

GLOBAL DIALOGUE

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Talking Sociology with
Geoffrey Pleyers

Breno Bringel

100th Anniversary
of the Japan
Sociological Society

Yoshimichi Sato
Chikako Mori
Masako Ishii-Kuntz
Naoki Sudo

Towards
New Internationalist
Political Manifestos

**ADELANTE – Dialogue of Global
Processes**

**Progressive International
Ecosocial and Intercultural
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**Nigeria Socio-Ecological
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ReCommons Europe

Theoretical
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Lidia Becker
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Open Movements

John Feffer
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Open Section

> **Reconstructing Dependency Theories**

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> Editorial

This issue of *Global Dialogue* opens with an interview with Geoffrey Pleyers, current president of the ISA, elected at the XX ISA World Congress of Sociology in Melbourne. In our regular “Talking Sociology” section, Pleyers shares some of his contributions to the study of social movements, his views on global sociology, and his perspectives about the contemporary world and the role of sociology.

The first thematic section celebrates 100 years of the Japan Sociological Society. Its president Yoshimichi Sato and several members of its board of directors trace the different stages of Japanese sociology vis-à-vis the institutionalization of the Japan Sociological Society. Special emphasis is placed on global connections, recent trends in Japanese sociology, and internationalization.

The second thematic section is devoted to contemporary political manifestos. Manifestos are collective tools widely used to position ideas or programs publicly. They can be understood as gauges of the present, often combining the diagnosis of historical and critical junctures, the interpretation of socio-political reality, and the search for alternatives. In a time of profound civilizational malaise and a crisis of alternative projects, this section brings together five internationalist political manifestos that seek to offer proposals and horizons for social and political change. Some are more global, while others are more regional, focusing on African, Latin American, and European cases. All suggest both possible paths for reorganizing popular mobilization processes and relevant short- and medium-term agendas.

The theoretical article, written by Lidia Becker and Christine Hatzky, starts from a provocative diagnosis: in recent decades, different branches of social theory (such as postcolonial and gender studies) have largely explored categories of difference but have neglected the recognition of similarities. In line with recent debates on pluriversity and new ontologies, the authors attempt to design a research agenda considering interconnectivity, convergences, analogies, and simultaneities to advance a relational concept of similarity.

The “Open Movements” section addresses two highly topical issues: on the one hand, the recent protests against two authoritarian governments (in Bangladesh and Venezuela) and their respective outcomes; on the other hand, the relationship between the ongoing genocide in Palestine and global climate justice. The section also includes an assessment of the transformations of social movements in Spain over the last two decades. Finally, the “Open Section” discusses the importance of intellectually reconstructing dependency theories, revisiting their roots, and updating their contributions.

We hope you have enjoyed this year’s three issues. In 2025, *Global Dialogue* will celebrate its fifteenth anniversary. It will be a unique opportunity to take stock of the state of public and global sociology and strengthen links between initiatives based in different world regions. ■

Breno Bringel, editor of *Global Dialogue*

> *Global Dialogue* can be found in multiple languages at its [website](#).

> Submissions should be sent to: globaldialogue@isa-sociology.org.

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In the section “Talking Sociology”, Breno Bringel talks to **Geoffrey Pleyers** about global sociology, the contemporary world and the role of sociology.



The thematic section “100th Anniversary of the Japan Sociological Society” celebrates the centenary of the Japanese sociology’s institutionalization. (Credit: Guillermo Gavilla, on Pixabay.)



The thematic section “Towards New Internationalist Political Manifestos” brings together five manifestos that seek to offer proposals and horizons for social and political change.

Credit for the cover page: Pixabay.



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“Capitalism has always been a system of unpaid costs. The costs are systematically externalised and shifted somewhere else.”

Hamza Hamouchène

> Global Sociology in Times of Polycrisis

An Interview with Geoffrey Pleyers, ISA President



Geoffrey Pleyers is FNRS Research Director at the Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium. He has been actively involved in the International Sociological Association (ISA) since 2006. He chaired ISA Research Committee on Social Classes and Social Movements (RC47) from 2014 to 2018 and acted as ISA Vice-President for Research from 2018 to 2023. On July 2023 he was elected ISA President for 2023-27. He is interviewed here by **Breno Bringel**, Professor of Sociology at the State University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, editor of *Global Dialogue* and a regular collaborator with Prof. Pleyers.

Credit: International Sociological Association.

Breno Bringel (BB): *Social movement scholars are familiar with your contributions concerning alter-activism and global movements. However, a very relevant aspect of your work is going beyond the boundaries of a specialized field of study to rethink the links between social movements and general sociology. Based on your empirical contributions, can you tell our readers more about this perspective?*

Geoffrey Pleyers (GP): Social movements are a captivating subject for studying society and social change. They are both products and producers of society. They mirror emerging changes in values and ways of living together, for example, with their innovative use of new communication tools or the process of individualization. They also attempt to transform society. They alert us to its problems and change how we see society, the world, and life together. This is true of progressive and reactionary movements that have gained influence and have managed to diffuse their worldview and values in many countries. As

for social change, it is never as fast or as linear as social actors – and many sociologists – wish. This is the main argument of my latest book, *Change is never linear. Social movements in polarized times* (in Spanish, CLACSO, August 2024), based on analyses of the 2019 social revolt in Chile, movements and solidarity during the pandemic, and progressive and conservative religious movements in Brazil. Understanding contemporary social movements and their roles requires giving up the illusion of a simple, linear relationship between crisis and social change and between social movement action, political change, and social change. Both the enthusiasm of those who announce a radical change in society as soon as a movement emerges and the pessimism of those who reduce the outbursts to collective illusions of a minority of a people need to be qualified. Social change is a complex path that passes through the euphoria of sharing anger, dreams, and solidarity with thousands of citizens and disappointments of some electoral processes that rarely reflect the depth of social and cultural change driven by social movements.

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BB: *You often discuss global sociology theoretically but also practice and build it. How does the global perspective appear in your trajectory from your early research on the alter-globalization movement to your most recent work?*

GP: I grew up in a village far from global cities. My parents did not have the chance to complete secondary school, and we only traveled a little. However, that village is an intercultural melting pot at the border between Belgium, the Netherlands, and Germany. Local roots and a local dialect combine with an openness to other cultures, languages, traditions, and histories.

A new life began when I moved to Paris, to the center founded by Alain Touraine and run by Michel Wieviorka. It was a stimulating international environment, with researchers from all the continents and many from Latin America. I dedicated my MA and doctoral theses to the global justice movement, or “alter-globalization”. I attended the first seven World Social Forums in Porto Alegre, Mumbai, Bamako and Nairobi. They brought together up to 180,000 activists from around the world. Since I discovered Latin America and its social movements, the dialogue with my colleagues and friends from there has remained fundamental. I learned a lot from the attempts to organize horizontally and more democratically by parts of this movement. I visited Mexico and have learned a lot from the Zapatista indigenous movement, which remains one of my main inspirations at a personal and professional level and in my role at the ISA. After my PhD, I conducted some research in Bangalore, India, and a post-doctorate at New York University. I also kept traveling and researching in Europe, notably studying the environmentalist movements and the post-2011 social movements.

BB: *It seems that the imaginary of “another world is possible” has given way to another, that of “another end of the world is possible”. A new dystopian “there is no alternative” is emerging worldwide. We are facing enormous challenges, such as a civilizational polycrisis, the deterioration of democracy, the normalization of authoritarianism, the deepening of militarism and the culture of war, the climate emergency, and the overcoming of planetary limits. How do you assess this scenario?*

GP: Every generation of sociologists considers that it is living at a crucial moment in history, an unprecedented crisis that will determine the future of humanity. We are no exception. We experience and analyze our times as a tangle of interconnected crises, a “polycrisis”, also interpreted as a “civilization crisis”, as Latin American scholars and the recent book you edited show. Modernity has been experienced as a succession of crises. However, this time, it is not just the future of humanity that is at stake, but our planet, too. “How to live together on a limited planet” is

the core issue of this century. Sociology must help resolve it, which is why our Vice-President for Research, Allison Loconto, chose “Knowing Justice in the Anthropocene” as the theme for the Forum in Rabat in 2025, and I have proposed “Global Sociology on a Limited Planet” for the 2027 World Congress in Gwangju, South Korea.

Climate change and the destruction of nature have accelerated, but they did not start in our time. They are rooted in the way of seeing the world and organizing life and society that has improved the living standards of a large part of humanity at an unprecedented pace and to an unparalleled level. However, this success of modernity has destroyed nature. Despite the increasing climate emergency, we keep destroying it at an accelerated pace. We face a historic responsibility as a series of thresholds and points of no return are crossed, shattering the balance of natural cycles with consequences for centuries to come. And yet, individually and collectively, we continue to live as if this was not the case. There are few drivers for a change that is so urgently needed.

Actually, in many realms, we seem to be heading in the opposite direction, with the rise of authoritarianism, racism, wars, and reactionary actors moved by polarized visions of the world and even a backlash against ecology and the timid measures that have been taken. The rise of authoritarianism also threatens social sciences. I am deeply concerned about the threats against academic freedom. Every week, we are informed about sociologists who have been threatened, suspended, or repressed because of their research, their criticisms of a nationalist leader, or for setting the war in Gaza in its historical and geopolitical context. It is urgent to organize ourselves better, support our colleagues, and request that governments protect (and in many cases stop attacking) academic freedom and stop targeting sociologists and scientists.

Threats to academic freedom also come from some actors within academia. We demand that every university, foundation, and institution active in the social sciences stop discriminating against colleagues who conduct research on specific topics or with some populations or who express their opposition to war, violence, and repression.

BB: *This is a bleak scenario.*

GP: Yes, but this is only part of the picture. At the same time, in different regions of the world, we witness promising social, economic, and political innovations: the mobilizations and concrete actions of a “climate generation”, and, on a longer time scale, the rise of a global consciousness and a different relationship with the world, with ourselves, and with nature – of which we are a part.

We live in complex times, in a more closely interconnected world on many levels, notably via the digital world, a global

economic and financial system, and the influence of a few thousand super-rich who concentrate a growing share of wealth. The increasing interdependence also results from the worldwide impact of contamination, greenhouse gas emissions, and the destruction of nature.

BB: How do you see the role of sociology in the face of these challenges, the emerging dark scenario, and this polycrisis?

GP: The world's transformations over the past decades and the rise of new critical perspectives have profoundly shaken sociology. The discipline was founded at the heart of industrial modernity when nature and economic growth seemed limitless, nation-states were consolidated, and White Western men were thought to be leading world history. They were, for sure, leading sociology and their way of thinking about the world has remained rooted in many of our concepts and theories.

Does this mean that sociology is in crisis? The crisis of sociology has been repeated endlessly since the 1970s. Reading and meeting sociologists from different continents, I have the exact opposite impression: I believe we live in extraordinary times for sociology. Since the beginning of the century, our discipline has undergone significant transformations that have regenerated it. The main developments have come from a greater openness of the discipline to critical perspectives that emerged at the border of the discipline or aside from it, often with a critical stance against it. In the past decades, sociology has become more open to these critical perspectives; it has opened more space for dialogue with different thoughts, studies, geographical areas, and theories, resulting in critical but fruitful dialogues and new ways of thinking about the world and sociology. Thanks to the contributions of feminist and intersectional approaches, subaltern, post- and decolonial studies, and Southern perspectives and epistemologies, new dialogues have opened up, and new voices have been heard. These dialogues have had a transformative impact. We have revisited the history of our discipline, its canons, and some of its main biases.

Much remains to be done. However, we should seize the extent of what has been achieved over the first quarter of the twenty-first century. When I was a student, the history of sociology was summed up in the contributions of a few Western scholars. Today, it is no longer possible to teach it without dedicating a session to W.E.B. Du Bois, to discuss inequalities without integrating gender and intersectional perspectives, or to present contemporary theories without referring to crucial contributions from the Global South.

Acknowledging contributions and perspectives by other researchers opens different doors to revisiting our discipline, asking different questions, and, above all, having a better understanding of our world, its challenges, and alternatives that could make it fairer and more sustainable. As I mentioned in a previous issue of *Global Dialogue* (13.3), this recognizes essential contributions by past and current Western sociologists: “*Global sociology can neither remain rooted in the Western universities and canons that presented themselves as universal nor be limited to criticism of this Western sociology.*”

BB: What are some of the key issues we need to address today? Are we in a good position to do so?

GP: The rise of authoritarianism and reactionary actors, on the one hand, and climate change and ecological collapse, on the other, requires us to think about our world (and our discipline) differently and to efficiently contribute to insightful ways to tackle the challenges of our times. The task is immense. However, we also have new resources to meet this need.

The rise of the digital world and now artificial intelligence brings new challenges. It also gives us access to vast amounts of data and much more powerful analytical tools. An even more important resource is the better integration of the knowledge, analyses, and contributions by researchers from all world regions. In many ways, sociology is more open, creative, and solid than at the beginning of the century. We are better equipped to contribute to understanding the world and help meet the challenges of our time. The first part of the twenty-first century is an exciting time to be a sociologist.

BB: How can Global Dialogue contribute to overcoming these blockages?

GP: *Global Dialogue* is a unique platform because it allows complex issues that affect every continent to be explained in short articles based on in-depth knowledge of local realities and rigorous analysis, but accessible to an audience of researchers, students, and citizens. This is the global and public sociology we have promoted since Michael Burawoy founded the magazine.

Every issue of *Global Dialogue* shows us that “global” is not a scale that flies above local realities (that would be “methodological globalism”). Conversely, global sociology builds on contributions by sociologists from all regions of the world. ■

> Japanese Sociology and the Japan Sociological Society: A Brief History

by **Yoshimichi Sato**, Kyoto University of Advanced Science, Japan and President of the Japanese Sociological Society



| Credit: The Japan Sociological Society.

I will briefly describe the history of Japanese sociology and the Japan Sociological Society (JSS) from my perspective because it is beyond my capacity to cover all the details of their history over more than one hundred years.

> Foundations with the aim of improving Japanese society

The JSS was established in 1924, but Japanese sociologists had started conducting sociological research before then. As Auguste Comte conceived the reconstruction of French society after the French Revolution, Japanese sociologists envisioned the way Japanese society would be and should be structured after the Meiji Restoration. They heavily relied on the thought of Herbert Spencer, but they interpreted it in two different ways – conservatism and liberalism – depending on their political positions, as suggested by [Akimoto](#).

Japanese sociology has strived to reflect the social realities of Japanese society and to solve them. Major social issues in prewar Japanese society were labor issues, poverty, and nationalism, to name a few; and Japanese soci-

ologists studied them in detail hoping to improve Japanese society. Although prewar Japanese sociology was heavily influenced by European sociology, Yasuma Takada, a giant in the history of Japanese sociology, established an original theory focusing on social bonds as the building block of sociology. His intention was to make sociology an independent field in social science. The originality of his theory was highly valued by contemporary Japanese sociologists and his work became a milestone in prewar Japanese sociology.

> Post-WWII: modernization and Marxist theories

After World War II, Japanese sociologists inherited a theoretical legacy from great prewar sociologists such as Yasuma Takada, Teizo Toda, and Eitaro Suzuki. Meanwhile, according to Tominaga in his book *Sociology of Postwar Japan*, they conducted sociological inquiries in particular fields such as sociology of the family, rural sociology, urban sociology, and industrial sociology. This led to the fragmentation of Japanese sociology. In response to this situation, two theoretical streams emerged: modernization theory and Marxist theory.

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Modernization theory was influenced by structural functionalism proposed by Talcott Parsons and his collaborators. It focused on the effects of modernization and industrialization on various segments in society. Marxist theory also studied the effects of modernization and industrialization, but its analytical perspective was different from that of modernization theory: it mainly focused on the effects of class structure. This came from Marx's theory on the contradiction between forces of production and relations of production.

Modernization theory became popular while Japanese society enjoyed strong economic growth (1955-1973); it depicted the reality of Japanese society at the time and optimistically predicted its brilliant future. However, it lost its popularity for several reasons: it could not explain social and economic stagnations in Japan after the economic bubble burst; not all countries in the world followed the trajectory predicted by it. Marxist theory also attracted many Japanese sociologists. They observed social problems caused by conflicts between different groups in society, such as that between capitalists/employers and workers/employees and that between large firms and local residents in the case of pollution. However, its influence also weakened for different reasons, such as the rise of the New Left and the collapse of the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc.

> **New directions, American influence, and the SSM Survey**

After the weakening of modernization and Marxist theories, the so-called multi-paradigm era began. This witnessed the emergence of excellent theories in various fields: phenomenological sociology and sociology focusing on information society, globalization, and welfare states, to name a few.

It should be emphasized that postwar Japanese sociology was strongly influenced by American sociology. Although European sociology had also been influential, the American style of empirical studies – qualitative and quantitative – attracted many Japanese sociologists. One of the major quantitative studies is the “National Survey of Social

Stratification and Social Mobility”, commonly known as the SSM Survey. The first SSM Survey was conducted by the JSS in 1955 in collaboration with an ISA international project. Since then, it has been conducted every decade, with the next being conducted in 2025. All of the SSM Survey datasets are available upon request at the Social Science Japan Data Archive, from the Institute of Social Science of the University of Tokyo.

> **National and international trajectory**

The JSS has evolved in tandem with this evolution of Japanese sociology. It has published its official journal since it was established in 1924. The name of the journal has changed several times; its current name is *Japanese Sociological Review*, the first volume of which was published in 1950. All of the articles on the *Japanese Sociological Review* are [available online](#). In addition to the publication of the journal, the society has held annual meetings since 1925. The 97th annual meeting will be held at Kyoto Sangyo University in November 2024 to celebrate its centennial. A special international symposium will be held during the meeting with Geoffrey Pleyers, ISA President, as an invited speaker.

It should also be mentioned that the JSS has been active in the international arena. Evidence of this, as stated above, is that the first SSM survey was conducted in collaboration with an ISA project in 1955. The JSS published the first issue of its official English journal, *International Journal of Japanese Sociology*, in 1992 and has continued to publish it annually (the name was changed to *Japanese Journal of Sociology* in 2022). Many Japanese sociologists have collaborated with international sociologists and been active in the ISA; the most important event reflecting the international activities of the JSS was the XVIII ISA World Congress of Sociology in Yokohama in 2014. The congress was a great success thanks to support from the ISA and national associations around the world. In the decade that has passed since that congress, the JSS has entered a new phase of international activities in collaboration and cooperation with the ISA and national associations. ■

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> Japanese Sociology and its Global Connections

by **Chikako Mori**, Doshisha University, Japan



Credit: The Japan Sociological Society.

The contributions of Japanese sociology to global sociological discussions are multifaceted, making them challenging to assess comprehensively in a brief article. The contributions take many forms at different scales, times, and places – for example, [Chizuko Ueno's work in China](#) has been highly influential – and there is no clear consensus on how to evaluate them. Indeed, assessments vary greatly according to the evaluator's perspective. The aim of this piece is not, therefore, to evaluate all the contributions, but to highlight the efforts made by the Japan Sociological Society (JSS) and its members to connect with and contribute to sociological discussions worldwide, fostering what Geoffrey Pleyers calls a [“renewed global dialogue.”](#)

> From “Western centrism” to attempts at “internationalization”

The development of Japanese sociology, the history of which can be traced back to the 1880s, was marked from the outset by its Eurocentrism, [as Shigeto Sonoda points](#)

[out](#). Most sociological inquiries at that time were heavily concentrated on the acceptance, introduction, and digestion of Western sociological theories. Yet within the JSS, founded in 1924, voices were raised early on calling for greater connections with global sociology. As [Seiyama mentions](#), the JSS was one of the first eight national sociological associations and joined the International Sociological Association (ISA) when it issued an appeal in 1950, a year after its foundation. Representing the JSS, Kunio Odaka attended the first ISA Congress and the collective National Survey of Social Stratification and Social Mobility (SSM) works he presented were subsequently referred to by Lipset and Bendix in 1959.

Several JSS members continued to engage with the ISA, including Yoshimichi Sato, who joined its Executive Committee (2010-14). [Hasegawa's account](#) shows us that these efforts culminated in the successful organization of the XVIII ISA Congress in Yokohama in July 2014, which attracted over 6,000 participants. It should be noted that this path towards internationalization followed by key JSS

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actors is clearly distinct from the Japanese government's nation-state model of internationalization, which aims to improve international rankings. As Shujiro Yazawa noted in 2011, when [interviewed by Michael Burawoy in *Global Dialogue*](#), true internationalization of sociology involves creating a global sociology situated within a global or planetary society beyond the nation-state framework.

> Focus on East Asian sociology

Significant efforts have been made at the regional level as well. [As Sonoda notes](#), several associations – including the Japan-China Sociological Association – have been founded since the 1980s, with Japanese sociologists increasingly participating in broader Asian sociological networks such as the Asia Pacific Sociological Association (founded in 1996) and the Asian Social Research Association (founded in 2010). Moreover, international research programs conducted within national university sociology departments have played a major role in strengthening cooperation with other Asian sociologists. Notable examples include programs led by Emiko Ochiai at Kyoto University and Yoshimichi Sato at Tohoku University.

The institutionalization of these initiatives is also taking shape. The East Asian Sociologists Conference, which began in 2003, resulted in the founding of the East Asian Sociological Association in October 2017 – its first congress was held in March 2019 at Chuo University in Tokyo. These East Asian sociological exchanges have given rise to numerous publications, such as *A Quest for East Asian Sociologies* (2014) and *Handbook of Post-Western Sociology: From East Asia to Europe* (2023). These initiatives aim to contribute to a global sociology that corresponds to “[a non-hegemonic world sociology](#).”

> New initiatives and challenges for the JSS

The JSS has launched several initiatives to connect discussions at a global level: the creation of the *International Journal of Japanese Sociology* in 1992; joint panels based on exchange agreements with South Korea (since 2007), China (since 2011), and Taiwan (since 2015); as well as the establishment of the official blog in 2023 to [present Japanese sociology in English](#). Another notable initiative is the Travel Award (formerly the Travel Grant, created in 2008), which rewards young researchers from around the



Tokyo, Japan. Credit: Willian Justen de Vasconcellos, on Pexels.

world who wish to present their research at the JSS Annual Meeting on a specific theme: “COVID-19 and Society” at the 2022 edition, and “Transnationalism in Context of Crises” at the 2023 edition.

For the 2024 edition, taking advantage of Geoffrey Pleyers' participation in the JSS Annual Meeting on November 9 and 10, the Travel Award theme is “[Decentering Global Sociology](#).” This has attracted a record number of candidates for the Travel Award. While significant progress has been made in dialogues with East Asian countries, exchanges with the Global South and its epistemologies – such as decolonial or subaltern perspectives – remain relatively underdeveloped. For the JSS and its members, the 2024 edition of the Annual Meeting presents a vital opportunity to engage fully in global dialogue and contribute to global sociology in tune with our times. ■

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> Challenges for Global Dissemination of Japanese Sociological Research

by Masako Ishii-Kuntz, Ochanomizu University, Japan



Credit: The Japan Sociological Society.

In my early career in the US, it was rare for me to run into Japanese scholars and graduate students when attending annual meetings of the American Sociological Association or other conferences hosted by different professional organizations. This scene has, however, steadily been changing, perhaps since the first years of this century, as I began to meet more sociologists from Japan at many professional meetings in the US.

> Consolidation and breaching the language barrier

This trend has become much more evident since the XVIII ISA World Congress of Sociology was held in Yokohama in 2014. That is, sociologists living in Japan seemed to have a keener interest in presenting their research findings at global conferences as well as publishing their research papers in English-language journals worldwide. Just a glance at some

ISA statistics also reveals this change. According to the ISA (2024), in 2010, the first year that Congress statistics were made available on the ISA website, 205 participants from Japan attended its Congress in Sweden and this figure represented the seventh highest number of attendees. That figure more than doubled, up to 429, in 2014 at the Yokohama Congress. After that, even though the total number of participants from Japan dropped to 115 and 277 in Toronto (2018) and Melbourne (2023), respectively, sociologists from Japan were comparatively the fifth most numerous in Toronto and fourth in Melbourne.

This is a welcome change not only for sociologists in Japan but also for their counterparts in different countries. When I was working on my doctoral dissertation in the US back in the mid-1980s, it was rather difficult to find sociological books and articles about Japan written in English. Thus, I often resorted to reading books and other documents writ-

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Tokyo, Japan. Credit: Oscar M., on Pexels.

ten in Japanese. Although it was great to be able to read books and articles written in Japanese, at the same time I felt that the research findings should be introduced to and read by many more sociologists, not just those who understand Japanese. Now that sociologists from Japan are much more actively involved in international conferences and publishing their research in English-language journals, I feel that Japanese sociological work has a great chance to be recognized globally.

Despite more exposure of Japanese sociological research in recent years, there are still a few obstacles preventing Japanese sociologists from globally disseminating their research findings. Based on my experiences of teaching sociology at a Japanese university and my concerns, let me discuss what these obstacles are, offer some suggestions to overcome the difficulties, and introduce what the Japan Sociological Society (JSS) has been doing to meet some of these challenges.

> Three obstacles and suggestions for globalizing research

First and perhaps foremost, many sociologists from Japan may feel that there is still a barrier in communicating with international researchers using English. This may be due to problems concerning English language teaching in Japan, where communicative ability in English is not taught effectively, as highlighted by [Ikegashira, Matsumoto and Morita](#). At the same time, a good number of Japanese sociologists attempt too hard to speak like native English speakers. For many Japanese sociologists who wish to disseminate their research findings to the world, the realization that they do not need to sound like native speakers of English

may ease their nervousness and reduce their stress levels. Within the JSS, we have created the Committee for Promoting International Research Activities which organizes annual workshops on writing research abstracts in English as well as offering lectures on presenting research papers in English. As graduate students attend these workshops and lectures many of their abstracts are being accepted for presentation at the ISA World Congress.

Second, there is a tendency for many graduate students and academics in Japanese sociology to want to be “perfect” when presenting and writing their research findings. Presenting their papers at conferences, for example, I have noticed that many Japanese sociologists prepare the presentation scripts and rehearse them many times. While practicing should be recommended, heavy dependence on manuscripts makes it rather difficult to give effective and smooth presentations. Furthermore, many presenters from Japan may feel nervous about the Q&A sessions for which manuscript preparation is not possible. What I usually recommend to students and researchers from Japan is not to be afraid of making mistakes and to explain which part of the comments and questions are difficult for them to understand. In the JSS, it may be necessary to offer seminars for students and new researchers to brush up their presentation skills.

Finally, in addition to overcoming language-related difficulties, it is essential for participants at overseas conferences to secure funding for traveling and accommodation. The JSS offers competitive travel grants for its members to participate in international conferences. In addition, the Japanese government, private organizations, and universities provide many types of scholarships for students to attend overseas conferences. Some professional organizations in the US also offer travel assistance for international attendees. I highly recommend Japanese professional organizations such as the JSS to create a database of these grants, fellowships and scholarships.

To summarize, promoting global dissemination of Japanese students’ and academics’ research requires both institutional and psychological support. An increase in Japanese sociologists participating in international conferences as well as increased visibility in English-language journals are both essential to push Japanese sociology onto the global stage. ■

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> Recent Trends in Japanese Sociology

by **Naoki Sudo**, Hitotsubashi University, Japan



Credit: The Japan Sociological Society.

The recent trends in Japanese sociology exhibit two characteristics. First, the chief interest of Japanese sociologists appears to have shifted to sociological methods. It is noteworthy that the methodological interests of Japanese sociologists are not limited to quantitative methods but also include qualitative methods. Second, the interests of Japanese sociologists during the early twenty-first century have been more diverse than those of the twentieth century. Thus, Japanese sociologists' chief interests have shifted towards the latest topics. These can be interpreted as new topics in the field of sociology being added to traditional topics within the field in Japan. Consequently, Japanese sociologists' interest in sociological theories has weakened over the past few decades.

> From sociological theories to sociological methods

To confirm the shift from theory to methods in Japanese sociology, we can refer to two studies written by two

Japanese sociologists. One is Ken'ichi Tominaga's book titled, *Sociology in Postwar Japan: A Contemporary History* (2004), and the other is Hiroki Takikawa's article titled, "Topic dynamics of post-war Japanese sociology: Topic analysis of Japanese Sociological Review corpus by structural topic model" (2019). Although these works by Tominaga and Takikawa do not analyze the most recent trends in Japanese sociology, it is certainly believed that the framework presented by them can continue to be applied to the latest scenario.

Those authors argue that two opposing sociological schools of thought (structural functionalism and Marxism) dominated the interests of Japanese sociologists during the 1960s and the 1970s. However, both those sociological ideas were radically criticized by the following generation of Japanese sociologists, and lost their influence. Instead of structural functionalism and Marxism, new sociological theories (e.g., Michel Foucault's studies on the subject, Pierre Bourdieu's cultural capital theory, Niklas Luhmann's social system theory, Jürgen Habermas's communication

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theory, and Anthony Giddens' structuration theory) have attracted the interest of Japanese sociologists. Moreover, Japanese sociologists' interest in sociological theories has weakened rapidly since the turn of the century.

According to Takikawa, Japanese sociologists are interested in sociological methods as a means by which to analyze social research data instead of sociological theories per se. Indeed, some Japanese sociologists have keenly analyzed social phenomena using advanced quantitative methods. Simultaneously, other Japanese sociologists have studied social phenomena using qualitative methods, such as narrative approaches. As Takikawa indicates, quantitative and qualitative methods became widely accepted by Japanese sociologists over the first two decades of this century. This suggests that the relations between quantitative and qualitative methods within Japanese sociology during the early twenty-first century have not been competitive, but rather complementary.

Generally, the diffusion of advanced quantitative methods in a discipline can be interpreted as a sign of normalization of the discipline as a science. However, the diffusion of advanced quantitative methods in Japanese sociology during the early twenty-first century tended to positively co-exist with qualitative methods which may be more difficult to scientifically normalize than quantitative methods. This suggests that Japanese sociologists' preference for quantitative methods does not reflect a preference for normalization of the field as a science. Therefore, we should explore other reasons why Japanese sociologists shifted their interest from sociological theories to sociological methods.

> Diversified topics in Japanese sociology during the twenty-first century

Hiroki Takikawa indicates that the research topics targeted by Japanese sociologists during the twenty-first century have been more diversified than those targeted during the late twentieth century. Specifically, Japanese sociologists have added new research topics (such as environmental problems, gender/sexuality, and self-identification) to the traditional topics in sociology (social class, family, labor, organization, urban studies, and so on). It is assumed that they should use new advanced quantitative and qualitative methods to address these topics, which are highly interconnected in complicated ways. Additionally, for Japanese sociologists, such methods are expected to play a significant role as a communication tool with social scientists in other disciplines (economics, political science, law, and social data science, among others), who share their in-

terests. It is likely that diversified research topics and the demand for cooperation with social scientists in different disciplines were the reasons why Japanese sociologists began to emphasize their interest in methods.

Moreover, Japanese society experienced rapid social change during the early twenty-first century. For Japanese sociologists, such changes have made practical and immediate resolutions difficult. First, the Japanese population aged considerably during the period. Consequently, Japan now has one of the oldest populations in the world. This has brought the sustainability of the social welfare regime of Japan into question. Second, Japan has experienced long-term economic stagnation since the late 1990s. Consequently, the share of non-regular employees (part-time and temporary workers) in the entire labor force has risen. Furthermore, as Japanese society needs to address the issues caused by a labor force shortage, the number of immigrants and the rate of women's participation in the labor force have been increasing. These changes have widened social inequalities and brought with them new social problems that are not explained by traditional sociological theories in Japan.

Thus, during the early twenty-first century, Japanese sociologists have had to address new topics that could not be explained by traditional sociological theories and consequently have shifted their interests from theory to method. It is not the case that sociological theories are no longer helpful to Japanese sociologists; rather, new sociological theories that sufficiently explain new topics and focus on emergent tasks will be required. Without founding theories to explain these new issues, Japanese sociologists will not be able to determine effective means to resolve them.

> Concluding remarks

It appears that recent trends in Japanese sociology are partly in resonance with those in sociology globally. While the rapidly aging population and long-term economic stagnation during the early twenty-first century may be remarkable in Japanese society compared with other countries, I believe that research interests shifting from sociological theory to sociological methods and diversified research topics are common characteristics shared worldwide. Therefore, problems caused by such trends are not only observed in Japanese sociology but also in global sociology. This suggests that Japanese sociologists should cooperate with sociologists worldwide to overcome the problems that they are facing in the twenty-first century. ■

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> Manifesto

Concerning Global Crises and Radical Alternatives

by **ADELANTE** – Dialogue of Global Processes

| Credit: [Adelante](#), 2024.



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> The crises we face

- The world is spiralling into an abyss of multiple crises. Deep fissures divide humanity, and humans from the rest of nature. The currently dominant oppressive system is fundamentally flawed and has created and sustains these crises. This system's roots are in the structures and relations of class, colonialism, racism, patriarchy, capitalism, state domination, casteism and our human-centred focus. It is these roots, not only the symptoms manifested in the crises, that also need to be challenged and transformed.

- There has been a historical process of domination of both peoples and of the rest of nature by the cultural hegemony of authoritarian, imperialist or fascist regimes.

This has made entire societies disposable, and displaces and destroys different ways of knowing/being/acting/living.

- The dominant system, backed by today's military-industrial complex and capitalism, creates or furthers wars and conflicts between nation states, ethnicities and religious faiths, the worst consequences of which are faced by innocent people and the environment.

- Ecological crises, including biodiversity loss, climate change, pollution and toxification of the planet have brought the planet to the verge of a sixth mass extinction: the first to result from human actions and which in turn undermines the lives and livelihoods of billions of people.

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- “Development” approaches based on endless economic growth are inherently unsustainable, create false distinctions such as “developed,” “emergent” and “underdeveloped,” and encourage unhealthy and unsustainable patterns of consumption.

- The system that has created multiple crises is also giving us a flurry of “solutions” that only treat the symptoms, not the underlying causes, such as carbon trading, green growth, net-zero, geoengineering and other techno fixes and market approaches.

- The different aspects of these crises are intertwined. We therefore need responses that are also holistic, inter-sectional and integrated, and point to genuine, systemic alternatives.

> **People’s responses: resistance and alternatives**

- A massive groundswell of grassroots action and movements is rising in response to these crises. The movements articulate and demonstrate transformative processes that guide us towards a world that is pluralistic, democratic, decolonised, just, equitable/egalitarian, liberated, feminist, ecologically wise, peaceful, post-capitalist/post-developmental, biocultural, prosperous, solidarity practicing and radical love based. Each movement may have its own interpretation and understanding of such values and terms which can create a pluralism and diversity that are to be respected even as we weave ourselves together based on commonly held fundamental values and ethical beliefs.

- Indigenous peoples, grassroots communities, collectives of various kinds and individuals are practicing pathways of sustainable, equitable living that include agroecology, reclaiming the commons, community health, alternative learning and education, gender and sexual justice, radical democracy and autonomy, localised economies that prioritise relations of caring and sharing, worker-owned or -controlled production, sustaining or reviving a non-binary relationship with all of nature and its conservation by ecosystem-based communities, sustaining or reviving a diversity of cultures, languages, knowledge systems and ways of being, and other such options. Many of these are encompassed within worldviews that respect life, some being continuations of ancient and Indigenous traditions, and some arising as countertrends within modern industrial societies. However,

these initiatives are as yet too small or fragmented to acquire the critical mass necessary for wider transformations.

> **Our commitment to transformation**

To build towards deep transformation, we commit to:

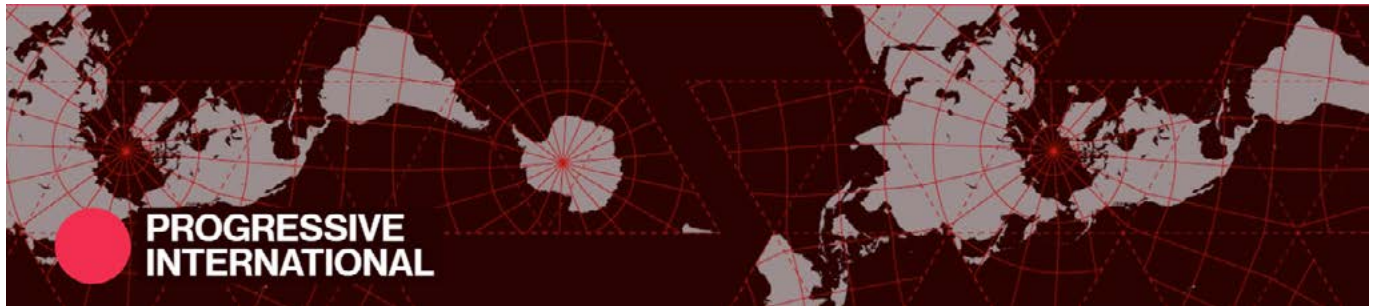
- Share and understand critical strategies for change and promote inspiring stories of transformation that is already in place.
- Contribute to a common struggle for disarmament and peace to create a just social and ecological transition.
- Explore and deepen our common positions, ethics and values, even as we celebrate and respect diversity and differences.
- Step into responsibility for political decision-making, most importantly through building people’s power on the ground. We act to affirm that this is power not to dominate (power over), but to transform positively (power to/with).
- Link movements of resistance and constructive alternatives to create the worlds that we want.
- Promote direct action on the ground, locally to globally, transcending nation-states to build solidarity and care between humans and non-humans everywhere.
- Extend our respect and care to the wider circle of life.
- Promote mass egalitarian regenerative technologies and convivial tools that are under democratic control.
- Build a common (but pluralistic, culturally diverse) dictionary and understanding of terms in various languages.
- Explore the extent to which systems of domination are embedded in our own habitual ways of organising and relating, and commit to the work of personal and collective healing that supports us towards more deeply connected ways of being.

While there are powerful people’s movements identifying and resisting the forces behind these crises, as well as practicing and promoting radical alternatives that are equitable and sustainable, we lack a coherent, combined response. We therefore commit ourselves to enabling such a concentration of forces working together across our communities, organisations and movements on communication, relationship building and collaboration. We do this in the spirit of democratic, non-hierarchical mobilisation, open to a pluriverse of ideologies, strategies, pathways and perspectives seeking progressive transformation towards the worlds we want and need. ■

Since November 2020, the [Global Tapestry of Alternatives](#) (GTA) started a dialogue amongst various global processes that are seeking systemic, fundamental transformations towards justice. These include, besides GTA: Global Dialogue Process; Global Green New Deal; Global Working Group Beyond Development; Grassroots to Global; Multiconvergence; Progressive International and Towards a New World Social Forum. This platform was named as ADELANTE in 2021 and has its own website with updates and resources: <https://adelante.global/>.

> Internationalism or Extinction

by **Progressive International**



Credit: [Progressive International](#), 2024.

At the inaugural Summit of the Progressive International held on September 2020, the Council adopted the following declaration.

I. Internationalism or Extinction

The crises of our century threaten the extinction of all life in all nations across all continents. Internationalism is not a luxury. It is a strategy for survival.

II. A Definition of Progress

Our mission is to build a planetary front of progressive forces. We define progressive as the aspiration to a world that is: democratic, decolonised, just, egalitarian, liberated, feminist, ecological, peaceful, post-capitalist, prosperous, plural, and bound by radical love.

III. Peoples of the World, Organize

We are workers, peasants, and peoples of the world rising up against the reactionary forces of authoritarian oligarchy. Our aim is international organization: to combine forces across borders in order to reclaim the planet as our own.

IV. We Build Infrastructure

Our mandate is to build the infrastructure for internationalism. The forces of progress remain fragmented, while wealth and power consolidate around the world. We build the scaffolding of a planetary front with the strength to fight and win.

V. Unity, Not Conformity

We seek unity through shared struggle. The present crisis demands the strategic alliance of all progressive forces. But coordination does not require submission. We aim to build a broad coalition, while making space for creative contention inside of it.

VI. Partnership by Mutual Power

We believe that partnership without mutual power is just another name for domination. In our work, we aim to rebalance rather than reproduce disparities of power across our coalition.

VII. Capitalism Is the Virus

We aspire to eradicate capitalism everywhere. We believe that exploitation, dispossession, and environmental destruction are written into the genetic code of capitalism. We do not support efforts to save this system, nor enable its expansion to all corners of the earth.

VIII. Internationalism Means Anti-Imperialism

Our internationalism stands against imperialism in all its forms: from war and sanctions to privatization and “structural adjustment”. We believe that these are not only tools of domination by some nations over others. They are also the tools of division to set the peoples of the world against each other.

IX. Language Is Power

We speak in many languages. Linguistic barriers strengthen class domination, white supremacy, and indigenous dispossession. We aim to transcend linguistic barriers to find our own common language of resistance.

X. Freedom at the Frontline

Our internationalism is intersectional: we believe that the layers of oppression sedimented by racial capitalism in the course of its imperial expansion demand that we center the front-line struggles for liberation at the base of global economy: for food, for land, for dignity, and for emancipation.

XI. An Internationalism of Liberation

We fight racism, casteism, and all forms of social domination. We recognize that white supremacy is an organizing principle of the world system. Our opposition to oppressive hierarchies is the foundation of our internationalism.

XII. Decolonisation Is Not a Metaphor

Our aim is to decolonise the planet. We do not settle for symbolic acts of decolonisation. Our demand is full reparations for past crimes and the immediate restoration of land, resources, and sovereignty to all the dispossessed peoples of the world.

XIII. Feminist Politics, Feminist Practice

We believe that no one is free in a system of gender oppression. Our aim is to break with the patriarchy while disrupting the binary structure of gender on which it relies. We direct our politics toward care, cooperation, and communal accountability.

XIV. Buenos Vivires

We do not measure progress with growth. The imperative of expansion is the engine of ecocide. We seek good ways of living, free from hunger and want, and we define our success by the quality of our collective coexistence.

XV. No Justice, No Peace

Our aim is lasting peace. But peace can only last in the security of social justice. We work to dismantle the war machine, and replace it with a diplomacy of peoples based on cooperation and coexistence.

XVI. Revolution, Not Regime Change

We support popular movements to transform society and reclaim the state. But we stand against attempts to overthrow regimes in order to protect the interests of capital and assist the advance of empire.

XVII. Winning Elections Is Not Enough

Our mission is to build popular power on a planetary scale. Elections are opportunities to transform politics and turn popular demands into government policy. But we know that winning elections is not enough to fulfill our mission.

XVIII. Power from Pluralism

Our coalition is bound by a shared vision of collective liberation. We do not import this vision or impose one program over the rest. Instead, we weave together our needs, knowledge, and policy priorities to build a common program that derives power from pluralism.

XIX. Relationships Are the Foundation

Our internationalism is intimate. New technologies promised community and connection, but sowed discord and disillusionment instead. We believe that we cannot succeed unless we know and trust one another on equal terms.

XX. Dialogue is Not Enough

Our aim is collective action. We are not satisfied with setting up a social network. Our activities prepare us for planetary mobilization, matching the scale of our crises to the scale of the actions that we mount against them.

XXI. Not For Profit, Not By Profit

We fund our activities exclusively through donations and member contributions. We do not accept money from for-profit institutions and the representatives of fossil fuel companies, pharmaceutical companies, big tech companies, big banks, private equity firms, hedge funds, agribusinesses, and the arms industry.

XXII. We Are Not an NGO

Our aim is solidarity, not charity. We believe that real change comes from movements of people, not the benevolence of philanthropy. We are accountable only to those movements and the communities from which they grow.

XXIII. Fight on All Fronts

Our coalition reflects the diversity of struggle in the world. We welcome unions, parties, movements, publications, research centres, neighbourhood associations, and individual activists in their lonely struggle. Together, this coalition is greater than the sum of its parts, and powerful enough to remake the world.

XXIV. From Each, and to Each

Our model of membership is simple: from each, according to ability; and to each, according to need. We expect members to participate in the construction of our common front in whichever ways they can. And we strive to support members in all the ways that their struggle demands.

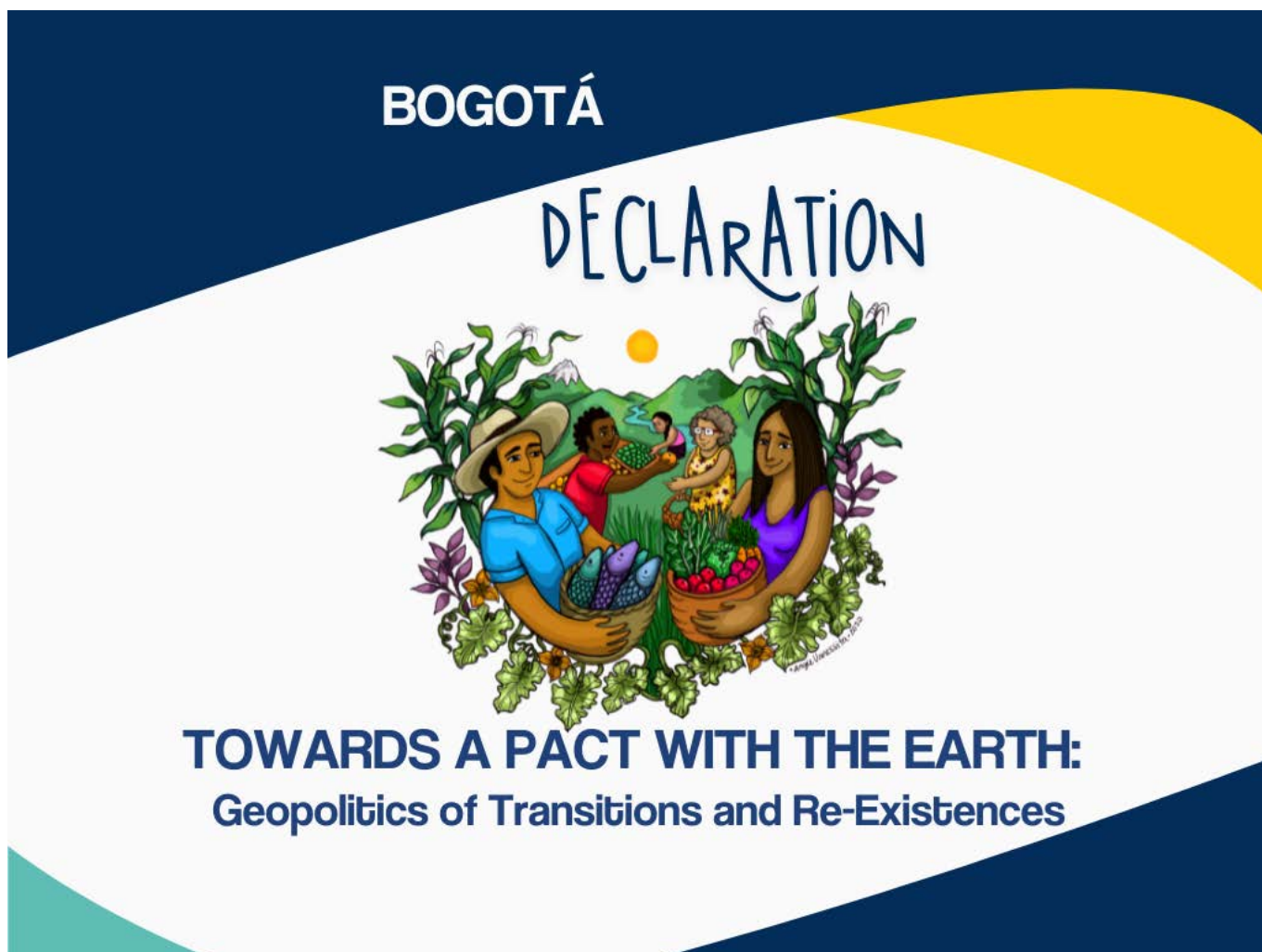
XXV. Solidarity Is Not a Slogan

We believe that solidarity is an action. The expression of sympathy for our allies is common. Our task is to recognize their struggle as our own, to organize our communities to take part in that struggle, and to join forces across borders in a common defense of people and planet. ■

The Declaration was adopted following the Inaugural Summit of Progressive International held on September 2020. More information on the movement and its initiatives can be found at <https://progressive.international>.

> Bogotá Declaration: Towards a Pact with the Earth

by **Ecosocial and Intercultural Pact of the South**



Credit: [Pacto Ecosocial e Intercultural del Sur](#), 2023.

After the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the “new normal” has been imposed with signs of chaos and instability. This new global status quo reflects the worsening of several interconnected crises (social, economic, political, ecological, health, and geopolitical), which reinforce each other while having a civilizational dimension. With great concern, we also observe a weakening of institutions and democratic practices worldwide, with a parallel strengthening of far-right ideologies and authoritarianism, as well as the perpetuation of a culture of war at various levels, deeply associated with capitalism, colonialism, and the exacerbation of patriarchy and racism.

> Against the new culture of war

In the present historical moment, we must distinguish the different levels of war currently being fought.

The first of these is the war against life and Nature. Territories are being devastated by militarization and increasing violence, which is expressed with particular intensity on the bodies of women and defenders of Nature, especially when they belong to Indigenous or native peoples, or racially and ethnically marginalized communities, particularly Afro-descendants. In global and geopolitical terms, one of these wars, the invasion of Ukraine by

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Russia, exacerbated the energy, humanitarian, and food crises, while reviving the nuclear threat in a context of inter-imperial rivalry.

Likewise, the global advance of patriarchal, racist, transphobic, and xenophobic far-right ideologies, together with the increasing control of political systems by money and the rules of the World Trade Organization, have imposed the full primacy of capital – particularly in the financial, hydrocarbon, agribusiness, arms, automotive, corporate media, and pharmaceutical sectors, among others – over the rights of peoples and life itself. The same productive sectors that most clearly reflect this control by capital also bear the greatest responsibility in the war against life that characterizes neoliberal capitalism. Therefore, the struggle for a just ecosocial transition necessarily involves the defense of democracy in all its dimensions, from the institutional, international, national, and regional political spheres to the construction of forms of self-management and territorial and local autonomy.

Secondly, war is contributing to the exacerbation of both traditional and new forms of extractivism associated with the corporate “green transition.” What is now new lies in the fact that the energy transition of the Global North towards supposedly “clean” energy is expressed through increased pressure on the Global South to extract cobalt and lithium for the production of high-tech batteries, as well as other strategic minerals for the transition. This pressure is also evident in the demand for balsa wood needed to build wind turbine blades, or the competition for land surface areas for large-scale solar farms and new infrastructure for hydrogen megaprojects.

In recent years, different Green Deal proposals have proliferated; they are both diverse and heterogeneous. However, in general, they have become a framework of political-discursive confluence in the Global North to reduce carbon emissions and promote supposedly “equitable” and “sustainable” economic growth. Climate justice is often at the center of these Green Pacts, allocating funds for compensation to communities that have historically suffered negative environmental impacts. But too often, climate justice is restricted to a domestic vision. In its eagerness to transition to renewable energy, the Global North rarely considers the multiple impacts of this transition on the Global South.

This is how what Breno Bringel and Maristella Svampa call the “[decarbonisation consensus](#)” emerges: a process that, although it advocates a change in energy sources (from fossil fuels to “renewable” energy), deepens existing inequalities and continues the commodification of Nature. It is a consensus that aims to achieve decarbonization without changing the metabolic profile of society – patterns of production, consumption, circulation of goods, and waste generation – but rather involves an intensifica-

tion of the exploitation of natural goods within the framework of an ideology of indefinite economic growth.

Given this scenario, we reiterate our claims recently presented in the [South-South Manifesto for an Ecosocial Energy Transition](#). We also reaffirm the urgent need for a change of course in Latin America, and in the whole world, as demanded through the voices of the peoples in resistance and the recent outbreaks across different latitudes of our region. A superficial change, as proposed by hegemonic actors, is not enough. Currently, even large corporations are beginning to talk about a “just transition” and present the “decarbonization consensus” as an end in and of itself, concealing the fact that it reproduces the same logic of accumulation, dispossession, and exploitation. We need to unmask and strongly oppose the new advancements of “green capitalism,” committing ourselves to a radical transformation that recognizes and paves the way for other modes of existence in balance and reciprocity with the fabric of life.

It is urgent to reduce carbon emissions, but also to question the current social metabolism of capital. The hegemonic “transition” programs are based on corporate, technocratic, neocolonial, and even unsustainable conceptions that do not advocate structural transformations, let alone incorporate the planet’s natural and ecological limits. We at the Ecosocial Pact question these approaches and recognize the need to root socio-ecological transformation in a logic of global justice that is both critical and alternative to hegemonic proposals for ecological transition.

> Our principles and agendas

In Bogota, during our first in-person meeting following the COVID-19 pandemic, we identified with the following principles: Principles of Equality, Justice, and Social Redistribution; Principles of Care, Interdependence, and Sustainability of Life; Principles of Reparation and Reciprocity; and Principles of Democracy, Self-Determination, Plurinationality, Interculturality, and Interspecies Ethics.

We also reaffirm our objectives and propose continuity in the following themes and agendas for action:

1. We are committed to **giving centrality to the care paradigm in the organization of our societies.**

We refer to all forms of care: interpersonal care, self-care, and the care of non-human beings who share this planet with us in interdependence. Care is fundamental for restoring relational and ecosystemic balances. All of us require care at certain moments or phases of our lives, an aspect systematically overlooked by the patriarchal/neoliberal narrative of the autonomous individual subject. Care, as a key aspect of well-being, should be actively assumed and shared by all members of society, regardless of gen-



der, deconstructing its attribution as a supposedly feminine task. Thus, within the dynamics of patriarchy, women (especially poor, racialized women; indigenous women; and those who are marginalized) have assumed almost total responsibility for care, with an overload of work in the area of reproduction that affects living conditions. Care should be recognized and valued as a set of essential tasks for life and happiness, as became evident again during the pandemic. This does not automatically translate into remuneration and incorporation into the market or the state sphere, as the fact that many forms of care exist outside the realm of capital accumulation is a seed for the construction of societies beyond capitalist logics. Assuming collectively or in community some aspects of care and life reproduction is the basis for the construction of the commons, as shown by many experiences in Latin America. This does not mean that states should not generate care policies that strengthen these community spaces, assume responsibility for more specialized care or promote care as a central aspect of social well-being.

2. We consider it essential to address the **ecological debt and the e(x)ternal debts** in the framework of a just ecosocial transition from the Global South.

No climate justice or socio-ecological transformation is possible without including reparations for and abolition of these debts. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the debt problem and the urgent need for real solutions, not just temporary or very short-term relief. We understand that it is necessary to **question and rethink the current geopolitics of ecosocial transitions** via integral strategies that guarantee horizons of dignified life for all in terms of integral, ontological justice, and reparations. Far from reducing geopolitical gaps, hegemonic transition proposals run the serious risk of deepening colonial and ecological debts with the Global South. To make progress on the path towards lasting solutions, it is necessary, though not sufficient, to demand the cancellation of external debts of Global South countries, citizen-led audits, and repeated denunciations of violence and corruption related to external debt. In summary, our proposal seeks to systematize those contributions that see the issue of ecological debt reparations and the cancellation of foreign debts as an opportunity to rethink the reorganization of the international financial system, based on patterns of environmental and geopolitical justice.

3. From the beginning of our actions, as an Ecosocial and Intercultural Pact, we have insisted that **no ecosocial transition is possible without social justice and environmental justice being seen as two sides of the same coin, aiming at a profound socioeconomic transformation**. In the short term, however, some transitional proposals are necessary, including the introduction of a **universal basic income** that places the issue

of citizenship center stage and is based on **progressive tax systems** for its feasibility and proper functioning. It should not be forgotten that Latin American countries have a regressive tax system, based on indirect or consumption taxes which primarily affect the most vulnerable. Large fortunes, inheritances, environmental damage, and financial income are all tax sources that receive little or very low presence in national tax systems. The most recent data indicate that tax evasion in Latin America costs close to 300 billion dollars in lost revenues (6.1% of the regional GDP), and that 27% of wealth is located in tax havens. Meanwhile, the COVID-19 crisis has further intensified **inequalities**. In our region, the richest 10% of individuals concentrate 55% of the wealth. Logically, wealth concentration is correlated to pollution, since the richest 10% of the world's population emits almost half of all greenhouse gases. Introducing a universal basic income is a necessary strategy for redistribution and poverty alleviation, but must be part of a more comprehensive transformation towards the decommodification of life, expanding free public infrastructures and the commons.

4. We know that no country can save itself alone. "Climate nationalism" and discourses of "national sovereignty" often conceal the deeper problems of an ecological crisis. In order for necessary policies to have a real impact on populations, bring about changes in the balance of social forces, and tackle the major challenges of our historical time, **new forms of political dialogue and regional cooperation must be developed, involving a significant part of civil society**. We defend **plurinationality** and **sovereign regional integration**, prioritizing local economies and aiming for selective decoupling from the global economy. Following the proposals of different Latin American organizations, we believe that we must move towards the construction of a **Regional Fiscal Pact** that fundamentally reconfigures the current fiscal system in all jurisdictions in an equitable direction, opening the door to urgently needed social and environmental reforms that can reduce the many and persistent inequalities. Without this, there is no possible path to a just and comprehensive ecosocial transition.

5. Necessary transitional policies in the short term must be considered alongside the mode of production. We must **problematize the current industrialization processes** in Latin America and the consequences of being the factory of Global North countries. The establishment of true sacrifice zones with high toxicity is facilitated by industrial development in specific areas of countries like Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, and Chile, not just by the primary export-oriented extractivist model. The risk of this being extended to more countries is high in view of the dispute between China and the United States for "natural resources" and labor in Latin America, which will continue to demand raw materials and exacerbate the exploitation of commodities.

6. This topic also leads us to consider what alternative production proposals would allow us to move towards other responses that consider **interspecies ethics** and question the power relations characterized by domination and exploitation of non-human sentient beings. This current model is legitimized by an anthropocentric view that categorizes non-human living beings as inferior and transforms them into objects, products, and private property at the service of human beings and the capitalist system. An example of this are the livestock, fishing, pharmaceutical, tourism, and textile industries that exploit animals as a workforce or transform them into products, prioritizing their economic performance while disregarding their quality of life and dignity.

7. **Ecosocial transitions cannot be limited to the energy issue.** It is essential to enact a structural transformation of the energy system, but also of the productive and urban model, as well as of the links with Nature: deconcentrate, deprivatize, decommodify, decentralize, depatriarchalize, de-hierarchize, deracialize, repair, and heal. To achieve this, we must disconnect our economic, social, and cultural structures from fossil fuels, the mandate of Nature exploitation, and developmentalist and El Dorado-inspired imaginary. We must understand the current socio-ecological crisis not only as an acceleration of climate change, but also as a crisis of diversity (species extinction) and an unsustainable food regime.

8. **Energy is a right and energy democracy is a horizon for sustaining life networks.** Ecosocial justice should aim to eliminate energy poverty and entails a dismantling of power relations that continue to prioritize access for a privileged group of society. In a short time, fossil fuels will be stranded or obsolete assets. In a just energy transition horizon, leaving fossil fuels underground and “deescalating” the processes of hydrocarbon exploitation (in its new and old forms) imply a rupture of meaning to redefine Nature as something other than a mere provider of resources.

9. **Effective decarbonization is necessary, but it should move away from commodification and not consolidate new forms of extractivism and sacrifice zones in the Global South.** We must be attentive to “false solutions,” as shown by the limits and ambivalences of renewable energies (lithium and minerals for transition) and all emission compensation schemes. This includes the consensus reached by corporations and states in spaces such as the COP to implement controversial energy models for the Global South that include green hydrogen, smart agriculture, carbon markets, geoengineering, and other proposals aimed at maintaining the current energy power relations between the Global North and the Global South.

10. We believe that a **just ecosocial transition, as a process of comprehensive transformation, is not and**

cannot be a promise for the future. Transitions are already happening via a multitude of experiences in communities and territories in both rural and urban areas, as well as through territorial resistances around the world against the continuity of the hegemonic model and false solutions. We urgently need to map out and strengthen these processes of re-existence linked to community energy, agro-ecological projects, urban gardens, distributed generation, and alternative economies, to name but a few.

11. A central pillar of the transition is to **promote agro-ecology** to transform the agri-food system through the creation and promotion of green belts of ecological agriculture in cities and towns, thereby generating employment and guaranteeing healthy, safe, and cheap food. Furthermore, this promotes autonomy and food sovereignty through production and distribution systems aimed at empowering local agroecological markets used by small farmers and solidary producers that foster an associative and community culture and citizen (co-)responsibility for production, participatory certification or guarantee systems, and consumption.

12. We live in cities planned by and for real estate speculation (the other side of this coin is the housing emergency and lack of green spaces) and dominated by the dictatorship of the automobile (with insufficient and overcrowded public transport). This characteristic has placed urban life under the spotlight and underlines the need for a radical change in the way we live in metropolises. **We must ruralize urbanity, especially in large cities where the connection with Nature is practically non-existent.** Through the Ecosocial and Intercultural Pact of the South, we propose the “right to a city with ecological justice” to change the way we live, feed ourselves, move, and relate to each other in urban areas. To achieve this, we advocate a new type of ecological and democratic urbanism that is capable of producing effective socio-environmental changes in: water metabolism (equitable access to water and water governance), the dynamics of urban flows (better waste and pollution management, sustainable forms of mobility and local healthy food production by stimulating urban agriculture and direct contact with small-scale producers), and urban infrastructure (accessible, ecological, and dignified housing, and urbanization approaches that address socio-spatial segregation and the cycle of poverty, inequality, and violence).

13. While local commitment to the transformation for life, the strengthening of autonomy, and the demand for states to respect and guarantee these legally, culturally, territorially, and budget-wise are a necessary condition, **they need to be expanded and strengthened at different scales (regional, national, Latin American, and international).** To achieve this, it is essential that we continue to move forward with the identification and defiance of common enemies, while also identifying convergent discurs-

sive and political frameworks for transformative struggles. Internationalism and an exchange of experiences between different regions of the world are fundamental to avoid political isolation and provide stronger global responses. In this process, it is important to identify the different types of allies in transformative struggles, including actors at different governmental levels, but always respecting the protagonism of eco-territorial struggles.

14. Finally, we are convinced that a fundamental part of the Ecosocial and Intercultural Pact of the South is the legal recognition of the **Rights of Nature**. In other words, human beings must recognize Nature as a subject of rights (and not as a mere object) with which to coexist harmoniously, respecting its rhythms and capacities. This also implies moving towards an **ethics of care**, which, within the framework of relational ontologies and the new climate challenges, must also be defined as an **interspecies ethics**, which contemplates the pluriverses, our being in and with other human and non-human sentient beings.

In summary, our aim is to contribute to the construction of a regional and global agenda oriented towards truly just transitions, which require participation and popular imagination, as well as intersectionality between the struggles of different generations and types, social and intercultural groups, feminists, and environmentalists. This

will undoubtedly involve not only an in-depth debate on all these issues, but also the building of permanent political North–South and South–South dialogues, together with other geopolitical bases, based on a redefinition of multilateralism in terms of solidarity, reciprocity, equality, interdependence, and eco-dependence.

With an open sensitivity to the processes of change underway in our region – with bursts of hope and new popular impulses – but also aware of the weight of retrograde and oligarchic forces, **we at the Ecosocial and Intercultural Pact of the South will continue to promote protests and proposals, criticism and alternatives, resistances and re-existences in the Pluriverse**. To do so, we have resumed the relational narratives and horizon concepts that have been forged in recent decades through different struggles and always standing alongside them: the rights of Nature, good living, redistributive justice, care, just transitions, autonomy, post-extractivism, eco-territorial feminisms, food sovereignty, and autonomy.

We do not defend just any Pact. Ours is not the hegemonic Green Pact of agreements and deals among the dominant actors, but a Pact with the Earth, from and for the Global South. It is a Pact understood as a commitment to other ways of being and existing in the world. ■

The Bogotá Declaration was drafted following the Annual Assembly of the Ecosocial Pact of the South held in Bogotá, Colombia, in March 2023. More information about the Ecosocial Pact of the South can be found on its [website](#) or on its [X](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) networks.

> Manifesto for Socio-Ecological Alternatives in Nigeria

by **Nigeria Socio-Ecological Alternatives Convergences**



| Credit: Breno Bringel, Abuja, Nigeria, 2024.

Nigeria is at the front line of key social and ecological threats. In the last few decades, the challenges the country faces have increased tremendously, manifesting via multiple layers of impact that threaten the well-being and even the survival of the Nigerian people. Although the country has enjoyed one of the best climates and most diverse ecosystems in the world, this immense natural endowment now stands at a critical tipping point on account of accentuating climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, and other ecological damage. Decades of reckless and poorly regulated mineral extraction, systematic environmental degradation in the name of “urbanization” and “industrialization,” poor policy development and implementation, and the growing impact of climate change have combined to present the country with ecological threats of existential proportions. On all fronts, ecosystems are deteriorating, communities are in peril, and the future is uncertain.

Despite the manifest nature of these threats, Nigerian authorities at the federal, state, and local levels remain unperturbed and continue to permit practices that accelerate reckless extractivism and systematic destruction of the natural environment, to the detriment of local people. The stark reality that confronts the Nigerian state and its people is that something deliberate, fundamental, and radical must be done to check the current and emerging impacts of the socio-ecological crisis.

The Charter that we present here is a bold call for a profound overhaul of Nigeria’s socio-ecological landscape. It offers a vision and blueprint for a sustainable, just, and equitable socio-ecological order that places the highest value on the well-being of people and the protection of the natural environment.

The challenges we face are unprecedented. Forests have largely disappeared from all over the country. The air is increasingly noxious. Water sources are heavily contaminated. The Niger Delta, once a vibrant ecosystem, has long been associated with hydrocarbon pollution of ecocidal proportions. Desertification is rampant, and droughts have become commonplace. Waterbodies are shrinking and disappearing. Floods are more severe and regular. Coastal sea levels are rising fast and engulfing communities. Agricultural yields are declining. It is therefore imperative that we act with determination and urgency at this time, and this Charter outlines a plan to confront the most urgent of these challenges.

Our vision is of a Nigeria where ecological integrity, social justice, and economic well-being coexist. We must give birth to a new Nigeria where the rights of nature are respected, where communities have control over their resources and enjoy resource democracy, and where everyone has access to clean air, water, and a healthy environment. This manifesto outlines a path towards this vision, rooted in the principles

of environmental justice, participatory democracy, and sustainable development. We envision a Nigeria where Nigerians drive transformations that occur in their environment.

> Core principles of the Nigeria Socio-Ecological Alternatives Charter

This Charter is anchored on the following core principles and ideological precepts:

- **Ecological Justice.** This principle recognizes the disproportionate impact of environmental degradation and climate change on people in poor and marginalized communities and pushes for the recognition of this disproportionality in national and global environmental and climate change responses.
- **People Participation.** This principle emphasizes the emergence of active and resilient communities that are empowered to participate in all decision-making processes that affect their lives and ecological wellbeing.
- **Sustain-Ability.** This principle recognizes the resilience and know-how of indigenous peoples and promotes their abilities, culture, and skills in developing sustainable long-term ecological solutions and practices that protect the environment and promote further sustainable practices.
- **Accountability.** This principle highlights the need to hold corporations and government entities accountable for their ecological footprints. It is founded on the firm belief that corporations and governments must comply with established regulations and principles of doing no harm, face penalties when they are in violation of these, and make reparation for any damage their activities have caused.
- **Solidarity and Partnership.** This principle recognizes the value of fostering unity and cooperation among diverse communities and movements across the world with the overall aim of building strong, vibrant, and united forces for ecological transformation and protection of the planet.

> Charter of Demands

1. Drought and Desertification

In recent decades, states in northern Nigeria have experienced increasing droughts. These prolonged periods of lower-than-average rainfall which fails to meet water requirements for crops and livestock, have resulted in a dire outlook for the overall socio-economic well-being of people. Being predominantly farmers, the indigenous people in the affected areas suffer significant income reductions due to failed crops and livestock deaths.

Drought also manifests via severe health risks that can dangerously impact indigenous populations. Water stress and a lack of adequate nutrition lead to health concerns

such as malnutrition, particularly among vulnerable groups, including children and the elderly. The overall poverty and precariousness engendered by drought-induced crop failures and water shortages force rural populations to migrate, triggering conflicts and creating socio-economic challenges.

The effects of climate change, overgrazing, deforestation, and unsustainable land use practices together with prolonged exposure to drought has brought about desertification in several states in northern Nigeria. This results in the loss of arable land, compromising food security and livelihoods. Records indicate that desertification has already affected about 75% of land in the front-line states, which amounts to about 43% of the total land area in Nigeria. It is also estimated that the desert expands from the north-east to the northwest of Nigeria by 600 meters annually. It is equally estimated that about 50% of the waterbodies in northern Nigeria have shrunk significantly on account of drought and desertification. The shrinkage of Lake Chad has been partially attributed to these same root causes.

It is vital that the government takes immediate and appropriate actions to ensure that the impacts of drought and desertification on vulnerable people are mitigated, and that other policy measures are taken to reverse the trend.

In line with this, the people demand: afforestation and reforestation initiatives, support for community adaptation strategies, environmentally sustainable land management, and water conservation projects.

2. Floods

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), flooding is the most common and recurring disaster in Nigeria. Since at least 2012, Nigeria has experienced recurring and increasingly severe floods, which impact communities across the country with devastating consequences. The 2012 floods were among the most significant in recent history, affecting over 30 of Nigeria's 36 states, displacing millions of people, and causing extensive damage to homes, infrastructure, and farmland. This event marked an intensification of the ecological challenges the country continues to face.

In subsequent years, the pattern of severe flooding has persisted, with major incidents occurring almost annually. The floods are often attributed to heavy and prolonged rainfall, poor urban drainage systems, deforestation, and the release of water from dams. Those in 2018 and 2020 were particularly destructive, affecting large areas and leading to substantial economic losses.

The impact on Nigerian communities has been profound. Floods have led to continued loss of life, displacement of families, and destruction of critical infrastructure, including roads, bridges, and schools. The agricultural sector has been severely affected, with farmland submerged, crops



destroyed, and livestock lost, leading to economic hardship for farmers and contributing to national food shortages. Additionally, health risks have increased due to water-borne diseases and the disruption of clean water supplies.

Despite these impacts intensifying, the government continues to fail to design responses that are both effective and sustainable. The response of authorities has largely been to provide skeletal emergency relief and early warnings. These measures have often been inefficient and insufficient to fully mitigate the impacts of floods. When flood warnings are broadcast, there is no corresponding effort to support communities in need of relocation and whose survival is threatened.

In line with this, the people demand: flood control infrastructure, protection of wetlands, relocation of highly affected communities, economic assistance, moving beyond simple early warnings, and responses to climate change.

3. Deforestation

Nigeria has one of the world's highest deforestation rates. According to the United Nations, an estimated 3.7% of its forests are destroyed each year. The primary causes are clearing land for rapid agricultural expansion and logging for timber, both legal and illegal, which are chiefly linked to corruption and ineffective law enforcement. Nigeria's forest cover has drastically reduced from about 40% in the 1960s to less than 10%. With the increasing rate of deforestation, the scenario has become much worse today. Deforestation threatens biodiversity, contributes to climate change, and disrupts water cycles. The loss of forest cover not only negatively impacts wildlife, but also local communities who depend on forests for their livelihoods.

New threats against the forests have emerged recently. Increasingly, forests in Nigeria are being perceived as another source of revenue generating income to fill the coffers of states. This has resulted in an unprecedented push to cut down forests for their monetary value. It is also noteworthy that in recent times, global efforts to mitigate climate change have resulted in a new wave of forest "commodification" and "grabbing" for their value in generating illusory carbon credits. The value of forests cannot be assessed in monetary terms without falling into the trap of believing that nature cannot be protected unless there is a financial value attached to it.

In line with this, the people demand: community initiatives to protect forests, an end to the financialization of nature, an end to plantation extension, and reforestation.

4. Water Rights

Billions of people around the world still lack access to clean water, with vulnerable groups such as women, children, and the underclass in society having to suffer disproportionately and spend exorbitant amounts to secure

this necessity. In many instances, this lack and scarcity leads to the deterioration of public health, security, and the overall welfare of people. The crisis is worse in developing countries, including Nigeria, where economic constraints, infrastructural deficiencies, neo-colonial machinations, environmental challenges, and systemic failures of governance combine to make water rights a pressing national and environmental emergency and a clear manifestation of the stark inequalities in society. In Nigeria, there is an ongoing debate over whether water should be regarded as a public good or an economic commodity, in the struggle between public ownership and private control of water resources.

It is important to note that the colonial imposition of capitalist structures established the initial conditions that have eventually resulted in the water challenges now being experienced in Nigeria. Those policies facilitated the exploitation of natural resources and labor, setting a precedent for post-colonial policies that continue to manage water as a business resource. The stress placed on water supplies is being exacerbated by the impacts of climate change and widespread pollution, especially as a result of hydrocarbon extraction and mining.

The people boldly proclaim that water rights are ethical, social, and justice issues. We note that Nigeria is a signatory to the United Nations recognition of the universal right to water and sanitation (Resolution 64/292 of 2010). Moreover, the pollution of waterbodies in Nigeria is a violation of the rights of nature which recognizes rivers, forests, and ecosystems as entities with rights.

In accordance with this, the people demand: the decentralizing of water management, resistance against the commercialization of water, recognition of access to clean water as a human right, strict sanctions for polluting water, and recognition of the rights of nature.

5. Biodiversity Conservation and Ecosystem Restoration

Nigeria has diverse ecosystems, ranging from rainforests and savannas to coastal mangroves and wetlands. These ecosystems support a wide array of microorganisms, plants, and animals including many species found nowhere else on earth. Nigeria is home to over 864 species of birds, 117 amphibians, 203 reptiles, 775 fish, 285 mammals, 4,715 vascular plants, and many undocumented species.

Nigeria's biodiversity faces serious threats from industrial agriculture (characterized by excessive use of agrochemicals, excessive tillage, monocultures, etc.), deforestation, soil degradation, pollution, overexploitation of natural resources, and climate change. Other risks include those posed by overpopulation, rapid urbanization, industrialization, poor economic development, and inefficient laws and policies on biodiversity conservation.

In response to declining agricultural yields, the government has permitted the adoption of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and chemical fertilizers and pesticides which further destroy biodiversity and the environment. Over the years, reliance on agrochemicals in the Nigerian agricultural sector has been on the increase, with more than 80% of farmers in Nigeria currently using inorganic pesticides and fertilizers. Farmers are unaware of the composition of these pesticides and often they do not apply them according to the specifications.

The people demand the adoption and promotion of agroecology as a solution to the biodiversity challenges the country is facing. Agroecology is a holistic and integrated approach that simultaneously applies ecological and social concepts and principles to the design and management of agriculture and food systems. It optimizes the interactions between plants, animals, humans, and the environment, while also addressing the need for socially equitable food systems within which people can exercise choice over what they eat as well as how and where it is produced.

In line with this, the people demand: a transition to agroecology, an increase in support for small-holder farmers, domestication of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the adoption of the precautionary principle, protecting reserved areas, and the removal of patent rights from all plant seeds and food.

6. Mining and Solid Minerals

While mining for minerals such as tin, columbite, tantalite, wolframite, lead, zinc, gold, coal, etc. is widespread in Nigeria, its contribution to the Nigerian economy is rather insignificant. The mining of minerals in Nigeria accounts for only 0.3% of its GDP. In recent years, however, the Nigerian government has actively sought to diversify its economy beyond reliance on oil and gas by revitalizing the mining sector. Key developments in this sector include a range of initiatives, such as regulatory reforms, that create a legal framework for mining, like the Nigerian Minerals and Mining Act of 2007 and the Nigerian Mining Regulation of 2011.

In recent times, artisanal small-scale mining has become more prominent in the sector. This essentially involves collecting and refining metals and minerals from secondary and primary ores using crude techniques. This informal, poverty-driven activity is environmentally damaging and poses serious health and safety risks for workers and communities. Whether artisanal mining or large-scale government sanctioned mining activities, the negative impacts are the same. Mining activities generate various impacts on the environment including land degradation, erosion, ecological disturbance, destruction of natural flora, pollution of air, land and water, health risks, and radiation hazards.

One of the major global problems of the exploitation of solid minerals and mining is the climate change effect. In

their radioactive decay processes some minerals spontaneously disintegrate, radiating and giving out excess energy capable of negatively affecting the global environmental temperature. The exploitation and mining of solid minerals also produces harmful gases such as methane, which can lead to fires breaking out and harm to the environment.

Solid minerals exploitation and mining involve massive clearing of crustal vegetation and plants. This exposes bare land, making it more susceptible to desert encroachment and negatively affecting people, animals, plants, agricultural productivity, land use/planning, and particularly endangered species. The impact of land degradation includes weathering, erosion, gully formation, and mass movements, which are significant challenges associated with solid mineral exploitation and mining. These issues can stem from mine tailings, waste dumps, uncontrolled excavation, abandoned mining pits, and the failure to restore mined land.

Mining activities also have negative impacts on people's health, lives, and cultural behavior due to the introduction into the environment of toxic, carcinogenic, and otherwise harmful metals, as well as mine dumps and tailings. These pollutants contaminate the air, water, and soil, making them unsafe for humans, animals, and plants. In Zamfara, where gold mining occurs, exposure to mercury can harm the central nervous system and cause issues such as eye, skin, and stomach irritation; respiratory problems; insomnia; irritability; indecision; headaches; weakness; and weight loss.

To address these ills, the people demand: enforcement of mining regulations, requiring the free, prior, and informed consent of affected indigenous people; proper research into mineral deposits in Nigeria; adherence to international best practices, including decommissioning and mining-free zones.

7. Energy Transition

Since the global energy sector is the largest source of global greenhouse gas emissions, responsible for about 73% of total emissions, the energy transition ought to focus on shifting from sources of energy responsible for emissions to renewable sources like wind, solar, and hydro. The aim must be to cut CO₂ emissions at source, in order to significantly mitigate the impacts of climate change. Nigeria has joined other countries in setting targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. These targets are outlined in various national frameworks, including a target of hitting Net-Zero Emissions by 2060, captured in the National Determined Contributions (NDCs) of 2021.

The energy transition is critical for achieving a sustainable future. However, there are a number of concerns which the national conversation on energy transition does not ad-

dress. The first is that the need to transition is an issue of justice. Nigeria and other countries suffering the worst impacts of climate change have contributed the least to producing the historical emissions that have caused the climate crisis. In this respect, those countries with the greatest historical emissions must bear the largest responsibility for the transition, including funding it. Our approach to the transition must therefore be through the lens of justice: it must address historical harm and create room for redress, as well as meeting the energy needs of communities.

An important difficulty Nigeria faces is securing energy for cooking. Fuelwood is a major source of energy for many Nigerians, with over 70% of households relying on it for cooking and heating. This reliance is particularly high in rural areas where alternative energy sources are less accessible. The use of fuelwood contributes to deforestation, as trees are cut down for firewood. Deforestation in turn reduces the number of trees available to absorb CO₂, thus increasing atmospheric carbon levels.

It is important to be mindful that the quest for so-called transition minerals to drive renewable energy sources must not reinforce the same inequalities and abuses which the extraction of fossil fuels engendered. Nigeria must consciously avoid getting locked into another energy pathway which recreates the same exploitative relations of production and expands sacrificial zones across the nation.

In line with this, the people demand: inclusive policy development and stakeholder engagement, job transitioning, compensation, environmental remediation, and access to clean energy.

8. Oil and Gas Extraction

Since 1956, crude oil has been extracted in commercial quantities from the Niger Delta nonstop. From a few initial onshore oil wells, the business of extraction has expanded tremendously with active oil extraction sites throughout the Niger Delta, and Lagos state. On account of the vast oil and gas exploration and exploitation activities, the Niger Delta is one massive oil and gas field. The region also accounts for a substantial portion of global gas output with proven reserves of 192 trillion cubic feet. The extraction of oil and gas from the region has created immense opportunities for Nigeria to earn huge revenues at the national and sub-national levels.

Despite massive hydrocarbon earnings, conditions in communities within the Niger Delta where extraction takes place are unbelievably horrific. The over 40 million people who live in this oil and gas producing region have not benefited from the huge amounts of resources pumped from beneath their lands, rivers, and creeks. Rather than improving welfare, infrastructure, healthcare, education, and security, revenues from oil and gas have instead driven

an unusual paradigm of poverty, conflict, repression, and underdevelopment.

The major problems of the region have been created by reckless hydrocarbon extraction activities. For instance, of the 3.5 billion cubic feet of associated gas estimated to be produced annually in Nigeria, 2.5 billion cubic feet (70%) is burnt off in gas flares. The flaring of associated gas continues not because there are no alternatives for managing the gas in a way that would have less environmental impact, but because oil companies and the Nigerian government have consistently refused to stop it. Oil companies in particular consider it cheaper and more convenient to continue flaring gas than to establish the infrastructure required to manage it. Deadlines to end gas flaring have continued to be shifted from 1979 to 2030 and perhaps even 2060. Even after a court judgment declared gas flaring illegal, the government prefers the paltry fines paid by oil companies to taking any real action to end gas flaring.

The movement of hydrocarbon products from various points of extraction to terminals from where they are transported to Europe, the USA and elsewhere has resulted in up to 7,000 kilometers of pipes being buried beneath the land, swamps, and rivers of the Niger Delta, sometimes right across people's farms and backyards. Some of these pipes have been buried for more than 40 years; with alarming regularity and chiefly on account of age and corrosion, the pipes rupture releasing crude oil that destroys crops, poisons rivers, pollutes streams and displaces whole communities. It gets worse: sometimes the ruptured pipes blow out in huge fires that burn for days, incinerating whole communities and their livelihoods.

After nearly 70 years of oil extraction with all the ensuing devastating impacts for the environment, livelihoods and human rights, the largest transnational oil companies operating in the Niger Delta – Shell, ExxonMobil, Total Energies, Chevron, and Eni – have perfected plans to sell off their assets, move into deeper waters or simply leave the region. As they leave and Nigerian companies buy up the oilfields left by these oil majors, there are no provisions concerning who is liable for historical contamination and related socio-ecological issues. As companies divest and local actors take over, they all immediately deny responsibility for historical damage. For oil-producing and impacted communities, divestment means the possibilities of holding corporations accountable for pollution become more remote.

Following from this, the people demand: an ecological audit of the Niger Delta; emergency response to disasters; and oil company divestment. ■

This Manifesto was launched at the Nigeria Socio-Ecological Alternatives Convergence Meeting held in Abuja on June 20, 2024. The Charter is a living document and will be reviewed from time to time by the peoples of Nigeria to ascertain the level of response by policymakers and to include other areas where the people and the environment are treated as disposable.

> Manifesto For a New Popular Internationalism in Europe

by **ReCommons Europe**



| Credit: [ReCommons Europe](#), 2020.

The European institutions (of the EU as a whole and the euro area within it) are structurally neoliberal, undemocratic and unequal. They constitute an obstacle to the meeting of popular classes' needs, demands and rights in each country, as well as to solidarity and equality between the populations of the member states. When combatting the logic of competition, as well as from the perspective of an ecological transition, the European level of struggles and of building alternatives is of particular importance.

We want to turn Europe into our common home, but this is impossible within the framework of the existing European institutions. Therefore, we propose a scenario that relies on existing social struggles at the local, national and transnational levels in order to disobey, confront and break with the undemocratic and capitalist European institutions, and replaces them with new forms of popular cooperation and democratic institutions across Europe.

> **The main features of the “rebellion” scenario for a common Europe**

1. We immediately need to implement our alternative social, environmental and political goals through coordinated and cooperation-oriented permanent platforms and disobedience movements at local, regional, national and European levels, and concerning all matters or specific issues (for example debt, migration policies, ecological transition, neo-colonial agreements with the Global South including “Eastern Europe”, etc.). Different political

actors should disobey the treaties, diktats and decisions of the EU. They should make it known that they do so together in order to implement alternative policies and to set up newly instituted and long-term cooperation (concerning all or specific matters).

This disobedience can be based on existing struggles and on specific campaigns (in all fields such as labour rights, monetary policies, anti-racism, etc.). It should, as often as possible, demonstrate the potential efficiency of the implementation of democratic, environmental and social aims at a European level, in contradiction to the existing Treaties and neoliberal policies. If a political actor is isolated, it can still delegitimize existing policies and institutions, disobey them by implementing alternative solutions and openly propose new forms of popular cooperation and self-organization at all possible levels.

2. Existing struggles at the national level should highlight interactions between the national ruling classes' policies and the dominant European ideology, political economy and institutions. In order to break with the hegemony of capital, popular consultations and mobilizations should focus on concrete aims and the programme which must be put forward to combat the EU's ruling classes and institutions. The confrontation will also consist of implementing defensive tools against counterthreats and attacks by the EU, as well as political offensive initiatives to destabilize the neoliberal block and to bring about a crisis of legitimacy that impedes the functioning of the European institutions. Implementing such tools must be done as soon as possible

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by a political actor through unilateral measures, such as: the suspension of debt repayment during an audit; a public policy programme creating jobs on the basis of a specific taxation; the control of capital flow; or some socializations/nationalizations linked to specific struggles and demands.

If a political actor is isolated, it should still implement such tools by itself and, through a call for popular mobilizations throughout Europe (rather than only inside its own geographical area), it should invite other actors to contribute to the delegitimization process and therefore to a political crisis of European institutions.

3. Such defensive tools and offensive political initiatives necessarily involve popular governments at a national level breaking with the European Treaties and institutions. All measures taken by a popular government require a break, at least at the national level, with the existing dominant European politics and rules. We must demonstrate clearly that what we defend is not based on “national interest” but the reasons for our stance are political, social, environmental and democratic; and they concern all people inside and outside of the current Union.

We defend the absolute need for a democratically controlled monetary system and currency, and therefore the need for the socialization of banks and for control of capital flow. These measures are in conflict with the Treaties and the economic and monetary union (EMU) of the European Union. A popular government may decide to exit the EMU and/or the EU (for instance by invoking Article 50) or accept the challenge of being expelled from the EMU or the EU.

> **Initiate a constituent process**

Constituent processes must be initiated at all possible levels in order to build alternatives that aim to develop new political cooperation in Europe. This must be based on a common platform against the European and local ruling classes and institutions as well as xenophobic currents. It must also favour social rights for workers and all subaltern classes as well as defence of the environment.

The scenario cannot be predicted in detail, but for instance an alliance of associations, rebel cities, regions or

states could launch a “rebel constituent process” (concerning global or specific functional prerogatives), open even to political spaces not involved from the beginning in the disobedience process. These constituent processes, with different forms according to the situations and levels concerned (from municipal forums and networks to Constituent Assemblies at the national or European level associated with internationalist platforms) are to be launched in order to create new cooperation, to favour the process of rupture of neighbouring political actors who have not yet embarked on this process, to dismantle Fortress Europe, and ultimately to create alternative institutions at the European and international levels. If a political actor is isolated, it should launch this “rebel constituent process” for the territory or function concerned, and propose that other actors join the process.

> **Proposals: immediate initiatives**

Each of the previous features requires some immediate initiatives. The main requirements concern the collective designing and the popular appropriation of the specific tools necessary to disobey, confront and launch constituent processes as well as the gathering of the social and political forces that can operate them.

We propose all progressive forces (trade unions, political organizations, associations, activist collectives, etc.) adopt similar goals: to strengthen jointly their criticism of the capitalist and undemocratic European institutions and specify together their proposals in order to break with these institutions’ hegemony and reconstruct new forms of popular cooperation; to update, share and popularize convergent texts, such as the Altersummit’s Manifesto and ReCommonsEurope’s Manifesto; to encourage the development of all significant initiatives on the local, national and European levels in favour of “rebel constituent processes”; and to take advantage of European elections in order to run campaigns and launch popular debates about this scenario and its implications, to inform about the existing initiatives and alternative spaces that could take part in this scenario, and to gather social and political forces around them. ■

This text reproduces (with minor rewording) Chapter 9 (Social struggles, political confrontations and constituent processes in Europe) of the Manifesto for a New Popular Internationalism in Europe, which was originally presented in March 2019. That Manifesto was drawn up by a group of activists and researchers from a dozen or so countries in Europe who wished to propose a blueprint to be acted upon by popular left-wing forces. It was part of the [ReCommonsEurope Project](#), initiated by two international networks (the CADTM and EReNSEP), and the Basque trade union ELA, in order to contribute to the strategic debates taking place within the European popular left.

> Beyond Difference: Similarity in a Pluriversal World

by **Lidia Becker** and **Christine Hatzky**, Leibniz University Hannover, Germany



Credit: Anderson Guerra, 2018, on Pexels.

The present is characterized by environmental catastrophes, wars, desolidarization and rapid technological progress with unforeseeable consequences. The practices of exploitation have intensified under neoliberal capitalism and accelerated the displacement and extinction of many terrestrial – human and non-human – populations. In light of these current planetary challenges, we argue for analyzing them “beyond difference” and unlocking the potential of similarity as a mediating concept for the humanities and social sciences, in accordance with the work of Anil Bhatti.

> Pluriversality and posthumanism

Categories of difference, as developed in critical postcolonialism and gender studies, are useful for deconstructing inequalities and hierarchizations, but neglect the recognition of similarities – relations, analogies, associations, simultaneities, and interspaces – as a prerequisite for empathy and cohesion-building social practice. Andean Indig-

enous philosophies of Sumak Kawsay or Buen Vivir take up thinking via connections in the figure of pluriversality in order to overcome colonial and patriarchal practices. In a “pluriversal world,” social orders of human and non-human (legal) subjects coexist on an equal basis and the Earth is not considered a resource, but a life-giving being, where everything is connected to everything else.

The concept of the pluriverse is process-ontological in the sense of involving a common becoming of humans and nature. A similar shift in perspective is proposed by the critical posthumanism developed in the Anglo-American and European regions which emphasizes the kinship relationships between human and non-human entities instead of differentiating between them. This approach refers to decolonial and non-anthropocentric views from Latin America, Africa and Asia, but in comparison, it places greater importance on technological development for the earthly future. Linked to this is the discussion about the habitability of the planet where the “earthlings” have a

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chance of survival and where anthropomorphic technology, with its opportunities and dangers, plays a key role. The concept of similarity gains importance in this context because techno-scientific development renders machines more and more similar to humans and intensifies the ambivalence of humankind's creative power.

**> Much ado about difference,
little about similarity**

There are strands of research literature that are relevant for the similarity-based analysis of the link between non-anthropocentric concepts of pluriversality and posthuman approaches. The first such strand is formed by the perspectives discussed in Latin America based on various Indigenous cosmologies (led, among others, by A. Escobar, M. de la Cadena, M. Blaser, and A. Krenak) as well as the concepts of conviviality (developed by Sergio Costa) and coexistence addressed in Latin American studies. Since antiquity, recognition of similarity has been repeatedly highlighted as a fundamental human cognitive function and as a practice that provides orientation – as imitation, mimicry, or mimesis – in philosophical and scientific-historical discussions. However, similarity has only recently emerged in debates concerning cultural theory and literary studies, so far without exhausting its epistemological potential.

Beyond these still vaguely formulated approaches, we want to make the concept of similarity fruitful for a paradigm shift in the humanities and social sciences, drawing on its fore thinkers (B. Spinoza, G. Leibniz, G. Tarde, W. Benjamin, Marcuse, and others), who form the basis for the second strand of research literature. To date, humanities and social sciences have primarily worked with categories of difference whose theoretical foundations form a third strand, namely structuralist, but especially post-structuralist, concepts (M. Foucault, J. Derrida, G. Deleuze). These difference-based perspectives were reflected in post/decolonial and modern-critical concepts (D. Chakrabarty, F. Coronil, S. Hall, R. Grosfoguel) and discussed in gender and queer studies, which together form a fourth strand of research. In a field organized along interdisciplinary lines, this fourth strand successfully developed the analysis of difference for the deconstruction of complex phenomena of inequality on a global level (G. Spivak, M. Lugones) and captured the entanglements of different dimensions of inequality under the concept of intersectionality. Work from the field of Black/women of color feminism (b. hooks, K. Crenshaw) paved the way for the awareness that the category of gender is constitutive for the understanding of ethnicity and class.

Identity constructions based on difference came under criticism from the 1990s onwards, in the course of the globalization debate, partly because of their essentialist understanding of culture, which does not allow for any spaces

in between (S. Hall, H.K. Bhabha). Such identity constructions are at the core of the idea of cultural superiority of a “Western civilization” based on simplistic and arbitrary identity constructions of “self” and “other” which are taken up by fundamentalist and identitarian movements. This is why the concept of identity based on difference is questionable. Accordingly, even difference-based concepts with an anthropocentric focus have recently been pursued via non-essentialist, relational approaches.

**> A final strand linking to pluriversality and
expanding epistemological connections**

The threat to planetary life posed by climate change and the destruction of ecosystems which is now so obvious calls into question, in particular, the differentiation between human society and nature (B. Latour, P. Descola), as established in the course of the Enlightenment (rationality) and consolidated in modern sociology. The concept of similarity also lends itself here to overcoming the dichotomies of coloniality between nature and humanity/culture, and to understanding the human being merely as part of a complex network.

This is the basis for the fifth strand of research, which encompasses new materialisms (K. Barad), posthumanism (D. Haraway, R. Braidotti), affirmative biopolitics (V. Borsò) and technofeminism (J. Wajcman, F. Costa). These are open to decolonial approaches and non-Western cosmologies, which is the decisive link to pluriversal thinking. Meanwhile, African philosophies also address techno-coloniality and the complex interweaving of technology, nature, and humans; and they debate the possibilities of decolonial technologies in a pluriversal world (A. Mbembe).

What all these approaches have in common is that they reconfigure empathic relationships between the zoe, geo, techno and anthropo dimensions. Other approaches compare Asian philosophies with the findings of quantum physics and their applicability in the social sciences and humanities (K. Fierke), thus opening up multiple connections in global knowledge production. In contrast to science and technology studies, the techno-coloniality angle (R. Camarena et al.) is characterized by its historical focus and the implicit knowledge of colonial and decolonial processes based on regional expertise, as well as by the expanded understanding of “technology” which identifies, for example, literacy as a colonial technique (W. Mignolo).

The specificity of our proposal is to discuss, systematize, and develop these different strands of global epistemologies based on relational thinking from the point of view of their complementarity in order to elaborate a new non-anthropocentric conception of the fluid relations between the nature–human–technology entities.

> **New (old) ontologies, technology critique, and decolonial similarity**

1. *Nature*: The modern demarcation between culture and nature, subject and object, which is fundamental to Western epistemology and has been developed under colonialism, will be questioned in terms of continuities and reciprocities between human and non-human subjects. We contrast the dichotomization, which justifies the exploitation of humans and natural resources, with a relational – pluriversal – perspective, which is inherent in the inclusive ideas of micro- and macrocosms of older cultures, the philosophies of Latin America, and the ‘flat ontologies’ discussed in recent times.

2. *Technology*: The optimization of technologies for the exploitation of exteriorized natural landscapes and groups of people was another basis of colonialism and the epitome of patriarchal rationality. The penetration of everyday life by new technologies and the fusion of humankind and technology evokes justified skepticism towards techno-coloniality – for example, through the control function of communication technologies. This, however, is countered by the hope of social design possibilities. Posthuman feminism defines the intertwining of organic life and non-organic matter, including technologies, as an assemblage, which raises the question of the concept of technology and the constitution of the subject as a decision-maker.

3. *Human*: The focus is on a pluriversal model of society based on the deconstruction of the category of human (defined as male, heteronormative, and White). Priority is given to the creation of commonalities between groups of people in the sense of conviviality and solidarity, beyond difference and foreignness. Up for discussion is the extent

to which the exploitation of otherized people and natural resources, which began in colonialism and continues in capitalism, is responsible for the social exhaustion in differences and the ecological crises of the present. Meanwhile, the risks of homogenization in historical and contemporary contexts, for example through the exclusion of diversity in authoritarian regimes, must not be neglected.

The innovative potential of our concept lies in the interdisciplinary linking of the process-ontological concept of pluriversality with posthuman approaches based on the ordering practice of similarity. We bring these together in order to develop a new conception of the relationships between the entities of nature–human–technology in the sense of a continuum. On the one hand, pluriversal and posthuman thinking share criticism of post-structuralist and post/decolonial research approaches based on “difference” and “alterity” when addressing Western conceptualizations of modernity, its universalism, and the promises associated with it. On the other hand, it should be taken into consideration that the modern world was divided into hierarchical and essentialist dichotomies (self/other, White/Black, man/woman, civilized/wild, subject/object, mind/body, culture/nature, difference/similarity), following the logic of modernity–rationality–coloniality.

Accordingly, differentiation was declared the paradigm of knowledge organization par excellence, while similarity and imitation were rejected in Western epistemology as “unscientific” because they were considered “primitive,” “magical,” “close to nature,” and “pre-modern.” Our approach, in contrast, integrates the relational concept of similarity into the decolonial paradigm, expands the pluriversal awareness of the world to include a critique of technology, and transcends difference-based knowledge production. ■

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> Protests in Venezuela and Bangladesh: When do Autocrats Give Up?

by **John Feffer**, Institute for Policy Studies, USA



| Credit: Shutterstock.

In one country, the increasingly autocratic leader of fifteen years has up and left after being forced out of power by a student-led opposition. In the other country, the increasingly autocratic leader of eleven years has refused to give up power in the face of protests after he rigged recent elections to give himself a narrow victory.

In the first country, Bangladesh, an interim government led by Nobel-prize winning economist Muhammad Yunus has replaced Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who is now in exile (once again) in India. Meanwhile in the second country, Venezuela, Nicolas Maduro has resisted calls from the United States, the European Union, and other countries to leave power (if not the country).

Why was the opposition successful in Bangladesh and not in Venezuela? There are many differences between the two countries: the institutional power of the government, the size of the respective oil reserves, the proximity to the United States. But perhaps the only difference that matters, in the end, is time. Maduro might well be just a few days, weeks, or months away from suffering the same fate as Sheikh Hasina. May he just doesn't know it yet.

> The Bangladeshi surprise

Sheikh Hasina probably thought she was untouchable. As Bangladesh's long-serving Prime Minister, she was well-protected by her lineage – her father led the independence movement against Pakistan, became the country's first president, and is known as the “father of the nation.” She also had reason to believe that her tenure in office was successful. The Bangladeshi economy has been on an upward trajectory [for the last 15 years](#) (including the COVID year of 2020). Access to education, children's health, and overall life expectancy [all improved](#) during that time. The poverty rate was [cut in half](#).

Then there was Hasina's geopolitical acumen. She had a strong ally in the Narendra Modi government in neighboring India, and she was able to maintain relatively good relations with China as well.

Sure, there were naysayers. She put a number of these domestic critics behind bars. What she didn't expect was a successful challenge from the country's youth.

First of all, a huge number of Bangladeshi young people have left the country. [Over 50,000 students](#) went abroad to receive their higher education in 2023. At the other end of the socioeconomic spectrum, over 15,000 Bangladeshi migrants, disproportionately young, made the harrowing Mediterranean crossing [to Italy in 2022](#). “Brain drain” is a [constant refrain](#) in the Bangladeshi media, as commentators try to figure out how to retain homegrown talent.

Surely Hasina too worried about the brain drain. But every young person leaving the country was also one fewer young person available to protest government policies on the street. With an unemployment rate [north of 15 percent](#), young Bangladeshis have understandably been frustrated at not being able to take advantage of the economic growth the country has enjoyed over the last 15 years. One option is to leave for greener pastures overseas. Another option for the well-educated is the civil service sector. Government jobs pay reasonably well and come with considerable job security.

Except that the government had been trying for years to reduce the number of slots available by allocating nearly one-third of all positions to relatives of veterans who fought in the country’s war for independence in 1971. Remember: the Prime Minister’s father was an independence fighter, and this was a way to reward that important constituency.

Students effectively blocked this new patronage system in 2018, but the government tried again this year. Young people returned to the streets. By the beginning of August 2024, [dozens of people have been killed and hundreds injured as renewed anti-government protests](#). Although the Supreme Court significantly watered down the quota proposal, students kept up the pressure until the prime minister resigned and fled the country.

It was a result startlingly similar to what happened in Ukraine in 2014 when young people, among others, demonstrated in the center of Kyiv against a corrupt president, Viktor Yanukovich, who had also fostered a strong bond with a neighboring authoritarian leader. Yanukovich subsequently fled the scene of his crimes and decamped to Russia, in a house he bought for a reported \$50 million.

Of course, no one wants to copy what happened next in Ukraine: war, loss of territory, economic devastation. To avoid Ukraine’s fate, Bangladesh will have to rely a great deal on the efforts of its new transitional government.

Fortunately, Bangladesh has put together a talented and inclusive team including Interim Prime Minister Muhammad Yunus, the economist and founder of the Grameen Bank. Yunus had been a target of the Hasina government, which accused him of embezzlement and other crimes. But the founder of the microcredit movement was guilty

mostly of not getting along or going along with the Hasina administration.

Other members of the interim government include two student protest leaders, Nahid Islam and Asif Mahmud, a remarkable achievement since young people rarely get positions of power during transitions of this sort. Other members [include](#) “human rights activists, legal experts, two ex-diplomats, a doctor and a former governor of Bangladesh’s central bank.” The main job of this refreshing assortment of non-politicians will be to stabilize the country and prepare for new elections.

> The Venezuelan non-surprise

It’s not just students who are fed up with Nicolas Maduro and his kleptocratic ways. According to pre-election polls and post-election results gathered in the precincts by the opposition, upwards of 70 percent of the population wants to oust the successor to Hugo Chávez. The Venezuelan non-surprise is that Maduro declared himself winner with the (to him) plausible figure of 51 percent of the vote.

There have been protests in Venezuela. As in Bangladesh, the government has sought to suppress the opposition by killing people ([more than a dozen](#)) and throwing them in jail ([at least 2,000](#)). Videos the government has released to accompany its “knock, knock” campaign of rounding up its critics have [horror-movie soundtracks](#) with lyrics like: “If you’ve done wrong, then he will come! [...] He’ll look for you! You’d better hide!” The opposition [called for](#) an international day of protest on August 17 that it hoped would attract many of the roughly eight million Venezuelans living outside the country.

But here are the two main differences with Bangladesh. In Venezuela, the opposition is party-based. It is set up to run in an election, not overthrow an illegitimate government. It knows how to mobilize the population to vote, not increase the street heat. Unlike other successful opposition movements, like those in Ukraine or Serbia or the Philippines, it has not prepared a campaign of non-compliance that includes strikes, road blockades, and the like.

Second, the opposition in Venezuela is led by old people. The presidential candidate, Edmundo González, is 74 years old. The real power, however, rests with María Corina Machado, a spry 56-year-old who has been around the political block several times already. She is savvy in the ways of protest and knows the limits of opposition in Venezuela.

The young people in Bangladesh, by contrast, are neophytes. That, it turns out, was their strength. They possessed the power of ignorance. They didn’t know that their protests were quixotic. They protested and protested and continued to protest even after the Supreme Court practically threw out the hated quota system. They rallied around



their one demand – Hasina out – even though they [didn't think it would actually happen](#).

The protests in Bangladesh were fueled by unbounded idealism. The protests in Venezuela are inspired by experienced realism. Sometimes the heart is more successful than the head.

> Time's up?

The night before Sheikh Hasina fled Bangladesh, her army chief [decided not to implement](#) an order to shoot at civilians in order to impose a curfew. This Bartleby-like refusal to engage – we, the Army, would prefer not to – was probably the decisive factor in bringing down the government. Meanwhile, the army remains the force behind the interim government.

But remember: it was the students' determination that effectively forced the Bangladeshi army to switch sides. So far, there are no signs that the Venezuelan army is planning to do something similar. The opposition issued an open letter to the military, urging it to abandon Maduro. But this came only a day after the Venezuelan leader appeared in public with military officials. "Always loyal," [they chanted](#) in unison: "Never traitors."

The Venezuelan opposition must play this inside game even as it keeps up the street heat. [Jack Nicas writes](#) in *The New York Times*:

"Between 1950 and 2012, nearly two-thirds of the 473 authoritarian leaders who lost power were removed by government insiders, according to an analysis by Erica Frantz, a political science professor at Michigan State University who studies authoritarianism. To combat that threat, autocrats frequently try what political scientists call "coup-proofing": They divide security forces into various fragmented units. That can keep any one branch from amassing too much power – and also cause forces to spy on one another. That, analysts said, describes Venezuela."

Maduro should know that he can "coup-proof" only so much. There comes a time in the political life of nearly all autocrats when they, just like Nicolae Ceausescu in December 1989, look out at what they believe to be a crowd of their supporters and, instead of receiving the applause they expect, hear only jeers. When that happens, they'd better have a helicopter waiting with a loyal pilot at the ready. ■

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> Global Climate Justice and Palestinian Liberation

by **Hamza Hamouchène**, Transnational Institute, The Netherlands



| Credit: Markus Spiske, 2019, on Pexels.

At the COP 28 Climate Summit held in Dubai in December 2023, Colombian President Gustavo Petro [declared](#): “Genocide and barbaric acts unleashed against the Palestinian people are what await those who are fleeing the south because of the climate crisis...What we are seeing in Gaza is a rehearsal for the future.”

He is right. The genocide in Gaza may be a harbinger of worse things to come if we don’t organise and fight back vigorously. The empire and its global ruling classes would be willing to sacrifice millions of Black and Brown bodies as well as White working-class people so they can continue accumulating capital, amassing wealth and maintaining their domination.

> Shifting costs to nature

Capitalism has always been a system of unpaid costs. The costs are systematically externalised and shifted somewhere else: to women and carers in terms of social reproduction that is largely unpaid; from urban to rural areas; from North to South where sacrifice zones are created, a dynamic facilitated through dehumanisation, othering and racism; and externalising costs to nature and treating

it for centuries as an entity to dominate and plunder, if not to commodify, and also considering it as a sink for waste. This has led to the ecological and climate crisis.

The impacts of the global climate crisis we are going through are differentiated along class, gender and racial lines, as well as between urban and rural areas, and Global North/imperial cores versus Global South/peripheries. They are also distinguishable along coloniser–colonised lines.

Palestinians and Israelis inhabit the same terrain but there is a huge disparity in impact and vulnerability because Israel settler–colonialism has grabbed, plundered and controlled most resources from land and water to energy and has developed, on the backs of Palestinians and with the active support of imperialist powers, the technology that will help to relieve some of the impacts of the climate crisis.

> Global climate justice and Palestinian liberation

It may feel misplaced or even inappropriate to talk about climate and ecological issues in the context of genocide in Gaza, but I would argue that there are important intersections between the climate crisis and the Palestinian struggle

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for liberation. In fact, there will be no global climate justice without the liberation of Palestine: Palestinian liberation is also a struggle to save the earth and humanity. This is not mere sloganeering, as I explain in the paragraphs below.

First, Palestine today perfectly demonstrates the ugliness of the current system and brings together its deadly contradictions. It also shows the tendency of moving towards the use of outright cruel violence on a large scale. Gramsci once said: “The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum, a great variety of morbid symptoms appear.”

Second, what is taking place today in Gaza is not just genocide. I am not sure we have the right terminology to describe all the destruction and death unleashed today on Palestinians. Notwithstanding this observation, what is also happening is [ecocide](#) or what some have described as “holocide,” which is the annihilation of an entire social and ecological fabric.

Third, the genocidal war in Gaza, together with other wars, also highlights the role of war and the military-industrial complex in exacerbating the ecological and climate crisis. The US army on its own is the [single largest institutional emitter](#) in the world, larger than entire Western countries such as Denmark or Portugal. In the first two months of the war in Gaza, Israel’s emissions were [higher](#) than the annual emissions of at least twenty countries. About half of these were due to weapons transportation by the US to Israel. The US is not only an active player in the genocide but also a significant contributor to the ecocide taking place in Palestine.

Fourth, and this is my main argument (based on the work of Adam Hanieh and Andreas Malm), we cannot dissociate the struggle against fossil capitalism and US-led imperialism from the struggle to liberate Palestine. Israel, as a Euro-American settler-colony in the Middle East, is an imperial advanced outpost. Alexander Haig, US Secretary of State under Richard Nixon once [said it extremely bluntly](#): “Israel is the largest American aircraft carrier in the world that cannot be sunk, does not carry even one American soldier, and is located in a critical region for American national security.”

> The Middle East and the global fossil regime

The importance of the Middle East in the global capitalist economy cannot be overstated. Today, not only does the region play a major role in mediating new global networks of trade, logistics, infrastructure and finance, it is also a key nodal point in the global fossil fuel regime and plays an integral role in keeping fossil capitalism intact through its oil and gas supplies. In fact, the region remains the central

axis of world hydrocarbon markets, with a total [share of global oil production](#) standing at around 35% in 2022. Israel has also been seeking to play a role as an energy hub in the eastern Mediterranean (through newly discovered gas fields such as [Tamar and Leviathan](#)): an aspiration bolstered by the EU’s attempts to diversify its energy sources away from Russia in the context of the war in Ukraine. The genocide that Israel is carrying out was no obstacle when granting licences to various fossil fuel companies to explore for more gas in the first weeks of the war.

Two main pillars form the edifice that is US hegemony in the region today: Israel and the oil-rich Gulf monarchies. Israel, as the number one regional ally, plays a fundamental role in maintaining the domination of the US-led empire in the region (and beyond) as well as the empire’s control of the vast fossil fuel resources, mainly in the Gulf and Iraq. It is within this framework that we need to understand the efforts made by the US and its allies in politically and economically integrating Israel into the region from a dominant position: pioneering technology, weaponry and surveillance material but also water desalination, food production through agribusiness, energy, etc.

The normalisation deals between Israel and other Arab countries go back to the Camp David Accords of 1978 between Israel and Egypt and to the peace treaty between Jordan and Israel in 1994. A second wave of normalisation, the Trump-brokered [Abraham Accords](#), took place in 2020 with the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco.

Before the 7th October attacks, it was expected that Saudi Arabia and Israel, under the patronage of the US, would sign a similar deal cementing US imperial designs for the region. This would have liquidated, once and for all, the Palestinian cause. The Palestine liberation struggle is thus not merely a moral and human rights issue but is fundamentally and essentially a struggle against US-led imperialism and global fossil capitalism. There will be no climate justice without the dismantling of the deeply racist Zionist settler colony of Israel and without the overthrow of the reactionary Arab regimes, chiefly the Gulf monarchies.

Palestine is a global front against colonialism, imperialism, fossil capitalism and White supremacy. It is incumbent on all of us from climate justice activists to anti-racist organisations and anti-imperialist agitators to actively support Palestinians in their liberation struggle and uphold their undeniable right to resist by any means necessary! The task in front of us is very challenging but as Fanon once exhorted us to do, we must, out of relative obscurity, discover our mission, fulfil it, and be sure not to betray it. ■

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This is a lightly edited version of a speech that Hamza Hamouchène gave in a panel at the Black Lives Matter Liberation Festival, held on July 13, 2024 in London.

> Social Movements in Spain:

Two Decades of Transformations

by **Marta Romero-Delgado** and **Andy Eric Castillo Patton**, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain, and **Gomer Betancor Nuez**, Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, Spain



Credit: Breno Bringel, Mural at the Faculty of Political Science and Sociology, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain, 2024.

Over the last decade, social movement studies in Spain have flourished and come to offer new perspectives, highlighting the ebb and flow of a complex network of voices and divergent agendas. An increasing number of studies has focused mainly on the “Indignados” (or 15M) movement and its range of outcomes after 2011-2012. However, there is a contrasting lack of research dealing with the main transformations experienced by other social movements that were either central or peripheral to the Indignados mobilisations.

For this reason, and adopting an interdisciplinary perspective, we asked ourselves what dialogues and transformations have confronted social movements in Spain over the last two decades. Looking into their origins and reconfigurations, we edited a [collaborative book](#). In it, Spanish feminist and LGBTQ+ activism dialogue with labour and antiracist movements, not forgetting the dire challenges of antiwar and pacifist legacies or the upsetting reassembly of far-right movements and their connection to changing parliamentary dynamics that imply a “Europeanisation” of Spanish politics.

> Interdisciplinary, dialogical, and global views

Social movement studies constitutes a field where sociology, political science, anthropology, and history, among other social sciences like social psychology or applied philosophy, bring together different problem scenarios and analyses. However, our book considers that social movement studies must consider the voices and testimonies of activists and movements from a diachronic perspective. Thus, in the volume we have edited, the interdisciplinary proposal offers dialogues with situated authorships that delve into historical and political examination. Although previous books integrate this approach within Europe, the dialogical view we provide via this project allows the possibility of bringing together studies about memories, legacies, and – more specifically – reflexive transformations and anticipations. In addition, some of the chapters offer analysis from the perspective of activist research.

Although most authors have an academic background, their research connects with life experiences involving observations of how theory and practice merge in evol-

ing realities and upcoming concerns about gender, sex, race, labour rights, social conflict, and peace discourses in Spain. Moreover, our book focuses on the recent Europeanisation of both the agenda and characteristics of social movements and their study in Spain; this also indicates a globalisation of the topic. The concurring dialogues of the selected case studies highlight the connection of Spanish contentious politics with regional and global trends that our book analyses via an interdisciplinary approach.

> Social movements in Spain

To understand global fabrics, one must consider the making of local threads. In Spain, the long shadow of Franco's dictatorship (1936-1975) influenced the elite-directed transition to democracy and the later dynamics of Spanish politics and policies. The authoritarian legacy of the political system and the political transition enacted from above conditioned the context and ecosystem in which social movements developed in Spain for several decades. Thus, most Spanish social movements have their roots deeply embedded in the dictatorship's formal and informal legacies. Not until the turn of the century or more recently was there a shift towards more extra-institutional actors. We have since seen an end to compulsory military service and the vindication of women's right to abortion in the first years of this century, together with other mobilisations like the recognition of LGBTQ+ rights or the acknowledgment of victims of the dictatorship in the early 2010s. However, recent far-right movements and political parties represent a reshaping of post-Francoist supporters with an ultranationalist and ultraconservative agenda that is currently connected to global networks in Europe and America.

Therefore, our book considers the influence of past political cultures and polity in Spain as a base to understand the different steps taken by divergent but relevant social movements before and during their Europeanisation and globalisation. Democratisation processes in Spain tackle a neoliberal international agenda and post-Francoist redoubts within the state and political–economical elites that tend to be ignored by some external analyses.

> Discontinuities and pathways in current and future research

The “golden age” that the study of social movements in Spain is experiencing attracts national and international scholars and is building the field. The 15M movement

opened the possibility of understanding the making of processes and alliances between social movements that encouraged citizens to participate and request democratic reforms beyond the institutional process. Moreover, it marked a turning point in academia. This phenomenon put Spain at the centre of world analysis of social movements, both because of the great repercussion of the movement and due to its great attraction for social movement scholars from abroad, who put the Spanish case under scrutiny.

Different research projects have been building a field of study in which Spanish researchers have internationalised their profiles and come closer to European networks. This convergent Europeanisation and internationalisation of the study of social movements in Spain paradoxically contributes to strengthening regional and global dialogues with other fields of research in the Global South, particularly Latin America. In this sense, our contribution to the field represents a meeting point for local and regional approaches concerning global realities and challenges for social movements. Thus, combined with the perspective of academics and activists who study the social movements in which they are involved, this diverse knowledge has given rise to a book in which theory meets reflective practice.

Although our proposal is not as innovative as some of the new approaches to the current debates on how to study social movements, we have intended to build an honest and rigorous contribution to the study of this subject, taking into account from where and for whom we write. The primary results we offer in the book are the possibility of first contact with a diachronic and dialogical study of social movements in Spain and a handbook for expanding previous knowledge in one or another movement, set of alliances, or local expressions of global trends. Moreover, we, the co-editors, worked hard to make the book available via [Open Access](#).

Writing in Spanish represents an evident challenge to disseminating our results and this is so for all publications produced in a context marked by English not only as a working language, but also as a way of thinking and framing political and social problems, conflicts, and actors. This challenge particularly affects academics and activists from countries on global and regional peripheries. We hope it will be translated in the not-too-distant future to make access to its content easier for non-Spanish-speaking audiences and meanwhile that the resonances with other realities and languages of *Global Dialogue* can help make these dialogues possible. ■

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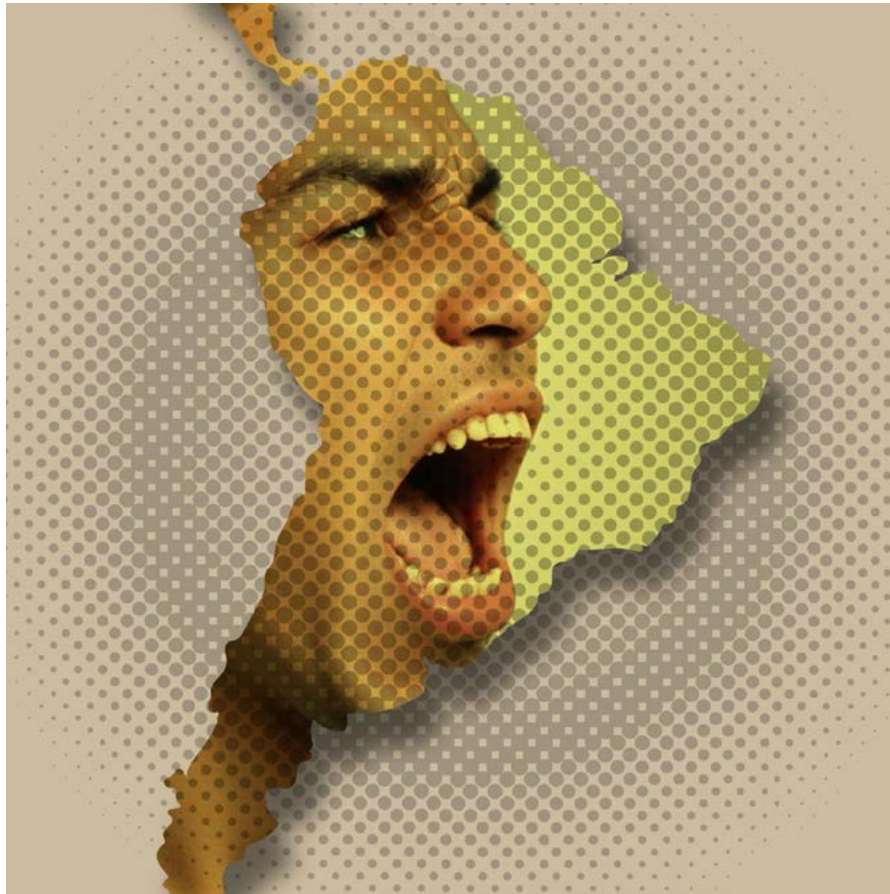
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> Reconstructing Dependency Theories

by **André Magnelli**, Ateliê de Humanidades, **Felipe Maia**, Federal University of Juiz de Fora, and **Paulo Henrique Martins**, Federal University of Pernambuco, Brazil



| Illustration: Arbu, 2024.

Recognizing the relevance and importance of dependency theories in the present context implies continuing research that deals with the sociology of intellectuals, the history and circulation of ideas, and the revision of modernization theories in peripheral and semi-peripheral regions. Moreover, this must form part of a broad understanding of modernity and global social processes. But it is important not to generalize the conditions of emergence of such theories produced outside the European and North American center as if they were intellectual productions common to all societies in the Global South. Such a generalization would only diminish the merit of intellectuals from semi-peripheral systems who have sought to theorize about modernization from within national societies that have experienced important processes of industrialization and the formation of middle and working classes that are politically organized into parties and unions. It was as a localized experience in

Latin American history that dependency theories were able to become a reference for the expansion of the critique of modernization to different regions of the planet.

> A perspective with Latin American roots

In the second half of the twentieth century, Latin America was a specific breeding ground for innovative theories that sought to question theories of modernization and create alternatives that could produce independent industrialization models. This process began with the structuralist-industrialist theses propounded by CEPAL economists and was further developed in the 1960s and 1970s by Latin American sociologists who extended the CEPAL debate into the field of politics. At that time, intellectual critique was expanding, driven by reactions to imperialism and dependency, along different lines of reflection. It involved dialogues with mobilizations of Indigenous peoples, Afro-

descendants, and women within the critique of coloniality and in favor of liberation.

Dependency theories, elaborated between the 1950s and 1970s, represent one of Latin America's most original intellectual contributions to understanding the processes of social change in the twentieth century. Their central concern was the "uneven and combined" nature of the expansion of capitalism and the social and political forms of modernity, with Latin American history as an empirical reference. By replacing the perspectives of modernization theories (then dominant in the social sciences and economics) and opposing the theses propagated by Soviet Marxism, they allowed for an understanding of the consequences and limits of the hegemonic alternatives presented by both the national–developmentalist strategy and the conservative–authoritarian modernization programs. Furthermore, they highlighted the multiple connections between local political actors and the global systems of circulation of capital.

The adoption of historical and often comparative perspectives favored an examination of the relations between Latin American elites' projects of "civilization" or "overcoming backwardness" in terms of Euro-American models and the reproduction of their heteronomous position, since the start of the processes of nation and state building in the nineteenth century. Besides studying inequality and dependence relations in the international system, new insight was gained into themes involving coloniality as a structuring feature of these social formations, including factors of "internal colonialism". Latin American societies can be understood both on their own terms and from a comparative perspective together with other peripheral formations, not as incomplete forms of modernization.

> Intellectual reconstruction

In our recently edited book [Dependency Theories in Latin America: An Intellectual Reconstruction](#), we offer an overview of dependency theories in Latin America. The volume covers elements of their intellectual emergence, conditions of reception in different contexts, contributions to sociological theory, and possibilities of being updated via contemporary topics such as political critique, the environmental and climate crisis, or the problems of post-colonialism. We thus seek to incorporate this considerable contribution into the history and repertoire of contemporary social theory, aiding in providing an understanding of the plurality of trajectories in the development of social theory around the globe and the originality of the Latin American perspective. Some of what was produced at the period inevitably bears the marks of the time – of intellectual, political, and social problems that belong to conjunctural situations. However, relations of dependence and inequality have a history and permanence and are posited and reposed at the level of the world system or global capitalism, so this intellectual reconstruction also deals with problems of the present.

> From national independence processes to CEPAL

The centrality of Latin America in the organization of alternative thinking on global modernization was not merely serendipitous. Most of the countries in the region experienced their national independence processes in the nineteenth century, unlike Asian and African countries which did not do so until the twentieth century. The early political emancipation of Latin American countries had an impact on the emergence of an important aesthetic and intellectual movement that began with the establishment of law and engineering faculties, and also literary and artistic movements, which took greater hold in the twentieth century with the modernist and nationalist movements.

There was already a history of reflection on the formation of national societies on the continent from the first decades of the century when, after the Second World War, a significant mobilization of Latin American economists started moving between Europe and the United States. They disbelieved in the liberal thesis that international free trade would help generate equal trade between manufacturing countries at the center and raw material producing countries on the periphery. Also impacted by the grandeur of the Marshall Plan aimed at rebuilding Europe in the aftermath of the War, they understood the importance of thinking about state planning to leverage the modernization of Latin America.

A milestone in this history is the formation of CEPAL (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean) in 1948, based in Santiago de Chile. This institution, which was home to a group of social scientists with diverse backgrounds, though particularly in the fields of economics and sociology, was the most prominent reference point in this intellectual circuit, which was expanding despite resistance from US security agencies. From the 1950s to the 1980s CEPAL played a strategic role in shaping the developmentalist model centered on the role of the state as the main agent of modernization. Among its main formulators were the Chilean economist Raúl Prebisch and the Brazilian economist Celso Furtado.

> The circulation of ideas

An important aim of our book is to show the potential of the circulation of intellectuals and ideas in the emancipation of an innovative theoretical perspective in the second half of the twentieth century, which was particularly evident in Latin America. Currently, the social sciences are becoming increasingly global and awareness is growing that there is no single historical trajectory for modern societies. So, examining the formation and unfolding of a field of debate and theorizing as rich and diverse as that which arose around dependency theories in a peripheral or semi-peripheral region in the production of global knowl-

edge helps to understand aspects of contemporary history that are not usually visible. The formation in South America of a circuit of ideas, institutions, and intellectuals with recognized creativity and autonomy challenges the usual images of knowledge production in the social sciences. Those tend to depict a simple division of labor in which the Global South collects data on the great processes of social transformation and the North theorizes them, producing the repertoire of concepts and theories that become the measure of societies' knowledge of themselves.

It was precisely in the confrontation with hegemonic theorizing that this Latin American intelligentsia produced the conditions for autonomous reflection in the mid-twentieth century. On the one hand, this makes it part of a Latin American intellectual history that has its own richness and reflective density. The efforts of local elites to set up universities in the region and to reflect on the specific characteristics of their processes of decolonization and their attempts to organize national societies, whose exponents included José Martí, José Carlos Mariátegui, Juan Baustista Alberdi, Domingos Sarmiento and Joaquim Nabuco, among many others, are a long-standing part of that history. On the other hand, the specific circuit of ideas that emerged in the region in the mid-twentieth century had its own particular characteristics.

The confluence of Latin American intellectuals with different national origins, disciplinary specializations, and politi-

cal profiles in the same field of debate was important. It helped to create a very original network of associated production that unfolded across the countries of the region. Perhaps it was the first time that Latin America positioned itself as a relevant and original global intellectual center, capable of projecting its influence into other intellectual contexts. These are issues that feature prominently in several of the chapters of our book, which seek to elaborate on how the circulation of intellectuals occurs in the history of ideas in Latin America.

Reconstructing these paths helps us understand the truly social and collective dimensions of the production of dependency theories and the sophistication and complexity of the circulation of ideas in the Global South. At the same time, the intellectuals involved maintained constant channels of communication with the hegemonic centers of knowledge production, configuring broader circuits than just the regional one. Many factors contributed to this, including the establishment of CEPAL as one of the five UN Economic Commissions, making it part of the system of international institutions, but also the presence of European and North American intellectuals in the region, the study and research trips of Latin American social scientists to foreign universities, and the publication and reception of their work in other contexts. These are additional themes that are reconstructed in several of the chapters of our book. ■

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