubled in size, growing by 2.5 million people since 2002. Samuel has increased his deliveries from three to five times per week, supplying the same *duka* and a few new ones. ■

Direct all correspondence to Marc C.A. Wegerif <marc.wegerif@up.ac.za>

47

> Zimbabwe's Predatory State:

Party, Military, and Business

by **Jabusile Madyazvimbishi Shumba**, Africa University, Zimbabwe

In academic debates, Zimbabwe's story is contested as much as it is polarized. The nature of the state itself is in doubt and disputed: does Zimbabwe exemplify a fragile, strong and unco-operative, or predatory state? On 15 November 2017, when the military intervened leading to the dethronement of long-time ruler President Robert Mugabe, some characterized the decisive military intervention as a classic "coup d'état." Yet for others, perhaps long frustrated and keen to see President Mugabe's departure at all costs, the end justified the means. The latter have preferred to creatively view it as a "military-assisted transition."

Many would agree that Zimbabwe moved away from the expectations of the hopeful masses and many supporters of the liberation struggle project. Insofar as the liberation struggle ended in the defeat of the white supremacist colonial minority, an historic conquest was won. However, the liberation movement in power has proved to be a disappointment, not only to many well-wishers, but also to the majority of the citizens it now rules. A very promising young state at independence in 1980, Zimbabwe in the post 2000s is now associated with grisly images of violence, cataclysmic economic failure, poverty, and suffering. Several questions beg answers: Why did this happen? How did it happen? Did the ruling elite know their choices would lead to Zimbabwe's developmental decline?

> The predatory state

In *Zimbabwe's Predatory State: Party, Military and Business*, I argue that the Zimbabwean state is best conceptualized as predatory rather than in any other terms. Yet the notion of the predatory state has remained an elusive concept. I differ with other advocates of the term who have appropriated it to mean the opposite of a developmental state, a special variant of criminalization, or a form of neopatrimonialism. Indeed, most political economy approaches to post-colonial Africa have tended to emphasize the absence of central authority. Ironically, however, the term "predatory" inherently denotes strength – that is, it implies the capacity of predators to prey on their

>>

48

targets, thus requiring the strength to subordinate their victims. For states, such strength arguably rests on the presence rather than the absence of central authority through which the state is able to exercise control.

Based on my empirical research, I suggest that the predatory state is a ruling class anti-developmental accumulation and reproduction project characterized by: (1) party and military dominance in the state; (2) state-business relations shaped by domination and capture; and (3) state-society relations shaped by violence and patronage. However, the distinction between the "authoritarian developmental state" and the predatory state deserves clarification. How do we distinguish between the two in terms of state structure and relationship with society in order to make sense of the structural variations in explaining disparate developmental trajectories?

> **Predatory states vs. authoritarian developmental states**

I argue that both the early version of the authoritarian developmental state and the predatory state are characterized by substantial authoritarian tendencies and the powerful role of personal networks. For example, during South Korea's high-growth industrialization, Park Chung-hee enjoyed close personal ties with two of the country's leading businesses, Hyundai and Daewoo; thus, one might find it difficult to disentangle the role of the state-defined public purpose of growth from the role of private profit motives and crony capitalism. However-

er, the state was always in command; it never lost its disciplinary capacity. For instance, when businesses failed to meet set targets, they were punished through withdrawal of incentives. The state's compulsion was pervasive and real.

The two types of states also differ considerably in terms of the state's relationship with business and the nature of its relations with the military. The twentieth-century authoritarian developmental state combined the use of disciplinary capacity with incentives to foster productive alliances with business, while predatory state relations with business are parasitic rather than production-oriented; hence they achieve opposite developmental outcomes.

The nature of the relations with the military is also divergent in that the use of the military in the twentieth-century developmental state was oriented towards a national project rather than personal accumulation. For instance, in the Asian classical developmental state model, the military played an effective role in controlling and repressing domestic labor to keep the costs of production low in order to attain industry competitiveness. Under a predatory state, the use of military violence mirrors the personalistic accumulation interests of the power elite.

In terms of the modes of accumulation, the manufacturing sector is conspicuously absent. This points to the rentier nature of the predatory state: that is, it is based on resource extraction rather than manufacturing. The changing structure of the Zimba-

bwean economy, moving away from a significant manufacturing sector to the post-independence dominance of resource-based extraction, is associated with this predatory shift. The absence of the manufacturing sector has implications that illuminate the deficiency of production strategies, a uniform feature across disparate sectors. In fact, the main aim of policy (such as indigenization and empowerment programs) is to channel rents to members of the ruling elite. Finally, the state needs cooperation with foreign capital (in this case, Chinese and South African) to generate foreign exchange and tax revenue to support essential government functions. Therefore, friendly foreign capital is allowed to participate in the sharing of resource rents.

The key conclusion of the study is not only that the power elite had class interests that inhibited economic transformation and development, but also that its voracious modes of accumulation and political reproduction transformed and sustained Zimbabwe's predatory state. The implications of this will be far-reaching. Over the years, the country's developmental capacities have been undercut by a predatory elite which relied on violence and patronage to retain power and accumulate wealth. Reform will come at a political cost as it undermines the deeply embedded patronage networks. In the aftermath of the November 2017 overt military intervention, the party-military and business complex has been rejuvenated and is likely to endure in the years to come. ∎

Direct all correspondence to:
Jabusile Madyazvimbishi Shumba
<jabusile_shumba@biari.brown.edu>

> Jozi: The Precarious City of Gold

by **Alexia Webster**, photographer and **Edward Webster**, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa, member and former President of the ISA Research Committee on Labor Movements (RC44)

An abandoned gold mine shaft on the outskirts of Johannesburg which is being used again by informal miners. Photo by Alexia Webster.

As Africa's economic hub for over 125 years, Johannesburg – affectionately known as Jozi – is the world's largest city not built on the banks of a river or near a large port. It has, instead, been built on gold. From its inception, gold mining transformed the world around it through constant innovation, stimulated by waves of migrants from across the region – and indeed the globe. This is evocatively captured in Sarah Nuttall and Achille Mbembe's collection of essays on Johannesburg, where they portray the city as a place of intermingling and improvisation, a city that is developing its own brand of cosmopolitan culture.

But there is another side to Johannesburg, a destructive side not only of human life, but also of nature itself. Johannesburg is, in Joseph Schumpeter's words, a case of "creative destruction." Unregulated mining in the abandoned mine shafts on the outskirts of the city could, some believe, destroy the city of gold.

Unmarked and hidden from the public is a thriving settlement of informal miners and their children. Desperate undocumented cross-border migrants have brought their families with them and eke out a precarious existence in hidden spaces not far from the city center. Photo by Alexia Webster.

>>

50

> The origins of the mining industry

Central to understanding the mining of gold in Jozi is its extremely sensitive cost structure. The challenge facing the early prospectors was not to find gold, but to find it in payable quantities. Profits were dependent on low production costs for two reasons. Firstly, because the average gold content of the ore is low and it is deposited deep underground. Secondly, the internationally determined price of gold prevents the mining companies from transferring any increases in working costs to the consumers. Consequently, within this narrowly circumscribed cost structure, the area of cost minimization has been wages. The historic task of the mine owners, then, was to create and contain a vast supply of cheap African labor.

Land dispossession and compulsory taxation forced the men into wage labor. They were housed in crowded single-sex hostels. They were not allowed to bring their families with them. The function of the family was to reproduce labor power, and to care for them back home when they were sick, injured, or old. In this way the vast peasant population of the region, in particular the women, subsidized the mine owners, enabling them to only pay the costs of maintaining a single person.

Deep underground with minimum head space and precarious support systems, black miners prepare to blast. For many years afterwards, their work experience affected their health, most dying painful early deaths from respiratory diseases. Photo: Photographer Unknown, from the archive of Luli Callinicos.
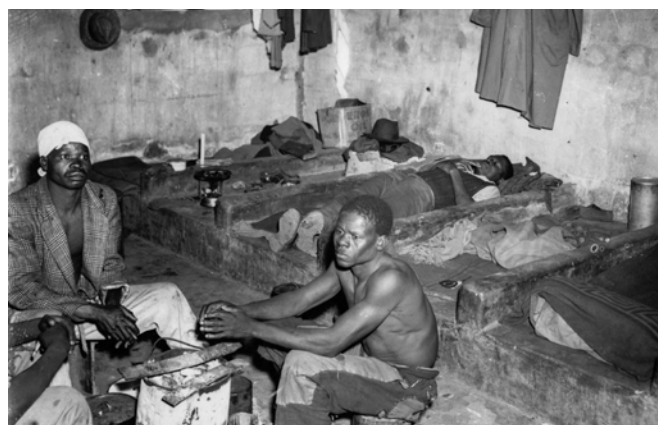

Mine workers resting on concrete bunks in a compound. One dormitory could house up to 40 men with barely the most basic provisions of storage, lighting, and heating. Photo: UWC-Robben Island Museum, Mayibuye Archives.
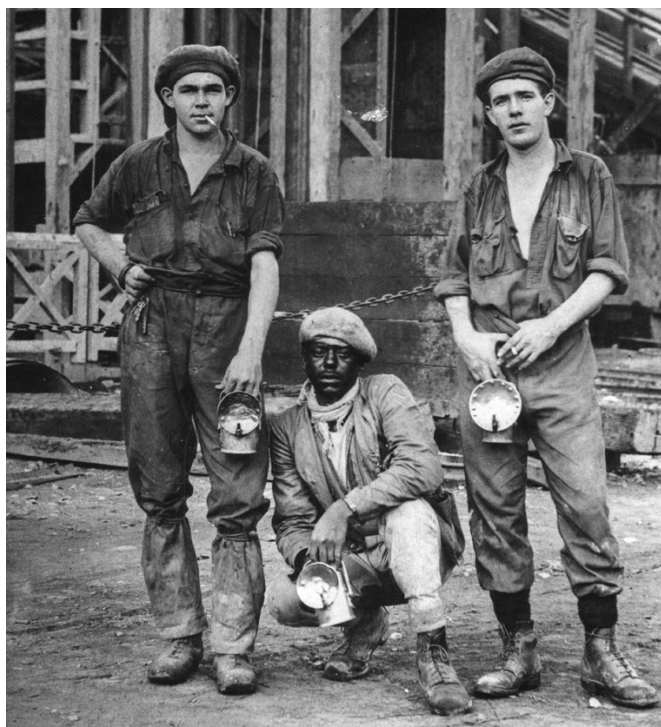
Two young white miner recruits beside an experienced black miner in 1907. Black miners earned roughly one-tenth of the white miner. Photo: Photographer Unknown, from the archive of Luli Callinicos, Gold and Workers, page 75.

Homeward bound. After a year-long contract mine workers make their way home laden with gifts for their families. Photo: Neave Africana Collection, Museum Africa Archives.

51

>>
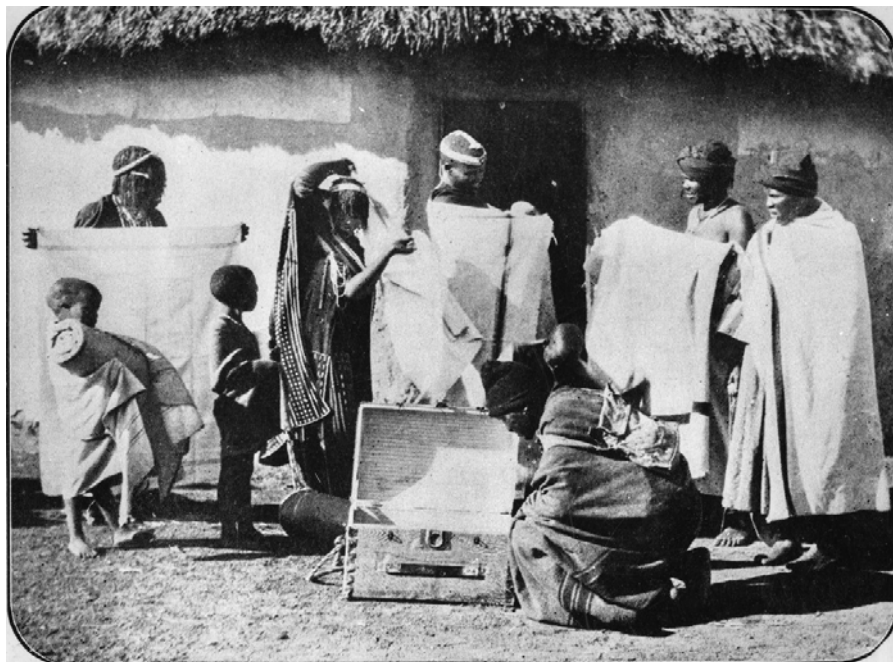
The homecoming. A migrant returns laden with gifts for his family in Mduduma in 1933. Photo: SA Review Pictorial, 1935-1936.

In order to maintain production, the mines went deeper and deeper into the bowels of the earth. The high accident rate on the gold mines is linked to the exceptional depths at which extraction of gold takes place. The average depth is more than 1,600 meters, with the deepest reaching over 4,000 meters underground. A major cause of accidents involves rock bursts and falls of rock. In 1983, the year we began our research, 371 miners were killed by rock falls. Between 1900 and 1985, 66,000 miners died underground and more than a million were seriously injured. Many men were permanently crippled by rock falls, spending the rest of their lives in wheel chairs or hospitals built for paraplegics.

Gold is a "wasting asset." Over time, the amount of payable gold beneath Johannesburg was exhausted. The city's population had grown exponentially and its secondary economy flourished to become the country's largest financial hub. The mines stopped formal production and the sites were abandoned.

Yet today, not far from the city center, you find cross-border migrants, as Janet Munakamwe has shown in her doctoral thesis, attempting to earn an illegal livelihood on the margins of the mining sector. They are known as the *zama zamas*. They go down every morning with primitive equipment, using ropes and torches on their mobile phones. They make their way to the rock face with simple hammers, spades/shovels, and chisels to crack the rock open and gather the ore.

Women at a newly reopened abandoned mine grinding the ore with their babies on their backs. Photo by Alexia Webster.

A miner holds up the hammer he uses to break rock underground. Photo by Alexia Webster.

>>

A "zama zama" with a large container pouring the slush into a bucket. Photo by Alexia Webster.

Woman miner brushing the fragments of the ore. Photo by Alexia Webster.

Combining grinding the ore with braiding hair and feeding the children. Photo by Alexia Webster.

It is a risky business, writes Angela Kariuki: "There is the very real possibility of running out of food underground, especially when working for weeks (sometimes even months) at a time. They speak of the lack of air, where ventilation equipment is no longer working. They also report that some have suffocated, especially when they light fires either to keep themselves warm in very cold underground conditions, or to soften hard rock areas. And they speak of chest infections, persistent coughs, and physical injuries sustained during frequent rock falls, flooding or other accidents, or because of the lack of ankle-supportive safety boots."

Faced with the indifference of the established union movement, these miners are beginning to self-organize through social networks underpinned by social media. Very few belong to unions, but new forms of representation and participation are emerging, such as worker advice offices, burial societies, and migrant rights associations.

The final product of hours of labor is a small nugget of gold. Photo by Alexia Webster.

53

>>

Informal mines, unlike the formal mining system of the past, involve both women and men, and their families. Photo by Alexia Webster.

54

But unregulated mining took a dramatic turn when the mayor of Johannesburg, Herman Mashaba, announced that the city faced a "looming catastrophe" (*Sunday Times*, November 25, 2018). Illegal miners, he declared, had brought the city to the brink of an unprecedented disaster as the *zama zamas* were blasting to within meters of highly inflammable gas and fuel lines under Johannesburg. Should one of these lines be damaged, he declared, everything within a 300m radius will be "incinerated." An official from the city council told the *Sunday Times* that key parts of the city were also under threat of collapse due to the 140 km labyrinth of new and existing tunnels that illegal miners are digging or blasting beneath the city.

So the city that was built on the backs of gold miners faces collapse under the impact of desperate women and men struggling to find a livelihood as "illegal miners" in the abandoned gold mines of Jozi. While some may celebrate the "free market" and the entrepreneurial spirit of these brave miners, the unregulated market cannot, as Karl Polanyi observed many decades ago, "exist for any length of time without annihilating the human and natural substance of society."

Mining communities affected by environmental destruction have formed networks to protect these precarious communities. Whether these initiatives could be the embryo of the countermovement envisaged by Polanyi seems unlikely, but it does support what Michael Burawoy and Karl von Holdt call, in their *Conversations with Bourdieu*, "the Johannesburg moment." The Johannesburg moment, they write, is a post-apartheid moment, a moment of political rupture. It is also a moment of sharp contestation, social fragmentation and "a profound disordering of society." ■

Direct all correspondence to:
Alexia Webster <alexiawebster@gmail.com>
Edward Webster <edward.webster@wits.ac.za>

> Right-Wing Populism
from a Solidarity Perspective

by **Jörg Flecker**, University of Vienna, Austria, and member of ISA Research Committee on Sociology of Work (RC30), **Carina Altreiter**, **István Grajczjar**, and **Saskja Schindler**, University of Vienna, Austria

Demonstration against a new labour law in Budapest, Hungary in January 2019. Credit: Attila Kisbenedek/AFP/Getty Images.

Far-right parties in Europe have benefitted from intensified socioeconomic change following the financial and economic crisis in 2008 as well as from declining trust in public institutions. Since the turn of the century, many of these parties have put the social question on their political agenda. Having had migration always as a central issue, these parties could successfully use the arrival of large numbers of refugees in 2015 to mobilize resentment and hostility among the populations. Their trump card of welfare chauvinism is thus based on both a more welfare-state-friendly rhetoric and a more aggressive xenophobic stance. In this process, the far right has laid a claim to the concept of solidarity and no longer leaves it to the political left. For example, the Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán presented the closing of Hungarian borders to refugees as an act of European solidarity.

The research project "Solidarity in times of crisis" (SOCRIS)[1] takes symbolic struggles over the concept of solidarity as its starting point. By symbolic struggle, we mean controversies in which (collective) actors try to impose their vision of the social world on others. This relates both to what we consider to be right or wrong, good or bad, valuable or worthless and to "symbolic boundaries" that separate people into groups and generate feelings of similarity and belonging. The project focuses on Austria and Hungary, countries affected very differently by the economic crisis but showing similar political developments. Using methodological triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data, SOCRIS provides a deeper understanding of the complex relationships between societal change and political subjectivity.

To analyze concepts of solidarity and the related symbolic struggles, we took into account the dimensions of the scope or boundaries of the imagined community of solidarity, the foundations of solidarity, and solidary activities, for example, in civil society. The SOCRIS survey, conducted between July and September 2017 in Austria and Hun-

>>

Demonstration against racism in Vienna, Austria in March 2019. Photo: Jörg Flecker.

gary, was based on representative samples of working–age individuals. The analyses of the data provided an in-depth understanding about who people express solidarity with, when and why people feel responsible for helping others, and whether they are in favor of welfare-state support for different groups of people.

One important research question was: What types of different solidarity concepts can be discerned in countries that seem to be deeply divided, for example, over issues of refugee support, means-tested social benefits, or state support for the Roma minority? In order to group people according to their views on solidarity, the survey data were subjected to a statistical cluster analysis resulting in seven groups per country. Surprisingly, some of the groups show similar solidarity concepts in both countries. For example, a "non-solidary and inactive" group is characterized by little support for the welfare state, by limiting solidarity to the family and the neighborhood, and by lacking activities in civil society organizations. On the other pole of the solidarity continuum we find a "solidary and active" group in both countries, i.e. people showing a pattern of solidarity characterized by strong support for the welfare state and high levels of activity in civil society organizations. Yet, the scope of solidarity in this group differs between the countries: While in Austria people show concern for all human-kind, in Hungary concern is limited to the national level.

However, a large majority of the population could be located between these extremes. There, we could identify several other groups showing different combinations of foundation and scope of solidarity as well as levels of activity. Some of the patterns only exist in one of the countries but the most conspicuous country difference relates to the size of the groups. If we take the groups or the types of solidarity together and only distinguish between exclusive-

ness and inclusiveness, i.e. whether people are in favor of ethnic and nationalist closure or show universal solidarity, we see that 62% share some form of inclusive solidarity in Austria whereas this is only the case of 39% of the respondents in Hungary. Conversely, some 40% of Hungarians show a clearly ethnically or nationally limited solidarity whereas this applies to 27% of the respondents in Austria.

Because of the strength of xenophobic and welfare chauvinist parties in both countries, we were also interested to see whether the solidarity patterns match party preferences. As expected, the strongest support for extreme and populist right-wing parties can be found among the non-solidary and nationally-exclusive solidary clusters in both countries. However, we also find that a substantial share of people in the most inclusive clusters (20% in Hungary and some 15% in Austria) are supporters of these parties. This means that some people vote for these parties not because of, but despite, their xenophobic and welfare chauvinist stance. It should also caution us against assuming that the far right simply represents attitudes existing in the population as people may be attracted to it for quite different reasons.

In contrast to large parts of the current debates on right-wing populism, the results of the SOCRIS project indicate that it is not only one particular social group, such as deprived blue-collar workers, whose voting behavior explains the success of far-right parties. While lower status, deprivation, and feelings of political powerlessness are indeed important factors, surprisingly a considerable part of sympathizers of both Austrian and Hungarian far-right parties are well-off, feel appreciated, and have benefitted from recent socio-economic changes.

The solidarity perspective contributes to our understanding of cleavages in societies and support for the far right. There is a certain match between solidarity concepts and party preferences. Yet, in spite of the importance of welfare chauvinism, we cannot trace back the success of these parties simply to "exclusionary solidarity." For one, in contrast to their rhetoric the parties do not even support a developed welfare state for the national in-group. What is more, solidarity patterns are often rather complex and the ensuing ambiguities and contradictions provide a certain openness for political mobilization from different sides. ■

56