

# GLOBAL DIALOGUE

9.3

3 issues a year in 17 languages

Talking Sociology  
with Qingzhi Huan

Christine Schickert

The Great  
Transformation  
(75 years later)

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Andreas Novy  
Fred Block  
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In Memoriam:  
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Open Section

> **Making Women's Rights a Part of  
Everyday Life**

MAGAZINE



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DISCOURS  
Le Discours

Frantz Fanon

ables

# > Editorial

**I**n countries of the Global North and South alike debates around climate change and the ecological crisis have come to the fore in recent years. In an interview, Qingzhi Huan, professor of comparative politics in Beijing, China and a proponent of eco-socialist policies, gives insights into the Chinese debates and how environmental policies and approaches to environmental protection have changed over the past decades.

Karl Polanyi's masterpiece published in 1944, *The Great Transformation (TGT)*, has inspired a lot of research in social and political sciences, in sociology, anthropology, and economics. Our first symposium, organized by *Global Dialogue* and the president of the International Karl Polanyi Society, Andreas Novy, celebrates the 75th anniversary of his book. Authors of path-breaking books about Polanyi's life and work, such as Fred Block, Gareth Dale, Chris Hann and Margaret R. Somers, and experts from different strands of research who are reading Polanyi's work for our times cover a wide range of topics, from a reflection on the intellectual context which was of relevance for *TGT* to the analysis of economic, social, and political developments of the last decades through the lens of Polanyi's perspectives.

Ann Barden Denis died in February 2019. She will be remembered not only for her sociological work in her fields of research, but also for her strong engagement in the ISA, as highlighted by Linda Christiansen-Ruffman, Angela Miles and Marilyn Porters in their tribute to her.

Our second symposium, organized by Karin Scherschel investigates migration, a topic with already a long tradition in sociology which has been drawing a lot of attention in the last few years. This collection of pieces from different countries combines historical perspectives with an analysis of the causes of migration, the situation of migrants and in particular refugees, the contested political regulation, and civil society's engagement.

Fridays for Future has become a very remarkable social movement against climate change, making the growing protest of young people facing the ecological disaster which threatens the livelihood of the next generation visible. The article by Julia Kaiser and Jasper Stange maps the cross-class approach to mobilizing and coalition-building that is a new development within the environmental movement.

Moustapha Tamba organized a collection of articles from Senegalese sociologists. They focus on the sociology of education and give us deep insights into the organization and accessibility of education and the different types of schools and their regulation.

In our Open Section Bengi Sullu, a youth representative to the United Nations for the ISA reports on the 63rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women which she attended. ■

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

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**GLOBAL  
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**The Great Transformation**, Karl Polanyi's magnum opus published in 1944, traces the economic, social, and cultural history of capitalism in the face of the developments he had witnessed between the 1920s and the 1940s. It is a keen-eyed investigation of what happened and may happen in the history of capitalism. This first symposium celebrates 75 years of this seminal book with articles on the history of Polanyi's oeuvre as well as perspectives and approaches inspired by it.



**Migration** cannot be regarded as an isolated phenomenon but rather as the interplay between multiple factors such as social, economic, cultural, and political rights, the division of nation-states, citizenship, globalization, and restrictive control of migratory processes. The articles gathered here combine historical perspectives with an analysis of the causes of migration, the situation of migrants and refugees more particularly, the contested political regulation, and civil society engagement.



This section provides theoretical and empirical insights into **sociology from Senegal** with informative overviews over the Senegalese school system and in-depth analyses of different aspects of it such as on French-Arab private and public schools and the relevance of religion.



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“What all these initiatives that mobilize with the slogan of a Solidarity City have in common is an evocation of a concrete utopia. This concrete utopia has the potential to lead out of political constraints by linking migration and social policy issues instead of playing them off against each other.”

Sarah Schilliger



# > For an Eco-Socialist Vision

## An Interview with Qingzhi Huan

**Qingzhi Huan** is professor of comparative politics at Peking University in China. In 2002-3 he was a Harvard-Yenching Visiting Scholar at Harvard University, USA and in 2005-6 Humboldt Research Fellow at the University of Mannheim in Germany. His research focusses on environmental politics, European politics as well as left politics. He authored and edited a number of books on these issues including *A Comparative Study on European Green Parties* in 2000 and *Eco-socialism as Politics. Rebuilding the Basis of Our Modern Civilisation* in 2010.

He is interviewed by **Christine Schickert**, the administrative director of the Research Group on Post-Growth Societies at the Friedrich Schiller University Jena, Germany and assistant editor of *Global Dialogue*.



Qingzhi Huan. Credit: FSU Jena.

**CS:** *Climate change has become one of the most talked about political issues in recent years, at least in the countries of the Global North. Could you describe the role this discussion plays in Chinese politics and society today?*

**QH:** Dealing with global climate change as one of the major issues of international environmental politics has traveled quite a long way since the signing of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) at the Rio summit in 1992. Generally speaking, like most of the other developing countries, China's position on combating climate change is clear and coherent – it is called the “Principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibility” (CBDR): First of all, climate change is a common challenge or crisis for the whole of human society rather than just for advanced or developing countries; secondly, the so-called advanced countries or regions, especially the EU and the US, should

take on their main historical responsibilities by offering or transferring necessary resources and technologies to the developing countries; thirdly, developing countries, including China, should make increasing contributions to global climate change control and adaptation in accordance with their growing capacities.

Based on this policy position, China's participation in international climate change politics over the past years can be divided into three stages: pre-1992, 1992-2012, 2012-now. Up until 2012, the dominant understanding was that it was the advanced countries like the EU countries and the US which were to take immediate actions. Since 2012, the Chinese government gradually updated or shifted its position towards international cooperation on climate change, especially under the framework of the UNFCCC. The best example here is the new role of China in reaching and implementing the Paris Agreement.

>>

To be honest, the major impetus for this adjustment of the Chinese policy position does not stem from the signing and implementation of the Paris Agreement but comes from implementing the national strategy of promoting the construction of an eco-civilization. Briefly speaking, marked by the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), the modernization of “national ecological environment governance system and governance capacity” has been recognized as one of the top political and policy goals for the CPC and the Chinese government, and joining international cooperation on climate change more actively is one ideal symbolic case to show their political willingness. For instance, China is also paying more and more attention to the implementation of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) by organizing several important, related international activities in 2019-20.

**CS: Environmental protection is not a new issue in China. In 1972, China, unlike other countries ruled by socialist parties, took part in the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, where a number of principles and recommendations concerning environmental protection were agreed upon. Could you sketch developments and changes in China’s environmental policies since then?**

**QH:** It is true that China’s environmental protection as a public policy formally started in 1972, when the Chinese delegation attended the Stockholm Conference on Human Environment. As a result, in 1973, China held its first national conference on environmental protection and set up a national office in charge of this policy issue. Since then, China’s environmental policy has experienced at least four stages of development: 1973-89, 1989-92, 1992-2012, and 2012-now.

In the first stage, with the formation and implementation of the “reform and opening-up” policy in 1978 under the political leadership of Deng Xiaoping, environmental protection quickly became a prominent policy issue, and consequently, “environment protection as a basic state policy” was officially recognized in 1983 and has been one of the key policy guidelines for China’s environmental protection until today. During the second stage, under the political leadership of Jiang Zemin, sustainable development became the major expression of the CPC and Chinese government’s political ecology and environmental governance strategy. From 2002 to 2012 – a transition stage in more than one way – under the political leadership of Hu Jintao, the concept of the “two-pattern society construction” (resource-saving and environmentally friendly society), put forward in 2005, was the CPC and Chinese government’s central term of that time. In 2007, the term “eco-civilization construction” was included in the working report of the 17th National Congress of the CPC. Since 2012, the real change is not that “eco-civilization construction” has become the umbrella word of the CPC and Chinese gov-

ernment’s political ecology and environmental governance strategy, but rather that environmental protection and governance are recognized as an integral part of the pursued “socialist modernization with Chinese characteristics in a new era,” theoretically and practically.

**CS: For quite some time now, your work has focused on the idea of eco-socialism. You argue that “greening” capitalism is not the answer to the current ecological crisis but neither is “greening” traditional socialism. Could you elaborate on this argument and explain what eco-socialism means?**

**QH:** Briefly speaking, eco-socialism as a green political philosophy includes two major aspects. On the one hand, it argues that ecological and environmental challenges on the local, national, and global level, especially under the dominant institutional framework of contemporary capitalism, are not just partial or temporary problems or defects, but are inseparable from the framework itself: they follow the logic of capital proliferation and the protection of the interests of capital-owners. In this sense, various measures under the capitalist regime, the so-called “green capitalism” or “eco-capitalism,” cannot solve environmental problems. Of course, as Ulrich Brand and Markus Wissen have expounded clearly in their book *The Limits to Capitalist Nature* this does not mean that capitalist measures against environmental damage, or even “green capitalism,” are totally impossible in reality (though always implemented in a selective way).

On the other hand, what is stressed in eco-socialism as a political philosophy is that it is a new type of socialism, or an updated version of socialism, and thus different from a simplified or falsified greening of traditional socialism. It is worth noting that the scientific socialism or communism that Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels suggested nearly two centuries ago is an ideal which has so far not been realized, whether in the former Soviet Union or in today’s China. And this ideal cannot be established in any country or region of the world in the foreseeable future. This implies that what we are imagining or striving for is an eco-socialist orientation of our contemporary world rather than a totally new socialist society. In other words, one of the main tasks for eco-socialists today is to make clear why various measures under the capitalist regime will eventually fail to solve the problems that they claim to solve, and why various initiatives of eco-socialism as real or radical alternatives can indeed bring about substantial change in all societies, so that “another world is really possible.”

**CS: In many discourses that I have followed, eco-socialism is discussed as an alternative to green capitalism with its own vision of the future that not only offers solutions for the ecological crisis but also addresses issues of inequality; it aims at connecting environmental justice with social justice. But you ar-**

**gue that eco-socialist concepts at the moment don't seem attractive to people. Why is that?**

**QH:** Admittedly, the concept of eco-socialism is still not as popular as many people may expect or argue, not only in capitalist countries but also in socialist countries including China. In my opinion, there are various reasons for explaining this anomaly. Firstly, eco-socialism as a political ideology and public policy is still very much affected by the stained reputation of traditional socialism in the former Soviet Union and Eastern European countries, which were obviously unsuccessful in institutionalizing the socialist ideas and values and in dealing with environmental issues, as Saral Sarkar has convincingly analyzed in his book *Eco-socialism or Eco-capitalism?* Moreover, the hegemony of neoliberalism throughout the world after the collapse of the socialist bloc in the early 1990s and its political and ideological propaganda have undoubtedly been a success, making the majority of people believe that there is indeed no alternative to capitalism. Most interestingly and/or regrettably, the economic and financial crisis of 2008 in Europe and the US also did not substantially improve the structural situation for radical or alternative politics, including eco-socialism. The rise and growing popularity of “green capitalism” or “eco-capitalism” in recent years can be considered as supporting evidence for this argument.

Secondly, as far as China is concerned, the competing political and policy interpretation of “eco-civilization construction” and “socialist eco-civilization construction” is a good example to illuminate that eco-socialism is far from being an established political ideology and political ecology. One deep divergence is whether or not a socialist orientation or direction is an institutional precondition for modernizing the environmental protection and governance system of today's China. From an eco-Marxist perspective, over-emphasizing the introduction of the so-called modern institutions or mechanisms for environmental protection and governance from the US and the EU would be at the risk of neglecting the socialist reshaping of the whole society which is essential for a future socialist eco-civilization.

**CS: What is needed to make eco-socialism more attractive as a vision for a future society?**

**QH:** Needless to say, this is an urgent and very challenging task for eco-socialists today. First of all, socialist/green-Left political parties and politics are still the major forces to make the eco-socialist vision for a future society more desirable and attractive among the public, and lots of work can be done by them. For instance, an encouraging message from the European Parliamentary elections of 2019 is that the European electorate, especially the young generation, are holding quite a supportive position towards combating climate change and other global environmental issues, but the Left as a whole did not benefit too much from it. Secondly, international dialogue and collaboration

among academics on all issues relating to eco-socialism should be further strengthened. Of course, it should be a more equal and open-minded, two-way process between the West and the developing countries. To be frank, China has been a “good” student of the West over the past decades in the sense of doing its best to imitate what the advanced nations have done or are doing to modernize the country. From now on though, China needs to be a more independent and reflective partner of the international academic community, focusing on how to really make the country better. Thirdly, one of the key tasks to make eco-socialism more attractive, especially in China, is to make “Socialism with Chinese Characteristics in a New Era” more attractive. From my point of view, a crucial way is to consciously introduce and implement the principle and policy of “socialist eco-civilization construction.”

**CS: You distinguish between “growing economy” and “growth economy,” the latter being dependent on continued economic growth, something that seems detrimental to solving the ecological crisis. What does this distinction mean in regard to China?**

**QH:** I used the term “growing economy” in 2008 to conceptualize the nature of economic development in China at that time, to show how I somewhat differ from Takis Fotopoulos, a London-based Greek thinker, who analyzed whether sustainable development is compatible with globalization by looking at developments in China. My major argument is as follows: both in terms of the legitimacy, desirability, and sustainability of resource support and environmental capacity, the economic growth rate of China at the beginning of the 21st century was to a large extent necessary or defensible. Of course, the overall situation of China's economic development has changed dramatically over the past decade and is currently facing an even more challenging situation today owing to the trade dispute/war with the US.

The real question in this regard is whether or not the Chinese economy is gradually moving towards a growth economy as Takis Fotopoulos has defined it. My reflection is that there is still no simple answer to this question. On the one hand, the annual economic growth rate of 6-7% since 2015 is almost half what it was ten years ago (11.4% in 2005), indicating that China is continuously optimizing its economy in line with the different stages of development, and, at least for the central and western regions of China, that an appropriate economic growth rate is still necessary or maintainable in the near future. On the other hand, considering the economic aggregate of China today – according to the World Bank, it is 13.608 trillion US dollars in total and 15.86% of the whole world in 2018 – even an annual growth rate of around 5% may bring about wide and tremendous impacts on our ecological environment. This is the very reason why we argue that an eco-socialist perspective or “socialist eco-civilization construction” has

the potential to make a contribution to better combine the necessity of meeting the basic needs of common people and protecting the ecological environment: more ecologism and more socialism.

**CS: In European countries and in North America, the idea of a green capitalism is the mainstream answer to the current ecological challenges. What could they gain from alternative visions of the future like the one you put forward?**

**QH:** Arguably, “green capitalism” or “eco-capitalism” is the most practical or even “rational” approach to deal with the current ecological challenges in European countries and in North America, because, thanks to the hierarchical international economic and political order and the increasingly wide acceptance of the “imperial mode of living” in developing countries, these “advanced” countries can manage to use the global resources and sinks to their own advantage. If such a structural configuration remains unchanged, one can imagine that there will be little possibility for the world to move towards an eco-socialist future.

However, it seems that this configuration has indeed become socially and ecologically problematic in recent years. On the one hand, following the economic rise of several major developing countries including China, it is becoming more and more difficult for the US and European countries

to maintain the status quo of the international order, which will threaten not only their position of hegemony in the traditional sense but also their green model of “eco-capitalism.” In other words, there will be less and less space or possibilities in reality for these “advanced” countries to maintain the good quality of their local environment while continuing to enjoy a high level of material consumption. To some extent, the increasing tensions today between China and the West led by the US can be interpreted in this way. On the other hand, more and more developing countries, especially the emerging economies like China, are taking the ecological environment problems seriously for different reasons. This implies that there will be more and stricter restrictions from developing countries on the acceptance of “dirty” capital and technology, let alone of waste and garbage, as the dispute over waste import between the Philippines and Canada has clearly shown.

In both senses mentioned above, in my opinion, the principles and ways of thinking of eco-socialism can contribute in making European and North American countries eventually realize the limits and defects of “green capitalism” or “eco-capitalism.” Solving local or short-term problems while others pay the costs needs to end, and a process of radical social-ecological transformation needs to be initiated as soon as possible. A more just world and more equal society are the precondition for a cleaner environment. ■

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# > 75 Years of The Great Transformation

by **Brigitte Aulenbacher**, Johannes Kepler University Linz, Austria and member of ISA Research Committees on Economy and Society (RC02), Poverty, Social Welfare and Social Policy (RC19), Sociology of Work (RC30), and Women, Gender and Society (RC32) and **Andreas Novy**, Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU), Austria



The importance and continuing relevance of Karl Polanyi's book *The Great Transformation* is reflected in the many languages it has been translated in. Credit: Ana Gomez.

**T**he *Great Transformation* (TGT), the magnum opus of Karl Polanyi, published in 1944, reconstructs the economic, social, and cultural history of capitalism in the face of the developments he had witnessed between the 1920s and the 1940s: market fundamentalism after World War I, the subsequent crisis and stock market crash in 1929, the Great Depression, fascist and socialist attempts to reorder the economy and society, the New Deal and, finally, World War II.

*The Great Transformation* is a keen-eyed investigation of what happened and may happen in the history of capitalism if the economy and society are organized along the “liberal creed” of the “self-regulating market” (Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*, Boston: Beacon Press, 2001 edition, p. 141) and the society becomes more and more a “market society,” driven by the mechanisms of demand, supply, price, and the profit-oriented dynamics of the market. In such a system, where “human society had become an accessory of the economic system” (TGT, 79), also those elements which never had been provided and produced for sale – land (nature), labor, and money – become “fictitious commodities:” “But labor and land are no other than the human beings themselves of which every society consists and the natural surroundings in which it exists. To include them in the market mechanism means to subordinate the substance of society itself to the laws of the market” (TGT, 74) and leads to its “demolition” (TGT, 75). Karl Polanyi analyzes the history of nineteenth-century capitalism as the result of a “double movement,” the “movement” of marketization and the “countermovements” – labor movements, legislation, protectionism, etc. – by which human society seeks security and protection.

In his presidential address at the ISA World Congress of Sociology in Yokohama in 2014 Michael Burawoy emphasized the significance of TGT by elaborating how the new

“wave” of “marketization” initiated in the 1970s, the post-communist phase of globalization after 1989, the financial crisis of 2007-8, and the subsequent social protests can be understood as a Polanyian double movement. And indeed, in particular since 1990 there has been an increasing interest in Karl Polanyi’s work. Scholars from around the globe are referring to his analysis of the “double movement” and trying to make use of his motif of “fictitious commodities.” Furthermore, they are also rediscovering his visions of “freedom in a complex society” and his ideas of a just and free society which might be possible “when the utopian experiment of a self-regulating market will be no more than a memory” in the history of industrial civilization (TGT, 258).

This symposium celebrates 75 years of TGT by presenting articles referring to the history of Karl Polanyi’s oeuvre as well as to perspectives and approaches making use of it. Fred Block and Margaret R. Somers read Karl Polanyi’s work in his time with reference to the mentors of neo-liberalism, Hayek and Mises, as well as to fascism, and show its relevance for understanding today’s authoritarian tendencies. Antonino Palumbo and Alan Scott overcome the simplistic state-market dichotomy and explain why and how states support markets. Gareth Dale gives a critical overview of the history of national accounting as stabilizing an economic order based on profit and, stemming from these reflections, problematizes an allegedly Polanyian reading of the “Beyond GDP” debate. Jonathan D. London investigates the great transformation in East Asia and dwells on the contradiction of a simultaneous increase in marketization and in welfare policies. Attila Melegh and Chris Hann combine a deep understanding of Karl Polanyi’s work in his time with contemporary reflections on right-wing populism in regard to migration and the developments in Europe. Andreas Novy concludes by stressing the enduring legacy of Polanyi, his inspiration for social movements, his critique of contemporary “global” capitalism, and his search for alternatives. ■

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# > Polanyi's *The Great Transformation* at Seventy-Five

by **Fred Block**, University of California, Davis, USA and **Margaret R. Somers**, University of Michigan, USA



Karl Polanyi, WWI. Credit: Kari Polanyi Levitt.

**W**hen Karl Polanyi died in 1964, his intellectual contributions were not well known except among economic anthropologists and scholars of Greek and Roman antiquity. As a refugee intellectual, Polanyi had divided his life across four separate countries – Austria, England, the U.S., and Canada. Moreover, he did not belong to any single discipline; his work cut across history, geography, economics, sociology, anthropology, political science, and classics. All this made it difficult for him to assemble the critical mass of followers that sustained the reputation of other important refugee intellectuals.

Moreover, Polanyi proved to be an unreliable prophet in his most important book, *The Great Transformation*. He

suggested in the final chapters that the world had finally recognized that the idea of creating a global self-regulating market was mistaken. To be sure, the “embedded liberalism” of the post-World War II economic order was nowhere near as destructive as the pre-war gold standard system. But the creation of Keynesian welfare states in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s fell far short of the kind of socialism that Polanyi had envisioned. Moreover, Polanyi failed to foresee the coming of the Cold War or Washington’s determination to rebuild a world economy in which goods and capital would flow freely across national boundaries.

Ironically, events occurring after his death cemented Polanyi’s reputation as a prophet. In the 1920s in Vienna, Polanyi had formed his ideas in opposition to the market fundamentalism of Ludwig von Mises and his student, Friedrich Hayek. Ten years after Polanyi’s death, Hayek was recognized with the Economics Nobel Prize, and a few years after that, he was lauded as the theoretical inspiration for the free market economic policies of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. In short, the last four decades of market fundamentalist policies transformed Karl Polanyi from a failed prophet into the most celebrated and prescient analyst of the powers and perils of the self-regulating market.

## > Gold-standard austerity and fascism

In *The Great Transformation*, Polanyi unequivocally blames the rise of fascism on the post-World War I restoration of the international gold standard, a decision for which politicians of all stripes, including Bolsheviks, were responsible. But once the cruelties of gold-standard austerity began to be inflicted on economically vulnerable people throughout Europe, socialists and political liberals alike turned against it – not only for its inexorable suppression of wages and public sector outlays, but also for its nullification of democracy.

Bankers and most employers, on the other hand, insisted that the gold standard embodied the economic laws of nature, and tampering with these mechanisms would lead to economic catastrophe. Their arguments might well have

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been dismissed as self-interested pleadings but for von Mises' and Hayek's theoretical justifications for governmental inaction in the face of increasing economic instability and mass unemployment. For Polanyi, it was not just that von Mises and Hayek advocated policies that were cruel and immoral; it was wildly unrealistic to imagine that millions of families, most of whom lacked any economic cushioning, would stoically adapt to economic privation. He also saw that when working people voted in support of public provisioning, decent wages, and unemployment benefits, these efforts were obstructed in the name of austerity. The immediate consequence was a deep disillusionment with democratic governance since gold standard rules inexorably trumped popular sovereignty.

Fascist parties took advantage of this disillusionment by promising the kind of security the globalizers refused to provide. Hence for Polanyi "the victory of fascism was made practically unavoidable by the [economic] liberals' obstruction of any reform involving planning, regulation, or control." But once in power, Hitler defied the gold standard constraints. By moving quickly to restore full employment, the Nazis were able to win popular support and fully consolidate their dictatorship.

### > Market fundamentalism and authoritarianism

The relevance to the current moment is striking. Forty years of market fundamentalism have created a regime of permanent austerity where governments, once again, are effectively blocked from boosting employment levels or protecting households from market instability. For a government to even consider challenging these strictures would trigger immediate reprisals in the way of market sell-offs of sovereign debt and sudden outflows of mobile capital. Even the leftist Syriza government in Greece, elected on an anti-austerity platform, was forced by the European Community to continue strict austerity policies.

There is again widespread disillusionment with democratic institutions and their failure to provide relief from perma-

nent austerity. Right-wing parties have grown stronger by capitalizing on this contempt for democratic norms and institutions. Finally, a new breed of elected authoritarian leaders has embraced the model of "illiberal democracy" characterized by electoral manipulation, judicial capture, suppression of free media, and a politics of hate that divides "the people" from the people's "others."

To be sure, today's authoritarians are not the same as twentieth-century fascists. But it would be foolish to take comfort from the absence of paramilitary formations with matching uniforms. Historical mimicry is not the relevant criterion for comparison. Polanyi saw that the interwar fascist threat was a response to a crisis of democracy created by the unmovable authority of the gold standard. We once again face a crisis generated by the institutions that govern the global economy. Like their predecessors, contemporary authoritarians have stepped into the vacuum created by crisis and have in some cases already begun to persecute their "enemies" in the name of protecting "the forgotten man."

The lesson for today is the urgency of a project of global economic reform that could break apart the constraints of permanent austerity and undo the crises of impotent democracy. To be sure, the challenge of creating a powerful global reform movement is enormous. It is no simple matter to generate the global cooperation required to face crises such as climate change, the dramatic increase in the number of global refugees, and an increasingly disorderly global economy. But at this moment, it might be possible to unite much of the world's population around the project of a global Green New Deal that would redistribute resources from the Global North to the Global South, address the climate change emergency, and transform the institutions and rules that govern the global economy. This global initiative would open up space within nations and supra-national regions for a renewal of democratic politics and a wave of reforms to create economies that work for all people. ■

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# > The Market as Statecraft:

## A Polanyian Reading

by **Antonino Palumbo**, Palermo University, Italy and **Alan Scott**, University of New England, Australia and member of ISA Research Committee on Sociology of Urban and Regional Development (RC21)



Karl Polanyi in Pickering, Ontario, in the late 1950s. Credit: Kari Polanyi Levitt.

**W**ith the exception of (orthodox) economics, social scientists – and in particular sociologists and social anthropologists – have long agreed that the pure competitive market is not humankind's natural condition. From this consensus, they have launched countless defenses of state sovereignty in order to justify extended forms of state intervention. These efforts have been redoubled since the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) of 2008. In the aftermath of the GFC, which has been framed in terms of a crisis of sovereign debt and addressed via austerity measures, the advocacy of state action has taken one of two main forms: (i) a defense of Keynesian tenets and the evocation of macroeconomic interventions directed at stimulating economic growth; (ii) the promotion of a nostalgic account of the postwar welfare state, supporting calls for redistributive measures directed at attenuating social inequalities. These responses, widespread among progressives, fail on both conceptual and normative grounds. They fail to challenge – and indeed perpetuate – the by now generally accepted but unwarranted neoliberal claim that there is an inevitable trade-off between states and markets.

### > The state as champion of the market

The social and political history of the last two centuries does not support this zero-sum account of the relationship between the state and the market. Karl Polanyi's *The Great Transformation* (first published in 1944) still offers the best theoretical account. Summarizing the critique of the classic social theory of liberal political economy, Polanyi argues that the laissez-faire policies designed to bring about a market society were the result of a political plan, whereas the social pressures supporting waves of protective regulation were a spontaneous reaction against the strains produced by those policies. In making the market an act of statecraft, Polanyi rejects the assumptions of political economic thinking more radically than do Marxist approaches. He views the state as both the initiator of the drive to establish a market economy *and* the cham-

pion called upon to rescue markets from the cyclical crises they tend to generate. Far from being the executive committee of the bourgeoisie, the state engages in market-making and -modifying for genuinely political reasons – to strengthen its sovereign power – and not because of the hegemony acquired by liberal or neoliberal ideas among political and technocratic elites.

How can markets help the state boost its sovereign power? The answer we derive from Polanyi's account of change is that markets have the ability to undermine the cooperative relations underpinning communal life by making various subgroups compete against each other. As such, markets represent a soft-power alternative to military and repressive force. They undermine the internal coherence and normative autonomy of communities, leaving state actors free to overcome social opposition to top-down attempts to impose a centralized, bureaucratic will. The battle against feudal authorities, intermediary bodies, professional associations, and guilds initiated by the absolutist state and continued by liberal states had this as its primary objective. The interest shown by Soviet apparatchiks in market socialism, and the embracing of the neoliberal market by the Chinese Communist Party also reflect this logic. Nor should we overlook the ways in which the market pattern has been selectively and strategically deployed to undermine those communities and groups that have actively resisted the state's bureaucratic encroachment. Unlike Marx (and his followers), Polanyi's critique of markets is not concerned with the question of workers' exploitation and/or alienation, but with its anomic outcomes: the erosion of groups' ability to regulate social intercourse and to maintain normative cohesion.

### > A colonial logic

In pursuing this centralizing drive, state authorities apply a colonial logic both at the domestic level (to subjugate indigenous communities and internal enemies) and at the international level (to impose the dominion of the state upon foreign territories and populations). Viewed historically, these two activities are intimately connected. External expansion has been the main means through which the state has been able to dampen the mounting internal social conflicts generated by market reforms – the so-called “social question.” The similarity between internal and external forms of colonization can also be seen in the cooperative relations that state authorities establish with other societal actors. At the domestic level,

the process of consolidation of the state has required the formation of collusive coalitions with various social and economic elites willing to share both burdens and benefits. Likewise, at the international level, colonial powers have always relied on the support of compliant ethnic groups or social elites with whom they have shared the spoils of the colonial enterprise. In both cases, the collusive coalitions thus established have a competitive nature, forcing their members to periodically renegotiate the terms of the partnership in self-serving ways. Economic and political crises have thus represented opportunities to shift responsibility onto other partners and to regenerate the market system, producing the cycles of regulation and deregulation described by Polanyi.

### > Reconnecting the social and the political

In light of this complex strategic context and the interdependence of states and markets, an emphasis upon state sovereignty and calls for more state and less market are not simply naïve, but perverse. Social support for state action is in fact systematically employed to pass emergency measures that boost the bargaining power of state actors in the process of renegotiating the coalition they are part of. Similarly, fears about sovereign currency default, tax hikes, and flights of capital are exploited to strengthen the hand of the monopolistic economic forces and social elites seated at the bargaining table. The last decade epitomizes the moves and countermoves made by the members of the collusive coalition responsible for the establishment of the neoliberal consensus undermined by the GFC. To avoid repeating previous mistakes, we need solutions that go beyond the advocacy of welfare measures directed at protecting the poor. The social question has to be reconnected with a political one: the democratization of both markets and government. Polanyi's appeal to social rights and to industrial democracy was an acknowledgement of such a necessity. But a broadening of democracy with the aim of empowering citizens would now have to be extended beyond the context of employment to include – among other things – extended consumer rights, legally enshrined limits on surveillance (both state and corporate), measures to constrain real estate and financial speculation, and the refocusing of questions of the environment, nature, and natural resources away from narrow economic interests towards responsibility vis-à-vis future generations. The alternative is to live with the current and future economic, political, and social consequences of a failing neoliberal utopia. ■

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# > Polanyi, Accounting, and ‘Beyond GDP’

by **Gareth Dale**, Brunel University London, UK



*Karl Polanyi in Vienna, 1923.  
Credit: Kari Polanyi Levitt.*

**W**hen debating Ludwig von Mises on the question of socialist accountancy, Karl Polanyi made the following remark. “Accounting is a quantitative overview of economic activity. The capitalist economy, for example, revolves around profit, so its accounting provides an overview of the relationship of each element of capital to profit. An army’s activity confines itself to achieving military technical goals by expending money and goods, so its overview becomes, in some sense, an end in itself: it enables control...” The task of each particular system of accounting, he goes on, “is therefore simply the following: accounting has to offer us quantitative answers to the questions we need to

pose about the economic activity at hand. The character of these questions determines the character of the accounting system that will provide answers to them. The capitalist economy, for example, makes profit its practical goal, and thus its accounting system is tasked with providing an overview that quantitatively presents the relationship of each of its characteristic elements (the different elements of capital) to the imperative of profitability.”

In this passage, Polanyi identifies the core accounting principle of the capitalist economy: it revolves around profit. He also gives the example of an army’s accounting (“it enables control”) as an example of a different type. Let us

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briefly explore this, beginning with the great accounting debates and transformations of the interwar period. One was the socialist accounting debate, in which Polanyi took part. The other was the revolution in national income accounting. Here, a pioneer was the US institutionalist economist Wesley Mitchell. He was critical of neoclassical theory as “qualitative” and called for an infusion of quantification into economics. Economics should be situated on measurable, and therefore solid, terrain.

### > The birth of national income accounting

In 1920, just prior to Polanyi’s intervention in the socialist accounting debate, Mitchell set up the National Bureau of Economic Research. It aimed to collect data systematically, and to develop a rigorous statistical overview of the economy as a whole. Mitchell was among the designers of the modern concept of a national income. He fleshed it out by providing actual numbers, which purported to represent the concept. In doing so he fashioned what Philip Mirowski in his book *The Birth of the Business Cycle* called “a new theoretical entity.” This work set the stage for the macroeconomic revolution in economics: for Keynes’ *General Theory*, and also for Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In 1932, the US Congress commissioned Simon Kuznets – a student of Mitchell’s – to devise a means by which to measure the nation’s output. Kuznets’ work eventually led to Gross National Product (GNP) and GDP. The 1930s also saw the attempt by Colin Clark to statistically estimate the annual “rate of growth of real income per head,” as well as “the first dynamic model claiming to represent an entire economy” which Jan Tinbergen published in 1936.

At first, national income accounting was carried by a reformist wind. If government was to intervene effectively to ameliorate suffering during the Depression years, it needed help from statisticians. Kuznets’ initial drafts sought to develop national accounting along welfare-based lines, including “goods” but subtracting expenditures in “bads,” like armaments. But Kuznets’ and Mitchell’s preoccupation with welfare was, as Marion Fourcade notes in *Economists and Societies*, brushed aside when the exigencies of war planning, and then Keynesian macroeconomics and demand management, took precedent. Kuznets himself worked on military planning at the War Production Board using the national income accounting techniques he had helped develop at the Commerce Department. In the same process, military spending – personnel salaries and arms purchases – came to be included in GDP, even as welfare

payments (social security and unemployment benefits) found themselves excluded.

### > Problems with GDP

In essence, GDP presents a survey of economic activity from the perspective of legally-transacted exchange value. It “rewards” commodification: sing a song and GDP doesn’t rise, but sing the same song and demand that your audience buy tickets, it does. GDP excludes transactions in which no money changes hands – housework, DIY, and voluntary work. It is gender blind and class blind. It neglects income distribution. Like exchange value, it is blind to nature too. It treats the sale of natural resources as income, without making any commensurate subtraction for resource depletion. It takes no account of externalities.

GDP, then, is a metric peculiarly appropriate to a world dominated by exchange value; it is an essentially capitalist measure. But, equally, it is an index developed by states and used to provide an overview of the “national economy,” with an eye above all on geopolitical competition. It is an index that mirrors the nature and needs of capitalist states. These are interested not immediately in profit, but in managing societies in the interests of capital. This is why the army’s forms of statistical overview, even when involving planning, shouldn’t be counterposed to those of capitalist business.

Today, debate surrounds GDP as never before. One consequence has been the “Beyond GDP” agenda. Whether for reasons of growth skepticism or out of concern that if GDP growth remains slack governments’ performance legitimacy will suffer too, political leaders, civil servants and academics – among them Nicolas Sarkozy, Jacinda Ardern, Gus O’Donnell, Joseph Stiglitz, and Amartya Sen – are promoting alternative yardsticks.

For the Polanyian political economist David Yarrow, the Beyond GDP agenda carries the potential to destabilize the constitution of “the economy” as a unified, market-centric object. If this were to occur, it would be a welcome development. However, GDP does not define the economic system’s core goal. That goal is the competitive accumulation of capital, and the accounting principles that guide it are those at the level of the firm, not the state. If the above analysis is correct, when critiques of growthism focus solely on the GDP metric while being coy about capital, they are occluding the deeper cause. ■

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# > Great Transformations: Marketizing East Asia

by **Jonathan D. London**, Leiden University, The Netherlands



| Karl Polanyi. Credit: Kari Polanyi Levitt.

**T**he world-scale expansion and deepening of markets and market relations rank among the most transformative developments of our times. We can refer to these processes by way of a generic if inelegant neologism – *marketization*. Accelerated processes of marketization that have taken hold globally in recent decades are deeply “Polanyian,” reflecting both the dialectic of market expansion and habitation and deliberate political strategies of social transformation pursued by elite political actors intent on ordering social life to serve specific interests and instrumental goals. That

said, the ways in which marketization has unfolded, the local responses it has elicited, and its effects on welfare and inequality have varied widely across and within world regions.

Globally, marketization has been associated with increased trade and investment, industrialization and financialization, capital accumulation on a vast scale, and attendant if uneven growth in incomes and wealth; but also with surging inequality, widespread and systemic economic insecurity, and ecological catastrophe. All of this has been permitted and accelerated by the broad triumph of varieties of capitalist interests intent on making the world safe for accumulation, at whatever cost. Around the world, the acceleration of marketization has gone hand in hand with the diffusion of corrupt practices committed under the cover of “market friendly” principles. This has led to the development of increasingly globalized but politically unaccountable accumulation regimes that generate wealth but also increase inequality, by sustaining economic insecurity and eliminable suffering even as average incomes rise and consumption rise.

But is the situation all that bad? After all, under marketization the world has grown richer, especially in East Asia, understood here as the 20 or so countries between Japan and Indonesia. An exploration of the dynamics of marketization and attendant dynamics in East Asia can contribute to a Polanyian analysis of our times.

## > The “double movement” in East Asia

Among the most widely cited data regarding the last three decades of marketization are those that highlight its contribution to improving living standards in the developing world, particularly in East Asia. According to the World Bank, between 1990 and 2016 the share of East Asia’s population living in “extreme poverty” declined from over 60% to less than 3%. However, these particular figures do not include the comparatively poorer and slower-growing market societies of Southeast Asia. And they are based on

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dubiously low poverty lines and representations of progress that serve dominant market-promoting interests. Be that as it may and however varied, the regional trend is clear. Processes of marketization in high-, middle-, and lower-income countries of East Asia have facilitated growth and improved living standards as well as increasing inequalities and sometimes shocking levels of exploitation. But marketizing East Asia also reflects elements of a Polanyian “double movement.”

A particularly intriguing aspect of the contemporary world market is that while its expansion has been facilitated by the hegemony of neoliberal ideas and interests (Dale, 2012), its advance has been accompanied by rapid increases in the scale and array of social policies across the world’s middle- and low-income countries. Rather than a counter-movement, the expansion of social policies across middle- and low-income countries that has attended marketization reflects the world-scale emplacement and institutionalization of globalizing market societies or *social orders*, respectively shaped by social relational and institutional attributes specific to each country.

In East Asia, the scale, scope, speed, and localized complexity of these processes has been particularly impressive, occurring against a backdrop of combined and uneven development. Across the region, the scale and scope of education, health, and social protection systems has expanded greatly as has public and private spending in these fields. In Korea and Taiwan, and even in Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines, social policy expansion has been accelerated by electoral incentives that reward elites promising to expand social protection. In comparatively wealthier Singapore, Hong Kong, and Malaysia, undemocratic states have rolled out education, health, and social protection services on an impressive scale, albeit in stratified ways that needlessly sustain poverty. In China and Vietnam, nominally anti-capitalist communist parties have instituted market societies exhibiting deeply authoritarian corporatist political frameworks that have delivered rapid economic growth and a basic floor of services for increasing shares of their populations, even as access to services beyond a basic level requires political and economic capital. Even Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar exhibit expanding social policy suites.

### > Debating the nature of the double movement

Viewed globally, some take developments in East Asia as evidence of a genuine de-commodifying Polanyian double movement, in which the ongoing integration of late-industrialized East Asian societies into the expanding world market is accompanied by the rollout of state social policies aiming to protect populations from the vicissitudes of domestic and world markets while also supporting the development of capabilities necessary to compete and achieve upward mobility within them. Addressing the global expansion of social policy, Harris and Scully aver that commodification in the global

South long predated neoliberalism and that, despite neoliberalism’s emphasis on developing and expanding the role of markets, its advance has obscured “a tangible shift toward the *de-commodification* of political economic life.” Indeed, the ILO reports that by 2019 roughly half of the world’s population is covered by at least one social benefit.

Sceptics of social policy expansion in East Asia detect a distinctively neoliberal and even *fake* Polanyian double movement, one that takes East Asians away from principles of universalism and decommodification and toward modes of governance and market citizenship that insulate market accumulation from democratic mechanisms. This neoliberal double movement reflects an assumption that welfare is best promoted and determined within and through the market, to the point where even social policies themselves promote the logics of the market economy. Surging inequalities and the broad commercialization and stratification of services observed in the region lend support to this view. Indeed, state social policies in the region have become major sites of capital accumulation.

What, then, are we to make of East Asia’s great transformation, which has been associated with significant if highly uneven improvements in living standards, the broad subordination of populations to market societies constructed and maintained to service elite interests, but also rising incomes and significant expansions in the scale and scope of social policy?

### > Instituting within social orders

Grasping the significance of East Asia’s transformation requires an analysis of the East Asian countries as social orders and, with it, deep explorations of their dynamic social relational and institutional attributes. Only in Korea and Taiwan do we observe even hints of gestures at a genuine re-embedding of the market along the lines Polanyi envisioned. In China and Vietnam, the double movement has occurred within the consolidation of market-Leninist orders. Across the region, social policies, like markets, have developed within and been routed through prevailing power relations. If there is a broad trend, it is that East Asian elites have instituted social orders and varieties of market citizenship characterized by weakly universalist social policies that extend a more or less adequate basic floor of services but make access to services beyond that highly contingent on pay-as-you-go principles and political connections. In East Asia, then, significant improvements in living standards, mass consumption, and consumerism, and expanding social policies amid increasing inequality, sustained economic insecurity, and ecological catastrophe do indeed represent a great transformation, albeit not of the sort that Polanyi envisioned and others might still hope for. ■

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# > The Fear of Population Replacement

by **Attila Melegh**, Founding Director at Karl Polanyi Center of Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary

**E**ast European populations are (again) in the process of understanding the insights of their son, Karl Polanyi. After writing *The Great Transformation* and explaining why market utopia leads to the need to regain a “protective cover” against systems of “crude fictions,” in 1945 Polanyi also argued that the introduction of a free market would lead to crazy nationalism in Eastern Europe:

*“If the Atlantic Charter really committed us to restore free markets where they have disappeared, we might thereby be opening the door to the reintroduction of a crazy nationalism into regions from which it has disappeared.”*  
(Polanyi, “Universal Capitalism or Regional Planning”)

Chris Hann, in his most recent book *Repatriating Polanyi*, also claims that the deeper causes of the rise of nationalism in Europe are the institutions of a “global neoliberal order.” In this short paper I argue that demographic changes in a global neoliberal era have pushed humankind – and within Europe, East European and (as a test case), very importantly, Hungarian societies – to look for some protection against a global market utopia. These societies reject capital’s interest in replacing missing or outgoing domestic populations with migrants uprooted from regions outside of neighboring countries.

## > Global level factors

The neoliberal era beginning in the late 1980s has witnessed a number of very important changes in global demographic processes which can make migration a far more controversial issue than in previous periods.

- During the period of globalization, migration has been increasing more rapidly than population, while fertility has been continuously declining, causing serious aging of the population. In the meantime, the improvement in the mortality rate has slowed down a bit as compared to previous periods.

- Behind the growth in migration is the key role played by the increased mobility of capital, which disembedded and uprooted large segments of societies globally. The resultant economic restructuring and loss of stable jobs have made everyday work and family life far less stable and increased a sense of insecurity.

- The debates on migration (based on historically inherited discursive patterns of controlling versus promoting migration) have become fiercer due to increasing welfare benefits and labor competition. This is related to the following interlinked factors: continuous aging of the global population due to declining fertility; the observable decline of the labor force participation rate in active age groups; a minor convergence of wages in which the privileged groups of the West experienced little or no wage increase; and the overall stagnation of redistribution levels since the mid-1990s, as explained by Böröcz in a 2016 paper on “Global Inequality in Redistribution.”

## > European level factors

The historically low fertility of Europe compared to the global average, and the continued above-average aging while losing some of the mortality advantages of the continent, point towards the increased importance of demographic factors in explaining why all of Europe has become so anxious about migration. It is related to the paradoxical migration versus welfare competition in a neoliberal era. The mobility of capital has been very high (the net flow of Foreign Direct Investment has been above global levels). Europe’s complexly embedded socialist economies were dismantled for the sake of this mobility, which in itself led to massive loss of jobs and massive population mobility in an open, but unequally developed space. We also see that Europe as a privileged region in terms of per capita economic well-being has been experiencing a decline of global significance while continuing to have high – and above global – levels of migration.

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## > Regional and local level factors

If we compare long-term employment we can see that from an all-time high – well above global levels – in the 1980s in East European countries, labor force participation rates fell well below European and even global levels in the 1990s and 2000s, before climbing back in the 2010s. Thus, there were two lost decades, which had a major impact on these societies.

This period of shock economics meant massive disembedding and uprooting. As Hann argues, this meant that radical macro-level changes went blatantly against the norms and everyday practices of people in the transition to “market society.” Concerning immigration, the key feature is that the whole region, including Hungary, sends large flows of people to the West but only receives migrants from the immediate region; further links are rare and relatively weak. According to the United Nations, in 2015 more than 25 million people who were born in the smaller states of Eastern Europe did not live in their country of birth; meanwhile, the total number of immigrants, mainly from the immediate region, just exceeded 10 million, indicating large-scale population losses.

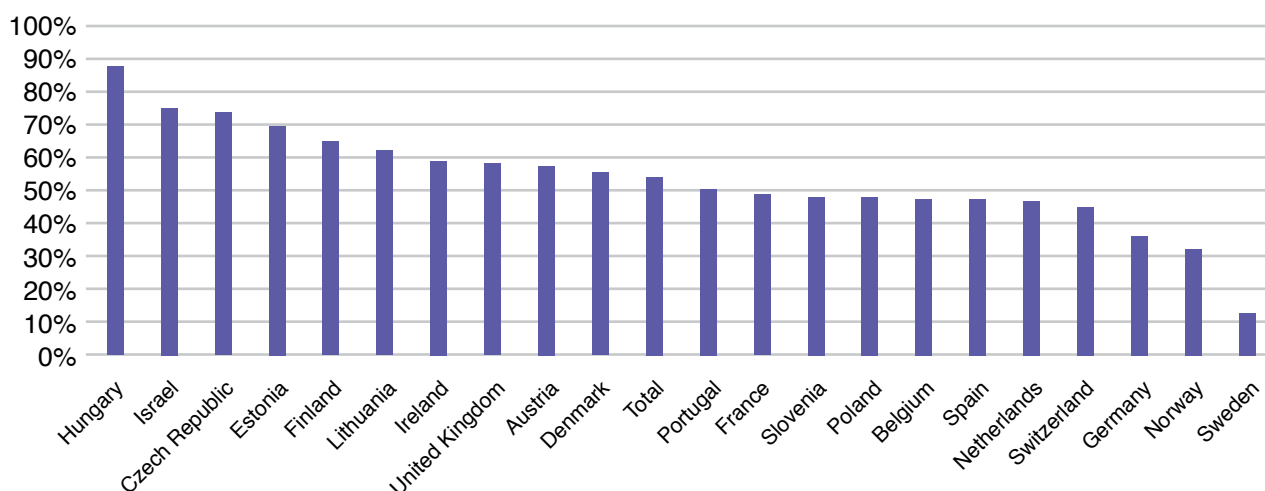
The consequences of the unequal exchange with Western countries (capital moves in and labor moves out) – loss of labor and skills; an increasing mismatch between labor demand and labor supply; and loss of social and tax

payments, especially within the overall process of ageing – are serious from the point of view of the nation-state and its social welfare system. It may be possible to argue that, as opposed to the global – and to some extent even European – tendency toward stable population growth there is a threat that some countries in Eastern Europe will be unable to function from a demographic point of view without huge tensions in their already truncated social welfare systems. This can explain why some East European populations are so open to fears of a population exchange.

We can argue that the interest of business and capital is clearly in a “fictitious exchange of migrant labor.” In a neoliberal framework they are happy to take labor out and offer the sending regions the opportunity of “importing” equally abstract labor. This is rejected by the local communities and some nationalist governments as being a catastrophic option in the midst of demographic fragility. Paradoxically, and in some ways tragically, this panic is especially effective when the issue is the recent refugee crisis caused by the tensions and wars of the last 30 years of neoliberalism. But there can be no national or nationalist answer for such tensions and contradictions. Only a global double movement can formulate an answer which might show a way out of the current tension, instead of the mechanical, authoritarian defense of the national or local “demographic body.” The move out of the neoliberal order might be the only way to assure the dignity of migrants and non-migrants throughout the world simultaneously. ■

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### Allow few or no immigrants from poorer countries outside Europe, European Social Survey 2014 (before the so-called refugee crisis)



Source: European Social Survey (ESS), 2014/2015 round, [https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/download.html?file=ESS7e02\\_2&y=2014](https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/download.html?file=ESS7e02_2&y=2014), accessed on October 15, 2019.



# > The Road to Populism

by **Chris Hann**, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Germany



Migrants at the Keleti railway station in Budapest, Hungary in 2015.  
Credit: Chris Hann.

**T**he pendant to Karl Polanyi's *The Great Transformation*, published one month earlier in March 1944 in London, is Friedrich Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom*. Neither can be classified as a work of professional sociology or social science. These are popular books by scholars aiming to reach a wide audience. But while Hayek's book achieved its goal very rapidly (thanks in part to an abridged version published in the US magazine *Reader's Digest*), Polanyi's much longer text enjoyed only modest sales. Although both Polanyi and Hayek are rooted in Austrian economics they differ hugely in style and substance. Polanyi plunges into the details of British economic history and colonial ethnography to conclude with arguments for democratic socialism. Hayek's work is more abstract and shrill. He views the economic doctrines of liberalism, held by Polanyi to be responsible for the ca-

tastrophes of fascism, as the key to individual liberty as well as economic efficiency. For Hayek, socialist planning leads to totalitarianism. He recommends free markets with minimal state intervention. This contribution explores not the complex intellectual history that preceded the 1944 publications but the pertinence of these contrasting economic philosophies for what followed, and hence for the state of world society today, 75 years later.

### > The rise and fall of embedded liberalism

The first postwar decades are commonly considered to be an era in which the economy is “re-embedded” in society (to use the familiar metaphor of *The Great Transformation*). The tensions of the Polanyian “double movement” (on the one hand, the penetration of the principle of the market, and on the other, the “self-protection” of society) are mitigated by Keynesian principles of economic management in order to maintain high employment and consolidate welfare states. The socialist Karl Polanyi was not impressed by these compromises, not even by the strong welfare states of Scandinavia. Nevertheless, the mixed economies of this period and the financial system negotiated at Bretton-Woods enabled liberal democracies to prosper in this generation.

These developments were undermined by hydrocarbon politics and the collapse of Bretton-Woods in the 1970s. By the 1980s, President Reagan and Prime Minister Thatcher (quoting Hayek as her guru) were attacking the pragmatic balance of embedded liberalism and proclaiming instead the virtues of the free market. Neoliberal dogmas were disseminated globally following the collapse of the Soviet bloc. With the demise of central planning, radical privatization and marketization led to extreme dislocation. Most postsocialist Eastern European states were eventually admitted to the European Union. The new elites of the East joined the old elites of the West to cast the social chapter of the Treaty of Maastricht to oblivion. The creation of the euro ensured that, as the dominance of the principle of the market induced ever greater mobility of capital and labor, earlier ideals of “social Europe” were now jettisoned. Austerity responses to the international financial crisis that began in 2007 have once more demonstrated the contradictions of a capitalism that appears increasingly disembedded.

### > Institutionalized markets and populist politics

Whether it be a decision to save or to consume, to migrate in search of higher wages or to accept what is available in one’s *Heimat*, economic life always plays out in contexts that are structured both socio-culturally and

institutionally. The metaphor of disembedding cannot be interpreted too literally: we need to scrutinize what Polanyi termed “instituted process.” Close inspection reveals that the regime of free markets depends critically on strong states to defend property rights and enforce the interests of capitalists generally. If Polanyi were writing today, he would probably pay attention to the ways in which the powers of even the strongest states have been subverted by transnational corporations, astutely avoiding taxation and accountable only to their own shareholders. He would be shocked by the way in which neo-patrimonial regimes, notably that in his homeland, Hungary, manipulate institutions (such as the mechanisms of the European Union) not for pragmatic planning to serve the interests of their populations but to cement links of clientelistic dependency within a quasi-monopolistic governing party.

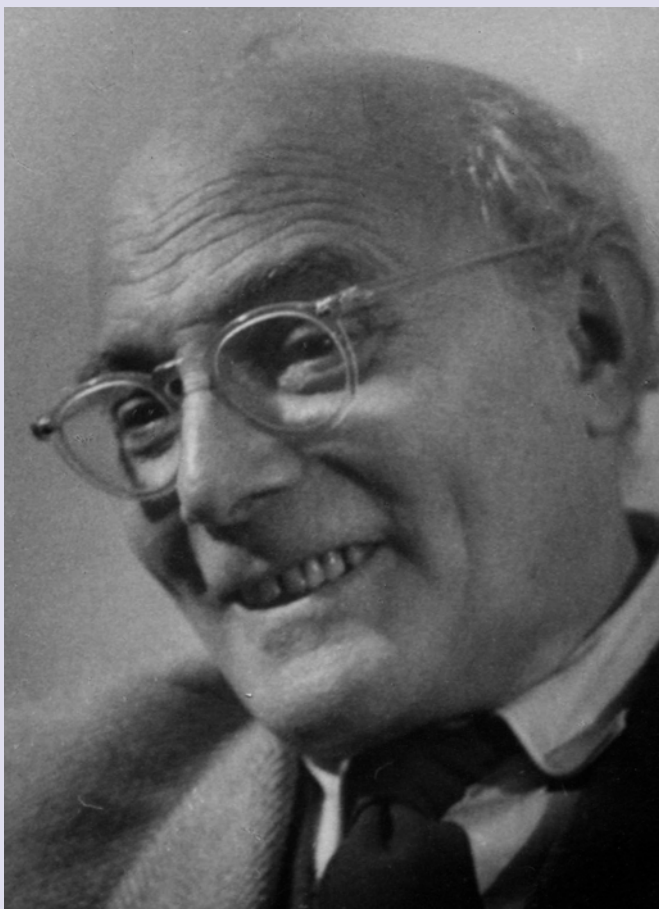
The new institutionalization of the economy is accompanied by an alarming rise of “populist” politics around the world. Leaders such as Orbán in Hungary or Trump in the USA are calling the basic compatibility of capitalism and democracy into question. In this conjuncture, Karl Polanyi’s analysis of the tensions of the double movement is prescient. When a society such as Hungary, which had been pursuing rather successful experiments in “embedded socialism” from the mid-1960s onwards, is abruptly exposed to the winds of global laissez-faire, it responds by seeking to defend itself, by reasserting values that appear to be threatened in the new global marketplace. In practice, this has meant camouflaging new class divisions by whipping up ethno-national sentiment. While Roma and Jews are the familiar scapegoats within the country, Brussels (the seat of the neoliberal EU) has replaced Moscow (the seat of the old system of central planning) as the primary external enemy. The details may differ but the populist nexus is one that Polanyi would have recognized, given the similarities to the roots of European fascism.

*The Great Transformation* is the definitive analysis of where the anti-socialist, laissez-faire dogmas of *The Road to Serfdom* lead. Both books have been reprinted many times and widely translated, but Polanyi’s message has never been compressed into a *Reader’s Digest* format. Sales of Hayek have always outstripped sales of Polanyi and continue to do so. Above all, in the Anglo-Saxon countries, 30 years after the end of the Cold War, the need to demonize socialism is a habit that is hard to shake off. Karl Polanyi offers a comprehensive alternative to the simplistic notion that the spontaneity of free markets is the best guarantee of individual liberty. The most important question of our time is whether the present crisis of Hayekian ideology can be resolved by a further revival of Keynesian liberalism, or whether this really is an “endgame” for capitalism. The optimist Polanyi would hope the latter. ■

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# > The Enduring Legacy of Karl Polanyi

by **Andreas Novy**, Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU), Austria



*Karl Polanyi in 1964.  
Credit: Kari Polanyi Levitt.*

whereas Polanyi problematized the viability of market societies in general. For Polanyi, lack of societal cohesion in market societies results from the functional independence and – worse – supremacy of economic motifs and interests over societal concerns and political interests.

## > Polanyi's implicit spatial analysis

Karl Polanyi was a strong supporter of the cooperative movement and admirer of Robert Owen, an early proponent of the movement. Anti-globalization movements, social economy, and solidarity economy, all these contemporary grassroots movements have aimed at empowering citizens, peasants, and workers to shape their personal lives and societies. They have experimented with self-management and forms of participatory governance and have often been motivated by a firm belief in the capacity of people and communities to take hold of their lives, to “re-embed the economy in society,” in more cooperative values, and less materialistic needs and desires. Therefore, they have promoted socio-economic democratization with the linked objectives of putting the economy in its place as well as extending democracy beyond the political sphere. Financing, producing, and caring activities are considered as too important to be isolated from collective decision-making, public accountability, and co-management. Many of these civil society movements, most recently the transition and commons movement, have promoted social innovations from the bottom up. But often they have been victims of the localist trap, unable to instigate institutional and structural change beyond their project or neighborhood.

This leads to a crucial, though neglected aspect of Karl Polanyi's oeuvre: his implicit spatial analysis. Polanyi's often-cited critique of the self-regulating market is not a

**A**fter his death in 1964, Karl Polanyi was mainly known in anthropology, being a fierce defender of a more contextualized understanding of the economics as the “organizing of livelihood.” His rediscovery as a social scientist in a broad range of disciplines took place from the 1970s onwards. In economics, it was through the work of Douglass North, who received the Nobel Prize for stressing the importance of institutions in economic development. Differently from Polanyi, he focused on markets, property, and contracts. In sociology, Mark Granovetter popularized the concept of embeddedness dear to Polanyi, but used it to investigate the functioning of concrete markets in market societies,



rejection of all types of markets. It is a critique of the emergence of “One Big Market,” one interconnected market in which everything can be traded – even objects that have not been produced for sale. The key institution that sustained “One Big Market” up to the 1930s was the gold standard. It made all socio-economic activities on the globe comparable, and thereby, tradeable. This utopia of economic liberalism is dystopian from a Polanyian perspective. Even before the term “globalization” was invented at the end of the twentieth century, Polanyi was a fierce critic of “universal capitalism” as well as the uncontrolled spread of technology in the “machine age.”

### > Neoliberalism and the need for multi-scalar alternatives

But it was only after the burst of the dotcom bubble in 2000 and the 2008-9 financial crisis that his critique of the disastrous social and ecological consequences of a deliberately planned “free market economy” was taken up for critical reflections on how contemporary societies respond to the commodification of life. Four decades of planned neoliberalism and the economization of all aspects of life have led to an increasing body of inter- and trans-disciplinary research. In sociology, Michael Burawoy has applied Polanyi’s conceptualizations to grasp the current commodification of nature, knowledge, and data. Neoliberalism’s impact on everyday life, from gender division of labor to marketization of education and health, has been deepened by the increasing dominance of financial markets.

The worldwide resistance against neoliberalism, academic as well as political, transformed Polanyi into a key inspiration for those interested in understanding and changing a world dominated by market logic. Many renowned scholars criticize neoliberal globalization, termed hyperglobalization by Dani Rodrik and “great financialization” by Kari Polanyi Levitt. As Wolfgang Streeck insists, the contemporary global economic order threatens democracy, welfare regimes, and national sovereignty. Alternatives would consist in more modest forms of economic integration, increased national policy space, and a reinvention of democracy.

These concerns have recently been taken up by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

(UNCTAD) in its plea for a New Global Deal that overcomes austerity, re-embeds financial markets, and limits economic power, especially the power of finance capital and digital platforms. This might be the most important contribution by heterodox economists to economic sociology that, since Granovetter’s seminal work, has tended to neglect macro-economic dynamics. On the other hand, a sociological perspective can enrich Polanyi’s definition of the economy as the “organizing of livelihood” by research on agency, power, context, and system integration. This would lead to a more place-based understanding of the economy as embedded, composed of specific institutions that produce not a uniform, but a variegated capitalism.

In my understanding, the alternative to hyperglobalization resides in strengthening democracy in a more contextualized and scale-sensitive economic order. Polanyi stressed the importance of supra-national regional planning; geographers remind us that the livelihood is in important aspects structured by neighborhoods, cities, and regions. And political economy insists that democratic accountability as well as social security is still organized mainly at the national scale. Democratic, sustainable, and solidary governance needs a multi-level perspective.

Finally, and at the most basic level, Polanyi’s legacy resides in his inspiration for a civilizational alternative to current market society with market, property, and competition as its key institutions. For Polanyi, the dialectics of improvement and habitation of economic progress and sociocultural security, accompany capitalist market societies. In the long run, civilizations that solely focus on economic improvement will collapse, as liberal civilization collapsed in the 1930s. Looming ecological catastrophes caused by exceeding planetary boundaries give these reflections a new urgency. Biophysical boundaries translate into societal boundaries, separating resource-rich owners from have-nots, the Global North from the Global South. As exclusion and inequality rise, authoritarianism as well as reactionary cultural politics might spread. But fighting exclusion and inequality might also strengthen counter-movements aimed at restoring a sense of belonging, security, and habitation and at conserving a viable climate. Following Polanyi, individual freedom and responsibility allows a range of possible futures, impeding any deterministic predictions. ■

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# > Ann Barden Denis: In Appreciation

by **Linda Christiansen-Ruffman**, Saint Mary's University, **Angela Miles**, University of Toronto, and **Marilyn Porter**, Memorial University, Canada



Ann Barden Denis. Credit: USC Canada.

**O**n February 5, 2019, Ann Barden Denis passed away suddenly from cardiac arrest. She was only 73. Ann committed much of her life to sociology, to interdisciplinary scholarship, to equality in society, and to respectful social relationships across differences. She leaves many grieving colleagues, students, friends, and mentors who miss her calm and caring presence as well as her collaborative, analytic, and executive skills, knowledge, and reliability.

Recently Ann began to use her middle name, Barden, to honor her strong maternal family roots. She greatly valued the wisdom and practical advice that her grandmother and mother passed on from their experiences in large, patriarchal, French Canadian families. From these women, Ann learned the importance of education and employment for asserting her independence as a woman in a man's world. Understanding how these issues related to individual and social power gave Ann strength and confidence in her personal and so-

ciological leadership roles. It also helped her to develop and change as a feminist throughout her career. While this appreciation focuses on Ann's public presence and contributions to scholarship and activism, she also led a socially engaged and caring life as well as remaining independent as a woman.

Ann's loss impoverishes many organizations that have been supported and shaped, or revitalized by her work. She made extraordinary administrative and scholarly contributions to the Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Association (CSAA), now CSA, and its Feminist Sociology Research Cluster; to the International Sociological Association (ISA) and two of its research committees, RC05 (then, Ethnic, Race and Minority Relations, now Racism, Nationalism, Indigeneity and Ethnicity) and RC32 (then Women in Society, now Women, Gender and Society); and to the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAW-ICREF), especially in recent years. In each of these associations and committees, and at her

bilingual University of Ottawa, Ann worked unflaggingly in major leadership roles (frequently as President) and in less eminent positions to ensure their organizational effectiveness and their continued social, academic, and practical relevance. She also worked to protect and foster basic principles of social justice, openness, access, and inclusivity in and between them. Moreover, she used her skills as both a writer and editor to contribute to their books, journals, special issues, fact sheets, and newsletters. She advised related journal boards and Canada's Aid to Scholarly Publications over time. Canadian and international sociology and intersectional feminist research relationships have benefitted greatly from her feminist leadership and administrative brilliance.

Ann was also a long-standing member of ACSALF, Canada's francophone equivalent to CSAA, Canadian Ethnic Studies Association (CESA-SCEE), and, from its first meeting, Women and Gender Studies et Recherches Féministes (WGSRF). She had a strong presence within both Francophone and Anglophone sociological communities and kept the Francophone pronunciation of her surname, "Denis." Her insistence on the silent letter "s" in her name allowed her to flag issues of Francophone language and ethnic equality from the beginning of her career in Canada among Anglophone sociologists. Later she joined Quebecois and other Canadian colleagues at meetings of the Francophonie, championing French language and culture internationally.

In 2011, Ann co-initiated Feminist Interdisciplinary Sessions at the annual Canadian Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS) and from 2013 co-chaired CSA's Feminist Cluster. In co-organizing and largely administering both interrelated programs, she personally translated cluster documents into French to facilitate Francophone participation and bilingual sessions. As a result of her lifetime of dedicated work and advocacy, significantly more attention was and continues to be paid to bilingualism within CSA and CHSS.

Ann's sociologically informed and holistic feminist administrative approach contributed to the survival of CRIAW-ICREF, founded in 1976 to make research on women more accessible to women for advocacy. From 2009 to 2015, Ann became a board member and took presidential terms (Vice-President, President and Past President). It was a time when CRIAW and other feminist organizations were threatened with extinction. During this punishing era of government cutbacks, Ann contributed what was needed to rebuild CRIAW's organizational viability, including re-establishing its volunteer committees with her active presence. Her global interests and administrative skills led her to understand the requirements for CRIAW to regain its credentials for United Nations (UN) status. As a CRIAW representative at the UN, she took on important roles in UN's associated NGO status of women meetings as organ-

izer, presenter, and mentor and also communicated with Canadians about the UN issues.

One example of Ann's sensitivity and multi-faceted skills took place at the ISA in 1994. After an RC32 pre-conference in another city, our group arrived at ISA check-in for our pre-arranged and stand-alone group residence. ISA housing authorities had excluded one of us, a senior Asian scholar. Amidst talk of protest for dividing our group, Ann assessed all perspectives. She calmed the situation and took the lead in implementing what turned out to be a win/win/win strategy. Next morning, she rearranged our residential space to accommodate our missing member and convinced housing authorities to agree. Her plan enabled us to visit our colleague's gated and guarded "protected housing" complex for non-white participants. We were horrified at this racism as were other ISA members and decision-makers. Ann's actions in this critical incident were vital in helping the ISA become more egalitarian and truly international.

Of course, Ann was also an exemplary scholar and left a fine legacy of scholarly writing. Her PhD thesis, *The Changing Role of Students in Relation to the Government of British Universities (1935-1968)*, foreshadows her sociological imaginary in grounding her research explicitly in biographical realities and within historical structures of power. Her subsequent scholarship was mainly Canadian and focused on education, women's work, the labor force, the Internet, and on women, class, and ethnicity. Her research became more comparative after the 1986 ISA conference in India and sabbaticals in the English-speaking Caribbean, especially Barbados. She headed an international research team on *(In)equality, Identity and Internet Use by Minorities in a Globalizing World: Young People's Internet Use in Barbados and Francophone Ontario*.

As ISA Vice-President for Research (2002-06), Ann organized a conference of its Research Committee. After re-election to ISA's executive, she co-edited *The ISA Handbook in Contemporary Sociology: Conflict, Competition, Cooperation and The Shape of Sociology for the 21st Century: Tradition and Renewal*. In addition to these initiatives, Ann took on both immediate and longer term issues in the ISA as well as lingering problems such as undemocratic practices and lack of linguistic and geographic diversity in some research committees.

Ann's foundational and diverse contributions to the practice and development of Canadian and international sociology generally, and to intersectional feminist and ethnic studies in particular, are inestimable.

She is missed, remembered and appreciated. ■

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# > Migration, On the Move

by **Karin Scherschel**, RheinMain University of Applied Sciences, Germany



Credit: Nick Youngson  
(Creative Commons 3).

**T**he dynamics of migration and flight are, simply put, the result of an inequitable global distribution of social, economic, cultural, and political rights. We would not reflect on or talk about migration if the modern globalized world was not divided through borders into nation-states. The political order of the modern world is determined by the national and supranational structures which claim the right to decide upon citizenship and territory. The increasingly restrictive measures to control migratory processes, particularly the flow of asylum seekers, have been a remarkable feature of migration, for example along the frontiers of Europe or the United States, just to give two popular and much discussed examples.

Citizenship is an achievement of modern times, on the one hand, but it is an exclusive mechanism and motor of social inequality, on the other. People need to cross borders to study, to work, or to find better conditions for their livelihood because of unacceptable living conditions. However, migration is an old phenomenon: people have been migrating since the dawn of human history. Gerda Heck reminds us in her reflections on “European Imaginations and African Mobility Realities” of a long forgotten migration history. The African continent has been a “safe haven” for thousands of refugees and economic migrants from Europe seeking refuge and/or a better life in the nineteenth and twentieth century.

Nowadays, globalization is a fundamental driving force of migration and flight; this powerful force has reduced the effects of spatial distance. Currently the number of

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countries and of people that are included in migratory processes is much higher than at any previous time in history.

Past and contemporary policies on immigration play an important role in migration flows. The relationship between increasing transnational flows of capital, goods, information, and people is another aspect. The international migratory process is based on an interplay between multiple factors, and it is impossible to identify one main pattern of movement. The migratory process may be caused by economic, political, cultural, or environmental factors. For example, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees predicts that climate change will trigger enormous refugee movements over the next few years. Likewise, land grabbing has become a major reason for multiple displacements.

Migration cannot be regarded as an isolated phenomenon; rather, it should be seen as an interlaced relationship of the above factors. International migration is not a process in which people migrate from one country to another; rather the migration process must be viewed as a lasting phenomenon, surpassing spatial and temporal boundaries. Carlos Sandoval reflects on the social moments of such migration movements in his contribution, "The Central American Caravan: A Twenty-First Century Exodus." This caravan is motivated by a variety of factors: The poverty rate, the increasing costs of electricity, natural gas, and gasoline trigger the collective exodus of people from Honduras or El Salvador. People migrate in groups and cross the borders together. The caravan not only offers protection against violence such as kidnapping or extortion but shows the collective moments of migration at the same time.

Globalization has led to an easier crossing of borders and to a strengthening of economic relations. The global restructuring of capitalism leads to a great demand for immigrant labor. Migrant labor plays an important role in the national economies of receiving countries. As Bediz Yilmaz shows for Turkey, this work is often informal. 3.6 million Syrians who escaped war now live in Turkey. The exploitation of Syrian workers is a widespread phenomenon tolerated by Turkish authorities. Yilmaz's contribution, "Refugees as Unfree Labor Force: Notes from Turkey," discusses the exploitative conditions of unfree labor.

We observe an expansion and a continuation of international migration across temporal and spatial boundaries. Many migrants now manage to live in two or more societies: their homeland and their host countries. Transnational migrants create a common space or field of symbolic and

collective representations beyond the nation-state. Diversity is one major aspect of modern migration movements. There is a wide range of migrant types: asylum seekers, refugees, undocumented migrants, and labor migrants (who include intellectual or business elites as well as domestic workers).

Contemporary migration flows have become globally significant because of the improvement of travel and communication facilities. We can communicate across borders and open transnational spaces of communication. Recently I visited Vercana, a beautiful place in Italy. There I talked to a friend who grew up in Yemen and went back for three weeks right at the time of the missile strike on Aden. She visited her family and wrote about the famine and the people who got killed. She reported about the sound of the falling missiles. New information and communication technologies make the experience of the *contemporaneity of the non-contemporaneous* possible. We can experience the social consequences of injustice, war, and persecution as it happens in real time. Media promotes not only the spread of injustice but also the enhancement of better living conditions, migration routes, and democratic rights.

As the famous sociologist Zygmunt Bauman stated: "the riches are global, the misery is local." It depends on money, citizenship, or gender whether people have the right and the opportunities to migrate.

We observe undoubtedly ambivalent dynamics between the facilitation of movement and the hermetic worldwide stop of it. The aggressive politics of Donald Trump to build a wall between the United States and Mexico and the creation and implementation of a fortress Europe are popular examples. We observe simultaneously the upsurge of right-wing movements and a new aggressive nationalism, as well as acts of solidarity. The global spreading of ideas based on human rights leads to movements against restrictive policies. Sarah Schilliger tells us in her contribution titled "Undoing Borders in Solidarity Cities" about the concept of Solidarity Cities. The political space of the city has become a field of democratization of urban life. The concept of citizenship will be viewed not as a status but as a process which includes negotiation over belonging and access to rights.

Thinking about migration means to reflect on the contingency of borders, the criteria of belonging, and the entitlement to as well as the exercise of rights in a modern unequal and globalized world. ■

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# > European Imaginations

## and African Mobility Realities

by **Gerda Heck**, The American University in Cairo, Egypt

**D**uring a summit of African leaders hosted by German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Berlin in October 2018, she introduced a new 1 billion euros development fund to tackle unemployment in Africa, a problem she said is spurring the “mass migration” from Africa to Europe. This points to two myths, still dominating the European discourse on African migration: That most Africans who migrate overseas are poor, uneducated, or semi-skilled, and that Africa is a continent of mass exodus. Europe seems to suffer from historical ignorance regarding its own emigration towards the African continent as well as its colonial legacy. And yet this colonial legacy and complicated relationships with African countries have a dominant impact on Euro-African migration policies and the discourse around them.

A historical glimpse into Euro-African migration reveals a neglected history. During several periods of the last two centuries, the African continent has been a “safe haven” for thousands of refugees and economic migrants from Europe seeking refuge and/or a better life on the continent. In the second half of the nineteenth century, Russian Jews fled anti-Semitic pogroms to Egypt, while Greek and Italian day laborers sought work in the construction of the Suez Canal. During World War II more than 40,000 refugees from Poland, Greece, and Yugoslavia sought shelter in refugee camps in Egypt, Palestine, and Syria. Others went to Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda.

### > European migration control

Controlling the movement of bodies globally has become one of the most prevailing political issues of the beginning of the 21st century. Responding to the arrival of nearly 800,000 refugees in summer and autumn 2015, in November 2015 the European Union set up the “EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa” (EUTF for Africa) earmarking 3.4 billion euros to fight “the root causes of irregular migration” (European Commission 2017). EU leaders started

to work intensively with countries all over Africa, tying development aid to countries’ willingness to accept returnees from Europe and offering fresh assistance in exchange for pledges to confine migratory movements.

This is nothing new. Since the end of the 1980s, the EU has developed a number of tools and activities to tighten its immigration and visa policies. Accordingly, the list of countries whose citizens require a visa to enter the Schengen area was approved based on the criteria of possible risks of irregular immigration from those states. Currently the highest rejection rates globally can be found in some African countries. In 2014-2017, 45% of visa applications in the German embassy in Yaoundé, Cameroon were denied.

Furthermore, controlling borders and migrants’ mobility has been a matter of negotiations between the EU and neighboring countries in Africa since the beginning of the 2000s. From 2004 on, there were several agreements between Libya and Italy to stem migration from Libya, which resulted, for example, in deporting people arriving on the Italian island of Lampedusa back to Libya, where they were detained in extraterritorial camps. In 2008, Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi concluded a “friendship, partnership and cooperation agreement” with Muammar Gaddafi. For years, Libya had demanded billions worth of reparation payments for Italy’s colonial crimes. Italy now promised the construction as well as financing of a Libyan coastal highway, paying 250 million dollars annually for a period of 20 years. In 2011, with the revolution and because of NATO’s intervention on the side of the Libyan rebel movement, Gaddafi terminated the cooperation with Italy, and in turn sought to use migration as a weapon against the EU, with police units still loyal to him forcing many migrants who never wanted to travel to Europe onto boats.

In the aftermath of the Arab spring in April 2012, Italy and Libya agreed to restart their collaboration on migra-

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**“Europe seems to suffer from historical ignorance regarding its own emigration towards the African continent as well as its colonial legacy”**

tion control. On 2 February 2017, Italy once again agreed to work with Libya’s military and border control forces “to stem the influx of illegal migrants,” thereby preventing migrants – as well as refugees – from reaching Europe. Since then, the Italian government and the EU have provided the Libyan Coast Guard with boats, training, and other assistance to patrol the sea and pull back refugees and migrants trying to sail to Europe, and nearly 38,000 people have been intercepted by the Libyan Coast Guard and taken back to Libya’s detention centers.

Already in 2015, an overarching network of agreements between Europe and African countries regarding “migration management, readmission agreements, and border controls, which are closely linked to development aid and the pledge for more visa allocations” gradually covered North, West, and East Africa. With the EUTF for Africa, the shift in focus towards activities on the African continent is accompanied by a new discourse that suggests that the “evil” of unregulated cross-border movements can be tackled at its roots. 63% of EUTF funds go to development projects, 22% to projects focusing on migration management, and 14% to security and peace-building measures. Thus most EUTF funding goes to European national organizations. For Germany, one of the partners implementing the EUTF is the GIZ, which in East Africa, for instance, is responsible for the “Better Migration Management” program. The organization has been highly criticized by various human rights organizations for its collaboration with former warlords in Sudan.

### **> African realities**

The effects of the EUTF for the African continent need yet to be researched. But the ways the EU tries to keep pressure on African governments to guard their border outposts and accept returned deportees can be seen as another chapter in a long history of simultaneously interlaced and unequal trajectories between the two continents, produced by power inequalities, colonial domination, exploitation, and racism. At the same time, African governments are not merely passive victims of Europe’s externalizing en-

deavors, as these regulations are flexibly negotiated. Furthermore, we know from years of research that migration movements cannot easily be stopped by border control.

In fact, Asmita Parshotam (2018) shows that Africa is the least migratory region in the world, and the majority of international migrants from Africa remain on the continent. In 2017, 19.4 million international African migrants, plus 5 million international migrants from outside Africa, resided on the continent. According to the UNHCR, countries as Cameroon, Chad, the DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, and Uganda hosted one third of the refugees globally (4.9 million refugees). Although the number of African migrants living outside the continent has increased from 6.9 million in 1990 to 16.9 million in 2017, such statistics hardly correlate with the images portrayed in European media of migrants arriving on European shores.

In addition, not all of these migrants live in Europe. For instance, more than 80% of Egyptian migrant workers are employed in the Gulf countries, like Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Kuwait. And more migratory ties have emerged recently between Africa, Latin America, Asia, and the Gulf states. Within the last 30 years, African migrant communities have also emerged in Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Dubai, and Istanbul. These migrant networks are strongly connected to the high mobility of African traders, who commute back and forth between the continents. Although Europe is not irrelevant, it certainly does not merit the central place it occupies in the popular discourses and academic work which frame African mobilities. Indeed, Europe has extensively invested in knowledge production in order to govern African migration movements, not only at Europe’s borders, but also on the continent itself. In response to this, philosopher Achille Mbembe recently advocated for an African continent without borders. In response to the overarching migration control attempts by Europe within Africa, he argues, the next phase of Africa’s decolonization should involve granting mobility to all its people and reshaping the terms of membership in a political and cultural ensemble that is not confined to the nation-state. ■

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# > The Central American Caravan: A 21st-Century Exodus\*

by **Carlos Sandoval**, University of Costa Rica, Costa Rica



Migrants crossing the bridge at the Guatemala-Mexico border in 2018.  
Photo: boitchy/flickr. Some rights reserved.

**S**ince October 2018, great international attention has been paid to the collective flight of Central Americans from their home countries, especially from Honduras and El Salvador. This so-called “caravan” of migrants moved first through Guatemala and then Mexico and many were, in June 2019, waiting hopefully in Tijuana, on the US/Mexico border.

## > Caravan or exodus?

A first element of this situation that may be worth discussing is the very notion of a “caravan.” At least in common usage in Spanish, and possibly in other languages, the word “caravan” is not necessarily associated with a dangerous or risky forced departure. “Exodus” is a concept with a long history, associated especially with biblical texts, which could apply in the Central American case because it points to the forced nature of the migration. Today in Central America, one doesn’t choose to migrate – it’s obligatory. A second point to consider is to what extent we are actually confronting an increase in Honduran migration. US Census data allows us to put this phenomenon in perspective. If we compare Central Americans counted in the Census of 2000 and 2010, it can be seen that it increased 136% in 10 years. The Honduran migrant popu-

lation increased by 191%; the Guatemalan, 180%; and the Salvadoran, 151%. What is new is not the number of those who are forced to migrate, but the decision to leave collectively their country.

## > What explains the collective migration from Hondurans

What is new is not the numbers of people who are migrating, but that it is a collective migration. These collective movements could be motivated as much by temporary factors as by structural ones. The increase in the cost of electricity, natural gas, and gasoline, as well as of various food products is among the factors triggering migration.

Leaving in a group at least diminishes the danger of kidnapping and extortion. People from countries in Central America, except for Costa Rica, need a visa to enter Mexico. This forces migrants to enter and pass through unofficial border crossings, leaving them vulnerable to mistreatment by organized crime as well as by the Mexican police authorities themselves. In the context of the rise of social media, many people are able to make contacts, and if they are going to start their journey on the night bus, it makes more sense to do it together.

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The lack of dignified employment is decisive among the motivating factors that could be said to be more structural. The poverty rate among the population as a whole is calculated to be 64.3%, and this creates violent structural conditions that are very difficult to deal with, especially for young people who are the silent majority of those that abandon the country every night.

In political terms, without a doubt the Honduran coup d'état left the social fabric even more fragile. June 2019 will be the tenth anniversary of the coup, and in November 2017, Juan Orlando Hernández was re-elected in a contest full of protest, doubt, and claims of electoral fraud. Hernández managed to make changes to the constitution allowing his re-election; ironically, opposition to re-election was one of the motivating factors in the 2009 coup.

A third combination of factors is social. There is an enormous amount of criminal violence in Honduras. In 2016, San Pedro Sula was the most violent city in the world after Caracas, with a homicide rate of 111 per 100,000 inhabitants.

### > Routes and reception

The majority of those who joined in the march north took the very longest routes to the US-Mexico border. This decision made the journey even more exhausting and was probably motivated by the desire to avoid the route along the Gulf of Mexico where there is an obvious presence of organized crime, and thus of extortion and death. There is a distance of 2,700 kilometers between San Pedro Sula, Honduras and Tamaulipas, Mexico (on the Gulf coast). Yet most of the migrants chose to travel to Tijuana, on the Pacific side of Mexico – a distance of some 4,348 kilometers.

Currently, the immigration authorities require that people arriving at the border as part of the so-called “caravan” register their names on a list controlled by Mexican authorities. This list allows the migrants to apply for asylum in the US.

The US government approves barely 10% of the applications for asylum that it receives, and the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) does not seem to be exercising any leadership role in this situation. The US provides 40% of the budget for UNHCR and is its largest financial backer.

### > To continue

In closing, three particularly important considerations must be mentioned. The first is that on November 6, 2018, midterm elections were held in the US, and in the four states bordering Mexico, eight of nine congressional districts voted to elect Democratic representatives. Encouraging hatred of immigrants did not create a great electoral wave for Donald Trump, and this sows hope as to the possibility that anti-immigrant hatred can be politically defeated.

Secondly, on the first of December 2018, Andrés Manuel López Obrador was inaugurated as the President of Mexico. He will without a doubt have among his multiple challenges – all very difficult and complex – the question of Central American migration. During the recent summit on migration held in Marrakech, Morocco, the Mexican government proposed offering employment to the estimated 200,000 Central Americans who pass through Mexico each year. However, in June 2019, López Obrador agreed to reinforce immigration controls as a way of dissuading Trump from proceeding with his plans for taxing Mexican exports to the US.

Finally, and not least importantly, beyond Trump's reelection and the start of a new presidential and legislative term in Mexico, the great challenge is to guarantee in Central America the right not to have to migrate. The goal in the medium and long term is to imagine a way out of the huge unfairness and inequality experienced in the region. This is a big hurdle to overcome, and one that, unfortunately, the ruling classes do not seem disposed to address today. How to improve a situation characterized by such unfairness and inequality will, without a doubt, be a test for progressive thought and action in Central America.

Two Honduran women interviewed by the BBC as they walked toward Mexico in October 2018 summed up very well this unfairness and inequality. One of the women declared, “It doesn't concern me if the President of the United States doesn't help Honduras because I don't get any help from him.” The other, for her part, concluded, “We aren't afraid of Trump's threats; we are coming, fleeing our country because we are so afraid of our own country.” ■

\* This is an edited version of an article originally published in Spanish on the webpage [www.madrimasd.org](http://www.madrimasd.org). Thanks to Meg Mitchell for translating it from Spanish to English. Thanks are also due to Torri Loneragan.

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# > Refugees as Unfree Labor Force: Notes from Turkey

by **Bediz Yılmaz**, IMIS-University of Osnabrück, Germany and Maya Association-Mersin, Turkey



*Children playing around the greenhouse poles, Adanalıoğlu rural zone, in the periphery of Mersin, south of Turkey, 2015. Photo: A. Öner Kurt.*

**W**ith 3.6 million Syrians and another 600,000 from other nationalities, Turkey is by far the country with the largest refugee population in the world. This has become for Turkish authorities a fact to boast about and is applauded by other countries, who talk of Turkey as a model.

In this short paper, I discuss some features of the Turkish model with the example of a mid-sized city where I have been involved in both research and activism on migration-related issues. But let me first explain the usage of the term *refugee*. Syrians in Turkey are under “Temporary Protection” because of the geographical limitation imposed by Turkey on the 1951 Geneva Convention. This status gives them a number of rights, such as unconditional access to public health and education services, but it fails to provide the predictability and reassurance of refugee status. As such, it puts its beneficiaries in a precarious and insecure position due mainly to the arbitrariness of the Temporary Protection Regime that is highly dependent on politics. By calling them *refugee*, I want to place the attention on these characteristics of the Temporary Protection Regime and underline the fact that though they are in refugee condition, they lack the status.

## > Characteristics of the Temporary Protection Regime

This lack is determinant in defining the destinies of Syrians in Turkey and explains the differences between various countries with a large refugee & *refugee* population. In this paper, I will focus on the labor aspect of *refugees*, particularly those working in agriculture. It would not be wrong to state that Turkey currently relies on *refugee* labor: while roughly half of the 3.6 million Syrians in Turkey are of working age, only 31,000 of them have been given work permits because of the difficulties of obtaining the permit. As a result, the working conditions of *refugees* are defined by informality. Hence, I would argue that informality, already highly widespread in Turkey (around 50% overall, over 85% in agriculture), is the very situation that makes the Turkish model work. In other words, without the high level of informality in labor, acknowledged by everybody, tolerated by the authorities, taken advantage of by the employers, such a high number of Syrians would not have been able to live in this country. Exploitation of Syrians in labor and discrimination against them in everyday language has become common to nearly all members of society regardless of their political affiliation.

Agriculture has a particularity in this landscape. The work permit, hardly obtained for other sectors and obliging the refugees to work in extreme levels of exploitation, is not even asked for in agriculture, opening the door for further exploitation. According to Article 5(4) of the *Regulation on Work Permits for Foreigners Under Temporary Protection* (2016/8375), foreigners under temporary protection and who work in agriculture and animal husbandry are exempted from the need to obtain a work permit. Based on my observations as an activist-researcher in Adanalıoğlu, an agricultural zone in the outskirts of Mersin, an Eastern Mediterranean city in Turkey, I would argue that refugees in the agricultural sector represent a form of unfree labor. I will follow the scheme provided by Nicola Phillips in her 2013 article on unfree labor to define contemporary unfree labor.

### > Refugees as unfree labor

The first dimension in this scheme consists of the informal, verbal, and short-term contracts based on “indebtedness [...] used to discipline the worker and bond her or him into that relationship, and frequently manipulated so as to maximize the exploitation of the worker.” In the agricultural zone where we made our observations, labor intermediaries exist as the pivotal figures in the relations of production in agriculture. Their omnipotent role has grown with the Syrians who also lack the local language. Intermediaries get a share from each daily payment, usually 10%. They act as negotiators in finding jobs, accommodation, and payment for the workers, and ensuring the completion of the task and the handling of any worker-related issues for the employers. This brings absolute dependence on the agricultural intermediaries for the refugee workers.

Secondly, unfreedom is “primarily constituted not by coerced entry but by precluded exit; these conditions are often established by indebtedness and/or the withholding of wages until the end of a contract.” In our case, payments are done at the end of the crop season for each product,

which might last for six to seven months. During the season, workers are given either some pocket money, or are indebted and bound to a local market, usually owned by the intermediary himself.

Thirdly, the contemporary forms of unfree labor generally do not consist of work without payment and involve an exchange of labor for money; however, “wages are in no sense equivalent to the value added by the labor appropriated under these conditions.” Our observations have shown that workers are paid lower than the established wage, and sometimes not paid. But they cannot leave because they usually have “money inside,” that they expect to recover at least partially.

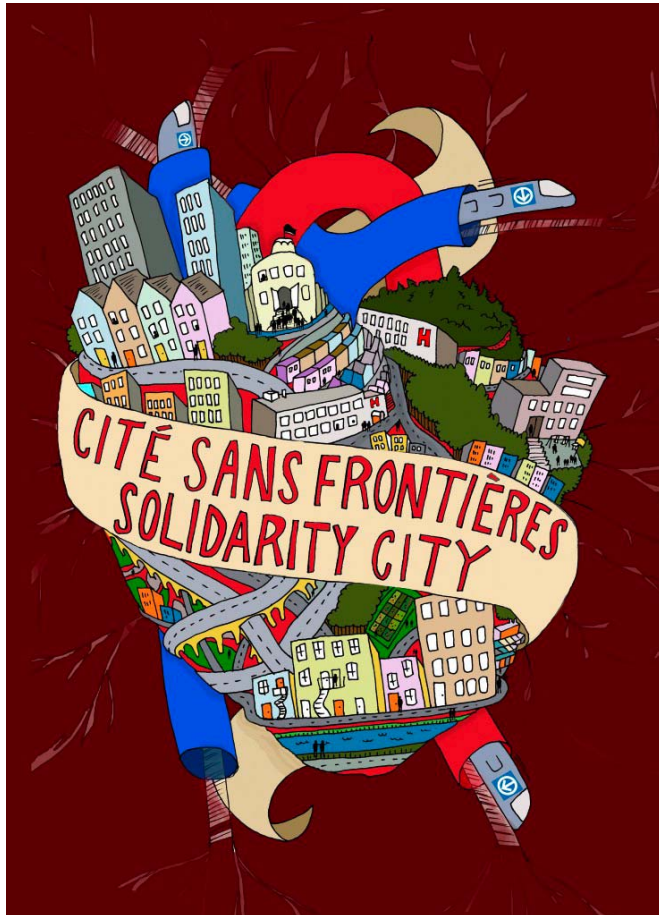
Finally, unfreedoms are constituted within the exploitative conditions that are “associated with harsh, degrading and dangerous conditions of work, violations of workers’ labor (and often human) rights and forms of coercion and manipulation designed to make workers work harder, for longer and for less money.” Indeed, refugee workers live in tents built on fields rented for this purpose by the intermediary (workers also pay a rent for tent-placement); basic infrastructure is lacking, and they pay for water while using electricity “illegally” by branching cables to the wires over the field. The agricultural intermediary decides on the working place according to the season for particular crops; workers only know a few days before that they have to move to a new place.

Yes, Turkey holds the largest refugee population but it does not offer them a dignified life, a path of integration, a promise for the future; instead, unstructured and daily measures guided by internal and foreign political necessities shape the model. It is highly improbable that this model would propose to the peoples of Turkey a transparent and structured model of living together. Is the Turkish government reliable, accountable, responsible? Can this really be a model? ■

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# > Undoing Borders in Solidarity Cities

by **Sarah Schilliger**, University of Basel, Switzerland



*Cities all over the world have become a space of struggle and experimentation around the future of migration regimes, but also a space for a democratization of urban life towards a right to a city for all. Credit: Solidarity City.*

**W**hile the leaders of the EU member states are pushing ahead with migration policy restrictions, accepting the death of thousands of people in the Mediterranean Sea and criminalizing those who rescue refugees in distress, municipal governments of various European cities are declaring their cities “Solidarity Cities.” Cities have thus become a space of struggle and experimentation around the future of migration regimes, but also for a fundamental democratization of urban life in the sense of a right to the city for all. These struggles for “urban citizenship” show possibilities for cities to challenge not only the nation-states’ ability to draw and uphold national boundaries, but also the fundamental meanings of citizenship.

## > Bridges from the sea to the cities

A significant political intervention at the local level involves a commitment to a “city of refuge.” Progressive mayors in coastal cities of Italy (e.g. Naples, Palermo) and Spain (Barcelona) have spoken out in favor of opening their ports and have offered to welcome those rescued at sea. After hundreds of people drowned within sight of the Sicilian coast, Leoluca Orlando, the mayor of the Sicilian capital of Palermo, was one of the first in Europe to declare his city a “city of refuge.” Leoluca Orlando has generated Europe-wide attention with his sentence: “If you ask how many refugees live in Palermo, I will not answer: 60,000 or 100,000. But: none. Whoever comes to Palermo is a Palermitan.” The “Charter of Palermo” he initiated demands that civil rights be exclusively linked to one’s place of residence.

In Germany, too, city governments have expressed their willingness to offer refuge for people looking for a safe home. Broad alliances (e.g. “Seebrücke” and #unteilbar) with thousands of people from across civil society have stood up for the creation of Safe Harbors through repeated demonstrations and creative actions. They call for safe escape routes, decriminalization of sea rescue, and a direct and humane reception of refugees, similar to a relocation program.

## > Access without fear to the urban infrastructure

Experiences from North America, specifically the Sanctuary Cities movement that has been developing since the 1980s, have been an inspiration for the Solidarity City movement in Europe. The central point of departure of Sanctuary Cities is the city’s illegalized residents. For undocumented migrants, the border is reproduced in everyday activities such as attending school, going to hospitals, or using public transport. Those who cannot prove that they have the correct papers are excluded from access to basic social services and can be criminalized, arrested, and deported.

In order to protect urban residents from deportation and to grant access to urban infrastructure and social rights, different forms of cooperation between social movements and city governments, which together oppose the national authorities and their migration policies, have been tested.





Banner of the Migrant Justice Network  
Solidarity Across Borders. Credit: Solidarity  
Across Borders.

A “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell” policy (as introduced in Toronto) prohibits city employees providing public services from asking about migration status (“Don’t Ask”) and, if it becomes known, from passing it on to other state authorities (“Don’t Tell”). In some cities such as New York or San Francisco, everyone who can prove their identity and residence in the city is entitled to an official municipal identity card, which offers people without regular residency status more security in their everyday city life and facilitates accessing city resources.

Currently, activists of the Solidarity City movement are calling for the introduction of City ID Cards in various German-speaking cities (e.g. in Hamburg, Zurich, Bern), following the example of New York. The Bern city government has already spoken out in favor, although the access criteria and the concrete content of the card are still contested.

### > Undoing borders

City governments play a central role within the (internal) border regimes as the development and implementation of welfare services depend on the city’s interpretation of national regulations. While the restriction of social rights for migrants with precarious status constitutes a form of internal migration control, providing access to welfare services for irregular migrants at the local level can challenge the existing concept of national borders.

This reflects an expansion of the notion of citizenship: Citizenship is not only defined as a status but as a process which involves negotiation over access to and exercise of rights. This interpretation gives less importance to legal regulations but rather focuses on specific social relationships, norms, practices of solidarity, and the negotiation of belonging. It therefore becomes all the more important to focus on the actual sites where citizenship is negotiated in day-to-day life, and where new forms of solidarity are exercised within urban communities.

The problem raised here is not primarily migration, but the unequal distribution of social rights and unequal access to resources. This enables a shift in the discourse on

migration – away from the current “integration imperative” and towards addressing inequalities and the question of social participation. In this lies the connection to current right-to-the-city struggles, at whose heart is the resistance against gentrification and against the commodification of public spaces, the collective appropriation of urban infrastructure, and participation rights.

### > Concrete utopia

What all these initiatives that mobilize with the slogan of a Solidarity City have in common is an evocation of a concrete utopia. This concrete utopia has the potential to lead out of political constraints by linking migration and social policy issues instead of playing them off against each other.

In addition, the concept of the Solidarity City enables broader alliances against poverty, for social housing, urban infrastructure, and cultural and democratic participation. Starting from very concrete needs and realities in urban space, everyday struggles of different social movements, which otherwise often operate separately, can come together and at best create a new awareness of jointly experienced forms of exploitation, oppression, and discrimination within a diverse urban precariat.

Often it is such concrete initiatives and grassroots movements that lay the foundations for certain political experiments. For a successful implementation, the creation of bridges between activists, progressive city politicians, and local authorities/administrations is crucial. However, the urban level should not be overestimated: Despite the room for maneuver, cities are integrated into a global power structure and the nation-state remains an important terrain for political struggles.

Finally, the concept also includes the opportunity to create a new understanding of belonging. It is not about who and how a perceived “Other” is and should be. Rather, it offers the possibility of collectively imagining a new “us”. This is a long overdue adjustment to the current reality of a post-migrant society in which migration is recognized as a fact. ■

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# > Students for Future: Towards Ecological Class Politics

by **Julia Kaiser**, University of Leipzig, Germany and **Jasper Stange**, Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany



Students at the University of Leipzig meet for a general assembly. Credit: Julia Kaiser.

**H**ow will our world look in a century? According to recent studies, the majority of the global population will be subjected to heat conditions beyond human survivability for several weeks per year. Aridification will affect more than 30% of the world's land surface. More than a billion people will be displaced from the tropical zone. Maybe, the German physicist Harald Lesch concluded recently, humanity would then have to admit that it only learns through catastrophes. We seem to have no serious interest in averting this situation, despite being fully aware of its approach.

However, today all over the globe young people, inspired by Greta Thunberg's weekly school strikes, are taking their anger to the streets and demanding a change in climate politics. This has evolved into the global movement Fridays for Future (FFF). Through weekly school strikes, demonstrations, and other forms of protest, they aim to exert pressure on politicians primarily to make them comply with the 1.5°C goal stated in the Paris Agreement.

In Germany, the movement has met widespread approval. More than 250 local chapters have been established, and 55% of the population has expressed support for the movements' concerns. In solidarity with the school students' cause, organizations such as Scientists for Future and Artists for Future have been formed. Such a broadening of its social base is one of the most important strategic objectives of the movement, following the logic that the bigger the movement becomes, the more pressure it is able to exert on those in charge. Everyone, regardless of

political affiliation, is called upon to join the fight against the impending climate crisis – and many have answered the call. This strategic outlook contrasts with the main tendencies in climate activism over the past decades. With its approach of involving large numbers of people in street protests, FFF has the potential to bring about fundamental structural change.

In Germany, students collectively joined FFF in early 2019 as Students for Future (SFF). In the following, we argue that SFF can have a significant impact on the political character of the climate movement by entrenching a systematic and class-based approach to the organization of majorities. Here we will briefly summarize the short history of SFF, followed by an analysis of what distinguishes their approach to climate politics. We conclude with some suggestions of how students and social scientists all over the world can support the movement against the impending crisis faced by humanity.

## > FFF conquers the universities

Following the rapid growth of Fridays for Future, in the spring of 2019 student activists across Germany began to discuss how to involve their universities in the emerging climate movement. From the beginning, the goal was to organize as many students as possible by hosting open meetings under slogans such as "Act Now! Let's bring the protests to the university: For more climate justice." Partly due to the significant impact FFF already had on public discourse at this point, these open meetings attracted up to

300 students each. Within a few months, these groups of politically diverse activists and students organized general assemblies in more than twenty universities all over the country, often being the largest political meetings these universities had seen in years. How had this rapid success come about?

Since the methods used in the east German town of Leipzig have been adopted in many other cities, we will use them here as a representative example. In order to reach as many students as possible, concepts developed in union organizing were applied by the Leipzig activists. To enforce an official general assembly, the goal was to make it impossible for other students not to hear about the planned general assembly and actively decide whether to support it or not. Thus, a petition was circulated which expressed solidarity with FFF and demanded a general assembly to discuss steps towards a more sustainable university and city. Activists and supporters systematically spread the petition in all faculties and on the main campus, and informed students about it in lectures, often with the support of the teaching staff. Within a week, 2,500 students had signed the petition.

At the assembly, the students agreed on a catalogue of demands after speakers from the university and unions emphasized the interconnectedness of ecological and social politics. In other cities such as Berlin, demands targeted not only universities but also unions and city politics; the unions were invited to the “climate strikes,” and the Berlin senate was urged to introduce steps towards the establishment of a more expansive and free public transport system.

### > Nationwide exchange and generalization of methods

In order to spread the methods applied by activists in cities such as Leipzig and Berlin, a nationwide gathering of SFF activists was organized in June 2019, with representatives from more than 30 cities attending. Successful approaches in the mobilization of universities were presented and discussed. US union organizer and author Jane McAlevey was invited to teach the activists proven organizing methods and discuss the climate movement’s next steps. This gathering was the first building block in the national coordination of the student climate activists. Equipped with these methods, activists organized general assemblies in fourteen cities by the end of the summer semester.

Concurrently, students began to be more actively involved in the dialogues with unions that FFF had initiated. To this date, almost every major union in Germany has met with SFF and FFF activists at both national and local levels. Such convergences of unions and social movements have been rare in Germany in the past years. Some unions, such as those representing public transport workers, ap-

pear to be natural allies of the climate movement because of their many overlapping interests. For example, following talks with FFF activists, Frank Bsirske, head of the service workers union ver.di, publicly encouraged ver.di members to attend the global strike day on September 20, 2019. But even unions such as the powerful IG Metall, representing carbon-intensive industrial sectors of the economy, engaged in dialogue with FFF, despite the fact that their workplaces would be those most affected by an ecological restructuring of the economy. The climate movement will have to solve many problems and answer many questions to create possibilities of actual collaboration with unions. Notwithstanding, these convergences may lead the way towards a mass climate movement powerful enough to create real social and ecological change, as we argue in the following.

### > A new type of climate movement?

From the above sketch of the direction which Students for Future has taken so far, we can derive some characteristics that, taken together, are rare if not unique in the broader climate justice movement.

First, SFF aims to make the struggle against the climate crisis a struggle undertaken by the majority of society. In that respect, it differs from other (not less relevant) forms of action that demand participants accept significant physical and legal risks – such as occupying surface mines or forests. Forms of action such as these inevitably mostly attract activists already radicalized to some extent, a limited milieu of what Jane McAlevey has termed “self-selected activists.” In contrast, Fridays for Future emphasizes its ambition to provide a space for the majority of society in its weekly “strikes.” SFF shares this sentiment.

The majority approach has implications both for the work among students and the formation of alliances with other actors. Within universities, SFF aims to confront the entire student body with the issue of the climate crisis instead of limiting itself to smaller events addressing only those already involved in climate activism. The politicization of immense numbers of young people in the past months is the result. This strategy has led to the rapid development of skills and confidence among core activists; even those who were never politically engaged before now speak in front of hundreds of students, organize demonstrations, and represent the movement in union dialogues. Interestingly, the majority of these activists are young women.

Secondly, when it comes to broadening the social basis of the movement externally beyond schools and universities, SFF (as well as parts of FFF) shares, at least in practice, a class-specific conception of what “majority” actually means. Prominent faces of FFF have mostly approached political parties, businesses, and even banks in order to gain more support for the movement, and have expressed

strong confidence in institutions such as the EU to fight climate change. Many SFF activists are critical towards these tendencies. In their effort to include further social actors in the movement, specific task forces were established which were dedicated to establishing a dialogue with trade unions to organize a majority of wage-earners. This happens not merely to express mutual solidarity, but to join with potential allies in strikes in which economic bargaining power can be exerted to achieve both social and ecological improvements. This approach towards trade unions is not only motivated by the acknowledgment of the economic power of organized workers. It is also an attempt to overcome the alleged contradiction between the interests of global climate and of workers, especially those in carbon-intensive branches of industry. The political center and right tirelessly, and often successfully, reinforce this narrative, striking a nerve especially among those directly affected by a restructuring of the economy, such as in the east German former mining region of Lusatia (Lausitz). While fundamental questions remain open, recent dialogues between SFF activists and trade unions have shown that the interests of global climate and those of bus drivers as well as steel workers frequently align.

### > Perspectives for the near future

These two characteristics of Students for Future's strategic outlook – aiming for the active involvement of the majority of society in the climate movement and a class-specific approach to the organization of this majority – open the door to forms of action capable of achieving structural change towards a more sustainable society through the self-activity of the majority. For instance, in Germany, an upcoming nationwide collective bargaining negotiation in the public transport sector may provide an opportunity to build a coalition between climate activists, unions, and communities. Just as in the health and education sectors, public transport not only has a small impact on anthropogenic climate change, but is also essential for the social reproduction and well-being of entire cities and regions. Based on this, SFF could organize open groups in their neighborhoods and universities, who would stand in solidarity with the employees, potentially supporting them in strikes, etc. External political pressure from social movements such as FFF/SFF could politicize the collective bargaining process and emphasize the far-reaching significance of these negotiations for society. A combined effort by unions and a mass climate movement could achieve better working conditions and higher wages for public transport employ-

ees, improve living standards for those who use it through the expansion and decommodification of public transport infrastructure, and decrease carbon emissions through a reduction of individualized transportation via cars.

The hegemonic strategy among prominent Fridays for Future activists, putting confidence in political parties, businesses, and state institutions to solve the impending climate crisis, has reached a sort of dead end. While it has played into the rapid rise of the Green Party in Germany, and led to climate change dominating public discourse for months, it has not resulted in tangible actions towards the ecological restructuring of the German economy and society at large. An orientation towards an ecological class politics, with unions fighting side by side with the climate movement for an ecological and social transformation, may just offer a way out of this strategic impasse.

### > Join us!

Universities, we believe, have the potential to play a significant part in the building of a broad, class-based, and global climate movement. This will require an organized student body as well as critical scientists who actively support the organization process and develop theoretical contributions towards a deeper understanding of the climate crisis' causes and possible solutions. These are not only issues concerning the technical or natural sciences; sustainable technologies alone will not stop anthropogenic climate change. Our entire economy and society will have to be restructured. In which way and what the consequences will be are crucial questions social scientists will have to answer.

To be more specific: Students, get organized in the climate movement! Scientists, align your research with the pressing questions humanity faces and make your results publicly accessible! Finally, work with us to strengthen the movement. Currently, Students for Future are discussing the possibility of a week-long student climate strike. For one week we could open universities to the public and organize lectures and discussions about the climate crisis and possible solutions to it. The conference of German Rectors Conference (HRK) has defined the role of universities as "centers of democratic culture contributing to productive discussions about mastering the major challenges of society." In the light of the world's current situation and near future, we think it is time to fulfill this responsibility. ■

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# > Private Catholic Education in Senegal

by **Moustapha Tamba**, University Cheikh Anta Diop of Dakar, Senegal

**P**rivate Catholic education remains prominent today in Senegal. In 1816, the colonial administration entrusted the teaching of French to the Church, in particular to congregations such as the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Cluny, the Brothers of Ploërmel, the Missionaries of the Holy Spirit, the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of Castres, and the Daughters of the Holy Heart of Mary. In the twentieth century, after the Second World War, the development of Catholic education took a decisive step forward under the impetus of Monsignor Marcel Lefebvre, Vicar Apostolic from 1946 to 1960. Other congregations settled in, such as the Brothers of Saint Gabriel, the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, the Ursuline Sisters, the Sisters of Saint Charles of Angers, and the Marists.

After independence in 1960, the Church entrusted teaching to the National Directorate of Catholic Edu-

cation in 1970. In 1976, a national coordination structure was set up, today replaced by a National Secretariat. Since 2003, private Catholic education has been constituted as an association called "Office national de l'enseignement catholique du Sénégal" (National Office of Catholic Education of Senegal).

However, private Catholic education has been decentralized through the creation of diocesan directorates. There are seven dioceses, each having its "Direction diocésaine de l'enseignement catholique" (diocesan directorate of Catholic education) or Didec. By delegation of the diocesan bishop, the diocesan director is responsible for all Catholic schools in a diocese.

To conduct this study, we turned to those responsible for Catholic private education, in particular the head of the diocesan directorate of Catholic education of the Archdiocese of Da-

kar and the Secretary of the National Office of Catholic Education of Senegal, to obtain quantitative data. Both offices are located in the S.I.C.A.P. Baobabs district of Dakar opposite St. Peter's Church, where we conducted a documentary survey using the archives made available to us. The results of the study are presented in the form of cross-tabulated or double-entry sorting tables.

Table 1 shows that the Archdiocese of Dakar alone accounts for nearly 50% of the total number of schools. It is made up of two apostolic regions, the first including Le Plateau, Grand Dakar-Yoff, and Les Niayes, and the second including the Sine and Petite Côte. In total, the archdiocese is made up of 41 parishes. The dioceses of Thiès and Ziguinchor represent 16% and 11% of the institutions respectively. The dioceses of Kolda and Tambacounda have fewer institutions.

**Table 1: Distribution of Catholic schools at the different educational levels in 2018-19**

DIOCESE	LEVEL					
	Preschool	Elementary	Middle	Secondary	TOTAL	%
Dakar	58	54	23	14	149	48.5%
Thiès	22	24	3	1	50	16%
Kaolack	12	13	2	1	28	9%
Ziguinchor	11	15	8	1	35	11%
Saint-Louis	8	6	3	1	18	6%
Kolda	6	6	3	1	16	5%
Tambacounda	4	5	1	1	11	4.5%
TOTAL	121	123	43	20	307	100%

Source: National Office of Catholic Education of Senegal, March 2019.



**Table 2: Distribution of students in private Catholic schools at the different educational levels in 2018-19**

DIOCESE	LEVEL					
	Preschool	Elementary	Middle	Secondary	TOTAL	%
Dakar	6,442	36,304	16,467	6,696	65,909	57%
Ziguinchor	2,268	5,735	1,856	491	10,350	9%
Thiès	1,983	11,080	2,665	836	16,564	14%
Kaolack	1,441	5,326	733	248	7,748	7%
Saint-Louis	970	3,519	1,212	262	5,963	5%
Kolda	656	3,465	958	245	5,324	4.5%
Tambacounda	417	2,630	479	143	3,669	3.5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14,177</b>	<b>68,059</b>	<b>24,370</b>	<b>8,921</b>	<b>115,527</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: National Office of Catholic Education of Senegal, March 2019.

The Archdiocese of Dakar is leading, with 57% of the total student population. According to statistics from the Didec, the urban area, especially Dakar and its suburbs, has a total of 25,360 pupils in elementary education while the rural area (Petite Côte and Sine) has 10,944 pupils. At the middle education level, the Archdiocese also maintains its rank with 14,002 and 2,465 students respectively in 2018-19 in its urban and rural areas. In secondary education, the Archdiocese remains first, concentrating 75% of the overall number of students enrolled in the private sector. The Collège Sacré-Cœur remains

the largest private Catholic school, with a total enrolment of 1,059 students in 2018-19.

Moreover, according to the Didec of the Dakar Archdiocese, there are at all levels more students of the Muslim faith than of the Catholic faith. For example, at the elementary level in 2018-19, 72% of pupils are Muslims, 26% Catholics, and 2% of other faiths. This is evidence of interreligious dialogue between the Senegalese.

In conclusion, it may be said that the spread of private Catholic edu-

cation has historically been ahead of public and secular education. In the nineteenth century, it was already present in the four municipalities of Saint Louis, Gorée, Dakar, and Rufisque. And it can be found today across the entire country, though most of the infrastructure and student enrolment are located in the Archdiocese of Dakar, which includes all the parishes of Dakar, the Petite-Côte, and the Sine. Another interesting fact is that most of the students in the private Catholic education sector are Muslims rather than Catholics. ■

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# > Sociology of the Senegalese School System

by **Souleymane Gomis**, University Cheikh Anta Diop of Dakar, Senegal

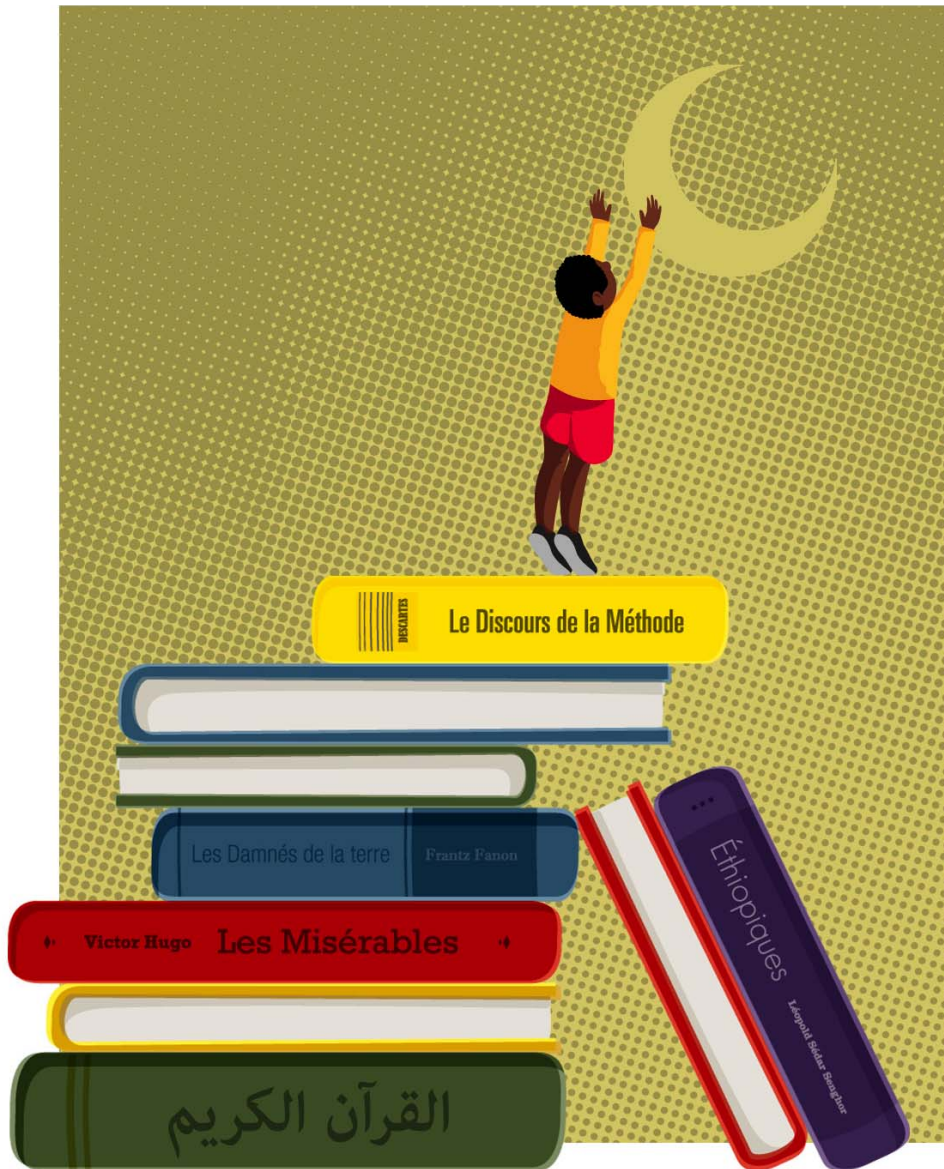


Illustration by Arbu.

**R**eflecting on the sociological dimension of the Senegalese education system is an opportunity for a comprehensive and systematic analysis. The aim is to show the strengths and weaknesses of its structure and functioning from the colonial era to the present day and to identify its prospects. Here it may be worth noting that Senegal is one of

the few countries in Africa with a long educational tradition. Indeed, long before contact with Europe, Senegal had hosted major centers of Koranic education during the period of Islamization of the Black Continent.

Major historical and religious figures such as El-Hadji Malick Sy, Sheikh Ahmadou Bamba, and Sheikh Ibra Niass helped spread Koranic education across Senegal and beyond. This tradition of schooling in Arabic played an important role in the resistance against the French invasion. However, French colonists actually managed to take advantage of this Arab-speaking tradition of the Senegalese to promote the colonial school system. In 1960, when Senegal gained its independence, the French-language school system inherited from the colonists was retained as a tool to help build the nation-state. French has been maintained by the new authorities as the official language of the country.

However, there remain recurring debates today as to whether the Senegalese have taken sufficient ownership of their education system. The Senegalese people still see themselves as mere users of this school system. The problem of introducing national languages at school to advance bilingual education attests to this.

## > Genesis of the school system in Senegal

The first French-language school in Black Africa was created in 1817 in Saint Louis, Senegal, by a young 27-year-old French teacher named

Jean Dard. From then on, more schools were established, gradually spreading first in coastal towns and cities and then in inland communities. The development of schools in the rest of the country was accelerated by colonization in order to facilitate commercial and political exchanges.

As in most former colonies of Africa, Senegal experienced the francization of curricula until its independence in 1960, then its Africanization from the 1970s, and finally its nationalization in 1990. However, despite this evolution over time, the Senegalese school system has remained structurally and functionally modelled on that of the former French colonizer. Schooling is compulsory and free for all girls and boys between the ages of six and sixteen.

Following UNESCO standards, 2% of the population of each country should reach the level of higher education. Given that the current population of Senegal is estimated at 15 million, the country should have about 300,000 higher-education students. But the actual number is 150,000 students, in both private and public higher education institutions. Another equally important issue is the mismatch between the curricula and the expectations of the peoples of Senegal.

### **> Strengths and weaknesses**

The Senegalese public school system is admittedly a model of success, having trained, in the fields of science, medicine, law, literature, and economics, world historical figures – such as Léopold Sédar Senghor in literature and Cheikh Anta Diop in history and physics – whose works have left their mark on the modern history of humanity. One strength of the Senegalese school system lies in the quality of the instructors' training. The state's commitment and determination to support its school and higher education system are also noteworthy, and so are the involvement and investment of families. People are free to contribute to the financing of their children's schooling.

However, it must be noted that neither the state, nor teachers, nor teachers' unions, nor technical and financial partners are considering involving parents in school curriculum development. Populations are reduced to consumers of the school system and its services.

The Senegalese education system experiences many different limitations – at the political, psychological, infrastructural, programmatic, material, financial, and human level. For example, Senegal is not entirely

autonomous in defining its vision and orientation in terms of educational policy: it is subjected to technical and financial constraints from partners such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

From a psychological standpoint, we find that the school institution is not yet sufficiently integrated into people's mentalities despite its long-standing presence in Senegal and its compulsory nature from an early age. School is still perceived by the Senegalese as a tool inherited from French colonization which cannot be fully made their own.

At the programmatic level, educational content has always remained linked to the French curriculum model, with only slight variations in some subjects. The new curricula, although designed and taught by nationals, do not really reflect local cultural realities but instead reproduce the colonial pattern.

At the material level, the Senegalese school system suffers from an ingrained lack of resources. Classrooms in temporary shelters are still present at all levels, from primary to higher education.

Despite these not inconsiderable difficulties, it might be argued that Senegal has a good school system. ■

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# > Strategic Adjustments in Franco-Arab Education in Senegal

by **El Hadji Malick Sy Camara**, Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar, Senegal



*Primary education in Senegal focuses on gaining literacy in Arabic and French.  
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**W**ith the introduction of Islam, an increasing number of households across Senegal have become familiar with the Arabic language. Indeed, Arabic is of paramount importance to the population, of which 95% is Muslim. The Arabic language appears to be highly valued among Senegalese Muslims because it is also the language through which the Koran was revealed. In fact, a person with in-depth knowledge of the Koran is considered educated and a good Muslim. However, from the outset colonization imposed an education system based on the teaching of French.

Coexistence between the two education systems has proved very difficult. To meet the needs of a large part of the population, private and

public Franco-Arab schools offer a dual education in both French and Arabic. Islam is actually an integral part of the lives of Senegalese people as it transcends ethnic and regional particularities and structures the lives of the people in an open way, regardless of their social origin, level of education, and cultural or geographical background.

Based on a review of the literature, this article illustrates how the peoples of Senegal have been able to use Franco-Arab education as an opportunity to avoid the pitfalls of colonial administration.

## > Learning models in Franco-Arab schools

At least two categories of Franco-Arab schools can be identified: those

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characterized by the strong dominance of the Islamic curriculum (Koran, fiqh, Sunnah, etc.), and those characterized by a greater or lesser balance between French and Arab-Islamic education. Today, owners of Franco-Arab schools are deeply invested in preschool and elementary education.

In the first category of Franco-Arab schools, education during the first two years of primary school is focused on acquiring literacy in Arabic and learning the Koran and hadiths. French classes are limited to an introduction to the alphabet and to developing communication skills. During those two years, students are expected to memorize as many surahs as possible from the Koran. But from the third year onwards, they are expected to “catch up” with first, second, and third year curriculums. In their sixth and last year of primary education, learners are required to take their exams in French and in Arabic to obtain their basic school-leaving qualification in both languages (national curriculum and certificate of completion of the Arab-Islamic curriculum).

The second category of Franco-Arab schools strikes a balance between secular public education and Arab-Muslim education. The creation of Al Falaq and Jama’atou Ibadou Rahmane (JIR) movements has made a significant contribution to the promotion of Franco-Arab education, an area almost completely neglected by the state, which had chosen French as its official language.

This option to combine or at least balance Arab-Islamic education and

secular public education was mainly aimed at creating and/or training future citizens with deeply rooted (Islamic) religious values but also with the capacity to achieve everything that a public school learner should know. The Bilal Koranic school,<sup>1</sup> created by the JIR movement, for example, had opted for this system. But apart from this school, which only offers elementary education, the JIR had created a secondary school, which even if it was meant to receive graduates from the Bilal school, did not meet with the approval of parents who wanted their children to proceed with the curriculum of secular public education. In JIR schools, there are two teachers per class for all subjects, that is, a French-speaking teacher and an Arabic-speaking teacher. In addition, the JIR assists many institutions with teacher training and programmatic studies. Indeed, at the El Hadji Omar Tall school, the Arab-Islamic curriculum largely overtook the secular public education curriculum. Though some parents favor Arab-Islamic education, following this path was in many respects a form of exclusion of the pupils. Still it should be pointed out that since the École Normale Supérieure (renamed FASTEF<sup>2</sup>) provides training for graduates in Arabic, there is no longer a distinction between teachers of Arabic and other teachers: all receive the same salary (Thierno Ka, Alioune Diop and Djim Dramé, 2013).

### **> Franco-Arab schools: claiming a double identity**

While the claim to cultural citizenship (or new forms of citizenship) was

initially put forward by the so-called “counter-elite” made up of educated Arabic speakers, it is now increasingly appropriated by a new franco-phone Muslim elite trained in secular institutions (Camara, 2016). This dual identity allows its members to escape from positions of “second-class citizenship” and claim their belonging to national citizenship. Their claim, although critical vis-à-vis the state and its secular institutions, is not expressed outside the existing institutional framework and state control. To the contrary, in the expression of their civil and political rights, these Muslim citizens tend to adopt the rules of the democratic game to promote their project of an “Islamic society” and challenge the hegemony of the Westernized and secular elites who have ruled Senegal since its independence.

### **> Conclusion**

Franco-Arab schools are now well established in Senegal, particularly in urban centers. Graduates from Arab-Islamic schools, who therefore call themselves “Arabists” (*arabisants*), have long suffered from a lack of career opportunities. Today the good scores obtained by Franco-Arab schools in national examinations (BFEM, baccalaureate) have eventually led Senegalese public opinion and the state to view them as a real asset for the country. These actors, most of them active in the Senegalese Islamic movement, have been able to requalify the Western perspective by using Franco-Arab schools as a key instrument for an assumed identity. ■

1. Some former students from this school are today high-level public officials while others are secondary education and higher-education teachers.

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# > Secular Private Education in Senegal

by **Samba Diouf**, Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar, Senegal



*In Senegal, private schools have gained a good reputation among parents who see them as a guarantee of stability due to the absence of strikes.  
Credit: Alan Levine/flickr. Some rights reserved.*

**E**ducation systems in countries of the Global South bear the double mark of traditional structures and of the colonizer. The model exported from Europe was certainly not introduced on virgin territory in Africa. It has always been appropriated in a unique way, both by those who had the task of adapting it to specific contexts and by those who adopted it. While its translation on local ground involved a betrayal of some of its initial principles, it also involved the adjustment of others of its principles to this culture (Charlier, 2002). As a result, the seeming supremacy of the school model set up by the colonizer cannot delude us: by describing it as “Western,” “French,” “formal,” or “modern,” people signify that they both consider it as alien to them and are willing to respect it only insofar as it gives them access to the material goods associated with Western modernity. This form of conditional support has left room for traditional educational arrangements: Koranic schools have always remained active in Senegal, continuously adapting themselves to the new conditions brought by social change. The state school, rather than supplanting these older institutions of socialization, came as a complement to them, while introducing its own criteria for establishing hierarchies of people and knowledge<sup>1</sup>.

Independence from colonial rule led Senegal to make explicit the nature and form of the relations it en-

visaged between the different bodies likely to be involved in the training of the younger generations. Thus the 1963 Constitution provides that: "The Republic is secular, democratic and social. [...] Everyone has the right to education [...]. Youth education is provided by public schools. Religious institutions and communities are also recognized as a means of education. [...] Private schools may operate with the authorization of and under the control of the state. [...] Religious institutions and communities [...] are free from state control." The secular Republic of Senegal therefore removed from its supervision the religious institutions and communities that it recognized "as a means of education." In other words, the supervision of education was only described as a distant goal, and gradually abandoned: in 1996, the decree implementing the law on the devolution of competences to regions, municipalities, and rural communities partially redistributed responsibility for education to sub-state levels. The 2001 Constitution then clarified the role of each body. The state "has the duty and responsibility to educate and train young people through public schools. All children [...] have the right to access school. [...] All national institutions, public or private, have a duty to make their members literate and to take part in the national literacy effort in one of the national languages." While the state's responsibility

for education is strongly reaffirmed, the role of sub-state or private bodies is also strengthened.

### **> Secular private schools**

Private non-denominational education emerged in Senegal in the 1980s. Secular private schools have been created by individual promoters who are responsible for their administrative, financial, and pedagogical management. Unlike Catholic private schools, the operation of secular private schools is not overseen by any general management though they are attached, as are all private schools, to the General Directorate of Private Education, which is a division of the Ministry of National Education.

Since the 2000s, secular private schools have been a resounding success in terms of massification. Although they are more in demand than other schools, they are often confronted with disruptions that hinder their proper functioning. These may include late payment of teachers, salaries below the minimum wage, and non-payment of the rent on premises which leads some owners to close the school.

### **> Parents' perception of secular private education**

It should be noted that the expansion of private schools and the number of children enrolled in this sec-

tor indicates that private education has gained an indisputable place in Dakar. The majority of parents interviewed claimed that the stability of the private sector was one of the main reasons why they opted to enroll their children in this sector. Such stability is reflected in the absence of strikes or walkouts organized by trade union movements, that is, of any of the disruptions that are plaguing today's public education sector. One of our respondents stated that "violence and cases of youth crime observed in some public schools have led many parents to send their children to private schools." Another respondent, a 38-year-old housewife, considered that "if a child does not succeed today in private education, it is because (s)he does not like to study. In the private sector, there are no strikes or lack of teachers, and parents invest a lot in their children's education." Interestingly, parents place greater emphasis on the stability of private schools in relation to public schools than on the quality of education they provide. In their view, school stability is a key factor of success and any child enrolled in a private school should succeed.

Public perception of secular private education shows that most parents opt for private schools for the sake of stability. These schools have gained a considerable place among populations for their good scores, but more importantly, for their stability. ■

1. See Suzie Guth and Éric Lanoue (eds.), (2004). *Écoles publiques, Écoles privées au "Sud": usages pluriels, frontières incertaines, Cahiers de la recherche sur l'éducation et les savoirs*, 3.

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# > Socio-Anthropology of Religious Leadership in Senegal

by **Mouhamed Moustapha Dieye**, Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar, Senegal



*Mosque of the Divinity, in Dakar, Senegal.  
Credit: Valentina Buj/flickr. Some rights reserved.*

## > The legacy of religious leadership

**F**rom early on, Senegal was a hub in the various exchanges between Europe, Africa, and America, which, to some extent, explains the openness of Senegalese people, their sense of hospitality and tolerance between Muslims and Christians. Their socio-cultural values derive from three cultural sources: deeply embedded cultural traditions, Islam and Christianity, and western-style modernity based on the Republic. Among these three sources, Islam is by far the most decisive influence. 95% of Senegalese are Muslim and most belong to religious brotherhoods that are the real social

regulators; 49% belong to the Tijanyya brotherhood, 35% are Mouride, 7% belong to the Qadiriyya brotherhood, and 5% to the Layenne.

Senegal's politico-religious history shows that Islam has produced literary men and leaders who were able to achieve and maintain the social equilibrium of the country. These religious leaders have profoundly shaped the evolution of Senegal and its people. The action and commitment of religious leaders such as El Hadj Omar Tall in Futa-Toro, Samori Toure, the famous leader of the dioula revolution, Maba Diakhou Bâ and Thierno Souleymane Baal who led the revolution of the Torobe in Futa-Toro against the Songhai Empire of Koly Tenguela remain in the Senegalese collective



memory. The strength of their leadership results from the convergence between Islam and the “old” tradition of an African democracy, the basis of which is a mistrust of power and the belief that its expansion and omnipotence should be contained and limited. Being aware of the perverse effects of any absolute power, traditional African societies have often prevented their leaders from “playing the chief” and made every effort to ensure an authentic leadership so that absolute power does not appear.

In Wolof society, at the ceremonial inauguration of the king, the chief pledges to act in accordance with the tradition and to work for the prosperity of everyone. In the Waalo (Wolof Empire), for instance, the spokesman of the notables warned the *Brak* (king) who had just been elected, telling him that: “If you deviate from the normal path towards your subjects, you will give us all your life. If you act against the grain, you will attract the odds of your voters and necessarily the hatred of your people.” This mistrust can be found in a Wolof popular saying that reminds the king about his duties towards the people: “Buur du mbokk” or “a king is not a parent.” By analogy, we can recall that in Islam, from the moment an individual professes faith, they dismiss any dependence or allegiance to another person. Therefore, Islam has no clergy and the head being a guide, the obedience people vow to him must necessarily be conditioned by his respect for Islamic principles that match the traditional values listed above. Thierno Souleymane Baal, the eighteenth-century warlord and Muslim scholar from the Futa knew how to symbolize an authentic leadership that still inspires many Senegalese religious or civic

movements. He said:

“I recommend the following guidelines to elect a guide:

- choose a wise, pious and honest man, who does not monopolize the riches of this world for his own benefit or that of his children;
- unseat any imam whose wealth has grown and confiscate all his property;
- ensure that the Imamate is not transformed into a hereditary monarchy in which the sons inherit from their fathers;
- fight him and expel him if he persists;
- the imam can be selected in any tribe;
- always choose a wise and hard-working man;
- never limit the choice to a single and same tribe;
- always base yourself on the criterion of ability.”

#### **> Values structuring the significance of leadership**

The religious leader must be a man shaped by the values of justice, selflessness and honesty, whose decisions always transcend personal interests and motivations. Having a very high sense of his commitments vis-à-vis his values and peers, he must maintain his belief, his moral rectitude, and his objectivity in all places and circumstances. Two religious leaders in recent history exemplify such leadership: Serigne Abdou Aziz Sy Dabakh, the third caliph of the Senegalese Tijjane brotherhood from 1957-1997, and Serigne Saliou Mbacké, the fifth Mouride caliph. The first did not hesitate to tell his disciples: “If you see me doing things that do not go hand in hand with what I tell and advise you, please call me to order or I will never forgive you, and if necessary separate yourself from me.”

Beyond the creation of a shared vision and moral code, the strength of the leader is based on his ability to apply to himself what he asks of others. The leader must respect the component moral values of the anthropological model of “nit ku baax” (a good man) which implies “nit ku am jom” (the sense of honor), “nit ku am Kersa” (a reserved man, who has public decency), “nit ku jub” (a righteous man), “nit ku am diné” (a man of faith), “nit ku doylu” (a sober man), “nit ku am kadu” (a man of his word) and “nit ku goré” (a worthy man). Among these values, the “jom” has a special importance because it covers various meanings: responsibility, sense of honor and dignity, “Warugal” (a sense of duty), well-done effort, self-sacrifice, courage, self-awareness, and awareness of one’s value. For Wolof people, the leader must embody all the values that aggregate in the “jom” – values that are inconsistent with laziness, cowardice, lack of scruples, and lies.

The aversion of the Senegalese to unfulfilled words is perfectly illustrated by two cases of political leaders who reversed their earlier promises. Former President Abdoulaye Wade did the “Wakh wakheet” (“I said, I withdraw my words”), retracting his words after having said that he would not stand for a third term in the presidential election of 2012. The current president who replaced him, Macky Sall has in turn just made the same “Wakh wakheet” by reversing his promise to reduce the term for which he was elected from seven to five years. The famous Wolof proverb “gor sa waxja” (the nobility is determined by respect for the given word) reflects the importance that Senegalese give to their words, and is invoked to criticize these presidents. ■

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# > Making Women's Rights

## a Part of Everyday Life

by **Bengi Sullu**, The Graduate Center, City University of New York, USA<sup>1</sup>



*Opening of the 63rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women. Credit: UN Women/flickr. Some rights reserved.*

**T**he 63rd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW63), with the priority theme “Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and empowerment of women and girls,” was held at the UN Headquarters in New York from March 11 to 22, 2019. Different events and panels looked at various aspects of promotion and protection of social, economic, cultural, and political rights of women and girls from local, national, and global perspectives and in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals. An important focus of the Commission was on the *implementation of protection and benefits for women*: there is still a long way to go to make sure women and girls in different parts of the world fully participate and thrive in life, despite a growing understanding of and widespread consensus on the status of women.



Plenary at the 63rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women.  
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Commission Chair (and Permanent Representative to the UN from Ireland) Geraldine Byrne Nason's remarks at Consultation Day – an information and mobilization event for NGOs in consultative status with the United Nations – underlined the disparity between recognition of women's rights as human rights and women's access to economic, social, and educational opportunities that will enable them to fully participate in life opportunities. The gap that we need to work on closing is the one between the recognition of women's rights and development and application of preventive measures and programs with innovative, systematic, sustainable, culturally sensitive, gender-responsive approaches that aim to eliminate gender inequality at the local level and in everyday life. We need to see the connections between women's political representation and their educational, economic, and social participation in public life in ways that will contribute to the making of the knowledge, practices, and policies that come from women's experiences, viewpoints, insights, and positions. We also need to recognize that diverse forms of gendered discrimination cut across race, class, national identity, religion, geography, occupation, and many more "interlocking systems of oppression", in P.H. Collins' words, to contribute to the forms gender inequality takes in a particular context.

The need to coordinate policy and practice and intersectional thinking for the most effective and permanent gender equality outcomes is best illustrated by turning to the issues of domestic violence against women, women's safety in public spaces and educational settings, the exclusion of women from economic gain and social and political opportunities by incarceration, and the unequal share of unpaid care work and family responsibilities during re-entry processes. These issues, which were examined in the panels cosponsored by the International Sociological Association at CSW63<sup>2</sup>, illustrate the interconnectedness of policy systems such as education, childcare, criminal justice, employment, and urban policy encompassing housing and transportation in enabling

women's economic, social, cultural, and political participation and point to the necessity for innovative thinking, effective implementation, and enforcement.

Domestic violence against women, for instance, is an issue that is often difficult to address because it is confined to the private sphere and thus is perceived as a private problem within the family. Women's knowledge of existing services doesn't necessarily match the multiplicity of barriers domestic violence perpetuates, including but not limited to restricted access to employment opportunities, independent and safe housing, free or affordable childcare, and protection and counseling services.

Domestic violence is one form of violation of women's rights which demonstrates that law alone is not sufficient to protect women without proper enforcement. The issue of women's safety in public spaces is another. As Dr. Jackie Sebire emphasized in the panel *Access to Justice for Women and Girls: The Role of Women in Law Enforcement and Peacekeeping*, based on her experiences as Assistant Chief Constable at Bedfordshire Police Department, UK, women's rights are best protected and practiced by community members who are able to recognize women's problems and the way these are felt and their burden carried. Advocating for women's participation in the policing profession will contribute to women's empowerment and allow for a cultural breakthrough, for it goes against the patriarchal norms associated with the profession; this has the potential for making women's experience or "feminist knowledge" the central tool to draw from in the fight against gendered violence that is not prioritized in existing enforcement models. This is also important in light of the increasing body of research on the problems of young women travelling to school or other educational institutions. As documented by Natarajan et al. (2017), female college students often face sexual victimization on their way to school. Research such as this, drawing on women's perceptions and experiences, can help inform urban policy and channelize technology

and public services to improve women's safety in urban public spaces and within institutions.

Violence and safety concerns are not the only factor holding women back from benefiting from social and economic opportunities. Unpaid care and domestic work that women have to take on limit their opportunities to enter the labor market and get jobs that will enable their independence and economic gain. Research suggests that: "around the world, women spend two to ten times more time on unpaid care work than men." (Ferrant *et al.*, 2014). It is evident that care work has not been recognized by governments as an integral part of the sustenance of economies and life; lack of paid maternity and parental leave, and social security benefits are the most important deficiencies in social welfare systems that lead women to either not enter – or leave – the job market when they give birth. If these women later want to take on employment, they are mostly forced to take on informal forms of employment that don't provide protections. As discussed in the panel *Women, Re-Entry and Social Protection*, this structural discrimination particularly affects incarcerated women, whose re-entry into the labor market becomes particularly difficult due to limited work history. Lack of family-oriented policies that put emphasis on distribution of responsibilities between women and men in the family and work-family balance impacts all women but is more likely to harm the most disadvantaged women who have been formerly deprived of opportunities during imprisonment. This is especially so when paired with the lack of interventions aiming to enable

the continuity of education and participation in life during the period of incarceration.

Implementation of protections and benefits for women necessitates a holistic and comprehensive approach. How do we make sure that interventions that find place in law and policy will be enforced? Governments need to be more proactive in ensuring that as many women as possible are able to have access to mechanisms that will not only enable protection but also help them thrive. Civil society organizations, such as the International Sociological Association, serve to educate policymakers on these topics and advocate for gender equal policies and practices. ■

1. The author is a youth representative to the United Nations for the ISA and attended the Commission on the Status of Women's 63rd Session for the first time in 2019.

2. These panels were co-sponsored by the ISA, the American Society of Criminology, the World Society of Victimology, Criminologists without Borders. You can hear [Dr. Rosemary Barberet](#), ISA Representative to the United Nations, speak about CSW63 at the United Nations or view [video playlist](#) of all six panels, [photographs](#) of all the six panels, and view the [reading lists](#) that were distributed at the events, which were developed by ISA representatives to the United Nations.

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