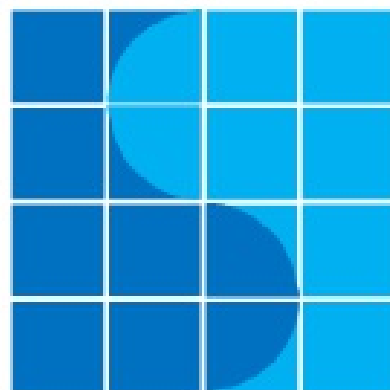


Trajectories

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Letter from the Chair

The Crisis of History and the History of Crisis: Sociology as a “Crisis Science”

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Sociology is inherently interpretive and inescapably historical. Cultural and historical approaches are not menu options that can be selected or rejected at will, but are a necessary part of any sociology that can convincingly claim to make sense of social

practices and social structures. Historical sociology is the guardian of the historical pole of this formula. Its mission, if it can be said to have one, is to defend sociology from falling prey to the illusion that it could limit its vision to the present and future and still be a social science. The cultural sociology section of the ASA might seem to be the more obvious candidate for defending

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sociology against the equally powerful illusion of a meaning-free social science. But historical social science is also channeled inexorably toward hermeneutic or semiotic forms of analysis, since past worlds always turn out to be foreign countries.

A cautionary tale about the costs of ignoring these definitional features of social science can be gleaned from the history of German sociology. Prior to 1933 German sociology was dominated by broadly “Weberian” forms of historical, interpretive sociology. Far from putting German sociologists at a distance from public life or locking them in an ivory tower, historicist sociologists were able to break down some of their long standing barriers to the history profession and by doing that to move closer to the core of political and intellectual life. It was Nazism that turned German sociology into a utilitarian, ahistorical science serving immediate political concerns. Where did the German historical sociologists go? Many of them were driven into exile in the United States and Great Britain, giving rise to the first formal recognition of historical sociology as something other than the history of sociology in American Sociology. This is part of the legacy that we, as the sociology section most directly engaged with historical sociology, have some obligation to recognize. There is no monument to figures like Norbert Elias, Hans Gerth, Paul Honigsheim, and Karl Mannheim in Germany, although they and many other sociologists were forced into exile.¹ Our section can best recognize them by preserving the historicist and interpretive approaches they represented.

Still, you may wonder why I am bringing up these historical events rather than focusing on the terrifying spectacle of the crisis-ridden present? I am not suggesting that we are in a situation identical to that of the 1930s historicist sociologists in Germany. History does not repeat itself. Too strong a parallel between our present and the 1930s blinds us to the

specificity of both periods. On the one hand, we also have today a populist movement fired by what one of its leaders calls *thymos* (rage), led by an American President thrusting toward a generalized state of exception, lawlessness, and chaos. We have rising economic uncertainty combined with a rising drumbeat redirecting our *thymos* against internal and external enemies. Unlike Weimar Germany, however, we do not have a government saddled by war reparations payments and a population subject to such severe discourses of national humiliation. America today does not have a Treaty of Versailles. We do not have an explicitly anti-Semitic political party vying successfully for government power—not yet, at least. At the same time, the United States differs from Weimar Germany in a number of ways that are highly relevant for the current US crisis, including the transformation of its history of slavery and domestic settler colonialism into a racialized political formation characterized by unequal voting rights, a prison-industrial complex, an archipelago of hyper-pauperized Indian reservations, and militarized domestic police forces. The fact that the US still presides over a declining informal global empire exacerbates our instability in ways that differ radically from Germany’s loss of its colonial empire and continental territories after WWI.

Yet while history does not repeat itself, it rhymes. Some of this rhyming sheds light on our own present. Some of this repetition involves the remobilization of causal powers and causal series within entirely new conjunctures. And one intervention that has been repeatedly remobilized in new settings is the repression of historical thinking within the human and social sciences. The destruction of German historical sociology after 1933 can serve here as a cautionary tale in this more limited sense. Historical sociology was virtually destroyed in Germany in 1933, and nowadays, decades after Hitler’s defeat, historical approaches still have not reentered

German sociology to a significant degree.² Pressures to align social scientific thinking with presentism, empiricism, and naturalism³ have reappeared in different times and places, with differing success. One of the most successful interventions occurred in US sociology between 1950 and the 1980s, during which a program of methodological positivism was undergirded by an array of causal forces, including the policies of government offices and foundations, along with new philosophies of science, new statistical methods, formal models, and computing techniques. American postwar Fordism led to regularities and predictabilities in the everyday lives of practicing social scientists, reinforcing the plausibility of empiricism, presentism, and regularity determinism (Steinmetz 2004).

A new assault on historical and interpretive sociology is underway. The specific sources of this erosion still need to be figured out. Some of the factors include advances in the natural sciences that seem to render obsolete any claims for an emergent and irreducible *social* science. Genetic science promises an Eldorado of a final scientific “consilience” around the natural substrata of life; computer science promises to teach humans how they think and even to transform their thinking. What use could we have for social science in such a world? And what use could there be for the painstaking, careful, labor intensive work of historical sociologists? These scientific trends are coupled with an array of threats to science funding and expertise, academic freedom, and faculty self-governance, powered by the infiltration of universities by corporate practices, entrepreneurial models, and short-term policy goals.⁴ Historical sociologists may be able to shed light on these and other forces that are eroding their specialty or converting them into nonhistorical sociologists.

Sociology as a Crisis Science

Sociology as a discipline has an intimate relationship to crisis. Since Comte, sociology

has often been understood as a science of crisis -- as a discipline born of and reflecting societal crisis -- one that proposes diagnoses of crisis and perhaps contributes to the end of crisis (and thereby to its own eventual abolition).⁵ Marx was a theorist of the endless crises of capitalism and their unforeseeable outcomes. Most of the European disciplinary founders of sociology construed their new science in terms of crisis. French colonial officials after 1945 described sociology as a social science that was particularly suited to understanding the all-encompassing crisis that their own colonial presence was inducing.⁶ Ironically, then, sociology was founded as a crisis science long before Gouldner announced a “crisis of western sociology,” unleashing a flood of jeremiads in which crisis was constructed as the result of the fragmentation of sociology rather than the essence of sociology.

What is the advantage of framing sociology as a crisis science? It is no coincidence that two of the greatest American political thinkers, Thomas Paine and W.E.B. Du Bois, both chose the title *The Crisis* for their periodicals. The word crisis calls attention to the existence of great social pathologies and failures and also to political and moral struggles aimed at overcoming those conditions.⁷ The word crisis is itself a cognate of critique. As Janet Roitman writes, crisis is “the basis of critical theory,” since crisis claims “evoke a moral demand for a difference of the past and the future.”⁸ Crisis resists assimilation to value-free social science.

The word crisis, standing alone or preceded by adjectives such as social, political, geopolitical, cultural, economic, psychic, or epistemic, is a “means for signifying contingency.” Crisis is inherently historical, signifying change and warding off static and ahistorical models.⁹ Crisis is resistant to epistemologies of causal uniform regularities, which Max Weber saw as anathema to sociology.¹⁰ As Koselleck writes in his classic work on the topic, it is “in the nature of crises that the solution, that which the future holds in store, is not predictable.”¹¹

Even Marx, who claimed to discern capitalism's "laws of motion," did not claim to explain the laws of motion or outcome of any given crisis; indeed, the possibility of a non-resolution of crisis and a supercession of capitalism this time around was built into the theory. Crisis is "defined as both entirely specific... and as structural recurrence" and is thus aligned with the idea of history rhyming rather than repeating itself. Individual causal forces and causal series reappear but always in combination with new combinations of additional causes. This makes empirical generalization a less realistic goal than the construction of theories about causal mechanisms that are transposable from one contingent causal conjuncture to the next.¹² Social crises scream "overdetermination."

The CHS section's activities relating to the current crisis and the planned conference in Philadelphia on August 10, 2017

The focus on crisis began at this year's ASA meetings in Montreal, where we had a panel on Empires, Colonies, and Indigenous Peoples, with presentations on "Legacies of Suspicion: from British Colonial Emergency regulations to the 'War on Terror' in Israel and India" Yael Berda (Hebrew University); "American Empire and Militarization at Home" Julian Go (Boston University); "Standing Rock, Epicenter of Resistance to American Empire" (James Fenelon, California State University, and Thomas D. Hall, De Pauw University); and "Indigenous and European Laws of Nations in North America to 1763" (Saliha Belmessous (University of New South Wales). The panel was moderated by Kari Marie Norgaard (University of Oregon) and the discussion was led by historical sociologist and University of Virginia sociologist Krishan Kumar, author of *Visions of Empire: How Five Imperial Regimes Shaped the World* (Princeton, NJ : Princeton University Press, 2017). Future issues of Trajectories will publish short versions of the talks given at that panel and others in 2017.

Along similar lines, we will publish an interview with Manu Goswami, Andrew Zimmerman, and George Steinmetz on "Decolonizing Knowledge." This will be followed by issues of the newsletter that explore different facets of the theme of the historical crisis of the present, the history of crisis, and the various ways in which sociology has been construed as a "crisis science."

Another feature of the new focus on crisis will be the new section blog, which will be part of the official ASA website for the section which will be entirely overhauled.¹³ The working title of the new blog is "Critical Historical Sociology: History, Theory, and Sociology in an Age of Crisis." The new blog will come on line this month, along with a fully refurbished website, thanks to Sahan Savas Karatasli.

Historical and comparative sociologists can make important contributions to discussions of the crisis of history and new regimes of historicity and temporality. These are some of the reasons for the focus of the 2018 mini-conference at the University of Pennsylvania campus in Philadelphia on August 10, the day before the Annual Meetings of the American Sociological Association. The title of the conference, suggested by Ann Shola Orloff, is "The Crisis of History and the History of Crisis." This conference is being organized by Kim Voss and myself, together with Baris Büyükokutan, Luis Flores, Robert Jansen, Simeon Newman, Tasleem Padamsee, Melissa Wilde, and several other members of the section whose names will be added in the next announcement of the conference on the section's Listserve. The conference will include two plenary sessions and several breakaway sessions. Section members will soon be invited to submit paper proposals for the open submission sessions.

Endnotes

1. There is, however, an Monument to Theodore Adorno in Frankfurt am Main (see photograph above); Norbert



Adorno Monument, Frankfurt am Main, Adorno-Platz, Bockenheim (University District)
Photo courtesy of Erik Olin Wright

Elias' personal papers are housed in the beautiful Marbach Literary Archives.

2. George Steinmetz, "Ideas in Exile: Refugees from Nazi Germany and the Failure to Transplant Historical Sociology into the United States," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 23:1 (2010): 1-27; "Field Theory and Interdisciplinary: Relations between History and Sociology in Germany and France during the Twentieth Century," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 59:2 (2017): 477-514.

3. Naturalism as defined here means the collapsing of the human and social sciences into the natural sciences, the denial of any emergence of social structures. Naturalism denies that there is any demarcation or distinctiveness between the natural and social sciences in terms of methods, objects, or theories. Natural science subsumes the social and human sciences.

4. Akeel Bilgrami and Jonathan R. Cole, eds., *Who's Afraid of Academic Freedom?* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015); Tracy L.R. Lightcap, "Academic Governance and Democratic Processes: The Entrepreneurial Model and Its Discontents," *New Political Science* 36:4 (2014): 474-448; Christopher Newfield, *Unmaking the Public University* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 2008).

5. Reinhart Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the Parthogenesis of Modern Society* (Oxford: Berg, 1988); Johannes Weiss, *Vernunft und Vernichtung : zur Philosophie und Soziologie der Moderne* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1993).

6. George Steinmetz, "Sociology and Colonialism in the British and French Empires, 1940s-1960s," *Journal of Modern History* 89:3 (2017): 601-648

7. See the comments by Markus S. Schulz, Vice President for Research of the International Sociological Association. <http://soziologie.de/blog/2013/03/public-sociology-uber-die-soziologie-als-krisenwissenschaft/>.

On the concept of "social pathologies" see Axel Honneth, "Pathologien des Sozialen. Tradition und Aktualität der Sozialphilosophie," in Honneth, *Pathologien des Sozialen. Die Aufgaben der Sozialphilosophie* (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer, 1994), 9-69.

8. Janet Roitman, *Anti-Crisis* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013): 8.

9. Roitman, *Anti-Crisis* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013): 19.

10. Richard Swedberg and Ola Agevall, eds., *The Max Weber Dictionary: Key Words and Central Concepts*. Second edition (Stanford: Stanford Social Sciences, 2016), 359; Ola Agevall, "A Science of Unique Events: Max Weber's Methodology of the Cultural Sciences" (Ph.D. dissertation, Uppsala University, 1999).

11. Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis*, 127.

12. Janet Roitman, *Anti-Crisis*: 20; George Steinmetz, "Odious Comparisons: Incommensurability, the Case Study, and 'Small N's' in Sociology," *Sociological Theory* 22:3 (2004): 371-400.

13. The "Policy Trajectories" blog will still be linked to the section's home page.

Moore's Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Fifty Years Later

Editors Note: 2016 marked the 50th anniversary of Barrington Moore Jr.'s The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World. Moore's influence in the social sciences and comparative historical sociology in particular, is well-established. Below are two essays on Moore, by Richard Lachmann and Cedric de Leon presented at the 2016 Annual Meeting of the Social Science History Association in Chicago, as part of a larger panel celebrating and critically discussing Social Origins. -MGB

For the 50th Anniversary of Barrington Moore's Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy

Cedric de Leon
[Tufts University](#)

In an essay written in 1996, thirty years after the publication of *Social Origins*, Barrington Moore, Jr. identified three “Bequests of the Twentieth Century to the Twenty-First,” namely, mounting poverty, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and the rise of fundamentalisms around the world. The programmatic aspect of the piece is interesting enough, and we will return to it later, but the genealogical accent is a more useful point of entry.

The essay was written in memory of Yale sociologist and sometime southern apologist William Graham Sumner, whom Moore calls his “intellectual grandfather...in the somewhat personal sense that I was a graduate student of Sumner’s junior colleague and collaborator, Albert Galloway Keller.” Among Sumner’s essays is one titled, “The Bequests of the Nineteenth Century to the Twentieth,” which stresses the sources of severe conflict from one epoch to another. Moore reveals his admiration for the “no nonsense” tone in Sumner’s work, which he says, was “completely free of the high-minded and edifying themes” of “democracy and brotherly love” that “audiences still expect on ritual occasions” (Moore 1998: 168).

Though one would be hard-pressed to find a single sociologist today who would publicly claim Sumner as their intellectual grandfather, it is a testament to Moore that we all claim him. Claiming Moore is tricky, however. On the one hand, because of his status as the pre-eminent theorist of fascism, communism and democratization, comparative historical sociologists are called upon to be of the world. It is this paradoxically presentist orientation that is behind Lis Clemens’ recent restatement of Moore’s overarching question, namely, “What are the conditions and processes that produce a better life for many, perhaps most, people?” On the other hand, because of his enormous influence his intellectual descendants

are continually dragged back to the past in a way that I suspect Moore would heartily disapprove of. As Theda Skocpol and others have observed, Moore avoided cultivating a school of his own, yet we are expected to reckon with his approach not only as a perennial alternative hypothesis in our literature reviews but consequently as a rite of professional passage (Ross et al 1998: 2; Skocpol et al 2011).

In this paper, I address two questions: What have we done in celebration of Moore and what can be done when this celebration is over. What we have done amidst the competing pressures of the present and the profession is to individuate as the young do in relation to their elders. That is, we find our voice – our professional selfhood – by disagreeing with Moore, and in case anyone thinks I am looking down my nose at others, let me just remind you that the first article I ever published was titled, “No Bourgeois Mass Party, No Democracy: The Missing Link in Barrington Moore’s American Civil War.”

On the question of individuation, it is useful to look at the work of three leading comparative historical sociologists – Theda Skocpol, Elisabeth Clemens, and Josh Pacewicz – Moore’s student, grand-student and great grand-student respectively. Each of them has distanced themselves from Moore though in different and perhaps ideal-typical ways.

Barrington Moore’s junior colleague and direct descendant, Theda Skocpol, became what Moore would have been had he been a touch more extroverted. Their common touchstone appears to have been what C. Wright Mills called the modern revival of the classical tradition: critical and historically oriented studies of pressing relevance to the human condition. This was public sociology before public sociology. But as Skocpol herself points out in two retrospective pieces, Moore was a traditional scholar, who valued above all the

quiet isolation of his study, the companionship of his beloved wife Betty, and the occasional get-together with his students. He rarely went to professional meetings and rejected the tenure track to be a senior lecturer in the social studies program at Harvard (Ross et al 1998: 2-5; Skocpol et al 2011).

Theda Skocpol burst upon the scene with her now classic *States and Social Revolutions* (1979). If Moore’s vision of large-scale social transformations was anchored in “combinatorial and contingent” class alliances, then Skocpol retained Moore’s focus on social

"Moore was a traditional scholar, who valued above all the quiet isolation of his study, the companionship of his beloved wife Betty, and the occasional get-together with his students."

classes but with two key differences: she highlights the pressures created by expanding circuits of international trade and the relationship between state actors and landed elites (Clemens 2016: 36). Since then, Theda Skocpol has become no less accomplished than Moore and has probably surpassed him in sheer scholarly productivity, but she is a much less reluctant public intellectual. She is the Director of the Scholars Strategy Network, which is a clearing house through which researchers engage in public debate and influence policy. Her most recent book is on the Tea Party’s impact on the conservative movement in America. More recently, she has engaged in a full frontal assault on the 2016 Republican nominee and now President-Elect, comparing him unfavorably to Kim Jong-un, Idi Amin, Hugo Chavez, and Benito Mussolini (Skocpol 2016).

Elisabeth Clemens is the grand-student who returns via a circuitous route of accolades and glamorous leadership posts to be the curator of Moore's legacy. By legacy I mean comparative historical sociology in its third wave and by curator I do not mean dusting Moore's framed portrait, but rather urging us to renew the subfield.

Clemens made her bones with the 1997 breakout book, *The People's Lobby*. In that work, the combinatorial formula of Moore and later Skocpol changes character once again as she explains that a social movement's interpenetration with the party machine stunts organizational innovation, whereas relative isolation from the party system encourages it. The paradoxical result is that though feminists were disfranchised, the absence of partisan meddling enabled them to inaugurate modern interest group politics as we know it, whereas organized labor, which had been thoroughly coopted and infiltrated by the party system languished, as indeed it does today relative to other disfranchised groups such as undocumented immigrants.

The palpable shift away from her forebears' intellectual preoccupations suggests that Clemens is not one who buys into the "great questions" approach to comparative historical sociology that center principally on revolution, democratization, the state and capitalism. Indeed, in the introduction to her co-edited volume, *Remaking Modernity*, with Julia Adams and Ann Orloff, she writes quite categorically, "historical sociology will die if left solely to modify the second wave's answers to Marxist questions generated in the heat of the 1960s" (Adams, Clemens, and Orloff 2005: 63). This, they point out, would be a "death by involution." Moreover, though a pluralist historical sociologies approach is preferable to the "great questions," they likewise predict death amidst the thousand flowers that bloom. "Surrendering to centripetal forces," they write, "kills conversations about large-scale social

change and relations across social domains" (Adams, Clemens, and Orloff 2005: 64). If I may rephrase, comparative historical sociology doesn't have to be about the same thing, but it must be about some thing.

Clemens's student, Josh Pacewicz, is the carefree great grand-student who feels no bar to mixing and matching the contributions of his ancestors. In his new book, *Partisans and Partners*, Josh seeks to explain why most American voters on the ground are becoming less polarized on a common set of issues, while politicians and a minority of American voters are becoming more polarized. Drawing on ethnographic field work in two Midwestern towns, to which he assigns the pseudonyms of River City and Prairieville, he argues that this apparent paradox reflects a new cleavage in the American electorate between what he calls "partisans" and "partners."

Under the Keynesian growth liberalism of the New Deal, large federal government transfers to local communities (i.e., for urban renewal, etc.) created a world in which community leaders, also party leaders, fought largely along class lines over the distribution of those resources. Those who demanded that the working class should get a bigger piece of the pie were union leaders and Democrats; those who held that corporations should benefit more were the members of the local Chamber of Commerce, who were uniformly Republican. The shift from Keynesian growth liberalism to free market neoclassical liberalism in the late-1970s turned off the spigot of government largesse and compelled local actors to compete for federal contracts and other transfers. Under these conditions, "partners," not old style partisans, became the pillars of their community. Bipartisan and collaborative, the new leadership focused on reinventing River City and Prairieville as hubs for tourism, the arts, among other initiatives. Meanwhile, old fashioned partisans who were disoriented and left behind by this cooperative nonsense found

the conflict they craved as grassroots Democratic and Republican activists.

“Human beings find it extraordinarily difficult to work together peacefully for shared and humane purposes. Yet somehow they manage now and then to do so, if often under duress and despite their inclinations.”

His approach in the book is eclectic relative to his pedigree. He takes from Moore a preoccupation with social class and class coalitions, though he does not assign them causal primacy in the way that his structuralist great grandfather did. From Lis, he appears to have inherited a suspicion of the American two-party system, which on his account, is now the home of virulent (and irrelevant) partisans. Finally, like Theda, he is interested in the effect of the wider political economy on the state.

If Moore's aforementioned essay on the “Bequests of the Twentieth Century to the Twenty-First” is any indication, then I think it is safe to say that Moore is with Clemens on this one, though in a way Josh un-self-consciously embodies Moore's eclecticism. Moore goes out of his way to announce the death of the great questions. In this ten-page essay, he spends four pages telling us to let go of the social conflicts that have given the twentieth century its distinctive character but are unlikely to be important in the twenty-first. Some of you may be surprised to hear that one social conflict that must go by the analytical wayside is “revolution on the scale of the Russian and Chinese Revolution” (Moore 1998: 169). In its stead Moore proposes a research agenda focused on three causes of human misery. Here at last we find an answer to the question, “WWBMJD”: What would

Barrington Moore, Jr. do? The first is “massive grinding and degrading poverty,” with special emphasis on the “political unwillingness to tap abundant resources, especially those controlled by the military” for “fear of upsetting the prevailing system of privilege and inequality.” The second is “the plague of AIDS.” In the event of a cure, he writes, “the task of getting any remedy, or set of remedies to the people who need them would be daunting at the very least. In the absence of a remedy, there are responsible epidemiologists who estimate that in the near future, death from AIDS will make the Black Death seem a puny affair” (Moore 1998: 172). The third reveals his alignment with Skocpol and Pacewicz, for here he urges us to turn our attention to fundamentalism – not Muslim fundamentalism, but to movements in general that “display an antirational and anti-intellectual current...are hostile to foreigners and display a notable inclination toward violence” (Moore 1998: 174). Moore does not offer any diagnosis this time, but he does pose a new puzzle that is notably if soberly optimistic: “Human beings find it extraordinarily difficult to work together peacefully for shared and humane purposes. Yet somehow they manage now and then to do so, if often under duress and despite their inclinations.”

Let me be so bold as to suggest that we have done enough individuation. The best among us have already done what there is to do in that quarter. I daresay Moore would be impatient with our perseveration over him today. He resisted the grand theorizing and abstract empiricism that was fashionable in his own time; he repurposed, mixed and matched the classics; he sidestepped the past literature. Above all, he was keenly aware of the political and moral stakes involved in our enterprise. From now on, let us wear Barrington Moore lightly, and strike out with critical questions that are the bequest not of Moore himself, but of the demands that the world places upon us.

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On Reading Social Origins Then and Now

Richard Lachmann

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I first read *Social Origins* as an undergraduate. The book showed me, as it did others, that comparative historical sociology could ask and answer significant questions and in so doing speak to contemporary political concerns as well as contribute to solving longstanding historical problems. This book helped reaffirm my decision to get a PhD in sociology rather than history or political science, and it definitely is why I decided to go to grad school at Harvard rather than Michigan, Chicago or Berkeley.

Moore's approach was a welcome and bracing change from the scientistic claims of modernization theory that dominated the Princeton sociology department, where I was an undergraduate, and indeed much of US historical sociology in that time. Moore's comparison of multiple cases also was a departure from the careful single case studies that most US historical sociologists saw as the path to academic legitimacy in the 1960s and 70s. Indeed, even Charles Tilly was just beginning to meld his work on France with broader comparisons, whereas Moore used Tilly's analysis of the Vendée counterrevolution to gain insight into antirevolutionary peasants in the Russian and Chinese revolutions, and used those revolutions (China in detail and Russia schematically) to explain why 20th century communists were more capable of suppressing peasants than Robespierre had been. In so doing, Moore laid the groundwork for some but by no means all aspects of Skocpol's great comparison of the French, Russian and Chinese revolutions. Moore in those years was the exemplar of sustained and precise historical comparisons.

The summer before I was going to begin graduate study in fall 1977 I received a list of graduate courses from which to choose. I was thrilled to see that Barrington Moore would be teaching a seminar on The Sociology of Cruelty. Unfortunately, Barrington Moore decided to retire shortly after I received that list and he never taught that course. While I don't remember exactly what he promised to include in the syllabus, a few years later when his book, *Injustice: The Social Bases of Obedience and Revolt*, came out I saw that the course was in part a rehearsal of that book's German case studies.

Social Origins has a lot to say about injustice and some about cruelty. While Moore adopts the term modernization, and views landlords and other elites that did not pursue ever-greater profits and material production as backward, he repeatedly recognizes the costs of modernization. Even about England, which had the gentlest transition to modernity and emerged on the other end with a liberal democracy, Moore writes, "the main victims of progress were as usual the ordinary peasants... The violence and coercion which produced these results took place over a long space of time...mainly within a framework of law...and helped establish democracy on a firmer footing [but] must not blind us to the fact that it was massive violence exercised by the upper classes against the lower" (pp. 11, 29)

Moore is clear in asserting that liberal democracy was a far superior outcome to either fascism or communism, but he puts episodic revolutionary violence in the context of the normal and continual violence of exploitation. Thus, Moore directly states, "To express outrage at the September massacres [against aristocrats during the French Revolution] and forget the horrors behind them is to engage in a partisan trick" (p. 101). He notes that the death toll of preventable starvation each year during the Ancien Regime was higher than that of the entire revolutionary terror. While Moore views

modernization as an omelet that is made from broken eggs, he again and again identifies the voiceless lives that were lost along each path to modernity and is not shy in concluding that the deaths from the 1789 revolution destroyed an aristocracy whose survival in Germany, Japan, Russia and China led to fascism and communism. Nor does he neglect to point out that while Germany and Japan's modernizations were less bloody initially than those of Russia or China, fascism in the end piled up the greatest death toll of all.

Moore is uneven in the extent to which he gives voice to peasants and revolutionaries in the various countries he compares. French revolutionaries are given, by far, the most extended attention. Chinese peasants and revolutionaries are almost voiceless, and instead their motives are imputed from their

"the main victims of progress were as usual the ordinary peasants..."

structural positions. The different degrees of historical detail can be explained in part by Moore's inability to read Chinese and Japanese. The bibliography for *Social Origins* includes works in French, German and Russian in addition to English. This is a greater range of linguistic fluency than most American scholars then and now possess, although some of the US and British historical sociologists working within the modernization paradigm in the 1960s and 70s did learn Japanese and/or Chinese and could access scholarship in those languages. Moore wrote in the very early years of the wave of history from below and his

successors have benefitted from the mass of scholarship that gives us a far deeper and broader understanding of revolutionaries, peasants and workers than was available to Moore in the 1960s. However, even then there was a rich Marxist literature on peasants that is almost totally absent from Moore's bibliography for France, Britain and Japan.

Dylan Riley, at the 50th anniversary session on Social Origins at the ASA in Seattle this August, argued that the logic of Moore's argument made dictatorship rather than democracy the default outcome of the process Moore still labeled modernization and many of us would call the transition to capitalism. Riley is correct that the process of democratization as traced by Moore, except perhaps in England, was an uneven and contingent process that could have been diverted or reversed. It might be that landlords and capitalist prefer authoritarian and fascist regimes to democratic ones if given the choice. However, in Moore's telling, the German and Japanese revolutions from above also were highly uncertain outcomes. Moore remained closely within the modernization paradigm in his emphasis on modernizing elites rather than classes or structural forces as the key variable in making it possible for Japan and Germany to successfully vault from the world of backward, uneven economies into the first rank of economic and military powers.

Revolution from above in Germany and Japan depended, in Moore's words, on "very able leadership to drag along the less perceptive reactionary elements, concentrated among, though not necessarily confined to, the landed upper classes" (p. 441). Thus, Moore credits the Meiji rulers with being farsighted and energetic. He believes the samurai could have stopped the reforms but they were unaware of the long-term consequences of the deal they had agreed to until it was too late. Conversely, in Moore's telling, Chiang Kai-shek had such a degree of autonomy that he could reverse Sun

Yat-sen's reforms without serious opposition and thereby inadvertently pave the path for the communist revolution. Moore's analysis raises the question of why Japanese and German modernizing elites were so capable and farsighted while the rulers of other countries were not. Unfortunately, he didn't offer answers or even an analytic framework to develop an answer. Social Origins does identify a fascist path to development, or more accurately a fascist path from development, but Moore can't explain why so few countries ended up as dictatorships.

Moore's decision to write a chapter on India was a brilliant opportunity to test his explanations of the other countries or at least to draw on his insights from those cases to try to predict India's future. However, since the fascist path depends so heavily on leaders' initiatives and shrewdness he finishes by throwing up his hands and saying that India's future will depend on the qualities of post-Nehru leaders whose identity he can't predict and therefore whose choices remain unknowable.

The most predictable path in Moore's analysis is the communist one. Communist revolutions as well as the sixteenth century German peasant war were caused by "the absence of a commercial revolution in agriculture led by the landed upper classes and the concomitant survival of peasant social institutions into the modern era when they are subject to new stresses and strains" (p. 477). That backwardness, Moore argues, was caused by landlord moves to increase profits by raising rents or tying peasants to land to use their labor to produce grain for export. In France, Russia and China the old state's success in taming or retarding the development of a bourgeoisie opened the door to peasant revolution. Yet, in France that revolution was a link in a long chain that led to democracy, while in Russia and China, peasant revolution was harnessed in what Moore sees as a fairly obvious and

unproblematic way by communist parties.

Moore's focus on peasants was prescient, since he wrote right before the wave of post-colonial struggles in the Third World. He laid the basis for Jeff Paige's more precise comparisons in *Agrarian Revolutions*. Paige, like Moore, offers an almost purely structural explanation for communist revolutions. In Paige's work, the

"Moore placed questions of injustice at the forefront of *Social Origins* in ways that non-Marxist American readers of the 1960s would have been most likely to appreciate and respond to."

default is continued stagnation and not fully capitalist or market-based systems of exploitation. Indeed, we can read Moore's speculations on India as suggesting that the default future for the Third World would be a failed modernization that also inoculated those states against communist revolution as well as blocking the paths to fascism or democracy.

Finally, why did Moore make political systems rather than capitalism the key dependent variable and therefore the object of his analysis? Part of the answer is that Moore accepted modernization theory's contention that all societies would end up, sooner or later, with enough of a market economy and with enough of the other aspects of modernity that the traditional social relations that blocked democracy, fascism and communism would be disrupted beyond any possibility of restoration. Yet that understanding of the relentlessness, if unevenness, of modernization, made it possible for Moore to focus on the choices that the modernizing societies of his era, with India as the largest, still faced. Moore certainly didn't see democracy, fascism and communism as

choices that were actually open to all contemporary societies, but he did assign them moral weights. He acknowledged, in passing remarks scattered through *Social Origins*, that factors external to each society made it increasingly unlikely that the newly modernizing would end up as democracies.

Moore's under theorized and scattered references to wars and to the cumulative effects of previous changes on later possibilities opened research agendas for later scholars. Skocpol pioneered the systematic study of the effects of war on state breakdown and revolutions. World systems theorists have been the most sophisticated in working out the role of temporality in opening and closing spaces for liberal political outcomes as well as the degree, pace and form of economic development.

Moore's analytic choices also reflected his moral values. In selecting dictatorship and democracy rather than capitalism or development as the outcomes he wishes to explain, Moore placed questions of injustice at the forefront of *Social Origins* in ways that non-Marxist American readers of the 1960s would have been most likely to appreciate and respond to. Fifty years later we can build, and we have built, upon Moore by drawing on far deeper resources of historical scholarship than were available to him. We also have a broader array of theoretical perspectives, including more subtle and sophisticated modes of Marxist analysis (which have the added advantage of being more acceptable within American academia) than Moore was able to engage with. However, we still can sharpen our moral sensibilities and learn how to make our scholarship speak to the political dilemmas of our time by returning to *Social Origins* and appreciating Barrington Moore's engagement with human cruelty.

On Human Rights Around the World Today

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Introduction

Targeted immigration bans, imprisonment of political opponents, abuse of refugees, disregard of immigrant and worker rights, murder, torture —the current social-political-economic landscape in the world appears bleak. The present preoccupation with these issues in our public consciousness, create a sense of urgency and continued crisis. It is not surprising then, that there is a renewed focus on the question of human rights. In the series of short articles that follow, we take a look at human rights within historical, national and global contexts. Gabriel Hetland asks us to examine the very idea and concept of human rights through the example of Human Rights Watch in Latin America. He calls for the issue to be analyzed more thoroughly and from a comparative historical perspective. This is exactly what the other articles do, while keeping the national contexts in the forefront. Gábor Attila Tóth, juxtaposes the question of human rights with freedom and liberty in post-communist Hungary. How do we understand

vanishing liberties accomplished through seemingly democratic means? In the case of Russia, Anna Paretskaya discusses the repression of political opponents through the very medium that should allow for expressing disagreement with one's government —the press and media. The last article by Timothy M. Gill, approaches the topic by looking at how the rise of Trump has changed the discourse on human rights in the United States, a country which for so long purported to be the steward and protector of human rights around the world.

The Uses and Abuses of a Concept: Human Rights in Latin America

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The idea that human rights should, indeed must, be defended appears unobjectionable and beyond question. During the 1970s and 1980s the concept of human rights played a key role in struggles against military rule in Latin America. The most famous case may be Argentina, where the Mothers (and later Grandmothers) of the Plaza de Mayo waged a decades-long struggle to bring Argentina's military to account for widespread human-rights violations. This struggle was a key part

of the broad popular movement that toppled Argentina's dictatorship and led to the restoration of democratic rule in 1983.

Human rights struggles were important in many Latin American countries during this period. The brutal experience of military rule convinced many popular organizations and leftist political parties that human (and political) rights that formerly might have been considered secondary or "bourgeois" – in particular the right to due process, and protection against torture, execution, and unlawful imprisonment (along with access to voting, and rights to freedom of speech and assembly) – were in fact critical, both in and of themselves, and as necessary conditions for waging broader struggles to tame, transform, and transcend capitalism. Evidence of the systematic denial of human rights in the former Soviet Union, Cuba, and other countries claiming the socialist mantle convinced many on the Left, in Latin America and elsewhere, that human (and political) rights could not be set aside in the name of socialism or revolution.

There are compelling reasons then, for anyone seeking a more egalitarian, democratic, and fair society to support the notion of human rights. At times, however, the concept has been used in highly questionable ways. Take how one of the world's leading human rights organizations, Human Rights Watch (HRW), has employed the idea of human rights in the case of contemporary Venezuela, alongside and in contrast to other Latin American countries. Close examination of HRW's statements and actions towards Venezuela (and Colombia, Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina) show how struggles over human rights may serve organizational and imperial interests over and above the interests of the downtrodden, forgotten masses whom human rights organizations claim to defend.

Few countries in the world have been subject to more attention from HRW in recent years than

Venezuela. Since 2014, HRW has issued 3 reports and more than 70 statements (op-eds, commentaries, dispatches, news reports, etc.) related to Venezuela, more than any other Latin American country, except Brazil. These reports and statements document the worsening political and socioeconomic (or "humanitarian" as per HRW) crises that have engulfed Venezuela since 2014. As anyone familiar with the news is likely to know, Venezuela is currently in the midst of a severe, multi-dimensional crisis. HRW's work captures important aspects of this crisis, such as severe and appalling shortages of food, medicine, and basic goods, acts of state violence and repression, and the government's increasingly select adherence to democratic norms (visible in the decision to suspend constitutionally mandated regional elections for over a year)

There are clear grounds upon which HRW and others can legitimately criticize the Nicolás Maduro administration. Yet, one need not be a blind Madurista to find HRW's work vis-à-vis Venezuela and other Latin American countries troubling in three ways.

The first is the openly partisan nature of HRW's criticism of Venezuela, which is directed exclusively at the government, making it appear that the current crisis is entirely the fault of the Maduro administration. This omits the broader historical, economic, and geopolitical context in which Venezuela's "Bolivarian Revolution" has taken place. As scholars of Venezuela have shown (but HRW seems to ignore in its work), the Venezuelan government has not acted in a vacuum but under significant constraints, most notably the constant, often violent opposition of domestic elites and the US government, which have repeatedly sought to destabilize and remove Venezuela's government. By neglecting to criticize human rights violations perpetrated by the opposition (and often supported by the US) – e.g. recent instances of low-income Venezuelans, often people of color, being

burned alive by opposition protesters; and destruction of badly needed food stored in government buildings – HRW has undermined its credibility. The organization thus appears less as a universal defender of human rights than a partisan actor.

The second is the double standard by which HRW has treated Venezuela and other Latin American countries. While Venezuela has been relentlessly criticized for any and all acts of “democratic backsliding” (some of which, to be sure, merit critique), HRW has been silent in the face of arguably more egregious violations of democratic norms elsewhere. The most obvious example is the Brazilian parliament’s removal of Brazil’s democratically elected president, Dilma Rousseff, in what critics label a “parliamentary-institutional coup,” which took place over two acts, in April and August 2016. HRW did not issue a single statement discussing, much less condemning, Rousseff’s ouster. HRW’s (non)actions were similar with respect to the similar parliamentary “coup” that removed Paraguay’s president Fernando Lugo in 2012. HRW responded to this with a single short statement expressing concern that Lugo’s impeachment “showed a lack of respect for due process.” The contrast with HRW’s relentless words and actions against the Maduro administration (e.g. lobbying numerous Latin American governments to suspend Venezuela from the Organization of American States) is notable.

The third troubling issue is the fact that HRW’s work in Latin America overall (and not just regarding Venezuela) appears to align very closely with the interests of the US government. (This is troubling for multiple reasons, not least the fact that the US does not have a sterling record of supporting human rights in Latin America, to say the least.) HRW has, for instance, issued no critiques of Argentina’s conservative president and stalwart US ally, Mauricio Macri (apart from a

statement imploring Macri, “Don’t Ease the Pressure Over Venezuela’s Abuses”), despite Macri’s firing of over 1000 public employees just after taking office, and recent harsh crackdown on Bolivian immigrants in Argentina. It is also worth noting that HRW aligned itself with former US ally Álvaro Uribe (a notorious human rights abuser, whom HRW criticized in the past) to oppose the historic

“...situate concepts, like human rights and democracy, within broader historical, regional, and global context...”

2016 peace accord forged between Colombia’s government and the FARC. HRW actively campaigned for a “No” vote in public referenda on the accord, an outcome many observers felt would lead to a continuation of human rights abuses within Colombia.

This brief examination of the contrasting ways the concept of human rights has been used and abused in Latin America over the past forty years has two broader lessons. The first is the need to situate concepts, like human rights and democracy, within broader historical, regional, and global context. The analysis presented shows the concept has been wielded in very different ways by grassroots activists (e.g. the Plaza de Mayo Mothers/Grandmothers) and powerful, transnational organizations (HRW). The second, related, lesson is the need to examine the webs of power within which concepts like human rights (or liberty, freedom, etc.) are wielded. In other words, comparative-historical sociology is needed to differentiate the use and abuse of such concepts.

Vanishing Liberties: Human Rights in Hungary

Gábor Attila Tóth

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The annus mirabilis, the year 1989, proved that the spirit of liberty still lives in the hearts of East-Central European men and women. The autumn of that year was the historical turning point for the transformation from Soviet-type authoritarian regimes to democracy. The single- or dominant-party systems collapsed through a series of negotiations and compromises between the old regime and the democratic opposition. In Hungary, the substantively new Constitution was promulgated on 23 October 1989, on the thirty-third anniversary of the 1956 revolution, two weeks before the fall of the Berlin Wall. The 1989-born democracy can be characterized by the main institutions of constitutionalism: free and fair elections, representative government, a parliamentary system, an independent judiciary, ombudspersons to guard fundamental rights, and a Constitutional Court to review the laws for their constitutionality.

Although Hungary set up what looks like a path to a mature democracy, the country faced from the beginning serious legal and extra-legal difficulties. There were social and political tensions at work under the surface of the new legal system. Most importantly, the political left and right were involved in a cold civil war with each other, and could not cooperate in partnership under and for a shared constitution. They not only saw each other as competitors in the contest for an election victory but also as enemies who were detrimental to national existence and progress. A poor tradition of democratic political conventions, weakness of civil society, imperfections of public education, and other sociological factors all made the constitutional balance fragile. In other words, political reality threatened seriously the

fulfillment of constitutional ideas.

In the 2010 parliamentary election, the then-opposition party Fidesz won a landslide majority of 68 per cent of the seats with 53 per cent of the votes. It was a majority sufficiently large to adopt a brand-new constitution called Fundamental Law. In line with the new constitutional framework the government enacted legislation affecting the independent judiciary; limiting the powers of the constitutional court; establishing a powerful media authority; transforming the Electoral Commission; narrowing public forum for free speech; removing legal rights of underprivileged churches etc. The government which imposed these radical changes remained popular and had been reelected with a similar majority in 2014. What's more, recent opinion polls suggest that if an election were called today the government would be elected again.

On the face of it, what the people want, the people have. In other words, the new Hungarian legal system arguably represents an 'illiberal' or 'winner-takes-all' concept of democracy and rule of law. Many observers of the Hungarian transformation apply the term 'illiberal democracy' to Hungary because political power is based upon repetitive elections, but the power-holders systematically violate the freedoms of the people they represent. More than this, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has proudly announced his government's break with liberal type of democracy. This is of course far from unprecedented. In reaction to unsettling constitutional developments allied with the decline of global freedom, a new school of thought has emerged to account for the fact that many such emerging regimes ostensibly behave as if they were democracies, but are majoritarian rather than consensual; populist instead of elitist; nationalist as opposed to cosmopolitan; or religious rather than secular. I think, however, that what we are experiencing

is not democratic at all. The unrestrained decision-making in the name of the majority has set the country on a road to the ruin of democracy and this road leads to authoritarianism.¹

The most important new feature of authoritarianism is that, under a façade of constitutionalism, it claims to abide by

"...what the people want, the people have. In other words, the new Hungarian legal system arguably represents an 'illiberal' or 'winner-takes-all' concept of democracy and rule of law."

democratic principles.² The Hungarian government, feigns to be normal constitutional democracy, legitimizes itself through popular elections and referenda. Incumbents are elected leaders who adopt constitutions and laws that apparently correspond to legal systems in democratic countries. The constitutional rules and institutions are often not essentially different from those to be found in constitutional democracies. However, the Fundamental Law belongs to paper constitutions often characterized as 'semantic camouflage' or 'façade constitutions', designed to create systematic advantages for the incumbents.

Today many authoritarian systems constitutionally retain multiparty elections and provide scope for activities of opposition movements. Political rights include active and passive electoral rights by direct, secret ballot, based on universal and equal voting rights. What makes them distinctive is that the election is managed so as to deny opposition candidates a fair chance. Legal norms and practices ensure

the dominance of the ruling party. The voting practice in the Hungarian constitutional system is hegemonic by nature, meaning that this system is deficient in many constituting elements of free, fair, and competitive elections required by both international human rights law and principles of constitutionalism. By virtue of this, the head of government may keep the process and outcome of the vote under strict control. An ODIHR (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights) mission concluded that the 2014 parliamentary election was not fair and that the basic framework within which the election was run violated key OSCE guidelines.³ The governing party enjoyed an undue advantage because of partisan changes in election law, e.g., unequal suffrage, gerrymandering of electoral districts, a rise to the electoral threshold, restrictive campaign regulations, far-from-independent assessment of the election and biased media coverage that blurred the separation between political party and the State. In sum, the practice of voting is controlled by those in power, and rival political movements are severely constrained. As a result, citizens are not offered a free and fair choice among various competitors in elections.

Existing institutional checks within the constitutional system are also illusory. The Constitutional Court plays a legitimizing role instead of fulfilling its task as final guardians of fundamental rights. The constitutional 'reform' resulted in politically expedient modifications to anything from the personal composition ('court packing'), competences, and institutional and financial independence of the constitutional court. (In a similar fashion, see the most recent transformation of the Polish Constitutional Tribunal.) Decisions of the constitutional justices, appointed according to the will of the authoritarian leader, contribute to the reinforcement of the system.

As a contemporary authoritarian constitution, the Fundamental Law formally declares liberty and equality rights for their citizens, but these are hardly legally enforceable. It constructs a constitutional catalogue of fundamental rights, ostensibly based upon the international standards arising from the European Convention of Human Rights and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms. Yet the constitution in fact contains a number of sections in direct contradiction with international human rights law, typically, recognizing certain fundamental rights, but only to the extent that these rights serve the interests of the ruling political group. Good examples might well be that in line with the Fundamental Law, rules on public education, social and health-care and taxation may give preference to the 'historical churches' over other churches, and the churches may be given an advantage over other institutions (NGOs, foundations, associations); the Fundamental Law has been criticized since it does not treat same-sex couples as equals; family is defined by a provision under which only a man and a woman are allowed to marry; the right to asylum is granted only "if neither their country of origin nor another country provides protection" for the asylum-seeker. Moreover, the Venice Commission noted that several parts of the Fundamental Law on the citizens' responsibilities and obligations seems to indicate a shift of emphasis from the obligations of the state toward the individual citizens to the obligations of the citizens toward the community.⁴

The government tends to restrict freedom of speech by capturing media. The relative popularity of the ruling party derives from the global trend toward populist leaders who exploit popular anti-system and anti-establishment sentiments; but it is also the case that a significant section of the mass media is de facto captured, including de jure takeover of public media. In this way, the general public is

subject to systematic manipulation by the government. The examples include a series of government-run poster campaigns and 'national consultations' designed to stir up public feeling against refugees.

Although criminal prosecution is still a tool for government, political opponents opt for a less blunt approach, opting to sue journalists and civil rights activists for defamation to silence dissent, rather than resorting to imprisonment, or blatant prohibitions or suppressions of journals, books, films, or websites. Since restrictions on free speech protect the members of the majority (citing, for example, the dignity of the nation, the country, or dominant ethnic or religious groups), instead of members of vulnerable social groups, such regulations constitute one aspect of an authoritarian approach.

Contemporary authoritarian governments do not necessarily prohibit civil society organizations, preferring instead to impose administrative burdens and found pro-government quasi-NGOs to oppose them. In Hungary, leaders of the opposition parties and social movements are frequently characterized as betraying their nation, or agents of external powers. Similarly, indirect racial or ethnic exclusions as well as repression of civil society are among the characteristics of the system. Although civil society organizations are not prohibited, following the legislation in Russia, Belarus, and Israel, the Parliament adopted a 'foreign agent' law; its primary aim being to curb cooperation between international and domestic NGOs. The government's attempt to eradicate the highly respected and independent Central European University can be also seen as a feature of a rising authoritarian regime. Moreover, government-organized non-governmental organizations (GONGOs) have been set up and financed by the governing party in order to imitate civil society, promote authoritarian interests, and hamper the work of

legitimate NGOs (See similar cases in Egypt, Russia, Syria, Turkey).

An important stepping stone to authoritarianism seems to be the ill-defined powers, including emergency powers, of the executive, the ‘guardian of the Constitution’. By invoking threats posed by terrorism, financial crisis or other imminent dangers, the head of the executive could successfully introduce arbitrary emergency measures. What is culminated in Hungary is primarily not a fear that alerts us to our vulnerability, but rather a rioting phobia. The real fear of the unknown, worry about change – cultural effects, crime rates, costs and so on – are manipulated by political leaders who exploit human fragility. In Hungary, the administration of nationalist ideology, the extended state of exception, and the government-run xenophobic billboard campaign are the symbolic and factual means of the manipulation.

Some would understand the Hungarian state of affairs as Rousseauian. In my view, neither *volonté general*, nor *volonté de tous* is helpful to justify the system under the Fundamental Law. To be sure, while the constitutional system in Hungary appears to be majority backed by the electorate through both popular votes and referendums, this electoral success is based on one-sided modifications to the constitution and electoral laws, mass manipulation, unfair elections, and fear of referendum initiated by groups of individuals.

I think that the political system in Hungary is closer to Carl Schmitt’s ideas on the distinction between friend and enemy; enforcement internal political homogeneity; the role of the executive, a ‘sovereign ruler’, who creates a new constitution in the name of the people, and is recognized as the ‘guardian of the Constitution’ as opposed to the constitutional court. These are justificatory ideas for an authoritarian legal system, which enforce

obedience to the central authority at the expense of personal freedoms, rule of law, and other constitutional principles.⁵

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A Closed Society? Repression and Countermovement in Russia

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During Vladimir Putin’s third term as President of Russia, which started in May 2012 amid five-month long protests against unfair elections, the country’s “freedom rating,” assigned annually by Freedom House, has continued to decline. In the beginning of Putin’s first term in 2000, the country was rated “partially free” with the overall rating of 4.5; in 2017, the last year of his third term (Putin served two consecutive four-year terms in the yearly 2000s, then four years as Prime Minister before returning to the presidency, which in 2011 was extended to six-year terms) Russia is labeled “not free.”

The country’s current overall rating is 6.5, with

civil liberties rated 6 and political liberties 7 (where 1 is most free and 7 is least free). According to watchdogs like Freedom House and academic researchers, both within and outside Russia, there is hardly any area in which human rights and civil liberties meet international standards, because the current government, all three branches of which have fallen increasingly under Putin's control, at best ignores and fails to enforce them or at worst violates these international norms itself. LGBT rights, freedom of expression, and freedom of association are the areas where government interference received most attention recently.

While Russia repealed the Soviet-era antisodomy laws in 1993, various regional and federal authorities have tried to recriminalize homosexuality since the early 2000s. Many of these efforts were aimed at banning what supporters of such legislation call "propaganda of homosexuality." Between 2003 and 2009 the federal parliament considered but ultimately rejected three versions of an anti-"gay propaganda" law, although several regional authorities passed similar laws and used the pretext of "gay propaganda" to deny registration to LGBT-rights NGOs and to reprimand television broadcasters for coverage of LGBT-related issues.

During the first decade of the 2000s, gay rights activism intensified and so did the antigay opposition (some of it facilitated if not directly incited by authorities): for example, when Moscow city authorities banned the first Pride march in May 2006, activists attending a gay rights forum in the city decided to march anyway but were assaulted by neo-Nazi and Christian Orthodox protestors; the riot police detained several dozen participants in the clashes from both sides. Moscow and other local authorities have continued to disallow gay pride parades under the pretext of possible public disorder even though in 2010 the European Court of Human Rights fined Russia

for consistent discrimination against gays by banning pro-gay rights marches.

Even though earlier versions of the law failed in the previous federal parliament's sessions, in June 2013 the Russian Duma, where the pro-Putin United Russia Party increased its majority in what is generally believed to be a very flawed election in December 2011, swiftly and unanimously (with only one abstention) passed the law banning "propaganda of nontraditional sexual relationships to minors." The law, which, according to critics, is vague on specifics of what such "propaganda" entails (and also purposefully avoids any concrete mention of homosexuality, bisexuality, transgenderism, or such), stipulates small fines for individuals (although penalties increase exponentially if the alleged propaganda is

"Moscow and other local authorities have continued to disallow gay pride parades under the pretext of possible public disorder..."

disseminated through the mass media and/or online) and much larger ones (up to 30,000 USD) for organizations or suspension of their activities for three months. Earlier this year, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), responding to a complaint from activists of GayRussia, ruled (with a notable dissent by the judge from Russia) this law to be discriminatory and interfering with freedom of expression. As with the 2010 ECHR decision, Russia is expected to ignore this ruling and continue persecuting gay activism; so far about a dozen individuals have been punished, as were several LGBT-rights organizations, most notably Deti-404 (Children-404)—a popular

online support hub for LGBT youths—whose founder and administrator has been fined and website and page on VKontakte (a Russian equivalent of Facebook) have been blocked.

Russian authorities' antigay stance stems from and in turn feeds into the long-standing homophobia of many Russians, particularly in more conservative—rural and/or religious (both Christian Orthodox and Muslim)—parts of the country, where discrimination and persecution, by authorities and compatriots, can be ruthless. In spring 2017, a reputable Russian newspaper *Novaya gazeta* exposed a campaign of violence by local police in Chechnya against men believed to be gay or bisexual. The newspaper's reporting, verified by Human Rights Watch based on firsthand accounts of victims, suggested that the abductions and torture that the police perpetrated to humiliate the victims and extract from them information about other gay men were condoned if not directly sanctioned by the Head of the Chechen Republic Ramzan Kadyrov, who is Putin's close crony. Several men have died as a result of their detentions. Most were released and returned home, although HRW reported that the men's sexual orientations were revealed to their families who were indirectly encouraged to carry out "honor killings": according to traditionalistic views in the region, having a gay relative dishonors the entire family. Kadyrov denied not only any knowledge of an antigay campaign in his republic but also that there are any gay people in Chechnya. Despite Putin's promises to speak with the heads of federal law-enforcement agencies, there have been no reports of an investigation.

The hallmark of Putin's first presidential term in the early 2000s was his struggle with the "oligarchs"—owners of Russia's richest companies (usually natural-resources giants or banking empires)—the best-known of whom is Mikhail Khodorkovsky, who spent ten years in prison and labor camps for fraud, embezzlement, and money laundering. While

ostensibly Putin was cracking down on financial machinations, including alleged tax evasion, persecution was at least in part politically motivated and resulted in the government's takeover not only of oligarchs' financial assets but of several nationwide television broadcasters owned, along with independent print media outlets, by two other top oligarchs: Vladimir Berezovsky and Boris Gusinsky.

But it was not the media moguls who have faced the most danger—nearly two dozen journalists were killed during the first decade of the 21st century, according to the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists, in reprisal for their work, and CPJ suspected that another dozen journalists were killed for similar reasons but could not definitively confirm it. Most of these reporters were murdered (as opposed to being killed in crossfire, for example) and often in contract-style killings, and most covered politics, corruption, or the war in the southern republic of Chechnya. The murders, in 2004 and 2006 respectively, of Paul Klebnikov, a US journalist and editor of *Forbes Russia*, and *Novaya gazeta* investigative correspondent Anna Politkovskaya are the most high-profile cases. Both covered the conflict in Chechnya, and Klebnikov also investigated connections between Russian business and organized crime. While no one connected to the Russian government has been directly implicated in any of the journalists' deaths, observers like the CPJ have criticized Russian authorities for dragging their feet in many investigations: for example, in both Klebnikov's and Politkovskaya's cases, suspected assassins were acquitted, while those who ordered the assassinations have not been identified and brought to justice.

With no independent national TV channels and with print media struggling under financial and censorship pressures, Russians turned to online news outlets and, later, to blogs and social

media for their news, commentary, discussion, and coordination of civic and political activities. The power of online publications and other internet platforms, which were largely unrestricted at the time, became evident in 2011–2012 during the unexpectedly massive and lasting protests against severe irregularities in the parliamentary and presidential elections—well documented and publicized by thousands of election observers across the country also with the help of the “new” media.

In the aftermath of these protests, which were Russia’s largest since the last years of the Soviet Union, the pro-Putin majority in the parliament has promulgated a series of laws giving the authorities a much tighter control over individuals’ online activity and over providers of internet-related products and service. There are now harsher punishments for “inducing, recruiting, or otherwise involving others in mass unrest” and for “public justification” of terrorism and extremism—both on- and offline—although what constitutes such activity, according to critics, remains vague, probably purposefully so. For example, in 2015

“With a strong hold on news media, nongovernmental organizations, and the electoral system, reelection in 2018... is nearly guaranteed.”

an activist in Tatarstan was sentenced to three years in prison for posting on VKontakte articles critical of Russia’s annexation of Crimea the year before, and in early 2017 an administrator of a Moscow library of Ukrainian literature received a suspended sentence of four years for keeping in her library and disseminating pro-Ukrainian publications that in Russia are deemed extremist. Additionally, new laws require that personal data of Russian internet users is only stored within Russia (even

if collected by foreign companies such as Facebook or Twitter), make online search engines with over 1 million daily users liable for content that appears on their websites, and ban foreign ownership of Russian-language search engines and online advertisers. Currently, the legislature is considering outlawing technologies like VPN, which allow access to blocked websites and servers, or Telegram, a messaging app facilitating encrypted communication between users.

The authorities seem to be particularly fixated on minimizing Western involvement in the country’s affairs, political and civic in particular, likely as a reaction to deep involvement of a multitude of international organizations during the “transition” from socialism in the 1990s, which are widely blamed for economic problems and civic unrest of the period. Since the beginning of Putin’s presidency, but especially in his latest term, his government has been working to curtail “foreign influences” over domestic affairs. It tried to delegitimize the protests of 2011–2012 and claims about irregularities in parliamentary and presidential elections by suggesting that election observers and protestors were on the payroll of the US State Department.

One of the first legislations of Putin’s third term was the law on “foreign agents,” which decrees that NGOs receiving any material support from foreign donors and participating in political activity must declare themselves “foreign agents” or cease activity. Over 150 organizations have been designated with this label (it is revoked if groups stop receiving funding from abroad) and at least 30 groups have disbanded. The problem with the law is not just that it is stigmatizing—“foreign agent” in Russia strongly connotes spy—but that it construes political activity very broadly: essentially any advocacy work or politics-related academic research can fall into this category; as a result, environmental groups, centers for prevention of violence against

women, and sociological research organizations—to note just a few examples—have been placed on the list alongside more obviously “political” groups like election observers associations and freedom of press advocates. Furthermore, in 2015 the government banned the National Endowment for Democracy and George Soros’s Open Society Foundation, both of which had supported local civil society work since the 1990s, as “undesirable foreign organizations” perceived to undermine the country’s security or constitutional order.

Despite, or perhaps because, of these increasingly tight controls by the government, Russian society is not entirely demobilized. The 2011–2012 protest movement failed to overturn the results of rigged elections and possibly contributed to the postelection crackdown on freedom of expression and of association, as well as to some electoral reforms favoring Putin and his political allies, but it at least demonstrated that there were hundreds of thousands of citizens who were willing to express their disagreement with and disdain for the country’s highest authorities, President Putin himself, publicly and collectively—which during Putin’s first two terms was unlikely and uncommon. After a hiatus, street protests, instigated by the oppositionist Alexei Navalny, a political and anticorruption activist whom Time magazine recently named one of the most influential people on the internet, are back. Navalny has announced that he is running for president in 2018, even though he is technically ineligible even to vote: early this year he received a five-year suspended sentence on trumped-up charges of embezzlement. He has about a million subscribers to his YouTube channel, nearly half a million Russians have pledged to support his nomination for presidency, and in March and June 2017 he mobilized hundreds of thousands across the country, many of them as young as 16–18, to rally against government corruption (nearly 2,000 protestors were arrested on each of the

two days, in many cases police used force, and hundreds of protestors face administrative and criminal charges).

With a strong hold on news media, nongovernmental organizations, and the electoral system, Putin’s reelection in 2018—should he choose to run—is nearly guaranteed. To demonstrate that he has the universal, or at least overwhelming, support of his people, his administration is likely to put further restrictions on political rights and civil liberties. Russia will remain “not free” but not without a newly active and increasingly vocal opposition.

The Trump Administration and Global Human Rights: Signposts for the Road Ahead

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Following World War II, state and social leaders across the world recognized the need to establish multilateral institutions that championed the global promotion of human rights. As a result, they created the United Nations (UN) in 1945, constructed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, established the Organization of American States (OAS) in 1948, and wrote the American Convention on Human Rights in 1969. Thereafter, international leaders have signed and ratified several international agreements, including the Convention against Torture.

The U.S., however, has maintained a conflicted relationship with human rights.

In the immediate post-WWII period, conservative senators blocked the U.S. from adopting many international treaties, fearing that the international community might use them to overturn states’ rights and end segregation. Some conservative legislators have continued to voice concern for U.S. national

sovereignty and states' rights in the face of international treaties. Indeed, this was the reason that several Republican senators recently gave for refusing to support the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, even though the treaty was modeled after domestic legislation, the Americans with Disabilities Act.

On the other hand, some U.S. leaders have embraced human rights and, at times, secured the ratification of human rights agreements.

During the early 1970s, Representative Donald Fraser (D-MN) resurrected the idea of human rights within Washington by hosting a series of hearings within the House Subcommittee on International Organizations, which involved visits from victims of right-wing Latin American dictatorships (Sikkink 2007). And, by the end of the decade, Georgia Governor Jimmy Carter utilized the language of human rights to unite several factions within the Democratic Party – those concerned with the domestic behavior of communist governments, particularly in Eastern Europe, and those concerned with U.S. support for right-wing dictatorships, particularly in Latin America.

If there remained any question, though, concerning the Trump Administration's position towards human rights, its stance has become clear over the last several months.

In his first trip abroad, President Trump visited with members of the royal Saudi family that continue to brutally rule over their country. Trump failed to offer any critique of the Saudi regime, instead visiting a Toby Keith concert and attending a meeting on counter-terrorism efforts. Indeed, Trump has made a habit of promoting working relations with several authoritarian leaders throughout the world. In an interview with Fox News correspondent Bill O'Reilly over the Super Bowl weekend, for instance, Trump reiterated his call to work with Russia and, when O'Reilly called Putin "a killer," Trump responded, saying that there "are

a lot of killers. We've got a lot of killers. What, do you think our country is so innocent?"

Beyond Putin, Trump has invited Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán for a trip to Washington. Orbán has targeted Hungarian NGOs that criticize the government, deployed anti-Muslim rhetoric, and recently threatened to shut down the Central European University. Trump has also praised the policies of similar strongmen in both Kazakhstan and the Philippines, where extrajudicial murder has now become all but uncommon throughout the archipelago.

Under Trump, the U.S. has begun to relax Obama-implemented restrictions on weapon sales. In March, for example, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson decided to lift human rights conditions on the sale of F-16 fighter jets to Bahrain. Despite selling over \$115 billion worth of arms to the human rights-violating government of Saudi Arabia, the Obama administration terminated plans to sell the Lockheed Martin-produced fighter jets to Bahrain in September 2016 lest it improve its human rights record, as it particularly concerned the treatment of Shiite government protesters. In May, Tillerson also quite plainly stated that the U.S. must often place national security and economic interests over U.S. values of freedom and democracy, leading to much criticism from within and beyond the ranks of the Republican Party.

These moves will surely send a signal to authoritarian governments throughout the world. Sunjeev Bery, an advocacy director with Amnesty International, for example, has stated that arms deals with Bahrain "place the U.S. at risk of being complicit in war crimes, and discourage other countries, like Saudi Arabia, from addressing their own human rights records."

The Trump Administration also clearly evidences disdain for multilateral institutions.

Earlier in March, the U.S. failed to appear before the OAS Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) for a hearing involving U.S. immigration policies. Witnesses condemned the new administration's attempts to ban individuals from particular countries from entering the U.S., and human rights activists have lambasted the Trump administration's decision to skip the hearing.

At the same time that the Trump Administration has protested the IACHR, it has championed attempts by the OAS to push the Venezuelan government, another country that has condemned its IACHR hearings, to pursue several political-economic reforms, including a recall election on President Nicolás Maduro. Interestingly, Venezuela remains one of very few countries that the Trump Administration has targeted. The Treasury Department, for instance, has placed sanctions on the Venezuelan Vice-President Tareck El Aissami for his alleged involvement in drug trafficking, and U.S. state leaders have continuously condemned the Maduro government.

The real difference, of course, between countries like, on the one hand, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia and, on the other hand, Venezuela and Cuba, that the Trump Administration seemingly cares about is support for national security interests. While the Venezuelan government has recurrently criticized the War on Terror since its inception in 2001, Bahrain has aligned with Middle Eastern forces such as Saudi Arabia, another U.S. ally and gross human rights violator, to target al-Qaeda, ISIS, and other anti-U.S. forces in the Middle Eastern region.

Despite some earlier question marks concerning the new administration and its policies, it's now clear that the Trump team possesses little regard for the global promotion of human rights.

To be sure, the U.S. has long maintained a

historically ambivalent relationship with human rights, multilateral institutions, and authoritarian leaders. Since the late 20th century, however, most U.S. presidents have accepted the importance of human rights as a significant factor that should, at least, partially shape U.S. foreign policy. In places like Saudi Arabia, though, we have seen how national security interests have repeatedly taken priority.

Under the new administration, human rights have been gravely downgraded as a foreign policy concern. Indeed, since Trump came to power, the U.S. has hardly spoke out against any country beyond Venezuela and Cuba. In doing so, Trump has shown that only left-leaning governments that reject U.S. national security interests are deserving of criticism. Such a policy harkens back to the darkest days of the Cold War – where the U.S. accepted, and even promoted, right-wing dictators, so long as they lavished praise upon the U.S. and targeted left-leaning activists (Grandin 2007; Mann 2012; Sikkink 2007).

As the last few months have shown, the next few years will surely involve a struggle to keep human rights concerns on the agenda. But, as the outcome of recent proposals by the Trump administration also shows, it's a fight that can be won.

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How Comparative Historical Analysis Can Advance Global Development

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For the past decades, global development and comparative historical analysis have existed in two separate silos. The two fields rarely if ever speak to each other. This mutual ignoring, however and hopefully, may soon change. Major normative shifts are now occurring within the global development establishment, presenting new opportunities for comparative historical analysts to modify the ways we've conventionally studied and practiced development.

Traditional Norms in Global Development

Global development refers to a massive ecosystem of institutions that share the common goal of eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in the developing world. These institutions include international development and aid agencies (e.g., World Bank), national development agencies (e.g., USAID), philanthropies and NGOs of all sizes, as well as public policy schools that train professionals in development. Along with intervention programs and research, aid plays a big part in development assistance. According to the OECD, total aid reached a new peak of US\$142 billion in 2016.

Economics has had a predominant influence on global development. As Catherine Weaver

points out in her study of the World Bank, the vast majority of leaders and professionals in the bank are economists, who hail from a small number of elite programs and therefore share similar backgrounds and assumptions about the way development works.

Scholarly trends in economics thus have a direct impact on development practices. The explosion of randomized controlled experiments (RCTs) in the last decade is a case in point. Today, RCTs, are the gold standard of causal inference in economics. Through randomized experiments, economists may isolate and identify the causal effects of a given intervention (such as a training program) with precision. This academic rave quickly caught on in global development, as practitioners saw that experiments could be used to supply solid scientific evidence that their "interventions" work.

Normative Shifts in Global Development

Though strongly rooted, there are signs that the traditional norms in global development are being challenged and gradually shifting. Some luminaries have pointedly criticized the predominance of RCTs. In one of his widely influential blogs, Lant Pritchett, a development economist at Harvard, poses an incisive

question: “Is your impact evaluation asking questions that matter?”

Pritchett cites the illuminating example of a visit he made to West Bengal. At a “women’s self-help group” created by the World Bank, a local woman asked Pritchett and his colleagues,

“scholarly trends in economics thus have a direct impact on development practices”

“Tell us how women’s self-help groups work in your country.” The experts were stunned because in fact, in the developed world, women’s self-help groups hardly exist. They are an artifact created by the rich for the poor.

Another leading voice in development is Michael Woolcock, one of few sociologists at the World Bank. Going against the grain, Woolcock urges development practitioners to deploy more case studies to understand how things really work on the ground. In his words, “Rather than seeking universal ‘best practice’ responses, analysts [should] use case studies to learn from ‘natural’ (or sometime overtly experimental) sources of intra-country variation.”

These challenges to prevailing norms were inked in the most recent World Development World Report (WDR) 2017, co-directed by Yongmei Zhou. The WDR is like an ultimate guidebook of global development. Published annually, millions of copies are downloaded and read by academics and professionals throughout the field. It is undoubtedly one of the most influential documents in development.

Under Zhou’s stewardship, the WDR 2017 has broken many new grounds, in particular, by introducing the importance of “comparative historical analysis” and “adaptation” to

development. Instead of fixating on institutional forms, the WDR 2017 bravely turns its attention to institutional functions. To give an example, instead of fixating on whether the institutions in a developing country look like courts in the United States, we should instead ask if those institutions serve to resolve disputes, whether or not they look like Western courts.

How CHA Can Advance Global Development

Given these shifting norms, it is timely to consider how comparative historical analysis can contribute to ongoing debates and practices in development. Below I highlight three points, drawing on my recent book, *How China Escaped the Poverty Trap* (Cornell University Press 2016), and its connections to both CHA and development.

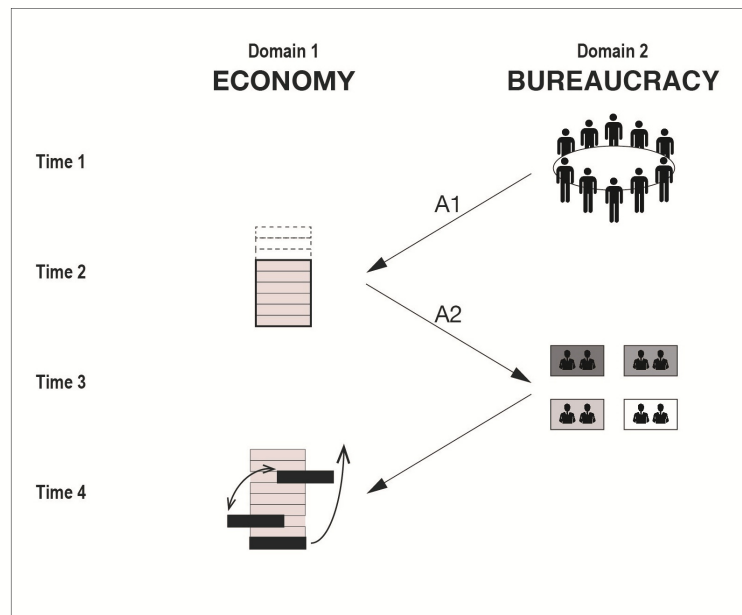
1. Building markets ≠ preserving markets

The notion that different institutional forms can serve similar functions is not new. Dani Rodrik has earlier proposed it in his essay titled “second-best institutions.” By acknowledging this idea, what the WDR 2017 has done is to bring it into mainstream thinking.

While the idea itself is not new or surprising, research is lacking on exactly what different institutional forms can serve similar functions. Rodrik’s use of the term “second-best institutions” suggest that less-than-ideal institutions may be good enough. But what exactly are these less-than-ideal institutions? What actual forms do we find in practice? These are empirical questions waiting to be explored.

My study of China’s reform process, from the opening of markets in 1978 to 2014, draws a sharp distinction between “market-building” and “market-preserving” institutions. By tracing the historical process by which markets first emerged and then subsequently evolved, my analysis shows that the institutions for

Figure 1



creating new markets (“market-building”) are qualitatively different from those that sustain markets (“market-preserving”).

Standard good institutions like private property rights and Weberian bureaucracies serve to preserve markets. Building markets, however, require making creative use of “weak/bad/wrong” institutions to kick-start entrepreneurial activities. Examples include non-technocratic state agencies, prebendalism, communal units.

For scholars of CHA, the tasks at hand are to identify a broader range of “market-building” institutions, since the forms of “market-preserving” institutions (e.g., modern courts, formal private property rights) are already well-known. We furthermore need to understand how and under what conditions do “market-building” institutions transition to “market-preserving” forms. While China presents a textbook case, similar cases can be found across historical contexts.

2. Mutual causal processes ≠ incremental change

To accomplish the above tasks, CHA scholars must develop a rigorous method for collecting data and tracing processes of mutual change. My book lays out a series of four basic steps, summarized in Figure 1 above:

- (1) Identify two or more domains of significance (D1 and D2).
- (2) Identify the relevant time period and significance junctures of change (T1 to T4).
- (3) Identify dominant traits in each domain in each significant period.
- (4) Step 4 is to trace the mechanisms of mutual influence—feedbacks—between changes observed in each domain.

CHA scholars, especially seminal work by Mahoney and Thelen, have illuminated the processes by which incremental change occurs in the absence of external shocks. The mutual changes—or coevolution—between institutions and economy is a special form of incremental change that involves feedback loops. Tracing

coevolution hence requires collecting historical-institutional data on feedbacks.

3. Study the underlying conditions that shape adaptive capacity

Tracing the mutual changes between economy and institutions motivates a deeper question: Pushing the causal factor one step back, what in turns shapes the capacity of societies or groups to adapt?

Hence, the second part of my book lays out a

"CHA scholars must develop a rigorous method for collecting data and tracing processes of mutual change"

broad theory of the necessary conditions for effective adaptation. The case of China illustrates how these conditions were created within the party-state, thereby enabling an adaptive authoritarian bureaucracy.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there are exciting possibilities on the horizon for CHA to make a difference to global development thinking. What's especially hopeful is that big thinkers in the development establishment are challenging old norms and keen to embrace new norms that pay serious attention to context, history, and adaptation.

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Op-Ed Corner: Environment and Climate Change Policy

Editor's Introduction

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In this fall edition of the Op-Ed Corner, we focus on an increasingly pressing issue: environment and climate policy.

The Paris Agreement is a global effort to combat climate change, and J. Timmons Roberts helps us understand why U.S. President Trump withdrew from it and how his decision has historical roots in the fossil fuel industry, anti-science campaigns, and religious ideology.

Maria Akchurin examines why there has not been more grassroots efforts to combat Trump's environmental and climate policies—namely, that environmental advocacy has become the purview of organizations. She suggests that one way forward is to take abstract concepts like “climate change” into what she describes as “more tangible and immediate ones.”

Finally, Thomas Dietz takes a step back to reflect on the state of environmental sociology and how historical/comparative sociologists can help tackle this important subject.

As a final note, I'd like to thank the section and my *Trajectories* co-editors for a wonderful year and the chance to create and edit the Op-Ed Corner feature. Although I am stepping down as co-editor, I look forward to continued engagement with the section and our members!

Looking for Comparisons to Trump's Paris Agreement Withdrawal

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On June 1, 2017 in the Rose Garden, President Donald Trump announced his intention to withdraw the United States from the Paris Agreement, a landmark deal among nearly every nation on Earth to reduce humanity's risk of experiencing catastrophic climate change. The storm of criticism before, during and after President Trump's announcement has been intense. Thousands of businesses, foreign leaders, local and state politicians, experts, heads of state and civil society leaders around the world have been nearly unanimous in condemning the move as reckless, selfish and ultimately self-defeating for the United States. This makes it difficult for many observers to understand why Trump would expend this

much political capital on what many consider a second-tier political issue (below national security and the U.S. economy).

Trump's nostalgia for a coal-based economy and his apparent fear of a renewable-energy future in the United States was not inevitable, as shown by just how rare it is around the world. The key to comprehending Trump's Paris decision, I would argue, is understanding how industrial interests influenced the President's understanding of the science of climate change and the trade-offs of the U.S. acting on the issue. To understand Trump's behavior now, it is valuable to put it in the context of a history of earlier campaigns by the tobacco industry over science and regulation. Along with other issue areas, strategies developed during these early tobacco wars have directly informed the fossil fuel industry's approach to winning policy battles over the past two decades. The fossil fuel industry's strategy involves hundreds of millions of dollars invested in trade organizations and public relations firms each year, in campaign contributions, in lobbying, and in building a circle of people around key decision-makers. Their long-term strategy and level of support have garnered remarkable results: hundreds of billions in continued fossil fuel subsidies, continued disputes over the basic nature of the problem and what to do about it, a weak and non-binding agreement a full 23 years after negotiations began, and now a President willing to try to undo even that.

Remarkably, nearly all the learning from this history seems to have been on one side: that of those wishing to delay action. This has dire implications for the U.S.'s ability to develop and sustain science-based public policy, and it suggests overdue efforts to combat these plots to undermine our democracy.

To fully understand the intersection of private interests and ideology, it is important to reach back to understand how fossil fuel interests

intersect with American religious history, the continuing influence of fundamentalist views in the Republican party, and to the strong Libertarian movement in the U.S. Texas oil wealth, frequently, runs into the Southern Baptist convention, keeping that group's leaders from addressing the issue of climate change aggressively. The fossil fuel industry has been described as the driving force behind the rise of the Tea Party wing that took over the Republican party and drove it to take extreme positions like the Paris decision.

The case of an anti-science campaign launched by the Tobacco industry is instructive. In spite of dozens of credible medical studies showed the direct link between smoking, cancer and

"The fossil fuel industry's strategy involves... building a circle of people around key decision-makers."

other cardio-pulmonary diseases. The tobacco companies had their own science supporting those conclusions, but actively suppressed their release. Public policy efforts were delayed; people died and suffered.

The initial response to Trump's withdrawal has been a public expression of shock and a redoubling of many countries and cities' efforts on climate change. But the longer-term and broader impact is uncertain: it could still trigger a chain reaction of lackluster efforts to address the issue. Very much is at stake in how this issue plays out. When President George W. Bush "unsigned" the Kyoto Protocol in March of 2001, the response was tepid and ineffectual. In effect, he got away with it, and was re-elected. The "climate issue" has to become an electoral one. That is, candidates must face funders and voters who will remember their response to Trump's Paris withdrawal.

There are important comparative cases with Trump's reckless decision on the Paris agreement. If having science be the basis of our nation's public policy, natural and social scientists and citizens now need to step up in ways far from their comfort zones. Becoming more strategic and policy-relevant in one's research direction is needed, as is scientists becoming more public and politically engaged.

Environmentalism and Climate Activism in the Trump Era

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The Trump administration is leading an attack on federal environmental policies. It has proposed to cut funding and staff at its own Environmental Protection Agency.¹ It has sought to eliminate the Office of Environmental Justice. It has appointed an EPA Administrator, Scott Pruitt, who works against the implementation of rules to limit methane emissions by the oil and gas industry. It has ordered a review of natural areas designated as protected national monuments under the Antiquities Act, threatening conservation on public lands.² It has pulled out of the Paris climate agreement to curb greenhouse gas emissions, hard-won through international negotiation with 194 other countries, and reinstated Keystone XL and the Dakota Access Pipeline, which have been opposed by some of the most active and visible environmental justice coalitions in recent US history. In this context where environmental institutions are being weakened, perhaps even more intensely than during the early Reagan years, collective action from below matters. Yet we have only seen a few instances of grassroots activism about climate change and environmental protections under Trump. Why?

It is not because people don't care about climate change and the environment. Relatively large proportions of US residents believe in anthropogenic climate change and support policies to mitigate the emissions of greenhouse gases. For example, recent data from the "Climate Change in the American Mind Survey" shows that a majority of registered voters believe that corporations and industry, citizens themselves, and the U.S. congress should do more to address global warming. Seven in ten registered voters also believe the US should participate in the Paris climate agreement.³ Yet existing research also shows that few people put climate change at the top of any given political agenda. When compared to other priorities like economic growth or threats like terrorism, climate change does not come first. For instance, in the United States, people are more concerned about an attack by ISIS and cyber attacks than global climate change, according to a recent poll released by the Pew Research Center.⁴ Climate change has been highly polarizing when it comes to partisan politics, provoking emotional responses on the right and left, and yet it also possesses the odd quality of being an issue that many acknowledge yet do not necessarily take political action about.

Part of the reason is that they don't have to. These days, professional organizations and large membership-based organizations are leading the fight on behalf of progressive "civil society," countered by comparable organizations on the right. Organizations like the Natural Resources Defense Council and Earthjustice use legal expertise, defending environmental protections through lobbying and the courts. Some groups like 350.org are organizing at the grassroots, but their work to build broad coalitions has only begun. People are mobilizing by giving money to groups like Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, and Sierra Club, which are reporting increases in donations as their supporters search for ways to

defend environmental protections; meanwhile, their opponents are funding climate skeptic groups. These activities are important in their own right, but they constitute only a part of broader public debates and grassroots efforts to make sense of the US's new stance on the environment and climate change.

Of course, it is true that several key organized protests and marches have sought to fill the gap. The People's Climate March, which took place on Trump's 100th day in office, effectively used climate justice framings to link

"Climate change has been highly polarizing when it comes to partisan politics... and yet it also possesses the odd quality of being an issue that many acknowledge yet do not necessarily take political action about"

climate change with race, gender, and economic inequality. The March for Science, held on Earth Day this year, put forward scientists as one constituency at the core of a movement to defend the EPA and environmental protections. Though the march was organized around a professional identity and scientific advocacy, it brought people to the street who had not marched before.

Yet perhaps it is in other instances of environmental justice mobilization that key lessons may be found. Perhaps the way forward for grassroots environmentalist activism under Trump lies in connecting issues like climate change—more abstract environmental problems with longer time horizons—with more tangible and immediate ones. NoDAPL protests emphasized “water protectors” and the message “water is life” to connect mobilization by indigenous organizations to a broader set of

allies. Mobilization in Flint—not only in the streets but also through volunteering and citizen science—helped bring attention to and address the water crisis, as well as spurring a broader conversation about local water infrastructure in the United States. Anti-fracking movements and other mobilization to defend public lands, campus divestment from fossil fuel companies, Keystone XL—these issues have also elicited grassroots activism and provided the opening for people to get involved in events like the People's Climate March.

In this climate where environmental policies in the US are under threat, activism from below will continue to be crucial to keeping environmental protections and climate policy on the public agenda. Rooting the conversation about climate change and the defense of environmental institutions in tangible struggles facing communities may lend momentum to a burgeoning cycle of protest and lead to greater broad-based collective action.

Endnotes

1. The proposed budget for FY2018 is titled “A New Foundation for American Greatness.” It cuts the EPA's budget by 31 percent, more than any other agency. Available online: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/omb/budget/fy2018/budget.pdf>.
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4. Pew Research Center. 2017. Global Attitudes Survey. The same poll shows that in other parts of the world, like Latin America, climate change comes first even in places where there are no strong environmentalist movements.

An invitation to study global environmental change

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The biosphere is changing in ways unprecedented at least since the emergence of agriculture. Roughly 60% of the ecosystem services (food, water, regulation of climate, etc.) on which humans depend are being used unsustainably (Reid et al. 2005). Global environmental change (GEC)—biodiversity loss, climate change, ocean acidification and other alterations in biogeochemical cycles, ozone depletion, widespread dispersal of toxics—is stressing ecosystems everywhere on the planet (U.S. National Research Council 1992, United Nations Environment Programme 2012). The consequences for human well-being and for other species will be substantial and potentially devastating for the most vulnerable.

Environmental sociology has done an admirable job of understanding why humans are placing so much stress on the environment. Sociological theories have been interrogated for insights into the drivers of environmental change (Foster, Clark and York 2010, Gunderson 2015a, Gunderson 2015b, Rosa and Richter 2008, White, Rudy and Gareau 2016). The standard sociological themes such as inequality, social movements and public opinion have been deployed (Brulle 2000, Downey 2015, McCright et al. 2016). We have contributed to a robust understanding of commons governance (Dietz, Ostrom and Stern 2003). Altruism and self-interest, norms, identity and other factors are being integrated into a theory of environmental decision making (Steg 2016). A strong literature has probed how political economy, scale (population, affluence), composition of consumption, and technology drive human stress on the environment (Jorgenson and Kick 2015, Rosa and Dietz 2012).

But environmental sociology has been largely silent on how large scale environmental change influences individuals, institutions and social structure. There is substantial and sophisticated work on how individuals, organizations and communities respond to extreme events, such as hurricanes and earthquakes (Tierney 2014). As noted, the inequities and injustices in exposure to environmental risks is a major theme in environmental sociology. But we have little theory or empirical work on how GEC impacts societies beyond relatively short term and local impacts. As we try to cope with the changing biosphere in the 21st century it is crucial that we understand the interplay between environmental change and social change. (As an aside, I think the same arguments could be made about technological change: major social transformations are underway due to developments in artificial intelligence and robotics, biotechnology, nanotechnology and neurotechnology, but we have little theory or evidence to help us understand those changes.) To take on the challenge of GEC, environmental sociologists need the help of historical and comparative sociologists.

I think there are two reasons why environmental sociology has neglected the consequences of environmental change; both could be addressed by insights from historical and comparative scholarship. The first problem is that most environmental sociologists examine the period from about 1960 to the present and much of that work focuses on advanced industrial capitalist societies. There have certainly been local and even regional environmental transformations during that period, notably land use change, whose consequences can be examined (Rudel 2016). But the kinds of global environmental changes we now face were not evident over the period most environmental sociologists study, and the societies most studied are relatively well buffered from the environmental changes that have occurred.

Since the current trajectory of GEC is unprecedented in human history, we need to rely on analogies. Undoubtedly much can be learned from analysis of local to regional environmental transformations that have occurred throughout human history. Other historical disciplines have undertaken this work (e.g. many papers in the virtual edition of *Environmental History on Climate History* (https://academic.oup.com/envhis/pages/virtual_edition_on_climate_change)). But sociologists will give special attention to key issues of agency, class, identity, intersectionality and power. That will help disentangle the way in which culture and social structure shape and are shaped by changes in the biophysical environment.

Of course, understanding the interplay of the social and the biophysical requires an appropriate theoretical framing. (Indeed drawing distinctions between “social” and “natural” is a theoretical issue.) A lack of adequate theory is the second reason I believe environmental sociology would benefit from more engagement with historical and comparative scholars. Perhaps in reaction to naïve environmental determinism, most sociological theory is not framed in a way that allows us to consider how changes in the biophysical environment affects the social and cultural. Environmental sociology has not much engaged with work in other disciplines that take the environment seriously (Moran 2010, Richerson 1977). The dynamic, historical and evolutionary perspective needed to understand the effects, not just the causes, of environmental change has been neglected but some scholars are starting to address the issue (Burns and Rudel 2015, McLaughlin 2012a). Some emerging frameworks pose a dynamic interplay between agency and structure, and in particular suggest how power can shape the adaptive landscape for individuals and groups (Dietz and Burns 1992, McLaughlin 2012b). These frameworks draw on studies of long

term cultural change (Henrich 2015, Richerson and Boyd 2005). They would benefit from engaging with research on changes that unfold over decades or centuries rather than over centuries to millennia and with work that attends carefully to how processes vary over time and across contexts (Dietz 2013). Emerging scholarship in animal studies may be a good model for what is needed (Kalof and Real 2008).

"the kinds of global environmental changes we now face were not evident over the period most environmental sociologists study"

In this discussion, I have truncated large literatures to a few examples, skipped over important work and simplified concepts that deserve more subtle treatment. I have not engaged the important methodological insights that historical and comparative sociology could offer to the study of GEC. But I hope I have made my case well enough to entice some historical and comparative sociologists to engage with the question of how environmental change has and will influence “big structures and large processes” (Tilly 1984). It is an intriguing and important challenge, and we need your help.

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Co-Winner: Ivan Ermakoff

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Chengpang Lee and Robert Jansen

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PhDs on the Market

Maude Pugliese

Postdoctoral Fellow, McGill University
University of Chicago (PhD)

Socio-Economic Disparities in Portfolio Composition: Their Historical Causes and Consequences for Inequality

In the first part of this dissertation, I stress the notion that working- and middle-class families hold the vast majority of their wealth in the form of owned homes, while higher-income families own mostly higher-yielding financial assets, in particular corporate stocks. Using a longitudinal analysis of data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, I extend the income inequality literature by showing that this socioeconomic disparity in asset ownership contributes powerfully to income concentration, as it engenders disparities in rates of return (ROR) to capital – a situation in which the highest-salaried and highest-wealth families also earn the highest investment incomes per dollar invested.

Second, given the implications of mass homeownership for inequality, I also ask: Why do many families own their homes even when homeownership monopolizes the near totality of their savings? Specifically, I first show that it was only in the 1940s that working- and middle-class families turned to homes as their primary wealth-building vehicle in the US and that, prior to this decade, these families had

actually tended to increase their investments in financial assets such as government bonds and even stocks, not in real estate. I then explore the causes of this historical turning point. I find that working- and middle-class families suddenly and permanently turned to homeownership in the 1940s in part because, in the late 1930s, homes had become the sole asset available on the installment plan. Indeed, mortgage credit developed quickly following the National Housing Act of 1934, as housing scholars know well, which made homes easily available on the installment plan. More importantly, however, and even though credit historiographies have typically glossed over this important episode in US financial history, corporate and government securities had also been widely available on the installment plan in the 1920s and 1930s. But, in 1934, this practice became prohibited, with the passing of the Securities Exchange Act, which left homes the sole asset available on the installment plan by the 1940s.

I have found that this transformation in the opportunities for installment credit across asset classes stimulated working- and middle-class families to turn to homeownership as their main asset, because these families considered installment plan credit instruments as critical tools in their wealth-building strategies. Essentially, these families employed installment-buying as a technology of financial self-discipline in their efforts to accumulate a

pool of savings. In addition, installment-buying of assets offered them a way to justify exiting their kin networks of economic support. Indeed, buying assets using an installment plan, in contrast to saving through regular bank deposits, pre-committed these families' incomes, and this gave them a legitimate excuse for refusing to support extended kin without endangering the other dimensions of these relationships. Using credit, therefore, allowed individuals and nuclear family units to reshape their kin networks – to make their ties to kin more about intimacy and confidence, for example, than about expectations of mutual economic support.

Dissertation Committee: Andrew Abbott (chair), Monica Prasad, James T. Sparrow, Linda Waite

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outsiders to Nigeria's bureaucracy with a surprisingly high proportion of women among them. Their moral beliefs and social networks were crucial for reform. Second, organizational change did not require restaffing or material incentives but occurred through a process of incremental collective staff alignment. Third, to protect themselves against government capture, these agencies systematically mobilized and cooperated with civil society. Finally, the use of digital technology and social media was crucial for building the trust of citizens in these agencies. The findings are of broad theoretical relevance for explaining counterintuitive organizational and social change under unfavorable conditions in the Global South and beyond.

Dissertation Committee: Ivan Ermakoff (Chair), Myra Marx Ferree, Gay Seidman, Bob Freeland, Aili Mari Tripp

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Michael Roll

University of Wisconsin–Madison

Rebel Bureaucracies: Corruption, Networks, and Effective Government Agencies in Nigeria

How do effective bureaucracies emerge in corrupt states? My dissertation explores endogenous change in three government agencies in Nigeria (drug administration, taxation, election management) that today stand out for their integrity and service provision in one of the world's most corrupt states. I focus on the changing relations of these agencies with politicians, civil society, and international development organizations since 1999 and provide a detailed analysis of their internal dynamics. Based on a comparative design, 135 interviews, participant observation, an original survey, and archival data, I identify four major factors. First, successful reformers were

New Publication

Revolutionizing Repertoires: The Rise of Populist Mobilization in Peru **University of Chicago Press, 2017**

Robert Jansen

Politicians and political parties are for the most part limited by habit—they recycle tried-and-true strategies, draw on models from the past, and mimic others in the present. But in rare moments politicians break with routine and try something new. Drawing on pragmatist theories of social action, *Revolutionizing Repertoires* sets out to examine what happens when the repertoire of practices available to political actors is dramatically reconfigured.

Taking as his case study the development of a distinctively Latin American style of populist mobilization, Robert S. Jansen analyzes the Peruvian presidential election of 1931. He finds that, ultimately, populist mobilization emerged in the country at this time because newly empowered outsiders recognized the limitations of routine political practice and understood how to modify, transpose, invent, and recombine practices in a whole new way. Suggesting

striking parallels to the recent populist turn in global politics, *Revolutionizing Repertoires* offers new insights not only to historians of Peru but also to scholars of historical sociology and comparative politics, and to anyone interested in the social and political origins of populism.