

## Archive of the Social Science Seminar





Cover photograph: Demonstrator protesting on May 1<sup>st</sup>  
Credit: Michael Nagle/Bloomberg Finance LP

# **Archive of the Social Science Seminar**

**2019-2020**

Founded in 1973, the School of Social Science is the most recent and smallest of the four Schools of the Institute for Advanced Study. It takes as its mission the analysis of contemporary societies and social change. It is devoted to a pluralistic and critical approach to social research, from a multidisciplinary and international perspective. Each year, the School invites approximately twenty-five scholars who conduct research with various perspectives, methods and topics, providing a space for intellectual debate and mutual enrichment. Scholars are drawn from a wide range of disciplines, notably political science, economics, law, sociology, anthropology, history, philosophy, and literature. To facilitate intellectual engagement among the visiting scholars, the School defines a theme for each year.

Besides the informal conversations that take place all year long, the scientific activity of the School is mostly centered on two moments. The weekly Social Science Seminar offers the opportunity to all members to present their work, whether it is related to the theme or not. The Theme Seminar meets on a bimonthly basis and is mostly based on discussion of the literature and works relevant to the theme. In 2019-2020, the theme was “Economy and Society.” The program was led jointly by Didier Fassin, James D. Wolfensohn Professor in the School, and Visiting Professor Marion Fourcade, Professor of Sociology at the University of California, Berkeley.

**School of Social Science  
2019-2020**

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**I**

**Social Science Seminar**



## INVOKING HEALING, OR HOW TO THINK THERAPEUTICALLY

Ed Cohen

What is the relation between thinking and healing? Can thinking support healing? Can healing support thinking? In his book, *La Connaissance de la Vie*, Georges Canguilhem, the inestimable French philosopher and historian of medicine—who was also a physician—argues that thinking as we know it only takes place (as far as we know) within life forms that we call human as a means of extending themselves in time and space. Indeed, the double significance of Canguilhem's title, which can be translated as both the "knowledge of life" and as "life's knowledge," underscores that all knowledge about life only arises within the living as such. Or, as Michel Foucault remarks in his introduction to Canguilhem's book, *The Normal and The Pathological*, Canguilhem demonstrates that "the biologist must grasp what makes life a specific object of knowledge and thereby what makes it such that there are at the heart of living beings, because they are living beings, some beings susceptible to knowing, and, in the final analysis, to knowing life itself." In other words, thinking describes a mode of living, a tendency that arises within some living beings as a way of going on living—medicine and biology providing two domains of thinking that take this going on living as their explicit subject. Moreover, thinking also can augment the potential to begin living otherwise. As Alfred North Whitehead affirmed in his lectures "The Function of Reason," reason's *raison d'être* consists in urging us "(i) to live; (ii) to live well; (iii) to live better."

Healing too can be understood in similar terms but on a much wider scale. Healing constitutes one of the essential tendencies attributed to all life forms. Living beings (again as far as we know) must have permeable boundaries; take in nutrients; expel the toxic residues produced by their metabolisms; reproduce themselves over time; and repair themselves. Thus, the tendency towards healing constitutes one of the conditions of possibility for the going on living of all life forms. Until the late nineteenth century, Western medicine had no problem encompassing this possibility. In the tradition constituted under the name "Hippocrates"—whose "oath" new medical students faithfully intone every year—healing was a natural force (called the *vis medicatrix naturae*) that medicine sought at best to support and encourage. Today however healing no longer occupies a central place within the medical lexicon. If you look up "healing" on Medline, the U.S. National Library of Medicine's comprehensive database, you will find only four categories: faith healing, fracture healing, mental healing, and wound healing. Not healing as a possibility, as a tendency, as a vital function, or as that upon which all of medicine's most prized bioscientific interventions depend, if not importune. Yet healing as both a concept and as a tendency offers vital resources that that we ignore at our peril—resources that might help support us in our going on living as individuals, as collectives, as a species, and as elements in a complex biosphere that our current "human" forms of living puts increasingly at risk.

Thinking *about* healing and thinking *as* healing constitute what I call "therapeutic thinking." While thinking only ever exists as a vital possibility, not all thinking is therapeutic. Indeed, much of what passes for thought these days is highly toxic. In this sense, thinking represents a "pharmakon," using the valence Jacques Derrida gave the Greek term in his reading of Plato's *Phaedrus* when he foregrounded its internal semantic slippage. Pharmakon in Ancient Greek had three valences: remedy, poison, and scapegoat. Whatever has the power to help us has the power to harm us and if we fail to appreciate this paradoxical possibility we can all too easily blame it for our problems. The question then arises: how do we enhance the therapeutic possibilities of our thought, while mitigating (but never entirely eliminating) its toxic potentials. In this seminar presentation, I will discuss the entanglement of thinking and/as healing in my two current manuscripts "Shit Happens: On Learning to Heal" and "Healing Tendencies: At the Limits of What Medicine Knows."

September 23, 2019



**BEAUTIFUL LIES**  
**ANTAGONISM AND ETHICS IN JIANKUI HE'S CRISPR EXPERIMENT**

**Eben Kirksey**

A media spectacle emerged with news about the world's first genetically modified babies from the Genome Editing Summit in Hong Kong. I was on the sidelines of this spectacle, as an ethnographer of science, and as a speaker on the ethics panel after Jiankui He. This paper considers situated ethical questions that emerged in Dr. He's laboratory in the context of broader initiatives to use CRISPR for altering the genes of human embryos.

The first CRISPR experiment that created heritable genetic changes to the human species sought to disable CCR5—a receptor that is used by HIV to gain entry into cells. HIV-positive people in China face discrimination in the workplace, the marriage market, and even the health care system. As a result, many people go to great lengths to keep their viral status a secret from medical professionals, their employers, and even their families. Some of the men who volunteered for the study were living with elaborate social fictions, or “beautiful lies.” Like many other gay and bisexual men in China, they were living in “fake marriages” with women. Falsehoods proliferate in these complex settings where men are expected to tell the truth about their sexual affairs, even while they cannot reveal the salacious details of their homosexual desires.

In many ways, the men who signed up for Dr. He's experiment were ethically exemplary—they were openly discussing their viral status with their wives and medical professionals, going to extreme lengths to reduce the likelihood of infecting their family. But, as they learned more about the research project, the ethical terrain began to shift. Volunteers for this experiment were drawn into a conspiratorial space where research was taking place at the edge of the law. Jiankui He made an effort to conform to international bioethical norms related to informed consent. But, the values of innovation and capital accumulation led to an atmosphere of secrecy and subtle deception. In recruiting participants, Dr. He papered over his financial conflicts of interest, neglected to mention the fact that he was violating legal guidelines, and minimized the unknown risks of using CRISPR.

Building on the work of Karen Barad, I argue that ethics does not involve the right response to the Other, but responsibility and accountability within relationships. Following Laclau and Mouffe, I found democratic possibilities for science as conflicts were *sustained*, not erased, with this research venture. Strictly speaking, Dr. He's experiment followed the contractual norms of conventional bioethics—governed by voluntary consent agreements between subjects and investigators. But, it ultimately did not pass muster in the unruly court of public opinion about medical morality in China. Within the private spaces of the laboratory, and in discussions that later erupted on social media, critical questions were opened, but not entirely resolved. These antagonisms signal the impossibility of a final solution to ethical problems in CRISPR clinical trials.

*September 30, 2019*

**UNPAYABLE DEBTS, EMANCIPATORY DEBTS**  
**THE POLITICAL AND MORAL ECONOMIES OF WOMEN'S DEBTS AND WOMEN'S BODIES**

**Isabelle Guérin**

What are the unpayable debts, those that alienate, exploit, suffocate, and from which it is impossible to get out? What are the debts that bind, protect and even emancipate? And how do these debts vary according to place, time and also social belonging, especially gender? While financialized capitalism continues to rely on household debt and policies for the "democratization" of credit are expanding, particularly for women from the Global South, it is evidently necessary to question the nature of the debts that shape contemporary societies, their transformation, their diversity but also their ambivalence, and the way in which they are both shaped by and constitutive of gender (and other power) relationships.

Based on 15 years of fieldwork in South India (Tamil Nadu), which is currently undergoing a radical transformation of its financial landscape, but also of its social and power relations, this presentation proposes several arguments. The fabric of the so-called democratization of credit and the consequences of it cannot be understood independently of all the rights and obligations that structure a given society: forms of protection and risk sharing, forms of recognition and differentiation but also the rules of alliance and kinship, which in turn shape in great part property rights, but also specific forms of sexuality.

In Tamil Nadu and for Dalit (ex-untouchable) women more specifically, the democratization of credit transforms and renews women's unpayable female debt. This is not new –unpayable debt is at the heart of the patriarchal system– but it is now increasingly quantifiable and financial, while retaining a strong moral component associated with new norms of chastity and monogamy. At the same time, transgressive sex with lenders is often the only means Dalit women have to pay off their debts, retain their creditworthiness and access new debts. This in turn traps them in an infinite debt in which moral and financial burdens interact and cumulate.

This tragic, horrifying vision of women's debt, which combines both exploitation and guilt, is not, however, incompatible with the existence of other debts, which forge women not only as objects of exchange but also as subjects of exchange and as individuals; and these debts can have an emancipatory virtue, including sexually, however fragile and narrow this emancipation may be.

If we really want to understand how debt is used and experienced on a daily basis, in all its diversity, complexity, contradictions and ambivalence, the way in which debt crushes women, but also how debt constitutes them as subjects, as individuals, including sexually, we must adopt a political and moral economy debt and a political and moral economy of women's bodies.

*October 7, 2019*

**OF OTHER BROTHERHOODS**  
**MAFIA, FREEMASONS AND THE CHANGING CRIMINALIZATION**  
**OF RITUAL RELATIONSHIPS IN SICILY**

**Naor H. Ben-Yehoyada**

A tension haunts the multifarious Anti-Mafia project in Sicily: the intimate certainty about the Mafia's persevering ubiquity meets the uncertainty about what the Mafia exactly is and how to produce a sense of certainty about it. The debate about what the Mafia is and how to fight it has historically vacillated between alternative models for characterizing the Sicilian Cosa Nostra: is it an array of multidimensional and potentially ubiquitous power relations, or a bounded criminal organization? Could it be both? The development of Anti-Mafia laws and prosecution methods since the 1980s secured a sense of certainty about the Mafia's existence and actions. Nowadays, the Palermo Anti-Mafia Paradigm – and the organizational model of the Mafia at its core – seem increasingly insufficient to capture the Mafia's complex dynamics.

To confront this predicament, several legal reform initiatives have recently sought to expand the reach of the Anti-Mafia criminal justice project. Some initiatives promote the criminalization of “deviated” Freemasons' lodges and a new framing of corruption: not as the transaction between gain-seeking individuals (mafia-related or not) but rather as an associative crime. This approach expands the anthropological imaginary of the power of ritual brotherhood to oblige persons' action beyond the strict definition of criminal organizations of the mafia type. While that definition constitutes one of that criminal justice project's fundamental achievements of the 1980s-90s, it now both inspires and is stretched by the reconceptualization of mafias, masonry, and the relationship (possible, actual, general) between the two.

What are the ways in which magistrates, journalists, scholars, and politicians perceive the making, power, and subversive potential of this variety of ritual fraternity? To examine how these different perspectives interrelated and changed over the years, we begin by following the recent trial regarding the 1988 murder of a journalist who before his death investigated, among other cases in southwestern Sicily, the relationship between the mafia and a deviated Freemasons' lodge. Through the trial we may examine how the epistemic tensions between magistrates and other actors turn the wider field of Antimafia inquiry into a key moving site of the struggle over the relationship between law, society, and the state.

*October 14, 2019*

**IN THE MARGINS OF MEDICAL EVIDENCE**  
**EXPERT WITNESSING AND STATE VIOLENCE IN TURKEY**

**Başak Can**

This talk explores the relationship between medical evidence and state violence in Turkey. Historically, evidence has a privileged role in the human rights field. Human rights activists have devised extensive scientific, technological and medical toolboxes to find out and document human rights violations. Activists' struggles do not generally go unanswered by the state. In Turkey, governments have immensely invested in forensic institutions and procedures that are concerned with the preparation of scientific and medical evidence of violence, primarily to counter human rights activists' political and practical efforts to document state violence.

In this talk, I discuss three modes of clinical encounters where doctors examine the bodies of prisoners or detainees and deliver medico-legal certificates on the latter's suffering, pain or injury in diverse official and non-official clinical settings. I ask: Who can speak as an expert of state violence? Under what conditions does a medical document gain the status of an evidence for a state crime or alternatively, become a document that enacts denial? Against the popular idea that evidence is an impersonal and transparent fact, I first argue that medical evidence of violence is a set of practices that are deeply embedded in historical, cultural and political contexts. If we place evidence in its context of use, we see that expert witnessing is an interactional practice and medical truth of state violence is always contextually produced, rather than being completely dependent on doctors' ideological and political stances. Second, the field of medical expert witnessing and the contentions over its logics and workings have been a constitutive force in determining the content and form of state violence.

Ultimately, I pose questions showcasing two recent contradictory trends that have profoundly affected the body-evidence regime in Turkey. On the one hand, the police have developed a strategy of getting medical certificates for their own injuries through their easy access to medico-legal apparatuses. On the other hand, the judicial decisions are less bounded by material evidence. Politicians are indifferent towards violation allegations despite available evidence, and the police no longer shy away from spectacularly displaying their violence on protestors. I thus ask: How do we make sense of the tension between the well-developed medico-legal institutions and procedures designed to find evidence, and the administrative, political and judicial processes that render medical evidence less efficacious? What does this tension tell us about the shifts in the human rights paradigm in the post-truth context?

*October 21, 2019*

## CREDIT FROM THE STATE, CREDIT TO THE STATE

Sarah Quinn

The federal credit programs are a widely influential—and wildly overlooked—form of government policy in the United States. As of 2017, the U.S. federal government owned \$1.3 trillion in loans, and guaranteed another \$2.5 trillion. That total rises to \$8.5 trillion if you include officially “off-budget” obligations held by Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and the Federal Reserve. By issuing and incentivizing, buying and selling, insuring and guaranteeing loans, the federal government has used finance to spur growth and direct the economy. Today federal credit obligations are highly concentrated in school loans and mortgage credit, but if you take a long historical look, there is no sector of the economy that has not, at some time or other, been shaped by government efforts to allocate credit. Drawing on more than a decade of historical research, and integrating insights from sociology, political science, and economics, my research has shown that government officials have long used credit as a multi-purpose policy tool, in ways that have been highly consequential for economic development. I argue that the federal credit programs are best thought of as part of a more expansive history wherein government officials have repeatedly turned to easy credit in an elusive search for economic opportunities that come with minimal political conflict or open wealth redistribution.

My ongoing work grapples with a question raised by my earlier findings on the credit programs: given the extensive involvement of the federal government in American life, why is the role of the government so poorly understood? I propose that part of the answer lies in the characteristics and use of complex policies like the credit programs. Analyzing the development of the first modern credit program, the Federal Farm Loan Act of 1916, I show how twentieth century U.S. Progressive reformers built on European precedents to reframe government credit support as a way for the state to help people help themselves. Presenting credit support as a way to promote “self-help” and “unlock” private initiative allowed Americans to reconcile government action with a sense of unchecked individualism. This framing also deflected attribution for the system’s outcomes away from the government and toward private initiative. This way of talking about credit programs persists today. My future work builds on these insights by identifying and exploring other processes and mechanisms that matter for how people make sense of government activities. This work includes investigations into culture and cognition, group processes of framing and meaning-making, and the role of affect and moralization in shaping political awareness. Taken together, these mechanisms and processes can provide a more nuanced model of how people “see”—and give credit to—the state.

*October 28, 2019*

## AUTOCHTHONY, LINE SYSTEMS AND STATE BUILDING IN NIGERIA

**Jeremiah O. Arowosegbe**

Colonial practices of ethno-racial segregation impacted grievously on conflict and state building in Nigeria. While such practices have continued to undergird post-colonial contexts of institutional fragility and state weakness, their impacts are yet to be accounted for in the literature on economic and political development in Africa. This study examines the colonial constructions of Fulani, Hausa and other groups ethnically not indigenous to Yorubaland as migrants and minorities, through their denial of land rights; dispossessions and marginalization using customary law, indirect rule and other institutionalized instrumentalities of the colonial ethno-graphic state. It accounts for the continuing impacts of such struggles over land for citizenship, institutional fragility, state weakness and the forging of nationhood in Nigeria. How have colonial constructions of "*the customary*" affected resource-based conflict and post-colonial conceptions of citizenship and inter-ethnic relations? Drawing on archival and ethnographic data generated in Yorubaland, Nigeria, on the conflict between Hausa-Fulani migrant pastoralists and indigenous Yoruba farmers over land, this study underlines how the struggles over agricultural resources, governance, land and political power; have continued to affect the manner in which political authority is (mis)constituted in colonial and post-colonial Nigeria.

The underlying thesis advanced and interrogated here is that although customary relations and the ensuing struggles over land have been central to state building in Nigeria from the colonial period onward, the economic and political histories of this region—together with the impact of such experiences and tensions on political integration—still need to be written. Drawing on the conflict between Hausa-Fulani pastoralists and indigenous Yoruba agriculturalists over land and water among other agricultural resources in Yorubaland, this work examines the impacts of resource-based conflicts—articulated through autochthony and citizenship—on state building in Nigeria. Importantly, while the disjunction between the officially established unity of the political system *vis-à-vis* ethno-linguistic fragmentations and sociological pluralities of state autonomy is arguably most visible in Africa and Nigeria than elsewhere in the developing world, we argue that this disjunction has a multiple impact on state action and legitimacy; the institutional and legal frameworks of economic life; the mechanisms of conflict resolution operating in society; the operations of the official political system; the relationships between administrative and political control; and the socio-cultural perceptions of the state's legality and politics. We provide evidence on how such weakness undermines the emergence of a strong state legitimately capable of national development, resource allocation and tax extraction. We show that these struggles not only erode state autonomy in Nigeria. They also feed into state delegitimation and fragility evident in the subversion and weakness resulting from such conflicts—noted across the country from the mid-1980s.

*November 4, 2019*

## THE ETHICAL STANCE AND THE POSSIBILITY OF CRITIQUE

Webb Keane

By “critique” we can refer to an assertion pitted against a state of affairs, that is, to say that things *should* not be the way they *are*. Defined this way, critique draws together fact and value, domains that thinkers from Hume to Weber have argued exist on distinct planes, never to be conflated. Yet much of political life is incomprehensible without this conjunction, and thus some grasp of people’s ethical motivations. Now I certainly do not intend to reduce politics to ethics. Some politics is a straightforward matter of struggle for one’s own survival and well-being in the face of oppression and harm. Such struggles probably don’t require an ethical explanation, although the ways people conceive of and argue about harm is likely to draw on their particular visions of human flourishing, and on ethical concepts such as “solidarity” or “justice.” In that respect, they measure the *facticity* of the harms they suffer against some fundamental—but counterfactual—*normative* sense of alternatives that have been violated. This, for instance, was one insight of the old idea of “moral economy”—as well, I would argue, as the background to Marx’s account of commodity fetishism. But what about those people whose political commitments cannot be directly explained by self-defense or self-interest? In this context, ethics concerns questions like ‘Why do I think this political or economic arrangement is simply wrong in itself—and why should I care?’

To answer these requires that we grasp ethical intuitions. I am interested in those dimensions of political life that arise from the conjunction between ethical motivations and social realities. But if they are to have political consequences, such questions cannot be confined to private introspection. Scale matters. This talk looks at the articulation between everyday interactions and social movements to show the interplay among the first, second, and third person stances that characterize ethical life. Drawing ethnographic examples from American feminism and Vietnamese Marxism, it considers some of the ways in which ethical intuitions emerge, consolidate, and change, and argues that objectifications and the reflexivity they facilitate help give ethical life a social history.

November 11, 2019

**REINVENTING ONESELF DURING THE CRISIS**  
**AUTONOMY AND DEPENDENCIES BETWEEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SOLIDARITY**

**Susana Narotzky**

The financial meltdown of 2008 was a result of aggressive neoliberal policies of deregulation that started in the 1980s and increased their pace through the 1990s and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In Europe, the policies adopted to “rescue” countries in trouble followed classic structural adjustment conditionalities entailing bailouts that increased sovereign debt, induced privatization, the penetration of foreign capital, a dismantling of public services (especially health and education), and deregulation of the labor market resulting in precarity and low wages. Based on long-term ethnographic fieldwork in Spain, Portugal, Greece and Italy, this research addresses the widely experienced breakdown of social reproduction and struggles to overcome it, both at the immediate, everyday, personal level and on the wider scale of systemic understandings of continuity. In this talk I will focus on three aspects: (1) the neoliberal push towards small and self-entrepreneurship; (2) the micro-rent aspects of kinship networks; (3) and the paradoxical regulatory value of the formal-informal distinction.

The ethnographies show that the injunction to “re-invent” oneself as an entrepreneur is either welcomed as an opportunity or reluctantly accepted. Entrepreneurial programs proposed by the state are often attuned to an ethos of hard work and of achieving autonomy through the market, as opposed to depending on state benefits or on wage employment. The tropes of “being my own boss” and accessing “freedom” are pervasive. This entrepreneurial imaginary is present even when many are part of subcontracting chains and depend on credit and labor from family members, subsidies from local, national or EU funds, and loans from commercial banks. I will explore the tensions arising between drives toward personal autonomy and the management of dependencies that entangle individuals with each other, with diverse income providers, with fiscal and financial agents, and with welfare institutions.

On the one hand, the push towards entrepreneurship pervades anti-crisis policies and subsidies at all institutional scales, while it also penetrates the strategies and discourses of the unemployed, the aspirations of young people, and even social economy projects. On the other hand, solidarity networks based on kinship, proximity, ideological or religious arguments have become key for accessing needed resources including various forms of capital. Policies are backed by an ideology of autonomy that supports re-inventing oneself while everyday practices rely on solidarities that create multiple dependencies. When the market fails to provide a living income and the welfare state to sustain wellbeing as part of a “common good” project, how do social actors understand the values of autonomy and dependencies?

*November 18, 2019*



## WEALTH REGIMES

### THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF ASSET MANAGER CAPITALISM

**Benjamin Braun**

According to economic theory, the rate of return on capital is a function of the relative scarcity of capital. In recent decades, global capitalism has shifted from capital scarcity to capital abundance. The steady decline of real interest rates on safe assets, global house price inflation, the ‘safe asset shortage’, the theory of ‘secular stagnation’ – the best empirical economic research suggests that the scarce resource is no longer liquid capital that can finance ‘real’ investments. Instead, as a result of demographic, technological and political developments, owners of wealth find that scarcity is in investment opportunities. From the perspective of economics, this shift should fundamentally reshape capitalism. Keynes, applying the logic of supply and demand, expected that when the resource the financial sector controls becomes abundant, the “cumulative oppressive power of the capitalist to exploit the scarcity-value of capital” should decline. Recent economic history, however, has not borne out this prediction – the gap between the rate of return on capital ( $r$ ) and the rate of economic growth ( $g$ ) has proven remarkably resilient since the 1980s. Why, during this period of growing capital abundance, has the  $r - g$  gap not declined? Why has the rentier not been euthanized?

This project paper makes two contributions. First, it argues that rates of return on capital should be at the very center of political economy. While wealth owners always seek returns on their capital, they do so in continuously evolving institutional settings. Moving away from the economic focus on the relative scarcity or abundance of capital, I develop a historical typology of *wealth regimes*, defined by three constituent elements – the nature of the assets that dominate the portfolios of the wealthy, the geographic scale at which those assets are held, and the organizational form of asset management. The concept of wealth regimes allows students of capital returns to assign agency to specific actors and institutions.

The project’s second contribution is to elucidate the political economy of *asset manager capitalism*. This concept refers to a wealth regime in which large private fortunes are dominated by liquid financial assets, in which portfolios are diversified across sectors and across the world, and in which wealth owners have outsourced wealth management to professional asset management firms. This wealth regime has empowered the (very) wealthy to sustain rates of return on their capital above what the economic logic of scarcity would predict.

*November 25, 2019*

# MARKET LOGICS, MINORITY RIGHTS, AND AMERICAN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

Chloe Thurston

The minority rights revolution of the 1960s and 1970s was supposed to have dismantled barriers to economic opportunity and inclusion in the United States, and yet more than fifty years on material inequality on the basis of race and gender persists. Though this inequality is the starkest when one examines the wealth gap between African American and white households, there are also significant racial and gender differences in experiences across other realms of economic importance, including experiences with student loan debt, access to employer benefits, and insurance costs and coverage. The aim of this project is to understand *why* nominal inclusion into key areas of opportunity and mobility continued to translate into differential and sometimes predatory forms of inclusion.

Social scientists have offered several explanations for this continuing inequality, including the role of intergenerational wealth transmission atop historical exclusion from key sources of opportunity and mobility, a lack of vigorous enforcement of civil rights laws by the federal government, and the role of implicit and explicit bias at the individual level. Using instead an American political development approach to understand the politics of incorporation over time, I identify the role of market logics in structuring political conflicts and material outcomes. Drawing from theories of international legal orders, I define market logics as collective beliefs or presentations of cause and effect market relationships, treated as objective and outside of the realm of law and morality. Market logics matter because they can exist as their own source of independent authority, and because they can imbue market institutions with path dependent ascriptive qualities. Frictions generated when market logics exist alongside mismatched orders can be generative of new political strategies, or operate as constraints in conflicts over competing orders. Seemingly seismic changes in laws, institutions, and political control may fail to translate into radically different material circumstances on-the-ground, in part due to the tension between new legal and social commitments, and everyday collective beliefs about market relationships.

Drawing from archival and secondary sources, I illustrate these possibilities in two cases. The first examines how contingent ideas about the relationship between house prices and residential segregation evolved into a “law of the marketplace”, and the constraints this placed on the fair housing movement during important periods of development in the twentieth century. The second case expands the concept of market logics into a different area of ascriptive inequality, examining the efforts of feminist activists in the 1970s and 1980s to reconfigure insurance markets, first indirectly, through the regulation of employer pensions, and then in the insurance market more broadly. I conclude by discussing the ways that incorporating market logics into an understanding of racial orders can allow American political development as a field to speak to concerns across other fields, including political economy and contemporary ascriptive inequality.

*December 2, 2019*

## THE CRYSTALLINE MEDIUM COMPUTATION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Alexander R. Galloway

On August 3, 1883 at the Société française de photographie Albert Londe presented his "photo-electric camera," a device featuring a circular set of nine apertures able to take pictures in sequence through time. A few years later in 1891 Londe advanced to a twelve-lens apparatus, this time arranging his lenses in a two-dimensional array rather than a circle. Like similar technologies deployed by Étienne-Jules Marey in Paris and Eadweard Muybridge in California, Londe's grid camera of 1891 was one of the most important photographic devices of the period, chiefly because of the way in which it proliferated the number of photographic apertures. In those years the trend was to capture multiple photographs in series, similar to the film strip popularized later in the cinema. By contrast, Londe chose to accumulate multiple lenses into a sort of grid camera. Hence the device produced grids rather than series, pictures arranged spatially in two dimensions rather than sequentially in one dimension.

Several decades later in 1952, the itinerant mathematician Nils Aall Barricelli arrived from Norway at the Institute for Advance Study in Princeton, New Jersey. Welcomed at the Institute by John von Neumann and his team, Barricelli was granted access to some of the processing time on a complex new device with a simple name, the Electronic Computer. His modest goal: to create living organisms using pure math. During those years the Electronic Computer was busy cranking through ballistics calculations for use in national defense. But this happened primarily during daylight hours. Barricelli took the night shift, spawning in the computer's memory scores of what he called artificial living organisms, erasing them again as the dawn approached. Synthesized in pure mathematics and run on a computer, Barricelli's organisms first hatched in the springtime nights of 1953 and are an important if often overlooked part of the history of artificial life and cellular automata.

While they might seem dissimilar at first glance, both Londe and Barricelli represent for me an alternative history for modern media, one that focuses not so much on analogical, visual media like the cinema but on information-based media like the computer. Evident in both Londe and Barricelli is an orientation toward small units or cells arranged spatially in two dimensions, similar to today's pixel-based bitmapped images. Each small cell gains a certain amount of local autonomy, acting as a unit of information within a larger synthesis. Barricelli processed his cells using mathematical and technical devices, but I argue that nineteenth-century photographers "processed" their subjects as well, anticipating what we now call computer graphics. By returning to figures like Londe and Barricelli my goal is to expand our knowledge of the history of computation by both widening the historical window to include nineteenth-century media and broadening the set of available references to include photography and simulation, but also, as I will describe as well, sculpture and games.

My story, titled *The Crystalline Medium: Computation and Its Consequences*, has three parts. I begin in the late nineteenth century, tracing the lesser-known history of Londe and his strange multi-lens cameras. Next I turn to Barricelli and the algorithms he used to create artificial organisms that could live, reproduce, mutate, and even die. Finally, I examine a nearly forgotten chapter late in the life of French filmmaker and philosopher Guy Debord, who in the 1970s defied expectations by establishing a commercial game company and releasing a table-top parlor game called *The Game of War*. Each of these three long-form essays is organized around a person, a date, and a concept: Londe's 1891 conception of media as parallel rather than serial, Barricelli's 1953 mathematization of living organisms, and Debord's 1977 algorithmic game design.

December 9, 2019

## **CLASS TRIPS BEYOND BORDERS**

### **STATE-SPONSORED HERITAGE TOURISM AND ETHNIC NATIONALISM**

**Virág Molnár**

The presentation explores how cross-border heritage tourism in Central and Eastern Europe serves to ethnicize national identity by establishing strong ties to ethnic diaspora communities that live beyond the territorial borders of the nation state. National borders in this region were repeatedly redrawn across ethnic groups in the course of the twentieth century and have remained contested ever since. Various ethnic groups were forcefully relocated across borders and subjected to discrimination and stringent assimilationist policies in their new home countries following both world wars. European integration and the accession of ten postsocialist countries to the European Union were meant to dispel remaining tensions over borders and the incongruity between territorial borders and the boundaries of ethnic communities. But, ironically, fading national borders gave way to new cultural and political practices that did not only help to reestablish relations with cross-border ethnic diasporas but also increasingly used these communities to redefine the nation in the ethnic majority country. In countries like Hungary this process has been instrumental in eliciting a shift from a civic to a strongly ethnic definition of citizenship, contributing significantly to the rise of nationalist populism. Heritage tourism remains a key cultural and economic practice – especially in Poland, Hungary, and Germany – that symbolically questions current national borders, emphasizes shared ethnicity as the chief source of national belonging, and aims to increase the viability of ethnic enclave economies in countries where the given ethnic group is a minority.

Within this broader framework, my project examines the large-scale student travel program that was launched by the Hungarian government in 2010— the year that marked the start of a brisk populist turn in Hungarian politics. The program provides funding to elementary and high school students to take organized class trips to areas of neighboring countries (Romania, Slovakia, Serbia, Croatia and the Ukraine) that belonged to the Hungarian state before World War I. Since 2010 around 300,000 students have participated in the program – running under the name “Without Borders” – whose ultimate objective is to have the entire cohort of 13-year old school students participate in organized class trips to Hungarian heritage sites in neighboring countries every year. The close analysis of the program is based on a unique data set obtained from the Hungarian Ministry of Human Resources that contains detailed information about all the class trips (N=2374) that took place between 2013 and 2016. It shows how the Hungarian government instrumentalizes the public education system to remake the national imagination of a new generation by spreading a narrow and exclusionary ethnic understanding of cultural membership and by selectively overemphasizing Hungarian heritage in regions that have had multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multicultural histories for centuries. It demonstrates how these objectives are achieved by combining corporate branding strategies and economic development aid to ethnic enclave economies beyond state borders. It also highlights how the program allows for the canalization of grassroots radicalism emanating from teachers or local travel guides, providing it with institutional validation. The project extends research on identity-based heritage tourism to show how it has become an integral part of the propaganda toolkit of populist governments.

*December 16, 2019*

**WHAT IS SUDANESE POLITICAL ECONOMY?  
REFLECTIONS ON THE CRISES OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL STATE**

**Alden H. Young**

This presentation is based on preliminary research related to my second book project entitled *Elite Retreat: Sudanese Political Economy After the Developmental State*. The central questions animating my work since graduate school have been how to write about what is Sudanese about the Sudanese tradition of political economy. And secondly, how to think about the relationship between political economy as a series of intellectual arguments and political economy as practices carried out by government officials, business people, intellectuals and ordinary citizens.

The majority of this paper discusses, based on preliminary interviews, what it looks like to do business in Sudan for some of the largest private firms in the country and how those firms narrate the evolution of the Sudanese private sector. In particular, in this paper I examine what I am arguing are two interconnected phenomena the gradual *Sudanization* of the private sector and the isolation of the Sudanese economy from the international financial markets by the 1990s.

Whether it was intended or not, the nineties in Sudan witnessed the *Sudanization* of the economy in addition to its economic isolation. The emergence of what Ibrahim El Badawi termed “the decades of solitude,” was also foreshadowed in the thoughts of a number of the regime’s Sudanese critics. I will focus on the work of two Sudanese intellectuals who would normally be placed on opposite sides of the political spectrum— Muhammad Abu Qasim Hajj Hamad and Fatima Babiker Mahmoud.

*January 21, 2020*

## THE CARCERAL COLONY PRISON BEFORE THE PENITENTIARY IN NORTH AMERICA

Wendy Warren

Studies of imprisonment in North America usually begin with the rise of the penitentiary in the late eighteenth century. Scholarship regarding the history of incarceration in North America generally tells this story: in the colonial period, state-sponsored punishment was public and corporal. If you stole, or murdered, or raped, or committed any one of a number of other crimes in the English colonies of North America, you would be whipped, or maimed, or branded, or hanged. Your walk to the gallows or pillory might start in a place called a prison, but that place only served as an incidental prelude to your public and corporal punishment.

But *after* the American Revolution, the story continues, the new nation tore down the town square's whipping post and pillory, and constructed instead a different and new sort of justice system. Authorities turned away from corporal and public punishment, and towards imprisonment, a less sanguinary and more enlightened form of punishment more reformatory more than retributive. This change in punishment, historians have argued, was revolutionary, and this story of a sharp transition from bodily punishment to imprisonment in early nineteenth-century North America, appears in almost every history of American incarceration.

This talk complicates that standard narrative by emphasizing the centrality of imprisonment to punishment schemes before the development of the penitentiary; it uses deep archival research and the tools of social history to uncover the ubiquitous existence of prisons in colonial North America. The colonial prison sometimes did serve as a holding place for an accused person awaiting a further sentence, but even when it served that function, the holding period was experienced as punitive and damaging. But, just as importantly, starting even in the first decades of colonization, people also received prison terms *as* their sentences, and imprisonment as a punishment in itself remained prevalent throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

In showing the prison's centrality and importance in the early modern English colonies of North America, the talk complicates a vibrant and ongoing debate about the prison's relationship to *modernity*. Categorizing prisons as modern punishment, or "rehabilitation," or thinking of the technological innovation of the penitentiary as "the birth of the prison," positions imprisonment against the gallows and pillory; it implicitly, in some narratives, turns the prison into progress.

Recovering the penitentiary's prehistory reframes the general history of prisons to reveal a much longer pattern of carceral practices, and in doing so problematizes the positivist distinction between modernity and whatever we may call what came before.

To think about prisons as born of the same social concerns, assumptions, and relations, and as maturing in the same historical moment, as the gallows, branding, and the wheel is to re-imagine the prison's present-day existence as an inherited condition rather than a newly-invented implement of contemporary society. It may be that we accept the corruption of today's prisons at least in part because we understand them to be, even in their flawed iterations, a superior alternative to some bloodier and long-ago era. But that reasoning crumbles when we understand that prisons were, in fact, part and parcel of that bloodier past. Ultimately, undoing the false linkage of prisons and modernity forces a rethinking of the role and legitimacy of imprisonment in contemporary society.

January 27, 2020

**SUSPECTS' APPEARANCE, ORIGIN, AND DNA IN FRANCE**  
**ELEMENTS FOR A POLITICAL CONCEPTION OF PRIVACY**

**Joëlle Vailly**

My study is part of a broader project that analyzes the scientific, political, and moral issues relating to DNA analysis as used by the police and the judiciary in France (Project « Fichiers et témoins génétiques: généalogie, enjeux sociaux, circulation » (FiTeGe), funded by the French National Research Agency (2015-2019, coordinator: Joëlle Vailly). More specifically, my presentation will focus on genetic tests that aim to predict suspects' appearance and/or origin in order to assist police investigations and what the professionals concerned discuss in terms of privacy. What are the effects of framing these tests in terms of privacy and what does privacy in fact protect? In a world undergoing constant transformation by techno-scientific changes, how is this notion redefined in interaction with technology? What social and political relationships are revealed or masked by the issue of privacy? In short, based on 35 interviews, trial observation and document analysis, this study focuses on the effects of conceptions of privacy when information relating to human bodies enters the semi-public domain by means of technologies implemented by state agents.

I will begin by outlining the analytical framework for my research, based mainly on Hannah Arendt's argument that the birth of the modern age has led to the progressive disappearance of the difference between the public (the political) and the private (the family home). I will then analyze the tension between two stances that I observed in the field: on the one hand, a majority stance presenting DNA tests of appearance as routine and connecting privacy with secrecy; on the other hand, a minority stance, which I understand as more political, connecting privacy with equality. The presentation will then go on to show that, by understanding the role of appearance in relation to how DNA is used, we are encouraged to move beyond traditional dichotomies between the internal and the external, the visible and the invisible. Visible appearance deduced from DNA is characterized by a to and fro between the internal and the external, affording an understanding of the aporia produced by norms based on appearance that contribute processes of racialization. Finally, I will explain how this process is reinforced by the shift from the world of science to the worlds of the police and the media and how the political dimension of privacy is obscured by the legal norm established. In short, I will show that not only do technologies shift from one normative frame to another, but also that the frames themselves are altered by the existence of new technologies. The availability of new tests of appearance and the focus on the visible means that tests combining crime, origin, and DNA can be made acceptable by depoliticizing them and obscuring the racialization process at work.

*February 3, 2020*

## #HELP

### THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF HUMANITARIANISM AND THE GOVERNANCE OF POPULATION

**Fleur Johns**

Like many other areas of work, international humanitarian practice and thinking are being transformed by sociotechnical phenomena associated with digital technology. Institutional developments within the United Nations (UN) are telling. Just over ten years ago, the UN Secretary General announced the launch of the UN Global Pulse project, dedicating to enabling, showcasing and promoting the “scaled adoption of big data innovation for sustainable development and humanitarian action”. This project has since been advanced through Pulse Labs in Jakarta, Kampala and New York and one soon to be set up in Samoa. Other, cognate initiatives have been launched throughout the UN system. Prominent, international public-private collaborations aim to harness digital technology for humanitarian ends: initiatives such as the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data. And more or less every major technology company across the world is investing in the humanitarian field: Facebook’s Data for Good initiative; Google.org’s Crisis Response work; and Alibaba’s collaboration with the World Food Program to develop Hunger Map LIVE are indicative examples. International humanitarianism is taking on new imperatives, protagonists, investments, techniques and objects of inquiry in connection with the expanding reach of the digital. Given the centrality of humanitarianism to the way that the international plane has been imagined, regulated, materialized and militarized throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, these shifts are worthy of close attention.

This talk will present one part of a book project emerging from socio-legal inquiry along these lines, ongoing for several years. This inquiry has focused on the work, collaborators and interlocutors of Pulse Lab Jakarta (part of the UN Global Pulse initiative referenced above). This talk concerns one shift that appears to be nascent within this sphere – a shift with potentially very significant social, political and legal ramifications. In this so-called “digital humanitarian” context, the statistical artefact of the population may be undergoing something of a declension, comparable to that which the family underwent at an earlier historical moment. This would render the population an ‘interior’ dimension of the social formation, while governmental attention may be pre-occupied, in the first instance at least, with eliciting and addressing something else: a succession of digital aggregates – many of them still only proto-typically formed – that are called to stand in for the population as an object of primary concern, inquiry, representation and governance. How might such a shift be reconciled (if at all) with influential accounts of the ends characteristic of national and international governance from late modernity onwards (most notably Foucault’s account of biopolitical governmentality to which so many scholars have turned in analyzing the global digital economy and its politics)? What might such a shift demand of practitioners, beneficiaries and infrastructures of humanitarianism and make of the contested ideas of international social and legal order that it underwrites? This talk puts forward some preliminary observations and provocations by way of response.

*February 10, 2020*



**WEALTH OVER WORK**  
**THE ORIGINS OF VENTURE CAPITAL, THE RETURN OF INEQUALITY,**  
**AND THE DECLINE OF INNOVATION**

**Julia Ott**

*Wealth Over Work* examines the origins of venture capital as an idea, as a form of investment, and as an organized industry. In the half-century after the onset of the Great Depression, beliefs about the centrality of venture capital to innovation, jobs, and growth shaped economic policy and corporate behavior while transforming the financial system. Between 1937 and 1982, concerns about venture capital – voiced from all across the political spectrum – gradually re-oriented American political culture to favor investors and the wealthy. In the process, ostensibly ‘race-neutral’ policies replaced those that more obviously discriminated against African-Americans, but yet the racial wealth gap persisted. Today, we live with a *less* innovative and far more unequal economy, thanks to venture capital.

Each chapter of *Wealth Over Work* examines the history of one of five key policies that have concentrated income and wealth at the very highest – and whitest – reaches of their respective distributions. Venture capital – as a concept, as a practice, and (eventually) as an organized industry – played a central role in shaping all these policies and practices. They include the U.S. tax code’s preferential treatment of income from investment (aka ‘capital gains,’ which are taxed more lightly than income from wages and salaries), introduced in 1921; the ability of managers of investment funds (including venture capitalists) to declare their compensation as a deferred capital gain (aka ‘carried interest’) in order to take advantage of that lower tax rate, starting in the 1940s; the practice of compensating corporate executives with stock options that are not taxed until they are exercised, beginning in the 1960s; the freedom of pension funds and university endowments to pursue high-risk investments like venture capital beginning after 1979; and the SEC rule change of 1982 that allowed corporate executives to direct corporations to buy back their shares to drive up stock prices.

The elevation of wealth over work in corporate and public policy swelled the size of the financial sector relative to the rest of the U.S. economy, while the pace of innovation slackened, economic growth decelerated, business investment declined, and inequality surged. Myths about venture capital stand in the way of democratic deliberation about how our society should direct the socially-generated surplus of today’s economy towards building a better economy for the future. *Wealth Over Work* draws upon history to emphasize the need for citizens to engage politically with questions about how new technologies arise and whom they benefit.

*February 18, 2020*

**GATE OF TEARS**  
**MIGRATION AND IMPASSE IN YEMEN AND THE HORN OF AFRICA**

**Nathalie M. Peutz**

How are the international community's efforts to rethink refugee policy experienced by refugees in the Global South? In December 2018, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Global Compact on Refugees proposed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Described as "a new deal for refugees," this compact seeks to strengthen the international response to large-scale movements of refugees and migrants outlined by the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants in 2016. One of its key outcomes was the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) designed to enhance refugee self-reliance and help ease pressures on the communities receiving them. In 2016–2018, this framework was rolled out in fifteen countries aiming to promote refugee "integration" through improved access to education, health care, legal assistance, and employment. Based on ethnographic fieldwork in a camp for Yemeni refugees in Djibouti—one of the CRRF pilot countries—the research evaluates the implications of this compact within the context of a complex set of migratory movements and displacements.

Focusing on the historic migration patterns between the Arabian Peninsula and the Horn of Africa and the contemporary encounters between "refugees" racialized as Arab and "migrants" racialized as African in a Djibouti port town, this lecture interrogates the legal distinction drawn between refugees and migrants and the theoretical distinction drawn between states of abandonment and captivity. It begins by describing an apparent opposition between the relatively abandoned Ethiopian migrants heading to Yemen and the *de facto* captivity of African-Yemeni refugees fleeing from Yemen. It traces how and why African-Yemeni migrants sought to become UNHCR-recognized refugees; how and why a refugee camp became designated a local village; and how and why, within the camp/village, two competing humanitarian regimes emerged. It argues that the putative distinctions drawn between the seemingly abandoned migrants and the seemingly captured refugees now permeates the camp, itself—destabilizing each of these categories. In doing so, it explains why refugees may experience the UNHCR's purportedly progressive push for their local integration as yet another impasse: a new and more pernicious form of encampment. In this climate, the Global Compact reads less like a global commitment than it does a form of Southern captivity and Northern abandonment.

*February 24, 2020*

## ORDINAL CITIZENSHIP

**Marion Fourcade**

The expansion of social citizenship in the twentieth century mitigated the brute effects of economic inequality in people's lives. The institutionalization of social rights and entitlement programs recognized that access to "the life of a civilized being" (to use TH Marshall's quaint phrase) should not depend on wealth only. To be sure, the process was incomplete, stigmatizing and often brutal, particularly for the poor and for racial minorities. Furthermore, the new rights created new social divisions, separating citizens according to their ability to do well through them. Economic and social differences did not disappear—far from it—but they could now legitimate themselves through the opportunities offered by, among others, the educational system. The meritocracy was born, with its lofty aspirations and its brutal deceptions.

The twenty-first century is seeing another flourishing of the conceptual and practical matrix of citizenship. Right-claims have multiplied and diversified, promising new freedoms and opportunities in every aspect of people's lives. Citizenship talk and demands now come in many flavors, depending on the adjective that precedes them: financial, digital, biomedical, sexual. But as new technologies, in particular, have enabled a broadening of economic and social incorporation, the possibilities for classifying, sorting, slotting and scaling people have also grown and diversified. New ways of measuring and demonstrating merit have sprung up, some better accepted than others. Institutions find themselves compelled to build up and exploit this efficient, proliferating, fine-grained knowledge in order to manage individual claims on resources and opportunities.

This talk scrutinizes the forms of stratification that are proliferating as a result of the digitization of social classifications: this "ordinal" citizenship, it is argued, creates its own winners and losers, partly recycling old inequalities and partly creating new ones. Demands for self-care and individual fitness pile up, eroding the universal and solidaristic basis upon which the expansion of citizenship historically thrived, and creating new categories of desirables and undesirables. Finally, as corporations, rather than the state, control many of the domains where the new rights-claims are being formulated, the figure of the citizen is semantically morphing into that of the customer, the client or the digital user, ready to be commodified and assetized for the benefit of others.

*March 2, 2020*

**THE DEBT ECONOMY IN URBAN INDIA**  
**FROM BONDAGE TO RESISTANCE IN THE SLUMS OF HYDERABAD**

**Z. Fareen Parvez**

Due to the unbridled expansion of finance capitalism and full embrace of neoliberal policies by their governments, many households across the global North and South have gone into massive amounts of debt to meet their basic needs. In India, economic liberalization has led to various forms of dispossession, internal migration, and the casualization of work. The economy grew at unprecedented levels in the last several years but at the cost of staggering levels of inequality. Although states have enacted welfare cash transfer policies to the poor, the development of public goods such as medical care, education, and sanitation has stagnated. In this context, the socioeconomic and political suffering of India's racialized Muslim minority remains disproportional. Muslims now fare worse on many indicators than the lowest caste groups. And with their lack of access to regular bank credit, they must turn to networks of illegal financiers and "loan sharks" to meet basic and emergency needs. This contrasts to the popular notion that household debt is driven by rising aspirations in the new global economy.

While debt can solidify social networks for poor communities throughout the world, it can also have severely destructive consequences for debtors. Informed by the work of Lazzarato as well as Graeber, this talk highlights the destruction of time and the destruction of community. It draws on 75 in-depth interviews with debtors, financiers, police, and activists as well as a 101-household survey in the southern Indian city of Hyderabad, which has one of the country's largest concentrations of Muslims and "slum" neighborhoods. The economy of the "Old City" section of Hyderabad is a debt economy that is structured by forms of debt bondage. This may be literal—with workers taking large loans they must pay off before earning a salary—and subjective, where people juggle several debts to pay only interest over long and indefinite periods of time. Marriage practices of expensive weddings and dowry have become deeply entangled with debt bondage and in turn, a type of predatory intra-community extraction. Relatively recent among Muslim communities, these practices require the quantification of women's value and have raised the "burden" of having daughters. The subjectivity these experiences create for debtors serves to powerfully legitimate class inequality. At the same time Hyderabad has resilient modes of resistance to the debt economy. These focus on Islamic discourses against dowry and status seeking and visions of an interest-free (moral) economy.

*March 9, 2020*

## SCIENCE ADVICE AFTER THE DECLINE OF TECHNOCRATIC EXPERTISE THE CASE OF COVID-19

**Alondra Nelson**

The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) was established in part to “de-politicize” the science advice provided to the executive branch. Against the backdrop of the moral and strategic errors of the Hiroshima bombing and the Vietnam War, US scientists who were increasingly prone to activism via bodies such as the Union of Concerned Scientists and Science for the People (both established in 1969) came to be deemed as “unreliable” experts. In this context, US government officials determined that they could no longer rely on external scientific expertise; more specifically, the ability to convene scientific experts who would not be critical of the US governance apparatus’ reliance on science and technology for military expansion and war was increasingly in doubt. The creation of OSTP sought to solve this problem by installing an office of science advisers as part of the White House staff, beginning in 1976.

Between the administration of President Gerald Ford to that of President George W. Bush, the office grew in size and in the scope of its activities. However, it was during the administration of President Barack Obama, that the scale and function of the office expanded to an unprecedented degree. The Obama OSTP would have the largest staff in the history of the office and its initiatives expanded the office’s purview to include almost all facets of government. Also distinctive was the acceleration of governance with and through public-private partnerships and the expansion of this mode of governing to science and technology policy. This shift was manifest in the rise of innovation “competitions” such as the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency’s (DARPA) that would yield the technology for self-driving cars that would be developed by Google X and other commercial engineering labs. It was also apparent in the presence of business elites who served as members of the Obama administration’s science policy advisory boards such as the President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology that was co-chaired by OSTP director, John Holdren, and included Alphabet CEO Eric Schmidt, VCs and academic scientists-turned-entrepreneurs. (In addition, many Obama OSTP staffers came to their roles in government from Silicon Valley; this self-named “Obama diaspora” would return to Silicon Valley following their government service). While business interests had been part of US science policy discussions since at least the nineteenth century, these ties were especially close in the Obama administration. However, the majority of the Obama administration’s science advice was channeled through technocrats—elite scientists, technologists and systems thinkers with ties both in and out of business.

*March 16, 2020*

## AUTHORITARIANISM, ALTERNATIVE GOVERNMENTALITY AND JUSTICE

Latif Tas

Life is not equal and laws are not always right. Living under continuous conflicts and wars during a lifetime does not provide a life of happiness. It only creates deprivation, infection, deep scars, misery, destruction, injustice and early deaths for many, but an endless greediness and abundance of power for some. The period when the practice of the authoritarian regimes increases and democracy is replaced by autocratic constitutionalism, when there is hardly any space for the practice of basic political and juridical principles of equality and fairness, and when the government of states, media, wealth and their justice systems almost only serves the regimes and its autocrats, then an alternative government emerges through necessity. The definition of alternative governmentality is not to be a substitution of the state but totally against the institutional structure and practice of the authoritarian state. It works in parallel and independently. This new approach is also a critical engagement of Foucauldian governmentality.

The foundation of any state is based on rule of law and justice. All power and control comes if one state is able to make rules, enforces rules and if that rules based justice is followed and respected by a large group of people. Without these conditions, the state, and its institutions, economy, governmentality, police and power cannot function or even exist. Demands and aspirations for alternative governmentality and justice are becoming important mainly when the existing political and legal systems are plagued by inequalities, corruption, and the discrimination of ethnic, religious and/or political minorities. In these contexts, state power tends to be challenged. Creating alternative judiciary and governmentality is one of the most important ways to transfer the power of the state, to develop a new state within state and to establish an authority and institutions of parallel state as a *de facto* way which may eventually bring some brutal autocrats and their regimes to an end. We have observed this in practice in the Kurdish political movement in the Middle East, against Turkish, Syrian, Iranian and Iraqi authoritarian regimes.

While some nations are treated as a master over the rest, some others are treated like they are disease ridden and are under quarantine by the master nations. They are under strict control, their movements are restricted and zoned, their exposure to other people limited as if they are contagious. That is the 'normal' justice for them as seen by the masters and its crowds. This has not been just unique to Middle Eastern' regimes, but it has almost been a foundation of most authoritarian nation states.

Based on 12 years of ethnographic research in Turkey, Syria, Iraqi Kurdistan and Kurdish diasporas in Europe, the research and upcoming book '*Authoritarianism and Revolt*' tries to answer the following six interconnected questions: Is it possible for an authoritarian state to become a democratic state naturally, without violence? Is it an option to support a separation of a state where one part supports authoritarian structure and the other side is against that power? How and why is alternative governmentality created? Does alternative governmentality work? Why do some groups have the right of having their own state but others don't? How big of a role do justice, gender and nationalism play in breaking states or building a new state and alternative governmentality?

March 23, 2020

# THE DIGITALIZATION OF MONEY IN CHINA

**Horacio Ortiz**

This presentation explores the theoretical foundations for an analysis of the digitalization of money in China. In the last few years, the expansion of digital technologies, in particular smartphones, has accompanied the development of widespread digital means of payment. Currently, several central banks around the world are exploring the possibility to use these technologies to make all payments digital. This presentation addresses these trends by focusing on the development of digital payments in China, in particular those managed by Alibaba (Alipay) and Tencent (Wechat Pay). Developed less than ten years ago, these payments systems are today used regularly by over 600 million people. They are a unique source of big data, on the basis of which other financial services have developed (insurance, wealth management and bank loans), and also one which sustains the development of a myriad of services, in the sectors of transport, payment of tax and public utility, health, education and logistics, among others. The data of payments is combined with that of these services, the data from social media gathered for instance with Tencent's Wechat and QQ, among others, and the data on e-commerce, an activity where Alibaba is the biggest global player, but not the only one. This data is expected to feed the provision of public services, and the public management of population, for instance, but not only, through the project to create a social credit system.

Thus, the digitalization of payments in China, due to its unique institutional combination of several sources of data, is part of a broad and deep transformation of social relations. This implies revisiting the theories of money in social sciences, and their connection to the analysis of the role of algorithms in everyday life.

This presentation does this by exploring the promises of pragmatist approaches of money. These highlight that the meaning of money depends on its uses, and that its institutional and material qualities influence what can be done with it, shaping thereby the practices that take it up. In particular, it implies looking at the way in which money is central in the constitution of social hierarchies that correspond to multiple, sometimes contradictory and disconnected imaginaries, which can be religious, moral, political or premised in terms of gender, age or other identities.

The presentation also explores the critical analyses of the use of algorithms, which show how their expansion in commercial practices goes hand in hand with marketing and the nudging of users, within vast monopolistic tendencies. This is usually accompanied by political narratives about the capacity of algorithms to "solve" problems of social coordination at the speed of light, influenced by a cybernetic imagination. The analysis highlights the limits of this imagination, and the role that the expansion of algorithms has in the production and transformation of social hierarchies.

The case of digital payments systems in China is unique due to the institutional setting that leads to the integration of data held by different companies and the state. This integration is far from achieved, but it is projected in a way that contrasts with what the GAFA have achieved so far. But this institutional specificity must be used to explore issues that concern the expansion of algorithms and digital payments on a global scale.

*March 30, 2020*

## FROM RIGHTS TO ENTITLEMENTS TO ASSETS THE WARPING OF WELFARE REGIMES

Lena Lavinás

Today, reforming social policy is at the center of the work of finance. Thanks to certain social policies – especially cash transfers underwritten by the state – the financial sector no longer has to rely on the requirement of liquid assets to make offers to growing heterogeneous middle classes, low-income groups and the poor. In this workaround, the State both exempts cash transfer recipients of different sorts from posting collateral and provides the very collateral that is a precondition for the expansion of financial markets. This is what I have called the collateralization of social policy under financialized capitalism.

This makes it all the more urgent to resignify the complementarity between social policy and economic policy, as well as the new links that are emerging between society and the economy in the era of financialization.

In spite of the tremendous divergences between patterns of social protection and social rights which marked the divide between rich economies and the rest of the world for the last 70 years, these sharply distinct welfare regimes now share mutual prospects: by promoting the collateralization of social policies, they establish a permanent source of indebtedness for households and individuals as a means to seek security, wellbeing and especially leverage – or what we used to refer to as opportunities. The driver of the transformation, retraction, and/or expansion of social protection systems is debt. Debt becomes embedded into opportunities.

One of the main features of financialized capitalism is the explosion of household debt. Since the 2000s, it has grown exponentially, though varying from country to country, in line with a substantial increase in credit supply. By running some correlations for a large set of countries, covering all regions worldwide, it was possible to establish a positive correlation between monetary transfers paid by the State, on the one hand, and debt and borrowing through financial channels, on the other. This means that debt might be playing a double role, both in shaping novel financialized patterns of social reproduction and also in guaranteeing the liquidity, which is crucial to the optimal functioning and continuous expansion of financial markets.

What new attributes and functionalities do social policies acquire then? To answer this question, there are three entry points, which draw on different theoretical frameworks that clash with one another, and offer exciting scholarly avenues. One leads to examining the intricate role of social policies in engendering debt and through debt - which is a liability - contributing to expanding asset markets within financial circuits. The second takes into consideration that, upon being turned into collateral, social policy would be considered an asset as well. Does that imply taking on an “asset form” as stated by Birch and Muniesa (2020)? And, if so, how does this transformation unfold? The third entry point aims at tracing how the rhetoric of individual entitlements has taken over the notion of rights as a means of enjoying security, strengthening and enlarging the semantic field of private ownership, and thus eroding the sense of emancipatory social change entangled with social ownership.

The goal is to build a comprehensive analysis of the novel designs of welfare regimes, shot through as they are by this asset culture, and in another theoretical register, by financialization. We lack a conceptual model able to provide an account of the numerous interactions between social policies and the regime of accumulation led by finance. Would assetization as welfare be an interesting conceptual frame to examine paths of reconfiguration of welfare regimes?

*April 6, 2020*



**EMBEDDED (AND DIS-EMBEDDED) SOVEREIGNTY**  
**GOVERNMENT DEBT, NEW YORK LAW AND FINANCIAL ORDER**

**Benjamin Lemoine**

Since the 2000s, hundreds of foreign investors have sued more than half of the world's countries, claiming damages and awards for a wide range of government actions considered threats to their profits, commercial activities and financial investments: for instance, state regulation in environment, health, etc. contested in investor-state dispute settlements, or government bonds investments not reimbursed and disputed in US federal courts. In these lawsuits, sovereignty can be calculated invoked, defended, protected, reassured, considered an obstacle, attacked or, more simply, delineated and circumscribed.

Sociology helps to avoid reifications of sovereignty (*i.e.* evaluating its quantity, its degree of "real" exercise). Without also considering what would be the "essence" of sovereignty, such as a predefined substance that would include a certain *core* domain of public policies, I describe how the technico-legal devices of global finance are twisting, delimiting, giving flesh, body, legal materiality and substance to a certain understanding of sovereignty. Investors and lawyers are able to manipulate it as a financial object, speculating and gambling on it. The capacity of the sovereign policies to cause harm to investors is quantified, evaluated and anticipated in risk premium, interest rates, awards and fees: a financier can cover and insure himself against sovereign risk, can arbitrate and shop around between different legal domestic architectures and institutions in one country, and therefore can, depending on such calculations, balance his risk and investment portfolio.

Sovereignty tends to be embedded and transformed, outside of any democratic debate, in the courtrooms and constituted through a bundle of legal practices of global finance with important implications for the distribution of power and resources among states and social categories today. The power of New York State law, the law of Wall Street, over states considered as "peripheral" in the international financial and monetary architecture is central to the construction of US dollar hegemony. The New York State law innovations, pushed since the 1960s by the executive branch would, starting in 2000, become a Frankenstein that has escaped its creator. The rise of creditor-driven legal rationality – a set of practices, codes, social norms and representations of what is fundamental, what is legitimate, fair and unfair – provoked important frictions within the US executive apparatus and administrations (State Department, US Treasury). More than tension, it produced a form of non-reversible autonomy, and a potential inability for the executive branch to weigh on and oppose its logics and scope of extension.

Beyond the idea that a *unilateral decisionist* version of sovereignty has become hardly operational since states are locked in multiple binding relationships to which they themselves have consented, the modalities of expression of sovereignty have been transformed over the last fifty years, even in *central* states and inside the US *hegemon*, by the rise of a legal and financial rationality that is relatively autonomous or, at least, can be sometimes disconnected from nation-states, executive and political powers. Legal modules of global finance are reconfiguring territories and authorities, the exercise of law, the power to constrain, and finally, what sovereignty actually consists of.

*April 13, 2020*

# Life, Economy and Economic Emergencies

Federico Neiburg

The COVID-19 pandemic places the world in front of unprecedented sanitary, social and economic challenges. The current economic emergency is at a size never seen before. This unexpected situation confronts my original project with unforeseen challenges. The scale of the emergency, its transformation into one of the most (if not the most) public issues worldwide, also implies a cognitive challenge: we clearly need new concepts to describe the process, to analyze it, to see possible futures and new forms to conceptualize the relationships between economy and life that the crisis exposes.

My original project on economic emergencies, was impacted due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Economic emergency was now overflowing. Confronted with this enormity, an updated book project emerges, containing my earlier works on South American hyperinflations, along with my work on the social and cultural history of *cost of living* indexes, and my research on the meanings of making a living in contexts of extreme scarcity of money, poverty and food crises, like those I have followed closely for years in the poor neighborhoods of Port-au-Prince. In sum, questions concerning the articulations between expert and ordinary calculations and measurements on the value of monetary lives.

The social sciences in recent years have seen a growing ethnographic critique of the concept of life, questioning its self-evident nature and the binarisms that oppose biological and biographical lives, life and death, life in the singular and lives in the plural, the frontiers between human and non-human lives, including those of other species – so important to gaining insight into the sociobiological dynamics of the current pandemic. Equally relevant to understanding our present time are the relations between life and economy that – until the current crisis (and with a few exceptions) – seemed to have been almost entirely off the radar of our disciplines.

Economic emergencies are specific spatial and temporal regions that acquired a singular status during and soon after the First World War and that have the property of showing, conceptually and practically, through the administration of what is 'essential for life', modulations in the relations between life and economy. The question of the trade-off between economy and life is a core (and a public) issue for our collective existence now. Some of the questions the project must deal with are: how do socio-legal-technical networks define the scope of the emergency and its duration? What are the moral dilemmas formulated and the different solutions offered? How do the national and the international dimension of the economic emergency interact (its conceptualizations and the solutions proposed)? How do economic and legal experts propose to define and to deal with the 'essentials of life' that the emergency demands that we attend to? How do we define the frontiers of the economic domain in the emergency (vis-à-vis, but not only, the sanitary dynamics)? Finally, what exactly do economic emergencies seek to remedy or repair and on which technical and moral basis?

*April 20, 2020*

## WRITING HISTORY FROM COLOMBIA'S ALCATRAZ

Robert Karl

Colombia's armed conflict has crowded out inquiry into crime and other quotidian forms of violence in the country's history. However, it is impossible to disentangle the two. Under Colombia's centralist 1886 constitution, which remained in force until 1991, extraordinary legal institutions used to combat political violence were employed to combat social disorder. In turn, traditions of punishment and forgiveness in the social realm shaped the Colombian state's prosecution of war against armed challenges to its authority, campaigns in which it also enlisted the help of private social actors. In tracking this interplay across the long twentieth century, this project aims to establish a deeper historical genealogy for what is often portrayed as a two-step, contemporary progression that links the weakness of Latin American state legalities, as well as the upswing in incarceration across the Americas, to neoliberalism. Instead, by looking at Colombia over the course of the twentieth century, we gain a portrait of how multiple sovereignties and legal pluralism were embedded in political institutions and practice. We moreover encounter not simply an evolution from internal conflict to criminal violence, but how even earlier criminal and carceral policies influenced wartime measures.

This presentation draws from a collection of inmate files from Gorgona, Colombia's Pacific Alcatraz, which housed 4,500 inmates between 1960 and its conversion to a national park in 1985. It does not seek to offer a history *of* Gorgona, but rather a view of Colombian history *from* the island. The presentation first places the dramatic growth in Colombia's prison population during the 1950s and '60s, and its even more dramatic decline in the early 1970s, within broader trends of punishment and forgiveness. It then pivots to consider how notions of mestizo nationalism and racial democracy, which find expression in Colombia's archive, can elide the place of Afro-Colombians in the Colombian criminal justice system. Finally, the presentation sketches out the crucial role of extraordinary executive powers in the creation of Colombia's punitive apparatus. Gorgona itself was established under state-of-siege authority, and later received insurgents and common criminals who were sentenced under harsh regimes of military justice. Exploring the historical nexus of incarceration and legal exception may provide clues to how states will attempt to police their societies in an era of pandemics, mass migration, and climate change.

*April 27, 2020*

## SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND THE STATE A RACIAL HISTORY OF LEGAL CASTRATION

Greta LaFleur

What constitutes *evidence* of sexual behavior, culture, or practices in periods before *sexuality* was understood as a category of human physical and psychic experience? This has proved a notoriously difficult question for historians of sexuality, who have looked to court records, diaries, medical manuals, doctors' notes, prison records, and social work archives, among other sources, for evidence of what sexual behavior meant or was understood to be in eras before the emergence of *sex* as a discrete site of inquiry for the human sciences. In this talk, I will further complicate these already-challenging methodological and archival questions by discussing the problem of trying to better integrate histories of sexual violence into histories of sexuality. Sexual violence, historically and today, is frequently naturalized as a predictable feature of various kinds of encounters. This was no less true in early America, where sexual violence often structured encounters between unequally-situated historical actors: between enfranchised white men and white women, between enfranchised white people and enslaved and/or Black men and women, and between colonial administrators and settlers and Native people, especially Native women. Under British colonial North American criminal law, even consensual sex could include a significant degree of force, so not only recovering, but even merely *identifying* sexual violence in eighteenth-century archives of all kinds can be an extremely difficult project. Coupled with the fact that, as Saidiya Hartman, Marisa Fuentes, Jennifer Morgan, and other scholars have demonstrated, archives themselves are sites of power that stage the violences of historical, individual, and affective erasure, histories of sexual violence are perhaps even harder to reconstruct than histories of sexuality. This talk will describe the methodological, epistemological, and archival challenges I have encountered in developing the research for my current book project, and will detail some of the approaches I have taken to addressing these challenges.

"Sexual Violence and the State: A Racial History of Legal Castration" builds on landmark studies of rape in early America by historians Sharon Block, Estelle Freedman, and Richard Godbeer, all of whom have offered careful analyses of what Block terms the "racialization of rape" in the rape law and slaves codes of the early American colonies. This talk examines a series of commutation petitions filed in the Superior Courts of Connecticut during the late eighteenth century, all of which were penned by black men (or their amanuenses) convicted of raping white women and sentenced to death. In each petition, the convicted man asks for a commutation of his sentence, offering to be castrated, sold into slavery, or both, in exchange for the mitigation of his death sentence. These gut-wrenching petitions highlight one critical intersection between the history of sexuality and the history of rape: the legal use of castration as a punishment for crimes. As I illustrate in this talk, castration emerged as a possible form of sentence mitigation not only, as Diane Sommerville has argued, because the state did not want to compensate slave owners for the loss of their property when enslaved people convicted of rape were executed, but also because castration itself had long been understood in law, animal husbandry, and anatomical sciences as a way of curbing problematic willfulness or high-spiritedness in animals (human and nonhuman) of all kinds. The talk traces what I term the emergence of a particular optics of rape, a process by which only very specific arrangements of sexual violence are identifiable as such, rendering sexual violence against Black women, men of all races, and sexual violence directed against individuals by the state illegible as violence at all.

May 4, 2020

**'WE ARE NOT BEGGARS'**  
**RECOGNITION AND RESENTMENT**

**Herbert Docena**

In the late 1980s, officials from the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Japan and other industrialized or “developed” countries began pressing officials from the poorer, less industrialized countries—or the so-called “developing countries”—to manage or reduce their greenhouse gas emissions to address climate change. To induce the developing countries to comply, they first proposed what can be called a system of *conditional donations*: an arrangement under which the developed countries would be required to control their greenhouse gas emissions and to give “aid” or “assistance” in the form of funds, technology or other resources to developing countries in exchange for the developing countries also reducing their own emissions. But in the mid-1990s, developed-country officials suddenly rallied behind—and eventually succeeded in pushing for—a very different regime: a system of *carbon trading* under which they would be obliged to reduce their emissions but allowed to “offset” them by buying “carbon credits” from developing countries that reduce their emissions.

Why did the world’s richest and most powerful countries shift from pushing for a simple, well-known system of conditional donations to pushing for a more unfamiliar and more complicated system of carbon trading to address climate change? Existing structuralist approaches for analyzing world politics suggest at least two explanations: a cultural account, which links the developed-countries’ shift to changes in world culture, and an economic account, which connects said shift to transformations in the world economy. Both go a long way in helping us understand the transition in question but they still do not go far enough because, as I will further discuss below, they do not adequately account for the timing and content of this transition.

Building on scholars who theorize power relations in terms of recognition, I put forward a *political* account that complements and brings together the economic and cultural accounts by paying more attention to how states actually interact with each other on the world stage. Drawing from 57 interviews with officials closely involved in the negotiations, several hundred pages of archival materials, and more than 12 weeks’ worth of ethnographic field notes taken over a four-year period, I argue that the industrialized countries shifted to pushing for carbon trading because the poorer countries had in effect revolted against them in the negotiations, refusing to not only cooperate with the developed-country officials under a system of conditional donations but also to accept the moral categorizations, the kind of moral relationship, and the moral ordering that the developed-country officials were pushing unless they agreed to a radically different approach—one which elevated the developing countries but demoted the developed countries. They preferred carbon trading over the alternatives, I go on to argue, because it elevated neither the developed countries nor the developing countries, thus providing them (the developed countries) a way to give moral concessions to the developing countries and, by so doing, also a way to break their resistance.

*May 11, 2020*

## BEVERIDGEAN UNEMPLOYMENT GAP

Pascal Michaillat

The unemployment gap—the distance between the actual unemployment rate and the socially efficient unemployment rate—is a key statistic for macroeconomic policy. In practice, many governments are mandated to reduce the unemployment gap to zero. For example, in the United States, the Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment Act of 1978 mandates the government to maintain the economy at “full employment.” Since achieving zero unemployment is physically impossible, full employment should not be interpreted as zero unemployment but rather as a socially efficient amount of unemployment; the mandate of US policymakers therefore is to close the unemployment gap. In theory, many optimal policies also depend on the distance from labor-market efficiency, which is measured by the unemployment gap: hiring and employment subsidies and firing tax; minimum wage; monetary policy; public expenditure; income tax; and short-time work. Yet, there does not exist any broadly accepted measure of the unemployment gap.

This paper aims to measure the unemployment gap. To do so, we rely on the Beveridge curve: the negative relationship between unemployment and job vacancies observed in many countries, including the United States. The Beveridge curve is key to determining the efficient unemployment rate because it governs the welfare tradeoff between unemployment and vacancies. Both unemployment and vacancies come with welfare costs: more unemployment means fewer productive resources; more vacancies mean more productive resources diverted to recruiting. Yet the Beveridge curve shows that both cannot be reduced at the same time: less unemployment requires more vacancies, and conversely fewer vacancies create more unemployment.

We find that the unemployment gap can be expressed as a function of current unemployment and vacancy rates, and three sufficient statistics: the slope of the Beveridge curve, the labor cost of recruiting new workers (time spent reading CVs, interviewing applicants, etc.), and the nonpecuniary cost of unemployment (mental and physical health cost of unemployment, loss of experience and human capital, etc.). In the United States, we find that the efficient unemployment rate started around 3 percent in the 1950s, steadily climbed to almost 6 percent in the 1980s, fell just below 4 percent in the early 1990s, and remained at that level until 2019. These variations are mainly caused by changes in the level and elasticity of the Beveridge curve.

These findings suggest that the US labor market does not generally operate efficiently, but tends to be inefficiently slack. The unemployment gap is especially high in slumps: as high as 5 percentage points in 1982, 3.9 points in 1992, and 6.2 points in 2010. Thus, it would be beneficial to implement stronger stabilization policies that reduce unemployment in bad times.

*May 18, 2020*

## **II**

### **Theme Seminar**





## **Economy and Society**

### **Theme of the Year 2019-2020**

How to study and conceptualize the relationships between economy and society has been a central problem for the social sciences from Adam Smith to Karl Marx, from Max Weber to Karl Polanyi. Over the last few decades, profound transformations in the functioning and regulation of the global economic order, the distribution of income and wealth, and the world of labor have generated new empirical and intellectual challenges. The social sciences have undergone a startling evolution, too, with economists turning to experimental methods and the study of various aspects of social life, including inequality and social mobility, while sociologists, anthropologists, historians, legal scholars and political scientists have developed new empirical and theoretical approaches to the study of markets, finance, risk and value. The theme “Economy and Society” is at the intersection of these two movements – in the world and in the academy.

Research on this theme brings together the various disciplines of the social sciences and humanities. Topics include, among others, questions related to market structure and economic action, financial cultures and technologies, the rise of automation and algorithms, the moral regulation of nations and individuals, old and new forms of labor and labor organization, the economic and political impact of immigration, the transformation of life-styles and subjectivities, the valuation of persons and goods, and the place of economics and economists in social and governmental practices. Because these phenomena and the way people experience them vary across countries, the projects presented and the scholars who propose them reflect this diversity.

## **Boom, Doom, Gloom – October 2, 2019**

Curated by Benjamin Braun and Sarah Quinn

### Readings:

- John Maynard Keynes, “The State of Long-Term Expectation,” pp. 147-164, in *The Collected Writings of John Maynard Keynes Volume VII: The General Theory of Employment*, (London and New York: MacMillan, 1973)
- Michael Lewis, “When Irish Eyes Are Crying,” *Vanity Fair*, March 2011 pp. 174-197

### Archive:

- Nigel Dodd, “Debt,” pp. 89-134, in *The Social Life of Money*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014)
- Gunnar Trumbull, “Credit Access and Social Welfare: The Rise of Consumer Lending in the United States and France,” *Politics & Society*, Vol. 40(1), 2012, pp. 9-34

## **From the Welfare State to the Debtfare State – October 16, 2019**

Curated by Lena Lavinias and Chloe Thurston

### Readings:

- Louis Hyman, “Ending Discrimination, Legitimizing Debt: The Political Economy of Race, Gender, and Credit Access in the 1960s and 1970s,” *Enterprise & Society*, Vol. 12(1), 2011, pp. 200-232
- Maurizio Lazzarato, “Understanding Debt as the Basis of Social Life,” pp. 13-35, in *The Making of the Indebted Man: An Essay on the Neoliberal Condition*, (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2012)

### Archive:

- Susanne Soederberg, “Student Loans, Debtfare and the Commodification of Debt: The Politics of Securitization and the Displacement of Risk,” *Critical Sociology*, Vol. 40(5), 2014, pp. 689-709
- Maurizio Lazzarato, *The Making of the Indebted Man: An Essay on the Neoliberal Condition*, (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2012)
- Hua Hsu, “Student Debt is Transforming the American Family,” *The New Yorker*, September 2019

**Resistance and Redemption:**

**On Debt, Finance, and Mobilization – October 30, 2019**

Curated by Benjamin Lemoine and Z. Fareen Parvez

Screening & discussion of scenes from documentary *Bricks*, led by director Quentin Ravelli

Readings:

- George Caffentzis, “Reflections on the History of Debt Resistance: The Case of El Barzón,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, Vol. 112(4), 2013, pp. 824-830
- William Callison, “Movements of Counter-Speculation: A Conversation with Michel Fehrer,” *Los Angeles Review of Books*, July 12, 2019

Archive:

- Michel Fehrer, “The Appreciation of Individual Conduct,” pp. 173-222, in *Rated Agency: Investee Politics in a Speculative Age*, (Brooklyn: Zone Books, 2018)
- Andrew Ross and Seth Akerman, “Strike Debt and Rolling Jubilee: The Debate,” *Dissent Magazine*, November 13, 2012
- Quentin Ravelli, “Debt struggles: How financial markets gave birth to a working-class movement,” *Socio-Economic Review*, Vol. 0(0), 2019, pp. 1-28

## **Reparative Justice as Historical Redress – November 13, 2019**

Curated by Naor Ben-Yehoyada, Robert Karl and Latif Tas

### Readings:

- Robert Meister, “Adverse Possession,” pp. 232-259, in *After Evil: A Politics of Human Rights*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010)
- Laura Dulce Romero, “No Victims of David Char Have Been Accredited before the JEP,” *El Espectador*, October 18, 2019
- Margaret Besheer, “Nobel Laureate Murad Urges Justice for Yazidi Victims of IS,” *Voice of America*, April 23, 2019
- Working Group, “The Italian Experience in the Management, Use and Disposal of Frozen, Seized and Confiscated Assets,” *Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on Asset Recovery Meeting*, Vienna, September 2014

### Archive:

- Theodoros Rakopoulos, “Divided by Land: Mafia and Anti-mafia Proximity,” pp. 173-189 in *From Clans to Co-ops: Confiscated Mafia Land in Sicily*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2018)
- Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The Case for Reparations,” *The Atlantic*, June 2014

## **Framing Economic Lives – November 26, 2019**

Curated by Isabelle Gu erin, Susana Narotzky and Federico Neiburg

### Readings:

- Michael Denning, "Wageless Life," *New Left Review*, Vol. 66(Nov-Dec), 2010, pp. 79-97
- Beverley Skeggs and Vik Loveday, "Struggles for Value: Value Practices, Injustice, Judgment, Affect and the Idea of Class," *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 63(3), 2012, pp. 472-290
- Angelique Chrisafis, "Greeks Fall Back on Family Ties Amid Debt Crisis," *The Guardian*, August 2, 2011

### Archive:

- Jane I. Guyer, "Volatility: A Performance in Modern Nigeria," pp. 101-114 in *Marginal Gains: Monetary Transactions in Atlantic Africa*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004)
- Viviana A. Zelizer, "How I Became a Relational Economic Sociologist and What Does That Mean?," *Politics and Society*, Vol. 40(2), 2012, pp. 145-174
- James Ferguson, "Distributed Livelihoods: Dependence and the Labor of Distribution in the Lives of the Southern African Poor (and Not-So-Poor)," pp. 89-117 in *Give a Man a Fish: Reflections on the New Politics of Distribution*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015)

## **Power of the Digital, Digital Powers – December 11, 2019**

Curated by Marion Fourcade and Horacio Ortiz

### Readings:

- Google Inc. “The Selfish Ledger”, Youtube  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LUSZfEBTwRc&feature=youtu.be>
- Gilles Deleuze, “Postscript on the Societies of Control,” *October*, Vol. 59(Winter), 1992, pp. 3-7
- Shoshana Zuboff, “Big Other: Surveillance Capitalism and the Prospects of an Information Civilization,” *Journal of Information Technology*, Vol. 30, 2015, pp. 75-89
- AliResearch, “The Next Decade: The Emergence of an Intelligent Economy”, in *Deconstruction and Restructuring: The New Era of Intelligent Economy*, January 2019

### Archive:

- Amnesty International, “Surveillance Giants: How the Business Model of Google and Facebook Threatens Human Rights,” *Report*, 2019
- Evgeny Morozov, “Digital Socialism? The Calculation Debate in the Age of Big Data,” *New Left Review*, Vol. 116/117(March-June), 2019, pp. 33-67
- Bidisha Chaudhuri and Lion König, “The Aadhaar Scheme: A Cornerstone of a New Citizenship Regime in India?” *Contemporary South Asia*, Vol. 25(2), 2018, pp. 127-142
- Jeroen de Kloet, Thomas Poell, Zeng Guohua & Chow Yiu Fai, “The Platformization of Chinese Society: Infrastructure, Governance, and Practice,” *Chinese Journal of Communication*, Vol. 12(3), 2019, pp. 249-256

## **Global Monetary Hierarchies – January 29, 2020**

Curated by Benjamin Braun, Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas, Horacio Ortiz and Alden Young

### Readings:

- Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas, “The Dollar Hegemon? Evidence and Implications for Policy Makers,” *6<sup>th</sup> Asian Monetary Policy Forum*, 2019
- Adam Tooze, “‘The Big Thing’: Global Liquidity,” pp. 202-219, in *Crashed: How a Decade of Financial Crises Changed the World*, (New York: Viking, 2018)
- Jane I. Guyer, “Soft Currencies, Cash Economies, New Monies: Past and Present,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, Vol. 109(7), 2012, pp. 2214-2221

### Archive:

- Barry Eichengreen and Domenico Lombardi, “RMBI or RMBR? Is the Renminbi Destined to Become a Global or Regional Currency?” *Asian Economic Papers*, Vol. 16(1), 2017, pp. 35-59
- Federico Neiburg, “A True Coin of Their Dreams: Imaginary Monies in Haiti,” *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, Vol. 6(1), 2016, pp. 75-93
- Tinashe Nyamunda and Geraldine Sibanda, “The Making of Zimbabwe’s Currency and Economic Crisis: International Financial Architecture, Nationalism and Economic Policies 1980-2000,” Draft



## **Temporalities of Economy and Society – February 12, 2020**

Curated by Herbert Docena, Fleur Johns and Virág Molnár

### Readings:

- Laura Bear, “Time as Technique,” *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 45, 2016, pp. 487-502
- Judy Wajcman, “How Silicon Valley Sets Time,” *New Media & Society*, Vol. 21(6), 2019, pp. 1272-1289
- Janice Peterson and Barbara Wiens-Tuers, “Work Time, Gender, and Inequality: The Conundrums of Flexibility,” *Journal of Economic Issues*, Vol. 48(2), 2014, pp. 387-394

### Archive:

- Pitirim A. Sorokin and Robert K. Merton, “Social Time: A Methodological and Functional Analysis,” *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 42(5). 1937, pp. 615-629
- Jens Beckert, “The Temporal Order of Capitalism,” in *Imagined Futures: Fictional Expectations and Capitalist Dynamics*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016)
- Samuel A. Chambers, “Untimely Politics *avant la lettre*: The Temporality of Social Formations,” *Time and Society*, Vol. 20(2), 2011, pp. 197-223

**Money, Circuits, and Social Relations – February 26, 2020**  
Curated by Marion Fourcade, Federico Neiburg and Frederick Wherry  
Guest Viviana Zelizer

Readings:

- Viviana Zelizer and Lauren Gaydosh, “The College Economy: How Students Manage Everyday Inequalities,” Draft
- Sibel Kusimba, “It is Easy for Women to Ask!': Gender and Digital Finance in Kenya,” *Economic Anthropology*, Vol. 5, 2018, pp. 247-260
- Natasha Dow Schüll, “Machines, Medication, Modulation: Circuits of Dependency and Self-Care in Las Vegas,” *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*, Vol. 30, 2006, pp. 223-247

Archive:

- Nina Bandelj, Frederick F. Wherry and Viviana A. Zelizer, “Introduction: Advancing Money Talks,” pp. 1-24 in Nina Bandelj, Frederick F. Wherry and Viviana A. Zelizer (eds.), *Money Talks: Explaining How Money Really Works*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017)
- Kieran Healy, “Dealing with Awkward Relations,” Paper, September 2013
- Ariel Wilkis, “Introduction: Money and Moral Capital,” in *The Moral Power of Money: Morality and Economy in the Life of the Poor*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017)

## **International Migrations, Gender and Economy – March 11, 2020**

Curated by Anne-Claire Defossez, Didier Fassin and Ravi Kanbur

### Readings:

- Paul Collier, “Now is the Time to Slow Down Immigration,” *The Guardian*, November 4, 2014
- Michael Clemens and Justin Sandefur, “Let the People Go: The Problem with Strict Migration Limits,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 93(1), 2014, pp. 152-159
- Panel, “The Economic and Fiscal Consequences of Immigration,” *The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Report*, 2017
- George J. Borjas, “A User’s Guide to the 2016 National Academy Report on ‘The Economic and Fiscal Consequences of Immigration,’” Working Paper, 2016
- Rhacel Parreñas, “Monitoring International Labor Precarity: The State Management of Migrant Domestic Workers,” pp. 39-57 in Didier Fassin (ed.), *Deepening Divides: How Territorial Borders and Social Boundaries Delineate Our World*, (New York: Pluto Press, 2020)
- Roger Ballard, “Coalitions of Reciprocity and the Maintenance of Financial Integrity Within Informal Value Transmission Systems: The Operational Dynamics of Contemporary Hawala Networks,” *Journal of Banking Regulation*, Vol. 6(4), 2005, pp. 319-352

### Archive:

- Hillel Rapoport, “Diaspora Externalities: A View from the South,” *Uni-Wider Conference on Migration and Development*, 2017
- Abdelmalek Sayad, “An Exemplary Immigration,” pp. 63-87 in *The Suffering of the Immigrant*, (Cambridge: Polity, 2004)
- Abdelmalek Sayad, “Recapitulation,” pp. 294-302 in *The Suffering of the Immigrant*, (Cambridge: Polity, 2004)
- Alexandre Afonso, “Migrant Workers or Working Women? Comparing Labor Supply Policies in Post-War Europe,” *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice*, Vol. 21(3), 2019, pp. 251-269

## **Religion and Moral Economy – March 25, 2020**

Curated by Webb Keane, Nathalie Peutz and Justin Stearns

### Readings:

- Julie Y. Chu, “For Use in Heaven or Hell: The Circulation of the U.S. Dollar among Gods, Ghosts, and Ancestors,” pp. 171-216 in *Cosmologies of Credit: Transnational Mobility and the Politics of Destination in China*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010)
- Amira Mittermaier, “Trading with God: Islam, Calculation, Excess,” pp. 274-293, in Janice Boddy and Michael Lambeck (eds.), *A Companion to the Anthropology of Religion*, (Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2013)
- Caitlin Zaloom, “The Evangelical Financial Ethic: Doubled Forms and the Search for God in the Economic World,” *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 43(2), 2016, pp. 325-338

### Archive:

- Al-Hasan Al-Yusi, “The Discourses, 36.9,” pp. 337-351 in Philp. F. Kennedy and Shawkat M. Toorawa (eds.), Justin Stearns (trans.), *The Discourses: Reflections on History, Sufism, Theology, and Literature Volume One*, (New York: New York University Press, 2019)
- Simon Coleman, “The Charismatic Gift,” *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, Vol. 10(2), 2004, pp. 421-442
- bell hooks, “Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness,” *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media*, (36), 1989, pp. 15-23
- Webb Keane, “Money is No Object: Materiality, Desire, and Modernity in an Indonesian Society,” pp. 65-90, in Fred R. Myers (ed.), *The Empire of Things: Regimes of Value and Material Culture*, (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 2001)
- James Laidlaw, “A Free Gift Makes No Friends,” *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, Vol. 6(4), 2000, pp. 617-634
- Adam Sabra, “Begging and Almsgiving,” pp. 32-68 in *Poverty and Charity in Medieval Islam: Mamluk Egypt, 1250-1517*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)

## **Race and Capitalism – May 11, 2020**

Curated by Alondra Nelson and Julia Ott

Guests Michael Dawson and Megan Ming Francis

### Readings:

- Michael C. Dawson, “Hidden in Plain Sight: A Note on Legitimation Crises and the Racial Order,” *Critical Historical Studies*, Vol. 3(1), 2016, pp. 143-161
- Nancy Fraser, “Expropriation and Exploitation in Racialized Capitalism: A Reply to Michael Dawson,” *Critical Historical Studies*, Vol. 3(1), 2016, pp. 163-178
- Walter Johnson, “To Remake the World: Slavery, Racial Capitalism, and Justice,” *Boston Review*, February 20, 2018

### Archive:

- Jodi A. Byrd, Alyosha Goldstein, Jodi Melamed, and Chandan Reddy, “Predatory Value: Economies of Dispossession and Disturbed Relationalities,” *Social Text*, Vol. 36(2 (135)), 2018, pp. 1-18
- Michael C. Dawson and Megan Ming Francis, “Black Politics and the Neoliberal Racial Order,” *Public Culture*, Vol. 28(1), 2015, pp. 23-62
- Michael C. Dawson and Emily A. Katzenstein, “Survey Article: Articulated Darkness: White Supremacy, Patriarchy and Capitalism in Shelby’s *Dark Ghettos\**,” *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, Vol. 27(2), 2019, pp. 252-268
- Peter James Hudson, “The National City Bank of New York and Haiti, 1909-1922,” *Radical History Review*, Vol. 2013(115), Winter 2013, pp. 91-114
- Lisa Lowe, “The Intimacies of Four Continents,” pp. 1-42 in *The Intimacies of Four Continents*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015)
- Stephanie Smallwood, “Commodified Freedom: Interrogating the Limits of Anti-Slavery Ideology in the Early Republic,” *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 24(2), 2004, pp. 289-298
- Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, “Back Story to the Neoliberal Moment: Race Taxes and the Political Economy of Black Urban Housing in the 1960s,” *Souls*, Vol. 14(3-4), 2012, pp. 185-206

## **Economy and Society in the Time of the Pandemic**

*A collective volume in preparation*

**Didier Fassin and Marion Fourcade eds.**

The social and economic upheavals that are following in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic are unprecedented in modern times. Throughout the world, economic production, social relations, and political norms have been upended, in a scramble for virus containment. As borders close and travel grinds to a halt, the physical world has shrunk, while the virtual world seems to be expanding endlessly. The productive fabric of nations is mutating at a fast pace, in an accelerated process of creative destruction. New fault lines are emerging, between those occupations and organizational forms that thrive under social distancing and those that do not; between those countries, many in East Asia and the Southern Pacific, that have quickly brought the contagion under control and those where it is has wreaked havoc (the United States, much of Europe and of Latin America).

Everywhere, biopolitics has redefined the present moment. The regulation of populations and normalization of conducts have taken a dramatic turn. The path of disease under the lockdowns has already revealed in grim details stark inequalities in death rates and in life conditions. People, groups and nations never had equal life chances to begin with, but the pandemic and the turmoil it has caused have exposed these social inequities much more crudely. Within nations the old, the sick, and the vulnerable – prisoners, migrants, the poor, so called “frontline” and “essential” workers, ethnic minorities – are dying at higher rates. Across the world, wealthy countries or regions – the European Union – are borrowing heavily against the future to support their populations, while poorer ones are unable to do so. Many are tottering on the verge of bankruptcy, with some – Argentina, for instance – already in default on their sovereign debt. The disease takes its toll, but so will the immediate and long-term consequences of confinement, including hunger, unemployment, poverty, isolation, social stigma, with massive population displacements in India, riots in Chile and protests in South Africa.

Lack of preparedness and slow reactions in many countries have resulted in numerous unnecessary deaths. In the United States and Brazil especially, the recommendations of experts have spurred a new cultural struggle, pitching a false opposition between “life” and “economy,” and transforming harmless masks into vicious political markers. The temptation to forge numbers, to muzzle critique, to carry emergency powers too far is high, and difficult to resist in this context. The US Center for Disease Control and Prevention ruined its reputation in a matter of weeks while China has been suspected from the start of obfuscating the real figures of its epidemic. Protected by the fog of the pandemic, Hungary has completed its autocratic conversion and Israel has announced the annexation of

the West Bank. Governments, too, are being revolutionized by Covid-19. The state of urgency has restricted civil liberties and altered democratic principles by liberating the executive branches from conventional restraints on their power and shielding many of their actions from scrutiny. But political possibilities and social utopias have emerged. The health crisis has increased awareness about the need for a basic income, the necessity of debt forgiveness and the urgency of environmental issues, but it is also threatening to normalize digital surveillance, to further concentrate economic power, and to intensify labor flexibility and automation.

*Economy and Society in the Time of the Pandemic* will address the effects of the pandemic through social and economic lenses. It will benefit from the unique collaboration of an international and interdisciplinary group of scholars who have reflected on the theme “economy and society” during a full year at the Institute for Advanced Study. Together, we have built a common experience via a bimonthly seminar, informal conversations, exchanges of papers, and the convening of two workshops dedicated to the preparation of the present volume. The book we envision will take the Covid-19 pandemic as a pretext to sharpen our conceptual reflections about social relations in the economy through a common engagement with this circumscribed, but deeply transformative, empirical context. Contributors working on field sites from six continents will investigate the production of ordinary life (“Everyday Economies”), the politics of culture and expertise (“Knowledge Economies”), the ongoing and imagined transformation of economic structures (“Political Economies”), and the circulation of moral arguments and emotions (“Moral Economies”) in the time of coronavirus. These four themes will structure the volume.

# **III**

## **Machine Learning and the Social Sciences Workshops**





**Two Workshops Co-Organized by  
the School of Mathematics  
and the School of Social Science**

**Conveners:**

Sanjeev Arora, Princeton University/Institute for Advanced Study

Didier Fassin, Institute for Advanced Study/Collège de France

Jacob Foster, University of California, Los Angeles

Marion Fourcade, University of California, Berkeley/Institute for Advanced Study

*First Workshop*

**Social and Ethical Challenges in Machine Learning**

Date: November 6, 2019

Location: Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton

*Second Workshop*

**Machine Learning, Theory, and Method in the Social Sciences**

Date: March 4-5, 2020

Location: Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton

*Support for these events was provided by a grant from the Schwab Charitable Fund made possible by the generosity of Eric and Wendy Schmidt, as well as by a grant from the Nomis Foundation.*

# **Social and Ethical Challenges in Machine Learning**

November 6, 2019

This invitation-only workshop brought together experts in machine learning and social scientists in an effort to reflect on the social and ethical challenges of producing machine learning and using it "in the wild." Possible topics include the social and ethical issues related to: the global digital labor market that supports many practical applications of ML; the impact of AI advances on work and occupations; uncharted territories for the application of new learning methods; public attitudes toward (and understandings of) artificial intelligence; deep fakes, democracy and the transformation of civic discourses; possible biases and discrimination embedded in predictive analytics (e.g. from search to policing and sentencing, from HR to dating, from social services to marketing); human sense making, opacity and machine learning outcomes; the promises and pitfalls of using AI to manage and control individuals and populations (e.g. via the generalized surveillance and scoring of individuals, as in the social credit system); the AI-induced reconfiguration of emotions, desires, and cognition; and cross-national differences in the implementation and regulation of machine learning.

## **9:00 am - 9:15 am Introduction**

Sanjeev Arora, School of Mathematics, IAS and Princeton University

Didier Fassin, School of Social Science, IAS and Collège de France

## **9:15 am - 10:45 am Ordering the Social**

Marion Fourcade, IAS and UC Berkeley and Fleur Johns, IAS and University of New South Wales "Machine Learning, Sociality and Solidarity"

Matthew Salganik, Princeton University "Understanding and Auditing an AI System in the Wild"

10:45 am - 11:00 am Coffee Break

## **11:00 am - 12:30 pm Prediction and Bias**

Sofia Ohlede, École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne, "Data Governance and Ethics of Algorithmic Decision-Making"

David Robinson, Cornell University "Discrimination, Law, and the Modeled Imagination"

12:30 pm - 1:45 pm Lunch

1:45 pm - 3:15 pm **Exposure and Surveillance**

Bernard Harcourt, Columbia University “From the Expository Society to the Social Score: The Struggle over the Control of Our Data”

Arvind Narayanan, Princeton University “Responsible Machine Learning in the Age of Surveillance Capitalism”

3:15 pm - 3:30 pm Coffee Break – Fuld Hall Common Room

3:30 pm - 5:00 pm **General Discussion**

**Public Event: Artificial Intelligence, Ethics and Society**

5:30 pm - 7:00 pm – Wolfensohn Hall

Pedro Domingos, University of Washington “How Will Artificial Intelligence Change Ethics?”

Mary Gray, Microsoft and Harvard University “Algorithmic Cruelty and the Hidden Costs of *Ghost Work*”

Moderator: Alondra Nelson, IAS and SSRC

# **Machine Learning, Theory, and Method in the Social Sciences**

March 4-5, 2020

Can the dramatic recent progress in machine learning lead to conceptual advances in the social sciences and humanities? Although we have access to social and cultural datasets of unprecedented scale, quality, and complexity, this question remains open. New methods of machine learning (e.g., various flavors of deep nets, transformer nets, AlphaGo and the like) often take a "black box" view of data. Little theoretical understanding exists about what patterns in data were implicitly identified as part of the learning. But it is these patterns that are of primary interest in the social sciences, especially when researchers hope to discover new social processes or phenomena. This workshop aimed to bridge this gap via focused dialog between the two communities. ML experts learnt about questions in culture, cognition, social action, power relations etc. that might inform the design of ML systems in the laboratory and "in the wild." Social scientists arrived at a better understanding of how modern ML techniques might be leveraged to generate new research projects and transformative methodological innovations. Out-of-the-box talks and discussions were highly encouraged!

## March 4, 2020

9:00 am - 10:30 am

Sanjeev Arora, "Randwalk Model of Text Generation: Toward Greater Interpretability of Word and Sentence Embeddings"

Jacob Foster, "Theory, Imagination, and Understanding: Our Common Task"

10:30 am - 11:00 am Coffee Break

11:00 am - 12:30 pm

Filiz Garip, "Using Unsupervised and Supervised Learning to Understand Human Migration"

Cristian Danescu-Niculescu-Mizil, "Conversational Markers of (Anti)social Dynamics"

12:30 pm - 2:00 pm Lunch - Simons Hall, Dining Hall

2:00 pm - 3:30 pm

Matt Salganik, “Measuring the Predictability of Life Outcomes with a Scientific Mass Collaboration”

Justin Grimmer, “Latent Treatments and Latent Confounders”

3:30 pm - 4:00 pm Tea - Fuld Hall Common Room

4:00 pm - 5:00 pm Discussion

**Public Event:**

5:30 pm - Wolfensohn Hall

Elizabeth Bruch, “Discovering Decision Rules in Mate Choice”

Tom Griffith, “Human Behavior as the Next Frontier for AI”

March 5, 2020

9:00 am - 10:30 am

James Evans, “Growing the Least Human (Computational) Intelligences”

Diyi Yang, “Computational Social Roles: Identifying and Configuring Social Roles in Online Teamwork”

10:30 am – 11 am Coffee Break

11:00 am - 12:30 pm

Étienne Ollion, “Learning to Analyze, Learning to Produce. Using AI to Revisit the History of Political Journalism”

Brandon Stewart, “High-dimensional Confounding Adjustment with Applications to Text”

12:30 pm - 1:30 pm Lunch - Simons Hall, Dining Hall

1:30 pm - 3:00 pm

Monica Lee, “Graph Mining to Protect the US 2020 Election”

Zubin Jelveh, “Opportunities and Challenges in Applying Data Science to Public Policy”

3:00 pm - 4:00 pm Discussion & Wrap-up



# **IV**

## **Film Series**





## ***Economy and Society Film Series***

In parallel with the seminar, and in collaboration with Librarian Marcia Tucker and the School of Historical Studies, we organized a Film Series, screening fictional films and documentaries from around the world to continue our discussion with a broader public through cinema.

October 2, 2019

*The Big Short*, directed by Adam McKay

\* Post-screening discussion led by Associate Professor Sarah Quinn, the University of Washington, and Research Fellow Benjamin Braun, Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies

November 13, 2019

*Valley of Saints*, directed by Musa Syeed

\* Post-screening discussion led by Associate Professor Z. Fareen Parvez, University of Massachusetts Amherst, and freelance journalist Nafeesa Syeed

December 11, 2019

*Graduation*, directed by Cristian Mungiu

\* Post-screening discussion led by Associate Professor Virág Molnár, The New School, and Assistant Professor Naor Ben-Yehoyada, Columbia University

February 12, 2020

*People's Republic of Desire*, directed by Hao Wu

\* Post-screening discussion led by Associate Professor Horacio Ortiz, East China Normal University, and Assistant Professor Julia Chuang, Boston College



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